

Seeking strength from within

The quest for a methodology of endogenous development

Editors: Marc P. Lammerink and Sara van Otterloo-Butler

© COMPAS (2010)

The editor and authors of this book reserve the rights of this publication. However, readers are encouraged to copy and circulate this information and to translate it into other languages as long as it is not done for commercial purposes.

For more information, contact:

COMPAS
P.O. Box 64
3830 AB Leusden
The Netherlands
Tel: +31-33-4320000
Fax: +31-33-4940791
E-mail: compas@etcnl.nl

Printing
BDU, Barneveld, the Netherlands

Cover photo: Kalavathi with her daughter at her organically farmed rice field, southern India where she conserves a popular traditional rice variety called 'Rajmudi'. Kalavathi, 140 other individual farmers and 10 farmer groups market their rice and other food products through a producer company called 'Sahaja Organics', inspired amongst others by the endogenous development methodology of the COMPAS Network.

Photo: Krishna Prasad, Sahaja Organics, www.sahajasamrudha.org.

Contents

Acknowledgements		4
Introduction		5
<i>Marc P. Lammerink and Sara van Otterloo-Butler</i>		
The contributors		12
Chapter 1	Sri Lanka – FIOH’s social mobilisation facilitates community change	18
<i>K.A.J. Kahandawa</i>		
Chapter 2	Ghana – From the inside out: CIKOD’s community organisational development	29
<i>Bernard Guri and Wilberforce Laate</i>		
	Essay Ghana – The Tanchara project: a practical application of Community Organisational Development	43
Chapter 3	Bolivia – AGRUCO strengthens communities’ self-esteem and identity	48
<i>Cesar Escobar</i>		
Chapter 4	India – FRLHT revives local health traditions	62
<i>G. Hariramamurthi and P.M. Unnikrishnan</i>		
Chapter 5	Peru – CEPROSI creates caring and friendly schools	77
<i>Elena Pardo Castillo, Melquiades Quintasi Mamani & Guillermo Huahuatico Espinoza</i>		
Chapter 6	Ethiopia – PARIMA reintroduces controlled burning, a traditional range management practice	91
<i>Getachew Gebru</i>		
Chapter 7	Conclusion – The quest for a methodology of endogenous development	102
<i>Marc P. Lammerink</i>		
Further information		113

Acknowledgements

A weeklong write-shop created space in which a group of field workers could engage in a critical and collective learning process. The editors would like to express their deep thanks to all participants for the open way in which they shared, confronted and discussed their experiences, and for helping to build an atmosphere of mutual trust. This provided a solid foundation for the book that has emerged. Without their efforts after the write-shop to finalise the exercise despite their busy work schedules, this book would not have been published. The comments and commitment from the contributors and their colleagues gave us the support we needed to finish the task.

Marc Lammerink facilitated the write-shop and made everyone feel very welcome at his accommodation in Monte Saraz (www.montesaraz.com). The beautiful setting provided a background of peace and tranquillity, in which we could reflect, discuss and write far away from the confusion of offices and cities. We thank Dona Rosette, who served breakfast and kept our coffee level up to standard, Senor Manuel who helped us savour the regional cuisine, and Captain Tiago who showed us the beauty of the Alqueva lakes. The two supporting editors, Sara van Otterloo and Chesha Wettasinha, maintained a critical stance throughout the week and helped the participants to organise their material and analyze the rationale behind their choices.

We acknowledge David Millar, a pioneer in the endogenous development field, and Jaime Soto, both of whom were present during the write-shop and took part in the discussions but were unable to finalise their contributions.

We are indebted to the support provided by COMPAS head office, Wim Hiemstra, Desiree Dirkzwager and Marijke Kreijkamp for their much-appreciated work on preparing the book for publication. The entire exercise would not have been possible without financial support from PSO in the Netherlands. The editors and contributors, however, remain responsible for the content.

We hope that this book will make a positive contribution to continuing the quest for endogenous development methodology. Above all, we believe that the processes described will serve to enhance the inner strength of other communities, and convince new local institutions to engage in endogenous development and continue this important work.

Marc P. Lammerink and Sara van Otterloo-Butler

Introduction

Marc P. Lammerink and Sara van Otterloo-Butler

Few books have been written on participatory approaches that integrate local knowledge into development interventions (endogenous development), and which present the experiences of organisations in so many different countries and under such differing circumstances. The purpose of this book is to make available to a wider audience, descriptions of how individuals and organisations go about their work of supporting endogenous development. The experiences recorded, from Sri Lanka, Ghana, Bolivia, India, Peru and Ethiopia, are the result of ten years or more of working in the area, gradually building understanding of the processes involved. Pulling together this wealth of experience has been an arduous task that has taken more than a year; in retrospect though this is a short amount of time compared with the period of observation, practice, experimenting and reflection undergone by the organisations themselves.

The book presents the critical reflections and learning culled from the different experiences and, as such, represents a step towards disseminating the approaches that have been developed in the last ten years in the work of the COMPAS endogenous development programme. Rather than just compiling a range of articles from authors of different nationalities, we have also attempted to distil what makes endogenous development different from other approaches to development (participatory or otherwise), differentiating without generalising too much. Although the experiences described here have been all inspired by a comparable philosophy, the process and phases of implementation differ and are specific to each context.

In a sense therefore, we present a comparative school of participatory approaches related to endogenous development in community development, health, education, and eco-agriculture. Comparison between different worlds and areas of attention makes the case for endogenous development approaches even stronger. The book presents methodologies developed and being used by organisations involved in field programmes of the COMPAS network. We hope that the contributions will inspire and encourage readers to try them out and to adapt aspects from the different endogenous development approaches to their own work situation.

The experiences derived from these different contexts provide sufficient authority to embark on a more overarching systematisation of an approach that integrates local knowledge and worldviews into development interventions. The concluding chapter takes a step in this direction.

Endogenous development and wellbeing approaches

Endogenous development as an approach evolved out of the school of action research and participatory approaches in agriculture and natural resource management, starting in the late 1980s. During the course of the 1990s, the importance of participatory approaches and of integrating local knowledge into development interventions became broadly recognised. However in practice, many of the approaches that had been

developed experienced difficulties in overcoming an implicit ‘materialistic’ bias, where the focus was on physical and economic development. Since it started in 1998, the COMPAS network has compared and supported endogenous development efforts. Endogenous development seeks to overcome a materialistic bias by making peoples’ worldviews and livelihood strategies the starting point for development. Many of these worldviews and livelihood strategies reflect notions of sustainable development as a balance between material, social and spiritual wellbeing. The three dimensions are seen as inseparable.

Thus, the concept of worldviews became central in the COMPAS network: ‘real life’ is considered as being when communities have capacities to aspire to achieve a balance between material, social and spiritual wellbeing. The main difference between endogenous development and other participatory approaches is thus the consideration of spiritual or cultural aspects in the development process, in addition to the ecological, social and economic aspects. The aim of endogenous development – development from within – is to empower local communities to take control of their own development process in order to achieve their material, social and spiritual wellbeing aspirations.

Endogenous development is mainly based on local strategies, values, institutions and resources. Therefore priorities, needs and criteria for development will differ in each community and may not always be the same as those of the development worker. Key concepts within endogenous development are: local control of the development process; taking cultural values seriously; finding a balance between local and external resources; and appreciating worldviews.

Let us take a closer look at the concept of wellbeing (*vivir bien* in Spanish), which is receiving increased attention in development cooperation². Gross National Happiness approaches focus on national levels and the Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) programme has been developed by researchers, academics and policy makers. In contrast, the niche of COMPAS partner organisations is showing how (and why) worldviews and wellbeing can be incorporated in concrete field programmes. According to the WeD programme, international development needs a practical concept of wellbeing if it is to reach and go beyond the Millennium Development Goals to confront the major and interlinked challenges of poverty, conflict and sustainability. But how can development organisations support the wellbeing aspirations of communities they work with? This has been a constant challenge for the organisations of the COMPAS network too.

How field workers can – learn to – deal with the different dimensions of wellbeing (material, social and spiritual) as expressed in worldviews is the key to endogenous development and therefore the key to the COMPAS network as a whole. Experience had been gained in field programmes, but these experiences had not been well documented as operational approaches and methodological tools, and thus a systematic operational approach with clear steps was lacking. This book tries to fill this gap.

Although the question of learning about endogenous development was addressed in the earlier COMPAS publication ‘Learning Endogenous Development –

² Examples are the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, economics of happiness as in Gross National Happiness approaches in Buddhist countries, the Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) as coordinated by the university of Bath, UK, and also the COMPAS network.

Building on Bio-cultural diversity' (Practical Action 2007), the book did not cover methodological aspects. The book is a collection of case studies illustrating the principles of endogenous development and ways of learning, such as appreciating the diversity of worldviews, visioning and planning and supporting local initiatives. The current book describes how some of the principles expressed in Learning Endogenous Development have been applied. The earlier book concludes: *'Endogenous Development implies much more than learning new skills or developing new understandings. It goes beyond the use of the hands and head, and touches people's hearts. It relates to peoples' fundamental views, their basic attitudes to their fellow humans, to their religious feelings sometimes. Learning in Endogenous Development is thus about personal as much as professional development'*³.

However challenging this might sound, participants at training events expressed time and again the need to gain more hands-on insight into operational approaches and practical tools on how-to-do endogenous development, and how to integrate the three dimensions of wellbeing – material, social and spiritual – in field programmes. Thus, systematising experiences became an important challenge in the COMPAS network to answer the 'how-to-do endogenous development' question.

Learning-by-doing endogenous development

In May 2009 we organised in Monsaraz (Portugal) the Monte Saraz write-shop for a South-South exchange between network partners. The weeklong write-shop created a space where a group of selected field workers⁴ could share, confront and discuss their opinions based on mutual trust. It involved a critical engagement in the interpretation of the different experiences, and mutual and collective learning, as well as writing.

During the write-shop, experienced field workers from seven partner organisations, all involved in endogenous development projects, critically reflected on and made sense of their experience, turning the lessons they derived from the reflection into new knowledge, which now will hopefully inform a new round of practice not only in their own work, but also in that of the readers of this book.

Systematisation

The facilitators of the write-shop used a methodology called systematisation ('the act of organising something according to a system or rationale'). Systematisation as a methodology has its origins in Latin America (Oscar Jara, 1998⁵).

Systematisation refers to a process which seeks to organise information resulting from a given field programme, in order to analyze it in detail and draw lessons from it. In English it is often referred to as a documentation process, but it is more than the simple act of recording information, as it involves a process of critical

³ The book has also been translated into Spanish by the Latin American COMPAS coordinator, AGRUCO (Bolivia): *Aprendiendo el desarrollo endógeno sostenible* (2008).

⁴ Selection of the fieldworkers was based on previous prepared materials and developed tools such as manuals, curricula, scenarios for making the endogenous development approach operational in different thematic areas and in different countries or continents.

⁵ Jara, O. (1998), *Para sistematizar experiencias*, ALFORJA, San Jose, Costa Rica

reconstruction and interpretation of the experiences gained in the field programmes of the COMPAS network. The facilitators challenged the participants to explain the logic of their different programmes, the external and internal factors that influenced their experiences and why particular results emerged. This thoughtful process of systematisation encouraged critical and collective reflection on how each experience evolved. It strengthened the abilities, skills and capacities of the field workers present to look at the evolution of their experience and identify steps, lessons and insights for future interventions.

During the write-shop the facilitator and two supporting editors helped the participants to organise the information gathered from their field programmes: analyzing the rationale for the choices made, how and why different factors intervened to shape or change the interventions over time and what processes of change emerged from the experiences. Furthermore, we reflected on the operational approaches and the process of steps and phases, and the methods developed (how-to-do endogenous development). We also reflected on the change process each field worker underwent: what made them become involved in endogenous development work, trying to understand the personal development and learning related to endogenous development. This information has been included in the section on the contributors. At the end of a week of intensive talking, discussion and writing we had six draft contributions. Everyone then returned to their own continent, and the editors continued a long-distance dialogue with the contributors to shape their accounts into the end result here.

Special attention has been devoted to tools that the organisations use to address the different dimensions of wellbeing and their interrelations: material, social and spiritual. During the process of writing we encouraged the participants to describe their operational approaches in a way that would help other NGOs interested in the endogenous development approach to be able to apply them in their own contexts, in particular in their application of a participatory endogenous development approach. Hopefully, the resulting book at least partially fills this gap. However incomplete, it represents the state-of-the-art of doing endogenous development in the COMPAS programme.

The users of this book

Building on its predecessor, *Learning Endogenous Development*, this book is intended for staff of community-based organisations, development organisations and projects, who work directly with communities, farmers and groups. They may work within government- or non-government organisations and have extension, research or general community development tasks. The focus of their work may be agriculture and land use, education, health or nature conservation, or may be related to livelihood issues. As part of their work, however, these practitioners all interact frequently with communities and are interested to learn how their interaction can be more effective and lead to truly sustainable development at the local level.

Structure of the book

This is a how-to-do book for people who want to understand methods used in going about endogenous development. It is not a manual, however. It is composed of contributions that highlight the steps and phases of operational approaches in different fields of endogenous development efforts, and in different contexts in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The methodologies are presented in the first six chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 describe a broader community approach, followed by chapters 3, 4 and 5, which outline approaches that have been developed in specific areas of work: agro-ecology, health and education. While it is not a methodological description in the strict sense, Chapter 6 is devoted to an interesting case study from Ethiopia, contributed by a member of the Endogenous Livestock Development network. Chapter 7 returns to the contributions of the write-shop participants and considers some global lessons and methodological issues raised.

The chapters

FIOH's social mobilisation facilitates community change

The Sri Lankan NGO Future in our Hands (FIOH) has over 20 years of community development experience in Uva province in Sri Lanka, working with smallholder farmers engaged in dry-land and irrigated rice farming. During this time FIOH has developed a participatory methodology, called the social mobilisation approach, for facilitating change in the communities. At the heart of this approach lies the concept that individuals in a society cannot make a change in their lives unless they have an intrinsic understanding of their own situation. Work in the community starts with the training of a social mobiliser. Subsequently, local-level organisations are strengthened to function independently. Under the COMPAS programme, FIOH started to consciously include a more holistic approach, whereby the community development process is conceived of as a combination of the material, social and spiritual aspects that encompass the genuine aspirations of the community members.

From the inside out: CIKOD's community organisational development

The Centre of Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development (CIKOD) is based in Accra, Ghana. CIKOD developed the Community Organisational Development (COD) process, which enables communities to marshal both indigenous and external resources using their traditional leadership and organisational systems for their own development initiatives. COD was developed from the principles of endogenous development – promoting development that involves creatively using all the indigenous potentials of a community but not excluding appropriate external resources. The methods used are based on working with and through the traditional authorities and indigenous institutions, their organisational practices and the natural resources available to them. This enhances the ownership of the development process. However, CIKOD realises that when engaging with traditional authorities one must be aware of the risks and challenges inherent in this relationship.

Agruco strengthens communities' self-esteem and identity

Agro-Ecología Universidad Cochabamba (AGRUCO) is a university-based organisation that has been working since 1999 on strengthening community-based organisation in agro-ecological management of the land in Bolivia. Two field workers, a sociologist and an agronomist, have worked with 350 families in seven indigenous communities, implementing a sustainable endogenous development approach in the Jatun Mayu basin. In AGRUCO's experience the most effective formula for overcoming problems that these rural people faced was to revalidate their own knowledge, to reaffirm their own cultural identity and to begin a real two-way dialogue with outsiders where neither party submits to or is subjugated by the other. The field workers learned that increasing self-esteem turned out to be the most valuable outcome achieved in the development process. 'Looking back we have come to understand that endogenous knowledge and organisational strength are like a seed in well-fertilised soil: they form the foundation upon which the development of other productive and social activities is built.'

FRLHT revives local health traditions

The Foundation for the Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), based in Bangalore, India, designs and implements participatory endogenous development methods to promote local health knowledge and sustain the natural resource base. These include Documentation and Assessment of Local Health Traditions (DALHT) in human health as well as ethno-veterinary health practices. The Home Herbal Garden programme helps to promote and mainstream positively assessed traditional remedies, and in Kashaya Camps decoctions (*kashayas*) are made from herbs that help prevent diseases such as malaria. In India many local health practices are disappearing due to lack of social and policy support. Moreover, the interest in learning and practising local health traditions is waning, especially in rural areas. FRLHT's approach has been successful because it applies local knowledge and resources for local needs. The codified medical traditions and non-codified local health traditions in India share a common worldview, and this helps to promote endogenous solutions to health problems on a large scale – something a country as large as India desperately needs.

Ceprosi creates caring and friendly schools

The Peruvian NGO Centre for the Promotion of Intercultural Wisdom (CEPROSI) is engaged in promoting local wellbeing through secondary education in the Andean highlands of Cusco. Since 2001 CEPROSI has been promoting intercultural dialogue in both primary and secondary education in the area. The organisation works on curriculum development in primary and secondary education to meet the wishes of the indigenous parents. They have developed a successful model of curriculum change based on the 'learn to live life' concept.

PARIMA reintroduces controlled burning, a traditional range management practice

The Pastoral Risk Management programme PARIMA is the coordinating member of the Endogenous Livestock Development (ELD) Network in Ethiopia. PARIMA works with the Borana leaders and pastoral people on the Borana Plateau in Ethiopia to revive indigenous range management practices. This contribution outlines the steps taken to revitalise the use of fire as a range management practice in the Borana rangelands in southern Ethiopia. Controlled burning of bush vegetation was a long-standing practice in the Borana pastoral system before its ban in the late 1970s under the national forest and wildlife conservation strategy of Ethiopia. According to Borana elders, the impacts of the fire ban have been disastrous: the subsequent bush invasion has killed grass (thus reducing domestic animal productivity and the amount of wild grazing animals) and substantially increased livestock loss to predators. Controlled burning has now been reintroduced following a participatory process conducted according to endogenous development principles.

Conclusion: the quest for a methodology of endogenous development

The final chapter of the book reflects on the methods and approaches described in chapters 1 to 6, and takes the process of systematisation a step further. It is clear that the underpinnings of endogenous development do not lend themselves to sweeping generalisations or rigid prescriptions of how to proceed. Nevertheless, patterns emerge and so a five-stage approach for strengthening endogenous development is proposed:

- ◆ Diagnosing and identifying local knowledge and practices
- ◆ Identifying and testing indigenous knowledge and practices
- ◆ Organising towards self-management and local leadership
- ◆ Sustaining and self-reliance
- ◆ Movement building through advocacy and linking

The editors regard this book as a starting point rather than the final statement on methodologies that integrate local knowledge into development interventions. We hope it will inspire readers to reflect critically on their work and to develop their own approaches and methodologies, building on their experiences, and to share these with colleagues. We would very much appreciate your feedback so that we can continue to learn together.

The contributors

During the write-shop that was the start of shaping the COMPAS partners' experiences into this book, the facilitators asked the participants whether there had been a particular moment when they recognised the value or strength of using an endogenous development approach. We include these short personal accounts from each of the main contributors to this book.

K.A.J. Kahandawa, works for FIOH, and is coordinator of COMPAS Sri Lanka

I attended a meeting of traditional medical practitioners in Mahiyangana, Badulla district. There I saw an old man performing a ritual and blessing a woman who was ill. I tried to talk to him afterwards but he was not interested. I persisted, and finally he explained that he would not talk about what he did in public, but if I was interested I could visit him at home.

The man lived far away in Moneragala, but I managed to go the following weekend. At first he was surprised that I had come, but he treated me as a special guest and I spent the whole day with him discussing his work. The man had a vast knowledge of medicine, herbs, snakebite treatments, bone fractures and more. He talked at length and I listened patiently. The more questions I asked, the more he talked. He described how he treated patients, gave me recipes for snakebite treatments, and showed me his collection of treatment methods and prescriptions for various ailments, written on *ola* (palm) leaves. He also explained how rituals, mantras, deities and meditation are used to treat different illnesses. He had rational, convincing explanations for everything he did.

In the afternoon a young boy came to the house and showed great respect towards the old man. This boy had had a motorcycle accident in which his leg was badly damaged. In hospital the doctors said it would have to be amputated to save his life. His parents objected, to which the doctor responded that he would not be held responsible if the boy were to die. With great difficulty the parents brought their son to this healer. The healer took him in and kept him at his house for more than two months, after which the boy was able to walk again. The healer explained his success, saying that doctors do not have respect for human life as healers do: healing is not only about giving medicine, but the spiritual aspects are also important in this work.

I left the healer's house in the evening, and gave a lift to a few youngsters on the road. As we drove along, one of them asked what I had been doing the whole day in the man's house. I told them about my discussions with the healer and that I had learned a lot. After listening, one of the boys said, 'And we thought that this man was half mad!'

The way this rich traditional knowledge is regarded made a deep impression on me. I wanted to understand more about this man and the work he does. I developed great respect for him and I still maintain a close relationship with him to this day.

Sri Lanka

FIOH's social mobilisation approach to facilitating change

K.A.J. Kahandawa

Background

A number of local organisations in Sri Lanka have been implementing programmes for supporting endogenous development for some 5-8 years. Their experiences include revitalisation efforts in agriculture, ethno-veterinary practices and Vaasthu (traditional house building and home environment). In order to facilitate endogenous development, these organisations have engaged in a variety of participatory interventions. The purpose of this contribution is to systematise the operational approach that the organisation Future in Our Hands (FIOH) uses to support endogenous development in its communities.

FIOH has over 20 years of community development experience. During this time it has perfected the social mobilisation approach, an intervention strategy it uses in the communities it works with. This approach has always been highly participatory and over the years has become accepted by the communities as one of their own development strategies. FIOH has further improved the social mobilisation approach to include endogenous development aspects.

An indicator of any development strategy is its long-term sustainability once the facilitating agency (often an NGO) is phased out. In many of the locations where it works, FIOH has been able to develop the capacity of the local-level organisations to function independently. Hence the FIOH approach to promoting endogenous development has proven its sustainability.

FIOH implements an integrated development programme in the dry and intermediate zones of Uva province in Sri Lanka. The target group consists mainly of smallholder farmers engaged in both dry-land and irrigated rice farming.

With the promotion of green revolution farming practices and subsidising of hybrid seed varieties, fertiliser and chemical inputs, farmers gradually moved away from traditional farming practices. Traditional seed varieties were lost. The high external input agriculture gave quick returns in the beginning. But as time passed, soil fertility declined substantially and the cost of external inputs increased, turning the new practices into high-cost low-return agriculture. After 40 years of green revolution, the farmers now face a severe crisis in agriculture. There are no more subsidies and farming has become an uneconomic venture.

FIOH works in these villages in partnership with the local community through the intervention strategy of social mobilisation.

Social mobilisation (SM) is a development intervention philosophy. At the heart of this philosophy lies the concept that it is more difficult for individuals in a society to make a change in their lives unless they have confronted the reality of their situation

and understand it from a holistic perspective. This means their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour can only be changed through an intrinsic understanding of their own situation. Social mobilisation can bring about such a change. Social mobilisation is a dynamic personal/individual, social, cultural and political process that is complex in nature.

Steps in FIOH's intervention strategy

FIOH's goal is endogenous development in the communities where it works – i.e. a development process that takes place according to the worldviews and needs of the community. It initiates participatory development methods with the intention of harnessing the active involvement of beneficiaries from the stage of problem identification to sharing the benefits. FIOH uses social mobilisers (SMM) as change agents to achieve this goal. The SMM is the crucial player who initiates the endogenous development process, so selection and training of the SMM is of great importance.

1. Identification of communities

The first step of the methodology is the identification and selection of communities that need development intervention. FIOH selects the communities based on *pre-determined criteria*. The criteria are the remoteness of the villages, no notable development intervention by the government or an NGO, majority of the community members below poverty line (as identified by the government under its Poverty Alleviation programme), and the potential for sustainable agriculture and other livelihood development. One additional criterion is that FIOH works with a cluster of villages, so villages that are close together are selected. Such a cluster usually consists of around 10 villages. The selection is done at FIOH level.

2. Selection and training of Social Mobiliser

Once FIOH decides to work in a particular community, the second step is to select the social mobiliser. The selection starts by placing public advertisements and/or considering recommendations from other field staff in the organisation. The FIOH coordinator interviews the candidate and contacts different sources to investigate the candidate's suitability. Younger persons are preferred. They need not have high educational qualifications but should have fairly good reading and writing ability. One of the important qualities of the prospective SMM is the person's acceptability to the communities in which she or he will perform. If possible, the mobiliser is selected from the village. Where there is no suitable candidate in the particular village, the SMM can be selected from a nearby village.

Once selected, the mobiliser receives training. Initial training of social mobilisers generally lasts six months. The training is conducted in such a way that during the training programme itself the mobiliser starts interaction with the community. The training process involves six training modules. (FIOH has a detailed curriculum for this purpose, and only the major steps are described here.)

The selected mobilisers are trained in small groups of 10-15 participants. The training starts with five days in the classroom, during which the trainees are

introduced to the general skills and attitude requirements for promoting an endogenous development process in the community. The most important skills at this stage are: building rapport with the community with respect to their knowledge and culture, and conducting interviews/discussions. After this initial training the mobilisers receive additional training on how to conduct interviews, use Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and visual tools for discussions, and keeping records of the discussions.

The SMMs then go to the community for a 15-20 day stay. During this period, they meet and discuss with the community members in the village and gather basic information about the community's social, cultural, religious/spiritual background and economy.

The SMMs then return for another classroom session of five days, where they share experiences with fellow SMMs and the trainer. The trainer helps them to analyse and understand the information they bring back from the community. Apart from what the SMMs learn by living within the village, they gradually build up additional skills and knowledge as the trainer familiarises them with a variety of teaching/learning methods in each classroom session. These methods provide the SMMs with further probing skills so that they can elicit a more detailed and holistic picture of the lives of people in the community. Having reflected and acquired new knowledge from the trainer, the SMMs go back to the community again with the assignment of understanding more about the lives of the community members.

This process of being with the community and coming back to classroom for reflection is repeated six times, ideally over a period of six months. In each session the facilitator provides the SMM with guidance on how to live in the community and initiate analytical discussions with individual community members in order to help them understand their situation better. The SMM also receives training on how to use participatory tools for deeper analysis and understanding of the community's situation. Mapping is one such example. Maps are made with the participation of the community members. At the initial stage this map is basically a resource map, which the mobiliser uses to represent the baseline situation. Apart from collecting geographical information, mapping is also done to collect social information.

The kind of information the mobiliser collects during the six-month period includes:

- ◆ history of the village and trends identified
- ◆ land and resource distribution in the village
- ◆ utilisation patterns of these resources and related problems
- ◆ different organisations in and outside the village
- ◆ formal and informal social institutions that are vital in village life (caste, religion, festivals, rituals and beliefs)
- ◆ family income and expenditure patterns
- ◆ savings and credit
- ◆ indebtedness and dependencies

The information that has been collected in the beginning is further elaborated and analysed each time the mobiliser comes to the classroom training. This information does not differ much from conventional analyses, but the discussions initiated by the social mobiliser make the difference, as the example in the box shows. As the

mobiliser continues to elicit information, s/he facilitates understanding of the spiritual dimension too.

Box 1. Social mobilisers initiate critical reflection and discussion

In conventional information collection, the informant would mention that they do not have any savings. Additionally they might also mention that they are indebted to local moneylenders, an indication of their inability to save. But when the SMM initiates the discussion, she or he discusses about unnecessary expenditures like smoking, betel chewing, buying things from the shops that they can easily produce themselves, and not using available land efficiently. In this way the SMM does not accept inability to save as a de facto status. An SMM will challenge such a statement in order to initiate critical discussion.

The objective of the training strategy is to develop a change of attitude in the mobiliser so that she or he comes to understand and appreciate the worldview of the community. Worldviews vary from community to community, and therefore they cannot be explained by an outsider to the mobiliser. So each time an SMM spends time in the community, their understanding is strengthened by the community members. The trainer has the task of providing the necessary skills and tools to make this more effective. In short, the trainer provides the tools and it is the social mobiliser who comes to mutually understand the worldview of the community in which she or he will continue, facilitating and supporting the community's development initiatives.

3. Social mobilisation in group/organisation formation

During the process in which the social mobiliser interacts with the community as part of the training, the community members and the SMM identify the areas where intervention is required to be able to move towards their wellbeing aspirations. The SMM is trained not to impose external views about wellbeing onto community members. His/her role is to facilitate discussions so that the community members understand and define their own wellbeing aspirations. SMM uses discussions and appropriate PRA tools for visualisation and deeper analysis. Many communities explain wellbeing in economic terms. At the same time there is a tendency to accept things as they are and not to question why or to seek the root causes of problems. But when the discussions are facilitated towards looking at the situation in a holistic perspective, the community members start analysing things differently and start to seek a deeper understanding of their realities. SMMs facilitate here, analysing the present situation and the root causes of the situation and eliciting possible actions to overcome them. By analysing their situation with SMMs, community members may come to understand, for example, that an increase in income might not bring the wellbeing they aspire to, as they also understand wellbeing in terms of social and spiritual dimensions

Extensive discussion and analysis eventually leads to action. As the SMM facilitates deeper and deeper understanding together with the community, members of the community start to feel the need for taking action in order to overcome the unfavourable situations they are in. We indicate below the typical chronological order of the actions that take place.

1. *Revitalising traditional collective activities*

During the latter part of the training the SMM facilitates the community members so that they start to revitalise traditional collective activities in all aspects of their daily life. One example is *attam* (a labour sharing/exchange system). This is a traditional practice for labour sharing in agriculture that existed in the villages before hiring of labour was introduced. During the cultivation season, when labour was in short supply, all the farmers got together and worked each other's paddy lands. This labour sharing system died out during the green revolution when chemicals and machines started to be promoted and used. The SMM initiates discussion about the useful institutions that existed in the past and facilitates so that the community members analyse positive aspects of these. The SMM raises the questions about the poverty trap and how to get out of it. She or he also facilitates discussion about individual versus collective action as ways of getting out of poverty trap. As a result of this dialogue, the community sees the advantages of the traditional system in terms of re-kindling the collective spirit. Through this type of activity individuals become convinced that the way out of the poverty trap is through collective effort. The SMM then facilitates a process through which like-minded community members form into small groups of 5-10 people. The decision to be in a particular group is made by the community members themselves. The criteria include living in close vicinity, equal social economic status and the willingness to be in the same group.

2. *Initiating collective activities*

Once groups have been formed, many collective activities are initiated in order to cement the group feeling. Weekly meetings are held and each household takes turns to host them. The responsibilities of record keeping are shared so that consultation and collective feeling are strengthened. The mobiliser initiates discussions at each meeting so that issues are discussed in relation to the material, social and spiritual aspects.

3. *Facilitating saving and credit*

As a crucial step of working together, and also as a way of finding a remedy for indebtedness, methods of saving and credit are facilitated. The community members normally express that they are unable to save because they are poor. But the mobiliser facilitates traditional savings methods such as saving in kind. These are used as a basis upon which further savings can be built. This generally takes the form of a group savings scheme, which further strengthens the collective feeling within the group.

4. Organisation building

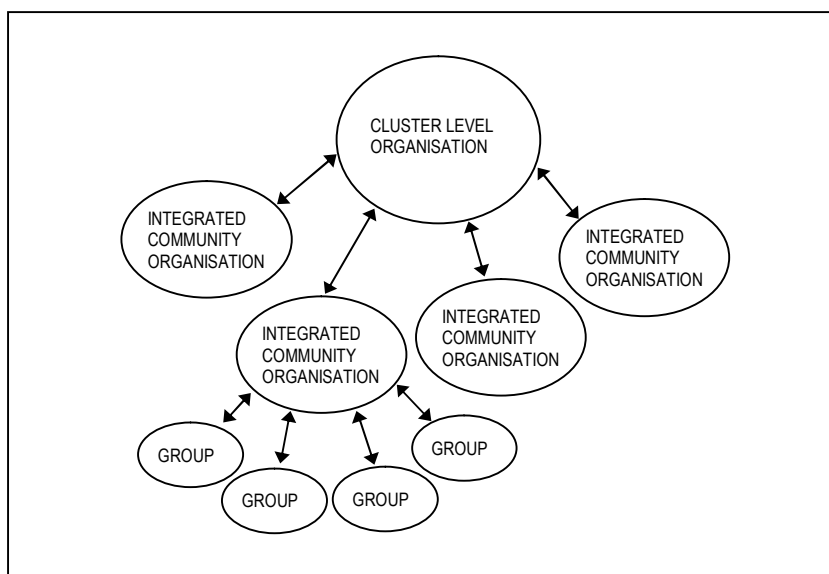
In order to facilitate the realisation of development aspirations that have been elicited by mobilised community members during the detailed planning process, FIOH has initiated the formation of organisations at different levels, shown in the diagram below.

First is the formation of groups at the very local level. Groups are mostly made up of people living close to one another, and members tend to be self selected, based

on similar interests and economic and social status. These are the groups at the bottom of the diagram. In 2009 there were 630 such groups in approximately 80 villages with a total membership of 4556 people, an average of 7-8 members in one group.

Once the groups are mature enough to work externally, (in 6-12 months) they are facilitated to become a village level organisation, named integrated community organisation (ICO). There are 57 such village-level ICOs, with an average of 11-12 groups per ICO. The groups are the members of the ICO. Groups each send two representatives to ICO meetings. These two members rotate on a yearly basis so that all the members have the opportunity to participate. A membership fee is charged for joining an ICO. The ICO also collects excess funds from member groups as deposits and uses these as a revolving fund. The ICO also mobilises funds from outside sources (credit institutions, NGOs) and provides them to members as credit for income generation activities.

How the Cluster Level Organisation is formed



Once many villages within one division (consisting of 10- 20 villages) have been mobilised, the ICOs form into a cluster level organisation (CLO). A CLO covers an administrative division. There are six CLOs in FIOH's working area. That means there are 9-10 ICOs in one CLO. The CLO is also a member-based organisation. The ICOs become members by paying a membership fee. They elect three representatives to be sent to the CLO. The board of management of CLO is made up of these ICO representatives. The main officers in the CLO (chair, secretary, and treasurer) are elected.

The objective of the CLO is to be a divisional level organisation that provides services to its members at a higher level. These include lobbying with government officers and obtaining infrastructure services for the villages. The CLO is also the planning unit that has direct contacts with FIOH and other agencies.

5. Planning process: from household level to group level

FIOH's experience of taking the planning process from household level to group level, and then on to the village and higher levels, is unique. FIOH used this planning methodology in its development interventions before its involvement with the COMPAS programme. The change that took place when FIOH joined the COMPAS programme was the adoption of the approach of looking at the community from a holistic perspective (material, social, spiritual). The planning process takes place in the following steps.

Step I Household plan

As explained above, the SMM engages in deep analytical discussions with community members. These usually take place with one family member (husband or wife), most often the person to whom the SMM has easiest access in the beginning. For example, in the areas where FIOH works, most of the men commute to work outside the village and women are the ones who are available in the household for regular discussions. These discussions continue at individual level even after groups have been formed. The individual discussions are important for a certain period so that the individuals gain a good understanding about the group process. Discussions and situation analysis lead the community members to understand the need for a more systematic way of planning and working will help them to overcome their present problems and achieve a higher state of wellbeing. Once this basic understanding has been gained, the mobiliser can facilitate planning at household level through discussions in the group setting.

With the situation analysis as the background, each household member develops a wish list, which is discussed, prioritised and put into a 1-2 year perspective. The activities proposed by the households are based on the discussions facilitated by the social mobiliser. The wish list is not to be submitted to any outside organisation. It is meant to be implemented by the household and groups, using their own resources.

As the mobiliser uses a holistic approach when facilitating (i.e. including material, social and spiritual aspects), the plan also reflects the participants' wellbeing aspirations. These might include aspirations such as completing the house, digging a well, construction of a toilet, education of a child, or cultivating the land. Spirituality is not explicitly mentioned in the plans, because it is not easy to translate into written plans at the beginning. This is where SMM and FIOH interventions are done. So in the implementation phase, the social and spiritual aspects are strengthened. This is most convenient, as all the planned activities, although they appear in household plans, are actually implemented as a group.

Step II Group plan

In group discussions, the household plans are discussed and three categories are identified. First, the individual household activities, which are implemented with minimal group support. Second are the activities that are collective in nature.

Collective activities are of major importance to the group plan. For example, savings can appear in the household plan, but also in the group plan as a collective activity. *Attam* (labour sharing) during the cultivation season also shows up as a collective activity. The group may also mention the external interventions they need in their plan. The third category is the community activities (done by the whole village) that are conducive for supporting the collective aspects; these are more important in the endogenous development process, and include for example the rituals and ceremonies for starting the cultivation season, in which all farmers have to participate (including non-group members).

Step III Village-level plan

When the SMM has been able to mobilise all the target families into groups, and once the groups are at least six months old (or considered mature enough to interact with other groups), the SMM facilitates a village-level forum. All the mature groups are invited into this village forum. The maturity of the groups is defined according to criteria accepted by the group members. These criteria include the amount of savings, number of savings methods used, amount of credit given, number of group activities conducted per month. Different villages may add other criteria too. Experiences show that it is possible to hold a village forum within a period of 12 to 15 months from the date SMM starts the facilitation process. In the initial stages of the village level forum, problems occur because of dissimilarities between the groups that are coming together. Some groups may attempt to dominate, as newer groups show less maturity than others. This is where the SMM and FIOH coordinators can intervene and promote better governance through more discussions, thus ironing out differences through understanding.

Between 1 and 3 members from each group participate in the village forum. Approximately 7-10 groups participate in the village forum. (In the area where FIOH works they are known as Integrated Community Organisations, ICOs). The village forum also goes through a similar planning process as the groups. The plan at village level includes those activities identified from the groups that require greater intervention at village level (see chart, Planning Process CLO). These are typically the supporting activities that need to be promoted in order to achieve endogenous development goals. The group plans may include how the members are planning to revitalise traditional paddy farming practices. They also may include the necessity for implementation of traditional rituals and ceremonies to be performed at the beginning and during different stages of cultivation season. Most of these practices are done by all the farmers. Such common activities, which need the participation of all or a majority of farmers, are identified from the group plans and included in the ICO plans. So the contents of the final ICO plan can be divided into two categories: resources and services its members (groups) need and resources and services the ICO has to mobilise from outside in order to fulfil the needs of the members.

Step IV Cluster-level plan

The higher level planning promoted by FIOH is at the divisional level, which is above village level. The divisional organisation is known as a Cluster Level Organisation (CLO). A CLO is a federation of all the ICOs in one Divisional Secretary area (the administrative hierarchy of government above village level consisting about 100-150 villages). All the key office bearers in ICOs become members of the CLO. The CLO develops a plan incorporating all the interventions requested by the ICOs. Hence a CLO plan mostly concerns mobilisation of external resources that are required by the member organisations. This plan is aimed at activities of a more political nature.

When working out the CLO plan, the ICO members need to have a clear picture of what they can achieve using their own resources. They identify areas which need wider outside support in order to facilitate their planned activities. For example: the groups and ICOs can manage loans to members up to a certain level. The CLO plan will be about getting larger sums of credit to members through different means. Another example involves training on different aspects of farming. Training on traditional farming can be handled at village level, and is therefore reflected in the ICO plan. Training at higher level, or exchanging experiences with another village in a different region, would be subjects included in the CLO plan. At the same time external organisations, Government or Non-government, look for well-organised and formalised set-ups in order to channel their resources. A Cluster Level Organisation has this capacity.

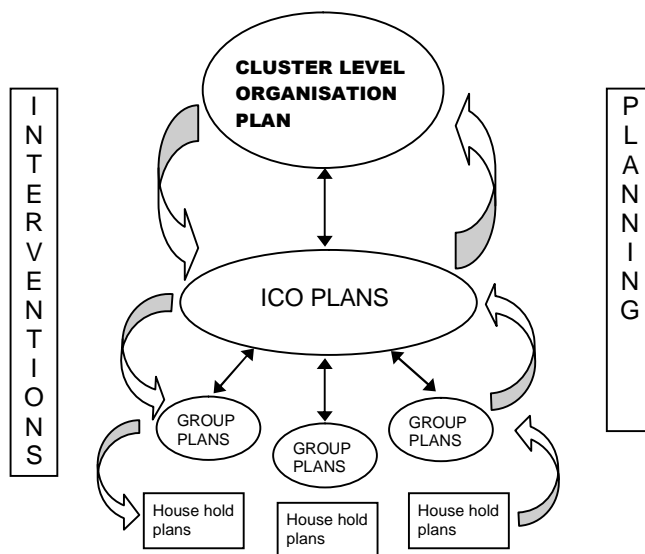
Step V Monitoring

As mentioned above, the planning process that starts from the household and goes up to cluster level is highly participatory and reflects wellbeing aspects as perceived by the communities. These aspirations are well connected with the participants' worldview, because the mobilisers' facilitation helps them to identify and highlight them in this way. The next important step is to monitor the participants' own activities using a participatory monitoring and evaluation system. FIOH provides participatory monitoring and evaluation training for the social mobiliser. This enables the mobiliser to help develop indicators for monitoring with the community members during the planning process. As not all community members are equally able to read and write, the monitoring is done using visual charts and tables, depending on what is most convenient to the particular group.

Monitoring the community members' own achievements is done by using indicators identified by the participants themselves. For instance, wellbeing is understood to mean having ample food at any given time at home. Ample food not only means having enough for family consumption. It also includes having enough for alms giving to the monks in the temple as well as for giving to the needy. (Both of these are ways of accumulating merit according to Buddhist teaching). The use of the traditional farming system in highlands is monitored by noting the plant and animal diversity. The greater the diversity, the less the farming practices have harmed any living creature. Simple systems of

monitoring charts are used to monitor progress. Groups as well as higher-level organisations monitor their own progress continuously in monthly meetings.

Planning process – CLO



6. Planning and implementation at FIOH level

The plans prepared by FIOH in order to support and facilitate the endogenous development process initiated by communities are based on the ICO and CLO plans. Once the ICO and CLO plans are ready, it is possible to identify intervention needs of the communities. FIOH's annual planning involves the amalgamation of the financially and otherwise feasible interventions that have been requested by CLOs. CLOs and ICOs consider FIOH as one of the many external organisations that they have through which to mobilise support. FIOH has used the emergence of the CLOs to phase out its interventions, gradually handing over the responsibilities to CLOs.

Box 2. Example of how the social mobilisation process facilitates ED

Organic farming/nature farming: One of the main constraints that both highland and lowland farmers face today is their dependence on external inputs caused by the green revolution. The problems now prevalent are lack of soil fertility, extensive pest damage and the high cost of fertiliser and pesticides.

Farmers know that the present practices are not wholesome. They experience that these practices go against their worldview and the five precepts of Buddhism (refrain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants). But these modern agriculture practices compel them to use pesticides in order to kill the 'pests'.

Not only are modern farming practices uneconomic, they also go against their worldviews. The mobiliser raises these issues so that they become the subject of discussions, with individual farmers as well as in the group discussions.

The discussions continue and the farmers are encouraged to discuss the traditional farming systems that existed before the introduction of the green revolution. As a result of this analysis and interventions by the mobiliser, there are a large number of farmers who have revitalised their traditional farming practices.

Traditional farming practices (also known as natural farming) are derived from the worldview of the communities, but they also in turn support this worldview. Traditional farming used to be based on the fundamental Buddhist concepts of *ahimsa* (doing no harm) and *mettha* (loving kindness). Under this system there are no 'pests'. All creatures have a function in nature. Farmers used astrology and religious practices to safeguard the crops. They also used nature-friendly techniques to chase away these creatures. Working with nature made the system sustainable.

Revitalisation of the traditional farming practices involved re-visiting the social/cultural system in which they had been nurtured. Although it is not possible to bring back exactly the same cultural system into the present, certain elements could be adapted. Collective action was a pre-condition to most cultural practices and the group formation and organisational formation has contributed to revitalising certain elements of the collectivity that existed in the past.

Farming as a collective practice was re-started with the group system. Most cultural practices that were part of farming have now been revitalised. The spiritual aspects and the practices associated with farming guarded crops and people through the practice of loving kindness and non-harming actions.

FIOH's experience shows that with this type of intervention by the mobiliser, farmers have been able to revitalise traditional practices. FIOH has facilitated this process by providing certain kinds of training and providing opportunities to learn about some farming methods from other similar farming communities.

The group- and village-level forums provide a solid platform for implementing traditional agriculture. Traditional farming is a collective system. As the mobiliser facilitates collective activities, the organisational capacity needed for re-introducing traditional practices is revitalised.

Conclusion

Social mobilisation is an approach for facilitating change in a particular community. The methodology exists and is used by different organisations as a development intervention strategy.

The attitudes, knowledge and the facilitation skills of the mobiliser are crucial for the effectiveness of the approach. Social mobilisation has long been used for many types of development intervention, and FIOH also used this as its main intervention methodology.

Under the COMPAS programme, FIOH underwent a change and started to adopt a holistic approach (including material, social *and* spiritual aspects) to its development work. This change was made possible by providing the mobilisers with the appropriate training. The success of the intervention depends entirely on the attitudes and skills of the social mobiliser and the capacity of the organisations to provide the appropriate skills to the mobilisers. The most important skills and attitudes are the capacity to work in the community through participatory intervention and the respect for traditional knowledge and practices.

Further information

FIOH

Future in Our Hands – FIOH – is one of the leading NGOs in the COMPAS Sri Lanka network. FIOH is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation registered in Sri Lanka, working to assist the poor communities to find solutions to their social, economic, political and environmental problems, through organised action at district, provincial, national, regional and global levels.

FIOH

325 A/3

Kanupelella, Badulla

SRI LANKA

Contact person: J. Kahandawa

Tel: +94 81 4470953 / +94 777844797 (Mobile)

Fax: +94 55 2223496

E-mail: kahandawa@gmail.com

Website: www.futureinourhands.org

CIKOD

The Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development – CIKOD – is a non-governmental organisation based in Ghana. Its main mission is to develop methodologies for the strengthening of traditional authorities and civil society organisations to facilitate sustainable grassroots organisational development that gives a voice to the poor and vulnerable rural families.

CIKOD

P.O. Box CT 4131

Cantonment

Accra

GHANA

Contact person: Bern Guri

Tel: +233 21 518045 / +233 21 506352

E-mail: byguri@yahoo.com

Website: www.cikodgh.org

AGRUCO

Agroecology University Cochabamba – AGRUCO – is a programme of the Universidad Mayor San Simon in Cochabamba. It is a centre of excellence on Agroecology and revalorisation of endogenous knowledge of indigenous peoples in the Andes and Latin America.

AGRUCO

Av. Petrolera km 4-1/2

Casilla 3392