Strengthening Civil Society Leadership and Fellowship in Asia

Vol. 3
Strengthening Civil Society
Leadership and Fellowship in Asia
Foreword 1

   Invoking Memory and Reflection 5
   Developing a Framework for Asian NGO Leadership 23
   Solidarity built on hope: Dialogue with Cambodian NGO leaders 33

Part II: Leadership Framework and Tools 39
   Emerging Asian NGO Leadership Framework 41
     Definition, Symbols and Vision 43
     Asian Leadership Values 48
     Qualities of Asian NGO Leaders 50
     Nurturing Asian Leadership 65
     Code of Conduct 69
     Leadership Performance Monitoring Tool 73

Directory of Participants 79
forever we will be grateful to the sustained commitment of men and women NGO leaders in Asia who have joined hands with us in AsiaDHRRA to respond to the need for a transforming leadership among NGOs in the region for the past three years. While new partners and friends have enriched our process during the 3rd Asian Leaders’ Dialogue (ALD 3), a core of the participants has been with us from the beginning of this initiative. Once again, the humility and openness of these people to find time to reflect on their ways and thinking as leaders, and to freely share these and their perspectives to fellow leaders have made ALD 3 a very enriching learning opportunity.

The ALD 3 is a culmination of the three-year Asian Leaders’ Dialogue program of AsiaDHRRA. We took the imperative to build on past gains and ensured that the link between the first dialogue process and the second and third was clearly communicated and understood by everyone. This time we aimed for an emerging Asian NGO Leadership Framework consensually shared by the participants. This publication contains this framework that could serve as guidepost to fellow advocates of leadership development across generations, in our different communities in the region.

We are also happy to share in this book the beginning of an Asian NGO Leaders Code of Ethics which could be promoted and used by development leaders genuinely dedicated to the
cause of empowering grassroots communities and their organizations. There are other tools and tips that come with this publication. We hope you will find all these useful in your organizations and in your own search for meaning, as a leader -- in whatever you do.

The culminating dialogue ended up with a planning session with very concrete suggestions on how the ALD initiative could be sustained at the regional level and started in-country. We have great plans, but all these will depend on the continuing passion and creativity of people who believe in this cause. The same people, together with fellow believers, who made the three-year journey a very meaningful experience for all of us.

Our sincere thanks to Open Society Institute – Partnership Beyond Borders for its support to the project, to Angelita Gregorio-Medel, our beloved facilitator and mentor over the years on leadership development, to all our leaders for their constant support, to Lany Rebagay for ably coordinating the program, together with Teresa Lingan-Debuque, our very able documenter and the ever-inspiring secretariat team. Our deep appreciation to CEDAC, SILAKA and CamboDHRRA for their excellent hosting of ALD 3. And last but not least, our special thanks to Dr. Mary Racelis, constant friend of the DHRRA network, for generously agreeing to be a reader of this publication.

Marlene D. Ramirez
Part 1

Proceedings of the Third Asian Rural NGO Leaders Dialogue
The Third Asian Rural NGO Leaders Dialogue (ALD3) started with a “meditative/prayer walk” around a “centerpiece” stitched together from materials from the past ALDs, including visual renditions of workshop discussion, pieces of cloth symbolizing the countries represented at the dialogue, and paper patterns of participants’ feet. This ceremony was intended to “invoke the energies” within each participant and to promote reflection on the two earlier ALDs and related events.

Representing CEDAC, the Cambodian host organization, Ouch Ngak expressed his appreciation for the ALD for promoting solidarity among Asian NGO leaders. He hoped that the ALD would continue to support sub-regional cooperation through the sharing of experiences.

AsiaDHRRA chairperson Soetrisno Kusomohadi said that the current dialogue marks the end of the three-year Leadership Development Program (LDP) of AsiaDHRRA and signals the start of another phase which would focus on “more operational concerns of leadership development”.

Invoking memory and reflection
As a review of what had gone before, AsiaDHRRA secretary general Marlene Ramirez recalled the objectives of the LDP. Anchored on “musyawarah” (Dialogue of Life), the program sought to deepen the knowledge and skills of leaders in relation to global issues and concerns; develop knowledge and skills in leadership models; popularize rural development issues, policies and cooperation; and strengthen AsiaDHRRA’s capacity and role in championing rural development issues, for the benefit of Asia’s farmers. The outcome of all these initiatives is a community of leaders committed to the pursuit of continued Asian NGO leadership development.

At the First ALD held in October 2003 in Cyberjaya, Malaysia, 36 NGO leaders resolved to educate themselves in the negative effects of globalization and World Trade Organization (WTO) policies, and to thus arm themselves in analyzing the economic impact on poorer nations, advocating for just and fair treatment for developing country farmers, and in getting their respective governments to reassess their membership in the WTO. The Second ALD held in March 2005 in Chonburi, Thailand resumed discussions on globalization, with emphasis on identifying mechanisms to facilitate civil society engagements with government trade negotiators and thereby ensure fairer agricultural trade. At the same time, the 28 participating leaders exchanged “leadership stories” highlighting concepts and principles of Asian leadership which would eventually form the basis for an “emerging leadership development framework”.
The Third ALD in Siem Reap, Cambodia aims to get consensus among the 30 participating leaders on the broad outlines of a leadership development framework, as well as to identify mechanisms that could sustain and direct efforts in leadership development at the local and regional levels. It is also intended to promote further reflection on how Asian NGO leadership can best respond to the challenges of globalization—what Marlene referred to as “reflective practice”.

Dialogue facilitator Dr. Angelita Gregorio-Medel called attention to the “centerpiece” in the middle of the room—a composite of reflections from ALD 1 and 2—and asked the participants what they recalled most strongly about the past two dialogues. Prominent in many participants’ recollection was the issue of globalization induced cultural homogenization—aptly symbolized by “fast food”—and a harking back to “slow food,” or greater cultural diversity and more lifestyle choices.

One participant thought that the ALD facilitated a journey towards self-awareness and solidarity-building. Yet, an intermediate step to this, as Dr. Medel reminded everyone, was “blacksmithing,” which consists of “testing [long-held] truths against those of the larger community; stake-making; [laying bare] our hidden fears; and struggling to understand what leadership means in the world we are [trying to establish].”

A video presentation designed to jog memories of the two ALDs and the WTO campaign in Hong Kong in December 2005 followed. Dr. Medel then asked the participants if their views of globalization had changed since the first ALD and how their awareness of the pros and cons of globalization had affected their leadership practice.
Of limitless skies and fast-moving trains

Opinions of globalization had not changed much in the three years since the Cyber Jaya dialogue. It was still regarded as an unwelcome imposition, whose ill effects on Asia’s poor had to be urgently addressed. In the minds of the participants, globalization was associated with various forms of disruption, dislocation, and distress:

“Lured by the potential revenues from sugar exports, my Government borrowed money from the banks to build 48 sugarmills, pledging the entire sugar harvest as guarantee for the loans. When the expected windfall did not materialize, the Government defaulted on its loans and ordered the farmers to grow other crops. What about all those sugarmills?

After that, the Government turned its attention to exporting shrimp. It persuaded thousands of rice farmers to convert their rice fields into shrimp farms. Then a typhoon struck and washed away all the shrimp farms.”

“When I think of globalization, I think of its effects on education. My village [in West Sumatra] has a madrasah, the traditional Muslim school. The move to standardize the educational system in my country has forced some radical changes on the madrasah. It is now obliged to assign a lot of homework such that the children, who used to be able to sleep over at the madrasah, now have to rush home to do their assignments. The cost of education has also increased. Madrasahs provide an education that is equivalent to that of standard schools but because they do not confer a formal certificate of completion that the formal job sector recognizes, madrasah graduates have a difficult time finding jobs.”
“Globalization, to me, has to do with the trafficking of women.”

“People are fixated with big shopping complexes, which they consider as a sign of development.”

“When I went to Vietnam, I expected to see an underdeveloped country. Yet, I heard the latest [American] music playing in taxicabs.”

Notwithstanding such negative associations, there was general agreement among the participants that globalization is an inexorable process. Its reach is as vast as the sky and its momentum that of a fast-moving train. It cannot be stopped, but its negative effects could—and should—be mitigated with sufficient preparation.

Various experiences and strategies in trying to deal with the reality of globalization were shared.

**Going back to basics.** A “Down with Globalization” stance was generally regarded as unproductive. Rejecting globalization without doing anything about is like taking a short-cut, said one participant. Rather, NGOs should take up the task of strengthening communities. This necessitates a shift of emphasis back to community organizing. “A nation,” she said, “is only as strong as the individuals that comprise it. We need strong individuals who can assume responsibility.”

NGOs should resume their traditional role as educators. The fact that communities are in such a mess today is probably because NGOs are not doing their job.
Defending the homefront. One participant thought that the answer lay in protective domestic policies and local safety nets. He pointed to a government regulation in his country which obliges supermarkets to source 30 per cent of their stock from local producers. The ‘90s adage, “Think globally, act locally,” remains relevant in these circumstances, he said, adding that while it is impossible to protect everyone [from the negative impact of globalization], we should try to protect the few that we can.

A village in Thailand composed of 51 families has gone back to a barter system of procuring goods and services, apparently to regain some control over their lives. This system worked so well that the Government tried to put a stop to it. The villagers concerned justified their “experiment” by saying that it is traditional Buddhist practice. This case demonstrates that the battle against globalization is being waged in various forms at the community level.

Eschewing exogenous development in favor of the endogenous kind, and promoting local resources and skills over foreign ways of thinking and doing things, is another form of local resistance to globalization. A concrete example of this is the attempt to localize food systems—prioritizing domestic food self-sufficiency, shifting from monocropping to more diversified farming methods, etc., which all have the effect of strengthening the community.

Girding for battle. Continued engagement with government, especially in policy formulation, was regarded as crucial. Unfortunately, NGOs that take on this task either do not possess the kind of specialization required or else do not have a firm grasp of the implications of policies they are lobbying for. One participant recalled being torn between producer groups trying to gain access to foreign markets and fisherfolk organizations advocating withdrawal from the WTO. Or else, having secured an extension of the quota system in favor of rice producers, his organization had
to contend with the impact on another sector of the resulting influx of chicken imports. He said he felt ill-equipped to deal with the complexity of policy choices.

Another form of preparation is maximizing the advantages offered by tools like information and communication technologies (ICTs). NGOs should also try to attract highly skilled people—who can get the job done—by offering competitive salaries. “To be a leader,” it was argued, “we must adapt to the market.”

Thirdly, NGO leaders must continue to educate themselves in issues arising from globalization by linkaging with other stakeholders and promoting information exchange.

**Walking the talk.** NGOs that profess to represent the interests of the poor must strive to keep their lifestyles consistent with their message. The gulf between the incomes of many NGO leaders and those of the poor was considered as a major sticking point: “How can we speak on their [the poor’s] behalf when none of us can claim to be poor,” challenged one participant. This provoked some debate. Another participant declared that he has no qualms about “being the most expensive leader,” and that as long as he gets the job done, his conscience was clear.

Between these conflicting positions was an alternate point of view which would require NGO leaders to show much more empathy with the poor. This means that while NGO leaders are not being asked to impoverish themselves, they should at least try to be “one with the poor” by not flashing their Balis or Guccis, and otherwise sporting incongruous lifestyles.

**NGO leaders should show much more empathy with the poor.** This means that while they are not being asked to impoverish themselves, they should at least try to be “one with the poor” by not flashing their Balis or Guccis, and otherwise sporting conspicuous lifestyles.
**Going against the grain.** NGOs should take a critical look at conventional measures of development, or even happiness. By classifying people as poor—and therefore inadequate—on the basis of economic indicators alone, they may be reinforcing current lopsided notions of personal contentment. Bhutan’s concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) offers a more holistic measure for human development and progress in society. Thus, a poor person (by conventional measures) may actually be much better-off according to GNH standards. NGOs should strive to promote similar alternative paradigms as a counterpoint to the valuation system that underpins the “modern” world.

At the same time, a number of participants thought that there could also be a positive side to globalization. Globalization, it was argued, has “brought about a civil society era” and “benefited formerly closed economies”. Moreover, the challenges of globalization, it was said, could also be viewed as opportunities.

**Gross National Happiness** is a concept of development adopted by the people of Bhutan that puts the individual at the center of all development efforts and regards economic growth merely as a means to achieving a higher end. It recognizes the need to develop the economy and to progress technically, medically and scientifically, but seeks to maintain the country’s rich cultural heritage, its traditional values and the natural resource base. The thinking behind this concept is exemplified in the following statement of a Bhutanese official:

“An individual’s quest for happiness is the most precious endeavor. It follows then that society’s ideal of governance and polity should promote this endeavor. The founders of Bhutan dedicated the particular system of government in Bhutan to promoting certain visions of enlightenment and happiness of the citizens. The country itself was perceived as a kind of mandala, a place where man could transform their infrastructure, polity and social organizations to create gross national happiness.” - H. E. Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley, Chair of the Council of Ministers, Royal Government of Bhutan.

*From: Turkelboom, F; Gurung T.R. and Dukpa, D. Role and Use of Common Property Resources (CPRs) in Bhutan Himalayas: Between Tradition and Globalisation, A Paper Presented at the Inaugural Pacific Regional Meeting for Common Property Resources at Brisbane, Sept. 2-4, 2001*
Agenda and dilemmas

The participants were then formed into small groups and asked to reflect on the following questions: *What is your leadership agenda for 2006?; What are the dilemmas you want to address?* Their reflections were characterized by a number of distinct themes, as follows:

**Group 1: Ouch Ngak, Esther, JB, Bunjung**

*“Achieving Results/objectives While Keeping A Balance Between Work And Family Concerns”*

**Agenda for 2006**

- “Self” (self-reflection);
- “Family” (values formation, balance between work and family concerns, gender relationships, and shared responsibility and decision-making);
- “Organization” (achievement of objectives, building stronger organizations, making organizations credible and acceptable to people and government); and
- “Community/society” (responding to the needs of country and community, building sustainable and self-reliant communities, overcoming crises, networking and collaborative partnerships).
External Dilemmas
• Trade liberalization;
• Political crises;
Internal Dilemmas
• Uneven or weak capacities;
• Competing family concerns; and Inadequate resources.

Referring to Phildhrrra logo, with drawing of a house beside it, JB would like to divide his time between work and family, and as much as possible keep his weekends work-free.

Referring to clusters of savings groups, Ouch Ngak dreams of building clusters of savings groups (SGs) at the commune level and then federating them at district and provincial levels.

Referring to woman with rays emanating from her “center”, Bunjung aims to “understand other people, help serve the poor, continue working with rural people, link with others from different sectors of society to jointly fight for justice and the elimination of poverty, and live simply and peacefully.”

Referring to drawing of a woman being pulled in opposite directions, the AFA logo, and drawing of a home and family, Ester would expand her professional involvement beyond work at AsiaDHRRA towards helping an indigenous group to lay claim to their ancestral land. She also wants to help build the autonomy of the Asian Federation of Farmers in Asia (AFA). At the same time, she as well as her husband intends to maximize the use of communication technologies, such as email and the internet, to keep in touch with their children despite their busy schedules.
Group 2: Nana, Tomo, Rezki, Phalla
“Organizing People And Getting Them To Work Together Using Available Resources”

The illustrations describe the process of moving from an unorganized state to an organized one. The materials and resources (represented by the circle and the pieces of wood) may be available, but they need a leader to put them to work. The spider’s web suggests that some problems or issues are “hidden” and must be uncovered because they are also related to each other. The cartwheel, which holds together the round framework and the pieces of wood (in the first drawing), without the use of nails, represents the leader’s flexibility and role of moving things forward.

The other illustration referring to a teaching situation symbolizes Tomo’s aspirations for ARI, her organization. She wants ARI to become a leader in promoting organic farming. Yet, she is frustrated by the gap between theory and practice as a result of unsupportive mainstream Japanese practices and beliefs. She also hopes to better articulate her goals by improving her drawing skills.
Group 3: Sil Vineth, Lorna, Bambang, Lany, Miren
“Balancing Different Dimensions Of Work”

Bambang says he is pulled in two directions: on the one hand, he is being urged to leave his organization and work directly with communities; on the other hand, his own organization still needs his leadership. He emphasizes good governance, a prerequisite to which is organization development. Lorna aspires to balance work and family. She also wants to get her children more involved in social development work. Sil Vineth wishes to promote NGO synergy through mentoring, as well as the sharing of knowledge to a wider audience through mainstream communication media. Referring to the candle, Lany would like to rekindle her commitment and passion for her work. At the same time, she wants to pursue further studies, so she will have to strike a balance between work and school. Miren is concerned with keeping an open mind, maintaining harmonious relationships with the people she works with, and overcoming her difficulty with the English language. She also wants to have a child, but wonders how she would divide her attention between her child and her computer.
Group 4: Ange, Rie, Dr. Toan, Soetrisno
“Facilitation”

The members have a common leadership agenda: to become a good facilitator between organizations/networks and the communities they serve. As facilitators, they expect to address the need to increase capacity; build consensus; and serve as a bridge between organizations.

They are like the soil, absorbing inputs and conveying these to the tree for its growth and development. Dr. Toan in particular likens his organization VietDHARRA to the trunk of a tree which serves as a bridge between its 18 members and its seven pilot sites. They can also be compared to a wheel, which links and provides leadership for various concerns, like membership, policy implementation/formulation, and resource mobilization.

The dilemmas they anticipate are the weak capacity of organizations, the challenges of consensus-building, and a tendency to get bogged down in superficial issues without getting at the root of a problem.
Group 5: Marl, Gabriel, Sara, Thida
“Good Governance”

The members see themselves as journeying towards good governance (referring to drawing of a boat), but concede that their boat is small; that donors won’t always be around to support them. All the same, they have no intention of going under in mid-stream.

The other elements in the drawing represent prerequisites to good governance, which the group would like to promote. The sun symbolizes enlightenment and empowerment through education, especially of women, and other poor and marginalized sectors. The trouble is, once one problem is solved, another quickly takes its place.

The drawing of a woman is emblematic of all Cambodian women, who are often denied their rights, and who are leaving the country in droves in search of jobs elsewhere. The agenda as far as they are concerned is to get the Government to secure women’s entitlements. Unfortunately, the cultural barriers to women’s greater involvement in society remain formidable. The DHARRA logo as kite represents the challenge of sustaining the link to the grassroots amidst leadership changes in the DHRRAs. This also points to the dilemma of rapidly changing development needs and the difficulty of getting grassroots communities to grow together.
The lifecycle of the seed points to the need to develop second-liners so that leaders can eventually bow out and let others take over. It also illustrates the importance of passing on leaders’ passion and empathy to their own children.

**Group 6: Wenchi, Tess, Muthu**

*“Self-reliance”*

Muthu says that a leader must also set goals for him/herself that are independent of his/her other goals. Wenchi points out that the seed in the blue waters emerges after it has absorbed enough water. In the same way, leaders must draw resources from outside in order that they may grow.

Tess argues that in order to have an impact at the national level, organizations must broaden its constituency to include consumers, producers, the government, etc. They must strive to create an impact wherever they can.

Yet, it is just as important to secure individual fulfillment, if not by traditional economic indicators then by alternative, more holistic measures, such as Gross National Happiness.
Rituals of Reflection

What is Reflective Practice?

Dr. Medel oriented the participants on what it means to engage in “reflective practice”. There are two kinds of reflection-- Reflection-in-action, and Reflection-on-action.

“Reflection-in-action” describes the process of doing something and being simultaneously aware of doing it: like having a “hawk hover over your every move, its sharp eyes missing nothing”.

“Reflection-on-action” refers to the reflecting one does after the event, for example, thinking through an incident or discussing it with a colleague, a supervisor, or a friend. This kind of reflection is what is involved in “reflective practice”.

Reflection and its value can be hugely enhanced by a greater understanding of the process. It can help individuals to come up with the most important questions, and to formulate and respond to their own learning needs.

A principle of reflective practice is: “Your knowing is in your doing.” Among skilled practitioners, knowledge and expertise are embedded in their practice. And this is just how it should be. However, there are advantages to making some of these implicit understandings and skills explicit. First, it explains and clarifies what one knows so that s/he can develop it more effectively. Secondly, it becomes easier to pass on such knowledge and skills to colleagues and partners.

Reflection has a problem-solving function:

• This happens when we think about and sort out difficulties, problems, and errors.
• Whenever we get anxious, frightened, or when things go wrong, we are unable to learn from the disaster or difficulty.
• Furthermore that problematic memory can become painfully lodged in the mind - eroding self-confidence, or causing further problems, like a cancer.
The Learning Cycle starts with an experience. After the event we bring it to the forefront of our mind (reliving the feelings, ideas, behaviors associated with it). This process of in-depth reflection leads us to generalize and draw lessons. We then test out these insights and abstractions in practice. Then the whole cycle begins again, when we reflect on new concrete practices and experiences.

Reflective practice is characterized by three paradoxes:

1. **In order to acquire confidence you have to let go of certainty.**
   - The confident, effective practitioner is the one who is able to respond flexibly and creatively to a range of influences, needs and wants of partners/colleagues, unforeseen events, and other forces.
   - A practitioner who knows the right answers all the time is bound to be wrong.
   - Sharing about, and talking through, the most vital concerns of your work life within a trusted and trusting environment will help you to let go of the security blanket of false certainty.

2. **Beginning to act when you don’t know how you should act.**
   - The strange thing about reflection-on-practice is that before we begin doing it we have no idea what we would be focusing on, and where the process would lead us. Once you know something about reflective practice you are able to work within this uncertainty—to trust the process, and openly explore whatever needs to be explored.

3. **Looking for something when you don’t know what it is.**
   - This is both reflection-in-, as well as reflection-on-action.
   - You are a skilled, experienced practitioner, and you can trust that you are. That wise,
strong inner person in you knows how to do it - trust and respect that person. This is it which you know how to do is both:
- Your practice, and
- Your reflection-on-practice

• When you are asked to share and reflect upon the most vital episode in your working life, or a time when you learned something really important, you will say or write the right thing, and valuable thoughts, ideas, feelings, and behavior will result.
• But you will have no idea what these are when you begin on the reflective process. This is part of the nature of reflective practice.

Reflective practice hinges on:
• Respect and faith in oneself
• Trust in the reflective process; and
• Uncertainty, which is vital to both learning and change

Anyone who aspires to become a reflective practitioner must enjoy the experience. S/he must give her/himself the gift of some reflective space. Rather than answers, s/he must expect more questions leading to yet more dynamic questions. Dr. Medel provided a list of questions to guide the reflection process, as follows:

• What did you wish (want) to acquire or learn?
• What did you actually acquire or learn?
• What is the gap /difference between what you want and what you acquired?
• What are the points of action? What do you need to do now?
• What are the things you should avoid doing?

A reflective practitioner, said Dr. Medel, is a reflective learner. Quoting David Winter, she added, “We do not store experience as data, like a computer does. We story it.”
Developing a framework for Asian NGO leadership

Following a review of the previous day’s proceedings, Lany Rebagay, AsiaDHRRA program officer, presented the broad outlines of an “Emerging Asian Development Framework” (See Annex 1). This document was drawn from three major sources: insights and discussions from the past two dialogues; the leadership stories of 14 ALD participants; and case studies and best practice in the region. This framework features sections on:

- Definition, symbols and vision of Asian NGO leadership
- Sources of values of Asian NGO leaders
- Qualities of an Asian NGO leader
- Roots of involvement in social development work
- Dilemmas and issues faced by Asian NGO leaders
- Proposed mechanisms and strategies for nurturing Asian NGO leadership

This document started a debate on which values are uniquely Asian, and whether such values should be more appropriately ascribed to religion or to a faith base.
**Uniquely Asian**

The Leadership Framework identified 19 values of Asian NGO leaders derived variously from religious teaching, social movements, and Asian cultures, as follows:

Leadership values rooted in religious teaching
- 1. Honesty
- 2. Sacrifice
- 3. Responsibility
- 4. Sympathy
- 5. Trustworthiness
- 6. Love of Neighbor/Service/Social mission
- 7. Justice
- 8. Excellence
- 9. Dedication to duty

Leadership values rooted in social movement
- 1. Empowerment/Democratic participation
- 2. Gender sensitivity
- 3. Peace
- 4. Respect for diversity/pluralism
- 5. Sustainability
- 6. Equity
- 7. Freedom

Leadership values rooted in “Asian Culture”
- 1. “Musyawarah” – dialogue of life/non-confrontational engagement
- 2. Sense of family/hospitality/fellowship/solidarity
- 3. Integrity – sense of “hiya” or shame for offensive behavior
The participants had reservations about ascribing the foregoing to Asian NGO leaders, as these qualities (except those rooted in Asian cultures) are more universal than uniquely Asian. There was general agreement on the need to identify more of the latter kind. One by one, participants pointed out values drawn from the various religions, like Buddhism, spurring another debate.

**Faith vs. Religion**

Many were wary of ascribing values to particular religions for fear of causing more division than already exists, for example, between Muslims and Christians. Besides, it was argued, all religions promote the same values, albeit perhaps to varying degrees of emphasis.

However, one participant would rather talk openly about religion. She said that few conflicts in history have been sparked by religious differences as much as by people manipulating religion to serve their own ends.

Bucking the consensus to drop the subject of religion entirely, another participant pointed out that, having come out of two dialogues, the values ascribed to religion, or faith, are evidently of great importance to the participants who identified them. However, she proposed to ascribe such values to a faith-base, as opposed to crediting them to institutions of a belief system that the term “religion” generally connotes.
Affirming a Leadership Framework

The participants then broke up into workshop groups to review the framework more closely and propose changes to it. The result of the workshop discussions is presented below.

Group 1: Dinky, Bambang, Rie, Sil Vineth, Lorna
Group 2: Dr. Toan, Thida, Ange, Gabriel
Group 3: Sara, Soetrisno, Tess, Lany
Group 4: Muthu, Bunjung, Marl, Ngak
Group 5: Sung Lee, Tomo, Nana
Group 6: JB, Miren, Wenchi, Rezki

On the Definition Of Leadership

Group 1
- Include as underlying motivation of leadership: service to people
- Re-state by integrating 3 aspects of leadership
- Make “commitment” central to the definition

Group 2
- Re-state definition as: “Leadership is the capacity to envision and to activate it based on the real understanding of the present needs, culture and behaviors of the people/society and being able to draw and mobilize resources and people to act collectively towards positive changes that promote the common good and happiness
- Suggest moving the last bullet of Page 4 ahead of the first one on the same page
- The leaders should have “good understanding (not necessarily expertise) of the process of organization and of the steps to achieving the organization’s objectives
Group 3
Enrich the definition by adding:
1. “Leadership refers not only to the mobilization of capacities but also to developing new leaders, specifically by creating opportunities for people to rise to leadership;
2. Leadership implies much more than management: leaders are managers but not all managers are leaders
3. Leaders are a guide, and provide a “gentle breeze push”

Group 4
Add:
• Leadership means encouraging people. It is process-oriented and promotes a win-win situation/harmony/happy endings

Group 5
• Sees no distinction between Asian and Western leadership but would add: “Leadership promotes positive change, i.e., helps identify the vision and direction of the organization

Values Of A Leader

Group 1
• Distinguish between faith-based and humanitarian values
• Add to list:
  1. consensus-building; participatory process
  2. “stubborn persistence
**Group 2**
- Re-word “values based on religion” as “faith-based values”
- Subsume “gender sensitivity” under human sensitivity
- Add to the list:
  1. Humility;
  2. Concern for the common good;
  3. Concern, practice and respect for traditions

**Group 3**
Add to list:
1. sympathy + empathy
2. trustworthiness + consistency
3. gender sensitivity to be subsumed under human sensitivity (which includes issues of age, color, religion/beliefs, region, etc.)

**Group 4**
- No input

**Group 5**
Add to the list:
1. flexible; must be sensitive to the power dynamics in the group;
2. (To the list of Asian values): dedication to duty and sacrifice (which is not to say that these are not Western or universal values but that Asian leaders prize it to a greater degree); ability to empathize with poor/common people

**Group 6**
- Remove categories of values, but there may be need to identify the value’s source
- Emphasize the distinctly Asian values, e.g., sympathy, sacrifice, family solidarity
- “Peace”should include the importance of saving face and conflict resolution
- Gender sensitivity should be subsumed under human sensitivity
On the Qualities Of A Leader

Group 1
Add to list:
1. Able to communicate to different stakeholders: from the farmer to the highest official
2. Fair and just
3. Committed to practice action-reflection
4. Sensitive and responsive to others

Group 2
• Add to list:
  1. Visionary (able to foresee and manage risks, rather than being “willing to take on a challenge even when there is no solution in sight”)
  2. Focused (knows how to prioritize rather than “does not spread self too thinly”; and invests on ‘all the possibilities’, rather than merely expertise)
  3. Persevering in the face of difficulties
• (In value #4—“Decisive”)—Take out the phrase “able to take risks”
• (In value #6—“Sensitive and responsive to needs”) replace “rootedness” with “relevance”
• (In value #8—“Inclusive”) remove “exudes charisma”
• Replace “Gender Sensitive” with “Human Sensitive” and include such dimensions as recognizing people’s need for a clean and safe environment; preservation of natural resources
• (In value #11—Practices action-reflection): add “willingness” to recognize mistakes and make amends
Group 3
Add to list:
1. sympathy + empathy
2. trustworthiness + consistency
3. gender sensitivity to be subsumed under human sensitivity (which includes issues of age, color, religion/beliefs, region, etc.)

Group 4
- Add to list:
  1. Generous;
  2. Prioritizes relationships;
  3. Patient; tolerant;
- 4. Forgiving

Group 5
- Add to the list:
  1. Open-minded;
  2. Flexible;
  3. Has high moral standards;
  4. Process-/people-oriented;
  5. Unconcerned with personal aggrandizement;
  6. (To Asian values): exercises great authority among members; artistic and makes use of traditional culture (dance, songs, etc.)

Group 6
- Gender sensitivity subsumed under human sensitivity
On Roots of Involvement in Social Development Work

**Group 2**
- Add “faith-based and positive social development movements”

**Group 5**
- Reflect the thought that Western leaders owe their status to their educational background, while Asian leaders trace their roots to personal experience or personal circumstances; the influence of family and respected mentors

On Strategies To Deal With Dilemmas And Issues

**Group 1**
- Personal level
  1. Build up a chest of memories evoking growth/change moments
  2. Work towards balancing work with family/personal concerns
- On Pioneer Leaders
  3. Create/build institutional mechanisms for sustainability
  4. Create a “pioneeering situation”
- On professionalism vs. volunteerism
  5. Bring in corporate/commercially oriented people into the organization
  6. Offer competitive salaries to attract the best people
  7. Nurture/ strengthen values of service/commitment/passion
- On financial sustainability
  8. Explore other funds sources
- On the socio-political environment
  9. Think local, act global
  10. Continue to engage government and other stakeholders
Group 6
- Identify the link among the 5 roots of involvement
- Include the community and other stakeholders in the framework

Sustaining Mechanisms

Group 1
- Affirmed the need for a “living code of ethics” to be developed by the group

Group 4
- Affirmed the ff:
  1. Proposed institutional mechanisms
  2. Need to take responsibility for one’s own growth ("Trust your hopes, not your fears")
  3. Need for a code of ethics: starting with the ALD community and being propagated at the local and regional levels

Group 5
- Affirmed the need for a performance monitoring instrument:
  1. Should be based on quantitative measurement
  2. Development of this tool must be discussed between the leader and the members
  3. There should be pre- and post- monitoring
  4. Standards should be developed at AsiaDHRRA level
- Affirmed the need for a “Leadership Development Program” at AsiaDHRRA level
Moving forward

Following on the heels of this workshop discussion, Dr. Medel asked the participants to write down on a piece of paper one or two words which would describe their proposed concrete action and mechanism/s to push forward the agenda of Asian Leadership Development. Listed below are some of these suggestions:

Nana – “heart”
Bunjung – “solidarity”
Bambang – “good governance”
Wenchi – “networking with aboriginal groups”
Thida – “adapt ALD to national level among Cambodian NGOs”
Sung Lee – “online leadership development”
Sara – “networking and reaching out”
Sil Vineth – “ALD coherent actions”
Muthu – “annual dialogue for civil society leaders/social forum”
Marl – “develop ALD at country level to replicate gains”
JB – “local leadership stories to inspire 65 PhilDHRRRA leaders”
Rie – “going to the field/meeting people face-to-face”
Ange – “leadership dialogue with local organizations”
Tess – “think global, act local”
Dr. Toan – “facilitate the participation of people in the development process”
Ouch Ngak – “farmer leaders to join ALD”
Rezki – “making village-city miniature”
Gabriel – “peace building through dialogue, networking for fair trade and life”
Soetrisno – “continue ALD activity in sub-region/country”
Tomo – “value and beauty of musyawarah”
Mirren – “explain to WRF what I’ve learned”
Lorna – “financial sustainability”.

The participants, depending on the scale required by their individual proposals, were divided into two groups to formulate national and regional level action plans, respectively.

**Group 1-National Plans**
Members: Nana, JB, Tess, Sara, Ouch Ngak, Mirren, Tomo, Wenchi

- Gather leadership stories (PhilDHRRA, Lihok etc.);
- Conduct local dialogues (through CLD, etc.);
- Expand dialogue to include POs (farmers, IPs, women, etc);
- Share ALD to other forums (e.g. WRF);
- Use AsiaDHRRA bulletin to update action.

**Group 2-Regional Plans**
Members: Dinky, Marl, Bambang, Gabriel, Dr. Toan, Muthu, Sil Vineth, Rie, Soetrisno, Sung Lee

- Continue the annual ALD/CSO forum with thematic focus (e.g. governance, etc);
- Link –up with on-line leadership development tool volunteered by Dr. Sung lee;
- Revise the leadership development framework;
- Formulate a Code of Conduct for Asian NGO leaders;
- Develop tools to monitor leadership performance.

It was proposed that these plans be implemented according to a three-year timeframe.
Dialogue with Cambodian Leaders

A panel of Cambodian NGO leaders composed of Ouch Ngak, Sil Vineth, Thida, and Dr. Kang Chandararot, head of Economics Unit of Cambodia Institute of Development Study, provided a brief overview of Cambodia.

Politics. The following events highlight Cambodia's political history:

1863-1953: French colonial administration
1953: Declaration of independence under Prince Sihanouk
1954-1970: Cambodia under Prince Norodom Sihanouk
1970: Monarchy abolished; Gen. Lon Nol takes power
1966-1975: Cambodia under the Republican (right-wing) government of Gen. Nol
1975-1979: Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge (also referred to as “Democratic Kampuchea”)
1979: Khmer Rouge deposed by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam which installed a Communist regime in Cambodia;
Early ‘80s: Civil war
1989-91: UN-brokered peace efforts
1993: UN-sponsored elections and start of restoration of normalcy;
1993-1996: Cambodia under the People’s Republic of Kampuchea led by Heng Samrin and Hun Sen; guerrilla war by Khmer Rouge
Mid 1990s: Diminution of Khmer Rouge influence in Cambodia and reinstatement of King Sihanouk
1998: National elections; formation of a coalition government; surrender of remaining Khmer Rouge forces.

Today, Cambodia is a parliamentary democracy, with a multi-party system. The king holds only a titular position, with real power resting with the parliament.

**Economy.** Cambodia’s economy is characterized by monopolies. It suffers from the lack of a clear regulatory framework. Yet, on October 30, 2005, the country officially joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). As a result, it has had to pass laws and formulate policies to allow it to adapt to the new trade rules.

The country gives the appearance of a democracy, by virtue of its institutions, but power is monopolized by the executive branch of government. Since signing the Paris Peace Accords in 1992, foreign aid has poured into the country, fostering the development of the NGO sector. Previous to this, from 1985 to 1992, foreign NGOs had been involved in setting up local counterparts in Cambodia. Yet, notwithstanding such brisk NGO activity, the Government has not seen fit to pass a law specifically addressed to this sector.
NGO-Government relations. From 1993 to 2000, NGOs were registered under different government agencies. But since 1998, all associations have been registered under the Ministry of Interior. There are 1,100 to 1,200 registered NGOs in the country as of last count. Their number has been falling since 1995 however, probably as a result of the decline in funding. The Government tolerates the humanitarian activities of NGOs, but regards advocacy work with great suspicion. For their part, Cambodian NGOs are anyway disinclined to take up an advocacy role, preferring to stay “neutral”. Few issues have had the potential to get them to come together. That is, until July 1997, when fighting erupted in the capital following the ouster of first Prime Minister Prince Ranariddh from power. The peace march held a month later to commemorate the incident, and which was participated in by monks, nuns and laypersons, appeared to have stirred the traditionally apathetic Cambodians to a degree of political action.

The peace group that emerged in fact went on to advocate for peaceful elections in 1998, a full year later, despite repeated Government crackdown on its members’ activities. The group has since disbanded but it has nonetheless served its purpose of raising social awareness. Remnants of this peace group have gone on to engage in sectoral work, like preparing women to participate in the February 2007 commune elections.

The following are highlights from the dialogue between the participants and the Cambodian NGO panel:

**Comment (C):** We are already engaging in policy formulation. Sometimes we are successful, sometimes not. We failed for instance to get guaranteed quotas for women. We didn’t get the corruption law. But we did manage to get an anti-domestic violence law passed. But even this owed more to government’s need to meet its internationally agreed targets.

**Question (Q):** Are the international NGOs in Cambodia united?
Answer (A): They are not really in the forefront of advocacy. NGO Forum [in Cambodia] works in forestry and has been able to mobilize people to march to Phnom Penh to lobby officials. But even if they wanted to be more active in advocacy, they are limited by their status—they are foreigners and as such are not civil society organizations (CSOs). So one strategy they appear to have taken is to transform themselves into local organizations.

Q: How would you characterize the student movement in Cambodia?

A: Students generally join associations for practical reasons, not for altruistic ones, such as to benefit society in general. Besides, once students groups become politicized they tend not to live very long. Only pro-Government organizations survive. However, I think that survival in this case is more a function of the kind of leadership than the position taken by the organization.

A: Cambodian institutions were destroyed during the Khmer Rouge regime. Many educated people were either killed or escaped to other countries. Universities were very closely monitored. We tried to mobilize the students in 1998 but they were not ready. It takes a certain level of confidence that the Government would not shoot at them to get students to join mass actions. Another problem is that student elections, rather than being a politicizing exercise, have become a venue for job recruitment, thus blunting their potential for politicization.

Q: The challenge faced by Cambodian NGOs is much greater than what many of us have experienced. How are the social services being responded to? Before the United Nations came in, there was an aid embargo on Cambodia. What is the situation of people affected by the Khmer Rouge? An entire generation did not have the experience of a family during the reign of the Khmer Rouge. This bears on the student movement and the difficulty of politicizing young people. In this context, what role can NGOs play? What healing process is going on so a whole generation of leaders can emerge out of the past?
A: Health and education are provided by the government. In terms of psychological healing, there is some government support, but not nearly enough of it. NGOs look after victims of landmines. We cannot yet talk about healing; we are still too traumatized. Perhaps putting the Khmer Rouge on trial might usher in this healing process.

A: Almost all families in Cambodia were victims of the Khmer Rouge, so the Government feels that as we are all in the same situation, none of us can demand special attention. It is anyway impossible to say which group should be prioritized or attended to first. The rural poor suffered most from the war, but no reparation funds have been set aside for them. Eighty per cent of the budget goes on public administration.

C: This is why [Cambodian NGOs] operate under such challenging conditions. They are pioneers in trying to create an opening. As the gap between the rich and the poor increases, more social problems will emerge. Child prostitution for instance is rife in Cambodia. Victimization as a result of globalization is doubly evident here.

Q: What keeps you going in the face of your difficulties?

A: I think that you cannot help people to become better off unless they want to be helped. Most people here are content with having just enough to eat. We need to change that mindset. Even the students must be helped to see that their associations should contribute to changing society, and not just to serve their own interests.
A: Under the Communist regime we were slaves to the state. We did what the state wanted us to do. Later, under socialist rule, we deferred to the organization. Under a market economy, we are beginning to understand a little what it means to become self-reliant.

A: I tell people no one can solve the problem for them, and that we can only provide support.

A: I am still stubbornly positively engaged. CSOs will eventually form a common framework for the future development of Cambodia. We are not yet unanimous about our vision for the country. But time will come when we will be ready. I am optimistic about the new leaders, and about the collaboration with the private sector and the public sector. We are in the same boat after all. So we will either sink together or make it all the way to land in one piece.

**Coming Full Circle**

At the close of the Third ALD, the participants went around to give each other flowers, a hug, and other gestures of appreciation. The dialogue had ended, closing the circle on the first phase of the ALD, but also signalling the start of a next stage in the ever-turning cycle of musyawarah.
Part 2
Leadership Framework and Tools
The Asian NGO Leader’s Dialogue (ALD) started in 2003 as an expression of NGO leaders’ shared commitment to sustainable rural development. Participants are NGO leaders representing diverse cultures, ideas, and experiences, as well as different generations. Since it started, the ALD has provided a venue for dialogue and exchange among NGO leaders on issues relating to the exercise of leadership in pursuit of a just, prosperous and harmonious life in rural communities amidst the challenges of globalization.

This paper presents the broad outlines of an emerging Asian NGO leadership framework—AsiaDHRRA’s initial attempt to consolidate the insights generated out of the two rounds of leaders’ dialogue, along with personal accounts of Asian NGO leaders, and leadership best practice in the region. Because it draws heavily from the impressions and perspectives of a select group of leaders, this framework does not assume to represent the mindset of the full range of NGO leaders in Asia. It does however aim to define what it means to be an NGO leader in the region.
This framework is a work-in-progress. Aided by insights from other stories and accounts, we see it being further enriching our collective understanding of Asian NGO Leadership. Ultimately, we hope that this framework becomes a living document which inspires NGO leaders to look deeper into themselves and their experience, thus nurturing their commitment to building empowered, sustainable and happier communities in rural Asia.

**Asian NGO Leadership**

In a region as diverse as Asia, with its multi-cultural heritage, and country-specific political and economic set-ups, it is difficult to arrive at a common conception of anything, including that of NGO leadership. Nevertheless, there seems to be a common thread that runs through the experience of most Asian NGO leaders.

What makes this leadership framework “Asian” is the fact that the concepts captured in this document are voices of Asian NGO leaders. The leadership concepts they espouse affirm universal facets of leadership yet also reflect uniquely Asian elements which have emerged from the series of leadership dialogues, e.g. “Musyawarah”.

This section presents an array of symbols and images of leadership gleaned from the sharing of ALD participants which hopefully will go some way towards forming a picture of the Asian NGO leaders—her/his vision, principles, core values and qualities. For earlier generations of leaders, this characterization might resonate with their own experience and perceptions. For younger leaders, it might serve as a guide or inspiration in charting their own path to leadership.
Definition, Symbols and Vision

Leadership is an active catalytic response which draws out and mobilizes the capacities of people towards positive change that promotes the common good and happiness.

The soil symbolizes leadership to me because just as the soil absorbs and converts materials for the plant’s benefit, a leader provides opportunities for the growth and development of members. The soil doesn’t choose the plant but provides for all. – Soetrisno

I chose a round table because to me leadership is a function of analyzing a problem or situation and coming up with a solution through participatory processes - involving many people with diverse capacities. --- Rachel

I chose people as a symbol of solidarity and working together for the common good. --- Sil Vineth

I drew two happy faces side by side. The first one stands for my concept of leadership as something that generates goodness and happiness. The other happy face connotes that leadership can involve more than just one individual.--- Dulce

As such, leadership entails participatory and empowering processes catalyzed by a leader who is able to animate, inspire, challenge, influence, mobilize and draw people together to define what they want and move forward towards a shared goal.
Leadership means encouraging people. It is process-oriented and promotes a win-win situation/harmony and happy endings.

In addition, leadership refers not only to the mobilization of capacities but also to the development of new leaders, specifically by creating opportunities for people to rise to leadership.

*Water, represented by a river, is my symbol for leadership. Leadership, like water, has a clarifying effect. It clarifies the vision of the group and the means to get there together.*—Rezki

*Faces of men and women that are progressively becoming clearer represent my idea of leadership, as they symbolize the processes of self-reliance, participation and solidarity.*—Bambang

*Leadership is about dreams and potential. The arrow is a symbol of leadership. It is always moving towards a target.*—Rahayu

*The circle is not two-dimensional. People do not become leaders overnight. The process is gradual because mobilizing resources takes place in phases.*—Wenchi

*I chose the logo of NATCCO because it represents people with a common vision and who are inspired to achieve their goal.*—Gil
Leadership is an act of service, an exercise rooted in one’s spirituality which enriches oneself and others.

By this definition, a leader is not necessarily the person who is constantly in the frontlines, or who has power or authority. A leader may be someone who gets things done by providing the enabling environment to accomplish a certain task.

*I chose the coconut tree because the tree symbolizes spirituality. By giving of oneself, one grows. The coconut tree is versatile – all of its parts can be used. It generates new life – in giving I also receive.* — Paul

*I chose the symbol of the cross, which has both vertical and horizontal lines. Leaders function according to a similar configuration. Their source of motivation can come from above and below.* — Dr. Boy

*I drew a small ant. I heard that before the tsunami, people saw ants coming out of the ground. Ants have wisdom; they are sensitive to the environment. Leadership sometimes cannot be seen but the work is going on even though the leader is not visible.* — Rev. Kya Mu

Leadership entails providing clear direction through facilitating decision-making processes and managing them efficiently maximizing resources towards the achievement of concrete results.

*I drew a flock of birds in flight. Natural leaders emerge when changes throw things out of balance. There is wisdom in nature and from experiences we get lessons in life.* — John
I drew a natural farmer who knows his own resources well, and the environment and nature. It also represents decision-making and maximizing of resources. --- Ryoko

My symbol is a river because for me leadership is about the achievement of results. Leadership follows a process and, just like the river, it has direction – from source to destination. It can either promote life or, in the face of obstacles, turn violent and destroy all in its path. --- Ange

My drawing refers to the exercise of leadership. The clouds we see now may not be there later. Behind a thick cloud is the sun but on the other side is the beginning of thunder and lightning. Leadership is as natural as the forces of nature interacting with each other. And because it is natural, there is the possibility of friction, symbolized by lightning and rain. On a certain day I may choose to be more of a manager than a leader. It all depends on the circumstances – the call of the times. --- Cres

This definition suggests that to be able to lead effectively, a leader has to possess certain forms of expertise. This expertise will help people to find efficient and effective solutions to problems. A leader should have a good understanding of organizational processes and of steps to achieving the organization’s objectives.

**Leadership implies much more than management. Leaders are managers, but not all managers are leaders.**

I drew a computer with huge processing capacity. With it, one can be creative and multi-level. It has a set of programs that run and can solve problems autonomously. - Anh

A notebook and pen represent lessons that are written down and passed on. – Dr. Toan
Leadership is a manifestation of the leader’s inner strength, passion, clarity of vision and positive outlook which captures the imagination of people and inspires them to move towards a common direction.

A leader is regarded as the product of her/his environment, and her/his exercise of leadership is defined by her/his personal and societal context. A leader rises above a crisis. Her/his “charisma” provides hope and direction to people. A leader is like a guide who provide a “gentle breeze push”.

_I drew a happy face because leadership exudes confidence and a positive outlook. There is also clarity in direction and knowing you can deliver. The outlook is borne of inner strength and the ability to build good relationships._ – Marl

_I chose a dot. A dot ends a sentence yet also starts a new one. It is a hole made up of atoms that comprise all things. It is simple and subtle, but it can hold things together or stand alone._ – Angge

_Mine is a crooked arrow because leadership is a process that is determined by abilities. If we want to achieve goals, we must take the first step, and keep working at it._ – Ouch

_I drew a lamp with a moth hovering over it—an image inspired by Jose Rizal, a Philippine hero. Leadership, like the lamp, is about giving light, but it can also be like the moth that is ready to be burned and consumed by its passion._ – Lany

In summary, leadership can be defined as the capacity to envision, and to actualize the vision through acts of genuine service to people as well as a strong commitment to social change. Such a commitment is rooted in an understanding of the present needs, culture and behaviors of people/society and is demonstrated by mobilizing resources and people to act collectively towards positive change that promotes justice, the common good, and happiness.
Asian Leadership Values

Leadership values are rooted in faith-based teachings

Most Asian leaders credit their faith or religion for the development of their concept of leadership and its values. This type of NGO leaders might have been inspired by their interaction, as students, with certain mentors who have inspired them to do pastoral or social action work in rural communities.

Supachai, a Thai Credit union Leader as well as a Buddhist, lists five merits as the foundation of his understanding of leadership, as follows:

1. Honesty
2. Sacrifice
3. Responsibility
4. Sympathy and Empathy particularly to poor people; and
5. Trustworthiness, Consistency and Integrity

Bambang (Indonesian) and Cesar (Filipino) recall being inspired by Catholic teaching, through their Jesuit priest teachers. To them, leadership values include:

1. Love of Neighbor/Service/Social mission
2. Justice
3. Excellence
4. Dedication to duty
5. Humility
Leadership values are rooted in social movement

Aside from the influence of faith and cultural values, the collective values of the social development movement to which they belong have strongly influenced most leaders’ value systems. Most of these movements revolve around issues of human rights, agrarian reform, peace, environment, food security, gender, etc. These values include:

1. Empowerment; Participatory process and Democratic participation
2. Human sensitivity (i.e., to gender, age, race/color, ethnicity, religion)
3. Peace
4. Respect and Tolerance for diversity/Pluralism
5. Determined persistence
6. Sustainability
7. Equity
8. Freedom

Leadership values are rooted in “Asian Culture”

The Asian NGO leader is often distinguished from other civil society leaders by cultural values that are distinctively Asian. Among these are:

1. “Musyawarah”/“Masyarakat”/Gotong Royong – a preference for a dialogue of life as a mode of non-confrontational, consensual, engagement which leads to mutual understanding and
to mutual cooperation. This is distinctively practiced among South East and East Asian leaders.

2. Sense of family/hospitality/fellowship/solidarity
3. Integrity – sense of “hiya” or shame for culturally inappropriate behavior
4. Concern for the common good
5. Practice and respect for traditions
6. Artistry – makes use of songs, dances, poetry and other forms of Asian arts to inspire and engage people
7. Flexibility – springs from tolerance and people/process orientedness as opposed to focusing on tasks.

Most Asian NGO leaders prefer non-confrontational, consensual approaches in discussions. Some groups find fault with this, blaming it for the slowness of decision-making among Asian NGO leaders. Yet, it is just such an approach that has proved crucial in forging the collaborative long-standing partnerships which flourish in Asian civil society. This “Asian Culture” which gives primacy to relationship building has been instrumental in maintaining solidarity amidst diversity among NGO leaders.

**Qualities of Asian NGO Leaders**

Asian NGO leadership can be characterized by citing the qualities of individual leaders. A number of these qualities are already evident in certain leaders while the rest are attributes the leaders still aspire to:

1. **VISIONARY**
   - Not limited by existing realities, or conditions
   - Proactive
   - Not afraid to dream big
   - Watchful of opportunities
   - Willing to take on a challenge even when there is no solution in sight
2. FOCUSED
  • Knows how to prioritize /does not spread self too thinly
  • Invests on developing expertise
  • Able to deliver output and brings about clear results

3. GENUINELY COMMITTED AND PASSIONATE
  • Persevering in the face of difficulties
  • Consumed by passion to accomplish the task at hand

4. DECISIVE
  • Able to assess a situation quickly and act expeditiously, but also prudently
  • Able to take and manage risks

5. INNOVATIVE
  • Open to new ideas;
  • Willing to try new ways of doing things, as well as new strategies and approaches
  • A good and eager learner
  • Tackles problems that challenge one’s values
  • Willing to go beyond one’s comfort zones

6. SENSITIVE and RESPONSIVE TO NEEDS
  • Listens well and empathizes with people
  • Maintains direct contact with communities to ensure relevance to realities on the ground

7. CONSENSUS BUILDER / TEAM PLAYER / PARTICIPATORY / EMPOWERING
  • Gets others involved
  • Uses team leadership in a multi-stakeholder setting
  • Able to harness the expertise and resources of stakeholders
• Values relationships
• Flexible
• Process/people - oriented

8. INCLUSIVE
• Motivated to lead out of a sense of her/his values and the inclusion of the values of others
• Shares the group’s vision with others and tests it against competing views
• Does not discriminate against people
• Open-minded / tolerant of diverse views
• Exudes charisma/inspires people to work together

9. SENSITIVE TO THE HUMANITY OF ALL PEOPLE
• Recognizes the contribution of both sexes
• Provides equal opportunity to men and women
• Sensitive not only to gender but as well as to age, religion, ethnicity, color/race, ideology

10. ARTICULATE
• Able to synthesize information and articulate it in a simple and useful form
• Clarifies issues
• Able to communicate to different stakeholders
11. PRACTICES ACTION – REFLECTION
   • Nurtures the habit of maintaining quiet moments for reflection
   • Able to identify lessons / learnings from one’s experience
   • Able to abstract and share the lessons from one’s experience
   • Able to recognize mistakes and willing to make amends

12. ARTISTIC
   • makes use of traditional culture e.g. dances, songs, poetry, local products as means to communicate ideas and build solidarity

13. HUMBLE
   • unconcerned with personal aggrandizement
   • forgiving of others’ mistakes
   • recognizes one’s mistakes and willing to make amends
   • accepts one’s limitations
   • accepts that we cannot do everything

14. IMBUED WITH INTEGRITY
   • has high moral standards / principled
   • just and fair

15. LEADS A SIMPLE and HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
   • Manages time efficiently/balances work and family concerns
   • Keeps self physically fit through exercise, a healthy diet, and creative breaks
   • Eschews wasteful and extravagant lifestyles

The 15 qualities mentioned above can be used in developing a personal leadership growth monitoring tool. Such a tool can help leaders to identify areas for improvement. Not all qualities may be internalized by the leader but through constant self-assessment and peer feedbacking, the leader can work towards improving on qualities she/he needs to further develop to become more effective.
The determination of which qualities need to be honed shall be based on the personal assessment of the leader. The degree of importance she/he ascribes to such qualities cannot be standardized since this assessment depends on the leadership capacities and qualities that the leader already has as well as on the context in which the leadership role would be exercised.

Tracing the roots of NGO involvement of Asian NGO leaders yields insights on how the next generation of leaders, or second-liners can be developed. It can also help create mechanisms to nurture those roots so that new leaders will emerge.

**Influences in Involvement in Rural Development Work**

**Experience of poverty and injustice**

Poverty, oppression and injustice, whether personally or vicariously encountered, is a major motivating factor for involvement in rural development work.

Many leaders come from poor families. The hardships they experienced within their own families or as part of a community incline them to seek changes and to bring these about themselves.

*My interest in rural development work began over 30 years ago, after my first trip to India, where I observed the most wretched living conditions. I also developed strong environmental convictions then.* – Dr. John Ferchak

*I come from a poor coconut-producing family in Bicol – one of the most depressed regions in the Philippines today. This experience together with my involvement in apostolic work encouraged me to go into rural development. My exposure to cause-oriented groups particularly those working against the dictatorship of the Marcos Regime was also pivotal to my career choices.* – Cesar Belangel
Family Influence Nurtured by Peers

The family is an important influence on the choice of career of most people. Parents and other key members of the family provide role models for children. Some NGO leaders come from a family whose parents exposed them to community work.

Once engaged in rural development work, friends and co-workers play a part in sustaining this involvement.

My family background played a vital role in my interest in rural development issues. I come from a farming family in a rural town. Many of the people I know were in agricultural related fields. My great grandparents were farmers; my grandfather was a veterinarian working for the local township government. My maternal grandparents were farmers. My father was not a farmer, but he was with the Forestry Bureau. I never had the experience of working on the farm, but had always felt quite close to farmers or people who live in rural areas. As a kid, I enjoyed visiting people who live on the farm. Being the eldest child, I was always first to be invited to accompany my grandparents when they went to visit relatives who live on the farm. One of the key persons that affected my entering into the field was my uncle, who was a general manager in the local Farmers’ Association. I admired my uncle and took his words to heart. -- Dr. Wenchi
These personal experiences taught me something about the reasons for poverty. It is linked to the unjust and unequal economic situation. Here was a big multinational company making big profits while paying very little to its workers. Thus, the workers had barely enough money to make ends meet. My father was a Trade Union leader. He fought for the rights of the workers in my community. He used to tell me stories of how he fought with the management even to the extent of trashing the office and hitting a supervisor. My grandfather told me stories of his fight with management. People with problems used to come to my house to meet my father. My mother and grandmother took care of them. When they had no money to give, they would give away the little jewels they had to help the poor. My father was also one of the leaders of the local church. Through my own family members I began to understand the meaning of helping the poor—Paul Sinnapan

Love for Rural Life

A positive and happy memory of life in a rural area inspire leaders to work for the promotion of vibrant rural life.

I grew up in a predominantly rural and agricultural community in the southern part of the Philippines. My childhood and teenage life was nurtured by a simple family of six, in an environment of natural beauty—seas and paddy fields. --- Marlene Ramirez

School Courses / Activities / Teacher

School and other formal learning institutions are potent training grounds for social development workers. Discussion and exposure to rural development issues and ideas may not be included in the official curriculum, but the influence of progressive-minded teachers can provide an important
source of inspiration. School organizations (e.g. student catholic action etc.), at certain points in the history of Philippine social movements, have played crucial roles in exposing students to social realities, which in turn increased social awareness and heightened the idealism and desire to work for rural development.

As a graduate student in science, I felt that I could make a contribution through work in appropriate technology -- Dr. John Ferchak

I met a priest from the Netherlands named Father John Dijkstra, SJ. Unlike other priests who talk mostly about religion and evangelization, Father Dijkstra talked more of social economy, empowerment, about helping “those who have little”, and “why and how poverty happened”. I got involved in his activities and journeys. Finally, I expressed my desire to join the community empowerment movement and promised to get involved totally in such activities after my studies. – Bambang Ismawan

When I studied in West Germany, I met Prof.Takuya Marumoto, who encouraged me to join JaDhra because it needed a social scientist in its staff. - Dr. Yatani

My study at SEARSOLIN, Philippines encouraged me to work for rural development – Paul Sinnapan

**Exposure to Socio-pastoral Work of the Church**

Many NGO leaders, particularly those from the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia, got started in rural development work as a result of exposure to and participation in the socio-pastoral work of the church.
My personal experiences at home and in my community sharpened by my involvement in my Parish created in me the desire to work for rural development. I became more enlightened with the following encounters:

- **Contact with my Parish Priest Fr. Caroff O.M.I at the age of 15 helped me to understand the Bible, the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church, Liberation Theology and basic social work concepts. Before that my faith was limited to saint worship and community religious celebrations.**

- **Joining the Young Christian Students Movement (YCS). Using the See, Judge and Act framework to organize students in the Secondary School to help themselves. Organizing tuition classes for poor student and savings groups among poor students. Discussions with the YCS Chaplains such as Fr. Micheal Pinto, Fr. Lequane.**

- **Joining the Parish Social Action Group started by Fr. Caroff O.M.I. to help the poor and to organize the women, youth and children in the rural areas.**

- **Growing with the French Missions who started the Social Workers Network among the Plantation Tamil Communities in Malaysia  --- Paul Sinnapan**

**Socio-Political Environment and Social Movements**

Many leaders are products of their times. Their involvement in rural development work is a response to the spirit and call of their generation. Several NGO leaders got involved in rural development work as a direct response to turbulent socio-political conditions (e.g., warfare in Vietnam, martial law in the Philippines, etc.)

*When I was a child of 6, I witnessed a time of great sorrow, the worst situation of food insecurity for the people in Vietnam’s history. Together with some other poor children of the village I followed my parents to the field where they buried those who died from hunger. We formed groups of children who made dramas of these terrible funerals. I was often the head of these groups.*
When North Vietnam was completely liberated in 1954, the new regime, the socialist one, was built up. The South was still under the French and afterwards under the US. We poor children in the rural areas had the opportunity to go to school and enjoy our childhood together. We were brought up in freedom by our new socialist regime. At the age of 16, I became a member of the Vietnam Communist Youth Union and remained as such for four years running. I was chosen as head of the Union of my class and my secondary school. --- Dr. Toan

For some leaders, the confluence of all four factors reinforced the call to work for rural development. The key then to developing more NGO leaders is to enhance those institutions nurturing the desire for rural development. In practical terms, this would mean establishing mechanisms to link rural development programs to those institutions.

In contrast to “western” leaders who usually attribute their leadership training/preparation to their educational backgrounds, Asian leaders trace their roots primarily to personal experience or circumstances as well as to the influence of family and respected mentors.

Among the roots of involvement, the socio-political environment can be considered as an important stimulus while institutions like the family, school, churches and other faith-based institutions and social movements serve as the driving forces. These are the transmission points in which involvement in social development work is honed. If these institutions are weak or not inclined to social development, then new social development activists/ workers / leaders may not emerge.
Coping With The Dilemmas And Issues Of Asian NGO Leaders

Much of the sharing during the second dialogue centered on dilemmas faced by Asian NGO leaders. Dilemma was defined as a tension point, a situation which calls values and priorities into question. Unless properly addressed, these dilemmas become sources of frustration and strain on their commitment to development work. Dilemmas at personal, organizational and societal levels.

**Personal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dilemmas / Issues</th>
<th>Coping mechanism / Recommendations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustration when CHANGE does not happen in the community</td>
<td>It helped me to remember what one of my mentors, Fr. Gauthier M.E.P. (the director of NOHD then), said to me: “I am only an instrument in the Hands of God; God will finally make things happen.” Some leaders say that it helps to keep an eye on the long-term vision of sustainable development while focusing on some realistic targets which are workable within the project period based on the capacity and limitations of stakeholders in the community. Build up a chest of memories evoking growth/ change moments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frustration when the people you trained betrayed the organization and thereafter became a source of disunity among the group.</td>
<td>Practice the principle of hating the sin and not the sinner. I still maintain good relationships with these people, giving them more time to grow and understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggle to practice what we preach: the pursuit of an Alternative lifestyle and consistency - <em>There are times when living up to the values we uphold becomes a source of internal and personal strain. e.g., falling victim to consumerism and materialism</em></td>
<td>As NGO leaders mature and grow in rural development work, more creative and constructive ways of expressing their inclination towards alternative lifestyles are explored. “This happens when personal change is manifested not only at the physical level but more so in the quality of relating, and ways of thinking and feeling about others.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting angry, making decisions without much consultation, not being gender sensitive all the time are some of my failures. Changing these tendencies is one of my dilemmas</td>
<td>The constructive criticism sessions I go through with my family and with my leaders have been very helpful to me. I do speak to priests and religious to help me to change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Striking the balance between family and work</td>
<td>Attending gender studies and family life education proved to be helpful in gaining a more gender-sensitive view of parenting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Tension in relationships among family members due to unfulfilled family obligations. Marital conflict arising from differences in perception pertaining to parenting, child rearing, or financial management is a source of pressure and stress.</td>
<td>Organizational policy should respect time for the family (e.g., avoid scheduling organizational activities on weekends). Work towards balancing work with family/personal concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visionary or irreverent?</td>
<td>- Maintain transparency in the conduct of any innovative strategy;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Accusations of rent-seeking or being coopted by the system are a source of tension for those NGO leaders who dare to explore ways of bringing opportunities from the government and even the market to development work (e.g., the case of Peace Bonds.)</td>
<td>- Strengthen support mechanisms by securing organizational mandate from your constituency;</td>
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<td>- Report on the progress of work, particularly the gains generated;</td>
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<td>- Ensure inclusive benefits from the gains generated.</td>
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**Organizational**

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absence of second-liners - Fewer young people have felt the calling for rural development work. The decline in student activism is perhaps one major factor for this trend.</td>
<td>- Develop an internship program linked to schools/universities;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Coordinate with the local formation center of the university re: proposed training design for student formation;</td>
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<td>- Network with student and youth organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dilemmas / Issues</td>
<td>Coping mechanism / Recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exacting accountability from co-workers vs. maintaining fellowship and harmonious relationships with them</td>
<td>Develop organizational policies and systems on performance management in consultation with staff;</td>
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<td>Sustain feedbacking sessions with staff as well as other mechanisms to monitor performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professionalization and commercialization vs. volunteerism</td>
<td>Develop organizational policies and systems, in consultation with staff, members, to determine just compensation standards and to come up with a good benefits package;</td>
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<td>Encourage and provide opportunities to staff to do volunteer work that would enhance their skills and commitment to development work.</td>
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<td>Offer competitive salaries to attract the best people</td>
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<td>Nurture/strengthen values of service/commitment/passion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role of Pioneer Leader - <em>Am I indispensable as a Pioneer leader?</em> - <em>Even though I was able to reduce my role in the movement I was not able to let go completely. While handing over responsibilities to other leaders, I was not satisfied with their work.</em></td>
<td>Mobilize Pioneer leaders to anchor training of new leaders - <em>my involvement in the 2nd and 3rd generation training of ACCU made me feel comfortable with my role as pioneer leader. Now, I don't look for perfection from the work of new leaders. I am able to accept their mistakes. I give them more time to grow because it also took me time to grow in leadership</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create a “pioneering” situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Sustainability and Relationships with Donors - <em>convincing developed country people of the needs of developing countries, raising money and report writing,</em></td>
<td>Continue dialogue with donors; - Explore alternative tour packages for tourists from donor countries as means to educate them on development work in the country, thus increasing the base of informed constituency among our partner donors.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Explore other non-traditional donors. Bring corporate / commercially oriented people into the organization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Create / build institutional mechanisms for sustainability</td>
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### Socio-political and economic contexts

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<tr>
<th><strong>Dilemmas / Issues</strong></th>
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| Shifting/readjustment of paradigms due to the new development terrain ushered in by globalization after clear analysis.  
- *It seems to me that I understood my community and work well in the ‘70s and ‘80s and early ‘90s. But now I am having some difficulty in understanding the new society. Lots of changes are taking place and they are happening fast. Society is becoming more complex, complicated and sophisticated. The impact of globalization is very powerful. I cannot understand the present youth and their behavior. Society is becoming more self-centered. There are fewer people interested in community development work.* | Need to redefine frameworks and paradigms through open and critical exchange of ideas among civil society leaders, academics, government and even the business sector:  
- consensus building towards systematic paradigm-building;  
- identifying alternative models of globalization, and documenting and popularizing these;  
- studying local realities and experiences and from there, drawing out elements of new perspectives.  
Need for new strategies and tools of analysis:  
- a menu of tools for analysis (tool box) must be shaped based on the new paradigm which integrates the sustainable development framework as the standard measure or tool for analysis;  
- these new tools must incorporate an understanding of power in relation to gender, class, citizenship, ethnicity. |
| Rise of Information Technology  
- with globalization propelled by the information revolution, culture is increasingly becoming homogenized. | Think globally, act locally:  
- make use of information technology to improve the exchange of information in support of our local initiatives;  
- ensure access and capacity of POs to maximize the use of information technology.  
- Think local and act global! |
<table>
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<tr>
<td>Fragile democracy</td>
<td>Continue to build autonomous People’s Organizations to widen the base for democratic participation;</td>
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<td>Sustain advocacy for participatory governance;</td>
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<td>Engage government and other stakeholders in constant dialogue and pursue on-ground collaborative and principled partnerships.</td>
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Nurturing Asian Leadership

Sustaining Growth in Leadership

1. Take responsibility for your personal growth in leadership

Personal Leadership growth monitoring tool

Leadership growth monitoring tools can be developed on the basis of a set of qualities that Asian NGO leaders should aspire for. AsiaDHRRA and AWCF have developed a similar tool which can be used as guide.

Identifying and expanding sources of joy

It is important for Asian NGO leaders to take responsibility for their growth as a leader. An essential part of this quest is to discover one’s sources of joy. A happy heart will certainly endure the challenges ahead. We should not allow our heart to grow cold and tired. Re-discovering our sources of joy will give us renewed energy and passion. Below is a sample of the sources of joy of some Asian NGO leaders.

What sustains my continuing NGO work is the wish to create a better world in which human beings of different cultural and religious backgrounds live together in peace and justice and in harmony with ecology. My source of joy as an NGO worker is to make direct person-to-person friendships with people who also carry out NGO activities.

My greatest motivation is the inspiration I get from villagers whose lives are immeasurably improved by what seems the smallest of interventions – clean drinking water systems, primary schools, latrines, small scale irrigation, animal revolving funds, rice
banks, and training in both social and technical areas which improve relationships and generate income for poor families.

I have always found joy in my profession, it always brings me incomparable pleasure. Any little achievement would delight me. For instance, when there is a meeting in a village, there is a problem and the people can find a solution. From such a meeting, an initiative to promote life and empower the community exists, like how to farm more efficiently, save money and manage business effectively.

Other personal tips for sustaining growth in leadership

• Grow with certain spirituality. *(This means establishing a value system for yourself, whether within or outside the framework of religion or faith-based group)*
• Continuously analyze the issues of the community you work with
• Grow with a team. Share with them your joys, sorrows and frustrations
• Have a clear vision, mission and goals for your work (based on certain ideologies, gender, etc.).
• Keep constant touch with the poor by going to and staying in the community
• Evaluate your work constantly (with your team and the community itself); occasionally bring in independent external evaluators
• Keep updated on development trends
• Listen to stories of success and failures in community development work
• Keep your own mentors and communicate with them regularly
• Continue reading. Do some research work
• Trust your hopes, not your fears
• Be healthy and fit – find time for exercise and relax with family and friends
2. Institutional mechanisms to sustain growth in leadership

Aside from personal efforts to nurture leadership, complementary efforts at organizational level as well as in the broader community of civil society should be pursued. Organizations should invest on clear leadership development program. Asian NGO leaders identified the following mechanisms:

• Continue the exchanges and dialogue: leadership circles for sharing, value-based leadership development programs:
  - Replicate the experience of dialogue at the local level
• Sustain leaders’ dialogue at regional levels – it provides venue for building fellowship
• Write up leadership stories and facilitate the sharing and popularization of these stories
• Organize exchange programs;
• Develop formal and systematized leadership training programs, e.g., Leadership Learning Institutes for
  - Second liners/new leaders
  - Pioneer leaders.
• Continue to develop the Asian NGO leadership framework
• Invest or mobilize resources to support elderly leaders

Accounting for Leadership Performance

Just as important as nurturing Asian leaders is accounting for their performance. One potential use of the emerging leadership framework is to develop tools for monitoring their growth and performance. The following tools/instruments would go some way towards establishing standards for leadership.
1. **Code of Ethics/ Conduct / Oath of an Asian NGO leader**

- An Oath of Asian NGO leaders can be drafted to serve as guide and common mantra for Asian NGO leaders

2. **Leadership Performance Monitoring tool**

- A leadership performance monitoring tool can be drafted through dialogue between leaders and their constituents. Clear expectations can be drawn which can then serve as basis for monitoring the performance of the leader. A baseline or initial leadership performance profile can be generated and updated regularly
I am an Asian NGO Leader. I rise to the challenges of the times. I heed the call and spirit of my generation for a just, free, empowered, sustainable, developed and happy rural Asia. I draw inspiration and courage from the community of rural people I serve and from the support of my family, comrades, colleagues, mentors and friends.

I am a lead catalyst of social change. I initiate processes that empower people through collective action. I am able to animate, inspire, challenge, influence, mobilize and draw people together to define what they want and move forward towards a shared goal.

I practice Musyawarah, thus allowing the dialogue of life to flow and be transformed into understanding and productive cooperation through consensus.

I put value on relationships. I respect and am enriched by the diversity of ideas and cultures of the people I work with. I maintain an open yet critical mind in the spirit of pluralism. I listen well and empathize with people. I nurture and promote fellowship and solidarity within my organization and among the broader formations of civil society where I belong.
I am inclusive. I work for processes and mechanisms that provide recognition and equal opportunity to people regardless of gender, age, color, beliefs, ethnicity and religion. I endeavor not to create divides between people, but rather create venues to welcome each one as a member of the human family.

I am an innovator. I am an eager learner; thus I go beyond my comfort zone and try new ways of doing things. I am not limited by current limitations and conditions. I explore new strategies and approaches. I invest in developing expertise. I maintain direct contact with communities to ensure that the programs and strategies I promote remain relevant to their goals.

I am an advocate. I am able to gather and synthesize information in a simple and useful form and to communicate it effectively to different stakeholders. I join activities which provide me with information and collective analysis of issues with a view to generating better alternatives and policy reforms.

I am creative. I make use of traditional culture, e.g., dances, songs, poetry, local products as a means to communicate ideas and to build solidarity.

I am a mentor. I allow new leaders to emerge. I create learning opportunities for people to rise to leadership. I provide an enabling environment for young activists and development workers to accomplish their tasks. I provide a “gentle breeze push” to motivate them to take on greater leadership roles.

I am a bearer of hope. I manifest and exude inner strength, passion, clarity of vision and a positive outlook which captures the imagination of people and inspires them to move towards a common direction.
I am persevering in the face of difficulties. I endure with joy and am consumed with the passion to accomplish the task at hand and to pursue the struggle towards my vision for social change.

I am a reflective practitioner. I nurture the habit of maintaining quiet moments for reflection which allow me to learn from my experiences and enable me to recognize my mistakes and to make amends. My mistakes humble me and allow me to be forgiving of myself and of others, too.

I lead with integrity. I maintain high moral standards by not compromising my principles and the principles of the civil society I represent. I am just and fair in my undertakings. I do my best to do what I preach.

I lead a simple and healthy lifestyle. I manage my time efficiently to balance work and family concerns. I keep myself physically fit through exercise, a healthy diet, and creative breaks. I avoid wasteful and extravagant lifestyles.

Rationale for the Code of Conduct of Asian NGO Leaders

As members of the community of NGO leaders in Asia, we recognize the importance of articulating and making known to the broader public the ethical principles that guide the work of social development workers.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The Asian NGO Leaders Code of Ethics states the qualities and values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of an NGO leader in this changing environment.
We work for the formation of social infrastructures at all levels, particularly through building alternative community-based models and cohesive networks, coalitions and social movements actively engaged in advocacy for policy reforms as our contribution towards the vision for a just, free, empowered, sustainable, and happy rural Asia. As such, we are committed to participatory and empowering processes. We have a special obligation to ensure the quality participation, particularly of the grassroots, to democratic governance as well as to access and control over resources necessary for sustainable development.

The qualities of an NGO leader used in this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide NGO leaders in assessing their conduct and hopefully to aid in ethical decision making. These statements provide a view of an Asian NGO leader; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.
Asian NGO Leaders’ Guide In Assessing Personal Leadership Growth

Name of the Leader: _________________________________________________________________
Assessment period: _________________________________________________________________
Significant events during the period: *(to be listed by the leader being assessed; this will provide the context of your exercise of leadership)*

Assessed by: *(should be done by the leader and one or three more by peer or staff)*

Rating:
1 Poor: needs to internalize the quality through practical resolution
2 Good: partly manifest the quality but need to improve
3 Excellent: able to internalize the quality and already exercises the quality as a good habit
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities of an Asian NGO Leader</th>
<th>Description/indicators</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Suggestions for next period</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| VISIONARY                        | - Not limited by existing realities, or conditions  
                                      - Proactive  
                                      - Not afraid to dream big  
                                      - Watchful of opportunities  
                                      - Willing to take on a challenge even when there is no solution in sight |        |                             |
| FOCUSED                          | - Knows how to prioritize /does not spread self too thinly  
                                      - Invests in developing expertise  
                                      - Able to deliver output and bring about clear results |        |                             |
| GENUINELY COMMITTED AND PASSIONATE | - Persevering in the face of difficulties  
                                      - Consumed by passion to accomplish the task at hand |        |                             |
| DECISIVE                         | - Able to assess a situation quickly and act expeditiously, but prudently  
                                      - Able to take and manage risks |        |                             |
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<tr>
<td><strong>INNOVATIVE</strong></td>
<td>- Open to new ideas</td>
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<td>- Willing to try new ways of doing things, as well as new strategies and approaches</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- A good and eager learner</td>
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<td>- Tackles problems that challenge one’s values</td>
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<td>- Willing to go beyond one’s comfort zones</td>
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<td><strong>SENSITIVE and RESPONSIVE TO NEEDS</strong></td>
<td>- Listens well and empathizes with people</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Maintains direct contact with communities to ensure relevance to realities on the ground</td>
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<td><strong>CONSENSUS BUILDER/TEAM PLAYER/PARTICIPATORY/EMPOWERING</strong></td>
<td>- Gets others involved</td>
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<td>- Mobilizing the involvement of others</td>
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<td>- Uses team leadership in a multi-stakeholder setting</td>
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<td>- Able to harness the expertise and resources of stakeholders</td>
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<td>- Put value to relationships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Flexible</td>
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<td>- Process/people - oriented</td>
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| INCLUSIVE                        | - Motivated to lead out of one's sense of values and the inclusion of the values of others  
- Shares the group's vision with those of other and tests it against competing views  
- Does not discriminate against people  
- Open-minded / tolerant of diverse views  
- Exudes charisma / inspires people to work together |        |                             |
| SENSITIVE TO THE HUMANITY OF ALL PEOPLE | - Recognizes the contribution of both sexes; men and women  
- Provides equal opportunity to both men and women.  
- Sensitive not only to gender but as well as to age, religion, ethnicity, color/race, ideology |        |                             |
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</table>
| ARTICULATE                      | - Synthesizes information and articulates it in a simple and useful form  
- Clarifies issues  
- Communicates to different stakeholders | | |
| PRACTICES ACTION – REFLECTION   | - Nurtures the habit of maintaining quiet moments for reflection  
- Identifies lessons / learnings from ones experience  
- Abstracts and shares lessons from one’s experience  
- Recognizes mistakes and willing to make amends | | |
| ARTISTIC                        | - Makes use of traditional culture e.g. dances, songs, poetry, local products as means to communicate idea and build solidarity | | |
## Qualities of an Asian NGO Leader

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</table>
| HUMBLE                           | - Unconcerned with personal aggrandizement  
- Forgiving of others’ mistakes  
- Recognizes one’s mistakes and willing to make amends  
- Accepts one’s limitations  
- Accepts that we cannot do everything | | |
| IMBUED WITH INTEGRITY            | - Has high moral standards / principled  
- Just and fair | | |
| LIVES A SIMPLE and HEALTHY LIFESTYLE | - Manages time efficiently / balances work and family concerns  
- Keeps self physically fit through exercise, a healthy diet, and creative breaks  
- Eschews wasteful and extravagant lifestyles | | |
Directory of Participants

Cambodia

**Ouch Ngak**  
*Human Resource Manager, Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC)*  
No.39 St.528 Sangkat Beung Kok I Khan Toul Kork, Phnom Penh  
Tel: (855) 23-880916  
Fax: (855) 23-885146  
Mobile: (855)12 887 648  
Email: ouchngak@online.com.kh

**Sil Vineth**  
*President, CNAC*  
No.8, Chrey Kong Village, Chom Chav Section, Veng Sreng Road, Dankor Khann, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
Tel: (855-11) 863092 | (855-12) 942921  
(855-23) 365708  
Fax: (855-23) 890110  
Email: cnac@forum.org.kh | yunyoeun@hotmail.com

**Thida Khus**  
*Executive Director, SILAKA*  
P.O. Box 821  
6s Street 21 Tonle Bassac 1, Khanh Chamcar Mon, Phnom Penh  
Tel: 855-23-217872  
Fax: 855-23-213108  
Mobile: 012918446  
Email: thida_khus@silaka.org

**Phoeuk Phalla**  
*Administrative Staff, Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC)*  
No.39 St.528 Sangkat Beung Kok I Khan Toul Kork, Phnom Penh  
Tel: (855) 23-880916  
Fax: (855) 23-855146  
Mobile: (855)-012-781-616  
Email:012600038@mobitel.com.kh
Indonesia

Bambang Ismawan
President, Binaswadaya
Jl. Gunung Sahari III No.7 Jakarta Pusat 10610
Indonesia
PO Box 1456 Jakarta 10014 Indonesia
Tel: 62-21-420-4402 | 425-5354
Fax: 62-21-420-8412
E-mail: bisma@cbn.net.id | binaswadaya@binaswadaya.org
URL: www.binaswadaya.org

Ms. Rezki Khainidar
InDHRRA
Board Member, BINADESA
Jl. Saleh Abud no.18-19, Otto Iskandardinata,
Jakarta 13330 Indonesia
Tel. 6221-8199749 | 6221-8519611
Fax: 6221-8500052
Email: binadesa@indo.net.id | khainidar@yahoo.com

South Korea

Sung Lee
Secretary General, KoDHRRA
15-1, Chung Dahm 2 Dong, Kang Nahm Gu,
Korea
Tel. 82-2-3485-5077
Fax: 82-2-3485-5069
Mobile: 82-17-692-5357
Email: leesung@krivet.re.kr

Malaysia

Marimuthu Nadason
President, DHRRA Network Malaysia
No.24 Jalan SS1/22ª, 47300
Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel: (603) 787-74741; 787-60520
Fax: (603) 787-30636
Email: erafood@po.jaring.my

Japan

Tomoko Arakawa
Associate Director, Asian Rural Institute
442-1 Tsukinokisawa, Nasushiobara City
Tochigi-ken 329-2703, Japan
Tel:(81) 28736-3111
Fax: (81) 28737-5833
Email: info@ari-edu.org | tomokoアラカワ@ari-edu.org

Saravanan Sinapan
Project Director, ERA Consumer
No.24 Jalan ss1/22ª, 47300
Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel: (603) 787-74741; 787-60520
Fax: (603) 787-30636
Email: dhrra@yahoo.com
Philippines

Cesar S. Belangel  
Deputy Executive Director, Caucus of Development NGOs (CODE NGO)  
2/F CCS Building, Social Development Complex, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.  
Email: cbelangel@codengo.org | cbelangel@admu.edu.ph  
Tel: (632) 426-6001 loc 4624 or 4625;

Teresa A. Banaynal-Fernandez  
Executive Director, Lihok Pilipina Foundation, Inc.  
102 P. del Rosario Extension  
Cebu City 6000 Philippines  
Tel:(032) 2548092  
Fax: (032) 2548072  
Email: tessbf@mozcom.com; lihokpilipina@yahoo.com  
tessbf_lihok@yahoo.com

Jesus Vicente C. Garganera  
National Coordinator, PhilDHRRA  
59 C. Salvador St., Loyola Hts., Quezon City 1108  
Tel: (632) 426-67-40 / 436-07-02  
Email: nc@phildhrra.org | jb_garganera@yahoo.com

Taiwan

Dr. Wenchi Huang  
TaiwanDHRRA, Member  
Associate Professor, Department of Agribusiness Management  
National Pingtung University of Science & Technology  
No.1, Hseuhfu Rd., Neipu, Pingtung, Taiwan 91201, R.O.C  
Tel 886-8-7703202 ext.7824  
E-mail: wench@mail.npust.edu.tw

Thailand

Dr. Napasri Maneewong  
President, ThaiDHRRA  
100/65 Kosumnives Soi 3  
Viprevadee-Rangsit Road, Laksi, Bangkok 10210 Thailand  
Tel. (066) 0257384114  
Fax: 02-5732056  
Mobile : 01-787-8616  
Email: nmaneewong@chaiyo.com | nmaneewong@hotmail.com
Bunjong Siri  
*National Coordinator, ThaiDHRRA*
100/65 Kosumnives Soi 3  
Viprevadee-Rangsit Road, Laksi, Bangkok  
10210 Thailand  
Tel: (066) 02-5738414  
Fax: (066) 02-5732056  
Mobile: 09-9910982  
Email: bunjongsiri@yahoo.com

Vietnam

Dr. Bui Quang Toan  
*Chairperson, VietDHRRA*
4th A1 Phuong Mai, 102 Truong Chinh, Dong  
Da, Hanoi, Vietnam  
Tel: (844) 5763786  
Fax: (844) 868-6654  
Email: bqtoan@fpt.vn

Regional Partners

Gabriel Baroi  
*Program Officer, Asia Partnership for Human Development (APHD)*
10th floor, Phaholyothin Place Building, 408/42  
Phaholyothin Road, Phayathai, Bangkok  
10400, Thailand  
Tel:(662) 619 0634-8  
Fax:(662) 619 0639  
Mobile: 060817987  
Email: gabriel@aphd.or.th  
URL: www.aphd.or.th

Corazon Juliano-Soliman  
*Member, Board of Trustees, International Center for Innovation, Transformation, and Excellence in Governance (INCITE Gov)*
Unit 502 Victoria Plaza Building  
#41 Annapolis St., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila, Philippines  
Tel: (632) 727-3927  
Fax: (632) 726-2920  
Email: INCITE_Gov@yahoo.com

Miren Larrea Olaberria  
*Co-Operation Desk, World Rural Forum (WRF)*
Granja Modelo, S/N 01192 Arkaute, Alava, Spain  
Tel: 00 34 94512 1324  
Mobile: 00 34 605 72 1943  
Email: mlarrea@ruralforum.net

Rie Nakamura  
*Coordinator, Southeast Asia Initiative*
Open Society Institute  
P.O. Box 223 CMU  
Chiang Mai, Thailand 50202  
Tel: (66) 0-53-40-4383  
Fax: (66) 0-53-21-1956  
Mobile: (660) 0 69-22-1340  
Email: rnakamura@osi-sea.org
Facilitator
Angelita Medel
Consultant
c/o Center for Community Services
Ateneo de Manila University
Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines
Tel. (632) 426-5998
Fax: (632) 426-5997
Email: angge-gm@admu.edu.ph

Documenter
Teresa L. Debuque
1186 Camden St., Brookside Hill Subdivision,
Cainta, Rizal 1900
Tel: (63) 9277983671
Email: teresaldebuque@yahoo.com

AsiaDHRRA

Soetrisono Kusumohadi
Chairperson
Jl. Saleh Abud no.18-19, Otto Iskandarinata,
Jakarta 13330 Indonesia
Tel. 6221-8199749 | 6221-8519611
Fax: 6221-8500052
Email: binadesa@indo.net.id

Marlene Ramirez
Secretary General

Lany V. Rebagay
Program Officer

Lorna M. David
Program Officer

Esther Penunia
Program Officer

2nd Floor
#59 C. Salvador St., Loyola Heights,
Quezon City, Philippines
Tel: (632) 436-4706
Fax: (632) 426-6739
Email: asiadhrra@asiadhrra.org
URL: www.asiadhrra.org
Production

Editorial Team: Marlene Ramirez, Lany Rebagay, Mary Racelis, Angelita Medel
Documentor/Editor: Teresa Debuque
Writer: Lany Rebagay
Design and Lay-out: Jet Hermida, creativejet
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