PARTNERING TO BUILD AND MEASURE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

An inquiry into best practices of organizational capacity building among national development organizations working in partnership with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

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Lessons from NGOs Around the World

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Acknowledgments

This handbook summarizes a three-year inquiry into best practices of partnership and organizational capacity building conducted collaboratively by the SIGMA Center at the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University; the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC); and more than 100 local NGOs (non-government organizations) working in partnership with CRWRC around the world (see Appendix A for a list of these organizations). The study was made possible by the commitment and cooperation of many dedicated people and organizations.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to CRWRC's partner organizations, who, throughout the study, shared enthusiastically the extensive wisdom and expertise they have gained through years of ground-breaking experimentation with effective capacity-building approaches. The learning contained in the pages of this handbook is a tribute to the depth of their understanding and to the breadth of their experience, and we hope this final product adequately honors their essential contribution.

Within CRWRC, the international field staff were the ones who made the project happen. They led listening tours, shared their knowledge, helped to lead all of the regional conferences that convened to work on this project, and worked with their partner organizations to create the capacity building and monitoring systems contained in this manual. Some CRWRC staff deserve special recognition as well. The regional managers took on the extra work of organizing the conferences and listening tours in their regions, writing reports, making extra trips to the home office, shaping the learning, and contributing to this manual. Caspar Geisterfer performed this role in Latin America and the Caribbean; Ivan De Kam, in East Africa; Joe Lamigo, in West Africa; and Will Postma, in Asia. Other contributors of material include Bev Abma, Jan Disselkoen, Roland Hoksbergen, Laura Snoeyink, and Karl Westerhof. Jim Boldenow, Gary Nederveld, Doug Seebeck, and Peter Vander Meulen provided the conceptual leadership and impetus to start the study. Wayne Medendorp and Ellen Monsma made sure we fulfilled all of the reporting requirements of USAID. John De Haan, the United States director of CRWRC, helped to incorporate the creativity of the study with the integrity of CRWRC's existing systems. In the home office Matt VanGeest provided the valuable service of sorting through reports, organizing material, editing contributions, and assisting with the production of this handbook.

Much of the intellectual and programmatic leadership of the study was contributed by the Weatherhead School of Management's SIGMA Center. In collaboration with CRWRC, SIGMA designed and facilitated the study and shaped the conceptual contributions contained in this manual. Three people deserve special

mention. Craig Wishart worked on the project for the first two years, helping to facilitate workshops and spending months visiting one-on-one with dozens of people and organizations, explaining appreciative inquiry, drafting field notes, and writing up case studies. Carla Carten joined the project in the final two years. She made an invaluable contribution by leading conferences, writing chapters, and helping to edit this handbook. Suresh Srivastva was involved with the project from start to finish and was central to shaping its intellectual agenda. He also provided extensive consultation on organizational capacity building to CRWRC's executive leadership.

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August 1997

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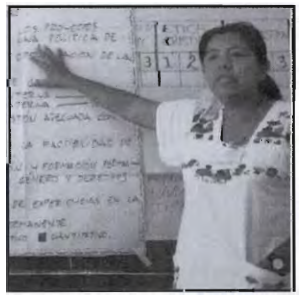
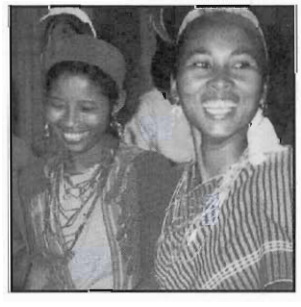
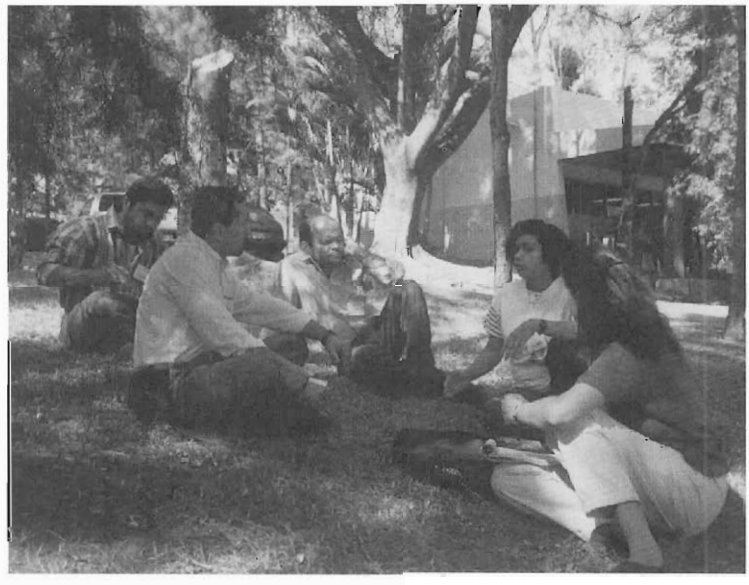




Introduction

Capacity building is rapidly becoming a central part of the strategic focus of many organizations operating in the international development community. The World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Ford Foundation are but a few of the organizations that have recently embraced capacity building as an integral part of their overall mission—and for good reason. We live in a time of unparalleled social invention—a time in which new ways of organizing are emerging within and across sectors and national boundaries on an unprecedented scale. Since World War II hundreds of thousands of civil society and voluntary organizations have sprung up worldwide to address social, economic, and environmental issues left unattended by other sectors. In the past decade, oppressive political institutions that once seemed impenetrable and insurmountable by common citizens have crumbled in humanity's path. In more recent years, spawned by the development of global transportation, communication, and information technologies, a breathtaking array of new organizational arrangements—grassroots organizations, social movements, global networks, collaborative alliances, public/private partnerships, socially responsible businesses—has blossomed to dramatically recolor the world's social and institutional landscape. Perhaps never before in the history of humankind has there been a period of such expansive social, cultural, and institutional change on a global scale as there is today.



A conversation about capacity building. One of hundreds that took place in the three-year study.

In this context, the *capacity* of our *organizations* and *institutions* to address effectively the most pressing global issues of our time becomes a topic of fundamental importance for the future of the planet.

Global Conversation on Capacity Building

The centrality of organizations to our common global future is but one of many important forces driving the capacity building conversation. Any effort to understand, let alone implement, significant human-scale development that does on include a sustained commitment to improving our knowledge and practice of organizational capacity building cannot succeed. Also relevant is the growing appreciation for the contribution that NGOs have made over the years building

civil society and advancing sustainable human development. This has led to an increase of interventions traditionally focused on the state and public sectors aimed at building the institutional and organizational capacity of NGOs.

A third consideration is that many conventional approaches and techniques of international development are rapidly losing relevance. The traditional transfer of resources (funds, programs, expertise) from North to South is proving to be inefficient, ineffective, and, in most cases, inappropriate to achieve any kind of sustainable change. Fundamental assumptions about inter-organizational relationships (donor-recipient, North-South, developed-developing) are being reformed to encourage increased mutuality in partnership and cooperative capacity building strategies.

Any effort to understand, let alone implement, significant human-scale development that does on include a sustained commitment to improving our knowledge and practice of organizational capacity building cannot succeed.

Fourth, as the world faces the challenges and possibilities of the 21st century, there is growing understanding of the need for multiple ways of knowing. Pushed by the failure of Enlightenment thinking to provide hope for a socially, spiritually, and ecologically sustainable future, and pulled by the contributions of local bodies of knowledge can make in this regard, indigenous ways of knowing are assuming a new level of importance in the international development conversation.

Fifth, financial stringency and a pervasive skepticism about development impact are putting organizations under increasing pressure to demonstrate results and dollar value to a variety of stakeholders. Issues focusing on accountability, program performance and measurement, and organizational control are becoming increasingly important in the international development debate.

In short, the enabling environment surrounding the capacity building conversation is and promises to remain a strong one. There is wide recognition that healthy, vibrant organizations and institutions are central to a sustainable world future, and there is a renewed commitment to include all voices and pursue an array of innovative and experimental strategies in advancing broad-scale human development. At the same time the pressure is increasing from all sides to apply more rigorous standards of planning and control in an effort to achieve financial accountability and to demonstrate results. It seems that almost everybody is interested in capacity building.

And yet, despite the growing interest, capacity building has yet to establish itself as a credible body of knowledge or framework for thinking and action. Useful definitions, explanatory models, and operational guidelines to assist scholars and practitioners are just beginning to emerge, and there is still much to be learned about what capacity is, why it is important, and how it can best be approached. It is within this context that the present study was conceived and hopes to make its contribution.

Background and Purpose of the Study

CRWRC has been working to build the capacity of grassroots organizations and NGOs throughout the world (including North America) for almost 20 years. In the

1970s CRWRC developed what it called a Skill Rating Scale (SRS), designed to assess the strength of its partner organizations in five key skill areas: technical, financial, managerial, governance, and—consistent with its religious affiliation—wholistic ministry. The SRS was based on the belief that local organizations are the best executors of local development and that the role of northern NGOs ought to be to provide management consultation and training to local organizations to enhance their capacity. The SRS provided a management information system that would allow CRWRC consultants to know where to focus their attention. It also provided a database by which CRWRC could monitor the growth (or lack thereof) of its partner organizations and could make strategic programmatic and funding decisions.

USAID became interested in the SRS system in the late 1980s, when it began a relationship with CRWRC by funding some of its work in Bangladesh. USAID's interest grew in the early 1990s, when CRWRC caught the attention of other NGOs with the SRS by highlighting it as a "best practice" during an organizational excellence program put on by the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) initiative of the Weatherhead School of Management. In 1994 USAID, excited by the potential for learning throughout the NGO community, contracted to fund a three-year study of the SRS system—which by then had been renamed as the organizational capacity indicator (OCI) system. The purpose of the study was to

Through the appreciative inquiry process, they discovered that in order to maintain integrity and effectiveness, organizational capacity building must be firmly grounded in partnership.

- revise CRWRC's capacity assessment system
- disseminate the learning to the global NGO community
- contribute to the capacity building of CRWRC and its partner organizations

CRWRC contracted with the Weatherhead School of Management's SIGMA Center to facilitate the study by means of the appreciative inquiry methodology.

What We Learned

While the study began with the limited objective of documenting and making minor adjustments to CRWRC's existing capacity assessment system, it quickly became a source of important new learning for CRWRC and its partners. Through the appreciative inquiry process, they discovered that in order to maintain integrity and effectiveness, organizational capacity building must be firmly grounded in partnership. Traditionally, within much of the international development community, capacity building has been defined in distinctly asymmetrical terms. It places Northern NGOs in the position of suppliers of capacity and Southern NGOs in the role of recipients. The organizations involved in this study suggest that it is time for the paradigm to change. Required is a relational process in which each partner learns, grows, and develops as a result of their interaction with the other.

A second finding was that capacity building works best when it is appreciative. Typically, capacity building programs begin by identifying organizational weak-

nesses and then designing interventions to strengthen the deficient areas. Participants of this study have developed an alternative view. They suggest that organizations live and thrive not primarily because of their problem-solving ability, but because of a host of contextual variables such as good leadership, a sense of community, a deep spiritual core, sound managerial and financial systems, and strong relationships with other organizations — that support and sustain their existence. Any viable system of capacity building must begin with and build upon these live-giving forces to reach its full potential.

In a related vein, participants suggested that capacity building must always be context-specific. Its effectiveness and sustainability is dependent on it being firmly rooted in the socio-cultural context of an organization's local environment and based on an organization's contextualized vision of the future, not on a distant or detached generic ideal. Consistent with this perspective, throughout this handbook you will find many context-specific organic metaphors used to describe organizations and the organizational capacity building process.

An additional finding was that capacity building can best be defined as a process of leveraging knowledge though relationship. It is a never-ending journey of interorganizational learning in which organizations interact with a variety of others to expand their capacity and heighten their integrity and effectiveness.

Finally, participants in the study stressed the importance of developing effective systems to monitor organizational capacity. These systems are important first and foremost as a tool for organizational self-assessment. They allow an organization to understand where it stands in comparison to where it hopes to be in the future, and then to devise strategies to get there. Monitoring systems also promote mutual accountability in the capacity building relationship. They allow an organization to demonstrate its integrity and effectiveness to a variety of internal and external stakeholders. Four highly-developed and tested monitoring tools that were developed by the organizations that participated in this study can be found in Chapter 6.

About the Format of This Handbook

This handbook attempts to capture the learning involved in a process that went farther and faster than expected. And the learning process is not yet finished. Some of the most interesting elements in this handbook are the stories that introduce each chapter or are included at the end of some chapters. These stories are the raw materials of the study, presenting intriguing ideas but, more important, giving a sense of the kinds of conversations that have taken place throughout the three-years of dialogue. Interwoven with these stories are new concepts and models of partnership, capacity building, and capacity assessment.

The study has involved nearly 100 development organizations around the world. Some are large development agencies affiliated with national churches. Some are new

organizations just starting their first programs. Some have focused exclusively on rural farmers or on urban squatters. Others have tried a variety of programs. Since all of these organizations have been partner organizations of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, a majority of them are Christian organizations. The learning from this subset of organizations has a lot to offer the wider development community in addition to Christian organizations. In light of this wide applicability we have avoided religious language in this handbook because we want this information to speak to a broad audience. However, in specific examples from organizations, we have made no attempt to mask their Christian character or worldview. As these organizations have explored and explained their capacity, they have often used religious language to express their hopes, values, and motivation. Non-sectarian organizations may not share the same core beliefs but will still have much to learn from this study.

In This Handbook

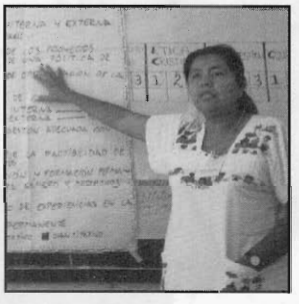
Chapter 1 of this handbook provides an overview of the three-year study and a brief introduction to appreciative inquiry, the methodology used to guide the study. Chapter 2 gives a brief introduction to the topic of capacity building and provides a synopsis of what SIGMA, CRWRC, and its partner organizations learned about building and assessing organizational capacity over the three years. Chapter 3 offers a selection of organizational metaphors used by some of the NGOs that participated in the study to describe, build and measure organizational capacity in their unique contexts.

During the process of inquiring appreciatively into organizational capacity, CRWRC and its partner organizations learned much about effective partnership, greatly enhanced their own interorganizational and interpersonal relationships, and developed a new model to guide their relationships and partnerships into the 21st century. Chapter 4 highlights this learning about partnership.

Chapter 5 gives a more in-depth look at how appreciative inquiry has been used to build capacity and design capacity-measurement tools. Chapter 6 provides a detailed description of the capacity assessment tools developed by CRWRC and its partner organizations in each region of the world. Chapter 7 offers a discussion of accountability in capacity assessment. Originally, the purpose of the SRS system was to provide accountability for CRWRC staff and their partner groups in the capacity-building work they did. Now, although the OCI system is much more flexible, it maintains accountability. In addition, some extra benefits have been added: increased ownership and mutual learning.

The appendices in this handbook offer additional resources. Appendix A supplies a list of the NGOs that participated in the three-year study. Appendix B explains the SRS system that CRWRC used earlier. Appendix C provides a brief history of CRWRC and the evolution of its capacity-building strategy.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY



The Adoni Area Rural Development Initiative Project (AARDIP) is the name of the project being carried out in south-central India with "out-caste" people (Dalits) in ten villages. The Council on Technical and Vocational Training (CTVT) is the development arm of the Church of South India and is CRWRC's contracted agent for supervising the AARDIP project. These organizations were involved in appreciative-inquiry training in February 1996.

The timing of this training was significant for the CTVT people; they had been "enduring" a major evaluation of themselves and their church, and that evaluation was funded by European donors and had been going on for two years! What started out as an exciting adventure in which all participants were invested, ended up to be an endurance test in which CTVT staff felt as though they had been the subject of an assault. They came to the appreciative-inquiry training dispirited and very concerned that whatever was to come of this training would have to be absolutely and genuinely participatory if it were going to have any integrity or value for them.

This training illustrated several things about appreciative-inquiry process. First, the process itself was very affirming. CRWRC's commitment to look at capacity building in a totally participatory way—in fact, in a way that takes each partner with utmost seriousness—was a welcome message to the discouraged CTVT leadership. Moreover, the fallout of the evaluation process had resulted in a serious weakening of the working relationships among CRWRC, CTVT, and AARDIP staff. By the end of the training, all of us who were involved felt that we had established a framework for at least a continuing conversation that would be helpful, honest, and hopeful.

We also noticed that the participants were reluctant to get into the appreciative mode—they kept wanting to talk about the program, tell "program success stories," and get quickly into the discussion of program events. Again and again, Nancy Ten Broek, the facilitator of the meeting, had to try to call them back to telling each other and us about their own experiences rather than just telling program stories. At several points, we began to suspect that the presence of a home office representative was an invitation to them to tell him the success stories they thought he wanted to hear, rather than to engage in the process for their own benefit. But as we went along, they did seem to get into the storytelling.

Later we noticed that the participants seemed very surprised that the stories were expected to have a cumulative (and useful) effect in the training. Their own inclination seems to be that once told, the stories had served their purpose. At one point, one of the participants asked incredulously, "You mean we are going to use these stories later in the training?"

We observed a surprising amount of openness—CTVT leadership seemed very willing to be vulnerable in front of some "low level" project staff. Especially the CTVT director was very open about his own pain and his own vulnerabilities.

This first training session with these partners points to some possible early learning about capacity. First, this session suggests that genuine mutuality between CRWRC and partner organizations is highly valued and is the basis for a strong relationship—personal relationships are essential. Second, it was heartening to see the degree to which partners valued CRWRC's systems for planning and reporting—and the importance attached to a mutual process of learning! Third, being solidly and predictably funded is also crucial. Fourth, networking is very important. Finally, the passion of partner leadership is a crucial element—the partners embody a passion for the poor, and this is a driving force and salient capacity in organizations. ■

Phase 1: Design of the Inquiry (Fall 1994 to Spring 1995)

The inquiry into organizational capacity involved 100 partner organizations working in partnership with CRWRC around the world. The study occurred in four geographic areas of the world: Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa, East Africa, and Asia. A series of meetings with USAID, CRWRC, and the Weatherhead School of Mangement's SIGMA Center established the overall design of the inquiry.

While conferences were long and arduous, time was made for celebration, cultural appreciation and relaxation.

Outputs from the inquiry were to include (1) a revised set of consensually-validated OCI indicators, (2) production of an organizational-capacity-building handbook that could be used by organizations worldwide, and (3) publication and dissemination of learning from the project. Outcomes included (1) a written methodology for organizational capacity building and monitoring and (2) strengthened organizational capacity of CRWRC and its partners.

The original intent was to listen and learn, but the posture of listening and the introduction of the ideas of appreciative inquiry had some exciting side effects: partnering relationships improved, planning processes accelerated, and basic methods of community organizing changed from problem to opportunity-focused. CRWRC and its partner organizations discovered many shared (and strongly held) values and strengths, and each organization enhanced its own capacity by learning from the best practices of the others. In short, CRWRC and its partner organizations have learned much about how to live and work together in a healthy relationship of creative partnership. In addition, CRWRC

OCI Study Timeline

YEAR ONE

Phase One
Series of meetings with USAID, CRWRC, and SIGMA to plan and design the inquiry.

Phase Two
Series of conferences with CRWRC field staff in Asia, East Africa, Latin America, and West Africa to introduce appreciative inquiry and to plan the regional inquiry process.

Phase Three
CRWRC field staff do a series of conferences tours with partner organizations around the world to discover the forces and factors that contribute to organizational capacity in each country.

October 1994 - December 1995

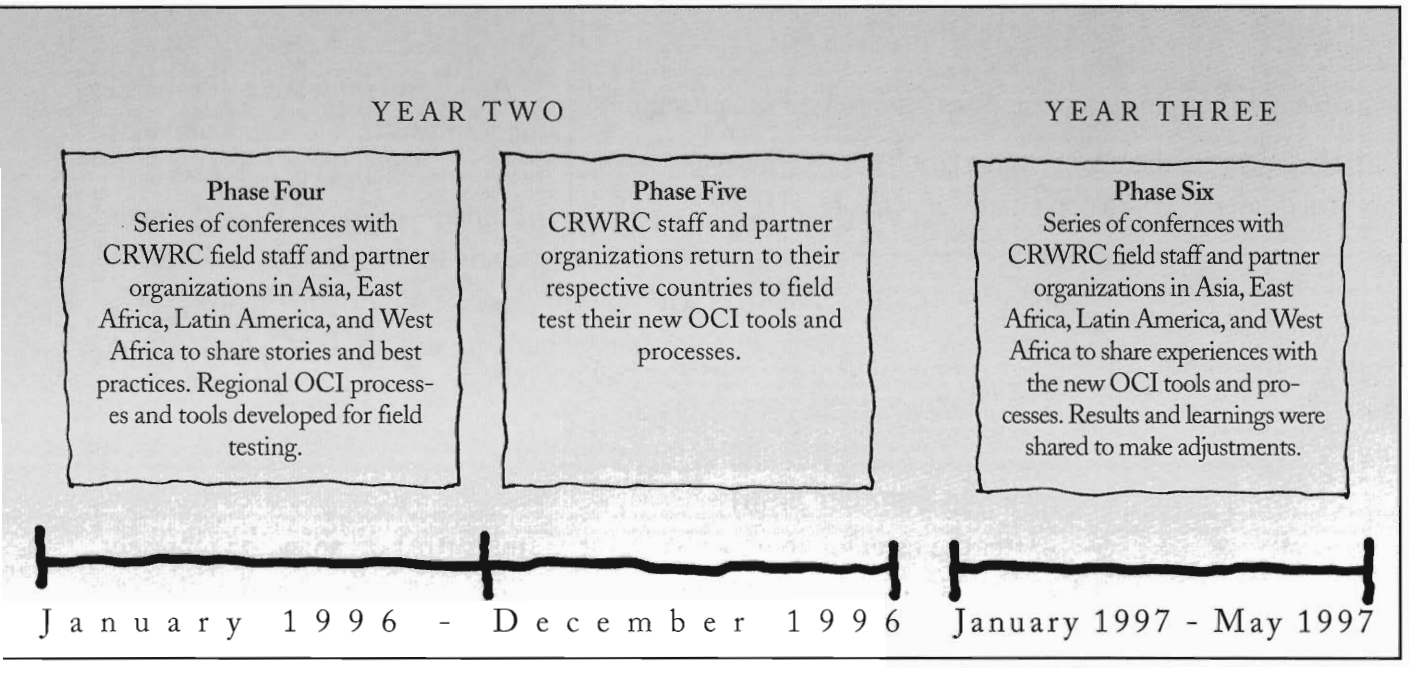
and its partners have learned about how to ensure contextual accountability in the partner relationship. The original goals of revising the OCI system to promote mutual accountability and organizational learning in contextually appropriate and relevant ways were accomplished beyond initial expectations.

Phase 2: Conferences with CRWRC Field Staff (Summer to Fall 1995)

The study began with four regional training conferences for CRWRC staff. Regional managers, who had been initially trained in the first phase of the study, helped in the training of field staff. Because the investigation would rely on data gathered by staff from partner organizations, field staff needed to be introduced to and trained in the investigative method of appreciative inquiry. Through the training, CRWRC staff became prepared for the second stage of the investigation, in which they would inquire into the capacities of their partner organizations.

The objectives of the conference were

- to build the capacity of CRWRC through appreciating its greatest strengths from the past and its most compelling hopes for the future
- to understand appreciative inquiry as a positive approach to building organizational capacity through dialogue and vision
- to explore the theory and practice of building and measuring organizational capacity
- to explore the role of culture and worldview in sustainability and capacity building
- to design a process for learning about capacity building and for monitoring with partner organizations



After learning about and participating in the appreciative process, field staff began to plan the next round of conferences. "Listening tours," based on their new understanding of appreciative inquiry would be conducted with partner organizations.

Phase 3: Listening Tours (Fall 1995 toWinter 1996)

After the training conference, CRWRC staff began a series of listening tours with partner organizations. The main goal of these tours was to listen to the members of the partner organization talk about their organizational capacity. The means to achieve this goal was the interview protocol developed during the training conference.

The inquiry was adapted to each country, organization, and region. CRWRC staff selected a variety of approaches around the world to make the study appropriate to each unique situation. For example, some conducted the listening tours by bringing together the staff and boards of up to six organizations in a three-day joint retreat. Others, especially those working more at the community level, did the inquiry much more informally while doing day-to-day tasks such as walking to the river or sitting under a mango tree. Staff members were at liberty to contextualize the protocol as well as to choose the setting most appropriate for them.

An important feature of the listening tour was that as many organizational members as possible were included—everyone from the board president to secretaries and other support staff. Also, consistent with the appreciative inquiry methodology, the interview protocol focused the dialogue on identifying the best aspects of the particular organization.

Protocol for Listening Tours

1. In your entire experience with your organization, when have you felt most excited, most alive and most engaged in your work? What were the forces and factors that made it a great experience? What did you do? What did others do? What did your organization do?
2. What do you value most about yourself, your organization, and your work?
3. What are you organization's best practices (ways you manage, approaches, traditions)?
4. What are the unique aspects of your culture that most positively affect the spirit, vitality, and effectiveness of your work?
5. What is the core factor that gives "life" to your organization?
6. What are the three most important hopes you have to heighten the health and vitality of your organization?

Phase 4: Sharing Results of Listening Tours (Spring to Summer 1996)

After the listening tours CRWRC staff and partner organization representatives were invited to regional conferences to share their learning from the listening tours and to begin to identify ways to measure capacity. In each of the four

regional conferences, through large-group and small-group activities, participants shared what they had discovered about organizational capacity.

The objectives of the workshops were to

- open a cooperative dialogue about how to build and monitor organizational capacity
- learn as much as possible from each other about organizational capacity and the best practices for building it
- identify capacity indicators and design a capacity monitoring/assessment tool
- seek a consensus around specific models for building and measuring capacity

During the first stage of the conference, the results of the listening tours were presented. The participants explained what they had discovered about their organization's capacity.

The second stage of the conference was devoted to an open dialogue about measurement. Some key questions discussed dealt with the reason for measurement, what should be measured, how to measure, and whom the measurement was for. Important topics that came up were objective vs. subjective, qualitative vs. quantitative, summative vs. formative. Based on this dialogue, participants were ready for the third activity of the conference—to draft potential measurement instruments about organizational capacity.

In the third stage, participants began writing provocative propositions based on key themes (team building, networking, leadership, community empowerment, and so on) that came out of the listening tours. (See Chapter 5 for a sample proposition.) Using the provocative propositions, participants were able to identify key indicators that would show growth in a given capacity area. They also began to develop new methods of measuring the capacities and indicators they had identified. In East Africa and Asia they proposed one instrument for the whole region. In West Africa they proposed organization-specific tools; while in Latin America they proposed country-specific tools. (See Chapter 6 for some of the tools that were developed.)

Protocol Contextualized

All of the listening tours that were in a language other than English required lots of extra preparation. However, the process of translating the appreciative-inquiry concepts yielded some interesting results.

The peak experience is longer than one moment. In Haiti "peak experience" was translated to "I like it a lot, a lot, a lot."

In West Africa "provocative proposition" was translated to "characteristic of a renewed organization."

Malians had a hard time talking about what they appreciated about themselves. The difficulty was partly related to their high desire for the community to say that. A helpful substitute question was "What does the community appreciate about you?"

If it is assumed that organizations are a mystery, capable of infinite variations of action, the only limitations to organizational greatness are the bounds of our imagination.

Phase 5: Field Test of Tools (Fall 1996 to Winter 1997)

The main objective of the fifth stage of the process was to field-test and fine-tune the draft-measurement instruments. During the next 10 to 12 months, partner organizations along with CRWRC staff worked toward the development of a meaningful measurement instrument. As in the previous conference, this work took place within individual organizations but also within groups of organizations. Honduras and Haiti are good examples of countries in which representatives from partner organizations met together regularly to test and refine the new instrument. In most cases, partner organizations were measuring organizational capacity as they had defined it, using indicators that they had defined and a measurement system that they felt adequately demonstrated growth in the capacity of their organization. Sometimes the instrument was innovative (use of stories and pictures to show change), while at other times, the instrument was more traditional (the use of numbers or letters along with a legend). In all cases, partner organizations attached new meaning to the question "What is organizational capacity?"

Phase 6: Sharing of Ideas (Spring 1997)

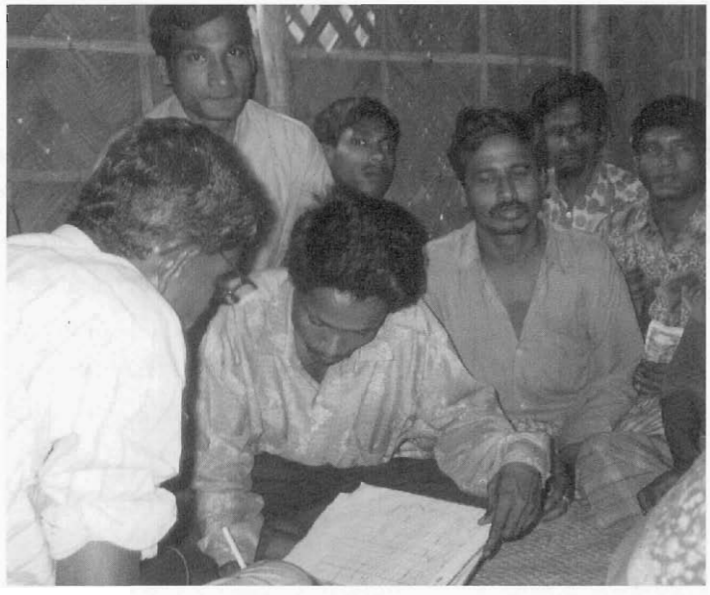
Partner-organization representatives and CRWRC staff came together one last time to share about their experiences in the development and use of the instrument to measure organizational capacity. This was a closing conference, so time was dedicated to looking back, but, more important, time was also spent in celebrating what was achieved. The majority of the partner organizations came away from this inquiry with a deep appreciation for paying attention to organizational capacity, and, more important, with a deep appreciation for the different ways in which people from other places view organizational capacity, as well as for their ideas on how this organizational capacity can be monitored. One result of this final conference was that the participants realized that measuring organizational capacity was important but that the way it is measured is changeable. Many participants left this conference committed to revising their own instruments based on ideas that had been presented at the conference.

A Brief Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) is an approach to organizational analysis and capacity building that intends to discover, understand, and foster learning and innovation in organizations. It is a form of organizational study that involves organizational members in seeking out the very best of "what is" to help ignite their imagination of "what could be." The aim of appreciative inquiry is to generate new knowledge that expands "the realm of the possible" and helps the members of an organization to envision a collectively desired future and to design

improved organizational systems and processes that successfully translate their intentions into reality and their beliefs into practice.

The working theory underlying the appreciative-inquiry approach is guided by the belief that our assumptions and the methods we choose for our inquiries into any situation predetermine what we will find. Consequently appreciative inquiry symbolizes a radical departure from the way we often view and evaluate organizations. It moves beyond seeking out organizational deficiencies and deficits to highlight that which gives life to the organization and sustains its ongoing capacity. Appreciative inquiry asserts that, in many ways, through the questions we ask and the choices we make, we "create" our understanding of our situation. In this way it infers that innovations are determined by the creative and generative questions we formulate about our experiences. Moreover, the dialogue that surrounds the new and innovative knowledge that is generated and shared can also stimulate and strengthen the mood or spirit of an organization. Appreciative inquiry suggests that the inner dialogue within an organization has a powerful impact on staff performance as well as actual and future organizational performance and sustainability. If it is assumed that organizations are a mystery, capable of infinite variations of action, the only limitations to organizational greatness are the bounds of our imagination.



An important part of the regional conferences was visiting community programs.

Appreciative inquiry was born in the early 1980s and since that time has been used by hundreds of groups, organizations, and communities throughout the world to develop new "knowledge of consequence" that transforms their cooperative functioning and renews their collective existence. It is based on four foundational principles of inquiry:

1. *Inquiry into organizational life should begin with appreciation.* Every system works to some degree, and a primary task of management and organizational analysis is to discover, describe, and explain those exceptional moments that give life to the system and activate members' competencies and energies.

2. *Inquiry into what's possible should be applicable.* Organizational study should lead to the generation of knowledge that can be used, applied, and validated in action.

3. *Inquiry into what's possible should be provocative.* More than anything else, an organization's vision will determine its future. Appreciative inquiry builds on the best of "what is" to unleash the collective imagination of organizational members and to spark dialogue about "what could and should be."

4. *Inquiry into organizational life should be collaborative.* There is an inseparable relationship between the process of inquiry and its content. The idea of approaching the inquiry into organizational innovation apart from the concept of collaboration is a negation of the phenomenon itself.

Appreciative Inquiry's Influence on This Study

Appreciative inquiry influenced the capacity-building study in three important ways. First, the *research questions were framed in an appreciative way.* They were selectively designed to search for the positive, "life-giving" aspects of the NGOs involved in the study. In contrast to traditional approaches to NGO evaluation and community assessment, which search for organizational deficiencies and weaknesses and barriers to development, the questions were designed to discover the organizations' best practices, their most sustaining values and beliefs, and the most supportive aspects of their local cultures. The study was based on the assumption that the NGOs and communities were full of love, hope, commitment, vitality, excellence, and expertise, and that the very act of inquiry into these "life-giving forces" would serve both to support and foster their development and contribute to the creation of new social and organizational possibilities. Consequently the research questions that framed the inquiry and the various protocols used to interview program participants were designed to bring to light the positive aspects that had sustained and nourished the NGOs and communities over the years. As expected, the protocol questions significantly influenced what was later "discovered" by partner organizations. By focusing attention on the positive, life-sustaining aspects of the organizations and communities, those aspects were thereby strengthened.

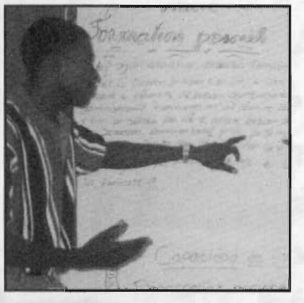
Second, the study was based on a *methodology that fosters dialogue.* It allowed people from many different organizations, countries, and cultures to gather face-to-face. The study was designed to include all of CRWRC's partner organizations worldwide. Appreciative inquiry provided a cooperative methodology that allowed many organizations to come together in a space of safe and supportive dialogue to share experiences, learn from each other, and begin to develop strategies and tools to value and strengthen regional and organizational capacity.

This dialogue occurred on several different levels. The initial dialogue was between CRWRC staff and the staff of partner organizations. Dialogue also occurred within organizations among all staff members and constituents. A further benefit was the dialogue that occurred between different partner organizations. CRWRC's original intent was to encourage dialogue between different partners in order to generate some consensus about measurement tools, but the level of dialogue went much further than that. The hope is that this dialogue will continue, that the relationships between these organizations will be strengthened, and that

the effectiveness of partners will be enhanced as their capacity to work together increases.

Third, as the study unfolded, appreciative inquiry itself was embraced in various forms by the participants of the study as an effective organizational-capacity-building tool. Thus appreciative inquiry served not only as a means of inquiry but as *a practical tool for building the capacity of NGOs and communities.* (For more on applying appreciative inquiry to capacity building see Chapter 5.)

PRINCIPLES OF CAPACITY BUILDING



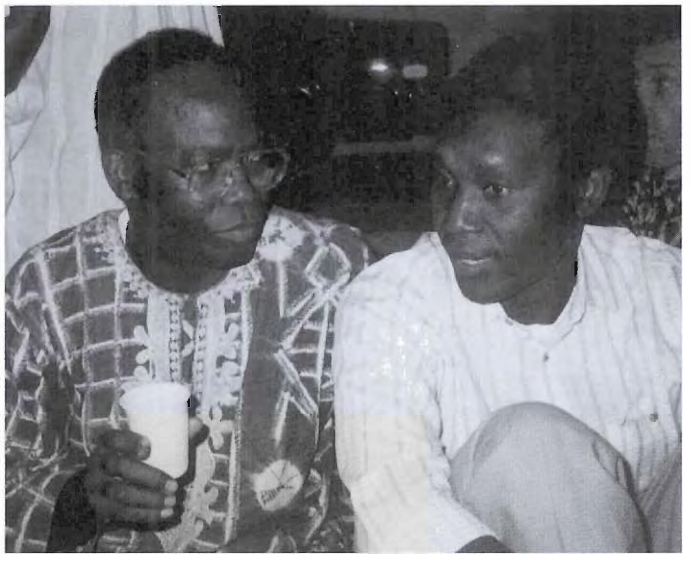
The following is from a 1995 speech given by Dr. Kabiru Kinyanjui of the International Development Research Centre in Kenya to an East African regional conference on organizational capacity.

Sustainable development in East Africa requires that elements of indigenous cultures, traditions, and practices, be embraced in the processes of change. The innovations of social change need to be rooted in indigenous knowledge and on African soil, where they can mature and flourish. Otherwise, these innovations will effect only temporary or inappropriate change that does not meet the needs and values of the people. Because recent change efforts have not been anchored in the rich traditions and cultural assumptions of the African people, they have been swept away with the changing tradewinds of time and sociopolitical contingencies.

Although many areas of the world are ravaged with violence and conflict, the search for lasting solutions lies beyond the immediate concerns of the crises. The process of searching for solutions must come from the people, with the answers indigenously rooted, so that the crisis will not return. These efforts lead to periods of innovation that create new possibilities, new transformations, and new visions.

Outside NGOs cannot provide the answers for the people in crisis. There needs to exist a strong sense of ownership of the change process, or the people will reject the solutions. When innovations are incorporated into the community, they have the power to transform society and to contribute to the sustainability of change. When the solution is their creation and their possession, the people will have the power and confidence to implement the change themselves. Through this process, they will learn to take pride in themselves and in the strength of their community and will have the ability to deal with further crisis situations. ■

While broad support for organizational capacity building as a strategy for community development exists, there has been relatively little systematic inquiry into the forces and factors that contribute to its effective implementation. In this chapter, we share six principles that reflect the collective wisdom of the organizations that participated in the study of the characteristics of organizational capacity building when it is at its best. The principles are not meant to comprise a capacity-building blueprint or a recipe for success. They are rather a set of normative guidelines grounded in the experiences of the study participants and connected to their hopes and aspirations about what organizational capacity building could be and should be.



Mutuality in partnership.

Begin with Partnership

Of all the crucial characteristics of organizational capacity building highlighted by the participants of the study, none was mentioned more frequently and more forcefully than the need for mutual partnership between organizations. It was proposed that organizational capacity is essentially an interorganizational construct, a condition that occurs when organizations enter into mutually edifying relationships with one another to strengthen each other and to carry out their respective missions in the world more effectively. This kind of transformative growth and development flourishes most fully in relationships between equals.

To enter into truly mutual partnerships in the capacity-building process requires a radical shift in the underlying assumptions about what capacity building is and who is responsible for it. Traditionally, Northern NGOs have viewed capacity building as something they can and should do to Southern NGOs. They have primarily used capacity building either as a means of evaluating Southern NGOs to determine where and how to invest, or as a mechanism for channeling programs, resources, or assumed expertise to Southern NGOs in an attempt to strengthen them. Implicit in this perspective is the assumption that Southern NGOs either do not care about their own capacity or are incapable of developing it. In either case, the underlying assumption is one of sufficiency or abundance in the North and deficiency or need in the South.

CRWRC staff and partner organizations are saying that it is time to change the capacity-building paradigm to one of radical reciprocity in relationship. They suggest that the desire for increased organizational capacity and the commitment to capacity building as a strategy for sustainable development are virtually universal. Capacity building is something that most organizations want for their own good.

This is motivated by two primary driving forces. First, and perhaps foremost, the organizations participating in the study are social-service organizations, committed to working with marginalized populations in order to enhance the health, vitality, and sustainability of the communities in which they work. Out of a sincere concern for humanity, their communities, and the condition of the earth, these organizations want to continuously increase their own ability to do their work effectively. Related to this value-led motivation, these organizations realize that their ability to accomplish their missions effectively is inextricably linked to their relevance, legitimacy, and credibility with a variety of internal and external stakeholders—such as current and prospective employees and board members; other local and international NGOs with whom they collaborate; government institutions, which in many cases have direct regulatory authority and in most cases are a potential source of support; and donor organizations. Healthy relationships with these constituencies require strong organizational capacity.

Rather than beginning with predetermined programs and systems of measurement, the first step ought to be to sit down at a common table to share identities, hopes, and aspirations.

To understand organizational capacity building as a process of partnership implies two things. First, the capacity building relationship must start with the act of mutual appreciation. Rather than beginning with predetermined programs and systems of measurement, the first step ought to be to sit down at a common table to share identities, hopes, and aspirations. Then, second, a context-specific capacity-building process and system of measurement can be established through dialogue. This approach invites a liberating shift away from paternalism and into true partnership in the capacity-building relationship. (See Chapter 4 for more on partnership.)

Practice Appreciation

Another finding is that organizational capacity building works best when it is appreciative rather than evaluative. Participants suggested that on a structural level, the evaluation process is demotivating. It focuses on failures rather than on success. Evaluation confirms inadequacies rather than building up confidence and a sense of competence. Given that organizations are organic in nature, that they live and thrive because of the forces and factors in their internal and external environments that give them life, any approach or methodology designed to build and measure capacity should seek to identify and strengthen those forces and factors. Thus the process involves more *valuation* than evaluation. An organization's strengths and best practices are celebrated and highlighted.

Capacity building is learning how to expand and develop beyond where you are and to progress toward a vision. Yet often capacity is determined by how much an organization doesn't know. Most organizational development models and organizational capacity measurement systems focus on the structural aspects of the organization, that is, the tangible things that can be seen and measured in the organiza-

tion. For example, most models focus on information systems, structures, technology, and financial systems. Focusing on these things is necessary but is not sufficient for getting a full understanding of organizational capacity. Capacity is also influenced by cultural factors, the values that govern an organization from within, the sources of motivation and commitment that compel the members of the organizations to go the extra mile. Organizational capacity systems must allow the building and measuring of value-based factors as well as technical factors. There must be a way to maintain an equilibrium between the two.

Organizational capacity systems must allow the building and measuring of value-based factors as well as technical factors.

How does an appreciative approach relate to other approaches? One way is that an appreciative focus looks at history as full, and other approaches look at history as empty. Many models look for deficiencies rather than strengths. They consider the past to be deficient and fail to recognize all of the factors that have given life and sustenance to the organization up to that time. Similarly, many approaches go from the outside in, staring from the viewpoint of a certain model and then imposing it on an organization; whereas the appreciative approach is an inside-out model that begins with the unique experience of the organization and then incorporates experiences from others as it goes, always reaffirming its own unique experience and history along the way. Finally, many models, because they ignore the past, engage in blue-sky thinking that is not grounded. Appreciative approaches remain grounded in the very real best practices and experiences of an organization's history.

The rest of this handbook outlines an appreciative approach to organizational capacity building. It is hoped that this appreciative approach will help organizations to grow and thrive in their unique historical, cultural, and experiential context; to be better able to serve the communities, families, and individuals for whom they exist; to be able to assess and enhance their own performance; and to be able to enter into powerful partnerships with other organizations in which both parties learn and relate to each other with the highest possible standards of accountability and mutual support.

Contextualize Everything

Contextual variation is a key element in organizational capacity building. There are some basic ingredients to building an organization. These "fundamentals" include things such as good governance, the ability to manage effectively, skill at networking, the ability to access and manage resources well, and technical competence. And yet there may be additional things needed in a particular context to help an organization reach its full potential. These may include things such as a focus on leadership, participation, or culture; or spiritual nurturing such as forgiveness, celebration, and so on. These dimensions may vary from context to context, and they may change from stage to stage of organizational development. The organizations engaged in the capacity-building process need to be able to decide in dialogue

what the crucial areas, categories, or dimensions are. It is in this process of dialogue that partner organizations can agree on the systems, structures, and processes that are best—those that have sustained and given life in the past. At the same time the partner organizations can remain fresh, innovative, and learn from each other to proceed and co-create the future.

The ideal system affirms and builds upon what the organization already has. The ideal system must allow enough predictability to provide stability and continuity, and it must allow enough flexibility for innovation and novelty. It has to be a process of affirming some basic ingredients and then building in flexibility, innovation, and fluidity to take in the particular dimensions of various contexts.

The ideal system affirms and builds upon what the organization already has.

A first step toward such an ideal system seems to be developing new definitions of capacity that are more contextualized to specific local culture and understanding. Current models are based on techno-rational definitions. Current models assume that if organizations can conform to a certain set of standardized skills, they will have a strong capacity to accomplish their mission and purpose. In that model, capacity becomes prescriptive. A more appropriate model would offer a process and indicators that are inductive and contextualized. Such a model would begin with local wisdom and build from there. This might also leave room for non-negotiables, but separating the non-negotiables from capacity building and measuring eliminates a stumbling block in the process.

A good example of the OCI system moving to a contextualized mode comes from Swoshika in Bangladesh:

> *A Swoshika staff person, Kohima Daring, talked about the initial experience with OCI as being quite negative—an imposed policy of evaluation. The whole process was perceived as distancing and secretive. However, a CRWRC staff person had the forms translated into Bangla and then involved the group leaders and members in collaborative discussion about the meaning and significance of these measures. The organization came to perceive OCI as a health-monitoring program much like the child-weighing process that helps them to maintain awareness of their progress, growth, and development. The concept of weighing is a very useful metaphor, for it is integrated into much of the organization's culture. As an indication of growth and development, this concept illustrates the freedom and flexibility to reach a particular objective without getting caught up and bogged down in rules and procedures. The focus remains on the positive objective of continuous growth.*
>
> *As the seed of OCI began to take root in Swoshika, it became more contextualized as well. There was a gradual evolution in the use of OCI. At first it was done only at the organization's central office. Then pro-*

gram managers got on board with it. Then field staff began to use it, and finally the local groups began using it themselves. There was also an evolution in terms of the language of the OCI forms. They began in English, were translated into a high level Bengali, and then were translated to a local level Bengali. Eventually local groups created their own forms with their own language. There was also a similar evolution in terms of the categories that were used. Beginning with CRWRC's five standard categories and evolving to a set of categories that were relevant to the local context (which included the five original categories but went beyond them). The OCI became increasingly relevant to and reflective of the community context and experience of the people.

Moises Colop from Guatemala shared another example of a contextualized approach to capacity building:

What kinds of things do we need to do to keep ourselves healthy and vital as an organization?

Twelve years ago, I was working in a variety of communities and some very interesting things were happening in these communities. I remember the spirit of the people. They were so giving.

On this particular trip, we went to visit a community, and we asked how they kept track of their finances. They brought to us five or six members of the community, and along with them they brought black corn, white corn, yellow corn, and beans.

They sat down around a table and began Mayan-style accounting. For the numbers 100–999 they used yellow corn, from 1,000–10,000 they used white corn, and for anything greater than 10,000 they used black corn. For digits less than 100, they used the beans.

I had no idea what they were doing. I didn't understand their accounting system and all that was symbolized by the corn and beans. And I found out that if I wanted written accounting, I would have to do it myself. I learned five things: (1) Not only by numbers can accounting be done. (2) Accounting doesn't have to be a solitary process. The people did community accounting; everybody could come and watch. The process was entirely transparent. (3) The accounting system was a good one; it covered every expense. (4) If I wanted to get accounting information, I had to go to the community to get it. So their accounting system not only built relationships among them, but it also built a relationship between them and me. It was not a distant or "arms-length" system. (5) If I wanted them to give me written accounting, I had to talk it over with them long and hard before I asked for it, because to do so would be to change their culture.

The contextualization of organizational capacity building and measuring activities requires that staff of international and local NGOs act as interpreters, media-

tors between the language and culture of their partner groups and the needs of their own home office. The staff serve as "middle persons" who have to balance conflicting expectations and "translate" different languages and approaches into a commonly intelligible framework. They create systems that integrate differing approaches rather than standardizing them.

Think Organically

A fourth finding of the study was that organic metaphors are most commonly used around the world to understand organizational capacity. Traditionally the organization has been viewed as a well-oiled machine—good parts, oil, adjustments will allow it to run by itself—clear, simple, easy. Participants in the study suggested that we change this mechanical model to that of a living organism—like a human being, a corn plant, or a football team. We must embrace a more organic model. There is a desire to define organizational capacity in life-centric terms—that is, to see organizations as living systems (trees, plants, babies-to-adults, sports teams, and so on) that are sustained and energized by myriad forces and factors in their environment. These forces and factors may shift from time to time, just as a seedling needs a different kind of attention than a full grown tree does. People's awareness of what is needed to promote growth also changes over time, so capacity building is seen as a dynamic, ever-evolving process that requires constant dialogue, creativity, and innovation on the part of the partner organizations. (See chapter 3 for more on this topic.)

Organizational capacity building is a relational process.

For example, one participant suggested that we use the tree metaphor for capacity building—summing the total of air, soil, fertilizer, sun, rain, and so on that a tree needs to grow, to mature, and to bear fruit. Other metaphors included a bakery, in which you need baker, sales person, cleanup person, customers, suppliers, flour, salt, and more. Also mentioned was a football team, emphasizing how it is not enough for each person to possess individual skill, but all need to be able to coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate. Further, the team needs to have a system in place so that if one of the players gets hurt or goes to play for another team, they can replace him, and the team will still play at its peak. From these metaphors they draw the lessons for their own groups, asking, "What kinds of things do we need to do to keep ourselves healthy and vital as an organization?"

In more general terms, organizational-capacity-building systems are strongest when they are based on a relational or inter-human logic rather than on a techno-rational logic. Each organization/community starts with a relationship and then co-creates a capacity-building and measuring system that works for that particular relationship, rather than starting with a pre-defined tool and subordinating the relationship to it. This is not to say that partners in the capacity-building process go into each relationship empty-handed, with no wisdom of their own, and this is not to say that partners have no expectations of each other—but the tool is most effective when it is created in relationship and open to contextual variation.

Emphasize Learning

More than anything else, organizational capacity building is about interorganizational learning. It is about one organization interacting with a variety of other organizations (for example, local communities, other NGOs, universities, consultancy firms, the internet, government bureaus, intergovernmental organizations, businesses) to learn as much as they can about how to strengthen their organizational purpose and performance. Since applicable knowledge is the driver of organizational capacity, the challenge is to discover together the kinds of knowledge that can be integrated by partner organizations to provide nurturing, sustenance, and growth in a given context. This is knowledge that will allow an organization to live, breathe, and function well in a given context as well as to shape that context.

It is important to point out that every organization has something to teach and something to learn. This is particularly noteworthy when one considers that organizational capacity is a product of both transitory and embedded knowledge—and is incomplete without one or the other. Embedded knowledge is that which comes from history, experience, culture, and a familiarity with local context. Transitory knowledge is that which transcends local context and culture and carries learning and understanding from the experience of others. Both kinds of knowledge are important in building organizational capacity, and each organization in the capacity-building process brings both kinds of knowledge. This, too, shifts the traditional relationship between Northern and Southern NGOs from one of teacher-student to one of learner-learner, in which each organization is both a teacher and a student, both the wise elder and the wide-eyed child in the learning process.

Organizational-capacity-building tools thus ought to be tools of learning, more than tools of monitoring. They must be tools that allow the partner organizations to grow stronger in achieving their mission and purpose for being in this world. This means four things:

1. The tools must assess the past, present, and future, not just the present.

2. They must look at the good, the strengths, and not simply the deficiencies.

3. They must be designed to create powerful images of the future that allow organizations to grow in those future directions.
4. Building and measuring capacity must be seen as two separate but interdependent areas of focus.

Organizations need a good learning process for building capacity, and they need to be able to assess what they have learned and accomplished. Simply knowing what they have learned and accomplished is not sufficient for building capacity. Likewise, having a good learning process may not ensure performance. Finally, the primary purpose of measuring capacity building is self-assessment.

Create Systems for Mutual Accountability

Across the board, organizations involved in this study affirmed that one of the most important reasons to measure organizational capacity building was to ensure accountability in relationships. Accountability is one of the primary reasons for considering the question of capacity. Because capacity building is a relational activity done in interdependence with other organizations, accountability in the process is essential. Accountability creates relationships of trust and performance with all stakeholders—communities, government, donors, peer organizations, and staff members within the organization itself.

To clarify this point, one participant shared a story about a shopkeeper who was given a truckload of rice but did not count the bags. He couldn't give an account. But if he had counted them, then he could have tracked what came in, what he had, and what went out. That allowed him to be accountable.

It is important to point out here that accountability is a two-way street. When we talk about mutual partnership in capacity-building relationships, that conversation must be extended to the topic of accountability. This approach also turns the tables on the traditional accountability relationship between NGOs in the North and those in the South. Traditionally the term "accountability" has been used to refer to Southern organizations being accountable to Northern organizations for the funds that Northern organizations have given. In the context of a mutual partnership, the term expands to include an accountability on the part of Northern NGOs to respect the values, agendas, and results of Southern NGOs. And, of course, accountability does not stop at the Northern/Southern interface. Accountability to the communities we serve and to other stakeholders in the sustainable development process is equally crucial.

The normative guidelines, then, for organizational capacity building are partnership, appreciation, contextualization, organic thinking, learning, and mutual accountability. Again, this is not a capacity-building blueprint but rather represents hopes and aspirations about what organizational capacity building can be and should be.

IMAGES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Capacity must be understood in terms that are meaningful to the organization. In some of the conferences participants shared local proverbs that illustrated the capacity areas:

Leadership

- *When the branch hangs low in the road, it gets trampled upon.* (The branch has to put up with everyone stepping on it, showing the patience and tolerance of a leader.)
- *If you want to eat a fig, eat it whole, without opening it—because if you look inside you will see all the seeds and insects and will not want to eat it.* (A leader does not look at all the problems, otherwise he may not be able or may not want to move forward.)
- *If a lizard cuts its tail, it will grow again.* (The leader should take care to nurture his youth because when he is gone, another leader will rise to take his place.)

Vision

- *Wanting is being able to.*
- *If you do not know where you are going, you may never get there.*
- *An old man who is sitting down sees much further than a little boy who is in a high place.*
- *Where there is no vision, there is no future.*
- *They didn't know it was impossible, and that is why they were able to do it.*

Interpersonal Relationship

- *People are the medicine for the people.*
- *No matter how long the night, the day will break.* (Even if we keep isolating ourselves from people, we eventually will return to people.)
- *The single bracelet will not shake, but many will make a beautiful sound.*
- *You cannot clap with one hand.*

Management and Administration

- *Knowledge is power.*
- *You go to search for coals with those who have gone to the fields first.*

Sustainability

- *Give a man a fish, and he will eat for a day. Teach him to fish, and he will eat for a lifetime.*

What Is Organizational Capacity?

Try to define, or even explain, organizational capacity. Certainly it's essential—even indispensable—for an organization to carry out good work. But agreement as to what capacity *is* remains elusive. Valuable, yes—but describable, a bit less so. Nonetheless, there are plenty of descriptions. For example:

> *a blend of good technical and administrative skills, institutionalized processes, sound policies, an ongoing training program, and a built-in means by which an organization identifies and addresses needs and then monitors and evaluates its performance.*

More could be added as well: mobilizing local resources, establishing priorities, ability to negotiate, share information, absorb new knowledge, and appropriately manage resources from donors. Descriptions of capacity are almost necessarily long and vague and end up sounding a bit "windy." This may not be all bad because, capacity—like the wind—encompasses many dimensions. When we talk about wind, we talk about direction, velocity, consistency, a production of energy. It's essential and refreshing. Without wind, air is stagnant.

But, perhaps also like the wind, capacity is something we cannot see and cannot really grasp. It is difficult to fully understand or predict. For example, even if an organization has capacity as described above, it still may be difficult to know if it will weather crisis periods or if the workplace is encouraging and attractive enough to retain quality staff. Even in a mature and stable organization, it may be difficult to know, when capable staff leave or there is a sudden revenue shortfall or there is a serious case of misappropriation, whether the organization will be able to bring in new people, pull itself together, and continue delivering services in a satisfactory manner.

Many developing countries face civil strife, and many national NGOs in developing countries operate in situations of resource constraint and high staff turnover. Organizations with stellar management systems can fold rather quickly in the face of civil conflict or an abrupt funding cutback from donors. Others, however—as during the times of civil war in El Salvador in the 1980s and in Sierra Leone in 1995, for example—though admittedly weak in financial management and other technical skills, are able to bond closer together, hold fast, and serve people in distress. Although they have not yet evolved a good overall management system, they are able to show empathy and impart to people significant messages of peace, solidarity, and reconciliation while also continuing—albeit at a reduced level—with health and education work.

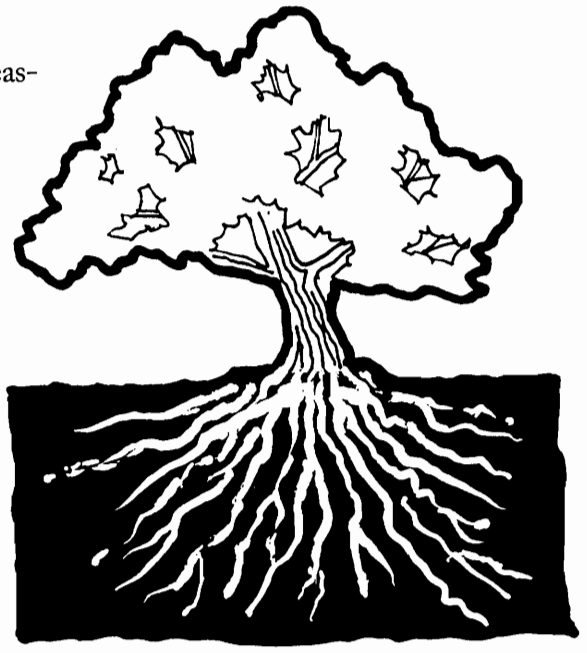
Some organizations function through difficult times, while others are unable to recover from setback. The difference is capacity. However, no list of skills, policies, or practices has proven to be a perfect indicator of future performance. Perhaps a

better way to begin understanding capacity is to present pictures of capacity that Southern NGOs created to define what organizational capacity means to them.

Capacity as Rootedness

An organization with capacity is plugged in. It is connected. It is anchored to the rocks beneath the waves. It is grounded in the reality of everyday life.

In Bangladesh, only those whose ancestry is on its lands can claim to be "sons of the soil"—that is, truly aware and able to understand the cultures of its people. One newly formed organization pictured itself as a freshly planted seed about to sprout, gradually developing roots in fertile soil. Organizations with capacity need to develop roots in the soil of indigenous culture, personal faith, and common experience.



Organizations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are increasingly seeking to frame their futures with appreciation for the traditions and values of their cultures. In this study, as organizations met in regional conferences to talk about capacity, they emphasized how essential cultural values are to a healthy, vibrant organization. As Dr. Kabiru Kinyanjui, of the Nairobi office of the International Development Research Center, shared in one meeting in East Africa, for development to succeed, elements of indigenous culture and traditions need to be embraced in processes and foundations of change. Innovations of social change need to be rooted in the African soil where they can mature and flourish. Moreover, such change must answer needs according to values of the people, their rich traditions and cultural assumptions. Organizations that are rooted in local values are tapping deep cultural resources.

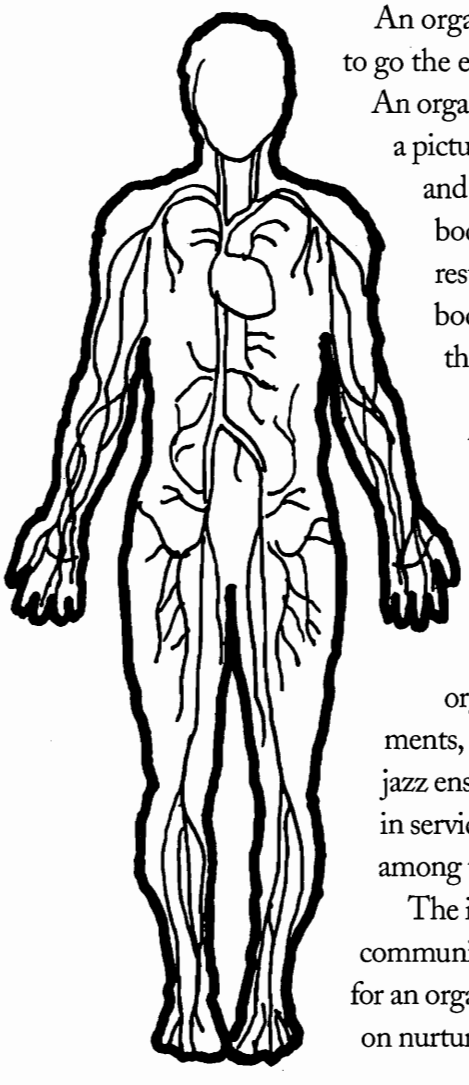
Ugandan organizations, among many others, have said that their faith life—as much as local culture—underlies their reason for "organizational being" and moves them to work with compassion and commitment. Organizations in the Philippines, Mozambique, and Malawi have explained that an organization's capacity is really faith in action. Where there is faith, there is reconciliation, and where there is reconciliation, there is always the avenue for accepting, if not resolving, differences—and this in turn will keep members united in their work. Organizations that are rooted in a shared faith have purpose for existence and motivation for working.

In addition to being rooted in culture and faith, an organization can be rooted in its past, its history, the common experiences of its members. The staff and board of an organization can root the organization in past accomplishments by

building a common memory of the organization's history. Affirmation and intentional dialogue about past accomplishments can bring to the surface how these accomplishments came to be and what made them satisfying events. This library of accomplishment gives shape and substance to an understanding of organizational capacity.

An organization that has roots in culture, faith, and common experiences is able to tap vital and, indeed, primary resources from which an organization can draw. Indeed, culture, faith, and shared accomplishments—resources that are themselves very interconnected—are forms of organizational glue that allow for a diversity of personalities, opinions, and work styles. The extent to which an organization is connected to these resources closely reflects the extent to which an organization is able to deliver quality and innovative work and to ride out the storms of painful situations that may otherwise threaten the organization's very fabric.

Capacity as Community



An organization with capacity is committed. It motivates, even compels one to go the extra mile. It is inter-connected and intra-connected.

An organization in the Dominican Republic shared how a good organization is a picture of a healthy human being, in which all the miles and miles of nerves and blood vessels are connected to such an extent that when one part of the body feels sensation of any sort, it is communicated instantaneously to the rest of the body, and that when there's weakness or pain in one part of the body, the rest of the body mobilizes quickly to compensate for or to heal the part experiencing the weakness or pain.

Other organizations in Central America developed wonderful pictures that illustrate how organizational capacity is built on community. In Haiti, an illustration of a tandem bicycle became a metaphor showing mutual effort, a shared sense of direction, balance, and coordination. In El Salvador, beehives and anthills were metaphors of organization as community with tenacity, shared purpose, and a well-developed distribution of labor. Nicaraguans suggested that a capable organization is like a jazz ensemble, where there are a variety of instruments, creativity, and room for innovation and improvisation. Members of a jazz ensemble are individual players who remain dependent on each other and in service to each other. The end product is good jazz music and uplifted spirits among the players as well as among their listeners.

The importance of community in an organization is not a new idea, but community is rarely discussed in the context of capacity building. It is common for an organization to spend more time and resources on building capacity than on nurturing better relationships within the organization. Moreover, capacity

building is treated as distinct from relationship building. However, this study shows that good organizational capacity is a function of healthy relationships within the organization.

For individual staff members to grow, they need to be involved in dialogue, learning, and nurture, which can happen only within relationships. When the staff of one organization in Bangladesh were asked when they felt most effective and most capable, they replied matter-of-factly that it was when they felt they were part of one family. In Bangladesh, where families are structures of trust, loyalty, and unquestioned commitment to one another, the family is a powerful metaphor for solidarity around organizational objectives.

An organization in El Salvador extended the family metaphor, saying that a healthy organization should extend a sense of loyalty and commitment outside itself to the villages in which it works. A healthy organization was seen as one that could identify with and care for people who had experienced the trauma of losing family members and friends through abduction or death—as has happened frequently since the 1980s—and that remained committed to these people even in the face of threats to its own existence.

Organizational capacity does not exist in the organization—rather, it grows in the network of personal, committed relationships between staff, board, villages, and other NGOs. A development organization's capacity is built on the community it is able to build.

Capacity as a Living, Open System

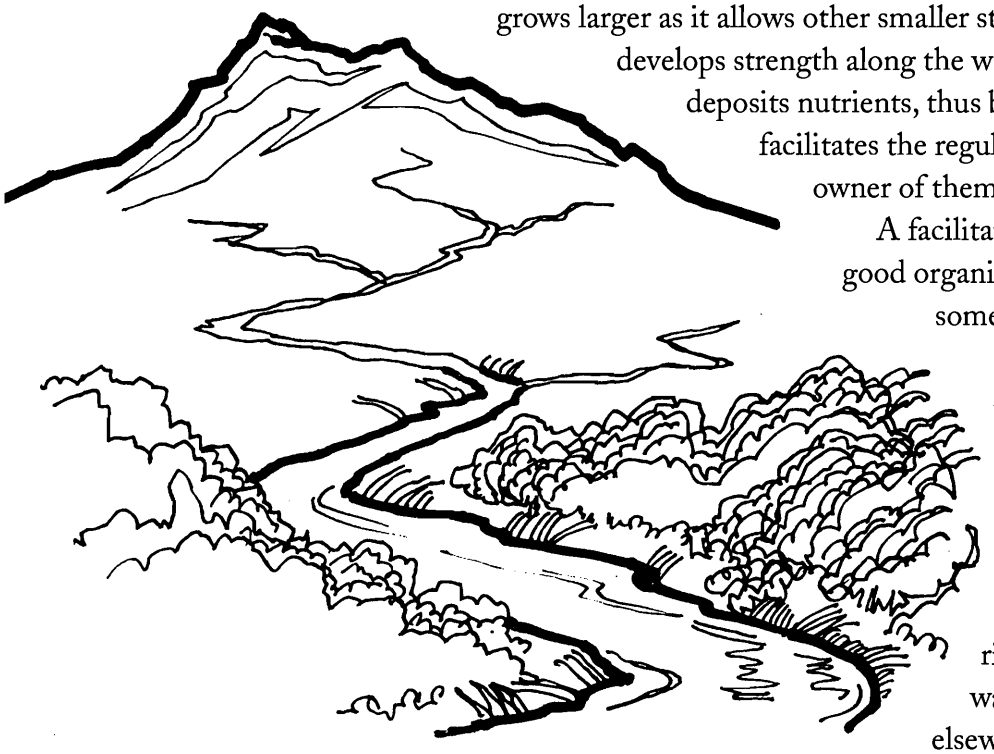
An organization with capacity is alive. It is flexible. It learns with life and cheer. It responds to change and seeks out opportunities for innovation. It nourishes.

One metaphor of an organization with capacity has been that of a well-oiled machine in which system inputs are processed and transformed into system outputs. Just as a car takes gas, oil, maintenance, and occasional repair work to keep running smoothly, so a development organization takes resources, consultation, staff training, and occasional restructuring to deliver consistent services to the poor. This paradigm leads to some faulty conclusions about organizational capacity. First, it implies that every organization can be tuned-up with a certain set of procedures. It implies that one set of tools can be used for all organizations, that a system for measuring capacity in one organization will work for any organization. The machine paradigm also leads us to think of "capacity" in the sense of industrial capacity. Development organizations become interchangeable factories that churn out results.

But organizational capacity is far different from industrial capacity. Whereas the daily processing capacity of an oil refinery can increase with more or newer machinery, organizational capacity is not proportionately linked to numbers of

staff, or to the quantities or even the qualities of training and policies that are in place. Organizational capacity incorporates quantity, quality, and efficiency dimensions—as would the oil refinery—but it also has more value-based, life-centered dimensions. Perhaps this is because development NGOs are service-oriented and people-focused. Both process and product are important.

A partner in Honduras pictured a good organization not as a smoothly running machine but as a winding river. A river starts small and then grows larger as it allows other smaller streams to join with it. It develops strength along the way. A river carries and deposits nutrients, thus bringing life to a region. It facilitates the regular acts of life but is not the owner of them.



A facilitative role like this makes for good organizational capacity. It is somewhat akin to the through-put in traditional-systems thinking, but the facilitation is seen as important in its own right, perhaps the most important attribute of a good organization. Because the river accepts streams of water that have their origin elsewhere, it grows in strength. And because it grows in strength, it is able to nourish and carry life to more and more plants and creatures.

Like a river, growth in organizational capacity does not follow a straight path or a mechanical process. Capacity grows in fits and starts. A river meanders and winds in cooperation with the lay of the land. Organizational capacity—happening at its best—may be two steps forward, one step back, perhaps not at all incrementally or in sequential fashion, perhaps in a time frame that begs patience. Hardly a cut-and-dried affair, said one East African, building capacity can be a messy, up-and-down type of business.

Unlike the smoothly running machine, an organization's life cycle is not linear, and its life is not finite. There does not necessarily have to come a time when the costs of keeping the organization running outweigh the benefits, where the inputs outweigh the outputs. Depreciation costs do not need to accumulate to the point where the organization is written off, as a machine would be.

An organization, by its very virtue of bringing human beings together, carries with it seeds by which to constantly renew itself, re-energize itself, and live to see new dawns and horizons. Guatemalans spoke of corn, their staple crop, as providing a fine picture of their organization, representing life for its people year after year, life by which people grow and serve. An Indonesian organization pictured a coconut tree growing on the banks of a river as being a true symbol of the way they function. The tree yields a harvest of coconuts each year, some of which are eaten and others of which fall into the river, only to be carried to another place where the seeds will cause a new tree to come forth and continue the cycle of life and life-giving.

An organization with capacity is a living and open system, taking in resources from a wide range, benchmarking best practices along the way, learning about what yields life and energy, keeping boundaries porous and movable. Like a tree, a garden, a river, a field of corn, it sustains.

Capacity as Shared Commitments and Hopes

An organization with capacity transcends personal interests. It embraces personal vision and a common vision of the future. It champions the words of Dom Helder Camara, a priest who labored among the poorest of the people of Brazil, that while dreaming alone may be a human reaction or impulse to handle day-to-day realities, dreaming together creates an unbreakable bond of commitment and a real hope that a better tomorrow will actually come.

Organizations inevitably change and move: there's staff turnover, a transforming environment, altered mandates and objectives. Organizational capacity is reflected in the ability of members to reflect, regroup and move forward in the midst of change, challenge, and even crisis. The organizational glue to which we earlier referred (culture, faith, and shared experiences) is essential, but so, too, are hope and a commitment to the future. Even more essential is that commitment and hope are broadly and deeply shared among those entrusted to carry out the organization's work.

An Indonesian organization pictured themselves as a bus on a rough road, steadily climbing toward two mountains towering in the distance. Another organization added to this image by putting all of its staff, board, and stakeholders inside the bus, all wearing smiles, and with the bus driver tenaciously holding on to the wheel, not letting the potholes or gravelly road deter

the bus from moving toward its goal. Organizational capacity is this common vision, this tenacity to keep going and attain a goal.

A Nicaraguan organization pictured themselves as an athlete. The athlete has a goal, works hard, and is in constant training. Inspired by a blend of commitment and hope, the best athletes are intent on performing as well as they possibly can. Several other organizations saw themselves as a team and viewed organizational capacity as depending on teamwork. An organization is a team of players in which each trains alone as well as in the context of the team. The team members know each other well, rely on each other, and instinctively know where the other will be on the playing field.

Just as organization with capacity is rooted in culture, faith, and past experience, it is drawn toward shared hopes and common dreams for its future. It needs time and space in which to reflect and dream, to renew commitments, to appreciate (even celebrate) that which has yielded satisfaction—and, in so

Learning from an Organization with Capacity

The Teso Rural Development Organization—Vision Terudo—has survived through a civil war, a famine, and even major organizational restructuring. Its ability to meet these challenges and to maintain effective programs is a clear demonstration of organizational capacity. This narrative is based on answers that staff and board members gave to two questions: What have been the most important events in the history of your organization? And what has made your organization strong?

History

Vision Terudo works with the Iteso people in Northeastern Uganda on the high, fertile plains where the red soil contrasts with the green vegetation. In every cluster of buildings along the highway are a few unstable structures in need of repair. Five years of relative peace have not been enough to erase the evidence of civil war. But this formerly prosperous region is beginning to recover, and Vision Terudo is an important part of the process.

Vision Terudo began in 1983, when the people of the Teso region raised cattle and exported cotton. Debora Egow and other founding members saw the potential for the poor to organize to work for the improvement of their own communities. They started Vision Terudo because they wanted an organization that would address the spiritual and physical needs of the poor. Many of the founding members of Vision Terudo belonged to St. Phillips church, and originally they intended the organization to be associated with the Church of Uganda. As it emerged, however, Vision Terudo became an organization with ties to many different churches in the region. Many of the founding members are still active in Vision Terudo today. The founding members, or trustees, appoint the twelve members of the board, which is made up of the executive director, two community leaders, and nine people not directly associated with Vision Terudo.

One of the organization's first struggles was to find capable staff. Since they were the first NGO in the region, they decided to start slow and develop staff over time. One thing that has helped with the development of staff has been partnerships with larger organiza-

doing, to revalue organizational assets that may otherwise be seen to depreciate with time.

Organizational visions need to be chosen by the board, staff, and stakeholders together. The organization in Indonesia, for example, saw themselves in a picture that they themselves drew—no doubt influenced by the mountainous terrain in which their organization works. Just as organizational capacity is specific to organizations and is contingent on time and environment, the ideal of a good development organization varies from one organization to another. Moreover, organizations are drawn to images of the future that they themselves have chosen. The energy created in the construction of an image will, in turn, release greater commitment and hope among the people who are working toward that image.

Traditional understandings of capacity are often tied too much to the present—seeking to assess the current state of an organization instead of working for the best possible future. Capacity-assessment systems have too often empha-

tions. Vision Terudo began a relationship with CRWRC in 1985. Later they received funding and consultation from Tear Fund, Action Aid, Compassion Canada, UNDP, and the Ugandan government. Staff members point out that these partnerships have been important not just for the funding they have received but also because of the things they have been able to learn from these organizations.

In 1986 politics and an armed rebellion disrupted the region. This was a time of political unrest throughout Uganda. Government troops moved into the Teso region because rebel troops were hiding there. The Karamojong, a tribe from the northern part of the country, took advantage of the confusion and sent out parties of cattle raiders. Because of the resulting instability, the government eventually moved the people into camps to impose order. The work of Vision Terudo was affected by the war too. In 1988 the executive director and many of the board members resigned. Even so, the organization continued. In 1989 Vision Terudo had its highest funding and highest staffing levels. The staff risked their lives to visit communities during the war. When people were moved into camps, the Vision Terudo staff shifted to providing relief work in the camps.

When the hostilities ended in 1991, the region started the long process of recovery. There were few crops to harvest, the roads were damaged, most of the cattle were gone, and many of the traditional clan leaders were dead. Vision Terudo once again needed to shift its work to address the changing needs of the people it served. It started a program to distribute a disease-resistant strain of cassava and received funding for an oxen-restocking program. In spite of the tragedy of the war, Vision Terudo staff members point to some positive changes. Since the cattle were gone, communities were open to considering forms of livelihood other than cattle raising. And since many of the elders had been killed, leadership roles expanded to include women and the young.

In 1994 a severe famine affected the region. By the time Vision Terudo was able to get funding for a feeding program, many children were dangerously malnourished. All programs stopped for 40 days, and all staff (even senior staff) helped distribute emergency food to families with chil-

sized appraisal over learning, innovation, or identification of potential. Like sunshine on a foggy morning, shared hope can dissolve rancor and burn away differences or apathy that hangs over and impairs even short-term visioning. At a conference in East Africa one participant noted that "capacity is much more than a mere possession of skills. Often organizations with the greatest capacity do not possess the skills but possess the spirit, enthusiasm, and hope for change."

Each of these four metaphors—capacity as rootedness, as community, as a living system, and as shared hopes—look at capacity from a different angle. Together they show organizational capacity to be complex and multi-dimensional. These metaphors do not completely define organizational capacity—and thankfully so, for it is more important for each organization to identify for itself the ingredients for a good organization. We are learning that an organization reflecting good capacity is somewhat like a festive curry meal. There are

dren under five years old. Later that year the current director, Susan Egaru, was appointed. She had the difficult task of helping the organization to adjust to reduced funding levels after the large build-up during the war. The board directed her to look at the structure of the organization. CRWRC helped her come up with a plan that employed more integration between the different program areas. The number of staff was reduced from 35 to 15. This was a painful and difficult time for all who were involved.

Organizational Capacity

Vision Terudo is a strong organization. This can be seen in the scores they have received according to an old CRWRC capacity-assessment tool, the SRS. But the strength of Vision Terudo is even more clear from conversations with the organization's staff and board members. They consistently identify five things that explain their ability to survive as an organization through many difficult times: their spiritual foundation, their committed staff, an involved board, good networking, and strong links to communities. These five areas may not provide a general definition of organizational capacity, but they certainly explain a lot about the capacity of Vision Terudo.

Spiritual Foundation

Every staff person made clear that Vision Terudo is a Christian organization founded on Christian ideals. Staff members understood their work as a service to God and mentioned the importance of the Bible studies they had every morning. They said these Bible studies had been especially important during times of crisis in the organization. During the war the staff members were often viewed as neutral parties because of their open faith, but it was still dangerous to visit communities. The Bible studies helped them to remember that they were not just working for themselves. These morning meetings were essential for morale when the number of staff had to be reduced. By praying together, the staff members were able to have honest conversations about the cutbacks. Although many people were upset about the cuts, they continued to believe in the mission of Vision Terudo.

Committed Staff

The war was probably the most difficult time for the staff of Vision Terudo, but there were other diffi-

staple ingredients that are understood as being essential—transparent management systems, clear communication, participatory work approaches—but there are also specific ingredients that can be selected only by the people of that place. And, in the end, only they will be able to mix all the ingredients together to make a curry that will truly define what they and their communities cherish.

Organizational capacity, like the wind, is something we will not be able to fully grasp, understand, or predict. Again, thankfully, we can put less weight on full understanding and more importance on a process of appreciation, hope, and discovery itself. As Marcel Proust has said, "The real voyage of discovery consists not so much in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes."

culties as well. Some staff members remembered times when they continued working even without salaries. The spiritual foundation of the organization is certainly one reason for the commitment of the staff. Another reason is the training and development they received from the organization. Staff members said that they felt they had become more competent through their association with Vision Terudo. They were pleased with the opportunities they had to learn from partner groups that provided training.

Involved Board

The board of Vision Terudo meets twice a year, but board members remain deeply involved. They work closely with the senior staff and have become acquainted with the grass-roots-level work through regular visits to communities. The staff have a lot of respect for the board, and they report that their meetings are productive.

Good Networking

Vision Terudo has received funding and consultation from a variety of organizations including Tear Fund, Action Aid, Compassion Canada, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Ugandan government. The organization has developed the skill of raising funds from international donors and learning from them while maintaining their own agenda, but the staff are just as interested in developing ties with other Ugandan development organizations. They are excited to pass along things they have learned from international partners to help other local organizations. They see themselves as a source of management resources, and they see their system of working with community committees as a model that other organizations can learn from.

Strong Links to Communities

The staff of Vision Terudo say that the communities are the source of strength for the organization. Community members interact with the board, and the plans for the organization originate in community committees. Staff members are quick to point out that their programs have worked because they are built on the strengths of the communities. The spiritual foundation of Vision Terudo reflects the strong religious roots of the Teso people, and the system of working through village committees is based on the existing decentralized clan leadership.

ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Once upon a time there were some "rich" people who wanted to help the "poor."

"Look at how much we have," they said, "and how much poor people do not have. We need to help the poor people."

So the people formed an organization that would give things to the poor people around the world.

"This is good," they decided. "But, we need to help more poor people. What if we cooperated with organizations in the poor countries? Then we could teach things to them, and they could help the poor people."

So they did this. They started cooperating with organizations in poor countries and were able to help many more poor people.

"Wow! We are really doing something good now," they declared. "Now, if we teach these organizations in the poor countries everything we know, then they can keep working without our help. We need to figure out how to train these organizations."

They sat down to think for a while. They thought of their own organization as a machine. Feed the organization the right resources and provide the right maintenance and the organization will achieve efficient results in helping the poor. They developed a system for other organizations to evaluate their efficiency. "This system will help other organizations to develop organizational capacity," they said.

Then one day they decided to get all of the organizations together to have a discussion about organizational capacity. "Each organization is a different kind of machine," they said. "As you think of your own organization, how can you know if it is running efficiently? How can you know if you have organizational capacity?"

One organization stood up and said, "We are not a machine. We are a cassava plant. We know we have organizational capacity because even when we get chopped down and trampled by drought and war, we grow again just like a cassava plant."

Another organization stood up and said, "We are not a machine. We are an ant hill. We know we have organizational capacity because we all work hard in our different ways for the good of the whole community. We may be small like ants, but we are strong when we work together."

The machine was silent for a while. "It seems that not all organizations that work with the poor are like machines. Maybe we can learn how to survive from the cassava plant and learn about community from the ants."

Later the cassava plant and the ant hill were alone. "I think the machine learned something today," said the cassava plant.

"Yes," said the ant hill, "I think we helped the machine to develop some organizational capacity." ■

Three Models

The challenges of development are complex, ranging from village-level concerns to international policy. There are organizations and institutions of all sizes involved in difficult issues ranging from the environment to health care to economic development. Cooperation between organizations is an essential strategy tool for understanding and addressing these complex and ever-changing issues. A form of cooperation that deserves attention is relationship between Southern NGOs and Northern NGOs. This chapter presents three models of North-South relationships. Colonial relationships have been the norm for much of the past century. These relationships allow one organization to have a large impact on another but do not promote participation and creativity. Consultative relationships are more open, giving Southern organizations more freedom to choose their own destiny but still have limited participation and dialogue. Collaborative partnership, in which both parties agree on a common goal and are open to being influenced by the other, offer great potential for capacity building. But these kinds of relationships are rare and take extra work. They must be built on mutual appreciation and clear communication about shared values, and they can be maintained only with constant dialogue and organizational commitment. But the work it takes to achieve these collaborative partnerships yields exciting results. That which is built together—through shared vision, joint commitment, cooperation, and collaboration—promises to be more appropriate, effective, and sustainable.

Colonialism and Development

Throughout modern history, many people have believed that European civilizations have been the makers of history. In his book *The Colonizers' Model of the World,* J. M. Blaut states that "Europe eternally advances, progresses, modernizes. The rest of the world advances more sluggishly, or stagnates: it is 'traditional society.' Therefore, the world has a permanent geographical center and a permanent periphery: an Inside and an Outside. Inside leads, Outside lags. Inside innovates, Outside imitates." With such reasoning, most Western people have believed that underdeveloped countries could benefit by being schooled, trained, and modernized. This Eurocentric mindset prompted developed countries to share their advantages in information, technology, and truth with the developing world. Often these advantages were shared for the economic gain of developed countries—to be able to dominate the "underdeveloped" and "unenlightened" countries' resources and peoples.

Some modernization was done in the spirit of helping—bringing the underdeveloped and unenlightened into the light, into the modern world, the *correct* world of religion, philosophy, health, and welfare. The task of development was to bring these gifts to the underprivileged. This attitude of care-taking gave rise

to a paternalistic relationship between the Western world and the non-European world. Thus, the world was divided between those on the *Inside,* who possessed the knowledge and skills to innovate and change, and those on the *Outside,* who were more stagnant, uninventive, and in need of the *Inside* as a catalyst for positive social and economic change.

This colonial model of development was demonstrated not only in how colonial governments treated their colonies; it was mirrored in most relationships between organizations in the developed world and organizations in the underdeveloped world. Businesses came to dominate. Missionaries came to convert. Even development organizations came to impose a set agenda of Western education, Western medicine, and Western agriculture. Few came to the developing world to learn.

Partnership Proposition

East African organizations created this provocative proposition about partnership in May 1995:

CRWRC and partners are celebrating similarities and differences. We are understanding of each other's values; we are respecting and valuing each other's cultures; we are appreciating the differences and therefore are learning from each other. We admit our needs and contract with each other to help each other grow. We both give and take and share with each other much that is of value. We deliberately solicit and rely on our partners' input. We assist our partners to serve in other parts of the world. We complement each other.

This relationship between the West and the rest of the world was misguided. The organizations and institutions of the West had to understand their own unique contributions and technologies, while at the same time valuing the contributions, technologies, and cultural expressions of the rest of the world. They had to integrate with other countries and regions of the world in a way that moved beyond colonialism.

Colonialism to Consultation

The end of World War II saw the virtual end of colonialism and the beginning of a different understanding of development, a time when advanced nations worked to bring prosperity and advancement to poor nations. Many nations became independent of colonial rule. These former colonies, once seen as extensions of European powers, were now seen as independent nations. These countries were expected to become like the developed nations of the world by building economies, governments, and education systems like those in the developed world. The role of the developed world was to provide the expertise to help these nations catch up.

Northern NGOs began to multiply in the 1960s. These organizations hoped to provide the resources, training, and access to information that would help organizations in the developing world become like their counterparts in the developed

world. The North and South formed consultation relationships that paved the way for more two-way communication. While the North was the primary influence in these relationships, the South was being given the chance to communicate more of their needs, ideas, and perspectives. The North was still the expert imparting information, knowledge, and wisdom to the South, and the South was receiving this expert information with little regard for cultivating its own knowledge and expertise. Although this type of consultant-recipient relationship is not built on mutual recognition and understanding of each other's strengths, it is a relationship of cooperation. Both participants are willfully working together for a common purpose. The introduction of cooperation into the North-South relationship began with consultancy, but the evolution of cooperation has continued.

Their success in these areas will depend on regional collaboration with other organizations.

Moving Toward Collaboration

As the world faces the complex challenges of health care, environmental degradation, growing inequality, and international debt, cooperation is essential. This was the message of the 1997 International Development Conference titled "The New Face of Development." The three speakers at the opening plenary session—World Bank President James Wolfensohn, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin, and Organization of African Unity Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim—all emphasized the importance of alliances between multi-lateral institutions, governments, and NGOs.

On a smaller scale, local development organizations have a parallel desire for cooperation. When organizations like Vision Terudo in Northern Uganda talk about their hopes for the future (see the end of chapter 3), the theme of collaboration comes up repeatedly. Their goal is to expand not just the number of communities they work in but also the number of organizations they relate to. They are excited to see some of their strategies duplicated by other organizations in the area, and they hope to develop a resource library for the region. As they dream about the future of the communities they work with, they see the importance of promoting agricultural exports and reducing the arms trade in the region. Their success in these areas will depend on regional collaboration with other organizations. Internationally and at the local level, cooperation is the key to magnifying the impact of organizations small and large.

Throughout this study, development organizations have had opportunities to discuss how they wished to relate to Northern NGOs like CRWRC (see boxes in this chapter). Southern NGOs talked about the importance of mutual respect, transparency, and cooperation based on shared values. They said that organizations should be able to work together with common goals based on local needs and resources and that this cooperation should have shared leadership. They presented the ideal of training, developing, and listening to each other—two-way dialogue

instead of one-way monologue. They dreamed about cooperative alliances between the North and South that would allow for multiple perspectives. These organizations were talking about moving beyond colonial and consultative ways of relating to each other to collaborative partnerships (see the following chart).

North-South Relationships			
	Colonial	**Consultative**	**Collaborative**
Relationship	Dependent	Independent	Interdependent
Based on	Resources	Knowledge	Appreciation
Influence	One-way	One-way	Mutual
Communication	One-way	Two-way	Multidimensional
Process	Project Mangagement Quantity-Focused	Skill Development Quality-Focused	Capacity Development Impact-Focused
Outcome	Project completed	Organization Fixed	Partnership Built

Collaboration and Capacity Building

When two or more organizations enter into a collaborative partnership, there are immediate benefits. The combined programs and constituencies of the organizations make new funding and new programming possible, allowing for greater resource leverage. In addition, collaborative partnerships can heighten the credibility of the organizations involved. The longer-term benefits, however, are more dramatic. When organizations relate to each other as partners, interorganizational learning becomes possible. The focus on learning, instead of the training of the consultative model, is the foundation of organizational capacity building, and capacity building is the key to sustainable development.

The values of efficiency and effectiveness have often been behind the strategies of many Northern NGOs. In a colonial relationship the main concern is the efficiency of projects. How much can be achieved with the least resources? In a consultative relationship the concern for project efficiency remains, but the effectiveness of the organization is even more important. How can an organization improve the quality of its work? In a collaborative partnership, the concern is for the long-term efficiency and effectiveness of the partnership, not just each partner. How can each partner increase its sustainable impact? This concern for the sustainable impact of a partnership leads to an interest in building organizational capacity.

Though the terminology is different, in the last couple of decades Western organizations have begun to implement empowerment strategies to reflect a similar move toward collaboration both within organizations and between organizations. Within organizations, these strategies aim to unleash the creativity and energy in people

moving from hierarchical structured organizations to more egalitarian organizations. The trend has been to change from organizations controlled from the top down to more participatory organizations, in which decision making is based on broader input. The desire for broader input into decision making extends even beyond the organization. In this way stakeholders from within the organization and from the environment in which the organization functions have a much greater degree of influence.

The desire for broader input into decision making extends even beyond the organization.

With this emphasis on greater participation, a new form of leadership is emerging in some Western organizations that is more fluid, contextual, and collective. These forms of leadership in the West are based on values more prevalent in non-Western cultures. Many non-Western cultures place a higher value on community and are less individualistic. If this is the case, perhaps the Western world, as never before, is in a position of being able to see and experience the value of being in equal partnership with developing countries.

Building Collaborative Partnerships

In spite of the benefits of collaborative partnerships between the North and South, these partnerships are still uncommon. Dependency-creating projects that focus primarily on the transfer of resources are more common, as are expert consultants that can be found in the capital cities of every developing country. This should not be too surprising, since collaborative partnerships are difficult to form. They require work, sacrifice, and, above all, new behaviors. Since a partnership requires some sacrifice of autonomy, both organizations must believe that cooperation is in their own best interest and in the best interests of the communities they hope to work with. Partnerships are at their best when both parties have the common goal of bringing positive and sustainable development to poor communities. Emphasis must be placed on accomplishing community-level results, thus improving the quality of the work and the long-term development of both the community and the donor organization. That is possible only when organizations strive to understand the relationships and interconnectedness of the various development organizations and institutions and the impact they have on one another.

Partnership Foundations

Organizations in West Africa developed the following list of foundations for collaborative partnerships:

- shared vision and mission
- shared value systems as they relate to development
- mutually agreed-to terms of engagement as they relate to decision-making processes and arenas as well as to the scope and parameters of authority of each partner
- agreed-upon information-exchange system
- concurrence to a long-range plan
- continuing dialogue, inquiry, and reciprocal feedback
- commitment to regular peer review of relationships and outcomes
- openness to learning from each other, other people, groups, and the environment

Once both organizations are convinced that cooperation will help them achieve their organizational goals, there is the further work of dialogue about values. Organizations must be compatible in terms of their non-negotiable values and must scrutinize the commitment and capabilities of prospective partners. Collaborative partnerships demand not only greater involvement of each party but also common goals, values, ideals, and transparent communication. This type of partnership can be built only on commitment to one another, based on a relationship in which each party is free to influence and be influenced by the other. Core values must not be threatened; they should be encouraged to flourish and to inspire action. Collaborative partnerships must be based on a foundation of mutually appreciative dialogue and a quest for excellence. The values of both organizations may not be identical, but there must be a commitment to communicate and respect these values.

Maintaining Collaborative Partnerships

Once a collaborative partnership is formed, the work is just beginning. If the relationship is working, it will change over time. Like a child, it needs a nourishing

Life-Giving Forces of Partnership

In Asia organizations from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, and Cambodia formed four groups and produced the following lists of necessary ingredients for collaborative partnerships:

Group A

Joining arms

Solidarity

Equal responsibilities

Family

Helping each other

Learning together

Loving each other

Mutual understanding and sharing

Group B

You have to work things out

You have to nurture your creations

You have to be open to new discoveries and challenges

You have to allow for differences

Group C

Mutual agreement

Stimulate one another for each other's benefit

Willingness to listen

Growing interdependence

Appreciate one another

Equal treatment

Transcend culture

Group D

Partnership is birds flying together.

One goal

We need each other

Pacing, alternating leadership

Coordination

Flexibility

Reciprocity

Equals

Ownership

Partnership is a honeymoon spirit that lasts and lasts.

environment and will likely grow to challenge its parent organizations. A partnership is not just a written agreement to work together; the alliance must be structured as an independent identity that requires resources, changed behavior in both organizations, and intentional leadership.

A collaborative relationship will require resources as long as it is functioning. The first resource required is staff time. High quality staff must be assigned to the alliance. The partnership will thrive not just on new ideas and joint programs but on personal relationships between individuals from both organizations. There will also be a financial cost to maintaining a partnership. The increased volume of communication and the necessity of meeting together will have real costs. The strategic importance of partnership must be made clear in both organizations in order to justify the continuing use of resources.

Sharing cultural events helps partnerships to become personal.

The partnership will also require changed behavior in both organizations. The planning processes must move away from legalistic blueprint approaches to become more dynamic, based on experience, dialogue, and mutual adjustment. Though this type of planning yields innovative programs, it is not the usual way for organizations, especially Western organizations, to work. Another change in behavior will need to be a different way of thinking about results. There must be persistence through inevitable early failures; the temptation for premature evaluation using traditional output criteria must be resisted. A partnership cannot sacrifice the long-term viability of either organization to achieve short-term efficiency.

Finally, the partnership will require intentional leadership. Collaborative partnerships must be led, not just managed. Since partnerships rest on reciprocity, there should be reciprocity in benefits and there should be equity in the management of the alliance. Through words and actions, leaders in both organizations must clearly communicate the purpose, importance, and legitimacy of the collaborations. Because collaborative partnerships are built on reciprocal relationships between autonomous partners, they must be held together and inspired by a continuously renegotiated and adjusted common image of the future.

Results of Collaborative Partnerships

Organizations that are engaged in collaborative partnerships will change. The more intensive the interdependence between organizations, the more each institution will change. The results of these changes affect community-level development work within the whole network of organizations involved in development. Positive

renewal and accelerated innovation will be the result as the number of North-South and South-South partnerships multiply and as more organizations become proactive about inter-organizational learning.

As organizations from the North and South begin to see each other as partners in development, they become more open to seeing communities as agents of change instead of as objects of development. Participatory development at the community level is possible when both Northern and Southern organizations understand reciprocal forms of collaboration. Organizations that embrace participation between and across organizations are more open to hear the needs expressed in communities and are more capable of unleashing local ownership, local accountability, and local knowledge for sustained development. Northern and Southern organizations can step out of the paradigms of power, authority, and control in their relationships with communities and into a framework of creation through interdependence and interconnectedness.

Participatory development at the community level is possible when both Northern and Southern organizations understand reciprocal forms of collaboration.

Community-level development work will change as collaborative partnerships are developed, but, just as important, the whole system of development, from community groups to multinational NGOs to multilateral institutions, will change. Donors, Northern organizations, Southern organizations, and communities with a common vision can agree to a broad division of labor in which each concentrates on making itself an effective part of the whole system. Two-party, North-South partnerships can be replaced with broad, multi-organizational partnerships. In this study of capacity, many organizations have already caught the vision for regional collaboration. Internationally and at the local level, cooperation is the key to magnifying the impact of organizations small and large.

There has been a long history of colonial relationships between the North and South. However, these relationships are not stagnant. Many relationships have moved from a colonial model to a consultative model and from a consultative model to a collaborative model of partnership. In striving to become more inclusive of each other's ideas, knowledge, and wisdom, there is a push to empower all members of the system in order to build the capacity of NGOs in both hemispheres. It is not necessarily an easy process, but there is a lot of energy focused on building collaborative partnerships and alliances between and across the North and South. These partnerships will be built as organizations recognize that their best interests can be served in collaboration, and as they work to communicate their deepest values. In order to be maintained, these partnerships will require committed resources, changes in behavior, and quality leadership. If collaborative partnerships are built and maintained, the result will be development programs that are responsive to communities and are built on the greatest strengths of many different types and sizes of organizations.

Speech by Ricardo "Toyditz" Cosico (August 20, 1996)

In August 1996 the board of delegates of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee met with representatives of all of the organization's stakeholders: staff, donors, program participants and staff of partner organizations. At that gathering, Ricardo Cosico, the executive director of Kabalikat Inc., a partner organization in the Philippines, shared this vision for partnership between CRWRC and its many stakeholders.

Good morning to all of you. Greetings from my Christian brothers and sisters in the Philippines.

The first time I was here, last September, was a dream come true for me. I praise the Lord for the opportunity of traveling to see North America. (There were lots of lessons that I learned while I was here . . . and I was able to share that with my co-workers back home.) This time it is again a dream come true. Why? The last time I was here, I was able to share with the CRWRC board members my dream . . . and that dream was . . . that someday there will be a congress of all national leaders of the countries that are being helped by CRWRC and that these people in that congress will pray, reflect, and plan for their future and will be able to chart their own destiny. It would be a wonderful experience if I could sit down with my brothers and sisters from Mali, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nicaragua, Honduras, Tanzania, and Uganda. . . . I know that by God's grace and your support it will happen someday.

Today, this gathering is again a dream come true—now my brothers and sisters from the South are here . . . and not only that but we also have with us our North American brothers and sisters . . . all of us sitting down together to chart our destiny and talk about our future.

Let me share with you nine questions I have prepared that I hope can guide us as we talk about our future and the future of CRWRC.

1. AM I CALLED?

We are here because God has called us. God has allowed it. It is a good thing that we are not chosen by God only because of our *qualifications* of what we have and who we are. The only qualification in the service of the King is our calling . . . and that calling is our greatest equalizer. If we have that in our minds, we can then work as equals . . . we can really work as partners, because we will look at each other as important. We will look at each other as God's imagebearers, people created in the image of God and having infinite value and dignity.

Also what we do for CRWRC is our calling. We are called to contribute to this organization. So whether it is in the field helping poor farmers or in the office

writing letters to prospective donors or typing field reports . . . that's our calling. We must be sure that we are called to do that. The question is not only to ask ourselves, Am I qualified to do what I'm doing? The first question we should ask ourselves is, Am I *called* to do what I'm doing?—because "a man sure of his calling is invincible . . . he will stay . . . he will be there whatever happens." That person is able to say, "I love the Master's work, whatever it may be . . . and at my post will He see me when He shall call for me."

Are you qualified? Maybe a better question would be, Are you called?

2. IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD STILL OUR GOAL?

The kingdom of God should be our goal. It should be our burning vision. We long to see that all people are restored to the original plan of God: creatures with self-worth and dignity. Is this still our goal? To move communities toward the lordship of Christ?

If our goal is to further the kingdom of God, then we will not fight each other; we will not see each other as competitors. We will work together because we are on the same team—field staff, office staff, donors, and national partners, we will *build up one another,* support one another, because we are building the same kingdom.

If the kingdom is our goal, then we will not care so much who gets the credit. We will just do whatever is expected of us and in the end say, "We are unworthy servants. We are just doing what is expected of us." I think we will do a lot of things if we just don't care who gets the credit.

What is our goal? Is it to build our own small kingdoms, or is it to further the kingdom of God? If the kingdom of God is still our goal, then let us work together.

3. DO WE VALUE AND APPRECIATE EACH OTHER?

A simple handshake, a smile, a pat on the back, a short note, small card. How often do we hear that relationships are far more important than results? The problem is that sometimes we are so serious in getting things done that we miss the people around us. A case in point would be this conference. If all we value and appreciate are the results that will come out of it, I think we are missing the point! I am not saying that we should only hug each other or smile at each other. What I am saying is let us do what we are supposed to do *but* let's do it with fun! Let us have fun doing it. Let's enjoy doing it. Can we really sing, "We are one in the bond of love" without blinking, or "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God"?

After this assembly it will be sad if all we have is the minutes of meetings and the recommendations of the plenary sessions. No new friends, no lives touched, nothing but pieces of paper!

It is a sad thing to take the trip but to miss the journey. A simple handshake, a smile, a pat on the back, short talks over a cup of coffee. Let's do it now—remember, there will be no rewind, no replay. Let's show that we value and appreciate each

other by spending time with each other and really understanding each other.

4. ARE WE SUCCESSFUL WHILE REMAINING FAITHFUL?

Former Senator Mark Hatfield of the U.S. senate shared a story about Mother Teresa's ministry in Calcutta:

> *"As my family and I toured Calcutta with Mother Teresa, we visited the orphanage filled with crippled children, the so-called House of the Dying, where sick and diseased are cared for in their last days. Mother Teresa ministered to these people, feeding and nursing the sick and the elderly, loving them when others had left them to die. I was overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the suffering and the utter impossibility of the task which Mother Teresa and her co-workers face daily. "How can you bear the load without being crushed by the impossibility of the task?" I asked. "My dear Senator," replied Mother Teresa, "I am not called to be successful, I am called to be faithful."*

How often we lose sight of that fact. Sometimes in our desire to be successful we copy the style and strategies of the world. We compromise, not knowing that faithfulness is far more important to the Lord than our success. Results are good, but if they are achieved at the expense of relationships, the results are useless. It is our faithfulness in the small things that God is happy with.

I am not against success. I am against results at any cost! I am against putting numbers on the pedestal and saying we have done it ourselves: "Look how great and successful we are—our numbers are increasing; our funds increasing; our reports are doubled—look how great we are!"

What if there are no immediate results—are we not successful? Even if there are no immediate results, if we are faithfully doing our jobs, we are already successful, and God is happy with that. Even if you think nothing is happening, *something is happening!* Just go on—continue to help those mothers; continue to type those reports; continue in faithfully supporting CRWRC. Be faithful in doing your jobs. Give your best, and God will do the rest. Galatians 6:9 tells us, "Let us not be weary in doing good, for in the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

5. ARE WE MARKET DRIVEN, OR ARE WE SPIRIT DRIVEN?

When Nehemiah was presented the situation of Jerusalem, he wept in anguish, he prayed, and then he formulated a plan. He discerned the cause of God and acted on it. Our programs and projects should be coming from the call of God. It should be something that God has placed on our hearts. Our projects should be a product of the heart-cry of our people.

There is now so much financial assistance in women's projects, do we just go there? Let us not jump to that or to this project because there is money or because

someone will fund it. We should ask ourselves, What is our institutional calling? What is our gift? What are we good at?

The bottom line is that we are serving God and our people; we are not serving our funding agency. We can make them partners, but we should not make an idol out of our donors. If our work is from God . . . it will survive. J. Hudson Taylor said it best: "God's work, done God's way, will never lack God's supply."

Whom are we trying to please and obey? I hope we are obeying the call of our God, who owns everything, the one who says, "Unless I build the house, all you laborers labor in vain" (see Psalm 127:1).

6. ARE WE EMPOWERING, OR ARE WE THE POWER-IN?

Robert Linthicum in his book *Empowering the Poor* said, "There have been two kinds of power through history—the power of money and the power of people. One of the realities of life is that the power of money often wins battles, but rarely wins the war. Every revolution has been the result of collective people power."

The power of the poor emerges from collective action. Real development cannot be purchased with foreign aid monies. Development depends on people's ability to gain control of and use effectively the real resources of their localities—land, water, labor, technology, human ingenuity, and motivation—to meet their own needs. When people find the freedom and self-confidence to develop themselves, they demonstrate enormous potential to create a better world.

Empowerment of the poor is not undertaking programs to solve the needs of the poor—hunger, unsanitary conditions, polluted drinking water, low harvest—because after our "great" intervention, people may be fed, water made clean, sanitation systems installed, and housing built, but the people are still without self-determination. They are, therefore, more helpless than before, for they have been made dependent. They have been treated as objects of care, not self-determined and capable subjects of their own destiny.

Ken Blanchard said, "Empowerment is not giving people power; people already have power in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation to do their jobs magnificently. Empowerment is letting this power out." I believe empowerment is trusting that the poor can do it. Allowing them to be principal actors of their own development. Our role is to come alongside them and strengthen them in their work and then get out of the way.

Let me share with you the credo of the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction in the Philippines formulated by Dr. Y. C. Yan.:

Go to the people, live among them.
Learn from them. Start with what they know.
Build on what they have. But of the best of leaders,
when their task is accomplished, their work is done,
the people all remark, "We have done it ourselves."

7. ARE WE WILLING TO CHANGE?

When I was in British Columbia last year, I heard a joke that goes like this: How many Roman Catholics do you need to change a dead light bulb? Thirty—one to change the light bulb, and 29 would light the candles. How many charismatics do you need to change a dead light bulb? Thirty—one to change the bulb and 29 to rebuke the darkness. How many CRC people do you need to change a dead light bulb? Change? Change?...

Why do we need change? Why fix it if it ain't broken? If it is working well, why do we need to change? Most of us are afraid of change—new responsibilities, change of work, a new member in the family, a new member on the team. But change is a reality that is happening to all of us. We live in a changing world. Everything is changing. It is a comfort that we have an unchanging God in this constantly changing world.

For change to become acceptable and agreeable to us, we must understand the purpose of the change that will happen. We need to know the outcome of this change. If we are informed that the change that would happen would be for the good of everybody, then it would be easier for us to accept the change that will happen.

Any decision to change should always be shared to the people who will be affected by the change. Decisions should always be nearest to where the action is.

The principle that I am trying to point out is this: Change can easily be accepted and implemented if there is trust between people in the organization. But trust is something that cannot be bought or commanded. You cannot just say to a person: Trust me! Trust is something that must be earned. You have to work for it. You have to be worthy of it. And that is where relationships come in. Trust is not an instant thing. If we talk for a few minutes, do you then trust me? NO! Trust is something you develop with a person. It is based on the foundation of LOVE AND RESPECT. Trust is a mutual feeling that both persons have for each other. Each of them is convinced that the one person is thinking what is best for the other person. Because of that, it is easier to sit down and talk and listen. And instead of competing, convincing, and confronting each other, both persons are looking at the future together.

8. ARE WE STILL BURNING OR ARE WE BURNED OUT?

Elijah in 1 Kings 19 said, "Lord I have been faithful to you, and now I'm the only one left. Let me die, let me die," after furiously burning for the Lord at Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18. Elijah was now on the verge of quitting. "Poor me. It's always me who is doing the work. I'm tired. I'm done. I'm going." Sounds familiar.

I would like to share with you three things about Elijah's experience:

- Mountaintop experiences are always followed by deepest valley walks. After Mount Carmel, Elijah was afraid of Jezebel. It is God's way of bringing us back to reality. It is his way of saying, "I am God. I am the one who gave you success." It is His way of teaching us (his creatures) to always be dependent on him. God is God, and he will

provide the growth; our work is to scatter the seeds. I think it would help us very much if we think of that as we do our own ministry and our work. Sometimes we think that unless we do something, the world will not be evangelized or developed. We forget that we are far more important than what we do.

- That brings me to my second point: sometimes we experience burnout because we tend to be so busy with the kingdom that we forget the King. We busy ourselves with so many kingdom activities—run here, work there—that we forget the King. Being busy with activities is easier than reflecting and being silent with God.
- Third, the Lord allowed Elijah to rest and eat. No activities—just rest and eat. Reflect. Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am the Lord" That's why personal reflections are still the best, taking time out of our busy schedules to read our Bibles and pray everyday. A Sunday school song reminds us of the best antidote for burnout: "Take time-out; go out and praise the Lord for his creation; talk to somebody about his goodness. Appreciate his goodness through the things he has made. You don't have to buy . . . most of the best things in life are free." I remember a co-worker from Africa who said, "You are always thinking of what we don't have. We are always thinking of what we have and praise the Lord for it."

The poor are thinking of what they have, and they praise the Lord for it. We are thinking of what they don't have, of what we can do, and so we tend to get burned out.

9. ARE WE WILLING TO ASK THOSE HARD QUESTIONS?

Let us take time to reflect on these questions:

- Am I called?
- Is the Kingdom still our goal?
- Do we value and appreciate each other?
- Are we successful and also faithful?
- Are we market driven, or are we Spirit driven?
- Are we willing to change?
- Are we still burning, or are we burned out?

In closing, I'd like to quote the prayer of Ron Sider in a book by Christopher Sugden, *Radical Discipleship:*

> *May the radical justice of God the Father, the liberating forgiveness of God the Son, and the revolutionary transforming presence of God the Holy Spirit, so blow through our lives that we may go forth into this broken world and fight the Lamb's war, knowing that our risen King Jesus has already won the victory over injustice, violence, and death. Hallelujah. Amen!*

USING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY TO BUILD CAPACITY

Alfalit, Nicaragua, started using CRWRC's capacity-assessment tool in 1994. Misael said, "The OCI came to us at a very opportune moment. Our organization was in a state of crisis. We'd lost our Christian identity, our board was negligent, and there was corruption in the ranks of our personnel. Our programs and our relationships with the communities in which we worked were suffering. OCI has helped us to get our own house in order and to begin to work more effectively with our partner communities."

Many models of organizing came from a particular culture or background. So Alfalit's concept of an ideal organization is conditioned, both culturally and socially. There is nothing wrong with looking toward an ideal, because every attempt at organizing responds to a particular situation and context. The problem comes when we try to use one system to measure in all contexts. The OCI study is designed to develop a system or a process that allows for each organization, within its own context and history, to collaborate with other organizations to create a tool that allows for the promotion and measurement of organizational capacity according to the specific cultural, national, and organizational context.

—from an interview with Alfalit staff
at a regional conference

The staff of People Oriented Development (POD) assert that they have benefited immensely from their relationship with CRWRC and from their participation in the listening tour. The introduction of appreciative inquiry has instigated learning, change, and conceptual innovation in their organization. Since the appreciative-inquiry workshop, POD has been developing a community-based assessment methodology that applies the appreciative-inquiry concept at the grassroots level. The staff immediately realized the implications of this concept for community-based development and embraced it as a new direction for their work. The motto at POD is "All new knowledge must be translated into actions that will benefit people."

—from an interview with POD staff
after a listening tour

People oriented development (POD) of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) is a member organization of the Christian Rural Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN).

Miracle and Mystery

Appreciative inquiry finds its starting point in one of the most ancient archetypes of hope and inspiration known to humankind—the miracle and mystery of life. When you witness the birth of a baby, you cannot help being awed by the fact that the child is filled with life, and emotion, and soul. Right from the start newborns kick, wiggle, scream, and have a personality all their own. Even in this age of biogenetic engineering (in which we can clone sheep and change the genetic makeup of a pig to give us leaner pork chops) any biologist, chemist, or physicist will tell you that there is no formula, no set of coordinates, no scientific model that confidently explains the deeper meaning and source of that baby's life. Life remains a miracle and a mystery.

So, because we are continuously looking for problems, we are constantly finding them all around us.

In the same way that the birth of a living, breathing, thinking, and feeling human being is a mystery, the birth and development of living, breathing, thinking, and feeling human systems can be considered a miracle of cooperative human behavior, of which there can never be a final explanation. There are simply no organizational or management theories that can give full account for the life-giving essence of cooperative existence. What makes human cooperation possible? What factors and forces bring to life a particular human system in a particular time and place and cause it to bloom, blossom, and bear fruit? No organizational theory can fully answer these questions.

It is precisely this boundless wonder and awe on a collective level that allows an organization to learn. By continuously asking the questions—What makes our organizing possible? What allows us to function at our best? What possibilities await that will allow us to stretch beyond where we are to reach even higher levels of health and vitality?—an organization allows its creative and generative capacities of language, thought, and imagination to be unleashed. The way to promote continuous learning is to engage in continuous inquiry—inquiry into what gives life or what makes possible a particular form of organizing. From that base of life you can begin to explore the territory that lies beyond what is. Learning, in turn, leads to social innovation. The knowledge interest of appreciative inquiry lies with discovering, understanding, and fostering innovations in organizational arrangements and processes.

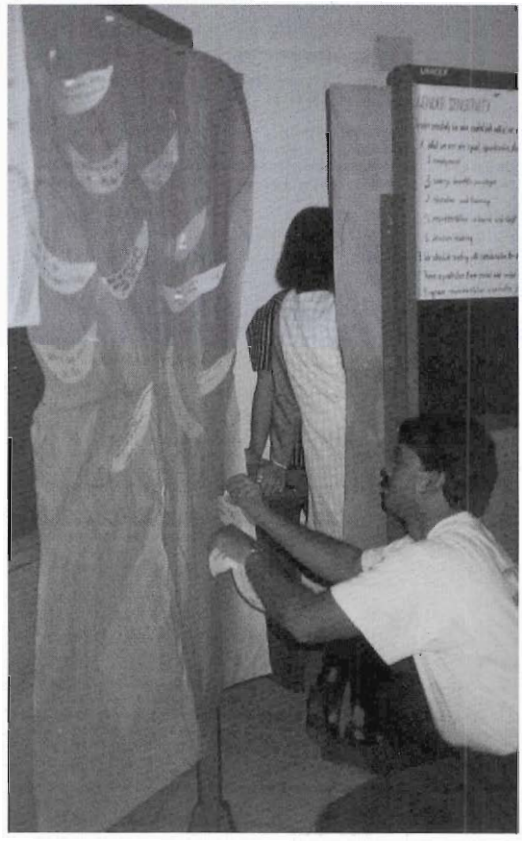
So on the philosophical level, appreciative inquiry recognizes the miracle and mystery of organizational life and invites organizational members to discover, learn about, and nurture the life-giving forces that foster innovation and the creation of new possibilities.

This appreciative approach stands in marked contrast to our traditional approaches to capacity building. Many NGOs remain stuck in the Modernist paradigm of classical or scientific management. They accept the guiding metaphor or guiding image of organizations as machines. Just like a machine, an organization is

understood as a network of interdependent parts arranged in a specific sequence that operates as rationally and efficiently as possible. In this context the job of management becomes one of planning, coordination, control, and problem solving. R. Kilmann writes, "One might even define the essence of management as problem defining and problem solving, whether the problems are technical, human, or environmental."

Over time many of us have become trapped in this machine metaphor, and we've begun to look at organizations themselves as "problems to be solved." We deny the existence of mystery and miracle and search for certainty and stability in things like our organizational structure, strategic plans, job descriptions, variance analyses, and quarterly reports. We search for scientific certainty and squeeze out human passion, curiosity, and the childlike desire to learn.

As David Cooperrider writes, "Our theories, like windsocks, continue to blow steadily onward in the direction of our conventional gaze. Seeing the world as a problem has become 'very much a way of organizational life.'" So, because we are continuously looking for problems, we are constantly finding them all around us. What ends up happening is that our creative instincts and our passionate search for higher values shrivel up and become dormant. We become great problem solvers, but we lose the capacity to envision and create better worlds. Instead of explorers, inventors, or prophets, we become tinkerers, mechanics, and caretakers. In some cases, we become so overwhelmed by problems that we begin to believe things will never get better. We become stressed, tired, and discouraged, rather than refreshed and revitalized, like pioneers returning home with exciting news of previously unknown lands.



Creating dialogue by posting ideas for capacity indicators.

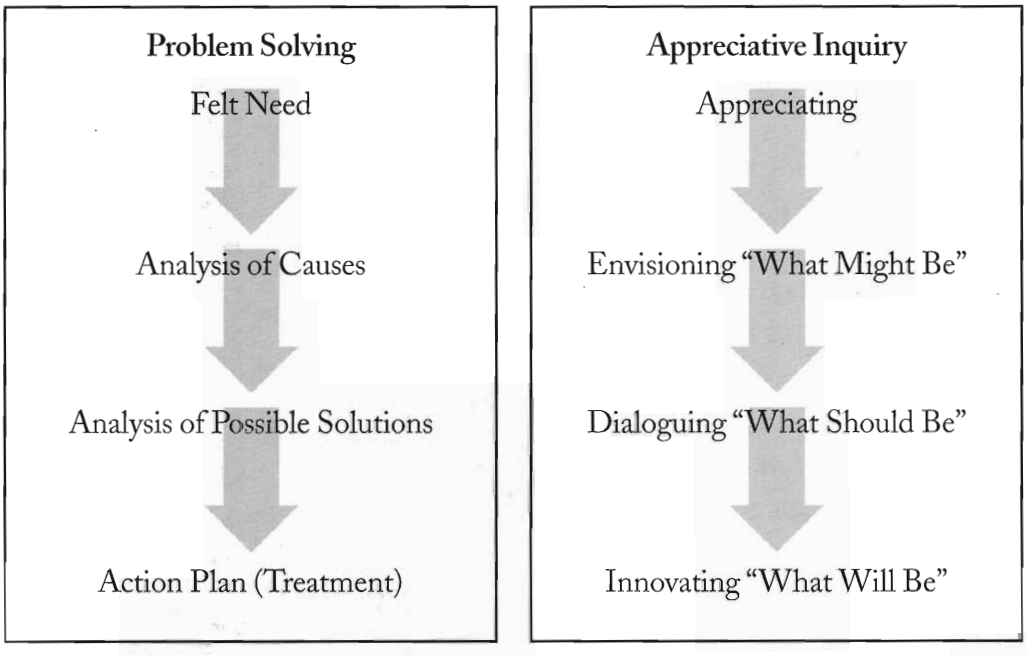
So, at its core, appreciative inquiry takes a philosophical stance that recognizes the miracle and mystery of collective life and invites us to explore it, with the wonder and awe of a small child, to discover new and better ways of living and working together. It gets us out of the mode of a constant-problem focus and into a mode of continuous learning and continuous innovation.

More than a technique, appreciative inquiry can be seen as a way of life—an intentional posture of continuous affirmation of life, of joy, of beauty, of excellence and innovation. At the same time in the context of capacity building we need to talk about methodologies—methods for helping appreciative inquiry to come alive. So we must ask the question "On a more practical level, how does it work? How do you do an appreciative inquiry?"

Appreciative inquiry seeks to locate, highlight, and illuminate what are referred to as the "life-giving forces" of an organization's existence. It asks two basic questions:

1. What, in this particular setting or context, makes organizing possible?
2. What are the possibilities, expressed and latent, that provide opportunities for more effective and value-driven forms of organizing?

Appreciative inquiry seeks out the very best of "what is" to help ignite the collective imagination of "what might be." The aim is to generate new knowledge that expands the "realm of the possible" and helps members of an organization envision a collectively desired future and to carry forth that vision in ways that successfully translate images of possibility into reality and belief into practice.



As a method of organizational analysis, appreciative inquiry differs from conventional managerial problem solving. The basic assumption of problem solving seems to be that "organizing-is-a-problem-to-be-solved." The process usually involves (1) identifying the key problems, (2) analyzing the causes, (3) analyzing the solutions, and (4) developing an action plan.

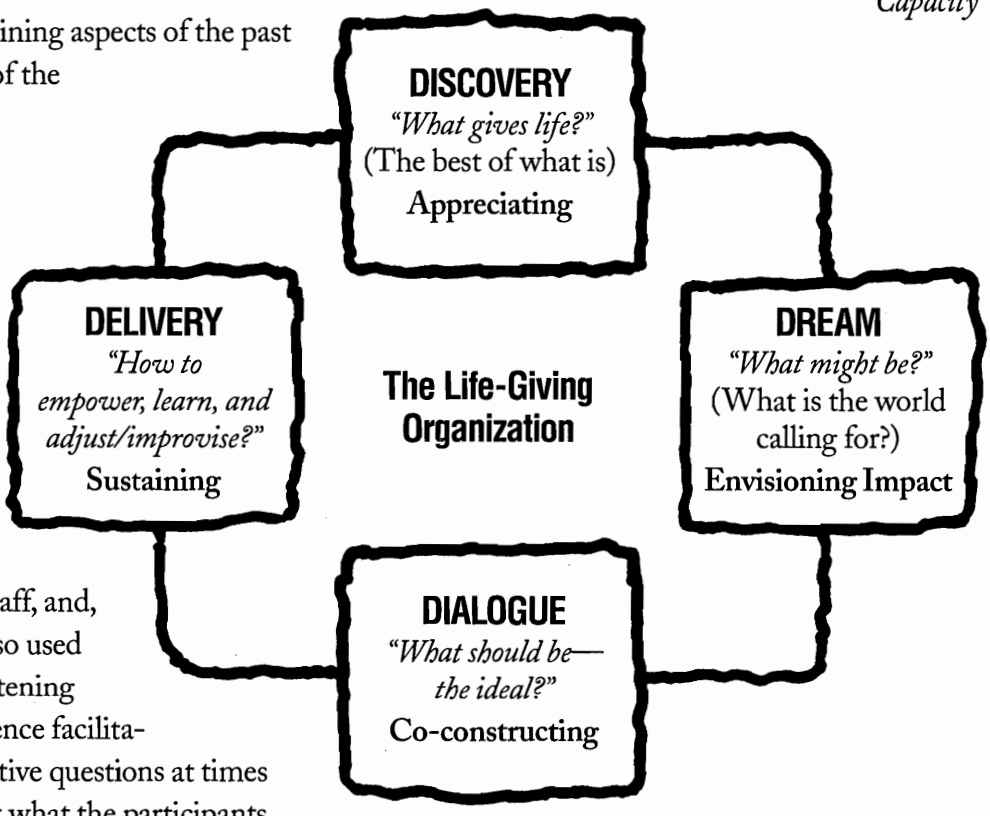
In contrast, the underlying assumption of appreciative inquiry is that organizing is a possibility to be embraced. The steps include (1) appreciating the best of what is; (2) envisioning what might be; (3) dialoguing what should be, and (4) innovating what will be.

A common framework for using appreciative inquiry to build organizational capacity is the "4-D" model. SIGMA, CRWRC, and its partner organizations used this approach to guide their inquiry into best practices of partnering and capacity building. Let's take a closer look at each stage of the 4-D model

Discovery

The first step is to discover and value those factors that give life to an organization, the "best of what is." The challenge of the discovery stage is always to keep the

focus on the positive. Regardless of how few the moments of excellence, the task is to zero in on them and to discuss the factors and forces that made them possible. At the heart of the discovery phase are the apprciative questions, which are designed to focus the attention of the inquiry team on the life-sustaining aspects of the past and the positive possibilities of the organization's future



Protocol Questions

In the process of learning about and growing in capacity, CRWRC has used some appreciative protocol questions at several different stages. The following questions were used at the first conference on appreciative inquiry with CRWRC staff, and, more important, they were also used as the basis for CRWRC's listening tours. At other stages, conference facilitators developed other appreciative questions at times of review and reflection about what the participants had been working through and toward. The questions used in the inquiry process predetermine what will be found; positive questions bring about positive answers.

1. *What attracted you to CRWRC?*
2. *In your entire experience with CRWRC, when have you felt most alive, most engaged in your work? What were the forces and factors that made it a great experience?*

   —What did you do?

   —What did others do?

   —What did the organization do?
3. *What do you value most about yourself, your work, your organization?*
4. *What are CRWRC's best practices (for example, ways of managing, approaching traditions)?*
5. *What is the core factor that gives life to your organization?*

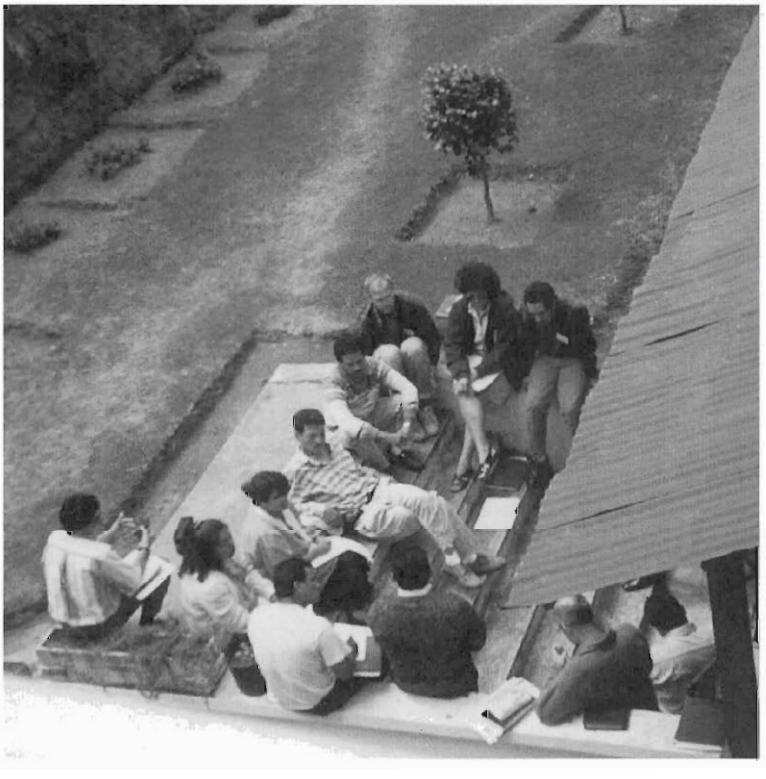
6. *What are the three most important hopes and wishes you have to heighten the health and vitality of your organization?*

Valuing Culture

We cannot overemphasize the importance of understanding the diverse cultural experiences of indigenous partner groups. CRWRC and many other international organizations have the privilege of interacting with a wide variety of cultural, ethnic, and tribal groups, and this relationship must be approached with a sense of awe and respect. The effects of colonialism and economic and political manipulation have had a lasting impact on the relationships that exist between developed and developing nations; this has also affected the relationship between Northern and Southern development organizations. It is the Northern organizations' responsibility to actively seek to rebuild the sense of community by learning to understand and value their partners' culture and experience. However, the concept of cultural appreciation goes beyond the relationship of NGOs and partner groups. Within cultures, the sense of valuing one's own experience must also be emphasized.

When people believe they are sincerely valued, both culturally and personally, they begin to feel respected. This carries over into all relationships—personal, community, and work. The process of valuing and appreciating builds cooperation and morale; it allows members of an organization the freedom to be themselves and to act in comfortable and familiar ways. The heightened awareness of the positives of their own culture inspires people to build on what they have and to develop a vision for a better future.

A variety of settings is important.



CRWRC and its partners have been actively breaking down barriers of inhibition and disrespect. In Uganda, two people groups had always referred and related to each other in negative terms. They rarely have had anything good to say about each other, choosing instead to continuously point out the negative aspects of each other's culture. Within the context of a CRWRC conference, these two cultural groups were asked to identify the positive aspects of their own culture. Initially, they had a hard time, because they were not used to thinking in those terms, but eventually they were able to discover the positives as well as have a good time going through the process. In the end, these two opposing cultural groups realized

that they had much in common. One participant said that he was surprised that the other group was so much like his own—why had he not known this? Never before had they identified the positives of their own culture, let alone heard or thought about the positives of other cultures.

The Challenge of Focusing on the Positive

In many situations, seeking the best practices of an organization or the valuable aspects of a cultural group can be very difficult. War, famine, disease, and persecution are daily struggles for many people around the world; there is little time to discover the forces or factors that make certain experiences great, or to discover what is valuable about a certain culture. Some of CRWRC's staff and partners, however, have learned that discovering and valuing are effective for dealing with the daily struggles they face.

> *During the first West African Regional Listening Tour in July 1995, three representatives from Christian Extension Services (CES) in Sierra Leone each shared a story with the whole group. Our task had been to choose a story that depicted a peak experience in our work with CES—a time we felt most energized, engaged, and effective. By the time the third representative spoke, the rest of the group chuckled at the now-familiar first sentence: "On November 4, 1994 . . ." Each representative had separately chosen a peak experience that had its roots in the aftermath of November 4 attacks by the Revolutionary United Front on villages where CES was working. The response to this crisis by the CES staff and by the people with whom we work demonstrated clearly to each of us the heart of what working for CES is all about.*
>
> *It should not be surprising, then, that in late August of the same year, when the same three staff members were organizing the Sierra Leone listening tour, they decided that sharing "war stories" would be an appropriate introductory activity. The twenty people who attended the workshop knew each other well. Many had grown up in the same village or had attended school together. They had been employed by CES for between three and fifteen years and had lived and worked in the same villages. This was not the first time they had told their war stories to other members of the group—one of the ways human beings deal with trauma is by telling their story again and again. However, this was the first time the entire staff had sat down communally to remember and speak about what happened to each of us during and after the attacks.*
>
> *Each person told his or her story to a partner. The partner then shared the story with the whole group. Some talked about the feelings they had experienced in the midst of the attacks—panic and fear in first flight,*

horror at finding dead bodies in the streets of the villages, hopelessness and insecurity for the future. Everyone had run. Some were forced to flee with other villagers on foot toward isolated farms. They told of living in hastily constructed huts crowded together in small clearings where there were times of mutual cooperation and touching generosity and other times of tension and distrust. They talked about what it was like to be out of contact with family and colleagues who had fled in different directions. They told of their efforts to organize—to arrange life in their hiding places, bury those who had died, protect property from looting, and start up clinics and churches again. Others talked about escaping to the supposed security of the district headquarters and then having to flee again under direct attack. The group told of their firsthand experience of being displaced persons, dependent on strangers for a place to sleep and for food to eat. They told of finally coming together—two hundred of them—on the crowded CES office compound. They, too, experienced the stresses of living in crowded conditions and the fears of an uncertain future. They all listened to Samba's story of his capture by the rebels and of his long march and miraculous escape. All were thankful that their own lives and the lives of those they love had been spared.

This three-day workshop allowed CES staff to sit down together and take stock of their personal and organizational lives after ten unsettling months of initial displacement and of reconstruction and relief work with displaced persons. Reflecting on what they learned about themselves as an organization, they began to envision a future for CES, a future which, both figuratively and literally, rose out of the ashes of destroyed lives and villages.

Doing appreciative inquiry can be an appropriate methodology at many stages in the life of an organization. In Sierra Leone the participants found that doing appreciative inquiry after a time of extraordinary crisis provided both a forum for talking together about the crisis and for exploring their experience as an organization during the crisis to discover strengths on which they could begin to build a new hope and vision for the future.

Dreaming

In the first stage you go through a process of discovery and create knowledge about what gives life to an organization. Now, in the second stage, you take this new knowledge and develop an image of how the organization might look at some future point. When the best of what is has been identified and is valued, the mind naturally begins to search beyond this—it begins to envision new possibilities. The collective imagination and mind may be the most important

resource for building organizational capacity. The key to the dreaming stage is passionate thinking—allowing participants to be inspired by what they have seen in the discovery stage.

Provocative Propositions

An important activity in this stage is the construction of *provocative propositions.* A provocative proposition is a statement in the present tense that describes the best of "what might be" based on all of the knowledge about the best of "what is." It is provocative to the extent to which it stretches the realm of the status quo, challenges common assumptions or routines, and helps to suggest real possibilities that represent desired possibilities for the organization and its members. Here is a proposition about staff development that was created by an organization in Haiti:

> *The team has the necessary training and information which permit it to respond effectively and efficiently to the institutional objectives, both at the organizational- and community-intervention levels. Additionally, the training received by the organization serves not only the organization but also other organizations and the families and churches of the team members.*

Notice that this statement would not be appropriate for many organizations but that the Haitian organization is passionate about it. Provocative propositions describe not a generic ideal for every organization but a realistic dream of what a particular organization can become, based on the peak experiences of the past.

In the regional conferences, all of the stories and all of the responses to the protocol were summarized and recorded on large pieces of paper so that participants could look back over the experiences and pull out the major themes. Each of these themes were then developed into propositions. When the propositions were gathered together, they described not only what organizations wanted to become but also what they believed they could become. In West Africa the following list was developed:

- **Community Self-Empowerment**
  A vibrant community has a vision for its development and participates in all levels to achieve it.
- **Spirituality**
  We must proclaim the gospel through the demonstration of Christ's love to all faiths in the community and beyond.
- **Commitment**
  A committed organization is grounded on its faith and values, perseveres in the midst of changes in its environment, and is willing to take risks.

- **Leadership**
  An organization needs leaders with a clear, shared vision, who are constantly dialoguing with all stakeholders: motivating, mentoring and delegating on the basis of trust.
- **Vision**
  As a group we know exactly what we want. We are always looking for what can be improved through brainstorming sessions and regular meetings. We are continuously training ourselves and thus expanding our field of vision.
- **Accountability**
  We maintain a monthly reporting system on all aspects of our activities. These are shared with partner groups and staff within the organization. We will have an annual appreciative inquiry and will have an audit system in place.
- **Interpersonal Relationships**
  We have an environment of openness and trust in which there is respect for everyone, regardless of rank and position. There is contentment and joy among everyone working together, and there is a high degree of respect for the community.
- **Management and Administration**
  People at all levels of the organization have access to and share timely information. This includes channels such as meetings, reports, evaluations, and informal conversations. This information creates a common base of knowledge by which all field and management staff and board members carry out their work responsibilities.
- **Staff Development**
  Supervisors provide conducive opportunities for learning on the job. Management and staff work together to identify training needs of all staff and board members. Everybody in the organization receives support and freedom as necessary.
- **Sustainability**
  If it is good for the community, then it is good for the organization. Staff members are regularly attending workshops, visiting other projects, and reading books and newsletters. Sustainability includes effective monitoring for the ten qualities mentioned here.

Dreaming and Planning

While the task of setting organizational plans is sometimes arduous, appreciative inquiry helps people to think about the good that has happened in the past so that they have concrete ideas about what can happen in the future. It makes creativity a concrete asset by freeing people from the risks involved in the vulnerability of creativity. Rather than plans that are idealistic wishes, people have tangible plans for a future within the reach of their own experiences. Stepping back and taking an

appreciative approach often yields solutions where before none had seemed to exist. One CRWRC staff member tells of her experience with the Alur people of northern Uganda:

> *Again and again I was told about the problems the Alur people had with getting their crops to market. No trucks would come to their villages from the towns to buy their produce, because there were rutted roads and precarious bridges. Cash was scarce. Much of what was needed—medicine, clothing, soap, money for school fees—was out of their reach. Several times during my review of community group plans, villagers indicated that they were caught up in the "continuing cycle of poverty." Just living in the community where I worked made the hopelessness real. How could I tell my neighbor of the benefits of saving when I went to sleep many nights hearing his child crying from the pain of a burning fever? I knew that the little money my neighbor had wouldn't cover treatment charges. On top of this, the unfulfilled promises of previous NGOs and government leaders to "meet their needs," only reinforced the people's hopelessness. These "esteemed outsiders" would tell them the benefits that would come if only they developed more groups in their village. Their efforts in that too had failed.*
>
> *Appreciating the positive in what "was" and identifying which experiences had helped them showed the people that there indeed were factors in their own community that could help them reach their goal. They began to build dreams and new visions based on their understanding of the things about their culture that were positive. In one community where the people had previously said that unless outsiders brought them a truck to bring their produce to market, their problems in life couldn't be solved, they came up with four concrete ways of reaching their goal of improving their children's health. Two required no outside assistance at all, and two only required the hiring of a trainer from outside at a cost of only about $20.00 to the group.*

Dialogue

The next step after discovering and dreaming is dialogue. With appreciation for past accomplishments and with a view of the current reality as a foundation and a dream for what could be, an organization can begin to design the future through open dialogue. It is a process of coming to consensus through sharing discoveries, ideas, hopes and values. In this step individual will evolves into group will and individual dreams becomes a cooperative vision for the organization. The key to this stage is to create a deliberately inclusive and supportive context for conversation. At the end of this stage everyone should be able to

say, "Yes, this is an ideal or vision that we value and should aspire to. Let's make it happen."

Techniques for Greater Participation

This type of discussion does not just happen. It takes the creation of events that will promote greater participation. In some of the conferences participants were encouraged to bring small group reports back to the larger group in the form of skits or songs. In an East African conference, for example, small groups met according to what country they were from. These groups discussed what they had been learning about capacity building over the past year. The group from Kenya performed a skit that was recorded in the minutes as follows:

> *To illustrate their report, a drama was presented. A river on the floor, the river Athi—one of the biggest rivers in our land. A man is at the river's edge wanting to cross but does not dare or know how to cross. A local person approaches.*
>
> *"Where are you from?"*
>
> *"From the plains."*
>
> *"You people can never cross the river, you do not know how."*
>
> *The local man crosses the river. Two other local people cross the river, ignoring the "plains" man. Two more local men see the "plains" man trying to cross the river. They talk to him about crossing the river. They tell him that he can cross it. They show him how to feel for the stones with a stick, and they cross with him. The group ended the drama with a song.*

After the drama, the larger group reviewed themes illustrated in the skit. Some of the ideas they noted were

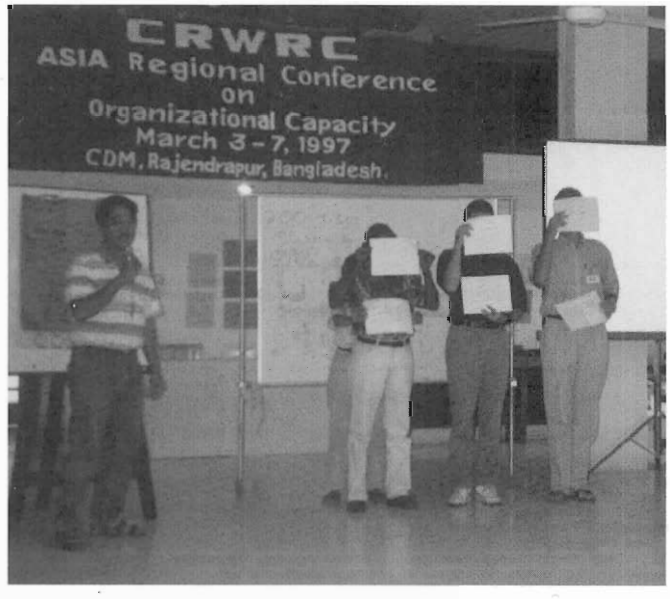
—consultation
—confidence and affirmation
—doing things together
—the power of fear
—love for one another
—every problem has a solution, but it is not always the same solution
—there are stepping stones
—the importance of a good Samaritan—you have to get involved
—the joy of success
—you need relationship and trust before you can help

Another creative way to promote dialogue was used in Asia. Several organizations had field tested capacity-assessment tools, and representatives were meeting together to share their experiences. Not all participants were equally comfortable speaking in English, the most common language of the group. In order to promote discussion, large pictures of trees were posted around the room. Each tree repre-

sented a different capacity area. At various times during the four-day conference participants met in small groups to think of operational indicators for each capacity area. These indicators were written on pieces of paper in the shape of fruit, and the fruit was posted on the trees. Throughout the conference everyone could walk through the "capacity orchard" and see the ideas of all the groups. Often these ideas prompted discussions and more ideas. (For a complete list of these indicators, see the Asia tool in chapter 7.)

Do Not Avoid Controversy

In the dialogue stage, controversial issues should not be avoided but embraced. The issues that people are avoiding are probably the best ones to pursue. In the beginning of this study many partner organizations were reluctant to discuss their frustrations with some of CRWRC's traditional ways of assessing capacity. However, CRWRC was committed to taking this input seriously. As partner organizations began to believe this, there were many frank and helpful discussions around such questions as, Who are we gathering the data for? Who should design the assessment tool? Do all organizations need to use similar tools? Toward the end of the process, at the final East Africa conference, some concerns were expressed about the purpose of this document. Some were concerned that CRWRC or Case Western Reserve University was going to benefit from the learning at the expense of the African organizations that were involved. This conversation was not avoided. Instead space was created in the agenda to discuss the issue. In the end, not only was the issue resolved but the group found that they had a strong sense of ownership for the work they had done together. One participant reminded the group that



Creative presentations are the best.

> *all of the information gathered on organizational capacity was created and gathered right here by us. That we, the partners, own the process. And that we, the partners, need to carry it further, whether CRWRC and Case Western write a manual or not. It is up to all of us to take what we have created, put it into our local languages, and recreate it in the context of the communities we work with.*

Planning the Whole Event

Much of the energy and excitement for this study came from the fact that representatives from several countries had the opportunity to learn from each other in regional

conferences. These conferences needed to be designed, from start to finish, to encourage dialogue. The final conference in Asia was held in Rajendrapur, Bangladesh, with about fifty participants from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, and Indonesia. The following is a list of reasons for the success of the conference:

1. Most of the participants had been together the previous year, so initial relationships had been formed. There was good chemistry. People enjoyed working with each other. The workshop venue, food, and accommodation were conducive to people enjoying the week together.
2. Participants came prepared with pictures from their respective projects and displayed them the very first night. Participants also came prepared with results of their experience with the revised Organizational Capacity Indicator (OCI) tool. In addition, they came with ideas for warm-up activities, games, songs to sing—things that really helped us to have a good time together.
3. CRWRC staff commitment to the conference, to appreciative inquiry, and to the development of an OCI tool was high. CRWRC host staff were committed to the event and had regularly met during the three months prior to the conference to review needs and to delegate responsibilities. Committees were formed, including national staff, with tasks and responsibilities delegated well ahead of time. Informing support staff about the meetings and about the significance of their roles was a morale booster and team builder for the Bangladesh staff.
4. Bangladesh staff had hosted an earlier large conference, although not as large or logistics intensive.
5. There were several volunteers "in-country" at the time who did a fair bit of preparation work for the conference, and one of the volunteers took minutes and helped with logistics during the workshop itself.
6. The workshop incorporated site visits, which were planned well in advance and were regarded by project-site staff as an opportunity to show themselves at their very best—to CRWRC and to other Asian partner groups. As well, CRWRC partner groups were given responsibilities to present a cultural show, each partner choosing what to present (skit, song, puppet show, dance). There was certainly a blend of ownership and pride on the part of partners for having the opportunity to present their culture—just as there was in their being able to host a visit to their project sites.
7. Introductions, registration, and agenda overview took place on the evening before the conference began.
8. The agenda moved along at a moderate to fast pace in order to sustain momentum and energy and to assure that objectives would be met and that there would be time slots for volleyball, walks, warm-up games, and so on. The agenda did

not seem rushed. There was a deliberate front-loading of the agenda, to prevent the often frustrating situation of having to wrap up a lot of agenda material on the last day. A number of participants served as translators to their fellow countrymen—and this proved to be of great benefit. Some of the translators were North American, some Asian—translators really did more than just translate, serving also to assure that new concepts were understood. Their work allowed for the agenda to move along fairly quickly.

9. Much of the work was done at the small group level. Groups were encouraged to present their ideas through short skits or songs and were given time to prepare.
10. Two types of small groups were used throughout the conference. On the very first night participants were randomly placed into small groups of approximately ten persons who would meet on an ongoing basis. Other groups, formed according to nationality, met at different times.

Delivery

The final step in the appreciative-inquiry process is to construct the future through innovation and action. The first three steps are designed to establish a momentum of excitement. Since members of the organization have been involved in the valuing, envisioning, and dialoguing process, they are committed, have a clear sense of where they are headed, and find innovative ways to help move the organization closer to ideals. At this stage in the process organization members identify one area after another in which they want to do things differently, based on their ideals. They take full responsibility for their own innovation and action.

This inquiry has focused on Organizational Capacity Indicator tools, so one major piece of the delivery stage is these OCI tools that have been created. Four of these tools are presented in the next chapter. However, a more important outcome has been the actual organizational capacity building that has taken place through the process. In East Africa, for example, the participants outlined three steps to apply and to continue the learning of the inquiry so far. First, they agreed to a process for reviewing and approving the OCI tool that would be used in East Africa:

a) The organizers of this conference will review documents of the last OCI conference and use that material to further flesh out and elaborate on the capacity indicators while placing an emphasis on clarity.

b) The draft document produced in the preceding step will be sent to the members of the "Pulling It Together Team" (a team of nine people across various partner organizations), who will review it.

c) After reading their input, the organizers will send the OCI-assessment document to each partner organization for feedback.

d) The final document will be written and produced by the conference organizers and sent to the partner organizations.

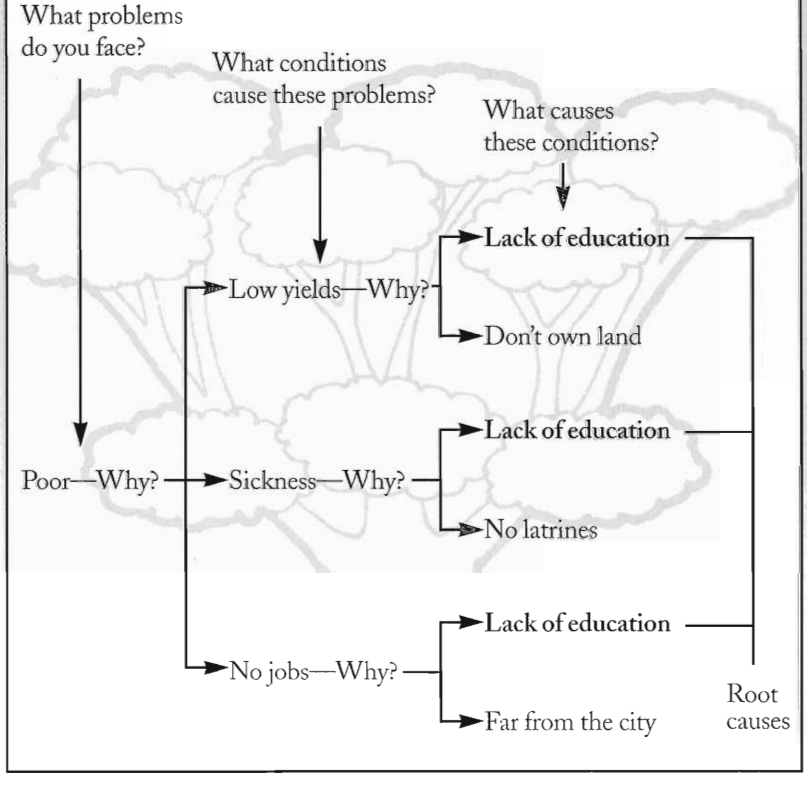
The next thing that conference participants agreed to was a plan for continuing their learning. A Long-Range Planning and Education Team was elected—one representative from each country, as well as one CRWRC staff person—to represent the organizations in the region. While functioning interdependently with each other, they will set the agenda and will schedule future meetings to meet training needs in the region. The participants also agreed to begin an inquiry around the subject of community capacity indicators. The partner organizations will begin a process in the communities in which they work that will help community members discover how to build capacity.

In this final stage ideals need to be firmly grounded in realities. This point is important to underscore because it is the juxtaposition of visionary content and

Problem-Solving Trees

"When you start working in a community, you have to help the people to understand their problems. Ask them what problems exist in their community; then ask them what conditions cause each of these problems; then ask them about the causes of each of the conditions. This process will help a community to understand their situation and identify the 'root causes' that they need to solve. Then they can make a plan together to address the problems in the community."

Problem Solving Tree



This method of community organizing was introduced to a group of CRWRC and partner staff in East Africa. The facilitator showed an example of how this method creates a problem tree. The approach is not unique. It is widely used in community development circles.

The Problem with Problem Solving Trees

This problem-solving approach might have been accepted by a different group, but all of the people in the room had just spent the previous week learning about appreciative inquiry.

They noticed that if you asked why the "root causes" existed, you

of concrete examples that opens the status quo to transformative action. Appreciative inquiry seeks to promote confident action and innovation based on local wisdom. Organizational learning and innovation are based not on some abstracted academic theory but on the theories developed through the experience and imagination of the organizational members themselves. But the process must not end with the final step of appreciative inquiry. The step of constructing the future is the beginning, not the end, of the process. If we accept the proposition that organizational life is a mystery and a miracle, then this final stage must be seen as an opportunity to act on the things that have been envisioned and designed and then, further, as an opportunity to set out and discover, understand, and nurture the organization's life-giving forces. It's a continuing process of discovery, learning, and innovation.

would end up going in a circle. For example, you could say lack of education is caused by poverty, which is caused by no jobs, which is caused by lack of education. The identification of "root causes" depends on when the facilitator decides to stop the identification process. Further, some pointed out that after spending a whole day talking about all of the problems in the community, a group might be more likely to give up hope than actually make plans for the future.

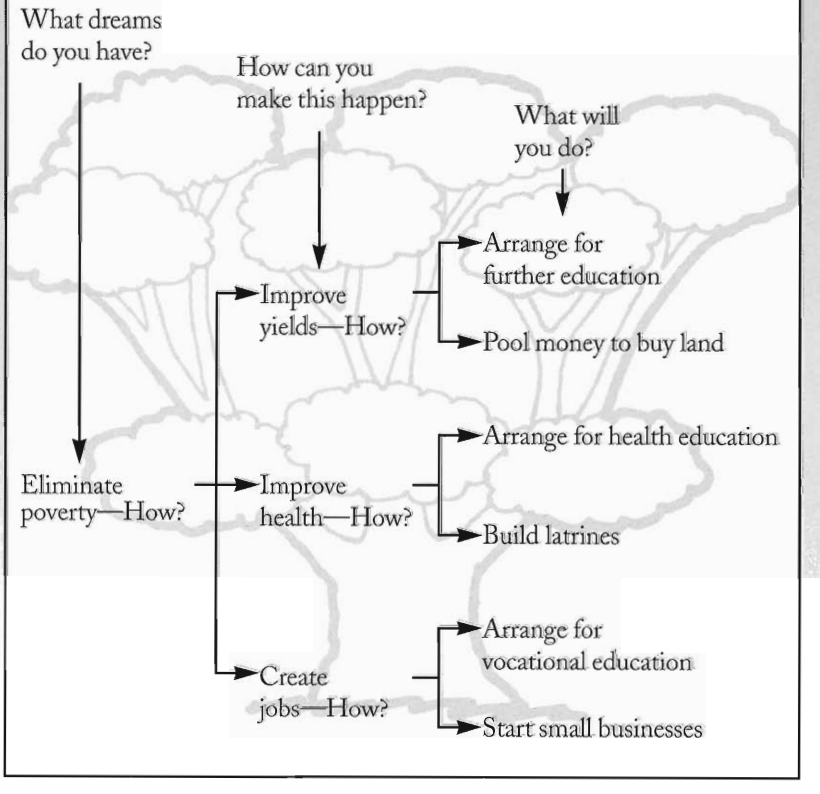
The Possibility Tree

Fortunately, one staff member came up with a wonderful way to modify the problem tree. He pointed out that you could help a community to analyze their situation by asking about their dreams instead of asking about their problems.

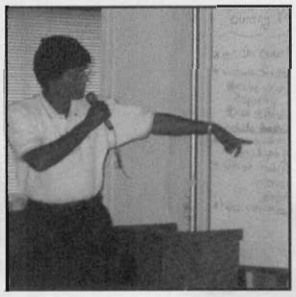
You start by asking what dreams the community has for the future, and then you ask how they can make that happen. The result is a "possibility tree" instead of a problem tree.

The cause-and-effect relationships that are identified in a possibility tree may be exactly the same as a problem tree. But the process of creating the possibility tree is more likely to get a group excited about the future.

Possibility Tree



FOUR CAPACITY-ASSESSMENT TOOLS



This interview with Santiago Flores was conducted and translated by Sarah Dieleman at the 1996 Latin American conference on capacity building in El Salvador.

Q To begin, shall we take a moment to let you introduce yourself?

A Well, in the first place, thank you very much for this opportunity. My name is Santiago Flores. I am the executive director of Alfalit of El Salvador and a pastor of the Reformed Church in El Salvador. I want to also express my appreciation for this opportunity in which we can share our ideas and our hopes. I also want to congratulate CRWRC for systematizing the conference and trying to deal with some of the suggestions that the colleagues have to share.

Q Tell me about a specific moment in which you felt the most happy, the most committed and content, with your work.

A That would be when the program of Alfalit (which has a 23-year history in El Salvador) managed to integrate, in the year 1980, the participation of the communities—of the people at the base—to do the work of planning, the work of orientation at the institutional level. So it was a moment when we realized that the organization knew how to utilize the support of the people of the community, when together the community, the staff, and the board of directors had all been empowered. This was when they had the strength to fight to go forward with the work. It was a peak experience when we were all participating and supporting the work of the institution.

Q Is there a "success story" you can tell?

A I have to tell about three things. In the institution—in teaching adults to read and write—there is a satisfaction. Even more, we feel success because we have helped the adults to integrate themselves at the highest capacity in their work and in their society—they can serve in their church and community.

The other is the program in which we are working with children. We have felt also a degree of success to be able to help mothers and fathers improve the development of their children.

Q In what ways can you see these life changes taking place?

A We have seen, for example, improved communication in the family (mothers, fathers, and children), and we have seen the family participating in improving their living conditions in terms of health, of education, and of participation in their own churches. We have also seen the individual trying to look for support in other areas where the government can help. We have seen children healthier than they were at the beginning. We have seen women gaining in their work in the community, as in their own families.

Q What are your hopes for the future?

A With relation to the work, we want to do the following: let us continue raising our goals and improving our quality of service—trying to

help and build together with the people a new alternative that permits developing as a person and developing as a community. Another great work for our committee is that we hope we continue acting as a facilitator, a companion, in this process of institutional development.

Q How do you define the phrases "capacity building," "institutional capacity," "development," and "appreciative inquiry"?

A When we talk about capacity building, there are certain concepts that we agree upon and in this case the committee and their partners balance. Let us build together.

Now, what we understand in this sense is to see how our organization measures itself.. What tool is the most appropriate system to promote efficiency in the service we provide, and what tool can help us to the end that we measure our success but also our errors? It is to measure with all the resources, technical and methodological, permitting us to be more efficient, using all the resources that are ours, for the service to the brothers and the sisters of our community.

Now, with respect to development, there are various definitions, but what we want to understand is that development is the capacity/empowering/training that helps the person, the community, to improve and transform their own conditions, in their way, to live better. It is the capacity that we can have to administer resources, our own resources, to the end that all are able to live better.

Now, about appreciative inquiry. It's a—in this moment, it's a little new, no? We have been working with other methods to measure. The perspective here for appreciative inquiry is to say, "Let's also measure the qualitative part—the people that we work with—not only the quantitative part." But is also important to measure the other. ■

No organization is so new or inexperienced that it cannot take responsibility for assessing its own capacity.

Four Regions, Four Tools

This chapter presents four organizational-capacity-assessment tools. Each one represents the work of partner organizations in different regions of the world: East Africa, West Africa, Asia, and Latin America. At first glance each tool looks quite different from the others. This is not surprising, since the processes through which the tools were developed in each region were nearly independent from those in the other regions. The chart at the end of this introductory section gives an overview of some of the differences between the tools. A more detailed study of the tools reveals a common set of values that the organizations share. All the organizations involved voiced similar ideas about the value of monitoring capacity, the importance of creating their own assessment tools, how these tools should be created, and how they should be used for future organizational development. In spite of the different *tools* that these organizations will use to assess capacity, they are all involved in a very similar *process* for building capacity.

Organizations in all four regions agree that capacity monitoring is in the self-interest of all organizations. All organizations need to monitor growth in capacity in order to understand where they are in comparison with where they hope to be in the future. Monitoring is essential for building and planning for the future, based on those hopes. Monitoring is a continuous process. Because capacity is not something that is achieved once and for all, no organization can reach a stage in which it no longer needs to monitor its capacity. Further, although key outsiders have much to gain from the monitoring process, monitoring should be seen as beneficial first to the organization itself before the information is useful for donors or consultants. The idea is to keep the tool as part of the life that becomes inherent to the systems and functions of the organization. The tool cannot stay the same as new challenges and conditions call for continual evaluation. Instead, dynamic and flexible tools are needed to match the ever-changing contexts in which development organizations work.

The next point of agreement between the regions was that every organization needs to create its own capacity-monitoring tool. No organization is so new or inexperienced that it cannot take responsibility for assessing its own capacity. Outside consultation may be helpful, but no outside expert can be the authority on the organization's capacity. CRWRC partner organizations have clearly stated that CRWRC staff and other outside consultants have been important to them in the process of developing new assessment tools. However, if outsiders move from helping with the assessment process to become the assessors, organizations see less value in their participation. As this chapter shows, development organizations are capable of designing useful assessment tools.

The idea that each organization should create its own tool does not mean there will not be similarities among capacity-assessment systems. In fact, the organiza-

tions in the study agreed on a process for creating capacity assessment. CRWRC's original goal was to have a universal tool that each partner in all four regions would use with a degree of contextualization. In the end, the degree of variation in the final tools created by the partners and regions was high. But the process used to create the varied tools was remarkably similar. With some variation, all of the partners agreed that each capacity area should be defined with "provocative propositions" that give not a generic description of skill every organization needs but the greatest dream for what a specific organization can become. These capacity areas should then be further described with specific indicators or behaviors that show the capacity in practice. The propositions and specific indicators help the partners to measure themselves based on their own vision of the future, not according to a generic ideal.

The development of contextualized tools by each partner has generated excitement around the monitoring process, which thus becomes useful as a source for further growth.

Toward the end of the three-year study, the organizations realized that the process of defining capacity areas and indicators was itself a capacity-building activity that had benefits beyond the creation of an assessment tool. Several other key characteristics were also identified as essential. The process had to be within a safe and open environment in order to promote learning and growth both for CRWRC and for its partners throughout the world. Also, full participation, with everyone gathering together to dialogue and to work through the entire process, was important. Further, maintaining a positive outlook on each organization's potential made the learning process energizing instead of academic. Partners and staff from every region felt strongly that the theory of appreciative inquiry was central to each stage of the creation process.

Finally, the organizations generally agreed on how capacity-monitoring tools should be used. Using the tools became just as important as defining and developing them. The consensus was that organizational capacity should be monitored twice a year. The assessment process should be surrounded by some kind of organizational event. Too often capacity assessments are a dreaded event that partner staff try their best to avoid. The development of contextualized tools by each partner has generated excitement around the monitoring process, which thus becomes useful as a source for further growth. Although there were variations, the agreement was that the actual method for scoring does not have to be numerical. Partners also agreed that the results of the capacity assessments should be used as a way of encouraging future development, making plans, and stating dreams. In addition, partners felt that there should be full involvement from board and staff members in the actual assessment process and that everyone involved should have a common understanding of the tool and how it has been developed.

The three-year study began with the desire to create more ownership of a CRWRC capacity-assessment tool. Instead of imposing an outside tool, the idea was to have the organizations agree on a common tool based on the CRWRC model.

However, the belief that a common tool would be best for all of CRWRC's partner organizations was not shared by the partners themselves. There was a strong desire for self-determination. Partner organizations needed to be given the freedom to run with the project, and they ran in different directions. The process, shaped by appreciative inquiry, created freedom to openly discuss capacity in all of the regions. At the same time, partner organizations expected to learn from CRWRC and, more important, from other organizations involved in the study. Partners are showing a strong desire to know what other CRWRC partners are doing, a desire to learn from others and to build on what they are doing. So, in the study, as organizations were given more flexibility to develop their own tools, they also learned more from each other, and, as a result, tools began to look similar. Haitian organizations, for example, realized that their values were reflected in many of the other assessment tools developed in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The amount of similarity among the tools varies from region to region. In East Africa the organizations agreed on a common tool that all of the partners in the region would use. The Asian organizations agreed to a common menu of capacity areas and indicators that each organization would choose from and modify for its own use. In those two regions the process for using the tools and planning for the future were quite similar, but the methods for scoring varied. There was less similarity among the Latin American countries. The partners in each Latin American country decided to work together to make a tool that all organizations in that country would use. Adopting something like the regional tool used in Asia, the Latin American countries decided on a standard template for each country, a template that could be adapted into each organization's reality. In West Africa the organizations came to some agreement on common capacity areas but decided to develop their own individual tools, identifying their own specific capacity areas and indicators and developing their own unique measurement system.

A system of high ownership and shared learning is evolving from this process. This chapter is not the end of that evolution process but another step in it. As partners continue to converse with each other and with CRWRC, a more concrete system will emerge. But the system reflected in the tools presented in this chapter, though sure to change, is an improved system for assessing organizational capacity. Before the process of developing the tools was completed, we expected this chapter to be the "final tool," the sum of all the hard work and research from all the regions. Instead, what we have is a goldmine of learning and diversity that can be used by other organizations to use as reference for the development of their own capacity-assessment tools.

	East Africa—Regional Tool	West Africa—Represented by CRUDAN	Latin America—Represented by Haiti	Asia—Regional Tool
Scope of Application of Tool	Regional tool with a process for continued refinement	Organizational tools developed by each partner, based on learning from regional conferences	Country tools based on broad ideas developed at regional level, further refined by organizations in each country	A regional menu of capacity areas and indicators agreed to by all organizations. Each partner will modify and contextualize.
Capacity Areas	• community and culture • management • teamwork • networking • empowerment • spirituality and faith • communication • transformational leadership • results attainment	• servant leadership • participatory management • organizational strengthening • resource development • community empowerment • technical • networking and partnership • holistic ministry	• staff development • good stewardship of resources • teamwork • autonomy • following Christian principles	• board / legal identity • vision / mission / strategy / set of shared values • human resources • management systems • leadership • networking • stewardship • gender participation • financial sustainability
Evaluation Process	What one thing that happened within the past six months illustrates the capacity of our organization in each capacity area?	What great story can we tell that illustrates the growth of our organization in the past six months in this capacity area?	Give a brief testimony of how the organization has demonstrated this capacity area.	Whole system meets to share recent experiences that show when each capacity area has been demonstrated or tested.
Scoring Method	Capacity is compared to expectations set six months earlier. • better than expected • as Expected • some progress • no change	Capacity areas represented by the stages of development of a tree: • seed sowing • germinating • vegetating • maturing • flowering • fruiting	The answers to the questions are recorded, but no "final scores" are given. Testimonies illustrate each capacity area.	Each organization creates a scale between the birth of the organization and the provocative proposition, and charts the progress on a graph.

Christian Rural Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN) Organizational Capacity Building Monitor

A Self-Evaluation Exercise

Instructions

A. Introduction

There are eight capacity areas identified. As a group, we want to assess where we are in all of these capacities. Each capacity has a definition or proposition and a set of indicators.

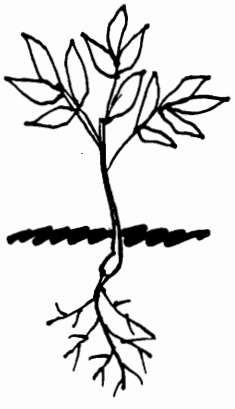
Capacity Areas

1. Servant Leadership
2. Participatory Management
3. Organizational Strengthening
4. Resource Development
5. Community Empowerment
6. Technical
7. Networking and Partnership
8. Holistic Ministry

There are six growth-measure categories. The organization is likened to a living organism —a fruit tree—with distinct growth stages. Each growth category is represented by a number or a color scale:

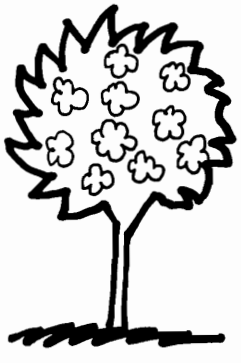
Seed Sowing
0 / Black

Germinating
1 / Brown



Vegetating
2 / Light Green

Maturing
3 / Dark Green



Flowering
4 / Yellow

Fruit Bearing
5 / Orange

For each of the eight capacity areas, the following process is to be used:

B. Dialogue

Read, review, and respond to each capacity area and the corresponding indicators.

C. Story

What great story (up to three short stories) can we tell that illustrate(s) the life growth of our organization in the past six months in this capacity area?

D. Growth

How do we assess our growth in this capacity area? (Categorize growth by using numbers or colors.)

Growth Measure of Capacity Area	Expected Growth by End of Year	Actual Growth by End of 6 Months	Actual Growth by End of Year
5 / Orange = Fruit Bearing			
4 / Yellow = Flowering			
3 / Dark Green = Maturing			
2 / Light Green = Vegetating			
1 / Brown = Germinating			

E. Hope

What hope (up to three hopes) do we have for our organization to grow better in the next six months in this capacity area?

1.

2.

3.

F. Actions

What concrete actions can we take in the next six months for our hope(s) to be realized?

Actions / Activities	*Timeline*	*Responsible*	*Resources*
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

1. Servant Leadership

Proposition: CRUDAN leaders are committed to be grounded in faith and kingdom values: leaders with clear shared vision who are constantly caring and communicating with all stakeholders in the organization—motivating, mentoring, and appropriating roles and responsibilities on the basis of gifts and trust. These leaders are Christlike, characterized by servanthood, dynamism, visionary, trustworthy, patient, disciplined, available, approachable, and transparent. The people in our organization have similar convictions in values, vision, and objectives such that volunteers are attracted to serve with us and use our own resources.

Indicators:

- Do leaders have ownership, ability to clarify, apply, and exemplify CRUDAN's core values which are understood, accepted, and personally practiced by all stakeholders?
- Are these values promoted and cultivated among leaders and members through consistent prayers, devotions, and discipleship activities?
- Is the leadership available, open, and vulnerable enough to support opportunities for staff members to be guided, mentored, trained to maximize their gifts and potentials for service?
- Are leaders Christlike, characterized by humility, perseverance, discipline, and a simple lifestyle?
- Are leaders good listeners, able to model teaching by doing, participative, approachable, and transparent?

2. Holistic Ministry

Proposition: Our organization in its life and ministry is proclaiming the gospel through the declaration and demonstration of Christ's love and compassion in a manner that is inclusive to all peoples and cultures among the communities we serve and beyond. It promotes and practices spirituality within the organization, and respects other faiths in the context of its witness for the kingdom of God.

Indicators:

- Is the organization obedient to the Great Commission and shaped by Christian principles?
- Is the organization visibly Christian in its strategies and actions?
- Does the organization ascertain that its board members, staff, members, and partners are Christians who ar committed to serve the kingdom and practice their faith?
- Does the organization ensure that holistic development is understood, promoted, and practiced by the organization and its members?
- Are the people in the organization involved in

Involvement Area	*Frequency*	*% or Average Attendance*
1. Regular Devotions		
2. Bible Studies		
3. Spiritual Retreats		
4. OCI Celebration of Hope		
Training on . . .		
5. Evangelism and Mission		
6. Discipleship		

- Does CRUDAN encourage tactical cooperation between the church and the non-believing community in combating poverty, injustices, and social conflicts?
- Does the organization advocate for the poor and powerless through the promotion of justice in the issues of environment, gender, and poverty?
- Does the organization promote peace for societal transformation?

3. Participative Management

Proposition: All stakeholders in the organization have access to and share accurate and timely information through constant dialogue and listening, participatory planning, reporting, and feedback so that they can make relevant decisions and carry out their work with accountability and in coordination.

Indicators:

- Are the purpose statements of the organization clear and consistent with Christian values?
- Does the organization promote compassion to the poor that leads to their better life and self-reliance?
- Are all stakeholders aware and committed to a clear vision and mission of the organization?
- Is participatory planning, implementation, and evaluation promoted and practiced at all levels?
- Are the results of objectives monitored and shared regularly to all stakeholders?
- Do the board, management, and staff develop—through clear job expectations and regular peer evaluations—adequate supportive and friendly supervision?
- Do people in the organization have the opportunity to be trained and learn on the job?
  (Agree and circle one.) Satisfied Insufficient Not at all
- Do they have the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned?
  (Agree and circle one.) Satisfied Insufficient Not at all
- Are people (board, management, and staff) free to express their ideas and be listened to?
- Is team building promoted in the organization at all levels?
- Does the organization practice sound budgeting, up-to-date bookkeeping, complete/timely reporting and regular audits?
- Are budgets stewardly and realistic, and are expenditures within agreed limits?
- Is there a steady improvement in the cost-effectiveness of programs over time?
- Are people of proven integrity handling finances?
- Is the organization securing financial independence through increasing local support for its sustainability?

4. Organizational Strengthening

Proposition:
A self-governed organization with an independent Christian and national board that have a sound culture, clear functions, and structures that set directions, boundaries, and standards; and that have a purpose and policies that enhance people's commitment to and competence for organizational growth and effective and sustainable programs.

Indicators:

- Does CRUDAN have a constitution that is duly approved, understood, observed, regularly reviewed, and updated by stakeholders to best serve the organization?
- Is a governing board in place at national and zonal levels, consisting of at least 10 members who are Christians?
- Are these board members a balanced representation of the constituency of the organization? In terms of geographical, program, and status representation?
- Does the organization have clearly defined statements of purpose?

(Please check, as appropriate, in the following table.)

Purpose Statement in terms of...	*Yes*	*No*	*Developing*
1. Values	_____	_____	_____
2. Vision	_____	_____	_____
3. Mission	_____	_____	_____
4. Goals	_____	_____	_____
5. Strategies	_____	_____	_____

- Is there an executive committee consisting of at least three officers who are actively involved in governance, not just consent?
- Does the board delegate to committees, task forces, and teams to bring about resolution, problem solving, and decision making?
- Does the organization have a long-range plan in place that is directional, flexible, and regularly reviewed for specific annual planning and proposal making?
- Are plans consistent with the organization's vision and mission?
- Are objective results monitored, reported, shared, and celebrated?

- Is the management information system, including OCI, used regularly and effectively to enhance organization decisions?
- Are program, staff, and impact evaluations participatory and peer oriented?
- Does the general assembly meet at least yearly, is it provided with clear and accurate reports, and does it participate in decision making?
- Are meetings conducted with pre-agreed agendas, and are discussions cordial, documented, and shared with all concerned?
- Are elections democratic and held openly and regularly?
- Does the organization have ongoing training and development for their capacity building based on self-need assessment and informal open dialogue?

5. Resource Development

Proposition:
A learning organization that develops and trains its board, staff, and membership. The organization seeks and obtains needed funding from donors whose vision and values are consistent with its own. It plans and raises income locally to consistently increase its financial independence and sustainability. It also broadens and deepens its link and liaison with ecclesiastical, government, and non-government organizations for resource collaboration.

Indicators:

- Does the organization have an orientation and training package in place for its board _____; staff _____; members_____ and partners_____? (Specify # training/year.)
- Does the organization have orientation, policy manuals, and training materials that are updated regularly?
- Do board, staff, and members have career/educational/training plans based on self, peer, and supervisor evaluations?
- Are there internal and external, informal and formal training opportunities planned to build capacity/competence of staff, and are these reviewed yearly?
- Are the results of staff evaluation and organization (OCI) and program audits acted upon promptly?
- Does the organization have a financial independence plan in place? Ongoing?
- Are funding proposals appropriately prepared, presented, and actually accepted by donors?

- Are fund-generation projects planned and ongoing?
- Is collaboration with church, government, and non-government organizations for information and services explored adequately? Utilized to the maximum?
- Does the organization joyfully and openly share information, learning, expertise, and services to the community?

6. Community Empowerment

Proposition:
The organization promotes a vibrant and caring community that has a vision for its holistic development. Its people participate on the basis of respect and trust at all levels to self-manage its resources in organized actions in order to achieve its aspirations (goals) for a just, self-reliant, and sustainable life.

Indicators:

- Does CRUDAN promote the release of people's potential as imagebearers of God to help themselves in the development of their community and society?
- Are people self-aware and socially aware so that they take initiative to reflect on their situations and to act on needs and possibilities in most needy communities?
- Are people in communities trained and mentored to take leadership?
- Are local resources valued, mobilized, and utilized to the optimum?
- Are people encourage and organized to act collectively to achieve common goals?
- Does the organization promote a culture of inclusiveness (open-door policy), respect, and trust that enhances high morale at all levels?
- Is there contentment in working together as teams, peers, and colleagues in the organization?
- Is there a regular session to air grievances, discuss issues, and celebrate results?
- Is participatory training conducted to achieve desired community impact/change?
- Is quality feedback promoted and used in monitoring, sharing, and strengthening staff/board capacity and performance?
- Are leadership, gifts, rights, and freedom of expression encouraged and nurtured?

- Is there mutual concern and openness to help one another so that people know what is happening to each other's families? In the organization? In the community?
- Are relationships personal, intimate, and cordial in teams and in the organization as a whole?
- Are community-training needs responded to through planning, implementation, and evaluation of participatory training at the partner organization and community levels?
- Are people initiatives encouraged on appraisal of needs and possibilities to meet needs?
- Are active community organizations developed or in place where we serve?

7. Technical

Proposition: An organization that is learning, currently informed, and creative in applying technical know-how, appropriate technologies, indigenous knowledge, and participatory-engagement methods in community development so that its response to need and interventions appreciates potentials and possibilities for effective planning, management, and evaluations of its holistic/integrated programs.

Indicators:

- Does the organization promote and conduct appraisals to set priorities of need and possibilities in a positive, appreciative, and participatory manner?
- Is instruction of trainers conducted with member organizations to ensure that appraisal methods are understood, contextualized, and used as part of the organization's planning systems?
- Are self-assessment and evaluation modeled in the organization and promoted down to the community level?
- Are community-organizing methods participatory, adaptable, culture sensitive, and open to local-knowledge innovation?
- Are goals and objectives on target and effective? In the areas of functional literacy, income generation, agriculture, health, and other program concentrations?
- Are monitoring tools (MIS) understood at all levels, reviewed regularly, and reported timely?

- Is the growth of organization monitored (OCI)? Is community change monitored (CCI)?
- Does the organization provide books, manuals, periodicals on programs, and technical information to its staff and members?
- Does the organization have the needed expertise in its various sectors?
- Does the organization have the staff and competence to work with target groups?
- Does the organization seek, research, and adapt innovative approaches and solutions?

8. Networking and Partnership

Proposition: An organization that recognizes the value of interdependence through collaboration and partnership beyond itself in order to receive and share ideas, resources, and information relevant to the times and effective for its survival in a fast-changing environment.

Indicators:

- Is CRUDAN open to learn from its partners?
- Does CRUDAN initiate or have regular communication, consultations, and meetings with the following?

—Other NGOs _____ How often? _____

—Churches _____

—Government agencies _____

—Partner organizations _____

- Does CRUDAN have a list/directory of partners within and outside the organization that it can tap for collaboration and other services?
- Is CRUDAN interested in and aware of the activities of its partners and other NGOs with common goals and vision?
- Is there increasing sharing of resources, funds, personnel, and expertise between its member organizations?
- Are there organized local forums, assemblies for NGO sharing and interaction?
- Does the organization encourage joint projects, coordinated efforts with government and non-government organizations at the community level?

- Are there visible results in communities because of collaboration with others?
- Does CRUDAN have standards to guide their choice and dynamics of partnership?
- Are partners involved in decisions, and are they appreciative and critical of CRUDAN's efforts?
- Do partners visit and value each other's work and relationship? Is a consortium of partners upcoming or in place to enhance cooperation and networking?

East Africa
Organizational Capacity Building Monitor

In East Africa, the partner organizations and CRWRC staff decided to create a regional tool to be used by all partners. They identified their capacity areas and defined the characteristics of each capacity. For each capacity area, they used the following process to determine how well the partner was doing in that area.

First, what one thing (or two or three) that happened within the past six months / 12 months illustrates the capacity of our organization in each capacity area?

This was

4 = Better than expected
3 = As expected, on target
2 = Some progress
1 = No change

Second, what one hope (or 2 or 3) do we have for our organization for the next six months / 12 months in each capacity area?

1. Community and Culture

Assessment of community and culture capacity involves focusing on three categories:

a. **Awareness:** being aware of
- local language
- local customs, habits, traditions, practices, and taboos
- local spirituality, beliefs, religion
- local needs and the capacity of resources (physical and human)
- local leadership and local leadership dynamics
- history and history of local development experience
- geography, environment, and surroundings

b. **Appreciation of the culture:**
- identifying the positive aspects of the culture as it relates to development
- better utilizing the positive aspects of local culture
- respecting local customs, habits, practices, traditions, and taboos

c. **Utilization of or building upon . . .**
- local songs, language, and dress
- local leadership
- local resources
- local history
- local felt needs
- programs rooted in the culture and owned by the local community

To aid in the assessment of this area, the organization reviews staff reports; conducts baseline surveys, visits to the community, and interviews with local leaders, program participants, and non-participants; checks with key informants—professors, staff of other departments, other NGOs, local pastors and politicians; and collects stories, using examples and illustrations.

2. Management

Assessing the management capacity involves focusing on three categories:

a. **Human resources:**

- recruitment and training
- morale, motivation, and participation
- assignment, position, or job descriptions
- recording, feedback, monitoring
- coordination
- communication
- organizing

b. **Capital resources:**

- planning and budgeting (annual and long range)
- monitoring and control
- application of resources, accountability, and transparency
- acquisition and maintenance

c. **Time resources**

- programming design, formulation, and packaging
- monitoring and evaluation and results

3. Teamwork

Assessment of the teamwork capacity involves focusing on seven categories:

Category	When/how	Who	Frequency
1. Sharing and interaction	meetings	board project staff all staff	1 x yr 2 x yr 3 x yr
2. Participation and trust	meetings	board project staff all staff	1 x yr 2 x yr 3 x yr
3. Consultation, cohesion, unity	meetings	board project staff all staff	1 x yr 2 x yr 3 x yr
4. Coordination	finance reports, project reports, narratives	board project staff all staff	monthly monthly 2 x yr
5. Motivation and encouragement	meetings and skill building	board project staff all staff	1 x yr 2 x yr 1 x yr
6. Control and directing	finance reports, project reports, narratives	board project staff all staff	monthly monthly 2 x yr
7. Holding common goal and vision	meetings and skill building	board project staff all staff	2 x yr 2 x yr 1 x yr

Also part of the process is celebration—by stakeholders in and of the organization—done regularly, creatively, formally, and informally.

4. Networking

Assessment of the networking capacity involves focusing on eight categories:

1. **Regular communication** (meetings) with
   - other NGOs
   - government agencies, government departments
   - constituency
2. **Updated listings** of
   - other NGOs to interact with
   - government agencies and departments to interact with
3. **Awareness** of
   - activities of other NGOs in the organization's area/communities
   - activities of government agencies and departments in the organization's areas and communities
4. **Using, sharing resources** (financial and material) of
   - other NGOs
   - government agencies and departments
5. **Using, sharing personnel** of
   - other NGOs
   - government agencies and departments
6. **Local community consultation or interaction** with
   - other NGOs
   - government agencies and departments
   - other communities
7. **Coordination of efforts** by
   - NGOs in local communities
   - government agencies and departments in local communities
8. **Visible results** that generate
   - additional resources
   - additional networking opportunities and contracts

5. Empowerment

Assessing the empowerment capacity involves focusing on five categories:

1. **Training:**
   - number of workshops, on-the-job-training, courses, visits
   - number of workshop participants
   - methodology used (participatory)
   - workshop content

- desired impact versus actual impact of workshop with participants. Any changes in skills? Attitudes? Transforming?
- participatory evaluations of workshops
- duration of workshop
- language used (local, national, foreign)

2. **Use of local resources:**
   - materials
   - human
   - natural

   To what extent are the above locally, participant identified and maximally utilized?

3. **Feedback quality and use:**
   - monitoring results shared?
   - evaluation shared?
   - monitoring and evaluations used in strengthening board and staff capacity and program performance

4. **Enabling environment:**
   - shared leadership
   - creation, awareness of, and respect for basic human rights, freedom of association and expression
   - nurturing, non-threatening atmosphere is promoted

5. **Agape love:**
   - mutual concern promoted
   - transparency (lack of intrigue) practiced
   - sacrifice and openness promoted

6. Spirituality and Faith

Assessment of the spirituality and faith capacity involves focusing on three categories:

1. **Service:** Are people developing themselves for
   - service in health, literacy, income-generating activities
   - service in stewardship
   - service in discipleship and faith nurturing

2. **Justice:** Is justice being promoted as it relates to
   - women's involvement
   - other marginalized groups' involvement
   - poorest of the poor being reached
   - promotion and practice of solidarity with the poor

- "inclusiveness" of programs (i.e., open and equal access as it relates to participation)
- transparency

3. **Evangelism:** demonstrating and proclaiming the good news
   - promoting and enhancing right relationships with God
   - "Fruit of the Spirit" is demonstrated
   - increasing interdenominational and interfaith unity
   - transparency in organizational systems and procedures
   - increasing community involvement in faith-nurturing and discipleship-building activities

Another important feature of this component is the concept of "deep rootedness"—our reason for existence, our being imagebearers of God, our involvement in "kingdom building"

7. Communication

Assessment of the communication capacity involves focusing on five categories:

1. **Participation and dialogue:**
   - information is shared and owned by all participants
   - all members are part of the communication process
   - freedom of expression exists; creativity is encouraged
   - all are encouraged to contribute
   - information is clearly presented

2. **Language:**
   - information is stored in a clear, common language
   - common language is used at all levels
   - language used is clearly understood by the listeners

3. **Frequency:**
   - data and information are timely and presented promptly at the various venues (i.e., community meetings, board meetings, staff meetings, and community visits)
   - monitoring and evaluations done are regular, prompt, timely, and shared openly

4. **Consultation occurs**
   - at external level (donors, government) regularly
   - at internal level (within organization, between departments, among staff)

5. **Diverse media used appropriately**
   - telephones, fax, e-mail
   - videos, photography

- computer-generated materials
- signs, posters, drawings using local materials
- speaking, writing

8. Transformational Leadership

Assessment of the transformational leadership capacity involves focusing on and determining whether the following twelve characteristics are being modeled by the organization's leadership:

a. trustworthy, honest, dependable

b. respectful, self-disciplined

c. affirmative with a positive vision

d. servant-like, committed, humble

e. sacrificial, dedicated, self-denying

f. gender sensitive, considerate

g. flexible, willing to change, rational

h. eager to (re)discover, learn, and be creative

i. tolerant, patient, enduring, persevering

j. motivated, encouraging

k. skilled at listening, calm, open, and approachable

l. God-fearing

9. Results Attainment

Assessment of the results-attainment capacity involves focusing on the previous eight organizational-capacity components as well as on the results achieved by the organization's programs.

In relation to the capacity components, the results were

4 = Better than expected
3 = As expected, on target
2 = Some progress
1 = No change

1. Community and Culture

2. Management

3. Teamwork

4. Networking
5. Empowerment
6. Spirituality and Faith
7. Communication
8. Transformational Leadership

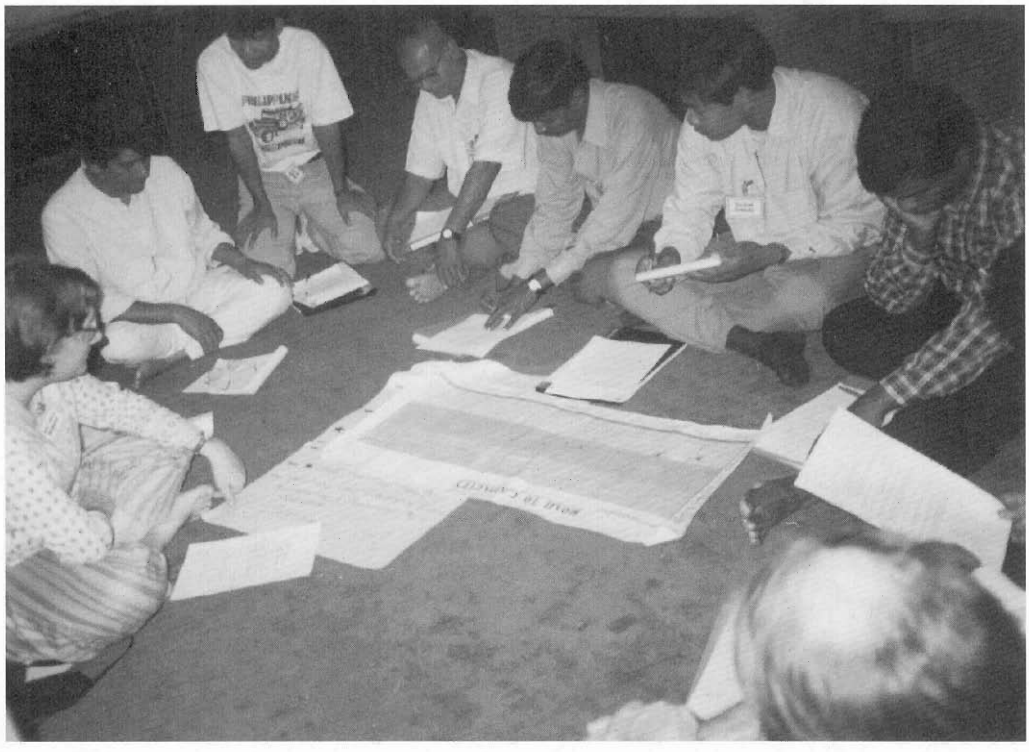
If possible, please tell a brief story (20 to 100 words) that illustrates in a general way the capacity of the organization, and briefly outline its current strengths and growth areas related to capacity.

As it relates to programs carried out, the results were

4 = Better than expected
3 = As expected, on target
2 = Some progress
1 = No change

1. Income-Generation Activities
2. Agriculture or Food Production
3. Micro-Enterprise
4. Adult Literacy
5. Primary Health Care
6. Evangelism

If possible please tell a brief "story" that illustrates in a general way the positive impacts and changes your development efforts have had on your target communities.



Asia
Organizational Capacity Building Monitor

1. Board/Legal Identity

Proposition: Our organization is governed by a selected body that sets our direction; determines policies; sets standards; hires for program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; and is ultimately responsible for the health of the organization.

Our organization is registered with the government, and we have . . .

- constitution and by-laws
- articles of incorporation
- statement of purpose
- plan of action
- other legal requirements as specified by the government

Flow Chart for Asia OCI Tool Development and Use	Remarks
CRWRC/partner workshops generate capacities, provocative propositions, and indicator lists.	*Do our current nine capacities cover all the desired capacities? If not, do we add more, or are we okay with partners/fields adding new capacities?*
A partner (everyone/whole system in the room) chooses relevant, desirable capacities (several or more).	*In a partnership, is CRWRC included within the partner's "whole system" so that CRWRC can participate in the selection of capacities?*
A partner (everyone/whole system in the room) chooses a provocative proposition on each of the capacities chosen.	*The provocative proposition does not need to be called as such. Partners can take the statement, as agreed upon, as a region, or they can modify/translate it so that it best fits their context, hopes, and dreams.*
A partner (everyone/whole system in the room) chooses relevant indicators for each of the capacities chosen or adds other indicators that are more appropriate to their situation.	*The indicators are the fruit of the capacities in action, the capacities being demonstrated; they indicate the degree to which the capacity and the provocative proposition have been attained.*
For each capacity chosen, a partner has a "road to capacity" card/chart posted on the wall.	*Perhaps not literally posted on the wall but available for all to see, as a reminder, as a challenge.*

Flow chart continued on next page

X-axis is a length of time as chosen by the partner.	*This can be three months, six months, etc.*
Y-axis is "amount" of capacity with full/total/high Y represented by the provocative proposition.	*Asia fields have suggested the stages of a coconut tree, degrees of happy faces, stars, and human motion as proxy indicators to use along the Y axis instead of numbers.*
A partner chooses where it is currently (at the time of meeting), relative to low Y (birth of organization) and relative to high Y (the provocative proposition). The choice can be made on the basis of shared stories and consensus.	*This may be difficult. Indicators may help in deciding the current reality and may also help in prompting stories or discussion as to where an organization is.*
Every "X" months, the partner (everyone/whole system in the room) meets to share stories that demonstrate when the given capacity was demonstrated and brought to test.	*The indicators can help in storytelling. There may be a risk that partners may gradually feel that a meeting agenda with regard to "storytelling" may not generate sufficient interest or importance.*
At that time and based on the discussion, the partner decides whether there should be any change on the scale, and by how much.	*Will the data generated on the "road to capacity" chart—"Do we go up or down," and "by how much"—be authentic? So far, we have said that if indeed the "whole system" is represented, the data should be authentic/valid.*
At that time as well, the partner sets a target as to where they wish to be in the next six-month period.	*This, too, may be difficult. Do partners simply say they want to be up on the scale. This step may lessen the value otherwise placed on target/objective setting.*

Indicators:

- The board understands staff roles and responsibilities and the organization's finances and policies that are in place.
- Policies and decision making are done by the board.
- There is freedom to express one's ideas (among staff and between board and staff).
- There is an open relationship between board and staff.
- Policies are in place to assure there are regular meetings.
- The board needs and includes national leaders.
- The board should be a promoter of the organization's work and should represent it to the general public.
- Board members are selected based on capabilities, not on gender.
- The board meeting agenda should be provided at least a week in advance.
- Board members are selected on merit.
- There is laughing and enjoyment in working together.
- The board includes experts from all development fields.
- The board knows when to provide direction to the director.
- The board knows the importance of and need for a long-range plan and an annual plan.
- The board sets direction, etc., based on people's needs.
- The board assures mentoring of new board members.
- Term limits are encouraged.
- Fifty percent of board members are women.
- There is equality in decision making among women and men.
- Board regularly monitors progress and evaluates the program and staff.
- Board is advisory only.
- Policies are balanced and allow for feedback between board and staff.
- There are regular meetings and good record keeping.
- Regular elections are held.
- The board supports, monitors, and makes relevant policies for the organization.
- The board has fewer than 30 members.

- Board members are committed and competent and hire staff who are also committed and competent.
- There is transparent participation without members bringing their own hidden agendas to meetings.
- Everyone in the organization, including the board, is responsible for the health of the organization.
- The organization is recognized by the government. If it is a church-related organization, it is recognized and supported by the churches as well.
- The organization has legal permission to work.
- Members of the federation are also registered with the government.
- Board members and the organization in general acknowledge that legal identity is good for the image and authenticity of the organization and that it helps to mobilize resources from the government.
- There is regular reporting to the proper authorities.
- Board members are free and committed to serve.
- The community recognizes and appreciates the work of the organization.
- A long-range plan is submitted to the government.
- There is an acknowledged need to maintain a good, "honest" relationship with government departments, and such a relationship indeed exists.
- The government knows who we are, and we have good relations with them.
- There is approval from the necessary authorities (such as an "NGO bureau") to carry out work.
- There is a written constitution approved by the board.
- Staff are acquainted with how the organization's legal papers are followed up in the government office.
- The legal name of the organization is registered with the government.

2. A Clear Vision, Mission, Strategy, and Set of Shared Values

Proposition: Our vision expresses our purpose for existing: our dreams, aspirations, and concerns for the poor. Our mission expresses how we reach our vision. Our strategy expresses the approach we use to accomplish our goals. The shared values that we hold create a common understanding and inspire us to work together to achieve our goal.

Indicators:

- Programs are relevant to the needs of the people, are effective, and reach our target population.
- Plans match the desires of the organization and are actually followed.
- Every person can state the mission and vision in his or her own words.
- There is helping and understanding at all levels.
- There is a yearly or a six-month plan that is checked monthly.
- The organization vision is clarified in the constitution.
- Staff, partners, and board members can express the organization's values.
- The board regularly meets together to approve policies.
- The group has a clear and shared statement of faith.
- Every board member, staff, and participant understands and is able to express the vision.
- Planning is done very strategically, with long term goals and concerns in mind
- Evaluations carried out of the organization show that the vision, strategy, and values are well maintained.
- Operations/activities are within the vision, mission, and goal of the organization.
- Staff and organization should always focus all their endeavors on the vision, mission, and so on.
- Staff knows why they do what they're doing.
- Every member of the organization has access to the organization's constitution.
- Every staff member has a clear work plan for meeting the strategy.
- There is unity in mind, heart, and action between the staff and the board.
- There are regular meetings to review and affirm the vision-mission strategy.
- Board and staff review vision and mission.
- The most important work is being accomplished.

3. Human Resources

Proposition: Our organization is designed to develop people and provide them with opportunities so that they can contribute to their full potential. We provide specific, focused, and appropriate training. The training and systems we use promote growth in thinking, understanding, acting, feeling, reflecting, analyzing, evaluating, innovating, creativity, flexibility, openness, leadership, teamwork, collaboration, and specific technical skills.

Indicators:

- We have well-trained staff who produce planned results.
- Well-kept monitoring and evaluating records are available.
- Staff visit other NGOs to learn about their successful programs.
- Staff makes group decisions before starting a new program.
- The right persons (those with skills and commitment) are hired.
- Staff are willing to share among colleagues.
- Staff are ever ready and open to learn new ideas and techniques.
- There is a good training curriculum available and being used.
- Staff are recruited according to needs.
- Members of an organization work together as a team—this is seen in participation and decision making that takes place in meetings.
- Morale of staff is high and encourages everyone to contribute to their full potential.
- Encouragement to staff is visible; continuing education is provided for staff; openness and freedom of expression are not stifled.
- Staff are able to continue working, perhaps in different ways, in the face of difficulty.
- There is mutual respect, and all are prepared to listen to one another.
- There is no nepotism in the organization. Decisions and discussion are carried out with objectivity.
- Board and staff have a mentoring plan—a training/career development plan. Opportunities are provided for mutual training.
- There is one well-documented innovation every two years with "learning" about successes and failures discussed throughout the organization.

- Board, staff, and partner-organization representatives are committed.
- We make use of other organizations' resources.
- There is a training schedule that includes all of the staff.
- Board and staff have high morale.

4. Management Systems

Proposition: We implement policies and practices that ensure the organization uses its resources effectively . . .

- to achieve its vision and goals
- to choose appropriate strategies and programs
- to report, measure, and evaluate results

We utilize a process and structure that involves participation of all members.

Indicators:

- Randomly selected "samples"" of poor communities are interviewed and monitored annually to assess community perspective on program success.
- There is clear accountability and regular monitoring.
- There is an accurate reporting of activity results.
- Planning is based on the vision.
- There are clear objectives and job descriptions. Teamwork is encouraged. There are regular meetings, good management-information systems, and listening to field workers' suggestions.
- There is an annual stakeholder retreat for visioning and evaluating.
- The management system is transparent and easily understood.
- There is a participation of all in setting vision and goals.
- The system can be easily replicated.
- There are good reports—easy and simple to understand.
- There is much flexibility—a fluid and responsive mechanism that enables us to adapt quickly to new information and to changes in the environment.
- Policies balance the needs of board, staff, and other stakeholders (program participants).
- The board uses and gives quality feedback on the organization's progress reports.

- There are clear lines of staff accountability.
- Community members use the information they collect.

5. Leadership

Proposition: Our organization's leadership is competent, for it empowers, serves, communicates, and is motivated by compassion for the poor. It demonstrates God-fearing qualities, flexibility, and transparency so that the organization is equipped to accomplish its vision.

Indicators:

- Leaders are committed to the vision.
- Leadership is approachable and has sincere concern for the staff and the organization's growth and development.
- Leaders visit the staff and projects regularly and know the staff and beneficiaries.
- Leaders empower others.
- Leadership is based on justice, and leaders receive ideas and share them with the staff.
- Leaders know and work with beneficiaries as well as learn from others.
- The emphasis of leadership is always on the benefit of country and humanity.
- Equipping leaders means mentoring, training, disciplining. Each one reaches at least one. There is an accountability partner for everyone.
- Issues are being dealt with.
- Concern for the poor includes communication.
- Leadership emphasizes sensitivity to the organization.
- Conflicts between people are resolved.
- There is a good relationship between staff and members.
- Training of leaders takes place at two levels. Leaders are constantly learning, and they constantly seek to support and build up new leaders.
- Leadership demonstrates humble and active participation.
- Encouragement to the staff is visible, continuing education is provided to the staff, and openness and freedom of the staff are not stifled.

6. Networking

Proposition: We build relationships by seeking and availing ourselves of opportunities with many different sources for mutual support.

Indicators:

- There is a clear understanding and communication of vision and priorities.
- There is good communication with other organizations by mail, meetings, and email.
- External and internal relations are excellent.
- There is an adequate and helpful number of meetings and time spent with other NGOs.
- There is an organized forum for like-minded organizations.
- There is little duplication in the work carried out.
- Working agreements with other partners and other collaborating organizations are in place.
- Joint training and exchange visits take place.
- Networking members have a current list of resources available.
- Quality promotional material is available.
- Stakeholders (board, staff, and donors) all work together.
- Cooperation and results reflect our working together.
- Staff is capable of obtaining resources.
- Church members are involved in development.
- There is an adequate and helpful frequency of communication.
- We help others to find new resources.
- Our organization has a good reputation.
- We are reliable and trustworthy.
- There exists an updated list of organizations with which our organization relates, and we have a documented record of when we have worked together and what we have done together.

7. Stewardship

Proposition: We will responsibly use and manage all of the human, natural, and financial resources of our own organization, and we will admire, honor, and respect all those resources given by God.

Indicators:

- There is no wasting of staff or resources.
- We live a simple lifestyle and simply give.
- We continually locate all natural resources available in the country using modern technology.
- Our work demonstrates cost effectiveness, good use of whatever knowledge is available to us, and an ongoing review.
- There is regular financial monitoring.
- There is high retention of staff (low turnover).
- The organization's plan, budget, actual expenditures, and variations are well understood.
- Plans are in place for long-term sustainability of our work.
- Committee of board, staff, and community are trained in preservation of resources.
- We work for the protection (local) of the environment (natural) and attend local/international conferences for global awareness of the natural environment.
- There is accountability in all expenditures.
- There is a responsible use of resources.
- We serve an increasing number of people with a similar amount of resources. We become increasingly efficient with the resources available to us.
- The impact and blessings of our work extend further and further while continuing to be cost-effective (in terms of financial and human resources).
- The organization provides for spiritual growth of the staff through regular retreats and observation of national holidays ("All work and no play . . .").
- There is respect for human dignity and worth.
- We make use of continuing education programs.
- Staff participate in programs.

- There is a committee for water and soil management (or a committee for each of these).
- We make a careful plan (including budget) and stick to it.

8. Gender Participation

Proposition: Gender participation is a value evident both within our organization and within our projects.

a. What we see is gender equity in employment, salary, benefits, privileges, education and training, representation in board and staff, and decision making

b. We schedule meetings with consideration for activities that may bias attendance.

c. There is protection from sexual and verbal harassment.

d. Program implementation promotes justice for both women and men.

Indicators:

- There is an even ratio of men and women on staff.
- Organization looks at community-level gender issues.
- There are equal opportunities for women and men.
- The organization emphasizes gender sensitivity in all its projects.
- There is a participation of women at all levels of organization.
- Women and men receive equal wages for the same job.
- There is equal representation of women and men on staff and board.
- There is equal access to education and shared responsibilities between men and women.
- Women must have equal rights (same rights as men).
- Men and women are involved equally in decision making.
- There is a maternal-pregnancy-leave policy.
- Men/husbands are educated regarding respect for women/wives.
- Men and women help each other.
- Staff are selected based on capabilities, not whether they are male or female.
- There are equal opportunities in all aspects of life.

- Equal opportunities are promoted; moreover, there is sensitivity to working mothers' needs.
- There is gender training for board, staff, and community.
- There are policies and training to promote equality among the staff (between men and women).
- Women are trained to improve their skill.
- Activities are appropriate for each gender.
- Staff is well trained about gender sensitivity.
- There is equal participation in decision making, at board level, within management, and within groups.
- The organization has a gender policy and a plan for implementation.

9. Financial Sustainability

Proposition: Our organization and programs are financially sustainable. We demonstrate this through our fund-raising ability, by which we are aware of external and internal resource providers. We can access resources from these providers through the successful marketing of our organization. Our financial system promotes flexibility, accountability, and a stewardly use of all resources available to us.

Indicators:

- There is demonstrated fund-raising/marketing ability (fund, capital, number of donors, number of clients).
- There is proper utilization of resources.
- No favoritism is shown in disbursement for projects.
- Our plans are leading us to financial interdependence.
- There is a good balance of internal and external resources.
- A good bookkeeping/accounting system is in place.
- The cost/benefit ratio (less expenses/more benefits) is good and improving.
- We are able to generate, own, and control our own resources wisely.
- We can support our own staff and projects.
- The organization earns income from sources such as agriculture.
- A good accounting and financial monitoring system (financial audits) is in place.

- Organizational income-generating activities are promoted; these activities are sustainable.
- There is transparency in the financial systems and a readiness to defend the organization's name and image when occasion calls for it (e.g., false accusation against financial mismanagement).
- Funds are released as per budget.
- Income and expenses are recorded.
- One hundred percent of operational costs are in-country.
- A revolving fund is available for sustainable income-generation activities.
- There is a system for reviewing financial information.
- There are multiple sources of income available.
- There is a transparent accounting system.
- An external audit is conducted on a regular basis.

Haiti
Organizational Capacity Building Monitor

1. Staff Development

Proposition: The team has the necessary training and information that permits it to respond effectively and efficiently to the institutional objectives, both at the organizational and the community-intervention level. In addition, the training received by the organization serves not only the organization but also the family life and church life of the organization members.

Indicators:

- According to team evaluations, the members have complete and general training in their area of work.

  _____of_____ have received training. (___%)
  (# of people) (whole team)

- According to team evaluations, the members have up-to-date technical training in their area of work.

  _____of_____ have received training. (___%)
  (# of people) (whole team)

- According to team evaluations, the members are capable of applying the principles of personnel administration, such as time use, decision making, human relations, and so on.

  _____of_____ have received training. (___%)
  (# of people) (whole team)

- Team members can give training to other people within the organization, and to people from other organizations.

  _____of_____ have received training. (___%)
  (# of people) (whole team)

- The organization has and applies a policy that ensures team members receive the training they deserve.

  _____of_____ have received training. (___%)
  (# of people) (whole team)

Testimony: Give a brief testimony of the training your organization has done.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Plan for the next six months:

_____

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_____

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_____

2. Efficiency

Proposition: An organization depends on internal resources (materials, capital equipment) and external resources (finances, community leadership, consultants). In terms of the internal resources, each member of the team should manage them with responsibility, efficiency, integrity, and satisfaction. Each team member should feel as if he or she has a role in the search and management of resources. In terms of the external resources, each donor should feel as if he or she is participating in important work that has integrity. The organization should look for resources without worrying about compromising its mission.

Indicators:

- Select one:

_____ The team identifies with the work of the organization in the community, and they motivate each other to look for the best way to use resources to obtain the best results.

_____ The team recognizes the importance of efficient use of resources and agrees to apply a system of controls that the organization has implemented.

_____ The team members are cooperating with the monitoring of resource use because they feel obligated to do so.

_____ The team members do not agree with the monitoring of resource use.

- The organization has a good monitoring and coordination system for its resource use. Indicate all that apply:

_____ uses a good accounting system

_____ prepares an inventory (at least once a year)

_____ applies a system to control use of office supplies

_____ monitors the use of equipment and other resources to ensure their maximum use

_____ within the organization each person holds a position according to their skills

- The organization assures that donors feel they are contributing to an important work that has integrity.

Yes No Donors are interested in visiting projects.

Yes No Donors give more support (financial, references, contact with other donors, and so on).

- The organization plans well for its needs and satisfies them without unnecessary waste.

Yes No The organization has unexplained expenses.

Yes No At the end of the year there is either not enough money or too much money left over.

Yes No The team evaluates the use of the resources.

Yes No The team evaluates the needs of the organization.

Testimony: Give a brief testimony of how the organization manages its resources well.

Plan for the next six months:

3. Team Work

Proposition: All team members meet together to share ideas about the activities of the organization. They collaborate together so that they come to realize the objectives and the vision of the organization which they hold together for the betterment of the organization. Each member respects the gifts that God has given to each individual member (1 Cor. 12:12).

Indicators:

- The team participates fully in the annual plan and long-range plan. (Choose one.)

_____ all plan together

_____ some members participate

_____ the administration writes the entire plan

- Each team member writes an annual plan for his or her area of work and shares it with the team.

_____ each shares his or her plan well

_____ the majority share their plan

_____ many do not share their plan

- The organization has and applies an established mechanism by which one can help another in organizing activities. (Choose one.)

_____ the team meets weekly or monthly according to work load

_____ the team meets infrequently

_____ the team hardly ever meets

- There is respect for the role, activities, and skills (gifts) of each member of the team; the team accepts the work of each team member according to his or her gifts. (Indicate each that applies.)

_____ all members of the team

_____ some members of the team

_____ no members of the team

_____ each member has liberty to choose the strategy that permits him or her to do his or her work best

_____ sometimes the administration intervenes to guide the work

_____ the administration declares how to do everything.

- Everyone who has anything to do with an activity meets together to look for solutions to problems. The team together finds the solution to a problem through an established system. (Choose one.)

_____ always

_____ sometimes

_____ never

- Each team member is interested in and has the capacity to evaluate and correct the work of team members. (Choose one.)

_____ all team members

_____ some team members

_____ no team members

- Each team member has the moral (humility) capacity to accept the recommendation of another member. (Choose one.)

_____ all team members

_____ some team members

_____ no team members

- The team meets together to share experiences with the strategy and to accept correction from others. (Choose one.)

_____ regularly

_____ sometimes

_____ never

- How do you feel about the team in terms of your participation within it? (Choose one.)

_____ the participation makes the team dynamic, effective, and efficient

_____ the participation promotes fear among the members

_____ the participation causes the team to loose time

_____ the participation provokes a spirit of competitiveness among team members

Testimony: Give a brief testimony which shows how your organization works as a team.

Plan for the next six months:

4. Autonomy

Proposition: The organization responds to its own needs and makes its own decisions. The organization has its own resources (financial, material, human), which allow it to function. Nevertheless, the organization works for the preparation of projects and looks for other resources for new activities or to better the organization without compromising its vision or mission.

Indicators:
(Choose one response for each.)

- The organization has legal recognition

_____ yes

_____ no

_____ in process

- The organization has a board which gives continuity

_____ the board is active

_____ the board is passive

_____ there is no board

- The organization has defined, with the participation of all interested parties, the vision, constitution, and policies of the organization.

_____ yes

_____ no

_____ partially

- The board supports the vision, constitution, and policies of the organization.

_____ The board reviews the vision and policies annually.

_____ The board revises the vision and policies when necessary.

_____ The board has nothing to do with the vision or the policies.

- The organization selects financial sources appropriate to its situation.

_____ yes

_____ no

_____ partially

- The organization has resources that assure at least two years of operation.

_____ more than two years

_____ two years

_____ one year

_____ does not have the resources

- The organization collaborates with other institutions, and there is mutual respect.

_____ yes

_____ no

_____ partially

- There is liberty and capacity to make decisions with or without the control of the board.

yes no The organization has the means and space to function.

yes no The board directs the organization.

yes no The board delegates responsibility to the team.

Testimony: Give a brief testimony that shows how the organization has autonomy.

Plan for the next six months:

5. Follow Christian Principles

Proposition: The organization is different from other organizations because . . .

a. The vision and all the activities are in agreement with what the Bible says.

b. Each program promotes integrity, peace, mutual respect, health, education, or a higher economic level for the whole community as a manifestation of the kingdom of God (Isa. 60-61; 65:17-25).

Indicators:

- The vision and objectives are in agreement with what the Bible says.

_____ The vision and objectives are solidly based in biblical principles.

_____ Some objectives are related to biblical principles.

_____ The objectives are not contrary to biblical principles, but the relationship is not clear.

- The team understands development to be one way to advance the kingdom of God.

_____ Each technical training has a relationship to the social-transformation aspect of the kingdom of God

_____ Each technical training focuses only on increasing the technical capacity of the participant.

- All team members are Christian according to the organizational definition of *Christian.*

_____of_____ are Christian. (___%)
(# of people) (whole team)

- Within the team there is an atmosphere of love and motivation in which each person helps the other when there is a work-related or personal need.

_____ yes

_____ sometimes

_____ no

- The programs have participants who are not Christian.

_____of_____are not Christian. (___%)
(# of persons) (all participants)

- The program encourages that more people believe in God.

How many people came to know God in the past year?_____

- The organization promotes prayer and biblical reflection.

_____ every day

_____ every week

_____ every month

_____ never

Testimony: Give a brief testimony that shows how the organization follows Christian principles.

Plan for the next six months:

CRWRC's Revised Capacity Assessment System

In our effort to develop a new method of assessing the strengths and needs of our partner agencies, we are placing a lot of emphasis on listening to our partners and allowing them ample participation in developing the new method. In my last encounter with Accion Medica Cristiana (AMC) leaders, that approach led to a curious encounter of a Third World kind.

When we had presented the Organizational Capacity Indicator system to the directors of AMC several years ago, they were quite vocal in their rejection of the North American system for assessing the strength of their organization. It was too culturally biased, for one thing, and it was entirely too rigid and quantitative. It was not at all respectful of their own culture and organizational integrity.

Last week it was time to go over the details of our new annual agreement with AMC, an agreement which had been developed with substantial participation of AMC communities and the AMC project team. It was the director of the local project who decided how to frame the results they were looking for and how to monitor progress toward those results.

What resulted was an agreement that in many ways reflected CRWRC's traditional emphasis on concrete and quantifiable results. When the executive director of AMC reviewed the agreement, he commented on how quantitative it was, thinking that CRWRC had imposed this approach. He was pleased to discover that it was his own people had developed the agreement and who had committed themselves to achieving the quantitative objectives.

One lesson of this experience is that lack of participation often erects barriers to understanding and collaboration that are more imagined than real. When people feel they are being imposed upon, their first reaction is rejection and rebellion, however strong the merits of what is being proposed. CRWRC has been told by our partners that we are often culturally insensitive with our "demands," but though this is no doubt partly true, I have the suspicion that increased participation will show that we had, and have, a lot more in common than we had ever realized.

—a narrative from Nicaragua ■

In Search of . . . Measurable Results

For twenty years, CRWRC has used a system for assessing the organizational strength of partner organizations. This system has had clear benefits but also some unintended side-effects. This chapter presents CRWRC's revised capacity assessment system. This is not a system that we are prescribing for other organizations to use. Instead it is a system born in the creative tension between CRWRC's organizational needs for valid information and the new learning discovered in the study of organizational capacity.

CRWRC has considered itself to be a results-focused organization ever since it implemented a management-by-objectives strategy in 1976. All community-development programs have measurable-results objectives that are tracked regularly. Income-generation programs track changes in participant-family incomes. Primary health care programs monitor child nutrition through regular weighing. Literacy programs report on how many new people demonstrate reading skills. Another area in which CRWRC expects results is in the strengthening of partner organizations. The desire to be able to track these results is what led CRWRC to develop the Skill Rating Scale (SRS) in 1977, an instrument that indicated whether or not partner organizations were maturing as expected.

The SRS evolved into a survey that CRWRC staff used to track the progress of partner organizations in five key skill areas: technical skills, networking skills, board-control skills, management skills, and church-linkage skills. Each of these areas was rated on a scale of 1 to 5. A score of 1 signified no ability in that area, and a score of 5 signified excellent ability. (For more information about the SRS, see Appendix B.) The assumption was that when an organization could score at least a 4 in each skill area, then the organization was capable of functioning without further help from CRWRC.

After 20 years of use the SRS tool is being reevaluated. The SRS has made a great contribution to the quality and integrity of the work of CRWRC. However, the growing understanding of organizational-capacity building as something bigger than skill development, along with a desire for more ownership of the system by partner organizations, has led to the development of a new system.

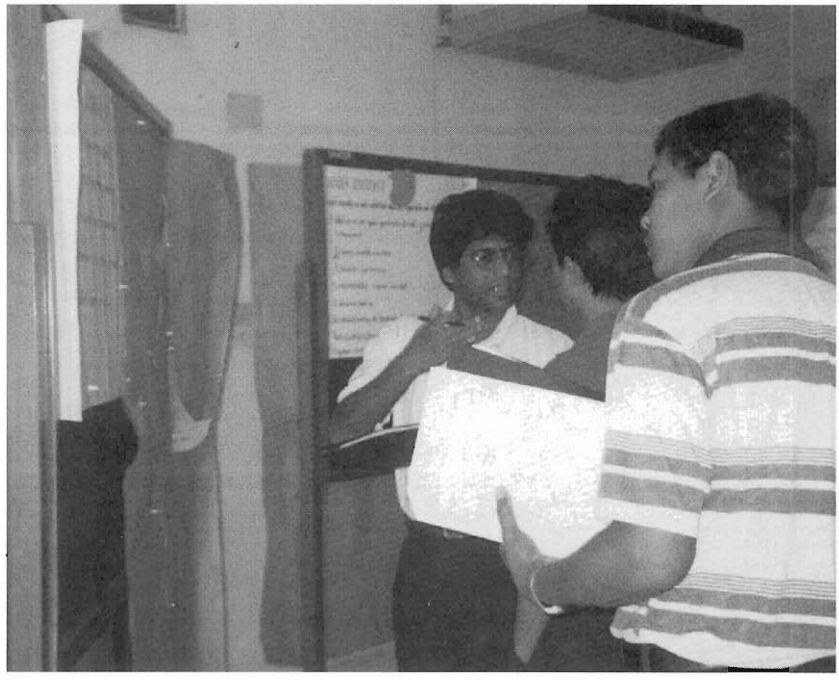
Strengths and Weaknesses of the SRS System

The SRS tool was a tremendous help in CRWRC's work of organizational strengthening. It provided accountability within CRWRC. It provided accountability between CRWRC and its partner organizations. And it was a tool for planning future organizational growth. However, after two decades of use, some weakness of the SRS have been revealed. One weakness has been that the SRS is not always a reliable indicator of future organizational success. Another weakness is

that the SRS has remained a tool that is primarily used by CRWRC, not by partner organizations. These weaknesses have motivated the creation of a new system.

But, first, let's take a more detailed look at the benefits of the SRS system. The creation of the SRS was motivated by a desire to provided accountability within CRWRC in the strategy of organizational strengthening. The SRS clearly accomplished this. When working with dozens of organizations around the world, a strategy of strengthening organizations can be difficult to monitor. The SRS was designed to reflect the essential values that CRWRC wanted to be reflected in work with partner organizations. Partner organizations needed to be

- developing technical expertise in literacy, income generation, and health;
- networking with donors other than development organizations;
- maintaining accountability to a legally responsible board;
- growing in management skills;
- and linking with churches whenever possible.



Discussing the indicators of capacity.

SRS scores helped supervisors determine whether or not staff were consulting with partner organizations in a way that reflected these values. SRS scores also allowed the administration and the board to receive a clear synopsis of the organizational strengthening work of CRWRC.

Just as the SRS tool helped provide accountability within CRWRC, it also promoted accountability between CRWRC and partner organizations. CRWRC was concerned about community-level results—such as families who increased their income and malnourished children who gained weight. It would have been easy for CRWRC to start treating partner organizations simply as subcontractors dependent on CRWRC for continuing financial support. But CRWRC has a strategy of management consultation that aimed to strengthen national organizations so that they would be able to work with the poor without being forever dependent on outside resources. The SRS focused attention on this consultation strategy. Partner organizations were expected to show a measurable impact on poor communities *and* they were responsible to work toward becoming independent from CRWRC. CRWRC consultants, on the other hand, were responsible to

provide the support and training necessary for the organization to become independent. By reviewing the five skill areas twice a year, CRWRC consultants and partner organizations kept each other accountable to their responsibilities.

The SRS tool promoted accountability in the work of organizational strengthening, but it was also a tool for planning. Organizations were able to set measurable goals for the skill levels they hoped to achieve, and they were able to create action plans to achieve these goals. The semi-annual results of the SRS helped CRWRC staff to pinpoint the areas where their consultation and training were most needed. CRWRC hoped to work with partner organizations for a period of five to eight years, at the end of which CRWRC would be able to "phase-out" of the partnership with the assurance that the organization would be able to continue to function independently. The SRS provided a way to track incremental progress toward that goal.

Organizational capacity, it seems, has something to do with the motivation and resilience within an organization.

Even though the SRS focused on skills, it prepared the way for a more complete understanding of organizational maturity. The SRS was a tool for building *organizational capacity* before the term was even being used. However two fundamental weaknesses of the SRS led to the development of a system that focused on organizational capacity instead of skills.

The first weakness of the SRS was that it did not always prove to be a reliable indicator of future organizational success. One reason for this was that there was often such a strong expectation that scores increase over time that the scores no longer reflected the true state of the organization. A more fundamental reason was that the SRS was not measuring all of the right things. The SRS evolved as it was used—indicators were refined, and the skill areas were changed—but organizational maturity was more complicated than it was first thought to be. In Sierra Leone, for example, the work of partner organizations was disrupted by rebel activity. Surprisingly, some of the organizations that had low SRS scores continued working through difficult conditions, whereas some apparently more mature organizations stopped all of their work. Organizational capacity, it seems, has something to do with the motivation and resilience within an organization. It cannot be defined simply in terms of skills. This realization led to the renaming of the SRS to the Organizational Capacity Indicator (OCI). At the time of the name change the capacity areas and indicators stayed the same, but CRWRC began to search for ways to improve the tool so that it would assess organizational capacity instead of just skills.

A second weakness of the SRS was that it was not owned by partner organizations. Most organizations participated in the assessment process only because it was required for further funding from CRWRC. In some cases the SRS assessment was done by the CRWRC staff person without significant involvement of the partner organization's board or staff. Although some organizations modified the tool to

make it more meaningful in their own context, it was rare that an organization would continue to use the SRS after funding from CRWRC stopped. Concern about the lack of ownership along with the desire for a more sophisticated understanding of organizational capacity prompted CRWRC to enter into this current study of organizational capacity.

Key Concepts in Capacity Assessment

The original intent of this study was for CRWRC to work with partner organizations around the world to create a tool that had high ownership and that accurately measured organizational capacity. However, the study moved CRWRC to do more than simply revise the capacity-assessment tool. As CRWRC moved beyond developing organizational skills to the broader goal of capacity building, there was a realization that a system of capacity building must include more than just a capacity-assessment tool. Also, CRWRC's use of numbers in the SRS was challenged by social scientists, so CRWRC began to move toward less numerical ways of assessing capacity. Finally, as CRWRC began to understand how organizational capacity can be built in partnership, the importance of ownership became more apparent. The new thinking in these three areas has shaped the development of the OCI system.

Any definition of organizational-capacity building must include an organization's movement away from dependency upon another organization.

Capacity Building Involves More than a Tool

The first concept that has been evaluated is the role of a capacity-assessment tool in the whole process of capacity building. Any definition of organizational-capacity building must include an organization's movement away from dependency upon another organization. However, when CRWRC prescribes the use of its assessment tool for partner organizations, it sets up a form of dependency—the partner organization is dependent upon CRWRC to understand its own capacity. As long as CRWRC alone prescribes the assessment tool, three messages are sent: first, that CRWRC knows what organizational capacity is; second, that partner organizations do not; and, third, that CRWRC can embed this knowledge into partner organizations. Each of these statements is clearly false. CRWRC does have a good understanding of organizational capacity, perhaps a more complete understanding than many of the younger organizations it works with around the world. But some of those organizations failed to flourish despite strong SRS scores, while others with weak scores have survived. Further, CRWRC cannot embed knowledge into another organization if that organization does not desire that knowledge. In addition to an assessment tool, the process of capacity building requires two things—appreciation and a partnership of mutual learning.

Appreciation, which has been a core value of CRWRC since 1993, is essential for capacity building in partnership. When CRWRC had the strategy of creating new organizations, appreciation may not have been as important. But a strategy of

In addition to an assessment tool, the process of capacity building requires two things—appreciation and a partnership of mutual learning.

building capacity implies adding on to what has gone before. When CRWRC enters into a relationship with an existing organization, that organization has a history of performance. If CRWRC is going to build upon this history instead of starting over, this history must be understood and appreciated. Further, both CRWRC and the partner organization must appreciate the organization's potential for future performance.

In addition to appreciation, a system of capacity building must include a partnership dedicated to mutual learning. The SRS promoted learning about capacity, but it was set up for partner organizations to learn from CRWRC. Consequently, CRWRC was slow to expand its own understanding of organizational capacity. The new OCI system, which allows each organization to create its own capacity-assessment tool, multiplies the amount of experimentation, innovation, and thus learning that can occur. This learning focuses on what organizational capacity is, but another kind of mutual learning can also take place. The SRS system, which encouraged every organization to monitor the same skill areas, may have helped to make sure organizations covered the minimums of performance, but it did not help organizations discover and develop the unique areas that would help them achieve their full potential. In a partnership of mutual learning, organizations can help each other understand what organizational capacity is and what each organization's potential can be, and they can readily adapt the process to each unique context.

Numbers and Assessment Tools

Another concept to be challenged was CRWRC's use of numbers in capacity assessment. A common method for assessing something that is based on the perceptions of many different people is to create a number scale (1 = poor; 2 = fair; 3 = average; 4 = good; 5 = excellent). Each person is asked to give a score for each capacity area, and the scores are averaged to give a final score. This method is popular because it gives scores that are easy to compare. A 3.5 is clearly better than a 3. This is the method that was used in the SRS.

In 1992 Kurt Schaefer and Jim Bradley were writing a textbook on the use of measurement in the social sciences. They had used the SRS system as one of their case studies. They warned CRWRC that using a numerical scale to track a complex property like organizational capacity often leads to a distortion of the truth instead of greater clarity. The problem with this kind of system is that there is often no common understanding of each numerical level. A "3" for one person might be a "4" for another person. Also, there is no reason to believe that an average of the scores from several people is meaningful. Perhaps some people know more about the specific indicator than others. Further, averaging the scores of different skill areas to arrive at an average organizational capacity is even more troublesome. There is no reason to believe that a high score in networking, for example, will

average out the effects of very poor management. The use of number scales allows easy manipulation of data but may mask and distort important information.

With the freedom to consider other ways of assessing capacity, CRWRC staff and partner organizations devised alternate methods of assessment. One method was to have a symbolic scale. For example, several organizations compared their organizational development to the growth of a tree. Ratings for capacities are based on the life stages of a tree: seed, germinating, seedling, flowering, fruit-bearing. This scale was more meaningful to the organizations than was the poor-to-excellent scale, since they selected and defined the symbols. A benefit of this method is that it does not impose a value on the scores. A new organization may say that it is just starting to work on networking, so it may say that it is at the "germinating" stage. This low score indicates room for growth and improvement in a way that a rating of "poor" does not.

They warned CRWRC that using a numerical scale to track a complex property like organizational capacity often leads to a distortion of the truth instead of greater clarity.

A way to improve on the symbolic scale has also been devised. Instead of having each individual select scores alone, the board and staff are to rate the organization by agreeing as a group about the level they are at. This allows those with more information or a different perspective to share with the group. The final score then reflects the knowledge of the whole group. An advantage of this method is that it promotes learning within the organization. There may be weaknesses or accomplishments that only certain people know about. After using this method the organization has a score that more accurately reflects the state of the organization, and everyone involved in the process of assessment learns specific details about the organization.

Some organizations have replaced the idea of a measurement scale of capacity with a continuing process of measuring their expected growth with what they have actually achieved. These organizations would describe how they hoped to progress in each capacity area in the next six months. Then, at the end of six months they would compare the actual performance of the organization to their expectation. At first, this method may seem less rigorous than a numerical or symbolic scale for rating capacity. But the process of writing down expectations for growth and then reviewing them as a group can actually promote more understanding of capacity than putting the organization on a scale.

A final variation involves sharing stories of recent organizational performance. Instead of having the staff and board determine the organization's level of capacity, some organizations share stories about the organization from the past year that illustrate the capacity being discussed. The group then selects one story as the best representation of the organization's capacity in that area. Next the group looks ahead to the next year and agrees on specific ways in which they hope the organization will perform to demonstrate growing organizational capacity. This method encourages more concrete discussion about the organization's capacity, and as an

additional advantage the stories can be collected over time to give a clear picture of how the organization has (or has not) grown in each capacity area.

Accountability and Ownership

The final concept that has been evaluated as the OCI has evolved from the SRS is the purpose of the assessment tool. When CRWRC developed the SRS, its main purpose was clear. The SRS was to provide information to CRWRC in order to keep staff and partner organizations accountable for the process of moving toward independence. However, as CRWRC has moved towards partnerships of more equality, the questions of accountability have gotten complicated. CRWRC has said the purpose of the SRS has been to insure that CRWRC is doing good consulting that will lead to independence. But the message communicated to partner groups has been that we are checking up on them. For whom is the information gathered? Who is keeping whom accountable? One answer is that CRWRC is keeping the partner organization accountable. CRWRC is providing funding and expects the organization to be moving toward independence. However, the accountability can also be reversed. CRWRC is providing consultation services. So the partner organization has every right to expect that CRWRC's consultation will have a measurable impact.

There are, in fact, several stakeholders that need capacity-assessment information.

There are, in fact, several stakeholders that need capacity-assessment information. Both CRWRC and the partner organization have staff, boards, and donors who need different pieces of the information about capacity assessment. Who has the first priority on the information? Actually each group of stakeholders has a legitimate claim for meaningful information. But it should be clear that none of the stakeholders is getting worthwhile information if the capacity assessment is not meaningful to the partner organization. Each partner organization's ownership of the capacity-assessment process is absolutely essential. If capacity-assessment information is primarily used by CRWRC or a donor, then capacity building cannot be taking place. The organization does not have a feedback system that steers it toward greater capacity. However, once the organization is assessing its own capacity and using this information for its own development, the information can be translated into a meaningful form for all the other stakeholders.

Overview of the New OCI System

The new OCI system that CRWRC will be using employs these concepts of capacity building. It avoids using numbers in a way that is misleading. It creates a context of appreciation and mutual learning. And it builds ownership by giving partner organizations the freedom to design their own capacity-assessment tools.

While partner organizations have agreed that each organization should design its own capacity-assessment tool, they have recommended an appreciative process that organizations should go through in order to define the components of capacity.

This process is described more fully in Chapter 5 but can be summarized with the following guidelines:

1. Involve the whole system.
2. Appreciate the organizational history and culture.
3. Give full voice to all participants (workshop or conference formats are ideal).
4. Use protocol questions to explore peak experiences, best practices, and future hopes of the organization.
5. List the forces and factors that have made these experiences possible. These forces and factors become the components of capacity.
6. Write "provocative propositions" to define and create a compelling vision for each capacity area.

Partner organizations also recommended that, once the capacity areas have been defined, each organization work with CRWRC to create a system for building organizational capacity. Chapter 6 contains four examples of these systems. In addition to the "provocative propositions" that define the components of capacity, each system should include the following components:

1. A list of indicators for each capacity area. The indicators are questions or descriptions that flesh out what each capacity area looks like when it is being practiced.
2. A description of a process for assessing the organization and sharing experiences related to each component of capacity.
3. A method to facilitate planning for future capacity-building activities.

There has been some concern within CRWRC that allowing partner organizations to design their own capacity-assessment tools will diminish the benefits that were gained in the use of the old SRS tool. However, the new system has been intentionally created to use the information from each partner organization in a way that maintains accountability within CRWRC, strengthens accountability between CRWRC and partner organizations, and helps in planning for organizational strengthening.

OCI Accountability Within CRWRC

The first benefit of the SRS tool was that it promoted accountability within CRWRC. The new OCI system allows partner organizations to create their own capacity-assessment tools. CRWRC needs to compile this information for its own use, but it will not be able to do this in the same way that it used the homogeneous SRS information. Not only will capacity areas vary from partner to partner, the way

that capacity areas are assessed will be different. Some organizations may use numbers, but others may use colors or symbols.

CRWRC uses the concept of an "audit trail" of information. This means that detailed information does not need to be centralized. Instead, the appropriate level of detail must be available at each level of the organization. In OCI there are four distinct users of the information within CRWRC. The first and primary user of the information is the CRWRC consultant assigned to a partner organization. This person is to be directly involved in the assessment process and is to have a copy of the complete tool used for the assessment. (See Chapter 6.)

The next user of OCI information is the regional team. Each region needs to share information about how capacity building is progressing with the partner organizations in that region. To facilitate this information sharing, the team is to develop a simple report that lists all of the components of capacity being monitored in that region and that gives space to indicate if capacity growth is progressing as expected in each area. (See Report #1 on page 157.)

Within CRWRC there is a person assigned by administration to monitor program and personnel performance throughout the organization. This person is the next user of OCI information. This person needs less-detailed information than the regional team does, but nonetheless needs to know how each partner organization is progressing. To provide this information, each region is to create a report that lists all of the partner groups and summarizes their capacity building. (See Report #2 on page 157.)

The final user of OCI information the board and administration. At this level, detailed information about each partner organization is not necessary. Instead there needs to be a summary of the work of capacity building going on around the world. The final report in this audit trail of OCI information simply summarizes how many organizations are growing as expected and how many are not. (See Report #3 on page 158.)

Report #1

Components of Capacity	Capacity Growth		
	More than Expected	As Expected	Less than Expected
Management			
Spirituality and Faith			
Transformational Leadership			
Networking			
Empowerment			
Teamwork			
Community and Culture			
Communication			
Results Attainment			

Report #2

Name of Partner Organization	Overall Capacity Growth		
	More than Expected	As Expected	Less than Expected
Partner #1			
Partner #2			
Partner #3			
Partner #4			
. . .			
Comment on capacity-building trends in the region. In which areas is capacity building most successful? What are the areas that show less than expected growth?			

Report #3

Total Number of Partners in the Region	
Number of New Partners	
Number of Graduating Partners	
Number of Partners Assessing OCI	
Number of Partners at "More than Expected"	
Number of Partners "As Expected"	
Number of Partners at "Less than Expected"	

OCI Accountability Between CRWRC and Partner Organizations

The second main benefit of the SRS system was that it promoted accountability between CRWRC and its partner organizations. CRWRC had the opportunity to define what all of its partner organizations would assess every six months. This created a mechanism for making sure that partner groups were working within the same value system as CRWRC. In fact, each of the five skill areas of the SRS can be linked to a core value of CRWRC. Technical skills were monitored because of CRWRC's commitment to quality programming in literacy, health, and income generation. Management skills reflected the value CRWRC placed on good stewardship of financial and human resources. Board-control skills demonstrated CRWRC's dedication to indigenous organizations with a local accountability structure. Networking skills revealed CRWRC's constant push toward financial independence. And church linkage skills mirrored CRWRC's own commitment to working with churches around the world. CRWRC required partner organizations to monitor these five skill areas because CRWRC expected these things from itself and from the organizations it worked with.

So, the question is, why not require that these five be included in all of the OCI tools, allowing additions as desired? What if an organization neglects an area of capacity that CRWRC knows is essential? Wouldn't it be best to require the organization to include that in its monitoring tool? Not necessarily. There are at least four reasons why an organization would not include a capacity area that we think is important. For example, imagine that a partner organization does not include management in its capacity-monitoring tool. One reason may be that the organization defines management in a different way. The way it defines leadership might include what we mean by management. In this situation it is probably not helpful to impose our vocabulary or our understanding.

Or perhaps the organization does not include management because that is not currently a high priority. Perhaps the organization is more concerned with other

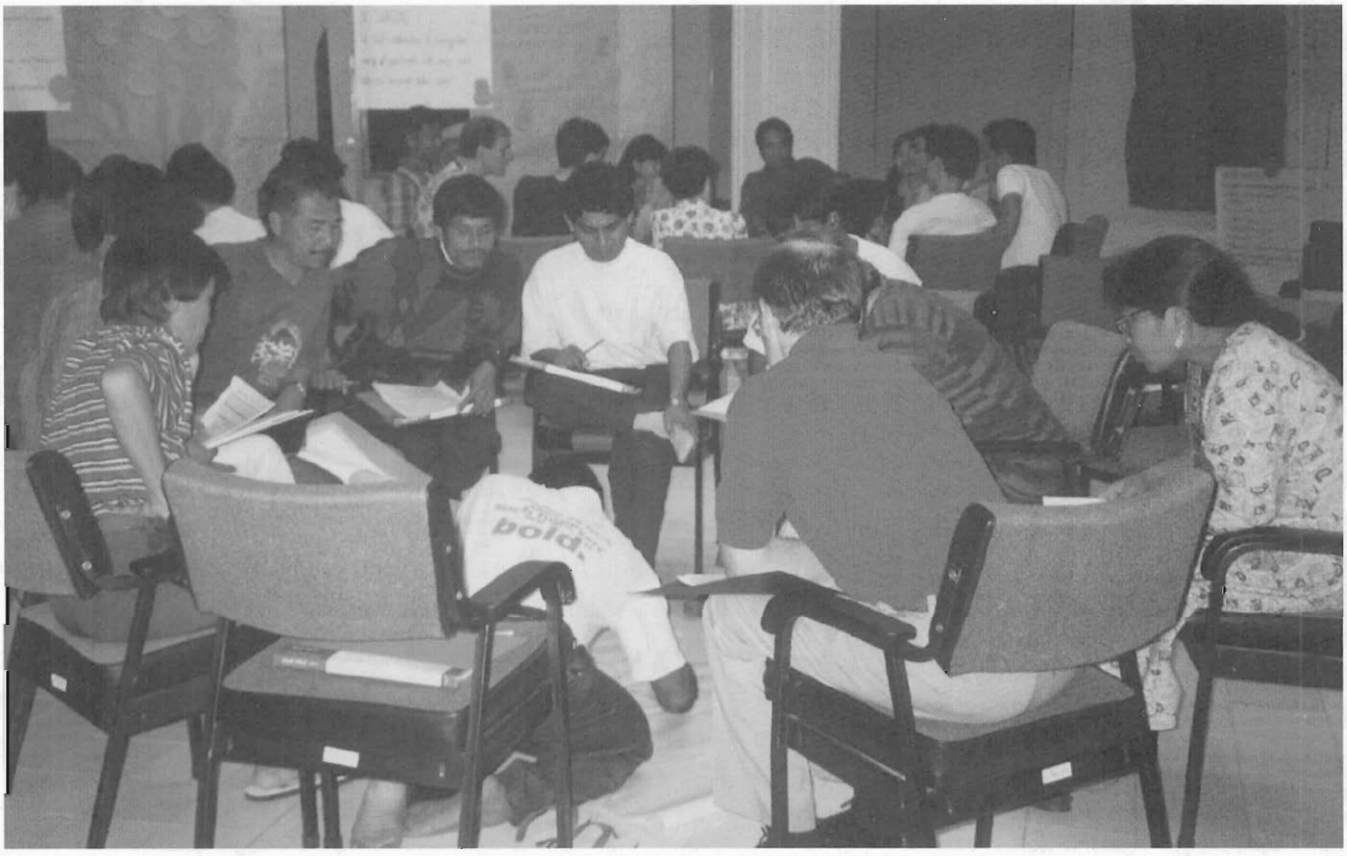
components of capacity. An organization can work only on a limited number of things at one time. Forcing it to be concerned about management will not guarantee that the organization will make progress in that area. By helping an organization to grow in areas that it feels are a higher priority, CRWRC can be helping to create space for the organization to develop management skills in the future.

A third option is that the organization is not yet sophisticated enough to intentionally monitor its management abilities. Instead of insisting that the organization monitor management skills, it may be very helpful for CRWRC to engage the partner in a dialogue about what management is and why it is important. In this way CRWRC could help the organization become more sophisticated by helping it to grow in the areas it has selected for itself. If the partnership is working well, the organization will soon be ready to monitor its own management abilities.

Finally, an organization might not include management in its capacity-monitoring tool because of a serious conflict in values. Maybe the organization has an authoritarian style of running itself and is not interested in changing its style of leadership. In this case it is not helpful to demand that management be included in the capacity-monitoring tool; instead, CRWRC will probably decide the organization is not compatible enough to continue to be a partner.

To avoid this last situation, it makes the most sense for CRWRC to embed the values reflected by the old SRS within its partnership requirements instead of

Discussing accountability tools.



requiring the SRS skills to be included within the OCI tool. This maintains CRWRC's integrity of mission while still allowing partner organizations to define for themselves what organizational capacity means in their context. The skills of the SRS can be thought of as minimum expectations of organizations that CRWRC works with. The OCI system does not change these minimum expectations but focuses capacity building on areas that will help partner organizations reach their full potential.

The creation of the OCI assessment tool is, in a sense, a long-range planning process.

The OCI as a Tool for Planning

The third main benefit of the SRS was that it was a planning tool for organizational strengthening. This aspect of the SRS has been improved in the OCI system. The SRS helped to diagnose which skill areas needed special attention. The OCI system allows much more participation and dialogue in the diagnosis. The creation of the OCI assessment tool is, in a sense, a long-range planning process. Staff members and board members agree together how they want their organization to develop. The process of assessing the organization's capacity every six months is a short-term planning process. Organizations compare their progress with their plan and make short-term adjustments as necessary. In experiences with OCI so far, this process has created an excitement about planning for capacity building that was never present when the SRS was used. The excitement level within partner organizations is helpful for CRWRC consultants as well. They now have the opportunity to design training and other interventions in areas where the organization wants to grow.

Hope for the Future of the OCI

The benefits of CRWRC's SRS system—that it provided accountability within CRWRC and with partner organizations, and that it was a tool for planning for organizational strengthening—have been maintained in the OCI system. The OCI system has additional benefits as well. It is a system that goes beyond assessment to include the essential elements of appreciation and mutual learning in partnership. Further, the use of numbers in the assessment tools has been changed in accordance with advice from social scientists. Finally, and most important, the OCI system has a much higher degree of ownership among partner organizations. But the work is not yet complete. CRWRC and partner organizations still have more to learn about organizational capacity building. The OCI system will provide a framework for continuing to learn and to innovate. Partner organizations want to continue to work with CRWRC, but they are even more excited about continuing to dialogue among themselves. These South-to-South conversations will accelerate the learning process even more. The strength of the OCI system is that it will allow capacity-assessment tools to be continually improved while still providing a framework for accountability and communication.

APPENDICES

East Africa

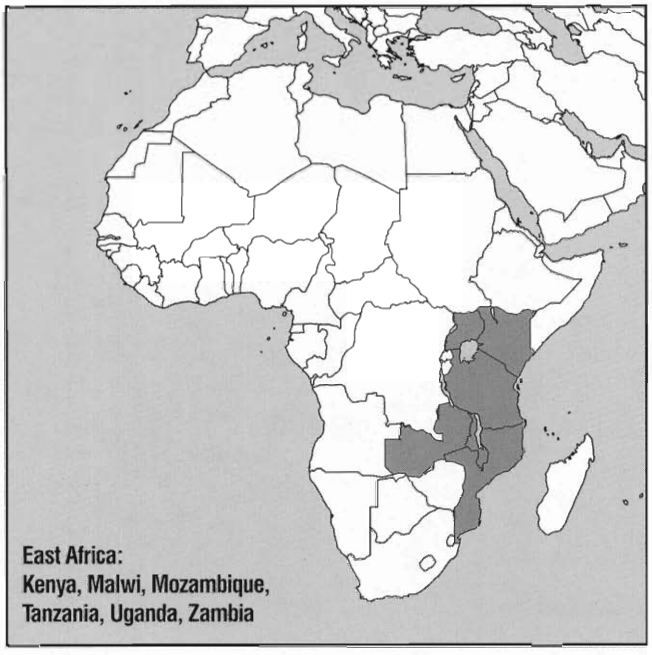
Uganda

Christian Rural Service of the Church of Uganda (CRS)

Working in the West Nile Diocese, CRS hopes to increase agricultural yields and incomes along with the redistribution of resources in the hope of a holistic increase in the well-being of area families. Specific programs in agriculture, adult literacy, and community development, along with the overall goal of community and personal empowerment, have helped CRS to positively effect more than 500 families in the past year.

Vision Terudo (VT)

This partner is an independent Christian rural development organization in the Teso district, which is about four hours north of Kampala, the capital of Uganda. VT is active in five main areas: adult education, evangelism, rural health services, agricultural extension services, and savings and credit services. After being founded in 1982, VT has grown significantly, and today it works with more than 9,500 people in various villages of the Teso district.



East Africa:
Kenya, Malwi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

Christian Community Services of the Muhabura Diocese, Church of Uganda (CCS)

CCS is responsible for all of the development activities in the diocese of Muhabura, which is in the extreme southwestern part of Uganda. After starting in 1990 with few staff and resources, CCS has been able to grow, and today it works with more than 700 families in agriculture, adult literacy, evangelism, and health programs.

Christian Outreach Ministry and Education (COME)

The mandate of COME is to improve the physical and spiritual well-being of the poor and underprivileged in the Gulu district of Uganda. The goal of COME is to develop the skills of communities and community groups to identify their common needs and problems, plan projects that meet those needs, implement and manage those projects successfully, and evaluate the results achieved though the projects. With specific programs in agriculture, health, income generation, and literacy, COME works with more than 700 families.

Ukuru Archdeaconry Planning and Development Committee (UAPDC) of Nebbi Diocese, Church of Uganda

UAPDC currently has programs in agriculture and community development and is laying groundwork for microenterprise and literacy programs. The commit-

tee works with more than 200 families in Ukuru county, with the overall goal of helping poor communities in these rural areas to improve their state of living physically, socially, and spiritually.

The Presbyterian Diaconate Board (PDB) of the Presbyterian Church of Uganda (PCU)

Since its formation in February 1996, the PDB has been able to lay groundwork for positive future results. More than 50 deacons from 10 congregations are in training for ministry in their churches and communities. The processes for an income-generation project and a savings and credit program have been initiated, and already 50 people, most of whom are women, are benefiting..

Christian Charity Center of Uganda (CCCU)

The CCCU, a young partner, is located in Lira district of north central Uganda. The CCCU has programs in community development, health, agriculture, and institutional development. The all-volunteer staff reaches more than 200 families.

AFRICA for Christ International (AFCI)

The AFCI, located in Kampala, has focussed on its own organizational development—board and staff—but has recently initiated a savings and credit program involving 40 women.

Southern Sudan Christian Youth and Community (SSCYC)

The SSCYC is assisting Sudanese refugees in Kampala and in refugee camps in Northern Uganda. This organization is working with 2,400 people in adult literacy, evangelism, and agricultural programs

Kenya

Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK)

The CPK includes the Provincial Development Office (CPK-PDO), Western Region Christian Community Services (Western CCS) and Coastal Fellowship Christian Community Services (Coastal CCS). These organizations provide training and resources in areas such as agriculture, community development, and diaconal development with an emphasis on stewardship, health, and income generation. Institutional building is also an important component of CPK's work as a result of a USAID grant.

Reformed Church of East Africa Relief and Development Program (RCEA-RDP)

The goal of the RDP is to uplift the living conditions of the Pokot and Turkana communities in the northern Rift Valley by encouraging them to release their potentials and capabilities in order to attain growth, economic productivity, social responsibility, and spiritual welfare. Specifically, RDP works with more than 8,000 people in programs in agriculture, community development, health, and income generation.

Zambia

Reformed Church of Zambia Development Program (RCZDP)

RCZDP has two arms, one in the Eastern Province, which is mainly rural, and one in the Western province, which is mainly urban. The long-term goals of the project are to help the people increase their financial sustainability, increase their food production, and decrease their malnutrition. The work of RCZDP is benefiting 4,500 families throughout Zambia.

Tanzania

The Society for Evangelism and Development Among Pastoralists—Huduma ya Injili na Maendeleo kwa Wafugaji (HIMWA)

With headquarters in Iringa, HIMWA's board and staff reach out to the pastoralist community of southern Tanzania, including the Masai and Barabeig groups. Their goals include preaching the gospel, empowering the pastoralists to obtain sufficient land, safe water, good health, decent shelter, education, environmental preservation, human rights, peace, and unity. HIMWA, which began in 1992, is presently working with more than 200 families in cash- and food-crop production, adult literacy, goat-raising, and community-based health care.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) Iringa Diocese

Since its inception in 1987, DIRA has been targeting community development projects. This diocese of 70,000 Lutherans reaches out to communities within a 150 kilometer radius of Iringa town in the southern highland of Tanzania. Presently the DIRA Projects and Development Department works with about 1,000 families in agriculture, aquaculture, and animal husbandry.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) East Lake Victoria Diocese

Based in Mwanza, on the south shore of Lake Victoria, ELVD's work is directed at "developing the ability of people to evaluate and solve their own problems. . . . [intending] for projects to be owned and operated by the people themselves." ELVD has, since 1987, involved itself in community-based development programs, and is presently working with more than 1,500 families in 60 local groups. Highlights of their program include the Mwanza urban microenterprise program, and the rural community-based health-care and agriculture programs.

Baptist Convention of Tanzania

The Baptist convention is a 40-year-old national organization with about 100,000 members in 850 churches. Having concentrated on evangelism they have decided to complement this work with church-based community-development programs. Their vision is to work with other organizations to empower their members to build the local church and to reach out to those in need in the surrounding communities.

Malawi

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Nkhoma Synod, Relief and Development Program (CCAP)

CCAP is busy empowering the local communities with knowledge and skill in agriculture, literacy, income generation, and primary health care. They are working in two districts, Lilongwe and Dedza, with more than 4,000 families.

Mozambique

Anglican Church of Mozambique -Kuchijinji

The Anglican Church, Province of Niassa, is responsible for Kuchijinji, which is a training center. The center is involved in community development in the areas of literacy, agriculture, and credit, and it has a new focus on primary health care with emphasis on AIDS-related care. There is indirect assistance to a building cooperative with Kodaco, which employs for the building skills that people have been trained in. Kuchijinji's intent is to be a resource and catalyst for community development in the Niassa Province.

Igresia Reformada em Mozambique of Mphatso Synod, Reformed Church of Mozambique

There is ongoing work in primary health care through rural clinics. These clinics assist more than 1,000 children monthly. Efforts to address the area of agriculture are planned.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Haiti

Program for the Training of Diaconal Organizations—Pwogwam Fomasyon por Organizasyon Dyakona (PWO-FOD)

PWO-FOD's mandate reinforces the national church's capacity to act as a catalyst in improving the quality of life of the very poor in Haiti's urban centers. It began in 1992, working primarily with the residents of selected slums of the capital city, Port-au-Prince. PWO-FOD's programs range from diaconal development to income generation and literacy. Today PWOFOD works with more than 800 families.

Haitian Christian Community Development Organization—Organizasyon Devlopman Kominote Kretyen Ayisyen (ODEKKA)

The ODEKKA program is located on the northern section of the Central Plateau region, near the town of Pignon. ODEKKA is currently working with 1,100 families in agriculture, diaconal development, income generation, and literacy.

Organization for Education and Development—Organisation pour l'Education et le Developpement (OGED)

OGED serves churches, community groups, and autonomous associations. Its programs focus on Christian leadership training in the churches, literacy classes, and community ventures with small-business development. The program began in 1986, and today its current beneficiaries number around 400 families.

El Salvador

New Tomorrow Association of El Salvador—Asociación Nuevo Amanecer de El Salvador (ANAES)

ANAES works primarily in the San Ramón community, which is spread around the slopes of the volcano "San Salvador." The organization works with more than 100 families and nearly 250 individuals on raising their abilities and awareness in the area of health.

Alfalit

Alfalit, located in San Salvador, exists to support and facilitate social and economic development in communities by means of education, technical assistance, and credit. Since the early 1980s, Alfalit has had programs in agriculture, health, and literacy. Today Alfalit works in cooperation with more than 1,500 individuals.

Project Global Village (PGV)—Proyecto Aldea Global

Project Global Village has a mandate to provide development assistance in various regions throughout Honduras. PGV started in 1984 and has grown into an organization working in four areas, serving a population of 40,000 people. PGV works mainly in health but has recently taken over the management of a national park. They have emphasized working with local governments and building proactive groups in each community where they work to assure that their work continues long after they leave the area.

Mosquitia Pawisa (MOPAWI)

MOPAWI exists to provide the indigenous people of the Mosquitia region the opportunity to participate in their own integrated development. MOPAWI's programs are in agro-forestry and small-business and technical-skill development, but their overall goal is to encourage development in all aspects of life: economic, social, cultural, spiritual, and ecological. To encourage sustainability, MOPAWI has worked hard to develop local and regional grassroots organizations. In the past few years there have been developments in protecting the vast forests of the Mosquitia region, which is particularly isolated from the rest of Honduran life.

The Council of Evangelical Development Institutions (CONSEDE)

CONSEDE is an association of 12 evangelical organizations. It exists to help coordinate training and exchanges between personnel of its partner agencies. These programs help to strengthen each organization financially, organizationally, and spiritually.

Christian Regional Advisory Council on Development—Consejo Regional Cristiana de Desarollo (CORCRIDE)

The basic mandate of CORCRIDE is to improve the spiritual and living conditions in 16 communities in the municipality of Triumfo, Choluteca. CORCRIDE works with more than 150 families in programs in agriculture, community and diaconal development, health, and environmental protection.

National Diaconate (CRC)

This organization labors to express the love of God in the communities that have a Christian Reformed church or a related home mission. National Diaconate began in the mid-1980s to provide diaconal- and community-development training to the people of the Choluteca region but expanded to offer health and agriculture programs as well. Today National Diaconate works with 3,000 individuals.

Solitas

Solitas works with single mothers in four market areas and three squatter's housing areas in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. The goal is to increase the abilities and incomes of these mothers by strengthening their self-assurance, basic reading, writing and math skills, business skills, and faith in Christ. More than 200 women and their children participate in Solitas's training and credit programs.

Come and Serve—Ven Y Servir

Ven y Servir is a church organization that strives to better the living conditions of the families of Neuva Suyapa, Honduras. They have a PREVENTION program to combat the effects of drug and alcohol abuse as well as a credit and savings program called PROCAFIH. Ven a Servir works with 192 families in Neuva Suyapa, which is one of the poorest and most crime-ridden areas of Tegucigalpa.

Nicaragua

Christian Medical Action—Accion Medica Cristiana (AMC)

In order to contribute to the public health of some of the poorest communities in Nicaragua, AMC works primarily with women and children to develop their abilities to improve the overall health and general well-being of their communities. AMC has worked in Nicaragua since 1990, and today they work with 4,500 families in 71 communities.

Christian Reformed Church of Nicaragua (ICRN)

The ICRN is a small church organization that works in leadership development, institutional development, diaconal training, and income generation.

Young People's Christian Association—Asociación Cristiana de Jovenes (ACT)

ACJ is comprised of several self-sustaining local community organizations that work to incorporate the youth in wholesome development activities and to identify and solve the general problems of their communities. ACT began working in Acahualinca, a marginalized urban barrio on the shores of Lake Managua. The focus of ACT's work is on income generation and general community development.

Church of Christ Association of Nicaragua—Iglesia de Cristo (AICN)

AICN's social programs work to build up communities in order to make them self-sufficient, especially in health, agriculture, and spiritual areas of life. The AICN has more than 100 churches throughout Nicaragua. As they build up their holistic ministries, their goal is to have long-term effects in justice, gender equity, and environmental protection.

Alfalit

Alfalit, focusing on literacy and literature, works on community development through increasing people's functional ability in reading and writing. In order to

address the broader needs of the people, they are beginning to combine literacy work with income-generation projects. Their work is primarily on the North Atlantic coast of Nicaragua but also extends into the various marginalized barrios of the capital city. More than 1,000 people are participating in Alfalit's literacy programs.

Dominican Republic

Christian Community Development—Desarollo Comunitario en Bateyes (DesCo)

DesCo was formed in 1987 to improve the physical, economic, and social conditions of permanent Haitian immigrants who live in the Dominican Republic. With programs in community development, health, income generation, and literacy, DesCo works with 900 families.

Social Services of Dominican Churches (SSID)

SSID cooperates in raising the standard of living of those who live in rural communities and who are held back by the misery and limitations that surround them. This work is done in communities that show interest in joint participation in the solution of their problems. SSID operates a broad range of programs in several regions. Its agriculture program helps about 3,000 families with forestry, conservation, crop production, and livestock raising.

Fondo Pro-Mujer

Pro-Mujer works specifically in poor neighborhoods in the greater Santo Domingo area to show that Christians are concerned about the economic and social well-being of poor, urban women. Pro-Mujer works in the area of microenterprise loans and training in order to build up the women of these poor areas.

Ecuador

Association of Evangelical Indigenous of Pichincha (AIEP)

AIEP consists of indigenous people living on the outskirts of Ecuador's capital city, Quito. Most of these people have come from rural areas to seek work. The association was formed to unite area evangelical churches in order to defend themselves against religious and ethnic persecution. They are poor and try to earn a living by making artifacts for sale in the city. About 1,700 families in 12 suburban communities are involved in the literacy, health, and diaconal development projects.

Association of Evangelical Indigenous of Tungurahua (AIET)

AIET is located in the mountain region near the volcano Tungurahua. The people are poor and are often discriminated against. They are in the second stage of a water and sanitation project, but they also have an income-generation project that includes a nursery for different types of native trees used to counter-

act the effects of deforestation. Some 300 families in four communities are involved in these projects.

Association of Agricultural Workers of Chimborazo (ATAC)

These indigenous country people are struggling to have equal rights with the mestizo people in the distribution of land. They are currently working in income generation projects involving small animals and handicrafts. The major accomplishment to date is the formation of a communal banking system through which the people can obtain loans. These programs, which involve more than 700 families in four communities, are carried out through the evangelical churches in the area.

Association of Evangelical Indigenous of Napo (AIEN)

The indigenous people of the region of the Amazon Basin have been exploited for years by multinational oil companies that have deforested large tracts of land and have polluted many waterways. Also, many of the women in these areas are beaten and ill-treated by their husbands and fathers. Projects are in place to deal with some of these problems. Specifically, AIEN works with 750 families in income generation, health, and diaconal development.

The goal of all of the intermediary indigenous organizations in Ecuador is to obtain lasting justice, gender equity, self-esteem, and the respect of other ethnic groups.

Mali

Association Protestante de la Santé au Mali (APSM)

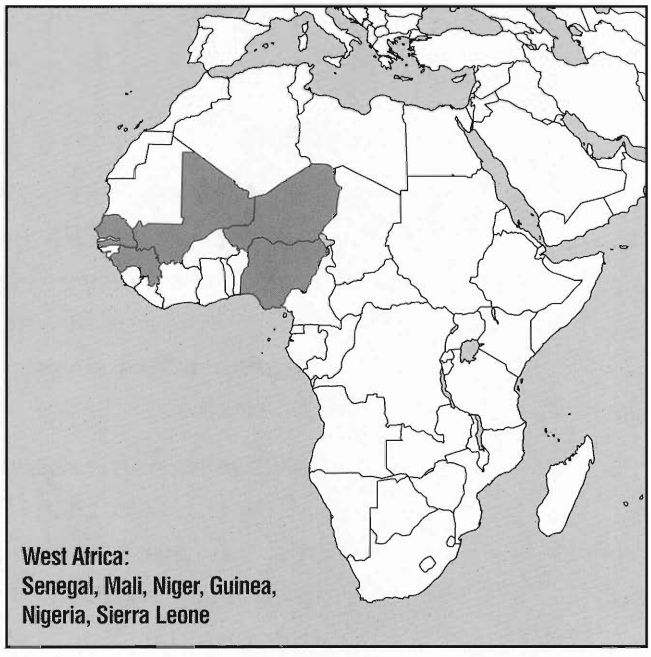
APSM promotes health, primarily through education of (1) the Christian health professionals who are its members, (2) church leaders so that they can encourage Christian communities to be more effectively involved in health promotion, and (3) groups of women and children in the community.

Bureau d'Assistance et de Développement Social (BADS)

Many families are benefiting from the works that BADS is doing. The overall goal of the project is to help individuals and communities take better control of their lives through learning the skills of reading, writing, arithmetic, and community development.

Christian Relief Commission—Commission de Secours Chrétien (CSC)

The primary objective of the organization is to give support and leadership to the aspirations of villagers to control and manage development activities in their own communities. Specifically, the projects aim to improve health through education and prevention, to teach basic literacy and numeracy, and to act as an impetus to other village-based development through a participatory approach to development.



West Africa:
Senegal, Mali, Niger, Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone

Niger

Assemblée Chrétien Evangelique au Niger (ACEN)

The Gourmantche people, a distinct minority in Niger, are the target population of ACEN. Approximately 60 families are working with ACEN in literacy and other community-development programs.

International Christian Service for Peace—Kookari iri bon se (EIRENE)

More than 1,000 people are involved in community development and income-generation projects with EIRENE. The overall goal of this project is to accompany the farmers/villagers of the Southern Dosso Province down the pathway of self-empowerment toward autonomy and independence.

Senegal

Women, Development, and Enterprise in Africa—Femmes Développement Enterprise en Afrique (FDEA)
Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA)

These two organizations are working on a joint AIDS program in Senegal. The participants are Senegalese women and youth from urban and outlying areas of three large cities. The overall goal of the project is to decrease the risk of AIDS/HIV/STDs through education and the promotion of safer lifestyles among market women and urban youth. More than 800 women and children are currently involved in this project.

Guinea

Teinture-Promotion Labé (TNT-Labé)

Indirectly, TNT-Labé involves more than 2,000 families in income generation. The challenge is to help the people of Guinea take on the issues that face them on a daily basis within the context of their faith in God.

Nigeria

Church of the Brethern—Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa A Nigeria (EYN)

The goal of the EYN project is to increase the physical and spiritual welfare of the families of northern Nigeria by helping them to improve their food production through a program of water harvesting and storage and a continuation of an agricultural extension project. These agriculturally based projects involve nearly 3,000 families.

Christian Rural Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN)

CRUDAN started in 1990 as a merger of 2 Christian development regional groups. Today CRUDAN is a membership organization of churches and Christian development organizations which engage in community development in Nigeria. More than 100 member organizations have programs in agriculture, community development, health, and income generation.

Rural Development Counselors for Christian Churches in Africa (RURCON)

Based in Jos, RURCON promotes holistic development with the Christian church and with other development organizations in Africa. It aims to create conditions for sustainable development for the benefit of the poor and marginalized communities of Africa. RURCON envisions a community that is spiritually, economically, socially, politically, and environmentally as whole as God has intended. Specifically, it works through training, counseling, capacity building, and networking with other development agencies.

Urban Ministry (SUM-CRC)

The goal of Urban Ministry is to upgrade the spiritual and physical well-being of the urban population, thereby contributing to the growth of churches and the improvement of living conditions for urban dwellers in a holistic way. Nearly 2,000 people are involved in Urban Ministry's health, income-generation, and literacy programs.

Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria Rural Development (CRC-RD)

This organization is committed to helping farmers increase their income through the establishment of orchards, poultry production, cooperatives, and other agricultural extension services.

Evangelism Among the Fulani—Aiki Bishara acikin Fulani (ABF)

Based in the Taraba state of Nigeria, the project is designed to improve the family welfare of the nomadic Fulani. The project loans calves to the needy, providing counseling on preventative animal health care as well as health and literacy training for the Fulani and their families.

Sierra Leone

Christian Extension Services (CES)

CES was formed in 1980 to share the good news of the kingdom to the poor of the Kuranko-speaking northern area of Sierra Leone in both word and deed. This was to be done by preaching while empowering communities to discover the resources to solve their pressing problems. More than 15,000 people are involved in CES's various programs, which include agriculture, health, literacy, community development, and diaconal development.

Christian Health Association of Sierra Leone (CHASL)

CHASL is a non-governmental, interdenominational health coordinating agency that began in 1975. It is an association of Christian-church-related institutions engaged in health care throughout Sierra Leone. The goal of this association is to empower communities through training and through the provision of resources.

Asia

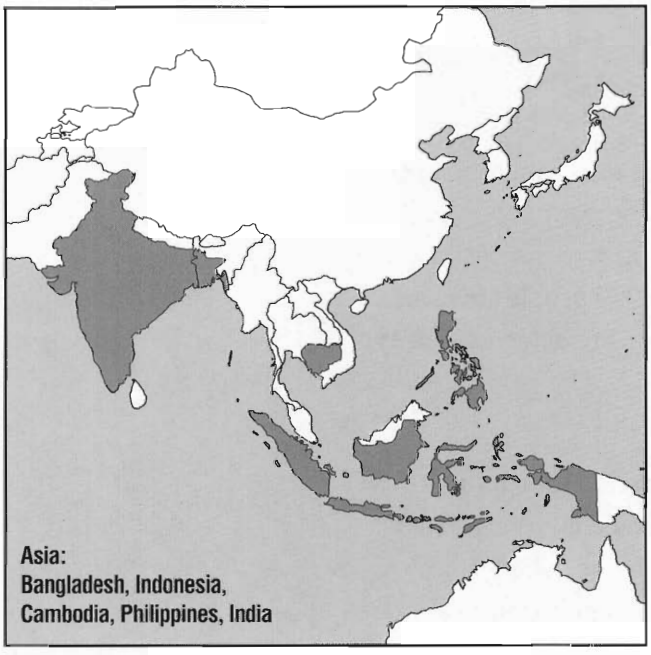
Bangladesh

Working for Learning and Self-Reliance (SWOSHIKA)

In 1985 SWOSHIKA began working in several key areas of need in Jamalpur district, a rural area that includes more than 75 villages. Today more than 3,200 families are working with SWOSHIKA in a wide variety of programs including agriculture, community development, health, income generation, literacy, and research and development. Their goal is to equip individuals and groups to serve as catalysts for positive change in their communities.

Community Development Project (CDP)

In Joypurhat district, a rural area 300 kilometers from Dhaka, CDP works to serve the underprivileged inhabitants who are still living under the poverty line. CDP, a project of the Churches of God of Bangladesh, has programs in community development, health, income generation, and literacy, and they reach nearly 1,000 families.



Asia:
Bangladesh, Indonesia,
Cambodia, Philippines, India

SATHI

Since 1993 SATHI has been working to meet the needs of poor women and men living in the urban slum areas of Dhaka to increase their self-sufficiency in the areas of health, income generation, and adult literacy. SATHI, which is a Bengali word for "friend/companion," seeks to reduce the effects of increasing urbanization. Today they work with 600 families.

Development Foundation (BNELC-DF)

The Development Foundation is the "caring arm" of the Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church. In one of the most depressed areas of Bangladesh, the DF works with 1,200 families and nearly 2,000 men and women. Their goal is to undertake socioeconomic and human development without regard to any discrimination of caste, religion, creed, or color. Specifically, they function in the areas of agriculture, community development, health, income generation, and literacy.

PROTTASHA

PROTTASHA, meaning "hope" or "expectation," has the aim of improving the socioeconomic and health status of the people of Kisherganj, which is in north-central Bangladesh. PROTTASHA places special emphasis on assisting

the poor of this region to acknowledge their capacity to change. Although they are a young organization (1993), PROTTASHA is involved with 150 families in programs in agriculture, community development, health, income generation, and literacy.

Scheme for Underprivileged People to Organize Themselves (SUPOTH)

In Bengali, SUPOTH means "the right and honest path." This organization's goal is to show love and charity by serving in the Birganj area of northern Bangladesh along with the Bangladesh Lutheran Church. Specifically, it seeks to empower the poor by increasing their income, improving their health and literacy skills, enhancing their social awareness and motivation, and strengthening their resource base through the formation of community cooperatives. SUPOTH has been in existence since the late 1980s, and today it works with nearly 1,200 families.

Indonesia

MITAYANI

MITAYANI, Indonesian for "trustworthy," exists to help the needy so that they are strong enough to help themselves and others. They work with nearly 1,000 families in Jakarta, a city with more than 8 million people. There are many needs; MITAYANI addresses issues related to community development, diaconal development, health, and income generation.

Bimbingan Mandiri Indonesia (BIMA)

BIMA, the Self-Reliance Guidance Foundation, works with 453 families in several villages in the province of Lampung. Their objective is to increase the income and community organization in the villages in which they work. They have programs in agriculture, community development, and diaconal development. BIMA, which began in 1992, works mostly with people who migrated from Java in the 1960s and '70s.

AMERTA

AMERTA means, literally, "no death" or "eternal life." With this in mind, AMERTA seeks to increase the income, health awareness, and community organization of rural villagers in central Java. Programs in agriculture, community development, diaconal development, and income generation help AMERTA to increase the ability of members of the GKJ church to serve their neighbors.

Committee for the Development of Deacon-based Organizations (BKP2Y)

BKP2Y serves as a coordination and training organization for 38 organizations under the Javanese Synod in the areas of leadership, group and micro enterprise development.

Philippines

Classis Metro Manila Diaconal Committee (CMMDC)
Classis Southern Luzon Diaconal Committee (CSLDC)

The goals of these committees are to enable the churches of their respective classes to carry out their diaconal ministry as effectively as possible for the glory of God and the growth and development of his church by providing diaconal training services, opportunities for fellowship, and the sharing of resources. CMMDC is located in Manila, a city of more than 10 million people, while CSLDC is located two hours south of Manila in Laguna Province. Both of these committees train deacons in leadership development and community services. They also advocate for medical services and resources, and they coordinate dental and medical clinics and disaster and relief assistance.

Kristianong Kabalikat Sa Kabuhayan at Tagumpay (Kabalikat, Inc.)

Kabalikat is a Tagalog word meaning, roughly, "Shoulder to shouldership." Kabalikat is an umbrella organization with member groups in eight provinces. The goal is to improve the quality of life of the Filipino poor by organizing local groups so that they can work together to identify and find solutions to their problems.

Kabalikat is made up of the following groups:

1. Gabay sa Pag—Unlad—Provincial Association for Guidance and Development, Inc.
    a. Urbiztondo Christian Service Group, Inc. (UCSGI)
    b. Samahan ng mga Iglesia na Kaakbay sa Pag-unlad (SIKAP, "Perseverance")—Association of Churches for Unity and Progress
    c. Kapatirang Samahan sa Kaunlaran (KASAMAKA, "You belong")—Christian Association for Progress
    d. Aliguas Pangkabuhayan (ALIGUAS, "Move forward")—Moving Toward Successful Livelihood, Inc.
    e. Pampamayanang Pangkabuhayan (PAYAPA, "Peace")—Community Livelihood Program, Inc.
2. Alyansang Kabit Bisig ng Rizal (ALYANSA, "Solidarity")—Alliance of People Linked Together in Rizal
3. Samahang Ginagamit ng Panginoon para sa Kapuwa (SAGIP—KAPUWA, "Help others")—God's Instrument for Others, Inc.
4. Suhay sa PaG—Unlad—Partners in Growth, Inc.
5. Samahan ng mga Manggagawa ng mga Kristiano tungo so Kaunlaran (SAMARITAN)—Association of Christian Workers Toward Development, Inc.)

6. Alay Kalinga sa Quezon—Association Offering Hope and Care in Quezon Province
7. Kabalaka sa Panay—Concern and Compassion for Panay

Buklod Biyayang Kristiayano, Inc. (BBK)

In 1985-86 BBK, located in Launa Province, was organized by Filipino evangelical Christians. The stated goal of BBK is to effectively and efficiently manage resources to build local organizations that achieve solutions to community problems, thus improving their spiritual and physical quality of life. BBK has programs in community development, health, income generation, and Christian school development and works with nearly 300 individuals.

India

Church of the CRC of South India

This is a church-based partner that serves approximately 300 families in southern India. It has some participants in income-generation programs and some in literacy programs, but the majority of its work is done in research and development into the possibilities for further growth in the coming years.

Adoni Area Rural Development Initiatives Project (AARDIP)

The Council on Technical and Vocational Training, which is based in Madras, is contracted to implement and supervise AARDIP's programs. AARDIP's goal is to organize low-caste villagers into groups that can function independently for self-empowerment. The intent of these groups is to address community needs in the areas of health, literacy, and income generation. Approximately 400 families are involved in these groups, which are also organized into a larger federation serving a broader area.

Cambodia

Help the Widow (HTW)

HTW is located in Saang District of Kandal Province and was established in 1993. Their purpose is to increase the living standard of the poor households headed by widows. HTW has programs in income generation, agriculture and vocational training in sewing and health education. They work with 229 families in six villages.

Rural Economic Development Association (REDA)

REDA's aim is to decrease poverty in Svay Chrom district of Svay Rieng Province. Today 230 families in 5 villages are participating in income generation, agriculture and pond building programs.

Khmer Association for the Development of the Countryside (KAFDOC)

KAFDOC was founded in 1993 and works in Kratie Province. Their goal is to improve human development and help the poor to solve their difficult living

situations through literacy, health, income generation, human rights and leadership education programs. They work with 138 families.

Cambodia Community Building (CCB)

CCB is the national organization forming to continue programs initiated by World Relief Cambodia as they phase over the work to Cambodian staff. Micro-credit combined with preventive health education is the method for serving the poor. It now has 128 village banks that involve nearly 4,500 women. Ambitious plans for expansion are being pursued to enable the organization to be financially self-sufficient within five years.

The Skill Rating Scale

In the early 1980s, when CRWRC began to focus on management consultation with indigenous development organizations, the Skill Rating Scale (SRS) was developed. The SRS measured five different skill areas on two scales: indigenization and quality.

Scale for Indigenization (Independence)
1—not functioning
2—dependent
3—cooperative
4—consultative
5—independent

Scale for Quality (Ability)
1—not functioning
2—unsatisfactory
3—needs improvement
4—adequate
5—excellent

The purpose of the SRS was to identify when an organization was prepared to be independent from CRWRC. When an organization was able to receive scores of at least 4 in each skill area, the organization was supposed to be able to function independently.

A. Skill Rating Scale for Technical Skills

Skills: Agriculture (or Income Generation), Community Health, Diaconal Training, and Adult Literacy

Technical Skills	Indigenization 1-5	Quality 1-5
1. There are policies clarifying the technical areas employed in development.		
2. Baseline surveys are done in areas of program concentration.		
3. There are lesson plans for teaching of the technical skills.		
4. Effective use is made of local technical resources.		
5. There are policies providing for continuing education for staff in technical areas.		
Average of Individual Item Scores		

B. Skill Rating Scale for Financial Record-Keeping and Planning Skills

Definition: The ability to raise funds, establish a budget, document receipts and expenditures (accounting), verify appropriateness of expenditures (audit), maintain assets (banking procedures, care of equipment), and prepare monthly and annual financial reports.

Financial Record Keeping and Planning Skills	Indigenization 1-5	Quality 1-5
1. There are plans for raising funds locally for programs.		
2. There is an annual budget.		
3. All income and expenses are appropriately documented.		
4. Expenses are monitored in relation to budget.		
5. Loans and loan payments are documented and monitored.		
6. There is a monthly financial report.		
7. There is a semi-annual financial report.		
8. There is an annual audit.		
9. All equipment is listed and accounted for.		
Average of Individual Item Scores		

C. Skill Rating Scale for Board Development and Control Skills

Definition: The board knows how to direct and control the group, organization, or institution by setting direction, establishing boundaries, and determining standards of performance.

Board Development and Control Skills	Indigenization 1-5	Quality 1-5
1. Has purpose statement		
2. Has goals		
3. Has clearly understood and stated values		
4. Has strategies		
Establishing Boundaries with Policies and Procedures for . . .		
5. Representation of constituencies		
6. Internal board practices		
7. Decision making		
8. Budgets; financial record keeping		
9. Monitoring and evaluation		
10. Fundraising		
11. External relations		
Determining Standards of Performance for . . .		
12. Job descriptions in place		
13. Objectives stated and clear		
14. Chain of responsibility in place		
Skills for Board Members:		
15. Decision making		
16. Evaluating proposals		
17. Evaluating program information		
18. Making presentations		
19. Working on committees		
Average of Individual Item Scores		

D. Skill Rating Scale for Management

Definition: The process of ensuring appropriate, effective, and efficient service while maintaining high morale (level of satisfaction) among all persons involved.

Management Skills	Indigenization 1-5	Quality 1-5
1. General meetings are held periodically to discuss common problems and needs.		
2. Group has identified community problems it wishes to address.		
3. Group has defined and formulated a purpose statement.		
4. Group has defined and formulated goals.		
5. Group had identified barriers to goals.		
6. Group has defined and formulated strategies.		
7. Group has defined and formulated objectives: key indicators of success.		
8. Group monitors success monthly.		
9. Recipients monitor progress against family or individual goals and objectives.		
10. Implementation plans include time frames and assigned responsibilities.		
11. Plans have identified community resources.		
12. Plans are appropriate and likely to bring about desired changes.		
13. Evaluations of the plan and program are carried out, and revisions are made—at least annually, and more frequently as necessary.		
14. Group submits reports to others in chain of accountability at agreed-to intervals.		
Average of Individual Item Scores		

E. Skill Rating Scale for Evangelism and Church Linkage Skills

Definition: The organization is owned (operated and supported) by Christians; as such, it witnesses to the truth of the gospel, ministers to the spiritual needs of people inside and outside the organization, and establishes ties with churches that result in both support for the organization and enhancement of the church's ministries.

Evangelism and Church Linkage Skills	Indigenization 1-5	Quality 1-5
Board Evangelism Skills		
1. Board members are evangelical Christians.		
2. Organization's materials uniformly express holistic ministry principles.		
3. Programs are supportive of and enhance ministry of neighbor churches.		
4. Board and staff are able to discern integrity and orthodoxy of potential partners.		
5. Has policies governing relationships with neighboring churches.		
6. Agreements with partner churches to identify mutual responsibilities.		
7. Organizations and partner churches evaluate ministry in terms of impact on churches.		
Staff Evangelism Skills		
1. Staff are evangelical Christians.		
2. Staff are members of evangelical churches.		
3. Staff can identify spiritual needs of others.		
4. Small-group Bible studies held regularly in all program areas, led by staff church members.		
5. Staff can articulate Christian principles, foundations for development work of the organization.		
6. Staff honor agreements with local evangelical churches.		
7. Staff coordinates its work with partner churches.		
8. Staff evaluates impact of its ministry on neighboring and partner evangelical churches.		
Average of Individual Item Scores		

Strategy Evolution in CRWRC

One of the first programs CRWRC started in the Philippines was a feeding program. It seemed like an obvious solution. Children were malnourished. CRWRC had resources and wanted to help. But this obvious solution created problems of its own. When feeding programs stopped, malnutrition returned and communities were often left hoping for someone else to come in and start a feeding program. Today many development workers would reject this program before it even got started. They would talk about the dangers of creating dependency and the importance of empowering communities to address the causes of poverty. The ideas of *dependency* and *empowerment* are at the very core of what most people mean when they talk about development. In the same way, it would be difficult for CRWRC staff to discuss any program without talking about *partnership* and *capacity building.*

The understanding that CRWRC staff have of these two terms is best explained by reviewing the history of CRWRC's development work. At the core of CRWRC is the simple desire to work with the poor to improve their quality of life. With agreement on this purpose CRWRC has constantly revisited three questions:

- Strategy: What should we focus on?
- Activities: What should we do?
- Measurement: How do we know if we are succeeding?

The evolution in thinking that has happened in CRWRC is similar to the evolution that has happened in the wider development community. Some programs have failed while others have succeeded in unexpected ways. Northern NGOs have worked to become less paternalistic as people with fewer material resources have shown that they have much wisdom to offer.

Strategy: What should we focus on?

At the most basic level, development can be understood as helping individuals: a malnourished child, a subsistence farmer, an urban mother without a job, or a war refugee. The focus is on needs. This was the thinking behind the formation of CRWRC and other similar organizations in the 1960s. Churches and individuals in North America heard about the needs around the world and looked for ways to help.

But, there are other ways to understand development. Instead of just meeting needs, development can be understood as helping community members to solve problems they have in common. The focus is on organizing local groups. A development worker helps a community to agree on what needs should be addressed, what resources are available, and what action should be taken. As the community

group makes decisions about how to address a problem, individuals are helped—but something more important also happens. The community group is taking responsibility for itself and learning skills that will help it to address more problems in the future. The shift from focusing on individuals with needs to organizing community groups has allowed organizations like CRWRC to have a much greater impact because they can start a process that will continue within the community.

There was no reason to think that only North American development workers could organize local groups. Actually, indigenous leaders proved to be much better organizers. So CRWRC shifted its focus to developing leaders. When leaders caught on to the belief in the potential and dignity of people living in poverty, they could organize local groups in their own communities and pass on these powerful beliefs to others. Development began to be understood not just as a process of helping people but as a belief system that could encourage positive change. This belief system could be spread through leadership development.

Indigenous leaders can work with communities to make a tremendous impact, but institutions or organizations magnify the impact of capable leaders. The final shift in focus for CRWRC has been from developing leaders to strengthening organizations. If development is a belief in the potential of the poor, then organizations provide the resources that put these beliefs into practice. Organizations train leaders. Organizations turn a belief system into a movement.

Activities: What should we do?

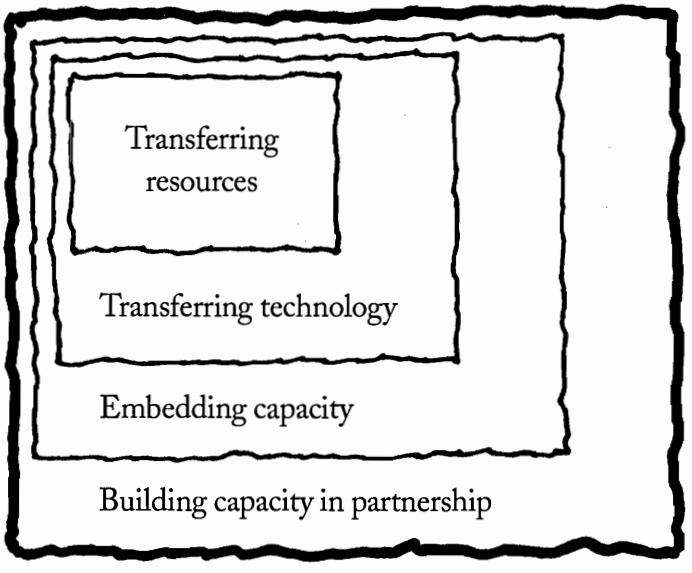
When development is understood as simply helping individuals, it is natural to think that the primary activity should be to give things to poor people. This is what CRWRC did when it first began. It gave food, medicine, and clothing to victims of natural disasters. It started feeding programs for malnourished children. It gave loans for fertilizer or livestock to subsistence farmers. All of these activities were ways of transferring resources from the rich to the poor.

CRWRC and other development organizations soon realized that transferring resources was only a short-term solution. A more lasting solution was to transfer technology. Problems that the poor faced could be solved with Western know-how. At this time CRWRC sent technical experts from North America. Farmers could

learn more advanced farming methods. Small businesses could be improved. Governments concentrated on large infrastructure projects like irrigation systems and hydroelectric generators.

Western technology could offer many benefits, but it often created more problems than it solved. The technological solutions were imposed from the outside. Communities were not involved in solving their own problems. So CRWRC began to concentrate on activities that would embed capacity in partner organizations. CRWRC still gave some resources and technical skills to these organizations, but emphasis was on equipping the organizations to use the technology and resources wisely.

What are our activities?



CRWRC worked with the staff of the partner organizations to help them increase their skills in agriculture, literacy training, or community organizing. They worked with the boards to develop skills in strategic planning and networking. They worked with the senior staff to develop management skills. In this context partner organizations were service providers who would work with poor communities with the help of consultation and resources from CRWRC. Organizational capacity was the ability to use technology and resources wisely to work with the poor.

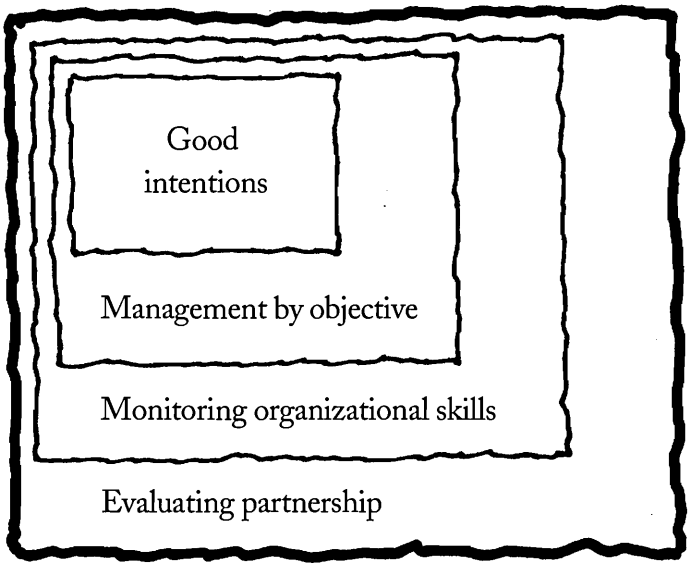
Most recently CRWRC has begun to redefine the terms *partnership* and *capacity.* Partnership should not be a lopsided arrangement in which one organization provides the majority of the resources, direction, and ideas. Instead partnership needs to be a reciprocal relationship in which both parties share ideas and learn from each other. Both organizations need to be willing to change as a result of the partnership. In this context capacity is not something that one organization has and can give or teach to another organization. Instead capacity is something that is built when two organizations are able to work together to find the best ways to work with the poor in a particular situation.

Measurement: How do we know if we are succeeding?

When CRWRC began working overseas, there were no standard expectations for the results to be achieved. Staff members created programs that they felt were the most needed where they worked. The implicit assumption was that the good intentions of staff members would ensure the effectiveness of programs. In the

1970s development organizations began to realize that not all programs really helped the poor. Nonprofit organizations were challenged to go beyond good intentions.

CRWRC reacted to this movement by implementing a strict management-by-objectives system that it has maintained to this day. Staff members reported regularly on the number of individuals involved in every program. Standard indicators were developed in all of the program areas. Income-generation programs measured increases in family income. Agricultural programs measured increased crop yields. Literacy programs measured progress in four levels of literacy. Health programs measured child malnutrition and infant mortality. CRWRC created an accounting system that allocated portions of management and support expenses to individual programs. This allowed the organization to track the average cost for different types of programs. The cost-effectiveness of programs increased dramatically.

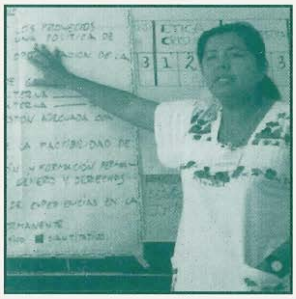


Later CRWRC expanded its commitment to measurable results. The changes in individual quality of life were important, but CRWRC expected changes in the organizations it partnered with as well. A system call the Skill Rating Scale (SRS) was developed to monitor the skills of an organization in five key areas: technical skills, management, networking and resource development, board control, and holistic ministry. Each partner was expected to grow in the quality of its work in each skill area and in its ability to practice each skill without outside help. CRWRC expected that over a period of five to eight years, a partner organization would learn to practice each skill with a high degree of quality and independence. When an organization received high marks in all five areas, it was ready to be independent from CRWRC—not requiring any funding or consultation.

This method of monitoring organizational skills had many benefits. The semi-annual skill evaluations were used to develop action plans that the organizations followed. The regular use of the skill evaluation tool was a constant reminder of the desire to phase-out CRWRC funding. The SRS system provided a concrete way to justify the claim that CRWRC was helping organizations to become stronger. However, the tool had its weaknesses. First, the measurements were not always accurate. Some organizations that scored well in all five areas were not able to continue successfully without CRWRC involvement. Second, the emphasis on

skills tended to focus on individuals instead of the organization. If key staff persons left, some organizations would be able to attract adequate replacements, while other organizations would be unable to continue. Finally, the SRS was a standard set by CRWRC. In some places it was contextualized by partner organizations, but it was always an outside standard.

The search for a better way to measure organizational capacity building has been the focus of this study. It explores the development of appreciative inquiry to build organizations that will endure and continue to grow in their potential to meet challenges and face changes for good.



PARTNERING TO BUILD AND MEASURE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

This handbook summarizes a three-year inquiry into best practices of partnership and organizational capacity building conducted collaboratively by the SIGMA Center at the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University; the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC); and more than 100 local NGOs working in partnership with CRWRC around the world.

Any effort to understand, let alone implement, significant human-scale development that does not include a sustained commitment to improving our knowledge and practice of organizational capacity building cannot succeed.

—From the Introduction