

KPA¹ Model: Appreciative Community Self-Assessment

By Philip Emmanuel C. Peñaflor²

Introduction

One of the perennial issues with poverty alleviation methodologies is that development planning is always conducted by so called “experts”, whether economists, sociologists, environment specialists, engineers, urban and rural planners or other social development planners. Oftentimes participation by the community is a condescending attribute of development planning because it is required by donors or it is a good strategy for social acceptability and ownership. Yet development planning may actually be pursued with definite objectives designed by development planners who may find creative ways of making the community own these plans as if the community itself was the one responsible for the development plan output.

What is more unfortunate is the use of development planning methodologies which tend to identify community needs and problems that supposedly can be addressed better with external assistance, usually with donor interventions whether with grants or loans or both, but usually with loan arrangements that are tied up with some perspectives that undermine the community’s sovereignty and own creativity to determine its own development according to its unique characteristic and cultural identity.

In one African country for example, some donors insist that the indicator of socio-economic development is the increase in *feddans*³ per year which each farming household cultivates, but development implementers find this difficult because culturally the households would only cultivate what they need which oftentimes does not go beyond two feddans. However the government is pressured to meet the indicators set by development planners and approved by donors without the community understanding the identified indicators. Oftentimes the development indicators are tied up with the market which is a donor perspective.

This *Knowledge for Poverty Alleviation* (KPA) article presents an alternative way of defining poverty and development in a way which considers the community as the primary stakeholder of the development process. It offers a simple and doable methodology which the community can utilize for its own development planning process with the combination of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Problem-Solving (PS) methods in the context of Participatory Action Research (PAR).

¹ Knowledge for Poverty Alleviation is a framework for the design and evaluation of development projects developed by Dr Serafin Talisayon and Jasmin Suministrado of the Center for Conscious Living Foundation, Inc. (see also <http://www.cclfi.org/files/Framework.pdf> retrieved on Aug. 27, 2013).

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³ Equivalent to about an acre or a little less than a hectare.

At the end of this paper a two-day participatory development planning design is being proposed which has already been tested in one community in Timor Leste⁴.

Popular Concepts of Poverty

The number of people in poverty has been cut over half since 1990. Over the same period 2.1 billion people gained access to improved drinking water and the child mortality has dropped by 41% (United Nations 2013). Despite the overall progress in poverty reduction efforts, some geographical areas have not enjoyed the same level of success as in other regions. Over the last two decades, the number of people living in extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa rose from 290 million in 1990 to 414 million in 2010. The failure to achieve poverty reduction goals at the regional level raises the question of why some efforts fail, while similar efforts deliver quality results in other regions.

There are two prevailing measures, and thus, definitions of poverty. One is *absolute poverty*, which quantifies the number of people below a fixed real property threshold. The term *absolute poverty* is also sometimes used as a synonym for “extreme poverty.”

Absolute poverty is understood as the absence of sufficient resources to secure basic life necessities. According to the UN absolute poverty is the absence of any two of the following eight basic needs: (1) food, (2) safe drinking water, (3) sanitation facilities, (4) health, (5) shelter, (6) education, (7) information, and (8) access to services.

The second measure of poverty is *relative poverty*, which classifies a poverty case not by comparing it to a fixed cut-off point, but by purposely comparing it with others. Thus, a measure of relative poverty defines “poverty” as being below some relative poverty threshold. By using this measurement, even if real income in an economy increases but the income distribution remains the same, then the rate of relative poverty will also stay the same.

The common international poverty line has been roughly \$1 a day, as set by the UN to measure extreme poverty (living on less than \$1 a day). This measure is found to be most acceptable, as this is more or less the same threshold used by poor countries to measure poverty. To use this by converting the amount to local currencies is another story. With \$1, one can buy oneself a meal in Manila, but not in New York.

The World Bank uses indexes of purchasing power parity (PPP) to convert the \$1 threshold into other currencies, whereby purchasing indexes are used to reflect cost for a bundle of goods per country. PPP basically suggests that prices of goods in countries tend to equate under floating exchange rates and therefore people would be able to purchase the same quantity of goods in any country for a given sum of money. That is, the notion that a dollar should buy the same amount in all countries. The downside of PPP is, however, goods that are actually bought by a poor family or individual in Manila, for example, are not the same goods bought by a poor family or individual in New York.

⁴ Implemented as part of Philip Emmanuel C. Peñaflor’s research methodology for his PhD dissertation entitled: “*A Phenomenological Exploration of Community Intangibles in Lautem District, Timor Leste, and Its Implications for Development Planning*” (unpublished PhD dissertation, Asian Social Institute, 2010).

In 2008, the World Bank came out with a revised figure of \$1.25 PPP, presenting a new way to visualizing global poverty: poorer than we thought. According to World Bank, “the incidence of poverty in the world is higher than past estimates have suggested. The main reason is that [previous data] had implicitly underestimated the cost of living in most developing countries.” With this new poverty line, 1.4 billion people live on \$1.25 or below a day. This is more than the previous estimate of 984 million with the older measure of a \$1 a day in 2004.⁵

Other emerging definitions and measurements of poverty regard factors other than income such as:

The Human Poverty Index (HPI). Developed by UNDP, the HPI examines and compares human deprivations along three dimensions: (a) degree of vulnerability of people to death before the age of 40 (longevity), (b) degree of exclusion from reading and communication (knowledge), and (c) standards of living (economic provisioning) as measured through the percentage of people with access to health and safe water and percentage of malnourished children below 5 years of age.

While there are criticisms that question the value of the HPI (i.e. – poverty, having a multi-dimensional character, does not need indices but rather thorough diagnosis that is most specific to an area or country; or that HPI cannot reveal the causes of the problem – so why bother?), it is still regarded to better reflect human deprivation compared to the Human Development Index, which was also developed by UNDP.

Well-being and Ill-being. Well-being is most commonly used in philosophy to describe what is ultimately good *for* a person.⁶ Early attempts to gauge well-being in economics are based on the assumption that well-being is the opposite of ill-being. Later on, studies found out that while having different sets of correlates and causes, well-being is not the polar opposite of ill-being, and that these two are considered part of a dimension of people’s feelings. Thus, people who experience ill-being may be at some point likewise experience well-being, and vice-versa.

Development as Freedom. According to Amartya Sen, being poor does not mean living below an imaginary poverty threshold, such as an income of a dollar a day, or less. A revolutionary economist, Sen believes that being poor means belonging to an income level that does cover for his/her basic needs. Sen recommends that rather by using income as a unit of poverty of an individual, why not do it the other way around: calculate how much such individual can achieve or obtain with his/her income, taking into consideration the peculiarity of the place of residence. This makes poverty analysis go a step further, primarily focusing and banking on the potentials of people – the very core of human development and empowerment (Sen, 2000).

Previous studies and perspectives define poverty in terms of income levels. But over time, these have been complemented by more progressive schools of thought that look at poverty in a different light, that consider human behaviors and perceptions as crucial factors that are related to poverty. Waves of literature offer an entire spectrum of theories that range from materialistic to psychosocial analytical lenses.

⁵ The developing world is poorer than we thought, but no less successful in the fight against poverty. Shaohua Chen and Martin Ravallion. World Bank, 2008.

⁶ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2008.

The Development Problematique

Simply put, development has definitely been treated as an ideal concept which implies an improvement in conditions. Yet one of the best definitions of development is by Gunnar Mirdal, who defined development (as early as 1974, prior to the conduct of major international development conferences and efforts) as the movement upward of an entire social system.⁷ Social system, he added, encloses (besides the so-called economic factors) all non-economic factors including all sorts of consumption by various groups of people; consumption provided collectively; educational and health facilities and levels; the distribution of power in society; and more generally economic, social and political stratification; broadly speaking, institutions and attitudes.

Freedom from Fear and Want. The idea and concept of “freedom from fear, freedom from want” was first referred as two of the "Four Freedoms" in Franklin Roosevelt’s annual address to Congress in 1941. He announced that the United States was fighting for the universal freedoms that all people possessed, which were "four freedoms" that people ought to enjoy; the freedom of speech, the freedom of worship, the freedom from want, and the freedom from fear.⁸

The 1994 UNDP Human Development Report defined human security as providing safety for the people from hunger, diseases, oppression, and other chronic threats; as well as protecting them from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – emphasizing that the concept of security be converted from a state-perspective to a human development perspective.

Development and Globalization. Then there came globalization. Globalization, as a transaction process, is not new – for example, people, communities, and groups like industrial corporations have been long transacting personal and business concerns across the globe. Globalization is “a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology.” This process has been observed to have effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems, on economic development and prosperity, and on human physical well-being in societies around the world.⁹ In other words, globalization influences how a person lives and interacts with his or her surroundings.

While being seen by countries as a vehicle for economic growth, a number of literatures criticize globalization’s inevitable, brutal ecological and socio-cultural effects. Due to the demands of fast-paced growth, globalization allegedly heightened over-fishing and depletion of other natural resources, as well as cross-boundary water and air pollution due to mushrooming, unregulated industries. Globalization has also been blamed for cultural transformation or even obliteration – where multiculturalism ceases to give way to the emergence of a monoculture that discourages traditional and cultural distinctions among countries or regions¹⁰.

⁷ What is Development? Gunnar Mirdal. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 1974.

⁸ Four Freedoms. Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1941.

⁹ <http://www.globalization101.org/what-is-globalization> (retrieved on August 26, 2013)

¹⁰ Kanner, Allen (2005). Globalization and the Commercialization of Childhood. *Tikkun Magazine* September-October Issue.

Critiques argue that poorest countries, not being ready to adopt the fast-paced process and adapt to drastic structural changes in the world economy, are the worst hit by globalization's disadvantages. A country's knee-jerk agricultural policy response, for example, may spell disaster to its resources and farmers, in exchange for being able to respond to the demands of the globalizing world.

Sustaining development. Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is from the Brundtland¹¹ Report: *it is the kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: (a) the concept of needs, in particular, the essential needs of the world's poor to which priority should be given, and (b) the concept of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet the present and future needs.*

Sustainable development is regarded as the only vision of the economy that takes into consideration the major challenges of globalization, while ensuring environmental protection, reduction of poverty and inequality, and overall improvement of human welfare. It implies the simultaneous improvement of both economic and social conditions, one reinforcing the other. The idea banked on numerous environmental movements in earlier decades, such as the Earth Summit in 1992.

The Millennium Development Goals as an example of a top-down approach to planning. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are regarded as the most comprehensive, yet specific development goals that countries have agreed upon in the year 2000. There are eight time-bound goals and 2015 targets on income poverty, hunger, maternal and child mortality, disease, inadequate shelter, gender inequality, environmental degradation, and global partnership. While developed at a global level, MDGs are designed to be adopted locally (country level). As per global agreement, the plans and goals provide a framework for the entire international community. The MDGs aim to cut global poverty in half by 2015.

Remaining challenges in the development praxis. Despite the celebrated era of globalization and sustainable development, there remain a lot of challenges that continue to haunt the true meaning of development. Minority groups, backed by some academics, argue that development is still wanting in terms of respecting people's values, cultures, faith traditions, and spirituality. For example, despite being poor, countries survived on cultural pride and had kept strong because of social solidarity. But these same countries are little by little losing their sense of cultural confidence and social solidarity due to a singular prescribed path towards global development.

Development Planning Towards Poverty Alleviation

Development efforts are flawed if there is no resulting poverty reduction. That is why at the first stage of development, the goal to reduce or even eradicate poverty should already be very evident. That first stage is planning.

¹¹ Another name in reference to the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development. The Brundtland Report is likewise referred to as Our Common Future.

Planning is a means of making conscious choices about how to achieve a future aim. Thus, planning for development implies a method of planning that takes into account the needs of the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable sections of the community¹² – because that should always be the aim of development.

In its earliest form, a country plan was essentially an economic blueprint for attaining economic growth. Plainly, it was but a set of economic recommendations. As development as a theory emerged, these economic recommendations have grown and interacted with approaches to planning for the sake of development.

The “technology” of participation has, alongside the efforts towards development, been a craze among policy and program developers, and development partners. Donor agencies began the promotion of civil society participation in the early 80s. In the 1990s, development cooperation saw to it that governance and poverty reduction approaches go hand in hand. Many tools and methodologies have been developed to assist participatory planning. However, it must always be noted that participatory practice is not the application of tools, but the use of one’s best judgment – a proven form of behavior that focuses on improvement of human endeavors.¹³

The “Bottom-up” Approach to Development Planning

In community development planning, it is important to emphasize community participation vis-à-vis the “top-down” approach because of the greater potential for success and sustainability of development activities if done with the participation of the community itself rather than when such activities are imposed from above.

Various literatures have already pointed out the failure of “top-down” approaches and it is not redundant to reiterate this important point in order to remind development planners of the importance of local participation. For instance, in *Participatory Rural Appraisal Handbook* jointly prepared by the National Environment Secretariat of the Government of Kenya, Clark University, Egerton University and the Center for International Development and Environment of the World Resources Institute¹⁴, it was pointed out that top-down approaches in rural development did not work well in Africa, also citing the report of the Bruntland Commission (*Our Common Future*, 1987), to wit:

Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and International development agencies often used “top-down” approaches to design programmes without consulting intended beneficiaries. Local, national and international decision-makers often used funds to import technologies from the North, rather than utilize and enhance locally conceived and sustainable approaches. The failure of such projects was high. As a result, disinterest in project activity on the part of the rural people was widespread.

¹² Development Planning and Poverty Reduction. Potts, Ryan, and Toner, 2003.

¹³ The Power in Participatory Practice. Caroline Harper (in *Development Planning and Poverty Reduction*), 2003.

¹⁴ *Participatory Rural Appraisal Handbook* (1990) jointly prepared by the National Environment Secretariat of the Government of Kenya Clark University, Egerton University and the Center for International Development and Environment of the World Resources Institute.

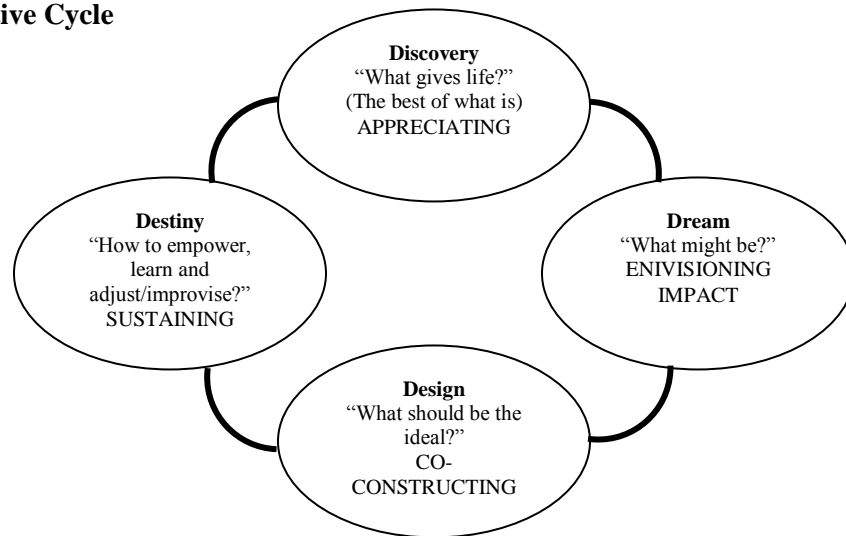
For a practical application of the “bottom-up” theory, this paper suggests the combination of the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Problem-Solving (PS) methods within the concept of Participatory Action Research (PAR), as an effective methodology for community development planning process.

Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR is research done together with the community for which the research is conducted. In “*Participatory Research for Community-Based Agrarian Reform: The Siay BCC Experience*”, Antonio J. Ledesma, SJ (1982), discussed three main attributes of PAR, to wit: (1) It is participatory in that data gathering, analysis and reporting are done by and for the local communities themselves; (2) It is “action-oriented” in that the research findings are utilized immediately by local communities, to help solve their problems; and, (3) It is research in a systematic manner adhering to the basic norms of social science investigation. PAR as a research method empowers the community to look into its own situation and to enable it to respond to its own issues.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI). AI is very helpful in identifying the community’s strengths and resources. In the past when outside facilitators like non-government organizations (NGOs) would facilitate situation analysis in communities to identify needs and problems, the communities would end up realizing that their situation is full of needs and problems that are beyond their capacity to address, and so they realize that they need more assistance from NGOs, or from the government, or from donors, to resolve their problems. In the end this kind of approach finds it difficult for the communities to facilitate their own development process and to sustain such a process.

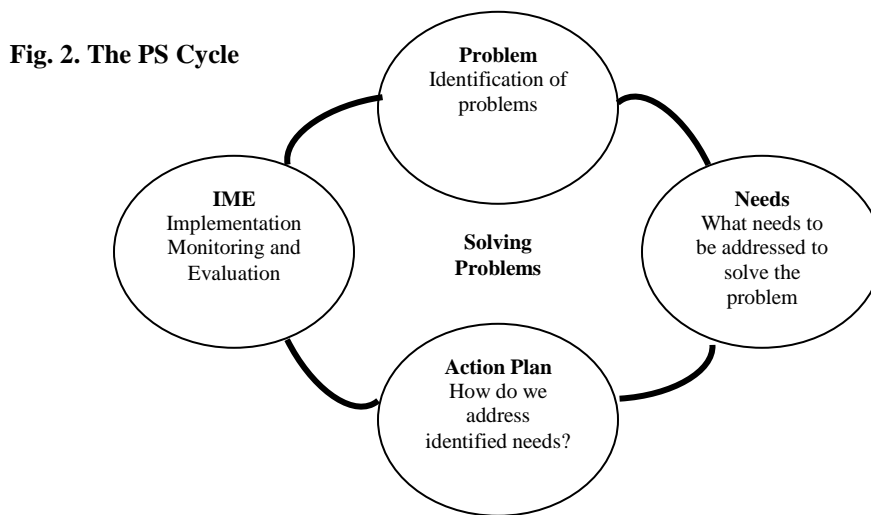
The goal of AI is to lessen the community’s dependence on external development agents so that it can by itself become the agent of its own development process. In theory the whole process of AI follows the following 4D framework: Discovery, Dream, Design and Deliver or Destiny as shown in Figure 1 below:

Fig. 1. The Appreciative Cycle



1. **Discover**—talking to one another, often via structured appreciative interviews, to identify exceptional/peak moments.
2. **Dream**—envisioning what might be if the peak moments were the norm, not the exception; the images of the future that emerge are grounded in the "positive present".
3. **Design**—developing "provocative propositions" to achieve the vision and strategies to implement them.
4. **Deliver**—acting on the provocative propositions, establishing new relationships, and mobilizing resources (known in some accounts as "**Destiny**")

Problem-Solving (PS). PS is a process in community development planning by which the community is facilitated to analyze its own situation to identify problems and needs. The idea in PS is to look for issues or problems and needs which are the target for project development and action planning. Shayamal Saha¹⁵ discussed the PS cycle in Figure 2 below which he has applied in a community case study for his PhD dissertation.



PS entails an assessment of the situation of the community where problems are identified, and then identifying the needs to be addressed to solve the identified problems, action planning to address the needs, and later implementing the action plan and monitoring and evaluation. PS is more inherent or subsumed in PAR. PAR is action-oriented, but that action comes from an analysis of the community situation where some needs have been identified by the community itself.

PS has been criticized to be too much focused on problems and the negative situation in the community which sometimes overwhelms the community and makes community members to

¹⁵ *Promotion of Self-help in Development & Social Change: Constructing Non Subject-Object Processes.* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Tilburg, 2009).

believe that they cannot do something about their problems unless external agents come to their aid¹⁶. This challenge is resolved or balanced by the concept of AI.

Tangible and Intangible Assets

In the discussion of poverty and development what is often missed in looking at wealth as an indicator is “intangible” assets. Wealth is often referred to as tangible assets that have physical existence which gives the holder financial rights or which can bring income or can pay debts¹⁷. The examples of tangible assets would be cash, bank deposits, investments, land or real property, equipment or machineries, vehicles and any other physical or material property.

Kiyosaki and Lechter¹⁸ suggested to redefine the concept of “asset” into something that could bring income to the family, and practically that is actually what asset is all about. However, oftentimes asset that has the potential of bringing income is understood in terms of “tangible” assets.

In reality intangible assets also bring income but are oftentimes not seen in that way because the very term “intangible” means they are not perceived of concretely. Social networks in the community for example, bring about income. When a mother leaves her baby to a neighbor so she could wash clothes for another household, then that relationship with that neighbor brings income to the family of the laundrywoman. The 2004 Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “intangible” as incapable of being touched, or being impalpable, or an incorporeal asset, and by “incorporeal” it means having no material body or form.

An intangible asset is anything of value which an individual, group or community possesses, that usually has no physical existence but is real because it is made use of in specific activities of the individual or group or community especially those intangibles that bring about socio-economic benefits or well-being. By “socio-economic benefits” it means social interactions that are mutually beneficial to those that are involved, which include income or financial benefits. By “well-being” it means a situation of upliftment or improvement of one’s conditions, e.g. meeting basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, education, health, or improvement in peace and order, or being able to participate in socio-political or civic activities, etc., that bring about a certain level of satisfaction to the individual, group or community.

For example, in Lautem society in Timor Leste, there is a holistic understanding of wealth where tangible and intangible assets interplay in the cultural milieu. Wealth is firstly, people, which is considered to be both a tangible and intangible asset. Second is land or natural resource which is also both a tangible and intangible asset. But people and land (human and natural resources) without peace and unity and good relationships are nothing. If people are fighting and there is no peace, they cannot work on the land. So peace and unity are valuable assets although intangible, but necessary for the tangible assets, i.e. people and land, to function. Ultimately true wealth is

¹⁶ Cooperrider D. L., and Whitney D. (2000). “ A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry”, in Cooperrider, D. L. (ed)., *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization towards a Positive Theory of Change*. USA: Stipes Publishing.

¹⁷ <http://moneyterms.co.uk/tangible-assets/> retrieved on Dec. 6, 2009.

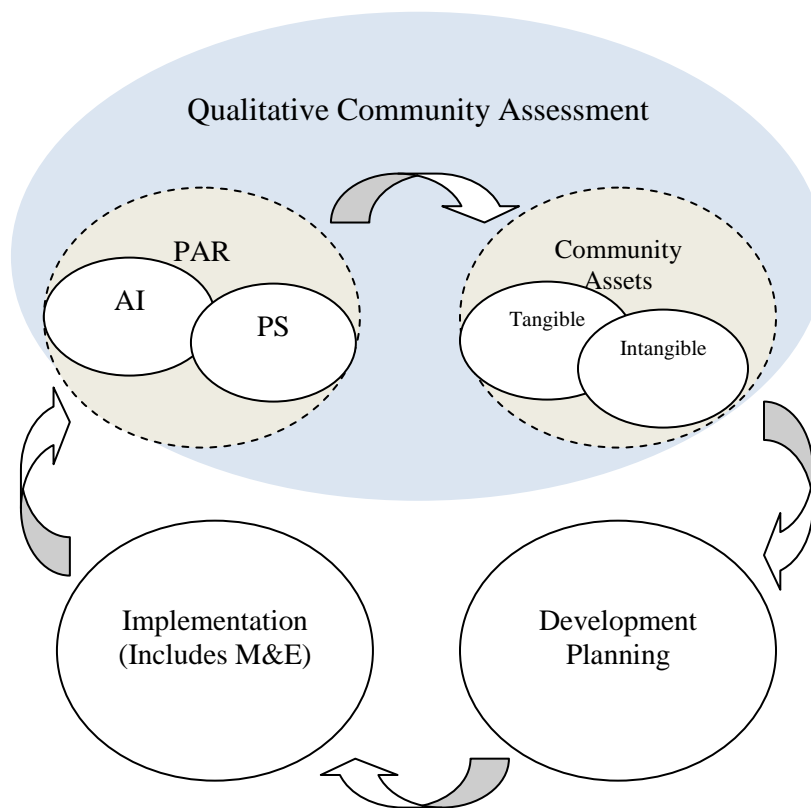
¹⁸ Kiyosaki, R. and Lechter, S. (2000), *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. Clayton, Victoria: Warner Books.

the “harmonious relationship” of people among themselves which is characterized by *nitam rau-rau* (peace) and *nitam ukane* (unity)¹⁹.

Development planning could be better approached through community intangibles and to utilize what intangibles could serve the community better. This approach would prove to be sustainable because it is rooted to the culture and values of the community. AI, in combination with PAR-PS, is a very relevant tool for the community to understand and appreciate its intangible assets. And once the community is able to appreciate their assets including the intangible ones, it will definitely change their concept of poverty.

Given the understanding of assets as both tangible and intangible, development planning could be approached not merely by looking at community issues or problems but most importantly by looking at their assets using the PAR/AI-PS assessment approach or methodology. Figure 3 below illustrates this assessment process which is a very qualitative community assessment exercise:

Fig. 3. A Community Development Paradigm



¹⁹ Philip Emmanuel C. Penaflor, “A Phenomenological Exploration of Community Intangibles in Lautem District, Timor Leste and Its Implications for Development Planning” (unpublished PhD dissertation, Asian Social Institute, 2010).

The figure above shows how the combination of the PAR/AI-PS methodologies, where PAR is the overarching methodology, is utilized to understand the situation of the community particularly in analyzing community assets. The usual approach in community assessments in development planning is to identify what the community lacks rather than what the community already has. The above model is the other way around where community assets are identified first with which the community will build upon in its development planning process to respond to the issues that may be identified during the problem-solving (PS) stage.

To summarize this community assessment paradigm, in PAR the community is enabled to look into its own situation. With AI, PAR can build the community's capacity to address such problems and needs that may be identified in the PS. The synergy of these AI and PS in PAR is envisioned to create a more sustainable development process in the community.

This paper suggests a design for a two-day community development planning process using PAR/AI-PS methodology (see Appendix).

Conclusion: Redefining Poverty and Development

A paper published by the Asian Social Institute in 1996 states that there is a universal belief in the equality among people, regardless of religion, culture, gender, race, class, and caste. Yet it also recognizes the reality that there is a great gap between the monetarily rich and the monetarily poor within and among countries. Money has been the symbol of the large-scale dominant institutional life, which led people to live through a mediated economy – the mediator being money.²⁰ The paper concludes by posing the challenge of acknowledging what the poor can share in the community it belongs to: inner spiritual and cultural resources – as crucial elements in the community's economic system.

Emerging schools of thought challenge the monetary system the same way. Mark Anielski, in his book *The Economics of Happiness*²¹, lays down the basic (if not the original) foundations of happiness and well-being. According to him, the concept of genuine wealth is actually consistent with the principles of sustainability; genuine meaning being true to one's values, and wealth as equated to well-being, of which conditions are true to human core values of life.

He made reference to the Chinese philosophy *xiaokang* (which means moderation) which guides a society to seek and achieve true harmony by striving for moderation and material sufficiency. *Xiaokang* is based on the notion that genuine well-being is achieved when households have their material needs met (sufficiency), people are living lives of moderation and material needs are equitably available and distributed to all (equity).

Gross National Well-Being. In criticism of prevailing measures of growth and development, Anielski observes that what we measure reflects what we value and what matters most, noting

²⁰ The Monetary Culture and Challenges of Equality. Mina Ramirez. Asian Social Institute, 1996.

²¹ Anielski, Mark (2007). *The Economics of Happiness – Building Genuine Wealth*. BC Canada: New Society Publishers.

that Social Equity or Gross National Well-Being is not given as much attention as GNP. Anielski identifies the five capitals of genuine wealth as follows: human capital (people, their mental spiritual physical and emotional health), social capital (strength of relationships with each other: trust, reciprocity, sense of belongingness), natural capital (free gifts from nature), built capital (all things made or manufactured with both human and natural capital), and financial capital (money or anything denominated in monetary terms: cash, savings, investments). The goal of the research on happiness is to determine from what source people derive their well-being. In the discussion of assets, these are all intangible wealth.

Gross National Happiness (GNH). Critics note that by measuring the amount of commerce in a country, gross domestic product also counts remedial and defensive expenditures such as those spent for security and environmental rehabilitation. As expenditures for such items increase, so does GDP. And there lies the problem because if a country has true progress, then it should not be spending anymore on goods and services that indicate deterioration.

GNH was developed to define an indicator that measures quality of life or social progress more holistically, as compared to the gross domestic product or GDP. The term was coined in 1972 by Bhutan's former King Jigme Singye Wangchuk, who used the phrase to signal his commitment to building an economy that would serve Bhutan's unique culture based on Buddhist spiritual values, which suggests that development of human society becomes beneficial when material and spiritual development occur side by side to complement and reinforce each other. The four pillars of GNH are: (a) the promotion of sustainable development; (b) the preservation and promotion of cultural values; (c) the conservation of the natural environment; and (d) the establishment of good governance. The *Center for Bhutan Studies* developed a sophisticated survey instrument to measure the population's general level of well-being. It then had been used by the government as basis for development planning. Again these indicators are all intangible assets.

To have or to be? Eric Fromm²² has differentiated between *having* and *being* as ways of existence. "Being" is rooted in love, and is concerned with shared experiences, while "having" is based on aggression and greed. Fromm observed how society had become materialistic, preferring "having" rather than "being." Development, driven by greed and illusion of unlimited growth, got to the point of ignoring what is good for human beings. This, noted Fromm, reflected that society completely deviated from its natural path, and that industrialization heeded the fulfillment of personal interests and the desire for increased possessions. People seemed to forget that everyone is mortal, and these possessions would be rendered useless after death. Material possessions are reflective of what people are in the inside.

Culture, spirituality and development. There is a strong contention for the intangible component in the development discourse that traditionally dwells on economic, social and political conditions, neglecting the cultural, moral, and spiritual dimensions of human well-being and their relevance to development. Thus William Ryan in his foreword on "Culture, Spirituality, and Economic Development"²³, says:

²² In "To have or to be?" New York: The Continuum. 1976.

²³ Ryan, William, S.J. (2005). Culture, Spirituality, and Economic Development: Opening a Dialogue. Canada: IDRC.

*“For the most part, these assumptions and values are not expressed in conventional rational paradigms or in quantifiable terms, but in **myth, ritual, and religion**. These "ontological needs" or priorities include such things as: love of other, one's commitment and responsibility to family, clan, and community; self-worth, one's sense of dignity, honour, and respect; sexuality and gender, roles and relationships -- both individual and social; work, both as a means of sustenance and as a creative act; beauty and joy, as expressed in dance, music, art, poetry, and play; a sense of the sacred and the transcendental, spirituality and formal religion; loyalty to the tribe, nation, or other ethnic identity; love of place, a sense of belonging here and not there; reverence for life, matter and spirit in nature, the origin of nature, and its relation to self; the unseen; ancestors; and life and death.”*

There are important indicators which are actually not very quantifiable, thus they are not factored-in in the discussion of development. Yet in the context of the current materialistic GDP-obsessed development paradigm, even the notion of well-being and despair are wedded to the ebb and flow of the markets which have been proven to have disastrous consequences, because according to Chris Maser²⁴, it is largely because people have yet to understand the notion of conscious simplicity. True wealth according to Maser lies in the scarcity of one's want as opposed to the abundance of one's possessions.

In the outer islands of Vanuatu, people thrive basically on *taro*²⁵ and *kava*²⁶, and life is so simple but people are happy and their relationship is characterized with caring for the welfare of each community member. Their environment is well-preserved, and one can walk in peace even in the middle of the night. So who really are poor?

²⁴ The Perpetual Consequences of Fear and Violence: Rethinking the Future. Washington DC: Maisonneuve Press. 2004.

²⁵ A kind of rootcrop which is the staple food in Vanuatu.

²⁶ A local brew made from the roots of the *kava* plant.

Appendix

A Two-Day Community Development Planning Process Utilizing PAR/AI-PS Approaches

- A. Preparatory Activities. The preparatory activities involve preparing the community by a pre-research visit to the community, at least one week before, to familiarize oneself with the community and the people who will participate in the activity. This initial informal contact with the community will psychologically prepare both the researcher and the community for the actual conduct of the study. The researcher also looks into the venue where the research activities will be conducted so that he appraises himself the limitations of the space for the conduct of the research activity and thereby is able to prepare accordingly.

In this activity community members are informed of the activity and are invited to attend said activity but the invited participants are representatives of the community or leaders both formal and informal. For purposes of manageability, 10-20 community representatives could be invited to allow for two Focus Group Discussion (FGD) consisting of five to 10 participants for each FGD depending on the actual attendance. However for purposes of logistics (lunch and snacks) the researcher may prepare for 20 or 25 participants just in case attendance may increase later or the next day.

The second preparatory activity is on the members of the research team, if a research team is needed apart from the main researcher. The researcher provides a quick one-day orientation to the members of the research team so that they are properly briefed on the procedures of the activity, the idea behind the FGDs that will be conducted using PRA tools (participatory rural appraisal) and how to facilitate the FGDs.

- B. Actual Conduct of the Research. The actual conduct of the research is two-days held in the community center of the village whether it be a community hall, a school classroom, a Chapel or a place for conducting religious activities but with permission from the religious authority in the village.

The conduct of the research by the research team based on a pre-agreed design during the preparation activity, will follow the AI process which is divided into the following activities:

Day 1. Discover and Dream

1. Introductions. “Getting-to-know” ice-breakers, explanation of the purpose of the study, opening prayer. This activity will help to set the mood for the research and community development planning activities.
2. Two simultaneous FGDs with the following sets of questions for the respective FGDs (a) and (b):
 - a) *What are our experiences in the past that made us feel united and proud as a community? What makes us unique as a community?*
 - b) *What are the things that make us happy everyday? If it is possible to cost the things that make us happy everyday, how much do they cost?*

In this activity, while the community discovers its pride and sense of self-confidence as they answer the above set of questions, the participants are also able to indirectly identify intangible

assets which could be analyzed and categorized as human capital, social capital, cultural capital, etc., based on existing frameworks on intangible assets.

3. Plenary reporting and sharing of reflections
4. Two simultaneous FGD utilizing the following PRA tools for the respective FGDs (a) and (b):
 - a) *Community Resource Assessment*. This PRA activity is still part of the discovery phase of the AI process but focus on the resources that the community has, usually natural resources and some historical monuments. In the discourse on intangible assets, community resources, particularly the natural resources, fall within the natural capital.
 - b) *Stakeholder Analysis*. In community development planning, it is important to understand who are the stakeholders in the community which have interests in, and which could affect or could be affected by, certain development initiatives. In the analysis of intangible assets, the stakeholders fall into the social capital.
5. Plenary reporting and sharing of reflections
6. Lunch break
7. *Visioning workshop*. Following the AI process, this activity is now the dream phase where the participants, after appreciating their uniqueness as a community and their strengths, i.e. their resources whether tangible or intangible, can now be motivated to dream of what they want their community to become. This AI phase in community development planning is important because this will be the source of their motivation and inspiration to plan and to work together as a community.
8. Sharing of reflections on the vision of the community.

Day 2. Design and Deliver (or Destiny)

9. *Problem Tree Analysis*. This PRA activity is done as a plenary. While it still follows the AI process, this activity is now the beginning of the Problem Solving (PS) approach inherent in the Participatory Action Research (PAR). After having conceptualized a vision of what they want their community to become in the future the previous day, the participants are now led to look back into the present situation and analyze the gaps between their vision and their reality. The idea is to identify problems that the community is faced with at present.
10. *Objective Tree Analysis*. After identifying the problems the community is faced with in the present, the participants would now be ready to respond to such problems by going through this PRA exercise, which is simply converting the problems into objectives.
11. Sharing of reflections
12. Lunch Break
13. *Action Planning*. This is the culmination of the two-day community development planning process. The participants are not expected to respond to all the objectives that they have identified in the objective tree analysis, but will be asked to prioritize or to decide on what are

the more strategic objectives that they could undertake taking into consideration the “do-ability” based on their capacities and resources including the community stakeholders.

- C. Community Action Planning. Community Action Planning is the same activity as the action planning in the afternoon of Day 2, but this is discussed here again to emphasize the output of the two-day activity as a community action plan. When this output is achieved the study or the methodology is implemented successfully.

However when the community has developed its action plan, the research is only successful in terms of its methodology. The assumption is that the development organization conducting the study will assist the community in enabling it to implement its action plan by providing some capacity-building activities later and by monitoring the community’s implementation of the action plan.