

Perspectives on Rural Development

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The present government recognizes the importance of rural development in the country's economic progress, but its approaches to rural development do not seem to be different from those previously tried in the past. These approaches are now being rendered ineffective by the country's problems of rapid population growth, high rate of migration to the urban areas, enormous foreign debt and insurgency. To promote rural development, the author suggests three major programs that stress the importance of people's participation and initiative: training to strengthen farmers' skills; development of the people's ability for cooperative efforts through community organizations, cooperatives and other people's organizations; and implementation of infrastructure and basic services' delivery projects with the participation of community organizations.

Introduction

Rural development and agriculture are major thrusts of the Aquino government. Yet it does not seem that any Philippine government in the past had a clear or effective strategy of promoting the rural development idea. Likewise, the present government does not seem to have developed rural development strategies much different from past approaches.

Success in development of the rural areas – in winning the fight against rural poverty – is crucial to the nation. Genuine development and prosperity in the rural areas will provide the solid foundation for national economic advances. Success in raising farmer incomes in the rural areas will greatly weaken the insurgency.

It is thus very important that clear and effective approaches to rural development be articulated, debated, identified, agreed on and implemented as early as possible. Such debate could begin in the Senate even before the 1989 General Appropriations Act is considered. The debate could identify other appropriate legislations to improve the effectiveness of government's rural development programs.

It can be argued here that development programs in the rural areas have, by and large, consisted of infrastructure and basic services provided by the national government. The present government has begun commendable efforts

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to involve people of the regions in planning the development programs and projects in their areas.

Rural development must involve not just the provision by government of infrastructures and services. It must include the development of the people themselves, particularly the rural poor, through training in useful skills and in social preparation. Rural development must foster and result in self-reliant, self-sufficient, and eventually, self-sustaining rural communities, without overly depending on government.

It is hoped that these thoughts may help stimulate some fresh thinking on the real aims, alternative approaches, and improved strategies for rural development.

Government Approaches to Rural Development

The Colonial Era

The colonial powers established a highly centralized government, for easier control by the metropolitan powers, Spain and the United States. Manila was not only the seat of colonial government. It was also the center of international trade, domestic commerce, sea transport, education, and finance.

The rural areas were administered as the producers of wealth, which could be exported to the mother country. Manila and its merchant community were useful as the conduit for collecting and exporting this wealth, and for distributing the goods brought in exchange into the country from the colonial power.

In the Spanish era, religious orders, extraordinary service to the Crown, and proteges of the colonial government were rewarded with large land areas which they could exploit. In turn, they were expected to keep the rural areas quiet, paying taxes, and producing items for export to the mother country. The Americans expropriated the friar lands, and distributed them to Filipino citizens. The US citizens were less interested in lands than in mineral concessions and merchant franchises.

Commonwealth and Post-World War II Era (Until 1965)

During the Commonwealth era, little conscious attempt was made to alter the import-export pattern of the economy and to change its locus, Manila. Nor were organized and sustained attempts made during the post-World War II era to mount programs for self-sustaining rural development. There was no imperative need to do so. Land was ample for cultivation to satisfy most rural

needs. Periodic outbreaks of peasant unrest caused by land hunger in regions like Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog could be assuaged by schemes of resettlement to land-rich areas like Mindanao. During the 1950s, there was also a large migration on a private individual, unprogrammed basis, from crowded provinces in Luzon and the Visayas. Consonant with the free trade relations between the US and its former colony, the country continued to earn dollars from agriculture, mining, and logging, which in turn were used to buy manufactured goods.

The country embarked on an industrialization program in the 1950s and 1960s. Industrialization was the route to national prosperity that the country's leaders opted for in the early 50s. Most of the new industries that were established depended on imported materials, most of which came from the US. Industrial equipment, mainly for products to substitute imports, and the materials they needed for operations, were given priority in the allocation of foreign exchange earned by exports of agricultural products.

The rural areas did not seem to need much attention from government and got little. Agriculture had fended for itself for centuries. It was thought the farmers only needed peace and order, roads, education, health, and other basic services. The government attempted to provide these especially prior to elections, for after all, the majority of the voters lived in the countryside. But few serious efforts are perceived to have been mounted for sustained rural development. The Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, began during President Magsaysay's administration, was one of the first and few attempts to bring about rural development. President Magsaysay also created the office of the Presidential Assistance for Community Development (PACD), which President Marcos was to elevate later to cabinet level.

The national population rose rapidly after World War II. But the population of Metro Manila was growing even faster, more than doubling by the early 60s from the 1.5 million residents in 1948, when they comprised 8.1 percent of the national population. This percentage steadily rose to 9.1 percent in 1960, and 10.8 percent in 1970.

Accelerating urban migration was a symptom of dwindling availability of land, the great lack of job opportunities in the provinces for their growing labor force, and the increasing disparity of development in the provinces as against Metro Manila.

Marcos Era (1965 to end of 1985)

In his first and second terms, Marcos anchored his program of government on heavy construction of infrastructure throughout the country, particularly the national highway system. This seemed to bring development to the countryside.

But because the program reemphasized reliance on government action for development of the rural areas, it actually may have set back ideas for self-sustaining rural development. Later, highway travel reinforced the central role of Manila in the economy. As with imperial Rome, all roads led to Manila, making it more accessible to produce from the provinces, and making provincial towns more accessible to Manila's manufacturers. With cheaper and faster transport from Manila, small rural industries serving markets in their adjoining towns became less competitive with similar products from Manila factories.

During martial law, Marcos concentrated power in Manila and in Malacañang, steadily removing more functions, authorities and budgets from the provincial and municipal governments, and making them subject to the supervision of a new office, the Department of Local Governments and Community Development. This department organized barangays as a political unit, thus making them part of and dependent on the administration's political machinery. Mr. Marcos' reasons for doing so are now obvious.

The Marcos administration did not give much attention to truly developing the rural areas. Yet trouble was mounting in the provinces. The insurgency had grown tremendously and the number of landless had increased. Few opportunities for farm employment existed. Hopelessness was growing in the rural areas about improvement of their life in the future.

The Aquino Government and the Rural Development Imperative

When the Aquino government assumed power, the availability of land has already become a big problem in the rural areas. In 1918, there were 10.3 million Filipinos. By 1948, the population had grown to 19.2 million, a 90 percent increase in 30 years. But population growth zoomed much faster in the next four decades. The 19.2 million population in 1948 had risen to three times that number by the end of 1986. The land-to-people ratio had dwindled to such level that critical shortages of farmland had been experienced by the country as a whole.

While national population had risen three times in the four decades since 1948, Metro Manila's population had swelled fivefold in the same period to 7.5 million. Migration to Metro Manila from the provinces was driven by the deteriorating economic situation and peace and order in the rural areas. Growth of the insurgency in much of the countryside was propelled by injustices perpetrated in that regime, by the poverty prevailing, and by feelings of hopelessness about the future. Due to this rapid population growth, the land-to-people ratio in the Philippines is now much lower than other ASEAN countries which are not city states. The rapid growth of population had created new problems, but changes had not been effected to keep pace and to cope with

the problems. New approaches, strategies, institutions, structures, and mechanisms had not been devised to cope with the swelling population and its related problems.

Perhaps because the shrinkage of land relative to population took place so rapidly, agricultural practices in most provinces have not yet adapted to the changed situation. In many places, extensive agriculture which is premised on ample land for all is no longer appropriate. More intensive agriculture, putting to best use every available square meter of land, is indicated especially in those provinces which do not produce all their people's food needs for adequate nutrition. Intensive culture practices and seeds for new crops, including vegetables, need to be propagated widely so that the farm may produce both higher yields and higher value crops, supplying more of the community's food needs, and increasing income of the farmer from his land.

On the urban side, Metro Manila and other big cities have not been able to cope with the high rate of migration from the provinces. Urban blight is far advanced. Basic changes in government structure and approach are needed to hasten progress in the countryside so that the provincial residents may opt to stay where they now live, instead of flocking to the urban areas.

The Aquino government has committed itself to agriculture and rural development of the economy. Programs which focus on improving incomes in the provinces will lead to increased mass purchasing power, stimulating the whole economy, including growth of industrial production. Palpable rural development is also the most effective move to counter insurgency.

The implementation of CARP introduces new dimensions to the problems of agricultural development. Modernization of agriculture and increase in agricultural productivity had relied for many years on the technological progress and scientific management of plantations. This is no longer possible with CARP breaking up large landholdings and reducing average farm size to three hectares. Yet in the Filipino experience, three-hectare farms rarely yield income above the poverty line for the Filipino farm household. There may be need to look for new models for developing agriculture within this constraint in farm size.

Another major stricture to government options is the large foreign debt, which requires huge outflows of foreign exchange and eats up a big chunk of the government budget. This forecloses capital-intensive industrialization as feasible option for national development in the next few years. The government is also thus limited from substantially increasing the construction of infrastructure, and from providing more basic services to the people.

With these severe limitations in the government's ability to provide for people's needs, government must turn to steps to release energies of the people themselves and direct these to development of their communities. The fact that government no longer has enough resources to be the main force for rural

development should have been recognized many years ago. But the past government could never afford to make such an admission; it would have endangered that regime if it were perceived by the people as not that all powerful.

Changes Needed in the Structure of Government for Effective Rural Development

In the situation described, we see no viable alternative in the long term to adopting a strategy for rural development in which the people take the lead for bringing their communities into prosperity. In this strategy, the government would play a subsidiary role of assisting and supporting initiatives taken by the people themselves. Thus, self-reliance becomes a principal goal of programs for rural development.

This kind of support role by the government requires its close and continuing contact with rural communities, in order to know their needs and assist the people in pursuing appropriate solutions to their problems. Central government, with its headquarters in Metro Manila, can perform this role. Rural development, as we have described, can be achieved only with a decentralized government.

Changes in the government structure are needed, to respond more quickly to the pressing needs of the people. The country's population by now is too large, and diversities exist that are too complex for the country to be successfully governed from the center with the present structure of executive government. Neglect of the provinces by past governments and the slow pace of rural development cause discontent in many provinces which can no longer be suppressed, especially in the current democratic space.

Present Role of National Government Agencies

The national government agencies are the main implementors of the national budget. Revenues of all local government units (LGUs) in 1987 amounted to only 6 percent of the total national budget. They receive an additional allotment of about 9 percent of the national budget. The bulk of developmental funds and the responsibility for implementing development programs are thus vested in the central bureaucracy.

However, the central bureaucracy is not well geared for rural development. Bureaucrats tend to cluster in the cities, remote from and out of touch with rural problems. They prefer to deal with problems in the aggregate and to make rules to apply in every case, rather than to recognize that problems and opportunities in each rural area differ, and thus call for varying approaches. The bureaucracy is organized by sectors, such as agriculture, natural resources, industry, health, public works, transportation, education, tourism and others. Their programs are not well coordinated at the provincial and municipal levels. Their performance is measured by aggregate sectoral outputs, often with too little regard to how equitably their services are distributed, or how well the projects are coordinated.

It is said that the bureaucracy cares more for statistics than for people. It may sound a harsh indictment but the criticism applies to all bureaucracies all over the world, not merely in the Philippines. The critics are even more harsh on the bureaucracies of authoritarian governments which suspect any initiatives emanating from the people.

Local government units are much closer than the central bureaucracy to the people and their needs. They are better able to monitor and coordinate government services in their jurisdictions. Governors, city and town mayors do not have the life tenure of the bureaucrat. They must win the approval of the people for their office. But at present they have little power and meager funds to respond to the needs of their constituents. And they do not have authority to intervene or even monitor national projects in their area.

It is true that the present capability of local governments to plan and to implement projects is deficient in many cases. This argument is often posed against granting greater powers to local government. But, on the other hand, it could be taken as a good reason to begin developing the LGUs' capability, and to turn over to them national government functions as they become able enough to discharge those functions well.

Expanding the Role of LGUs and Decentralizing Government

The need for decentralization of government is now widely recognized. President Aquino and her cabinet have enunciated their policy in this regard, and have mounted pilot projects for decentralization in four provinces. The Constitution mandates local autonomy.

It is proposed that government decentralization be programmed to take place by phases and over an established time period that is realistic. Powers and budgets of local government units would be increased at the same time, and to the extent that they increase their capabilities to exercise the new powers well and spend the increased funds wisely.

It is recognized that as and when the powers and budgets of LGUs are expanded, measures should be taken to institute more effective monitoring, fiscalization, and checks and balances on their operations. People's organizations should be assisted in their establishment and strengthened in order that, among other functions, they will fiscalize local governments in wielding their increased powers and spending their greater budgets for the good of the community, and not for other purposes. The structure of local government units should be more effectively democratized, to avoid abuse by the local executive of his added powers.

The proposed decentralization of government, which is actually a devolution of power, could be effected in three areas:

- (1) Transfer of certain functions from central government agencies to local governments. These functions would include simple licensing functions; widespread delivery of

certain basic services such as health, primary education, agricultural extension; and, the identification, construction and maintenance of rural infrastructure facilities, such as barangay, provincial and municipal roads and bridges, elementary school buildings, rural health clinics, and artesian wells.

- (2) Transfer of budgets for the delivery of basic services and for the construction and maintenance of the facilities cited in paragraph (1) above, from national agencies to the local government units, together with the agency staffs performing these functions. Concomitantly, the local government units should be granted authority to raise their own revenues through local taxes, subject to limits established by national law.
- (3) Regional and provincial officers of national agencies need greater authority to act more expeditiously on those local problems over which their agencies have jurisdiction. At one of the public hearings of the Senate Committee on Economic Affairs in Cebu City, it was expressed that if government were to be truly decentralized, half of the PAL passenger traffic would be eliminated – passengers that have to fly to Manila just to follow up papers.

New Roles and Relationships of the Central Bureaucracy and Local Government Units

The transfer of certain functions from the national agencies to local government units will greatly diminish the staff supervised by the former. For example, the Department of Agriculture has 12,000 agricultural extension agents; Education has 320,000 teachers. Collaterally, the personnel administered by the provincial government will increase greatly.

The national agency should retain policy supervision over the functions that will be transferred to the local government units. It would also set the overall policies and guidelines which would govern the performance of these functions. It would transmit to LGUs the result of studies and researches to guide LGUs in improving their performance of these functions.

The national agency concerned would review the yearly proposals for budgets to fund performance by LGUs of the functions transferred to them. This power of review and recommendation of that segment of the budget to be implemented by the LGU will promote the effective policy supervision of the function by the national agency concerned.

The national agency would retain its regional office, maintaining personnel only to the extent required to carry out the policy supervision and review of how well the LGUs are performing the functions. The national staff bureaus would continue to attend to research, development, and training.

The organization and structure of the provincial government would be changed to handle properly the increased functions and personnel. Checks and balances should also be provided in the revised structure of the provincial government. Some portion of the functions transferred from the national to the provincial government may be sub-delegated to respective municipal governments, under supervision of the provincial government. The provincial

councils will also have to become more actively involved in legislating the provincial budget. This function can not be left to the provincial executive in the same manner as at present.

Technical and Social Preparation as a Crucial Component of Rural Development Programs

While decentralization of government is necessary for rural development, it is not enough by itself. It has been stated earlier that past government approaches and strategies were deficient in achieving genuine rural development. A way of describing the deficiency is that past governments at their best tried to bring about development for the people with infrastructure and basic services. However, there were few, if any, parallel efforts for the enhancement of the people's skills (outside of the formal education system) and of community organizations to contribute and participate in that development. If this component of technical and social preparation had been part of the programs of past governments, rural development may by now have become primarily an activity by the people themselves and not of the government.

It has been mentioned that the Marcos government, for its own ends, fostered increased dependence of rural communities on government. The present government's policies and programs should, counter to the Marcos regime's thrusts, aim to increase the self-reliance of rural communities. Empowering the people to carry out community development activities by themselves will wean them away from the belief that only government can improve their lot.

Three major programs are required to accomplish these ends. The first is to strengthen the rural farmers' training in various skills, so that they may be able to increase their farms' productivity, plant higher value crops, improve farmgate prices, and derive supplementary incomes from other non-farm livelihood occupations. The second major program is to develop their ability for cooperative efforts, so that they may pool resources and talents for common ends, through community organizations, cooperatives, and other people's organizations.

The third program is to implement infrastructure and basic services delivery projects with the participation of community organizations. However, this third program may be carried out in a rural community only after it has received the technical and social preparation made by the other two programs. The community organizations will play as large a part as is feasible in the implementation of such projects, under supervision by representatives of the national government agency or of the local government.

The first program will teach skills useful in improving rural livelihoods. Skills not only have to be taught. Equally important, they have to be practiced.

Practice will develop proficiency; after a time, the erstwhile trainee begins to discover by himself how to improve the skills learned from his trainer and develop new ones. So the skills in which the rural residents are to be trained should be those they will be able to practice in their daily environments. Government's rural programs should be also designed to provide gainful opportunities to practice the skills learned from training.

The second program would assist people to realize the strength that lies in group action, and to organize themselves into community organizations, including cooperatives. Group action will empower the people to do things for themselves that can not be done by the individual. With success will come confidence, and with that confidence, initiative to venture into new activities that they think up themselves to achieve ends they choose to attain.

When the people begin to take initiatives, then the people's organization has become self-reliant. Development of their community will then be self-sustaining, because it happens at their own initiative and by their own efforts. By that time, they no longer have to depend on external agencies, including government. Upon reaching this stage, they will then be in a position to tell government what to do, and not to be dictated on what they should do. This is the proposed version of people power for rural development. To reach this stage will take years, but it is a worthwhile goal to aspire for in all rural communities.

Employees in the bureaucracy could probably carry out training in rural areas for technical skills. However, they must first receive reorientation and training in social skills to enable them as trainers to use more effective techniques of rural area training. The record of government agriculture extension workers leaves much to be desired vis-a-vis small farmers. We suggest training in both farm and non-farm skills.

While government personnel, with reorientation and training in social skills, might be effective in rural training for technical skills, their ability to foster community organizations and cooperatives remains to be proven. The lesson is that cooperatives can not be imposed or required. The initiative to form and operate the cooperative must arise from the people themselves. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a prominent role in organizing cooperatives that function well.

The social preparation of a rural community is a critical factor towards the formation of community organizations and cooperatives. This is a process which can take one to four years and may involve the following steps:

- (1) Establishing the trust in the NGOs by the residents;
- (2) Education and training, including values formation;

- (3) Community discussion of needs, problems and projects; and,
- (4) Assistance to the community to carry out projects decided upon.

The bureaucracy is not able to follow a similar process. Its rules will not permit its employees to carry out such soft activities, which are very difficult to measure, and for which standard time frames are impossible to prescribe.

The NGOs can be relied on greatly for the social preparation component of rural development. It will be necessary to evolve mechanisms and modalities of support by the government to NGOs. Few NGOs at present get funding support from the Philippine government. Many more receive assistance from private organizations, both Filipino and foreign; some NGOs receive funding from foreign governments.

The programs advocated here are necessarily long-term by their nature. Development of skills and changes in attitudes are not accomplished in rural communities within a few months. A clear vision and strong determination by government to bring about self-sufficient communities and self-sustaining development in rural areas are required to propel rural programs and generate enough momentum in the early years.

Modes of Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of Government and Non-Governmental Organizations

NGO activities are thus crucial to bring about the kind of rural development described above. It seems anomalous that NGOs of this country, doing work for a public purpose, get so little support from their own government, and so much from foreign entities.

NGO efforts are limited by the resources available to them. Increase in these resources would correspondingly expand the reach of the NGOs in carrying out the activities for which they are eminently suited. They would be able to perform social preparation, education and training in many more rural communities, and thus promote self-sustaining rural development more widely.

However, many responsible NGOs are wary of accepting funds from government. They want to make sure that no political strings are attached to the funds, for they value greatly their independence and flexibility. Furthermore, some rural communities may not accord the NGO the same respect if it is identified with the government. It must be borne in mind that the trust and respect for government were greatly eroded during the Marcos era, and have not yet been restored to former levels.

It is then necessary to give thought to modalities and mechanisms of cooperation and mutual assistance between government and NGOs, to carry out

rural development most effectively. Some principles that may be observed in devising these modalities and mechanisms are:

- (1) The goals to be attained by the programs for development of the rural area in which the NGO will be working should be defined and, where possible, arrived at with participation of the NGOs and the people in that area.
- (2) The tasks to be carried out in the area, towards the defined goals and within each program, should be clearly spelled out.
- (3) The NGO's flexibility and freedom of action in carrying out its tasks are important to preserve. At the same time, the NGO should be held accountable for carrying out the tasks for which it receives government funding.

One way by which the NGO may work with government for rural development is through a contract for specified social services. However, many NGOs are local in nature, limited to working with a specific barangay or town, and may not have the staff to do the paperwork for government contracts. It has been suggested that government contracts may be made with intermediation of recognized umbrella organizations of NGOs, without precluding direct contracts with the field NGO.

Another possibility is for government to employ on contract for about two to three years, new college graduates who pass examinations devised by NGOs. After appropriate training, these graduates may be seconded to accredited NGOs for the task of social preparation of rural communities. Or the young contract employees may be deployed directly to the work of social preparation, under supervision of a special regional office. This idea is analogous to the Peace Corps of the US, of Canada and of Japan, who were mobilized to work with poor rural communities, albeit in foreign countries. A related program is the creation of a Youth Corps for Rural Development.

Special Programs for Least Developed Provinces

The Senate Committee on Economic Affairs is now comparing various mechanisms for rural development, as contained in bills referred to the Committee. The bills propose either strengthening or creating:

- (1) Economic districts, under an economic manager appointed by a government department;
- (2) Integrated area development authorities/agencies; and
- (3) Regional development corporations.

These bills are based on the premise that rural development will continually depend on government actions, in a manner decided upon by government agencies, which is contrary to the views strongly espoused in this paper. It is strongly believed that in the long term, rural development should take place in a

manner decided by the people of the area, and that the people should themselves implement the program with government support and assistance. Hence, the need to include skills training and social preparation in every rural development is imperative.

It is recognized that some areas of the country require massive infrastructure programs to make up for the serious neglect by past administrations, and to bring these areas to infrastructure levels more comparable with other areas of the country. Integrated area development (IAD) programs are probably suited only for these neglected provinces. Such IAD programs serve to focus foreign assistance to these depressed areas. These programs should however terminate when infrastructure levels in the area have increased enough to be comparable to the average rural area.

Regional development corporations would also seem contrary to the principle that commercial activities should be left to the private sector. However, there are areas of the country where indigenous entrepreneurship does not as yet exist. The lack of entrepreneurs bars the setting up of commercial enterprises which would support farming and other primary production activities, thus raising rural incomes. Government development corporations may be warranted to identify and support the establishment of such projects. It would be preferred that the projects when set up not be operated by the government corporation. They should instead be leased to and operated by private parties, preferably cooperatives of the farmers that would benefit from the operation of the project. Regional development corporations should not be established in areas where private enterprise is already active.

In sum, it is herein suggested that direct intervention of national government in planning an area's development and implementing its projects may take place only in the least developed areas of the country. The norm would be for the people of an area to define their needs, formulate the development program, and implement as many of the projects as are within their capability. But in least developed areas, where the needs are numerous and implementation capability so deficient, the national government may take unilateral action in the interest of establishing geographical equity of development.

Recapitulation

To recapitulate, the following summarize what has been discussed in this paper:

- (1) Overcentralization of government traces back to the colonial era.
- (2) A centralized government was more acceptable in the days when life was much easier in the provinces when there was enough land for all. Where

there was shortage in land, people in provinces could still migrate to other provinces to look for land which they could own.

(3) Because of rapid population growth, those times ended about 1960. Life is now much harder in the rural areas. Intensive agriculture needs to be practiced.

(4) Population is now so large, the different regions so diverse and the needs of the people so heavy and urgent that a centralized government can not effectively respond to those needs.

(5) Decentralization of government must take place. It is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for true rural development to happen.

(6) Approaches of government to rural development must also change. Past administrations relied on government services and infrastructure to bring about rural development. But resources of government are no longer enough to provide all the services and infrastructures needed. The people will have to participate in providing these services to the community, and eventually do most of these themselves, with minimal assistance and support from the government.

(7) In order to realize this goal in the future, three programs of rural development must be launched. These are training in farm and non-farm skills; social preparation of rural communities, particularly for community organizations and for cooperatives; and then, participation of the community through their organizations in the delivery of basic services and building rural infrastructures.

(8) It is proposed that every rural development program should include a social preparation component. Too often, government programs fail because they are not accepted by the people as being theirs.

(9) Social preparation of rural communities, including the establishment of cooperatives, is a task that the existing bureaucracy can not carry out until it has received long and extensive training. In the meantime, this work of social preparation could be done by NGOs. A Youth Corps is also proposed.

(10) It is necessary to develop the appropriate mechanisms by which government could assist and support NGOs in their work of social preparation of rural communities. A contractual form of relationship is suggested.