

PHILIPPINE CLUSTER EXPERIMENT

Last August, I had the opportunity to go through India and participate in the Maliwada Human Development Training School for two weeks. I had the chance to sit down with the "Blue Shirts" one afternoon while the directors had a meeting and it became very clear that one needed to participate in the great experiment that was going on in Maliwada to anticipate what are its futuristic implications. On getting back to the Philippines we began to raise the question of alternative models in which you would deal with society - all of society, all of the people and all of the geography.

The island of Mactan is an island off the bigger island of Cebu. Until fifteen years ago, it was an island of sleepy fishing villages. Then, a bridge was built and an international airport. The island has been catapulted into the 20th century in a period of only fifteen years. By August, there will be a flight that originates from the island to Peking. That is how radical the changes have been. They now have a free trade zone where foreign multi-nationals can come and set up their factories for export purposes. The city of Davao, where Langub is located, is one of the largest cities in the world in terms of land area. The two-pronged development of the city pushes on either side of a mountain range where there are no services at all. The development plans do not touch this area for the next twenty years. That is where our mountain cluster project is located.

Our initial step in creating a model for doing several projects at the same time was to look at the situation. There are three regions in the Philippines. In Cebu, the actuation of the Sudtonggan Human Development Project has been the first phase of the cluster experiment. The first model we drafted is called the Anchorwheel. It starts with the existing project and locates four other villages, preferably one close by, one far away, and two that would cover the geography to the sides. The design called for people from those four villages to come to a Human Development Training School in Sudtonggan and return to their villages to create the structures through which those four villages would work together. The second model was similar, but in it there were no auxiliary staying in these four villages. The cluster experiment would be coordinated from the existing project. We decided to experiment with Langub as the center project in the second cluster model. The third model was designed to enable a cluster in an area where there is not an existing project. It is like the other models in that it begins with four villages and sends representatives to the Training School. They return to their villages and work together with a circuit team from a house or project visiting on a regular basis. They work with the cluster of four villages from the anchor of a fifth project. This third model is called the Spinning Wheel model.

The three regions, Cebu, Davao and Manila decided to focus on Mactan and activate the Mactan Master Cluster model first. Davao, because of that Anchorbase model decided that the signal focus in the Mountain Cluster was economic development. The image was that anybody in the mountain cluster involved in the project could get enough money to pay for membership in the Davao Country Club if he so desired. To enable that we are designing the Mountain Cluster Human Development Corporation. There are many stories that go with that. For example, this month they are planting the seedlings for 800 cacao trees. Cacao has a very profitable market as it is the source of chocolate. It is a large scale program which will impact the total mountain area forcefully.

In the Manila region, we decided to capitalize on the image of the Metro Aids. There are even street sweepers with t-shirts which say "Metro Aides," in one of the parts of the human settlements program-. We decided to create the "Metro Blue Shirts," - Blue Shirts that come from the city. Companies are already in conversation with us about sending some of their young personnel to be in one of the projects for a year. University students in their third year from local universities and colleges are interested in the cluster experiment, and we hope to do a training school for the Metropolitan Blue Shirts. After training, they might serve one year in one of the cluster projects. Those are the three focuses of the three Regions. The Master Cluster is actually combining the three plans in one project cluster. Mactan has created the Mactan Cluster which includes Sudtonggan and four other villages.

In the first month the actuation task forces consisting of the "Blue Shirts" and villagers did a massive community forum campaign across the island. After the Assembly the "Blue Shirts" began to decide which four villages were close enough to each cluster village to work cooperatively following the community forums. Some of

them are already participating. They come to San Miguel for training and they have already established a preschool program in their community as a result of the forum and their relationship to San Miguel. This next quarter we plan to host another school that will take villagers from those sixteen communities to do sixteen other projects in Mactan.

We have been surprised by some of the responses. Two governmental offices have approached us. One is the National Economic and Development Agency which funded our community forum. They want us to do four other projects in a watershed location where they are working and do it without having to have auxiliary on location. We would assist with the community forums, the training, the holding of the consult, and the writing of the document. Then we would withdraw and be in a consultant relationship to the agency assisting them in linking with the services of existing governmental agencies. This would be one of the Spinning Wheel Clusters Model. In the next training school we anticipate twenty villages will be sending representatives to prepare themselves for consults in January.

Mr. Robert McNamara of the World Bank came to Manila to address the United Nations Trade and Development Conference. He brought along with him a man who has seen our work in Maharashtra. They are funding thirty-five villages in Ilio Ilio where we have had some community forums and from where some people had come to the last training school. They want us, within a five year timeline, to do those thirty-five villages using the Mactan Cluster Model. That is one, then four, then sixteen, then thirty-five villages over a five year period. So from one project, without increasing staff personnel and without moving personnel, you could actually do a minimum of twenty and a maximum of thirty-six projects.

What are the implications of the cluster experiment? First, when I was in Maharashtra, I was not terrified of the figure of 232 villages. I was terrified over the figure of 2,500!- Let us apply the cluster model to the 232 human development projects already in operation. If you can do a minimum of twenty each, and you multiply that, you have more than 4000 projects possible in the state of Maharashtra. I am no longer worried about doing 2,500 projects in Maharashtra. The second implication is for those of us located in metropolitan areas and needing to do a project; the Spinning Wheel Model is a model that might be considered. We will be working on that this coming year. We have not really worked on the rest, but from our work on the other two, we feel confident that it is a workable model. The third implication is that the community forum campaign is an integral part of the cluster experiment. You can not do the cluster experiment without doing the project and the community forums together. The site selection, training of troops, and the massive coverage of the geography where the cluster villages are located requires community forum. It is an integral part of the life and the training of the "Blue Shirts." The fourth implication is that we have begun to have a relationship different from village to village. When the Langub Mountain Cluster was initiated, the people from the Mactan Cluster went down there to help another cluster. It is not first one Human Development Project relating to another Human Development Project; it is one cluster relating to another cluster. That is very powerful in terms of your story as well as the practical image of how you do geography. You do not get caught on the image of one village in the midst of 2000 villages. There is one cluster enabling other clusters. Participating in the cluster experiment has been very clearly within the context of doing it on behalf of the globe. What sustained the school, the auxiliary and the "Blue Shirts" is that from the very beginning, the Philippine Cluster Experiment was designed with futuristic intentions relative to all the projects around the world. This is an experiment on behalf of all.