

# CHAPTER 6

## PEOPLE ... HUMAN RESOURCES

*People are the key to everything. They are the latent force and the limiting constraint. People are human, with all the problems that go along with that. What is the human potential? What is needed so that people can do the maximum that they are capable of? An increase in population should be a positive for development success rather than being a negative that reduces wealth. Recent development thinking has people as liabilities and users of scarce resources rather than being human assets that help produce and create wealth. The chapter challenges some of the issues about people that are used to explain development failure but which are more about the way organizations and societies fail people. It raises the question about people's wasted potential, lack of opportunity and disorganized organizations. It takes up the issue of how organizations with ineffective systems and processes destroy the potential of good people to do great work. The focus of development is about people who are both beneficiaries and the instruments of development, either individually or through some form of organization. There is a need to envision development from the perspective of the people who are failing and hopeless under the prevailing development paradigm and optimize development from that perspective.*

### **Make the very best use of people**

How can people be put at the center of development. How to get people to be more important than institutions. How to get people in every corner of the development process? When people have opportunity they can make better use their abilities for good benefit. But people have more power as a team so that leads to the question of how teams should be established and how people can organize to get things done. What are the incentives that motivate people? What way to organize for success at every level, while keeping the priorities of people, and the enthusiasm of people so often lost in the humdrum of a typical large organization. How to keep people informed so that they are able to participate in priority setting and decision making and making accountability a factor in development performance.

### **People - too many not doing much**

The logic of the economic thinking used by most in the ORDA world is that a human being is a liability. This is a fundamental problem that pervades economic calculations.

Many of the problems of development are blamed on increase in population, and population pressures. But that begs the question of people as having value and their role as a resource. This treats people as liabilities and users or consumers rather than as assets and producers. The chapter challenges some of the issues about people that are used to explain development failure but which are more about the way organizations and societies fail people. It raises the question about people's wasted potential, lack of opportunity and disorganized organizations. It takes up the issue of how organizations with ineffective systems and processes destroy the potential of good people to do great work.

Development should not be about monetary measures, but about all the other quality of life measure that are important to people as they live from day to day. How are the members of my family doing? That is the number one question for the majority of the world's people. Most have no idea about any of

the alphabet soup of economic indicators, but they do know how the family is doing. And sadly, for most of the world's people the members of the family are not doing well.

Everything about development has to be brought back to people. Development is ONLY about people. And looked at from the perspective of people, the present paradigm for development does not work. The challenge is to determine what will work.

*Someone said the "all politics is local". I want to go a lot further and say that "all life is local"*

When development gets a new focus, and starts to do what makes success at a local level, there will be success. And what will make success at a local level is development activity around the priorities of the people and the community.

And this is quite easy.

Every single community knows what it has as priority.

And it is impossible to come up with a formula that has universal applicability.

The only thing that is going to be common, is that local people should be central to the processes that determine what are priority.

The human resource dimension of development has probably been more successful than any other dimension of development. In the 1960s and 1970s there were relatively few people in the South with education. During the past thirty years, education has become far more widely available, and parents in the South have embraced education whenever they have had the opportunity.

But while education has become significantly more available, the jobs have not kept pace. Most of the poor countries have far too few jobs in the formal sector for those with education, and for the world as a whole, basic education is not enough to do the work that is more and more needed. The result is huge frustration and a level of unemployed and literate youth that is very very high.

*The SOUTH has people. Almost an unlimited supply. The people of the world are numerous. More numerous than at any time in history, and in fact better educated than ever.*

The single biggest opportunity in the SOUTH is to make productive use of people. The labor pool in developing countries is enormous, but they are mainly unemployed or underemployed.

And in some ways many are "unemployable". This is more a question of opportunity that has been missing than anything else, but it is a critical challenge. Though there has been more education in the last three decades than in prior periods, education is not as good as it could be and there is not enough of it. Sometimes, where it is available, the poor cannot afford what is needed to be enrolled and to participate

In order for everyone to get opportunities there has to be a range of work opportunities. Work opportunities are required to suit the capacities of the people available.

*The theme of this book has been "Turning Development Upside Down". The typical corporate mindset is to design the best possible configuration of manufacturing and staffing, and then recruit the type of people needed to implement the corporate plan. In order to make best use of the SOUTH's labor resources for community economic value adding, the need is to design jobs on top of the available labor.*

The best way for people to be helped is to make it possible for people to help themselves. This cannot be done simply by wishing it so. There has to be specific action to make it happen. The way people will help themselves is by having the opportunity to do productive value adding work.

*Another theme of this book is that success is achieved when a lot of small things happen, rather than a single large thing. Everywhere in the SOUTH there are needs, and there are people to satisfy the needs, but no financial means to bring the two together. Nobody works. No needs are satisfied. So financial means need to be available to make it possible for jobs to be created and work done, and for market demand to be stimulated. This is the Sears credit initiative of the early 1900s being repeated again a hundred years later.*

People need to be trained. But people should not be trained in a vacuum. They should be trained in ways that are immediately useful so that they can do a better job, create more value and get paid more. The work opportunity should include training within the workplace or in the community so that people have a chance to do something more productive and be more valuable and earn more.

And people's opportunities to learn more and do better should never be constrained. Because someone was born poor and missed out on early education should not preclude them from doing well and being part of tomorrow's success.

*I was helped in one assignment by a Somali. By the time I was working with him, he had a US university PhD and knew his subject very well. But as a child he only got a very rudimentary education and spent most of his time looking after animals. A responsible job, but part of the traditional unpaid family labor system. Then there was war .... and drought and famine. He eventually got his advanced education through the UNHCR refugee support program.*

As efforts are made to improve people's education and training, care must be given to be assured of economic value adding. Education and training and unemployment is economic value destruction. Education and training only becomes value adding if the person can get to do something productive with the incremental education and training.

Value destruction in connection with the people resource gets to be very high when people are disabled or die prematurely. The economic value profile of a human being changes over time.

*Let us take the case of a NORTH individual. Health and education and training for one child is an investment of (for the sake of the example) \$200,000. It is unlikely to be less, and may be very much more. But over a working life of 40 years, this investment will be paid back many times. A good education opens earning opportunities that are not available without a good education, so the initial investment in education and health has an economic payout, and there is a life that earns more, and has an economic value adding characteristic. But if the person dies young. Then the return has not been earned, and it is an economic value destruction situation.*

This is an important idea. Africa and the SOUTH already had economic value adding problems, but with the health and HIV-AIDS crisis the problem is now getting far worse.

*Well trained teachers are dying in their twenties and thirties rather than their sixties and seventies. Instead of getting 40 years to add value, they have just a few short years. It is of course a human tragedy. But it is also an economic value adding crisis.*

There is a lot of work that has value that is not monetized in most modern society. Mothers looking after their children is not usually "paid", and yet it is of immense importance and value to society. In the NORTH "day-care" for children is paid for, is expensive, and may well be far less valuable than the unpaid care from a parent. Value adding activities are not just about money and what is paid for and what is not. Value is created when something that people need and want is created. Unpaid parents are creating value in the family and in the society or the community.

In the SOUTH, the health and HIV-AIDS crisis is creating all sorts of needs for care and help for those

unable to care for themselves. A lot of the care is being given by family and friends and community. There is not much funding for this. But there is enormous value.

*Because there are now perhaps 30 million people living with HIV or AIDS, and maybe as many as 10 million orphans, maybe as many as 100 million people are in the community of people directly affected by the crisis. These people are doing much of value, without it being reflected anywhere in the system of "keeping accounts". Helping these people to do their valuable caring by "paying" something for the work that they are doing would seem to be fair, and needs to be arranged.*

There is a big global movement in place that is mobilizing financial resources for microcredit. A subsection of the global microcredit industry might be in the best position to address this problem

The potential of people to create value is often constrained by their access to land and other means of production. There are initiatives to give people access to credit so that they can engage in small entrepreneurial activity. And this should be encouraged. It is unlikely that more than a tiny proportion of the people who could use microcredit have the opportunity at the present time.

But there is a need also for people to work together in larger groups. The small or medium sized business has the potential to be a very much more effective way to have economic value adding that will make a difference at the community level, rather than just at the personal level. Business needs to get organized so that people can be organized, and so that the human resource of the business can be combined with other business resources to be productive.

*An SME contractor in the SOUTH can easily have a well trained owner or manager, and ten or twenty or a hundred workers, and some equipment and some working capital, and do excellent work for the community at costs that are tiny compared to international contractors. Financing these works creates long term jobs for the workers and enormous value adding for the community.*

## **Human resources**

People are both the reason for development and one of the primary resources for development.

People add "something" that goes beyond science and engineering, and makes it possible for some of the limitations that one would expect to constrain success to be overcome. People bring intellect and ingenuity into play. Instead of always being in a zero sum situation, people can help make things become win-win instead.

But that is not what has happened in development. The world has got into a vicious spiral of failure rather than the virtuous spiral of success. People are thought of as liabilities and not as assets. Overpopulation is seen as a problem.

People are engaged in the economic game of winning. But it is the game of my side winning, and "to heck" with the losers. And this game can be more vicious today than at any time in history. The power of peoples' intellect has been used to create the most productive and powerful military machinery in all of history, and the winnings in the game of military economics are enhanced enormously when military machinery and the related military supplies are consumed. But all sorts of "good things" get sidetracked and lost when the global economy gets dominated by the military economics component.

While people have emerged as winners in the modern economies of the NORTH. People are losers in the SOUTH. Poverty and hunger are widespread. In simple terms, about half the worlds population, some 3 billion people fall into the poor and hungry category. This is ridiculous and makes no sense. Something is wrong.

But in the main development planning has been based on giving the poor and hungry something. A

welfare model of development. Under this model, with half the world needing gifts, and the NORTH not feeling very generous, development has to fail. And it is no surprise that it has failed. What is surprising is that the “experts” in the field are not seeing this failure for what it is. A stupid concept, bound to fail.

John Kennedy had the right idea when he said “Do not ask what the country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country”. The development equivalent should be to ask what people can do for themselves, and not what the NORTH needs to do for them.

While the poor and hungry and busy, very busy, trying to make ends meet and stay alive, they are also terribly unproductive. Having a job is only part of the answer. Getting paid for doing nothing is not a solution. What needs to be going on is that people should be doing things that need to be done and have value in the community. And people should be paid something that is related to the incremental value that they are creating.

When people do work, get paid and create value there is the foundation for a sustainable and successful economy.

But not many people working in development in the SOUTH fit into a favorable profile of work, pay and value. Too many people are engaged in work without adequate pay. Or too many people are paid to create results that have little or no value. The whole issue of economic value adding must be integrated into the issues of how people become a resource for development

## **Population demographics**

The world's population is now considered to be a “development” problem. Overpopulation has become a justification for poverty and failed development. Analysts of development from the NORTH think of people as a liability in the poor countries of the world, in the SOUTH. Yet classical economic analysis in the NORTH used to complain of lack of population growth as slowing down economic growth and the potential for market driven profitability. There is a disconnect. What is it?

Clearly there has been a very rapid growth of population in the SOUTH. And this growth has stressed local resources, especially the local natural resources including land. But the problem is not so much the number of people, but the lack of a full set of resources to make it possible for them to engage in “economic value adding” activities.

*It is more than twenty years ago that the World Bank started to put a focus on encouraging “subsistence agriculture” in Africa. The idea that development investment funds would be allocated to encouraging “subsistence” anything seemed to me then, and still seems to me now, be ridiculous. But it does have the advantage of tremendously lowering expectations from development investment.*

In order for people to be a valuable resource for development, people have got to have an opportunity to do something valuable. People with no formal education cannot do some of the things that the NORTH might see to be valuable, but that is not the view that should be being used. Can people do something that has value in the local community? And then the next question is, what is it that will enable them to do something many times more valuable for the local community?

The local value of a woman walking several kilometers to collect firewood every day, or to collect water every day, is enormous. It can be the difference between life and death for the family. But it is something that the NORTH does not think about very much. Water is instantly accessible in the kitchen, in two and a half bathrooms and at several faucets in the garden. Hot and cold on demand, and safe to drink. And energy likewise is instantly accessible. Heating is all electric, gas, oil ..... and easily and always working. For quite small payments, the NORTH gets its water and its energy essentially

instantaneously. But the SOUTH must spend hours every day to get water and fuelwood that is so much lower quality. What a waste of the SOUTH's people resource.

And if someone from the SOUTH gets an education, what does one actually do with the education. Where are the jobs? Getting educated does not create a job. The investment in education has a cost, but it only has a value when there is opportunity to make use of that education in some gainful way.

And if someone from the SOUTH is healthier, that is good, but is it valuable. The person lives longer, but what good is that if there is nothing gainful for the person to do. Another person to feed. Another person to share in the very limited economic pie.

What is needed is healthy, educated, motivated people who have opportunities to make use of their talents to do economic value adding activities in their communities.

## **Population growth**

The spiraling growth of the world's population is a dangerous fact. There are now more than 6 billion people alive, up from around 3 billion \_\_\_\_ years ago, The way the world is presently organized and the way the global economy operates, population growth is a reality with very bad consequences.

In broad terms the population of the NORTH is stable or even declining. And the population of the SOUTH is growing dramatically.

Ironically it is success with health interventions such as universal immunization against childhood diseases that is a root cause of the population explosion. There has been a big reduction in infant mortality over the past fifty years and as a result more children able to survive and add to the population. Over the past century there has been a big drop in the birthrate in the NORTH, but so far there has not been a similar big drop in birthrate in the SOUTH.

The health and HIV-AIDS pandemic is changing population dynamics enormously. In highly affected areas, and change the population dynamic may result in depopulation rather than just a reduced population. But sadly it will also serve to reduce even more the already low level of economic productivity.

And what about population growth. Better health increased longevity and increased population. All the initiatives to reduce family size are going to achieve limited results until there is education and understanding of its benefit. Its important to note that the impact of HIV/AIDS will not help family planning in the short run. A simple solution with limited impact will have to be addressed; unemployment has to be addressed through business investment and jobs. And there has been little done within the current system (ODA or otherwise) to get business investment increased and jobs created.

## **Building human capital**

### **Training**

The importance of training is paramount. The strategy for training includes the idea that the accountancy professional as a whole is the key to strong accounting, accountability and transparency. Accordingly the plan is to engage the national accountancy profession as a whole in the goal of excellence in accounting in both the private and the public sector.

The opportunity will then exist for training to be an ongoing process from education and professional qualification at the start of an accounting career to later experience based learning and continuing professional education.

The staff of government will undergo training that is aimed at accounting improvement in both the short term and over a longer term. The vast majority of the junior staff of government are expected to need training so that their daily work is done better, More senior staff will need training so that the processes of accounting and improved and the control systems are in place and operating effectively. Both senior accounting staff and other middle and senior members of the civil service will need training in the use of the accounting system and the analysis of accounting reports.

### **Brain drain**

African countries have lost a lot of their brain power during the last thirty years simply because the economic opportunities in their home countries are so poor relative to world possibilities.

North America and Europe are the primary destinations for educated Africans. Now, several decades after independence African academics and professionals are to be found doing work in the NORTH that would be immensely valuable in the SOUTH. But at a personal level it makes no sense to stay poor in the SOUTH when good opportunities are open in the NORTH.

## **People ... reason for everything**

Development ought to be all about people.

But it isn't.

More people are in social and economic difficulty now than forty years ago. There has been progress. But there has been more backsliding. On balance most people have not benefited over the past several decades in the way that might reasonably have been expected.

*This is not what the relief and development experts at the World Bank, in the UN and at donor organizations like USAID want to hear. And in order to legitimize their position they have started to redefine poverty so that it is split between extreme poverty and just plain old poverty, and then they can say that extreme poverty is down, even while basic plan old vanilla poverty still is huge, and bigger in absolute numbers than ever before.*

Something is wrong. People were meant to have been the beneficiaries of progress. But instead something else is going on.

Some people are getting wealthy, very wealthy. The prevailing organizational and legal and economic structures are working to facilitate wealth creation. Not surprisingly, wealth is concentrating around those with decision making power.

And some people are getting poorer, and some poor are in the stage where survival is an issue.

This is not the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Supposedly the era of the “robber barons” is over. This is the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is not a world were most people are ignorant. This is a world where knowledge is widespread. But power and decision making still remains highly concentrated.

The organizational framework is wrong. Decision making is is concentrating wealth and power rather than achieving broad based people progress.

Development is about people. It always has been. But along the way the idea of process, and a whole set of thematic issues has overtaken the people focus of development.

For development to succeed it has to be about people. Everyone who has worked at the “grassroots” level of development understands the importance of the people dimension of development. They know that failed development ends up with people who are poor and hungry and lack the basics for a decent quality of life and with little or no opportunity.

The basic thesis is that people are the key component of society and of development. And human rights are central to the people dimension of development.

Just as economics had to rethink its arguments when labor became a component of both the production side and the consuming or market side. Development needs to do the same thing. People are part of the engine that drives success in development and people are the primary beneficiaries of development.

It is a long time ago, but corporate business moved on from the corporate era of the robber barons (circa 1880) to a more enlightened era where management and labor would work together for the good of the company and the workers.

The world is full of good people. And the world has half of its people poor and hungry.

But people in general have little interaction with the world at large. They just interact with their own local family and community. What happens beyond that is of little concern. This is the nature of the individual human being, and their families.

Over time people have organized in order to do things that individuals cannot do alone. And as organizations have been created, leaders have emerged to make these organizations run. And leaders have emerged to control the activities of organizations, and in some cases to benefit unfairly from the organizations.

Some organizations have been created to govern. Other organizations to conduct business and build things. Other organizations around the spiritual dimension of humanity.

All organizations have links with history. All organizations are created within a context that reflects what society expects, whether it is through law and regulation, or by tradition.

And all organizations evolve to reflect the pressures from inside and outside the organization. Some do it well. Some do not.

But all organizations essentially are people.

And organizations sometimes make it possible for good people to do bad things. In fact, it is argued that modern organizations actually make good people do bad things.

*The corporate world expects profit improvement year after year after year. This is not a normal feature of corporate reality, it sometimes happens for a few years in a row, but rarely continuously for ever. Where it does, there is usually some bad reason for it being that way. And in recent times it has been people doing bad accounting and corrupt and greedy corporate leadership that made the unreal appear possible.*

The Official Development Assistance (ODA) community has more “good people” than most groups of organizations, but the various organizations that make up the ODA community are not able in any way shape or form to deliver the sort of “good performance” that might be expected from good people. This is not a problem of good people, this is a problem of organization. It is just not possible to get good performance out of organizations whose structure makes it impossible.

And in the SOUTH, there is poverty and there is hunger and all sorts of other problems. But people are mostly good. Sadly, the circumstances make it possible for the cunning and the greedy to be “successful” at the expense of the poor. The organization of society favors the rich and the powerful, often at the expense of the poor. Good people abound, and even the good people among the rich and powerful are limited by the organization of society to be of much help to the poor.

*There is defeatism among many good people. They argue that the poor have always been with us, and that this will always be. I argue that there was a time when this had to be, when technical and economic productivity was still very low, but those times are*



*long past. People used to say that people would never fly. The idea that people would go to the moon was pure science fiction. But these things have been accomplished. Poverty and hunger can be solved when good people get committed to doing it.*

Good people can do amazing things. They need to get organized to do what needs to be done. Good people have got to avoid the organizations that are constraining factors in getting good performance, they need to use the best processes and the resources they need. And they need information to help them get the job done.

People have been left out of the development process.

This is not entirely true. People in ODA organizations are part of the development process and they have become the controllers of the process.

But people in the SOUTH have been left out. The people of the SOUTH should have been the beneficiaries of development, but instead their lives are arguably considerably worse now than they were many years ago. Certainly the gap between the well to do of the world and the poor of the SOUTH is as wide today as at any time in history.

The World Bank has been heavily criticized over the years for ignoring the input of the people of the SOUTH and in 2001 rectified this problem by carrying out more than 60,000 interviews. The outcome of these interviews, and other World Bank studies of people of the SOUTH was reflected in the World Development Report of that year, but one has to ask why was it necessary to have 60,000 interviews and how do you make any sense out of this number of interviews within the World Bank process for development decision making.

The people of the SOUTH have got to be beneficiaries. Their communities should benefit from progress, but on terms that suit the people. The achievement of progress is a process. It is organic, and will never be the same in two different places or at two different times.

## **People centered development**

The idea of people centered development is popular. In fact it is touted as the solution to a lot of the malaise of development. But action speaks louder than words, and in fact people centered development is mainly words with rather little action.

In fact, development is centered around organization and procedure and thematic concepts that have become an excuse for practical tangible activities that have a value for people.

## **Put People at the Center of Everything**

### **People are the key engine for development**

People need ways to do what is essential for themselves and their family in an efficient way. People are essentially enterprising, and will do a lot if it benefits themselves, their families and their community.

People will work long and hard to make a living ... and they would prefer to work long and hard for good money than just enough to get by. This is a function of the efficiency of the work available and the buying power of the community and the country.

In poor places, people walk long distances to get health care. They would prefer to walk a short distance, and not lose so much working time. People have their children walk long distances to go to school, but would prefer it if the children could go to a school that is close by.

People are often constrained by a lack of education and experience. Don't try to get

people to do what they cannot reasonably be expected to do, but figure out what it is that they can do that is valuable, needs to be done and is worth paying for.

### **People ... human resource**

People are the most under-appreciated asset, and because of this planning often excludes their impact on the process of development, and little goes as planned. When people are pulling the process there is a very different outcome than when the process is trying to push the people.

The best way to make a person valuable is to organize so that they have something valuable to do, and they can do it efficiently. People who are educated and healthy and unemployed doing nothing are of little socio-economic value ... worse they can create civil strife ... but give people like these an opportunity to work in a good organization and get paid for it, then there is a big value and good progress.

Some of the most successful organizations give credit for their success to the quality of the staff ... and they are absolutely right to do so.

### **Rebuilding after World War II**

The rebuilding that took place after World War II was funded ... but the success is attributable not only to money but also to people and motivation. People can do almost anything if they want to do it, they are encouraged to do it, and there is a reasonable level of funding so that the needed materials are available.

#### **Rebuilding Europe after World War II**

The success of the Marshal Plan in helping to rebuild Europe after World War II is explained in large part by the willingness of the people to do a lot of the work. Provided there was some money, some food and some materials, people could put the society back together.

There was a lot of red tape, but it was not doing planning as much as it was trying to be reasonable about the allocation of scarce resources. The speed of Europe's recovery, and especially Germany, was frequently referred to as a miracle.

## **Time for Change**

African professionals are ready for change. What is needed is the opportunity to change.

Experts at the World Bank and other institutions know there is a need for change, but do not know how it can be done.

### **The many dimensions of people**

There are many different dimensions of people, all of which have an impact on the development process and performance.

- ◆ Individual
- ◆ Organization
- ◆ Economic
- ◆ Spiritual
- ◆ Material
- ◆ Emotional
- ◆ Pragmatic
- ◆ Social
- ◆ Sexual

All of these dimensions of people are present and conflicting at the same time.

## **More Good People Than Bad People**

### **The world is full of good people**

Most of the people I know seem to be “good” people. Wherever I have worked (something like 60 countries) I have found that most people are good. This experience transcends both religion and race ... I have had the good fortune to work with good people of many different religions and races.

In spite of this, global society as a whole and especially the socio-economic situation is a disaster. There has to be a reason why good people do not have a more livable global society. Good people need income to pay their bills. To support their family, good people have to work and are constrained by the opportunities available.

### **When good people meet bad systems**

A lot of good people are stuck in jobs where systems are not very good and the organizational culture is ethically challenges, but they can do little to change the situation. Good people get beaten by bad systems, bad processes, and ineffective or unethical organizations. They work where it is very difficult for them to perform well and get good results. The situation in Iraq is no different ... plenty of good people with an enabling environment for socio-economic progress that needs help.

Good people live in bad societies ... and no matter how hard they try, they are stuck in a bad situation and can do very little about it without help.

### **Good people ... working hard**

In government ... public service ... and in the international relief and development sector, there are a lot of good, ordinary people who work hard and willingly put themselves on the line to get good outcomes. From time to time these good people put themselves in harms way, and sometimes get into the news as they work against all odds to mitigate the impact of disaster.

I have become convinced that most people are good people at heart, in spite of some outward appearance to the contrary, and some aberrant behavior from time to time. If people can be as successful being good as being obnoxious then there would be more people looking good, but sadly, being obnoxious is often the best way to get ahead. The challenge, then, is to give good, hard working people more of a shot at doing well.

## **How Should People Organize?**

### **People organizations**

There are all sorts of ways that people can organize informally to do collectively what they may not be able to do individually. An example of this is the way children will organize themselves in order to play a team game like soccer.

People organizations like trade unions have had a very important role in getting a balance between the greed of capital in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the dignity and value of the worker. Eventually a strong middle

class emerged and later the role of collective bargaining and the union diminished. There is still a legitimate role for organizations to advocate for good conditions and workplace safety for workers around the world.

### **How does this get coordinated?**

Broadly speaking ... the less coordination the better. Sustainable development will perpetuate itself as soon as there are incentives that pull development, and decisions are made automatically ... organically, if you will ... by community groups. It is a distributed decision model. It has been described in economics as the working of the “invisible hand”.

Some modest level of active coordination is required in order to get the best possible results. A market that is manipulated because of the lack of balance between buyers and sellers, or inappropriate access to information or the exploitation of monopoly power does not result in good outcomes from the market.

### **Getting people organized - teamwork.**

People can do a lot when they are organized, and all pulling in the same direction. There is a lot of people energy wasted on disagreement and conflict. People will not put a lot of energy into doing something that they oppose ... but will put a huge amount of effort and energy into doing things that they want to be done.

This is not a complex idea ... we see it everywhere.

When people have opportunity, they usually make good use of their abilities. But the most value usually comes when people are part of a team and the team acts together to do something of value. This leads to the question of how teams can be established and how people can organize to get things bigger done.

How do you build teams? The better question is how do teams get built ... because a team that works is going to be one that has a natural birth. They can be encouraged, but they cannot be created from the exterior.

### **How everyone can help ... a little bit**

There is a need for everyone to help. A small amount of help many times over works very well. Everybody should be doing something to help.

Everyone can be a part of this. Planning becomes local and is not dominated simply by Soviet style Gosplan or the World Bank style equivalents. Planning is done in a “distributed mode” where people close to the problems identify priorities and how progress can be made. And people who are remote from the problems and can help have opportunities to build linkages that can assist in a practical manner.

It is understandable that there are busy people who are fully committed to their work, their families and their social activities ... and already do more than their fair share in their own communities ... so cannot reasonably become engaged in helping the “south”. But they can help by ensuring in their day to day activities that they are not supportive of anything that is fundamentally wrong and doing socio-economic damage in the “south”.

Ordinary people can have an important impact wherever they are. When everyone is intolerant of global bad behavior, and is prepared to make just some modest action to make things right, there can be a sea change in relief and development performance.

There are many competent people who are not able to do very much of value because present organizational structures do not embrace merit very much and opportunities are limited. Competent people are doing good work, but at nothing like their full potential. Getting the most from a community of people is not done from the top of the pyramid, but by a lot of knowledge at the bottom ... something that is possible in a community and in a small organization, but rarely of much effectiveness at the top where everyone has become a number.

### **Local folk can do a lot**

There is a prevailing assumption that local people cannot do very much. This is a fundamental mistake. Local people can do a lot within the limits of their resources. It is worth noting that the things local people cannot do are things that are often not needed. Studies and master plans and baseline studies and the like are needed not to achieve development but in order to satisfy the requirements of a process. The process is not essential to development. The process may be useful and facilitate development, or the process may actually constrain development. In too many cases the process has become more important than the resulting development.

*Field visits to communities in many parts of the world resulted in some valuable feedback. "Why ..." we were asked by community leaders "... do we have to buy things we do not need, in order to qualify for a credit package that we do need" Meanwhile "development experts" were asking the question why so much of what was being sold never got used. What the planners had succeeded in doing was to create waste and inefficiency and high costs for the community that indeed did need credit, and indeed did need some items in the "package", but rarely all the package, and the unneeded stuff was bought and then discarded. In theory the planners may have been right, but in practice the planners had it wrong.*

*I was working with Mozambican refugees in Malawi. There was a fire at one of the camps and some 40,000 refugees lost their shelter. UNHCR was faced with a serious problem, but the refugees themselves drove the process that rebuilt shelter almost instantly. UNHCR facilitated the organization of the refugee community so that they were able to rebuild their huts, and UNHCR provided some materials that would not be available easily to the refugees. Essential UNHCR provided nails. The refugees did the rest, using locally available materials. If this rebuilding had been done using the normal development paradigm, with formal planning and studies and external resources, it would have taken a long time and cost a lot more.*

## **What Do People Need?**

### **Basic needs**

Everyone needs the basics ... food, water, shelter, clothing. At the bottom of the pyramid it is not self-evident that even the basics are going to be available.. and if they are available, are they going to be affordable. In Iraq, the national wealth should make it easy to all to have a lot more than the basic needs. Everyone should be able to share in a quality of life that is of an internationally high standard.

## **People need opportunities**

If people have opportunities, almost everything else will fall into place. But in the real world there are constraints on opportunity that are draconian. Developing opportunity requires a careful matching of people and possibilities.

People need opportunity, and not to be constrained by everything around them. Everyone needs to think more about what people are doing, can be doing and should be doing.

Making better use of people is a huge opportunity. Local people need opportunities to go to work and do something useful. Organizing so that people in the community can do things that are needed by the community and valuable is one of the big opportunities.

## **People need opportunity**

More than anything else the opportunity at the bottom of the pyramid should be something that does good for the community. People need places to work where they get paid and do something of value. They need jobs. They need profitable ways of using their time.

People have all sorts of skills ... there needs to be some sensible matching of skills with needs. Education can help, but it is the vocational rather than the academic that is probably the most use ... the practical rather than the theoretical.

What someone does is not important, merely that what someone is doing should be of value to the family and the community.

## **People need health**

People get value from a good health system. A good health system is one that makes it possible for all to get adequate health care without an undue economic burden, and be better able to contribute productively to society.

## **People need education**

People get value from a good education system. The cost of education is low compared to the life-time value of being educated ... but of course that value is only realized in a society where people have the opportunity for work and pay. Though one of the biggest successes over the past 40 years has been the increase in the number of the "educated" around the world, this has not been matched by an increase in the number of decent jobs. Because of better education, things are possible today that could not have been reasonably contemplated a generation ago. But the number of people who have opportunity for gainful and productively employed is not enough. There are very large numbers of people who are either unemployed or underemployed ... and there are also people who are employed but unpaid.

## **People need religion**

And people get value from their religion. Religion and the spiritual dimension of life and the society should be adequately recognized, and taken into consideration when trying to understand what priorities should be given to various options.

I like to think of religion as an enormous force for good ... and when that is not what I am seeing, it is usually because guns have taken over and religion is merely being used as a front for secular militarism.