HRD and Corporate Social Responsibility*

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Today's business enterprises are growing bigger and turning global. They have been changing drastically from their laissez-faire industrial revolution origins. Corporations now realize the importance of long-term existence and investing into the future of their business operations. They now feel the inadequacy of the traditional classical economic philosophies where the basic concern is limited to the efficient transformation of scarce resource into goods and services and creating wealth primarily for themselves.

The trend under globalization is the weakening of the state as a result of privatization and further strengthening of private multinational corporations. Citizens are at a loss since the state is no longer in a strong position to protect them. Add to this the weakening of the formal sector of the world's economies as a result of global jobs outsourcing and contractualization. Hence, workers and citizens' organizations (the civil society) are becoming more vigilant and suspicious of growing private enterprises.

"Business is not often viewed as a do-gooder," says an article on corporate social responsibility (Pesayco 2006, F1). American consumers have become less forgiving and more skeptical about business after a string of corporate scandals rocked the United States. It has reached a point that majority of American consumers are even willing to pay more for products that have complied with social, ethical, and environmental standards. Sixty-two percent of New Zealanders would patronize products identified with a worthy cause. About 30 percent of Americans will shift to another brand that is associated with a good cause.

Theories and Principles of Corporate Social Responsibility

The theories on corporate social responsibility (CSR) were explained by Brummer (1991):

1. *Classical Theory* - The primary goal of organizations is to secure the shareholders' financial goals.

2. *Stakeholders' Theory* - Corporate executives are responsible to shareholders and other groups.

3. *Social Demandingness Theory*– The goal of corporations is to promote and protect certain interests of the general public.

4. *Social Activist Theory*– There exist universal standards to determine responsible corporate conduct independent of the interests of the stockholder.

Wood (1991, 695) as cited by Sexty (2004) noted that CSR means business and society are interwoven and governed by the following principles:

1. *Principle of Legitimacy* - Society grants the enterprise legitimacy and power to operate as an institution but it can also take away that power if the enterprise does not perform what is expected of it.

2. *Principle of Public Responsibility* – Business is responsible for outcomes related to its involvement in society. The nature of responsibility will vary as their programs and activities differ. The principle emphasizes the relationship of the firm to its specific social, ethical, cultural, and natural environment.

3. *Principle of Managerial Discretion* - Managers decide how to practice CSR. The leaders of the organization have the obligation depending on available opportunities, choices, and resources

Buchholz (1991) as cited by Sexty (2004) listed the following elements common to all CSR concepts:

1. Corporations have responsibilities that go beyond the production of goods and services at a profit.

2. These responsibilities involve helping solve social problems especially those they have helped create.

3. Corporations have a broader constituency than stockholders alone.

4. Corporations have impact that go beyond simple marketplace transactions.

5. Corporations serve a wider range of human values than can be captured by a sole focus on economic values.

The good practices of CSR are HRD driven. One model conceptualized by Michael Bogart is shown in Figure 1. Another model by Carmela Ortigas (1993) is shown in Figure 3 at the end of this module.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Today's corporate battle cry is to look deeper into CSR by going beyond profit maximization and philanthropy toward creating long lasting business solutions to social problems. To be able to continue doing good deeds, a business must be commercially successful and able to sustain contributions to the communities.

Figure 1: 3 Major Concentric Waves of Corporate Social Responsibility

Societal Responsibilities
unemployment, public service, education, infrastructure, environmental concerns, etc.

Organizational Responsibilities
employee empowerment and HRD

Basic Responsibilities
towards its growth & survival and stakeholders (shareholders, consumers, government and the local community)

Corporate entities at present take a broader perspective in their roles in societies and communities. The "business of business" according to Juan Luz and Teodoro Montelibano (1999, ii), is also "developing people, not only within the company but also in the community that it serves."

The criteria for the success of an enterprise is not only in terms of profits but also in terms of sociopolitical contributions to society like decreasing pollution, reducing unemployment, improving peace and order situation, etc. Corporations not only contend with trade unions, consumer groups, media and government regulatory agencies but also with environmentalists, civil rights activists, women's organizations, tribal communities and in the specific communities where it operates. "Some social scientists even maintain that the corporation operates on a franchise granted by the people—a franchise that can be withdrawn if the people feel they are not benefiting from it" (Tapia 1999, C5).

According to management expert Peter Drucker (1991), management has three responsibilities: to make profit, satisfy employees, and be socially responsible. Balan (1992) added that if management fails to carry out these social responsibilities, the production of wealth in the long run will weaken society. Balancing profit maximization and income generation on one hand and discharging social responsibilities by stockholders and citizens in general on the other is not an easy task. There has to be a very vigilant civil society that can maintain the balance.

Vigilant civilian actions have sprung during these times as a result of the so-called comeback of the neo-classical economic philosophies where private global enterprises actively take over less efficient state-owned and state-protected enterprises through various privatization schemes such as buyouts, joint ventures, build-operate-and-transfer (BOT), build-own-and-operate (BOO), build-and-transfer (BT), subcontracting, and the like.

What worries the citizens is that if big businesses are dominantly privatized and the state considerably weakened, who will take the cudgels for the ordinary civilians? Thus, private enterprises are always looked upon with suspicion. In the meantime, private enterprises have accepted that gone are the days of business bonanzas when profits can be raked easily and they can enrich themselves at the expense of poor communities. There is no long term visioning in this type of business operations. If the consumers

and the community are not empowered, who will sustain the business of the private enterprise? It will just be hopping from one place to the other until it runs out of place where it can operate.

Thus, while the first corporate code of ethics was adopted by a US corporation only in 1985, 84 percent of companies in the US and half in Europe surveyed in 1991 have adopted a code of ethics as a form of CSR practice.

Rationale for Corporate Social Responsibility

There are several reasons why corporations should be socially responsible.

1. In general, the mass of consumers and the public have higher levels of education and better means of communication. Public image can make or unmake corporations.

2. These consumers are very much concerned with their collective welfare and are always pressuring the government to be more protective of their rights and welfare especially against unscrupulous local and foreign enterprises whose usual stake in business in a foreign country is only short-term.

3. Citizens today are more actively organized in the civil society and volunteer organizations. Aided by state legislations, they have forced corporations to transform from being solely profit-oriented enterprises into socially responsible and community-oriented organizations.

4. Capitalization and ownership of corporations are becoming more diverse and the controlling owners and operating managers realize fully that their loyalty should first and foremost be with the public. Strictly, corporations are no longer "private property." Two surveys conducted by Credit Lyonnais Hong Kong and the US Securities and Exchange Commission revealed that investors are willing to pay from 12 percent to 30 percent as premium on corporations practicing good corporate governance. The Credit Lyonnais survey further showed that these corporations have yielded a higher return of 33.8 percent on capital (Lim 2006).

5. Professional managers who are middle class citizens are becoming as powerful, if not more powerful, than capitalists. In the modern

economic system, people with skills and knowledge are replacing capital and other physical assets such as land and buildings as prime factors of production. Managers therefore have to serve the interests of all stakeholders of the enterprise equally and work for the good not only of the controlling stockholders but also of the employees, suppliers and subcontractors, customers, the community, and the general public.

Ashbridge Business School in 2001 identified the following benefits of CSR (Apostol 2003):

1. Enhanced brand and company reputation
2. Improved social and environmental risk management
3. Improved employee relations (hiring/retention)
4. Better stakeholders relations
5. Improved community relations
6. Proactive change management strategies
7. Improved financial performance from all of the above

The corporation now views itself as an integral part of society whose role is to help that society develop, which will in turn assure the corporation's long-term existence. The values, visions and strategic objectives of the corporation should be compatible with that of society and the community. Corporations are actually subsystems of the community or society. The cycle of relationship between the corporations and the community and society is illustrated as follows:

Figure 2: Corporations, Community and Society
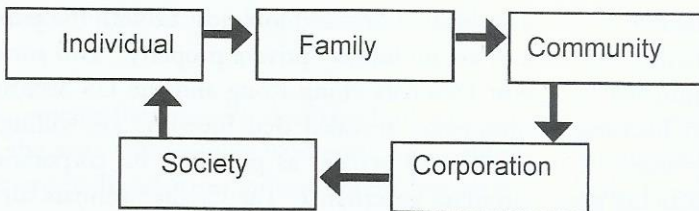
The cost of CSR should be regarded as a normal cost of business that yields back returns not necessarily in the short-term but in a strategic perspective.

Origins of CSR

The practices of CSR can be traced back to the evolution of society. Specifically, guilds and community organizations have evolved for purposes of livelihood, education and HRD. During the dark days of the industrial revolution, there were enlightened social reformers. Shocked by the exploitative system, they advocated and practiced the mutual responsibilities of doing business while serving the community.

Among the most prominent was Robert Owen (1771-1858), a utopian socialist more popular known as the father of cooperativism. A proponent of Thomas More's (1478-1535) socialist ideas, Owen believed that society must be restructured on the basis of equal rights and collective labor. He contrasted his social system to that of capitalism which is a system of competition and exploitation (Fajardo and Abella 1993).

Owen was a son of an English saddle-maker who started to work as a shop boy at 10, managed his own small spinning mill at 18, headed a large Manchester cotton mill at 20, and directed and co-owned a large textile factory in New Lanark, Scotland at 29. Owen improved the social and economic conditions of his factory workers, including the community and its poor residents.

Owen tried to organize workers' cooperative societies in 1820 in England. In 1824, Owen organized experimental cooperative communities among English migrants in the United States which were called the "New Harmony." In this community collective ownership of land, collective labor and equal distribution of profits became the norm.

Ofreneo (1992) described Owen as a very religious person who experimented with shortening work hours from 14-16 hours to 10 hours per day on the idea that workers will be more productive if they are properly motivated. Owen also set up a school for the workers where they were able to learn unionism and cooperativism. He preached ideas of socialism for 40 years. He died poor because other capitalists ganged up on him, fearing his unorthodox ideas.

Another anachro-syndicalist socialist philosopher was Frenchman Charles Fourier (1772-1837). Like Owen, Fourier also organized independent communities called phalanteries. Unlike the Owenite communities, however, the distribution of profits in the phalanteries depended on the individual capital or effort.

The experiments of Owen and Fourier failed because they were too ahead of their times. Their adherents, specially the Owenites, learned from the failures of both Owen and Fourier which have guided the practices of today's successful cooperatives and civil society enterprises.

German social scientists following the ideas of institutional political economist Friedrich List (1841) did not advocate antagonism or suppression of unions and communist ideas but instead treat them as partners of government and business. One of List's followers was Otto Von Bismarck (1815-1898), founder of the German empire. As head of the German government, Bismarck protected the workers and their organizations through welfare programs. Private corporations were encouraged and regulated in the accordance with public interest.

When class antagonism between the capitalists and workers heightened during the great depression in the US in 1930, government provided workers and the trade union movement strong political rights in union organizing and collective bargaining to counterbalance the strong state support to American industries. Institutional political economist Prof. John Commons was supported by industrialist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., a CSR practitioner, in conducting research in industrial relations at the University of Wisconsin to encourage worker-capitalist social partnership for the recovery of the American economy.

The Philippine Experience

In the Philippines, social reformers include Don Isabelo de los Reyes, Lope K. Santos and Herminigildo Cruz who organized the various *gremios* (local guilds and community organizations) and trade unions into a labor federation. Through the Union Obrera Democratica in 1902, de los Reyes and company were able to exert pressures against foreign and local enterprises for them to improve the lot of Filipino workers and at the same time continue their social services to the communities.

De los Reyes was an advocate of anachro-syndicalist socialism which he learned from Madrid, Spain when he was exiled and jailed by the Spaniards. Among the writers of this school were Charles Fourier, Simonde de Sismondi, Joseph Prodhoun and Michael Bakunin. Their aim was to decentralize civil order to the lowest possible level by organizing people and communities into self-governing communes, cooperatives and mutual aid societies. Like Marx, they advocated the abolition of private property but not to be monopolized by the state. Instead, the means of production should be administered by the communities and organizations in the concept of stewardship.

Developing countries like the Philippines have had several bad experiences in local and foreign corporations that have operated, profited and left after exhausting the resources of communities. This is especially true in extractive industries like mining, logging and manufacturing where communities have remained impoverished while corporations grew and profited. Community protest actions against corporations are no longer isolated incidents. As a result, laws and legislations have been enacted to protect the nation from corporate abuses.

A recent example is the Maricalum Mining Corporation in Sipalay City, Negros Occidental which shut down in 2001. It still owes two local governments more than P90 million ($1.7 million) in unpaid taxes, and P170 million ($3.3 million) in backwages and separation pay to its 5,000 employees. According to the DENR Bureau of Mines and Geosciences, the company's 125 hectares tailing pond containing 111 metric tons of mine tailings discharged in over 20 years of operations has been polluting the air in the surrounding areas and causing increased respiratory illnesses (Gomez 2006).

Today, the League of Corporate Foundations (LSF) composed of 59 corporate foundations and corporations are actively promoting CSR since 2003 and engaged in social development work all over the country. This is in addition to the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) whose funds are donated by top corporations operating in the country.

Corporate Governance and CSR

CSR can be expressed in several ways. One important component of CSR is good practices in corporate governance. Good corporate governance means empowerment of employees and other stakeholders through

consultative or participative management. This will result in transparency in management, a very important factor in selling corporate stocks to the public. Growth of enterprises and the economy in globalization or post industrial period is largely dependent on the mobilization of public capital through the stock markets.

Several corporate financial scandals like the case of Enron Corporation in the US have rocked global corporations. Enron, certified financially sound by its prestigious accounting firm Arthur Andersen, continued to sell stocks to the public even though it was already bankrupt. Even Enron's 21,000 employees were not aware of their company's condition as they too lost heavily in their pension fund investments (Wikipedia 2006). As reported by Lim (2006), corporations have realized that businesses have to make money the proper way through CSR and good corporate governance.

Good corporate governance is very important in the Philippines where the biggest enterprises are family-controlled. Lim reported that the value of stocks of family-controlled corporations have grown after they were made public corporations. A survey by the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) and the Capital Market Development Council (CMDC) concluded that publicly listed corporations that topped the corporate governance scorecards were among the most trusted corporations: Ayala Land, BPI, Petron and PLDT.

Better internal organizational control, enhanced image, and improved credit rating are just few of the benefits of good corporate governance. These benefits will in turn facilitate resource generation from the public and the capital markets to fund new business ventures in expansions and generate more decent jobs for the Filipinos (Lim 2006).

Corporate Public Relations and CSR

When CSR is exhibited, especially to the public, it is called corporate public relations (PR). What is basic in corporate PR is that the corporation should always practice what it preaches. In other words, corporate PR is not creating a false image or façade of the corporation. When we say that a corporation is socially responsible, we mean that it is doing its share in empowering people not only inside its business premises but also outside—in the community and the larger society.

The practice of corporate social responsibility and corporate PR should always start with the formulation or review of the corporation's values, vision, mission, goals and strategies (VVMGS). The identified values, vision, mission, goals and strategies should be aligned with the goals and values of the community in particular and the society in general.

Empowerment should begin within the organization. HRD programs should be geared toward employees and shareholders, among others. This means a company must take care of its employees as the first step in implementing a community-centered corporate PR. The right practice of corporate PR should be HRD driven as shown in Figure 1.

The next step is to expand the concerns of the corporation outside the company premises—the communities surrounding their areas of operations. This will lead to community relations (Comrel) programs.

Community Relations Programs and CSR

Comrel is a basic technology of the corporation whose objective is to show the community where it operates that it is aligning itself as part of and in service of the community. A community is defined as a group of people working together and in service of each other.

A Comrel program is a set of projects and activities of individuals or groups of entities or organizations designed to realize the goal of their locality for community empowerment (or capability building). Community empowerment is achieved through consciousness raising, community organizing, problem identification and problem solving, and implementing projects and interventions to solve or correct the identified community problems.

A Comrel program starts internally within an organization or business entity itself by empowering the organization and its employees first then expanding externally to the community where it operates. Its basic tools are corporate communication, HRD, and organizational development (OD) technologies. A good Comrel program should preferably be tied up with activities of the existing network of non-government organizations[1] (NGOs), peoples' organizations (POs), cooperatives and local government units (LGUs) active in the community. This is called community networking.

Comrel is not exclusively practiced by large corporations. Even small and micro-enterprises are practitioners of Comrel programs. Community businessmen and professionals join community organizations and are very active in various livelihood, socio-civic, sports, educational and religious activities whose benefits redound to the community. The primary reason why people are active in individual Comrel programs is because they share in common the values and goals of community organizations or NGOs.

ComRel is considered part of workplace development because it is a strategy adopted by companies as a component of CSR. Based on the CSR philosophy, businesses should not only be concerned about making profits but should make significant socio-political contributions to the community where it operates.

Pressure groups (such as NGOs, political parties, church groups, and the like) demand that the outsourcing of production and services to certain sectors or groups of workers should not lead to exploitation, bad working conditions, and degradation of the environment. Companies are therefore expected to design and implement programs geared towards people development and the preservation of the environment. A company is able to provide assistance to people and maintain healthy relations with the community through projects and programs such as livelihood and skills training, medical missions, and environmental protection.

Rationale of ComRel Programs

According to Luc Zandvliet, the major reasons why Comrel is necessary are the following:

1. Natural resource deposits located in stable contexts are running out especially in the extractive industries; deposits of natural resources in relatively safe and politically stable countries have already been explored or local communities are contesting their exploration. As a result, executives of resource companies acknowledge that they will find themselves increasingly operating in zones of conflict. This new reality challenges extractive industries to find more effective means to interact with local communities; it demands new skills in creative business thinking and building community trust.

2. All company activities are in the public domain. "Far-away-places" no longer exist. Global technology has enabled shareholders and consumers alike to be aware of the positive and negative social impacts of corporate activities on local population, from the highlands of Papua New Guinea to the remote islands of the Philippines and rural Sudan. Even the smallest communities have learned that stakeholders in home countries can be reached via satellite and mobilized via alliances with international advocacy groups. Far-away places simply no longer exist. While this trend provides challenges, it also offers new opportunities for the company to display its global corporate citizenship.

3. Establishing a positive legacy is a critical corporate responsibility. Sustainable development policies give a comparative advantage to companies seeking new contracts. For example, host governments increasingly engage with companies based on their previous environmental and social record elsewhere. It is therefore critical for companies to establish positive legacy. Governments may request that local communities and NGOs evaluate past company performance to determine which companies to select for future partnerships.

The objectives of Comrel programs are:

1. To raise or maintain a wholesome image of the company or individual in the community;

2. To serve as a promotional tool for the company's products and services;

3. To establish good relations with local government units and agencies operating in the community;

4. To help maintain law and order in the community for a conducive working environment for the company;

5. To establish rapport with the community and help in social reforms and other social empowerment activities in the community;

6. To inform the community of the company's activities, values, visions, strategies, objectives, programs and projects that relate to community welfare;

7. To project an image of a successful corporation in the community.

Some of the common activities, interventions and projects in Comrel programs are:

1. Publicity of company activities, both internal and external (press/news releases, press conferences, featured articles, pictorials, radio plugs, information kits and brochures, leaflets and pamphlets, guesting in shows and programs, etc.);

2. Company publications like community newsletters and employee newspapers and magazines with extended circulation to the community;

3. Open houses and guided plant tours;

4. Sponsorship and management of projects or programs such as cleanliness campaigns, garbage recycling and green projects, and anti-drug abuse campaigns, among others;

5. Initiating discussion groups, caucuses or study sessions. These are small and informal units of people who group together to discuss critical issues or day-to-day problems;

6. Sponsoring or initiating house-to-house or office-to-office campaigns;

7. Sponsoring meetings and assemblies for advocacy campaigns including marches, parades, rallies, demonstrations, etc;

8. Build a speakers pool for public speaking in community advocacy projects;

9. Hanging posters or streamers in strategic places and maintaining watchboards, bulletin boards or billboards;

10. Creating and maintaining live mascots during campaigns in highly populated areas and places like schools, commercials areas, parks, and the like;

11. Support or encourage employee membership in community NGOs;

12. Corporate support for community activities and services such as fiestas, exhibits, and projects on health, education, skills training, peace and order, and the like;

13. Support for employee cooperatives and associations;

14. Support for local NGO-GO network;

15. Sound IR practices if labor is unionized.

Gaddi enumerated the guidelines in conducting a Comrel program:

1. It should have a well-defined framework for the people and the community. It should likewise have a clear purpose, objectives, and goals. The programs and projects should be both culture and gender sensitive.

2. Planning should include the social preparation phase and strategies in organizing. Target groups and beneficiaries should be clearly identified. The plan should incorporate entry, consolidation, organization and withdrawal strategies. There should be a community-friendly monitoring system during and after the Comrel program implementation.

3. Comrel program implementation should always be consultative and participatory.

4. It should be able to present concrete benefits to the people and the community.

5. Finally, a Comrel program must be sustainable and replicable.

There are some common weaknesses observed in some Comrel practices. Among them are:

1. There is no consultation with people in the community.

2. There is no identification of actual needs.

3. There is lack of a definite and clear development framework for the implementation of the program, project or activities.

4. There is no clear pattern of entry, consolidation and withdrawal phases of the program or project.

5. There is no social preparation.

6. There is lack or absence of participatory process.

7. There is misuse of local resources which affect the people and community both in the short and long-run.

8. There are no substantial benefits to the people and the community.

Examples of Community Relations Projects and Programs[2]

Nestle Philippines

The Cabuyao Factory nutrition program is aimed at improving the health condition of selected malnourished children in Barangay Sala, Cabuyao. The project is done in coordination with Cabuyao Rural Health Center and employee volunteers. The program consists of regular feeding of children every Tuesday and Thursday, medical check-up, hygiene instructions, and art lessons. Children are taught to brush their teeth three times a day, cut nails every week and wash hands before and after eating to avoid virus contamination. They are also taught basic art skills such as drawing, coloring, and paper-cutting. On Valentine' Day, kids learn to cut heart shapes where they write simple messages to their parents. Parents are also given lectures on basic nutrition and personal hygiene every Thursday.

Panasonic Philippines

Established in 1999, the Panasonic Scholarship Office in the Philippines (PSO Phil.) works in collaboration with other departments and representatives from the academe and government. It operates under the flagship of Matsushita Electric Philippines Corporation (MEPCO) representing the four companies of the Matsushita Group of Companies in the Philippines (MGCP). The Panasonic Scholarship Program is instrumental in enhancing Panasonic brand awareness as well as in affirming Matsushita's philanthropy even in times of economic difficulties.

Amkor Technology Philippines, Inc.

Amkor Technology is one of the world's largest subcontracting companies for semiconductor packaging and testing, serving approximately 150 customers worldwide. Established in the Philippines in 1989 as Amkor/Anam Pilipinas, it has evolved into Amkor Technology Philippines.

Amkor keeps pollution prevention facilities such as a waste treatment plant and a system for the proper disposal of solid waste. The company reaches out to nearby communities and their residents through various

social relation programs such as the Creek Rehabilitation Program, the Paskong Paslit Program and scholarship grants for poor but deserving students. It donates computers to schools and conducts blood donation campaigns.

Bechtel Philippines

Bechtel's Quezon power project in the Philippines implemented a community relations program that involves the public in addressing environmental and socioeconomic concerns. The results of independent site inspections were publicized to disseminate facts about current environmental conditions where the public was invited to visit the plant and review environmental mitigation measures at work. Also, the community relations team holds weekly meetings with the town mayor and the city council to provide construction progress reports and discuss project issues.

Unilever Philippines

The Comrel Program called the Clean Water Advocacy for the Conservation of Laguna de Bay was started in 1999. In 2004, the program won the Fr. Neri Satur Awards for Environmental Heroism. Fr. Satur Neri, an environmental Catholic priest assigned in Bukidnon, was killed in 1992 by suspected illegal loggers for his anti-illegal logging, pro-environmental, and pro-people stance.

Mirant Philippines

The company is an independent power producer owning more than 2,400 MW of power generation in the Philippines. Power generation is supported through long-term contracts. The Project Beacon, a Barangay Electrification Assistance for Countryside Development in coordination with DOE, was aimed at energizing 1,000 barangays all over the country. The project won the following awards:

- 2001 IABC– Gold Quill Award in CSR (economic, social and environmental·development communications category) for Project Beacon

- 2002 IABC-Gold Quill Distinguished Communication – Excel Award for Project Beacon

- 38th Anvil Award of Excellence for Project Beacon under the Public Affairs Management and Communications in the Countryside Development Category

Figure 3: Empowering Communities
Source: Carmela Ortigas, Training and Empowerment, 1993
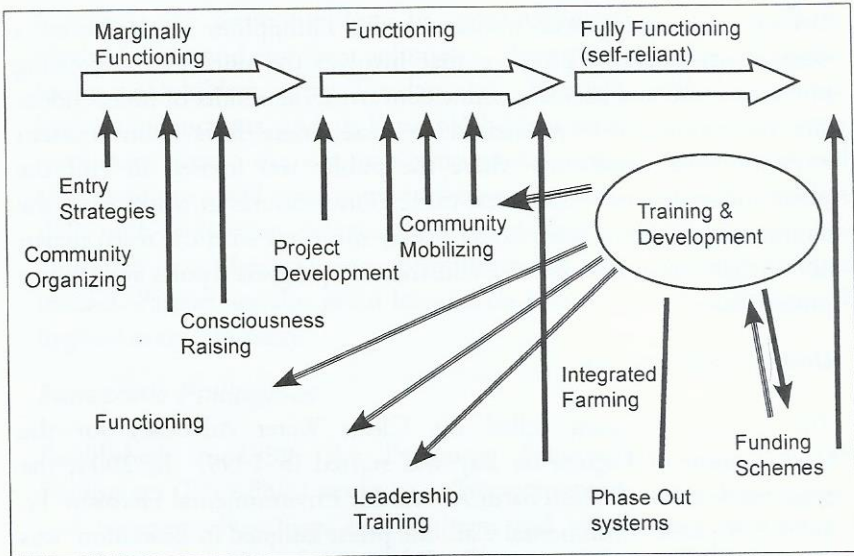
Notes

[1] An NGO is a non-government and private organization that is non-profit, independent, voluntary and organized from the grassroots. It is categorized into 3 types: political NGOs, like trade unions, labor parties and other pressure groups; religious, academic and cultural NGOs (or organizations within academic, religious and other cultural institutions); and economic NGOs, like cooperatives and other self-help (labor) enterprises.

[2] Culled from website of companies.

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