Towards an Alternative Development Paradigm

Indigenous People's Self-Determined Development

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Laman laka*: Our Indigenous Path to Self-Determined Development

by Mirna Cunningham

In recent years a development concept has begun to be advanced in Latin America that attempts to incorporate the perspectives and views of indigenous peoples. In the Qichwawa language it is known as Sumak kawsay, suma qamaña in Aymara, sumak ñandereco in Guaraní, Laman Laka in Miskitu, and Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien in Spanish.1 These are summed up in the concept that living well does not merely refer to per capita income or economic growth. Buen Vivir or living well presumes common cultural mores, and harmony between human beings and Mother Earth. It is anchored on values that stand for culture, life, living together, complementarity not just among people but between us and nature, and protection of the commonweal for the benefit of communities and nations as a whole. Slowly gaining acceptance, this concept was recently included in constitutional reforms in Ecuador and Bolivia.2

These precepts coincide with those of indigenous peoples throughout the rest of the world,3 as their approach to self-determined development is based on the fact that culture is a way of life. The land and resources that provide for their livelihood and their relationship to these are part of their spiritual lives. Self-determined development or development with culture and identity is characterized by a holistic, nonsectoral approach that seeks to build on collective rights, security, and greater control and self governance of lands, territories and resources. Our way to-
wards development builds on tradition with respect for our an-
ccestors as we look and move forward.

This paper reviews the debate, proposals and some practices
of indigenous peoples' development in Latin America within
the framework of indigenous visions and perspectives. It in-
cludes Laman Laka, which reflects the development concept of
the Miskitu peoples of Nicaragua.

Some basic conditions must be met if proposals for indige-
nous self-determined development are to advance favorably.
In the Nicaraguan case, the establishment of a multi-ethnic au-
nomous regime lays the basis for exercising the collective rights
of the indigenous peoples, starting with territorial rights. In Bo-
livia, the structural transformations promoted by the current gov-
ernment establish the foundation to move towards Buen Vivir.

**Concept of Indigenous Peoples' Self-determined Development - Buen Vivir**

María Eugenia Choque (2010) has pointed out that indige-
nous peoples derive their conception of living well from their
own experiences and life systems, and from an integral rela-
tionship with Mother Nature. This involves a constant search for and
reestablishment of collective, individual, political, economic, so-
cial, cultural, spiritual, and physical wellbeing in the framework
of exercising our historic rights. It must not be understood from
a concept frozen in time, but as argued, from the point of view of
people who have been constantly confronted by the struggle to
reestablish their wellbeing, their "Buen Vivir" or "commonweal."

Choque contends that the reconstruction or construction of
the commonweal is connected to a close relationship with what
we once were as a people. Memory of the historical past, known
as a time of liberty, is one point of reference for us. The other
reference is that down through the long period since the occupa-
tion by other cultures, our wellbeing has been undermined by a

process of assimilation, from the invasion and then the colonial
republics whose national political constitutions refer to the "abo-
lication of collective lands, abolition of traditional authorities," that
is, the assimilation of indigenous peoples into the logic of western
life.

Throughout this history, colonial relations remained intact
and retained their oppressive character. They were shaped to
legitimize a reality based on colonial order as being something
normal and even being *national* in essence. This history, very
different from its philosophical definition as being synonymous
with liberty, has undergone some processes of change, thanks to
the struggle of indigenous peoples. In truth, this history is a per-
verse one. The goal was to induce us to forget our identity, and to
desist from exercising our rights to liberty and self determina-
tion as peoples. In that hostile framework the struggle for the
reconstruction of our wellbeing has been incessant and has al-
ways depended on our capacity to resist.

Buen Vivir—our wellbeing—is linked to our profound spiritu-
tuality that upholds our relationship with Mother Nature. It is
linked to the economic conditions, rooted in our own systems
and institutions that drive productive life, animal husbandry, and
economic exchange relations. It is woven into indigenous iden-
tity that is the basis to assert who we are, where we come from,
and to where we are headed. It is tied into our social organization
systems that stem from interrelations established among indigene-
ous peoples themselves, the communities—*comunidades*,
*ayllus*, *markas* and *suyus*, *capitanias*, *tentas*.

Our Buen Vivir develops from the living conditions estab-
lished in relationships with our environment and natural re-
sources, and connected to rights over resources originating within
indigenous territories. The relationship nourishes spiritual and
collective conviviality among the men and women of our
peoples, and our will to exercise the right to control and admin-
ister our resources.

The vision of living well, of Buen Vivir, or *yearning* and
*searching* for wellbeing, has to do with conditions of social life,
perspectives, and indigenous people’s life quality. The shared framework of this pursuit is the principles of reciprocity, complementarity and redistribution in the distinct spaces for the people’s social, economic, cultural and political life. The close relationship between indigenous peoples and Mother Nature stems from duality and wholeness or completeness, just as man and woman complement each other, like sun and moon, day and night, or male and female in animals, vegetables, and minerals. There prevails a complementarity: both cooperate and form a social unity, and the social and natural world, including even the symbolic universe, is reestablished. This is the dialectic of complementary opposition, a dual opposition that is therefore required for reciprocity and the integral whole.

According to Fernando Huanacuni (2009), “Living well is to live in harmony with the life cycles and with the multiverse, and in balance with all forms of existence. Living well means to live in harmony and equilibrium, in harmony with Mother Earth’s cycles, with cosmic cycles, with history’s cycles, with all life’s cycles, and in complementary balance with all forms of existence. Within this cosmovision, all forms of existence are equal in status; all have complementary relationships, all are living, and all are important.” However the fundamental basis for the continuity of Buen Vivir is respect for Mother Nature, access to land and territory, in the framework of the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples.

Characteristics of Development from an Indigenous Perspective

The principles for the construction and reconstruction of self-determined development—Buen Vivir—must be understood in the juridical framework of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular the exercise of the right to self determination, as provided in:

Article 3

Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 4

Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

Article 32:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.
2. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.
3. States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

It is also important to return to the preamble of the Declaration on the Right to Development. It establishes the inalienable human rights to development, by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.

Another instrument which helps to understand Buen Vivir is Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de
they establish that each Signatory Party, to the extent possible and wherever appropriate, shall, in tandem with national legislation, respect, preserve, and maintain the knowledges, innovations, and practices of indigenous and local communities that entail traditional life styles pertinent to sustainable conservation and utilization of biological diversity, promote their broad application through the approval and participation of the concerned communities and members, and assure the sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.

Some characteristic elements of the debate about development from the perspective of indigenous peoples that have been identified are the following:

Indigenous Vision

One of the first things that stands out in the proposals on Buen Vivir is the fact that nature is a “living being” within which all its components establish multiple connections, with human beings being a part of the cosmic fabric. For the Indigenous Council of Central America, the cosmogonic vision is the philosophical axis of individual and collective thought and action. It implies an indissoluble and interdependent relationship between the universe, nature, and humanity where a favorable ethical and moral basis is constellated for environmental conservation, development, and a society in which harmony, respect, and balance prevail. Some fundamental aspects of indigenous people’s cosmogony are community in relation to peoples, time, balance and harmony, consensus, dialog, respect, and a system of rights.

This element is expressed in the following arguments:

1) Giving priority to life

Buen Vivir strives for the revitalization of the forms of life and living in the community, in which all members look out for all. In that context, the most important thing is not only the hu-
3) The economic subject is collective

For indigenous peoples, one basic difference between indigenous development and other development models is that the economic subject is collective. Although this characteristic has variants, especially given the massive flow of indigenous persons to urban centers, it has particular cultural connotations not dependent on the geographic and spatial location of indigenous peoples. This feature is reflected in the fact that natural and cultural property is collective and has the community as its reference point.15

The following are some expressions of that characteristic:

Strengthening mechanisms for social control16 between residents of the same community. In ancestral times, all community members took charge of controlling the functions carried out by their main authorities. In the case of Bolivia, for example, this is also expressed through measures adopted to recover the natural wealth of the country and to enable all to benefit from this in a balanced and equitable way. In this case, it has been argued that the goal of the Buen Vivir doctrine is also to nationalize and reclaim strategic enterprises of the country in the framework of balance and relationship between human beings and nature in contradistinction to irrational exploitation of natural resources.17

In Central America18 it has been put forward that from the point of view of indigenous cosmovision, natural resources are far from being an economic possession. Indigenous spirituality includes the belief that all forms of life in nature possess a soul. A spirit is present in all things, to which they owe their peculiar characteristics.19

Territoriality—Mother Earth—is one element that fosters collective identity and belonging to an indigenous people. It is considered sacred and cannot be the object of sale nor of personal appropriation. Indigenous territories are composed from all the elements that make them up: soil, subsoil and airspace, rivers, lakes, animals, metals. They are collective and represent a space in the universe where nature and human beings live together. Territory is the basis for building and elaborating our own development model as an integral part of a juridical, political, economic and social system of a specific people.

Indigenous peoples, in this context, also argue20 that we possess and have engendered our own knowledges derived from our relationship with Mother Nature, the natural resources, culture, production, and ways of life. Therefore a necessary step in the process for defining a development model for, of, and by indigenous people will be to identify what knowledges stem from our cultural practices, and how the community protects, preserves, and recreates them. In Central America, CICA21 has defined a planning methodology known as Balu Wala, and among its methodological principles are participation and inclusion.

The Balu Wala22 is based on values and principles of indigenous cosmovision. It aims to strengthen the institutional, organizational, technical and political capacities of indigenous communities for the effective management of development. It facilitates the process of ordered territorial arrangement that conforms to the traditional knowledges and indigenous peoples’ own wisdoms. Balu Wala also strengthens organizational systems for communal production in the framework of the indigenous economic model to improve the quality of life on the road to a life of wellbeing, our Buen Vivir. It establishes instruments that enable the community to manage communally, taking into account national and international juridical frameworks.
4) Role of indigenous economic institutions

Indigenous peoples, working within a territorial base and their relationship with nature, have engendered knowledge in the use and management of their resources. This accumulation of knowledge has enabled the establishment of systems of relations on political, economic, and social organization that allowed them at determined moments to attain stronger degrees of sustainability in food security and in the exchange of products.

Maldonado (2009) has mentioned some indigenous peoples' economic institutions such as the Minga and the Ranti Ranti, among others. Those systems are based on principles of reciprocity, complementarities, and communal work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>How It Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MINGA</td>
<td>Collective labor for a common project or task</td>
<td>Participation of all the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANTIRANTI</td>
<td>Mutual support, moral obligation</td>
<td>Inter-familial participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIOSTASGOS</td>
<td>They assume, lead, and partake in a celebration</td>
<td>Collective decision-making, collective participation, input and social responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARGOS</td>
<td>Commitments that strengthen the family relationship</td>
<td>Accepts responsibility for supporting and guiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPADRAS-GOS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARKAK TAYTA</td>
<td>Take on a communal responsibility to achieve prestige, appreciation and respect</td>
<td>Accumulate capital for the celebration, share, and interact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on talk by Luis Maldonado, 2020.

An additional form of expression of this characteristic is the concept and practices involved in the work of indigenous peoples. Many of us hold a different concept of work, viewing it as an occasion for communal socialization, a fiesta.

Choquehuana (2010) argues that the capitalist system of paid work is distinct from the new model of the Plurinational State of Bolivia where people have returned to the ancestral way of considering work as a fiesta, a party. Added to that, work is seen as a form of growth. That is why people in indigenous societies take on work chores from a very young age. That position generates a dilemma for many organizations that promote children's rights because they at times confuse these familial and communal socialization activities with child labor.

A range of rituals or ceremonies are linked to productive activities such as harvesting and planting. The communities con-
continue to honor Mother Nature through dancing and music, mainly in tandem with seasonal agricultural tasks. However, in the cities the original dances are treated as folklore.

Another characteristic of community labor is reciprocity. It consists of doing work to reciprocate help offered by a family in agricultural, fishing, construction and other tasks.

These characteristic features are related to people’s cultural revitalization and daily practices involving indigenous identity and culture, such as recovering traditional foods, and holding fiestas as ways to socialize. Also involved is the role of spirituality in community life, to mention just a few traits.

5) Intercultural Relations based on gender and inter-generational equality

Another characteristic of indigenous people’s development model is a search for forms of engagement with other sectors, including governments and the state. For that sake, one of the first steps consists of accepting differences and similarities between the diverse beings that populate the planet. It is stressed that to develop Buen Vivir, people must respect the other, know how to listen to all that he or she wants to say, without discrimination or any other type of suppression. Various practical experiences have taught us that the search for consensus and the use of dialog are adequate forms for dealing with differences and hence must be promoted in the process of trying to attain our Buen Vivir.

The vision of future generations has been specifically addressed in the proposals and arguments regarding indigenous peoples’ development. There is a call to respect women, “because she represents our Pacha Mama, our Earth Mother who possesses the ability to give life and care for its fruits.” In the community, the woman is valued and is present in all life-oriented activities, raising the young, education, and cultural revitalization. Inhabitants of indigenous communities value women as the basis of social organization because they pass on cultural wisdoms to their children.

Regarding intergeneration relations, Choquehuanca (2010) has stressed that “Vivir Bien is to read our grandparents wrinkles to find the trail forward. One of the main sources of learning for the community is the elders who hold onto stories and customs that over the years have been subject to loss. Hence, the elders are respected and consulted in the indigenous communities of the country.”

Development Concept of Indigenous Peoples in Autonomous Regions of Nicaragua

Approved in 1986, the Political Constitution of Nicaragua recognizes the multiethnic and pluricultural character of the nation. With this Constitution, the State for the first time acknowledged ethnic pluralism as a principle of the nation, accepting the existence of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendent communities as societies culturally distinct from the rest of society with specific rights. And among their special rights established by Article 5 are “maintaining and developing their identity and culture, having their own forms of social organization, administering their local affairs, maintaining their communal forms of property of their lands, and the enjoyment and use of those lands.”

To realize this principle, the State has promoted profound juridical and structural transformations and established the Regimen of Regional Multiethnic Autonomy. The Costeña Regional Autonomy represents a step taken by the State in favor of peoples that have been historically marginalized, excluded, and discriminated against under the global approach of individual and collective rights. It builds on the equality of opportunity for all Nicaraguans, and creates conditions that gives (or ought to give) them special consideration to overcome the discrimination they have suffered.

In 1987 the National Assembly of the Republic of Nicaragua approved the Autonomy Statute for the indigenous peoples and
ethnic communities, laying the bases for constituting an autonomous regional system. Among the characteristics of the autonomy model are the following:

a) It is of regional domain and those that live in the specifically determined territory have autonomous rights.
b) It is multiethnic and guarantees the establishment of special districts and members of a Directive Board of each indigenous and ethnic community.
c) Recognizes economic, social, cultural, legal, ecological, political rights maintaining an integral approach.
d) Recognizes as autonomous authorities the institutions of regional, municipal, and communal administration.
e) Establishes the right to patrimony, budget for regional administration and the creation of a Regional Development Fund.
f) Maintains the principle of national unity.
g) Recognizes the collective rights of indigenous peoples; communal territories, forms of organization, traditional authorities, cultural values and characteristics, languages, forms of administration of justice, and use and enjoyment of natural resources in their communal lands.
h) Recognizes the practice of traditional medicine.
i) Prioritizes the rights of women.
j) Is supported by the Political Constitution of Nicaragua and is complemented by specific laws.
k) Devolves functions like health, education, wellbeing, local development, and others to the regional authorities.
l) Establishes the requirement of coordination between the regional authorities and the Central Government.

The Autonomy Law of the Autonomous Regions establishes administrative bodies, authorities, and institutions at the regional, municipal, and communal levels, articulating indigenous peoples’ own traditional institutions, with structures created by the State to address the multiethnic and geographical differences. They are:

a. Regional Autonomous Council or Regional Autonomous Parliament;
b. Regional Coordinator of Governor;
c. Municipal and Communal Authorities;
d. Others corresponding to the administrative subdivision of the municipalities.

With the approval of Law 445 in 2003, indigenous traditional institutions at the communal and territorial levels were reaffirmed as institutions of public administration, including communal and territorial assemblies and authorities. The responses of the State in the autonomy process can be classified basically into three areas: development of a normative juridical framework, advances in the establishment of public policies and structural transformations of the State, and construction of intercultural citizenship.

Indigenous peoples of the Autonomous Regions require a development model that can count on articulation between different levels of the existing autonomous authorities charged with the task of jointly promoting local development processes in ways that assure recognition and respect for historical individual and collective rights for all the peoples that live in the region. Under the Buen Vivir concept, the Nicaraguan government participates through the organs of the Regional Autonomous governments and municipal administrations. The Nicaraguan government has defined a Human Development Plan that has as one of its components the Autonomous Regions’ Development Plan. This plan is based on the precept that a subject with a collective identity exists and shall participate fully in public management though the exercise of their autonomous rights.

A common error is to define development as a function of increased productivity, modernization, technology and accumulation of wealth—seen as accumulated material goods and financial capital. That is the capitalist concept of development, one that is exogenous to indigenous peoples. In contrast, development as a tool for survival and wellbeing of the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua is based on the rational and sustained uti-
lization of natural resources available in our territories, under
the ancestral principles of holistic vision for the interaction of
humanity and the surrounding environment—work, collective
property and the application and transmission of ancestral
knowledges. Some of the resources we depend on are the soil,
water, flora and fauna in the territories, and among which the
human being interacts as one element.

Development for the Miskitu people, to which this writer
belongs, is linked to what has been denominated as laman laka.
It can be interpreted as a set of norms for harmonious living
together within family and community, regardless of age or gen-
der group. This could be what some sociologists and anthrop-
ologists call the “social fabric.”

Economic norms guide territorial use through the laman laka
which brings on the feeling that yes, I have, you have, I have.
That implies interexchange or pana pana (manu vuelta or acknowl-
edging others’ help with reciprocal help or work) that allows for
interaction among people in which the value of the word, re-
spect for the family, mutual confidence, ethnic loyalty, and the
commonweal predominate. In this framework, tacit agreements
are reached on ecosystem use in which everyone knows where
to carry out individual planting and where collective planting is
done. Also clear for all is where to hunt or fish and zones dedi-
cated to maintaining relations with the spiritual world.

The basic principle of the laman laka concept has been de-
defined as the common good or commonweal. The principle func-
tions as an articulating element of a system of cooperation in the
communities. Its reach includes all persons and families, and it is
based on social equality and social equity. It helps to strengthen
associative relations that always require confidence, solidarity,
reciprocity, and ethnic and territorial roots.

In the case of the Miskitu indigenous people, a schematic
model can be sketched of the process of the search for Laman
Laka, along the following lines:

### Table: Some Community Institutions of Miskitu People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Institutions</th>
<th>Functions Exercised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pana Pana</td>
<td>Form of community work based on reciprocity. Families alternate to carry out work during the planting, harvest, seasons, house building and burials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakahnu</td>
<td>Work is shared among family groups, and sometimes between communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Health System</td>
<td>Comprises the knowledges, promotion, prevention, and delivery of care. Involves a network of traditional doctors and a referral system. It is based on the ecosystem, and fauna, flora, natural resources, and spirits that interrelate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Education System</td>
<td>Based on reproduction of forms of knowledges and practices acquired through legends, myths, and advice. One learns by doing, and through family and community socialization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Organization</td>
<td>It is based on the concept of “taya” that links all those who depend on ties with relatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tala Mana</td>
<td>The community justice administration system based on the principle of community equilibrium and harmony. Transgressors of the norms of community unity and ethics must “pay” for their misbehavior with a sanction defined by a judicial authority, the WIHTA and his advisor group (elders, community authorities).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The principle of the common good is linked to protection and adequate use of the community’s natural and cultural patrimony. Territory, natural resources, language, knowledges, and practices regarding production, health, alimentation, and forms of life all make up the community. Hence, the commonweal helps to guarantee economic, social, and cultural reproduction for the people.

In the case of the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua, rights based on ancestral property on ancestral territory are now guaranteed in the autonomy statute of the Nicaragua Caribbean autonomous regions. Important steps are now being taken in demarcating territories and titling lands in territories of different indigenous peoples. By February 2010, 10 land titles had concluded the process of formal legal recognition by the State: six in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region, two in the Special Regimen Zone and two in the South Atlantic Autonomous Region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Territory by region</th>
<th>Communities benefited</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Size by hectare</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>RAAN:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td>Kipla Salt Tasbaika Kum</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5,164</td>
<td>113,597</td>
<td>1,135.97 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.</td>
<td>Li Lamni Tasbaika Kum</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9,103</td>
<td>138,227</td>
<td>1,382.27 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.</td>
<td>Wangki Li Aubra</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7,991</td>
<td>88,434.78</td>
<td>884.36 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.</td>
<td>Awas Tingni</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4,164</td>
<td>73,394</td>
<td>733.94 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.</td>
<td>Mayangna Sauni As</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>163,810</td>
<td>1,630.10 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.</td>
<td>Sikilta</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>43,241.40</td>
<td>432.41 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>RAAS:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td>Awaaltara Luhpia Nani Tasbaika</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9,679</td>
<td>241,307</td>
<td>2,413.07 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>ZONA DEL REGIMEN ESPECIAL:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td>Mis/kitu Indian Tasbaika Kum</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>65,230</td>
<td>652.30 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.</td>
<td>Mayangna Sauni Bu</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>94,838</td>
<td>948.38 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>TOTALES:</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>53,580 habitanes</td>
<td>1,023,068 has.</td>
<td>10,210.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All of the above are interwoven into a system of ancestral communal institutions that are linked to municipal and regional territorial administrations. Efforts are also underway to establish the interfaces and interactions in the administration of health, education, community justice, and elections of authorities. All that can be considered as a framework for governing from within.

There is another development sphere that extends “outward” and is focused on relations with the government or state, and with other actors. In those cases the indigenous peoples assume roles to manage and negotiate in function of collective interests, for example, for the granting of economic concessions or massive use of resources, whether by the community or by external actors.

Following the destruction caused by Hurricane Felix in September 2007, the communities and regional authorities agreed to use the felled timber for construction of individual housing and/or community infrastructure. In a complementary way, the surplus fallen timber was prepared for sale to buyers from outside the communities and the region.

Both internal and external relations have gone on to form part of the Nicaraguan constitutional framework, in which development results from balanced, multiethnic and multicultural relations in the context of the right to self-determination through the regional autonomy statute. This opened the doors to the right to be citizens with current access to power and the right to take their own decisions.

The following traditional practices further and better illustrate our development concept and its dynamic.

The catch from hunting or fishing is usually shared or exchanged among community dwellers: meat, grains, fish, tubers, wood. Hunting and fishing both take place in time and space within the territory. The two activities are never repeatedly carried out in the same place, and the incidence of choosing an already used zone is low. To that end, distant grounds are selected far from each other. That sometimes involves spending days away from the community. This practice implies collective labor among various men. It strengthens community unity and allows for the transmission of knowledge between generations or others, regarding nature management.

In contrast, for example, in the Rama villages and communities the extraction of oysters from the Bluefields Lagoon is an
activity carried out mainly by adolescents, women, and children. It takes place very close to the communities. The same happens with coconut picking by indigenous littoral communities. In all those cases, there is a high sense of collectivity in the work and in the distribution of the fruits.

In the beginning the humid tropical forest—or the pine plains, lagoons and littorals, keys and inlets, in addition to the riches found in their high biological diversity, and that from outside could be regarded as something greater and more wholesome than a mega supermarket—represents the survival and development of the culture, spirituality, alimentation, shelter, working instruments, home, health, and education of indigenous peoples. This forest gifts each and all who know how to relate to its spirit.

This development model is now threatened “from the outside.” It is menaced by deforestation of watersheds and river basins, resulting from the invasive presence of colonizers who are pushing the agricultural frontier deeper into our territories. It is also undermined by chemical contamination through abuse of agrochemicals in highlands whose residues drain to the coastal lagoons and inlets, poisoning everything in their way. The effects of climatic change are now being felt in our territories through bigger and more frequent hurricanes and floods, putting biological diversity and crops at risk, and ultimately the lives and wellbeing of indigenous peoples.

In summary, Buen Vivir or good living for indigenous peoples still presents historical challenges and tasks such as territorial recognition. Peoples cannot understand the right to Buen Vivir when our territories are constantly threatened and appropriated by national and international companies, and when conditions of the quality of life get progressively worse. Indigenous peoples’ life expectancy index has dropped from 100 years in the past to the current 50 to 70 years. And, we can be sure that future generations will have an even lower life expectancy.

When education continues to have a western focus; when our languages are on the road to becoming extinct; when we indigenous women continue to be relegated to the private sphere; and when so-called intermediaries very far removed from us do not recognize our rights to enjoy Buen Vivir—we then have cause to conclude that there is still a long distance to go and that we still have to travel against strong adverse currents.

Faced with these gigantic threats, what can we actually pass on as a heritage to younger generations, if not but to refurbish our living vision that encompasses our profound sentiment for Buen Vivir?

Endnotes


2 There is not really any English equivalent in the idiomatic sense. “Good living” does not have the same sense, partly because terms like it and the “good life” have all been tainted by the egoistic and consumerist culture of capitalist civilization, explained in the paper. There is a term from the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism—“commonweal.” It is the source of the word Commonwealth, as in the British Commonwealth (Mancomunidad). But its original meaning was much similar to the indigenous concept of Buen Vivir, that is living together and sharing the wealth, conceived not just as consuming things but enjoying social life in the community of associated producers and members. The Oxford entry for the term: commonweal/kommunweel/noun (the commonweal) archaic the welfare of the public. Oxford uses the term welfare in its sense of “well being,” not charity or government handout.

"Tivoli meeting on indigenous peoples and self determined development. Tebeebba. 2008.

These terms refer to the organizational and communitarian forms of the Andean peoples of South America.

The term “multiverse” used by Choque (2010) alludes to the multiple ways of seeing and conceiving life, and not to “universe.” The latter alludes to a sole truth or way of viewing life that everyone must follow.


Luis Maldonado. Conference during the presentation of the Project for Development with Identity of the Fondo Indigenam (Proyecto de Desarrollo con Identidad), Panama, 2009.


CICA. 2008.


The 2008 Constitucion Politica de Ecuador incorporates nature’s rights. The UN General Assembly approved a resolution on MOTHER EARTH. The government of Nicaragua is promoting a Charter on the commonweal (Buen Vivir).


Fidencio Davis. Elementos para formular el plan de desarrollo del territorio Mayanga Sauni As. URACCAN, 2009.

Signifies Prime Territory of the Mayanga Nation.

Maldonado, 2009.


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For example, in the Miskitu people’s culture, the water spirit is Liwa Mairin—that can be translated as the siren mother; trees, plains, forests have spirit protectors.

Idem.

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It is a concept of the Kuna-Panamá people that signifies tree of salt, and is significant in the preparation of a new authority. The balu wala must be for all, with rights equality and in harmony with nature.

Idem.

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Human Development Framework and Indigenous Peoples’ Self-Determined Development*

by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

The lingering global economic recession, the ecological disaster due to climate change and biodiversity loss, the destruction of ecosystems, and the inequitable access to and distribution of land, food, water, energy and social services are all interrelated and can no longer be addressed fragmentally. While many studies and analyses have explained why these problems persist, very few holistic and bold proposals have been put on the table to address their structural roots. In the last three decades, countless multilateral, plurilateral and civil society processes dealt with these issues globally and regionally, resulting in legally binding agreements, political declarations and programs of action with implementing mechanisms at all levels. However, no serious or successful attempt has yet been made to assess what they have so far achieved or where their recommendations converge and can contribute to a more holistic solution to the problems we face.

Major disunities still exist in dealing with the structural roots of these problems. And we lack the political leadership and boldness in declaring that the world’s prevailing economic, political and sociocultural system has broken down and needs to be replaced with one which respects human rights and the limits of our planet. Perhaps, what is required is to choose the analyses

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Pastoral Accumulation: Arrested Self-Determined Development in Ethiopia

by Melakou Tegegn

Pastoralism is one of the major traditional ways of life and a sustainable livelihood system in Africa. Millions of people in Sub-Saharan Africa live a pastoral way of life, from the Tuaregs and Fulanis of West Africa, the Afars and Somalis in the Horn of Africa and the entire Sudan, to the Massai and smaller pastoral communities throughout the Horn and East Africa. For centuries these communities practiced pastoralism but colonization disrupted it in the name of "modernity," negating it as backward and subjecting it to extinction.

British colonialists pursued a policy of wiping out pastoralism, confiscating pastoral land and natural resources in the guise of treaties or outright eviction. In Kenya, lands of the Massai and other pastoral communities as well as forest lands of hunters and gatherers were all taken over in such a way. A similar pattern followed in Uganda where British colonial authorities adopted a policy of confiscation of the ancestral land of the Karamojong. In Ethiopia, anti-pastoralism has its own historical roots. The Muslim sultanate that arose in the 15th century and went to war with the Christian kingdom for almost a century basically emanated from the pastoral area of Eastern Ethiopia. In all these countries, appropriated lands were converted to game reserves, national parks or private holdings for white farmers, and thus began the construct and institutionalization of pastoralism as an inferior and backward economic system and way of life.
In the postcolonial period, the African “state” literally stepped into the shoes of the colonial state as far as pastoralism, freedom and development were concerned. In Kenya, the “state” replaced the colonial powers in taking possession of parks and wildlife reserves as well as in grabbing ancestral lands of pastoralists and hunters and gatherers. It also left huge tracts of land confiscated by colonialists in the hands of white farmers. Continuing land confiscation, the new political elite in the Kenyan state used political power as a major vehicle of wealth accumulation and ethnicization of power. A similar pattern unfolded in Uganda where the government carried on the anti-pastoral policies introduced by the British. In Ethiopia too the imperial government of Haile Selassie maintained the age-old anti-pastoral construct but gave it a new tone: “pastoralism is not conducive to development and growth that it needs to be transformed into a farming community.”

Throughout these countries, such prejudices were and still are passed down through the mainstream education system, mass media and other forms of communication. That explains why mainstream African elite and intellectuals continue to be shaped by this same colonial construct on pastoralism. The following instance shows how pervasive the colonial construct still is. In 2008, two major newspapers in Uganda, The Monitor and Vision, widely covered the crisis that erupted when a pastoral community in Western Uganda refused to abandon an area they had just moved into because of drought. Not a single article took the viewpoint of the pastoralists.

The three postwar governments in Ethiopia are no exceptions either. The imperial government of Haile Selassie systematically marginalized pastoral communities particularly the Afars and Somalis for political reasons. Detached from the central government, the Afars have always been considered rebels because they refuse to abandon their way of life including their traditional system of governance. The case of the Ethiopian Somalis is different. The Somali nationalist movement that formed the Somali republic in Mogadishu in 1960 had earlier broader aspirations to unite the five major Somali communities: in “British” Somaliland, “Italian” Somaliland, Djibouti, Ogaden (Ethiopia) and in what was called by the British as the Northern Frontier District (Kenya). Consequently, two major wars erupted in the 60s between the Ethiopian government and the Somali republic, the latter undoubtedly supported by the Somali community in Ethiopia. For this reason, the Somalis in Ogaden came under suspicion and were subjected to brutal repression. While not involved in a secessionist activity, one of the biggest pastoral communities in Ethiopia, the Borana Ormos, were nevertheless similarly suspected because they were supportive of the Italians when Mussolini’s Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935.

The pastoral communities in the Southern region of Omo, bordering Kenya and Southern Sudan, were completely forgotten. When images of South Omotic people started to be portrayed for the purpose of tourist attraction, in much the same way that Kenya does to the Massai and Samburu, people in the mainland were surprised that such people had lived in Ethiopia and are indeed Ethiopians. The Omotic people were also subjected to the most degrading form of repression as some of them were forcibly taken by the nobility under the imperial regime, and made slaves.

When the military regime came to power in the wake of the overthrow of the imperial regime, the conditions of the pastoral communities did not change. They remained excluded and marginalized, and the hostile relations with the Afar and Somalis continued. This led to a number of political movements, such as the Afar Liberation Front and the Western Somalia Liberation Front. The military government did not have the slightest idea about pastoralism, let alone develop a policy on it. The current regime of the EPRDF, basically highlander and chauvinistic towards lowlanders including pastoralists, is no different from its predecessors when it comes to pastoralism. Its primary agenda is that pastoral communities have to change their livelihood system and become farmers.

However, due to the enormous policy advocacy done by pastoral NGOs and donor pressure to a lesser extent, the regime
pretends to have “accepted” pastoralism. It formed a department within the ministry of federal affairs called Pastoral Development Department. It also appropriated Pastoralist Day, started by the national NGO network, Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia, when the prime minister addresses pastoral elders, using the occasion for grand propaganda. But the basic policy of settling pastoralists and converting them to farmers remains the same.

Yet despite this negative government policy, the pastoral livelihood system has great potential both for capital accumulation and economic growth that can contribute to social development. In this respect, it holds much greater economic promise than the farming community, but the regime’s infamous strategy for rural development does not count this reality and instead relies on the economic surplus supposedly “generated” by the small peasant landholding system.

**Self-determined Development under Pastoralism**

African pastoralism is a particular way of life whose livelihood system is mainly livestock production. Other pastoral systems exist such as among the Saami of Northern Europe (Norway, Sweden and Finland) who live traditionally on reindeer herding, the Mongolians on cattle breeding, and some communities in the Philippines on mobile fishing.

The pastoral community in Africa is huge and encompasses a wide territory. A livelihood system based on livestock breeding has to practice transhumance or seasonal change for grazing lands, as people have to move from place to place in search of water and pasture for their animals. When the rainy season ends in one area, they seek another place where water and pasture still abound. Sometimes in periods of drought, the movement brings them to areas inhabited by farming communities. Pastoral communities resorted to such a livelihood system, given the harsh environment they inhabit and its unsuitability to traditional farming.

Pastoralism is not just livestock production but a way of life with forms of social organization including traditional institutions of governance. The rules governing these traditional structures are all defined to protect the pastoral livelihood system and make it sustainable. Different pastoral communities have different social organizations and structures, but the fundamentals are similar. Somalis and Afars have very similar ways of social organization, while Boranas and Omotic have their own distinct systems that differ from those of other pastoral communities.

What is unique about pastoralism is, unlike the small peasant landholding system, it generates a sustainable way of life nurtured by a rich indigenous knowledge system. Since the environment and water in particular are vital in sustaining life in traditional formations such as the peasant production system and pastoralism, protecting the environment should constitute a key component of their knowledge systems. In Ethiopia, environmental preservation does not exist in the peasant’s knowledge system but is crucial among pastoralists. Among the Afar, for instance, cutting down a tree is punishable by a fine of one cow. The Boranas also have a wealth of indigenous knowledge on preserving river water and water sanitation.

It is with such knowledge systems that pastoralists have managed to maintain their way of life for centuries. It is only recently that recurring droughts due to climate change and shrinking natural resources have restricted their movement, resulting in up to 90 percent of livestock loss in the severest droughts. We can see that it is external factors, such as climate change and declining resources, that are causing pastoralists to lose livestock in times of drought; otherwise their coping mechanism is well known.

The biggest challenge facing pastoralism in Africa is the phenomenon of modernization. As we have seen above, the colonial construct on pastoralism, inherited by the post-independence state and internalized by the political and intellectual elite, persists to this day in the name of modernity and development. According to this construct, the pastoral way of life is primitive,
barbaric and must be put to an end. But then, what should replace it? Governments merely say pastoralists should be settled and become farmers, an idea the EPRDF regime in Ethiopia pursues religiously among the country’s some 10 million pastoralists. But is there any concrete study to show how these millions should transform into a totally different livelihood system that requires its own institutions completely alien to them? There is none.

Even if we agree that pastoralists have to settle for the sake of development, there are crucial questions that need to be addressed. First, a clear development strategy has to be mapped out as to how this transformation from a pastoral to a peasant system should take place and how it benefits the pastoral community. Secondly, if pastoralists have to farm like peasants, how should land distribution be worked out since they own land communally? Thirdly, pastoral land has to be examined in relation to whether or not it is suitable to traditional/peasant farming. Fourthly, because of the sudden nature of transformation, is there any contingency plan to ensure it takes place smoothly? The EPRDF government appears not to have made any such preparation or considered any of these crucial issues. It simply wants pastoralists to become peasants out of the blue.

But why is there an insistence for pastoralists to become farmers when Ethiopian peasants are extremely vulnerable, particularly in times of drought, which is becoming more frequent with climate change and increasingly followed by famine? Under the current land tenure system, peasants feel little responsibility to take care of the land as required because the government has ownership of rural land. Today, in addition, they till tiny plots of an average 0.6 acre whose yield is so low that they are unable to exchange goods beyond what they need to survive for the rest of the year. It is on such conditions of farm production that the much publicized government strategy of rural “development” hinges. And it is this same vulnerable system of production that the regime wants pastoralists to convert to.

From the point of view of self-determined development, the pastoral livestock production system and way of life is much more sustainable than that of the peasantry in present conditions in Ethiopia. For such a poor country whose government cannot provide the entire infrastructure required for the transformation of pastoralists to peasants, the best alternative is to support pastoralism and assist its communities to hurdle the challenges induced by external factors. Pastoral self-determined development can be a source of capital/wealth accumulation that can boost rural development and industrialization. The first step forward is livelihood diversification through livestock trade. What pastoralists need is the setting up of market mechanisms, which can be provided by local authorities or NGOs.

Pastoral livestock production is essential for sustaining the livelihood of pastoral communities, and in fighting poverty and destitution. In a country with the highest level of food insecurity such as Ethiopia, livestock production can contribute greatly to economic growth and social development, and if it spreads in the region, to regional development as well. But to achieve this, pastoralism as a viable way of life should be recognized officially. African governments seem to have problems with pastoral mobility, but this is essential for pastoral livestock production. In addition, “it is a pre-requisite for promoting trade both within and between countries and to access international markets. It is essential for the maintenance of high livestock productivity and for coping with climate change. It needs to be secured both locally and cross-border, and between pastoral and non-pastoral areas. Failure to do so is a major contributor of insecurity and conflict, particularly in East Africa and the Horn” (Pastoralism Fact Sheet 1, CELEP-Cordaid, 2009).

Mobility has another exceptional contribution. It has been scientifically proven that mobile livestock is much healthier than ranch cattle, producing better quality meat and milk. As the same Pastoralism Fact Sheet notes, pastoral “…livestock are able to feed on a diet that is substantially richer than the average nutritional value of the range they live on. They can thus attain a much better level of nutrition than livestock feeding off natural pastures that remain in one place. And this means their livestock
are more productive—producing more milk and meat than sedentary animals reared in the same environmental conditions.”

In spite of these advantages of pastoral livestock production, the Ethiopian government appears bent on wiping out pastoralism. It has adopted a rural development strategy called Agricultural Development-led Industrialization (ADLI). Under this strategy, agriculture refers solely to peasant agriculture, and the small landholding peasant is expected to produce surplus, accumulate wealth and diversify livelihood, thereby generating industrialization. The problem with this strategy, however, is that it banks on the peasant whose life has become more precarious by the season due to less and less yield because of the constricting area for cultivation and recurrent drought. It depends solely on something that the country obviously does not have: surplus grain. Yet Ethiopia has until recently been the top cattle producer in Africa, and comes second to Sudan today. Ethiopia is known to have livestock but not grain, but why the government ignores this and relies instead on a product it does not have remains a riddle.

Pastoral Accumulation

What makes a discussion of pastoralism, pastoral development and strategies difficult is that it constitutes a “new” terrain in development discourse, and more so for pastoral accumulation as it is unheard of. That by itself generates resistance as mainstream development discourse has always been disinforming by the dominant discourse on development. Further, pastoral development is not in the books or part of classical economic theories. Neither Adam Smith nor contemporary champions of neoliberal economics have written about it with the exception of Marx who wrote on the Asiatic mode of production with reference to Mongolian pastoralism. The dominant discourse or theories simply do not recognize it or see it as something worthy of consideration. Pastoralism appears condemned to extinc-

tion. Who would care whether it survived or how viable it could become? Who would then consider the notion of accumulation out of pastoralism or that a doomed system could ever be a basis for capital accumulation? It is such notions that challenge any discussion on pastoralism and pastoral accumulation.

It is the contention of this paper that pastoral accumulation is possible and likely to be more feasible and contributory to the national economy than other traditional economies if equal attention is paid to its development and rendered the necessary assistance. Needless to say pastoralism, threatened more than ever, requires government support especially in terms of policy development and implementation of concrete measures that encourage pastoral accumulation.

Livelihood Diversification

The process of accumulation in traditional formations such as pastoralism and peasant system begins with livelihood diversification. A catchword these days, livelihood diversification cannot be attained without a comprehensive approach and necessary support mechanisms put in place. The most crucial element in enabling it is assuring ownership of the most important component in the means of production; i.e., livestock in the case of pastoralists, and land in the case of peasants. Ethiopian pastoralists are placed in a much better position than their peasant counterparts as livestock is still in their hands (not nationalized) and the land is not privatized although traditional communal ownership has not yet been restored.

Secondly, after more than a century of systematic marginalization by central governments that was actively supported by modernization projects of the World Bank and African Development Bank, pastoral life has been severely threatened without an alternative being provided. Pastoralists were pressured to change their way of life, but so-called modern political governance and social institutions and enterprises, such as commercial farms and wildlife parks, were all alien to
pastoralists. Neither did they benefit from these institutions in terms of employment and social services. This alienation has created a situation where pastoralism, though threatened by modernity, was maintained.

It is important to stress that pastoralists are not resisting change, only that which is imposed on them. Like all societies, pastoral society is dynamic and passes through change. The challenge is to recognize the tempo of organic change and adopt a policy acceptable to the community on one hand and realistic enough to generate economic surplus on the other. What is crucial in generating livelihood diversification is precisely the recognition of this fact: a policy that is accepted by the community.

In the process of livelihood diversification, individual members of a given pastoral community will only resort to move towards another form of life and/or production system when they have some form of confidence and trust—much like in a social contract—in the existing macro-economic policy. In other words, the individual pastoralist who has a large herd of cattle must say to himself: “Yes, now I can move to a different trade.” This trust is absolutely essential to the process of livelihood diversification.

It is indeed clear that the process of pastoral accumulation that starts from diversifying livelihoods first of all requires a conducive policy environment. Good governance is at the core of the process, and as one of Ethiopia’s chief maladies is the disparity between policy rhetoric and implementation, this requires putting appropriate institutions in place. Good governance cannot be achieved merely with pious wish on the part of policy makers. Undoubtedly a fundamental weakness of the government, good governance is a huge undertaking that calls for rapprochement and mutual recognition and dependence between the government and pastoralists. Such an arrangement is the key to solving other chronic problems, such as conflict, that impact on the process of accumulation and social development.

Institutions of good governance are important in livelihood diversification, which generates economic and social develop-
Livestock market mechanism

The fundamental demand of pastoralists has always been a market for their animals. Unheeded, they have been compelled to sell their livestock in faraway markets, even resorting to cross-border trade with neighboring countries such as Kenya and Sudan. As this way of livestock trade has never been beneficial to them, they have persisted in their demand for a better market. The lack of markets and related trade mechanisms, such as facilities for dry meat processing (for local market) and modern meat processing (for export), have debilitating effects when calamities strike like long droughts that wipe out cattle, sometimes up to more than 90 percent. This constitutes a huge loss in cash and assets.

That an effective livestock marketing mechanism is crucial to pastoral communities is indisputable, for three main reasons: (1) for pastoral food security in normal times, (2) as leeway in times of drought, and (3) for pastoral accumulation.

1. Pastoralists enter trade with other communities by exchanging their animals for grain and other necessities. In view of the dynamic nature of pastoral life, they feel secure if they acquire cash that enables them to cope with the fast changing environment. Sending their children to school and having access to modern medical facilities are among the requirements to cope with changes, even if such education entails changes in the way of life of their children. Pastoralists have equal rights with farmers, who are accorded all the support the government can muster, to be assisted in gaining access to the market. To lead a normal life, they need a market mechanism like all others who are disposed to sell their surplus.

2. In periods of long droughts, pastoral cattle are at risk of being decimated. In the 1997 drought, the Borana pastoralist community lost close to 97 percent of its livestock. At that time their worry was not to save the animals, which by then was too late to do, but to save even a few for future breeding purposes. The big problem pastoralists face is how to dispense with their cattle in the face of such disasters. To address this, several NGOs have initiated a project in which pastoralists process dry meat in exchange for cash. Setting up a market mechanism for pastoral livestock would also be helpful in times of calamities, as it would reduce the urge on the part of pastoralists to overstock and encourage them to try another trade.

3. Most importantly, an effective mechanism is needed for the process of livelihood diversification that leads towards wealth accumulation. A number of conditions may drive pastoralists towards diversification, namely, the threat to pastoral life resulting from external dynamics and the dynamics of change itself. If good governance is institutionalized and imbued with a pedagogic mission that we are going to describe later, pastoral confidence and trust will grow, which facilitates the move towards a different trade. The mentality of traditional communities is not easy to change or to do it from a distance. Pastoralists want to see that institutions of governance are there to help them, their children and the community. Where past governance has been unpopular and aloof, much is expected from the government in terms of policy and concrete practice to prove that it stands with and for the community.

Effective and efficient livestock marketing mechanisms play a crucial role in the pastoral accumulation process. Their establishment will encourage pastoralists to start diversifying their livelihood and through time start accumulating in a different trade. This paper contends that pastoral accumulation has a better chance of success than other subsistence economies due to some leverage that pastoralism has. These advantages are:

- As cited earlier, until very recently Ethiopia had the largest cattle per head in Africa. Cattle are the country’s wealth and what it is known for. And it is a huge wealth that has to be appreciated and tapped. As an Amharic saying goes: “A bronze at hand is equivalent to gold.” Livestock is Ethiopia’s gold, and developing a strategy
of accumulation on the basis of availability of wealth is a natural course.

- Compared to the process of accumulation based on crop cultivation, pastoral accumulation requires less capital investment. All that pastoralists have to do is to bring their cattle to the market, and all the government has to do is set up a market mechanism.

- Compared to the peasant sector and given required assistance by the government in water harvesting, pastoral livestock production presents less risks.

- If properly strategized, there exists a vast natural resource to support pastoral accumulation. Many of the country's great rivers pass through pastoral land, and natural resources abound to complement and support livestock trade.

- Given the high demand for organic meat in industrial countries, Ethiopia can generate high foreign exchange earnings if it develops the cattle export trade.

- If the government encourages private business or itself invests in meat processing plants and other accessories, such as leather, this can accelerate the marketing and trade of pastoral cattle. This will in turn boost the financial capacity of the community and enable it to diversify their livelihood, provide education to their children and have access to modern medication.

- Having witnessed the precarious nature of peasant agriculture, there is an increasing interest by donors in pastoral development. This can enable the government, with a proper pastoral development strategy, to have access to funds.

Tasks of Government

Indeed, what we described above cannot be realized without the active and conscious role of the government. There are crucial areas where government can make interventions to assure the success of pastoral efforts towards livelihood diversification and accumulation. Let us broadly enumerate these tasks which are strategic and historical:

Policy consultation. It is absolutely imperative for the government to set up policy forums where pastoral development strategies and policies can be discussed at the federal and regional levels. At the federal level, a national pastoral development policy forum can bring in all stakeholders of pastoral development including academics. At the regional level, the forums can look closely at the development process in the respective regions.

Conducive environment. As described above, an enabling policy environment is a crucial component for the pastoral accumulation process.

Livestock Trade Promotion. The government needs to conduct intensive, effective and professional trade promotions of livestock, leather and associated commodities, particularly in Western Europe and the Arab World. It has to target specific countries where it can have market access. Needless to say, this task could pose challenges as European Countries follow a policy of protecting their agricultural sector, thus lobbying through civic organizations in Europe is important.

In the Arab World and in the Gulf countries in particular, a livestock trade boycott was called against Ethiopia for fear of Rift Valley fever that beset neighboring Kenya. Under such circumstances it is crucial to launch trade promotion campaigns to assure that such cattle diseases do not exist in Ethiopia.

Livestock health. In the face of the existence of various forms of cattle diseases that can also affect humans, it is vital to have a large-scale and permanent campaign to assure livestock health. The government has to invest in training programmes to produce veterinarians and community animal health workers, liberalize its rules and allow veterinary privatization through a credit system, institutionalize a system of surveillance of diseases, and other similar measures.
Supporting programmes. Like it does to peasant communities through its agricultural extension programmes, the government also needs to support the pastoral livestock production system. It has to promote human health services, education system and mobile schools in particular, water development and similar activities.

Cooperation with NGOs. Nongovernment organizations have an immense role to play in pastoral development. The government has to recognize this and undertake active cooperation with them. NGOs have the expertise and experience in pastoral development that the government can tap and cooperate with.

Macro interventions. Ethiopia’s pastoral regions constitute the most marginalized in every sense: education, health care, public administration, access to justice, and the like. This is where tremendous development work should be done particularly in view of the pastoral potential for accumulation. The government needs to place qualified personnel in its administrative and project structures: technocrats who understand pastoralism and have a positive attitude towards it and who appreciate its untapped potential. Education curricula need to be reviewed and adjusted to the pastoral indigenous knowledge system and in line with their way of life. Apart from putting market mechanisms in place, the government also needs to focus on other investment sectors that can galvanize the accumulation process and facilitate the condition for livelihood diversification. Such is the strategic approach that the government should adopt if it is serious in beating poverty in Ethiopia.

Conclusion

We have seen the huge potential that pastoral accumulation has if the proper focus and attention is given to its growth. We have also seen how precarious the peasant sector is and that banking on this sector for wealth accumulation or generating industrialization is sheer fantasy. At the center of this entire problem are the nature of governance and the dictatorial policies of the regime. The space for participation for the nascent civic sector has shrunk after the aborted 2005 elections in which the ruling party stole election results and claimed victory. That was followed by a massive clampdown against the opposition and all those who criticized the regime, notably the private press and advocacy NGOs. The regime came out with new laws to close these down, virtually quashing any critic.

The onslaught against the nascent civic sector includes the closure of and/or restriction on pastoral NGOs. The government focused specially on the national pastoral network, Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia, and is increasingly making it defunct. It compelled the network to change its vision and objectives and pushes it more and more towards becoming an appendage. It hijacked the Pastoralist Day started and organized by PFE and turned it to an annual government circus. In short, the government appears to be stifling other views than its own, let alone permit any criticism or policy advocacy work. That has hampered the effort in pastoral development in Ethiopia and deprived the country of one huge potential for development.

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ewoloto families, and project management was ill equipped to monitor these arrangements.  

The challenge in developing veterinary services (and for Ereto II) is to provide support in a way that helps private vets build up sustainable practices, employ reliable assistants and build consumer confidence in the quality of service. This support may require a long time frame, and will need commitment from the NCAA and Ngorongoro District council to limit the monopolies presently in place.

Impact of Component 4: Empowering local institutions and communities

While empowering local institutions and communities was the specific focus of this component, it was also one of the outcomes of the restocking and water and pasture development components. The restocking process strengthened community leadership (both customary and formal) as trust was established between the project and community members at every level. By mobilizing people to contribute livestock and facilitate the social programme, the restocking exercise strengthened traditional leadership roles and made local people active participants in the process rather than passive beneficiaries of it. Reviving social institutions, encouraging communities to participate in their own development and thus increasing their capacity to take charge of it, are all forms of social empowerment that have positive emotional and psychological effects on individuals and the community as a whole. This was reinforced through training on human and land rights, which increased people’s ability to understand and operate in the political sphere.

The distribution of ewoloto livestock to destitute households headed by women was particularly helpful in empowering women. There were women on every ewoloto, water user and grain distribution committee, and this helped promote recognition of their potential to contribute to development activities, but it is also clear that it is crucial to maintain the focus on gender issues and re integrate women’s demands into the development process. By listening to and including women, the project was able to redirect water development interventions to include delivery of water for domestic use, so that the home-based grazing systems could be sustained and families less exposed to the stress of moving to access food.

Involving pastoralist communities in the identification of strategic development and priority needs has improved water and grazing resources for livestock production and helped reduce conflict between pastoralists. Participation in the development process increases their technical skills, enabling them to access information and knowledge and acquire skills in animal health, water management and information sharing. It also made the outcome of this process more sustainable, because communities: a) contributed to the development of the water delivery infrastructure, b) own the water infrastructure, c) can manage and repair the delivery system, and d) because water and pasture resources are protected by village by laws. Some communities are now independently managing the construction of new, self-funded water development schemes.

However, although the project has enabled communities to participate in decisions regarding their own self-improvement, they have often been frustrated by what they understand as a lack of goodwill and cooperation from the NCAA, its far-reaching powers over access to natural resources and its resistance to other actors operating in the area (such as NGOs or researchers). So, while communities may know more about their rights, there is still a feeling that they are not permitted to enjoy them.

The Lessons Learned from Ereto I

Twelve lessons with policy implications were learned from the fieldwork, interviews and workshops held during the consultancy. These are key pointers for future implementation,
research and analysis, are critical for focusing attention on pastoralist livelihoods and production, and have significant implications for developing informed messages that can improve policy dialogue on pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood.

**Lesson 1: Building on customary mechanisms to alleviate poverty is effective, and supporting customary poverty alleviation mechanisms has positive, far-reaching impacts on communities**

The project built on a customary poverty alleviation system (*ewoloto*) and provided additional support to tackle the prevailing poverty among pastoralists in NCA: first, by contributing half of the animals required for the restocking; second, by supplying restocked households with maize for three years; and third, by providing veterinary services for *ewoloto* livestock for two years.

The key to poverty alleviation in this context lies in ensuring that target communities are in charge of the design, implementation and monitoring of all activities. This helps minimize mistakes, improve design, build genuine partnerships and trust, and increase the ownership and sustainability of the intervention. Building on locally accepted mechanisms is of crucial importance.

**Lesson 2: Reducing poverty through restocking limits pastoralists' vulnerability to shocks and confirms pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood**

One of the indicators of success for restocking is that families manage livestock independently and are able to pay for essential services such as schooling and healthcare. *Ereto* records indicate that restocked families experienced a net gain of 34 percent for cattle and 46 percent for their goats over a period of three years, proving that they were able to manage a productive herd successfully.

The revitalisation of customary restocking interventions throughout NCA has lowered the number of unproductive people that livelihood and production systems have to support, and reduced the burden of poverty on individual herd owners. This means that in general, households are now less vulnerable to poverty-related contingencies, and that people can better invest time in production and livelihood strategies and afford to assist poor relatives.

**Lesson 3: Developing water points to ensure mobility within pastoralist grazing systems is vital for sustainable pastoralist production**

Mobility is crucial in dryland regions because the primary production of pastures is determined by the huge variations in altitude, soils and rainfall (which varies between and within seasons). Pastoralists use seasonal grazing strategies to track these resources and avoid the impacts of drought and disease.

Over time, their access to grazing and water resources has been limited by NCAA regulations, deteriorating water supplies, wildlife and cattle raids. As pastures become limited, livestock and communities are increasingly vulnerable to shocks caused by drought, hunger, poverty and disease. When drought forces them to break the rules, herders invariably come into conflict with the NCAA. In order to improve the situation, Ereto I rehabilitated several defunct water supplies and developed new water resources to increase the amount of land available for grazing.

Providing strategic and reliable water supplies that are designed to enhance herd mobility and allow pastoralists to track available grazing resources has had a positive impact on production. It is reported that livestock and pastures are more productive, livestock are healthier and that there are fewer conflicts. Investigations by the study team suggest that longstanding rotational grazing regimes can be re-established and that the allegedly negative impact of grazing on the environment and wildlife habitats can be limited through collaborative efforts to establish and maintain strategic water supplies.
Lesson 4: Improving domestic water supplies for households and livestock is essential in order to enhance livelihood and food security

PLA work with communities showed that the first priority for both men and women in pastoralist communities is a reliable, year-round domestic water supply to cover household needs and service a small household herd.

The impact of improving domestic water supplies so that families can remain in their homes is considerable: there is less stress on the household, children can attend school throughout the year, young livestock are properly sheltered, old people and small children do not have to leave home, property is not lost or stolen, and so on. Importantly, water near the home also increases food security, as the necessary livestock can be kept near the home and continue to produce milk.

Lesson 5: Community involvement in developing water supplies increases social responsibility and improves livelihoods

When Erceto I agreed to construct a pipeline from the Ilangaar’tutukie spring to Meshili village, local people constructed a seven-kilometer road by hand so that the cement, pipes and other equipment could be carried up to the spring. They did this on their own accord, with no advice or training from the project. Similarly, when the project agreed to rehabilitate the Endoldol pipeline to supply Ngoile village, local people dug trenches and raised money to change the direction of the pipeline so that it better served their needs. Both villages elected water committees to agree on the design of the pipeline, oversee community contributions and labor and manage the pipeline infrastructure.

The shift from functional participation to self-mobilization in building the pipeline has had a positive effect on the villages' capacity to mobilise for other things; and levels of trust, responsibility and organizational skills were enhanced through project efforts and the experience of working with water and evroleto committees.

Lesson 6: Water supplies for extensive pastoralist grazing regimes must be reliable

Livestock are usually only watered every second day during the dry season, when they are taken to graze one day and watered the next. In some areas with no standing water, such as the Gol Mountains and Kakesio, water sources are scarce and livestock have little or no opportunity to graze while tracking water points because of the distances involved. They become vulnerable to disease and shocks under these conditions, so it is essential that the source they are tracking will deliver water.

The case study on the Kakesio windmill clearly shows that pastoralist communities are not prepared to invest in unreliable water delivery systems. Although community leaders were ready to collect money to pay for the regular maintenance and minor repairs required by wind-powered pumps (and had done so), they were not willing to repair the wind pump when it became clear that there is not always sufficient wind in Kakesio to power it. Instead, they planned to use the money collected to build a small dam.

Case Study 1
Impact of water development on services in Meshili and Ngoile villages

- In April 2001, Erceto finished constructing the Ilangaar’tutukie pipeline to Meshili village and rehabilitating the Endoldol spring pipeline to Ngoile village.
- Prior to this there was no water available in Meshili and little available in Ngoile. Without water being available, it was difficult to get teachers to live in the villages. The few teachers required that each child brought a container of water each day for the teachers, in addition to their own drinking water needs. This meant that children often came late.
- Before the water was provided by Erceto, the clinic demanded that patients supplied their own water needs,
and even simple treatments were constrained by lack of water.
* Now teachers are willing to work in the villages and children have their water needs satisfied. And now clinic staff can perform their duties and patients have better access to treatment.
* The community at Ngoile, having finished the pipeline, decided that they would build their own school. The children had to walk eight kilometres from Ngoile to Mshili and some of the children came from beyond Ngoile. With experience of organizing, laboring and raising money for the pipeline, and with water available for building, the village set about building their own school. The school now functions and school teachers are prepared to live there, even though it is remote. The village is proud of its school.
* Both Mshili and Ngoile have a strong representation of women on the water committees, some of whom are *ewolot* recipients.
* Both Mshili and Ngoile have several *Ilaiywanak* (customary Maasai age set leaders) on the committees, representing all age sets.

**Case Study 2**

**Kakesio windmills**

In 2001 Ereto I rehabilitated a deep borehole in Kakesio, originally established in the 1950s as part of the Serengeti compensation scheme. Ereto installed a wind driven pump, cattle troughs and domestic points. Prior to installation, it was agreed between communities, Ereto and the water engineers that the wind pump be installed as an experiment as wind supplies in the area were not recorded or well known. A water user committee was elected by the user community and registered with the village council. The pump was installed by technicians from the neighbouring ward in Manyo District, so spare parts and technical expertise was available close by. Community members were trained in windmill and pipe maintenance. The tank and troughs were installed in collaboration with the water user committee. On completion in April 2001, the windmill and infrastructure was handed over to the water user committee.

In April 2005, interviews showed that communities in Kakesio knew that the windmill was their property and their responsibility, and that there was a committee responsible for maintenance. The windmill had broken down and the committee had collected three million shillings (USD3,000) to repair the windmill. However, at a village meeting, it was decided that the windmill might not be the most appropriate means of solving water shortage problems of the area because:

1. the rods broke down regularly
2. the windmill needed a lot of maintenance
3. there was not always enough wind to drive the pump, making water delivery unreliable

As the communities pointed out, "especially in the dry season, water supply for livestock has to be reliable because they are only watered every other day & already stressed. If there is no water for them when they have trekked many kilometers to drink, they may die."

It was therefore decided that the money collected to repair the windmill should be used for other water development projects. Community members want to use the collected money to experiment with the small rock catchment water harvesting arrangements for domestic water proposed in the water inventory and feasibility study commissioned by Ereto I.
Lesson 7: The key to developing sustainable water supplies in pastoralist areas is to engage with customary land and water tenure arrangements

Fieldwork in NCA suggests that customary arrangements for managing water and land use are still respected in parts of the Gol Mountains, Meshili, Kakesio Ward and most of Nainokanoka Ward, and that livestock keeping has little or no negative impact on the environment. Customary leaders control access to water and pasture resources across NCA, and these controls are quite effective if they are recognised by outsiders.

However, there has been a significant increase in cultivation in areas where these rights and regulations have been eroded and challenged through outside influence, and invasive unpalatable species now dominate pastures where rotational grazing is no longer practiced. Therefore, it was important for the project to identify customary arrangements for managing land and water, to ensure that interventions fit within the local framework and are consistent with existing values.

During the information sharing workshops the project was advised to use a broader approach that incorporates customary systems into interventions, so participatory methodologies were developed to enable all sections of society to take part in the design and monitoring of project activities. Customary leaders are active in water user committees in most areas where Ereto I completed water development interventions. This helps ensure that interventions are consistent with local values and arrangements, although more research is needed to understand the committees’ roles and mandate and identify the many challenges they face.

Community leaders were trained in PLA and reportedly some are still using the exercises in planning work with the communities within their own wards (e.g., Oibalbal).

Figure 2. A map drawn by elders in Mokilal, showing natural resources, human settlement and water development.

Some PC and NCAAA staff were also trained in PLA techniques. However, despite the training neither body has utilized participatory methods in land use planning and zoning, or applied them in their new General Management Plan. A much longer time period is required to establish genuinely participatory integrated land use planning in NCA.
Lesson 8: Clearly defined and respected ownership of water resources promotes sustainable water delivery for pastoralist production and livelihoods

Water management schemes involve many actors, and it has to be made very clear who the beneficiaries are to prevent powerless individuals or the local elite from appropriating interventions (this also applies to restocking). One of Eretu I’s most critical tasks was to actively promote ownership during the design and construction of water schemes, and to transfer ownership of water resources to the registered water user committees once the works were completed. More analysis is needed to understand the dynamics of these committees and learn what makes some work and others not function well or at all.

Despite investing heavily in water development and putting a lot of effort into working closely with communities, there have been problems managing some of the completed water schemes. For example, once the project was phased out of the Nainokanoka pipeline, certain village councils tried to take control of water resources that had been handed over to water user committees—leaving the communities struggling to retain control over the operation and maintenance of their new water system. The same thing happened in Endulen, where the dam at Ngarusi was in poor condition. However, in other places, communities were able to retain control over their water resources and manage and maintain the infrastructure.

The status of communities, village governments and other institutions in the overall framework of the NCA Ordinance is an important issue, as individuals and communities alike are uncertain about their rights and obligations as residents of NCA. Although there are registered villages with legitimate village governments, it is debatable whether village by-laws or other village-based regulations are binding within the legal setup of NCA, and whether customary arrangements are recognized. Communities in NCA need to be better informed about their (institutional) rights in order to develop effective strategies for establishing sustainable land and water management regimes.

Lesson 9: ECF immunization increases pastoralist production, allows for selective breeding and higher off-take, and can provide the basis for private veterinary practices

Research in NCA shows that the tick-borne disease ECF was the greatest killer of livestock in the area, and that immunisation can reduce calf mortality rates from 70-90 percent to just 4-7 percent per annum. Pastoralists from all over NCA report that immunized calves grow faster, breed earlier and are more disease resistant than those that have not been immunized. Higher calf survival rates allow them to breed cattle for desired characteristics such as milk production, ability to withstand drought, etc., and increase off-take from their herds, as they can sell livestock while maintaining a large enough herd to make a livelihood.

In 2003 the private veterinary practitioner contracted by Eretu I to treat ewoloto livestock reduced his sales outlets and drug stocks in an attempt to make the exercise more profitable. He continued to provide ECF immunization across NCA, and said that this generates enough income to maintain his other distribution and service outlets in NCA. In 2005, ECF immunization cost 6,000 TZ shillings (US$6) per calf, payable in cash.

Lesson 10: Outreach CAHWS linked to private veterinary services are essential for effective veterinary services in pastoralist areas

The private veterinary services supported by Eretu I show that if effective and reliable drugs are available to treat livestock, pastoralists are prepared to pay for them. However, to be sustainable, the service has to be: i) appropriate to the pastoralist production context, and ii) given effective policy support.

When the project stopped providing material support and other handouts, the PVP found that sales were insufficient to keep him operating full-time, although he still has sales outlets in most of NCA and comes to the area to immunize cattle against ECF. There is unfair competition from the District Veterinary Officer and his assistants, NCAA staff, small-scale entrepreneurs
selling drugs at markets, small shops in NCA and herders returning from markets with veterinary drugs.

Pastoralists suggested a two-pronged approach to veterinary support:

1. Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) can play a vital role in improving livestock production in pastoralist areas. These are trusted and capable herders selected for training by the community; individuals who know the conditions and constraints to livestock production, are skilled animal handlers and can ensure that drugs are available where necessary because they come from the pastoralist community.

2. The PVP for the locality should preferably be a local pastoralist with a sound livelihood in the area. This would make PVPs more likely to remain in NCA and better able to cope with seasonal fluctuations in drug sales, as they would have a parallel livelihood option (keeping livestock). They might also accept payment in kind for drugs and services, which would help herders with cashflow problems.

The Government intends to provide guidelines, a training curriculum and a legal framework for CAHWs to operate in. This will make it easier for Eredo II to support PVPs by working with CAHWs, and improve the viability and sustainability of the initiative. However, the challenges of passing legislation and securing effective commitment and further support remain. At present, government-employed vets and veterinary assistants are dispensing private services in pastoralist areas with impunity. With no competition in pastoralist areas like NCA, government employees will continue to provide inadequate services and pastoralists will carry on treating livestock diseases themselves.

Lesson 11: All users, including women, should be involved in developing project activities to reduce the risk of interventions being appropriated by powerful groups

This lesson is critical in reducing the risk of powerful groups appropriating interventions for their own economic or social benefit and excluding the less powerful. Lessons 4 and 7 above (where ownership of water development schemes is disputed despite the project attempting to involve a broad range of stakeholders) illustrate the dangers of consulting only small groups or excluding certain sections of society. This usually means that users are excluded from managing the resource, so it is not maintained and falls into repair.

There were also reports of people trying to cheat the ewoloto programme in its early days. For example, “A” would lend poor person “B” some livestock so that the project would match them as part of the ewoloto restocking exercise. Once “B” received the livestock from Eredo, “A” would reclaim the loan, leaving “B” with the animals purchased by the project—or half of what he or she was supposed to get. Apparently a number of people tried this, but on each occasion “A” was shamed into retracting the loan or making it a genuine gift once the community became aware of their scheme.

Lesson 12: Women are empowered through restocking

Eredo restocked 3,400 poor and destitute households, 55 percent of which were headed by women. Restocking these 1,859 women seems to have had far-reaching impacts, although they are not well documented in project reports. However, fieldwork for the study clearly indicated that restocking women changed the way that they were perceived, and that they had benefitted from the project policy that women should own outright any livestock they received through the restocking programme.

The restocking programme revealed that pastoralist men are willing and able to work with women on poverty reduction and other development activities. Even though water committees are
traditionally a masculine domain in pastoralist areas, women were readily accepted onto them once the idea that they can effectively contribute to development activities gained ground.

Lack of education was another factor limiting pastoralist women's participation in project management, which was dominated by pastoralist men. This had an impact on the kind of activities that were planned, although women did become more vocal and demanding at community level, and the drive for inclusion in project activities tended to come from men and women in local communities rather than the project. This was attributed to the new sense of women being able and willing to contribute to development. Women also started to contribute regularly to the public debates and meetings that play an important role in pastoralist communities, and which are only open to cattle owners. Promoting methodologies like PLA gave illiterate women their voice and enabled them to articulate their ideas for project implementation. In Kakesio, where these methods were regularly employed, women became Community Animal Health Workers, despite initial resistance from the project management.

Traditionally, livestock belong to and are managed by men. This is still largely the case for cattle, although women do have use rights to livestock products and in practice also manage part of the herd and monitor livestock diseases. Although the women who received cattle through Ereto I did not always secure more than use rights to these animals, they tended to have greater rights to livestock given through the project (especially cattle), adding rights of disposal and management to their customary use rights. These changes were more likely to be supported by the community if they had a positive impact on poverty alleviation.

Understanding of women's roles in pastoralist production and livelihoods has been very poorly documented, and certainly requires further research. The general lack of understanding about gender in pastoralism has led to the proliferation of myths and assumptions about pastoralist men and women, which serve to further marginalise women and lead to them being progressively less heard or consulted. Ereto I attempted to remedy this situation by taking a practical approach to working with pastoralist women on poverty reduction and supporting local demands for women to be given first priority in the restocking exercise.

Key Policy Implications

Poverty reduction and the sustainable management of the environment in pastoral areas are two key objectives of Tanzania's National Strategy for Growth and the Reduction of Poverty:

"...promoting efficient utilization of rangeland, empowering pastoralists to improve livestock production through improved access to veterinary services, reliable water supply as well as recognizing pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood..." [endnote: NSGRP, 2005].

EREOTO I's field experience provides a set of lessons with which to shape how in practice the government's commitment to supporting pastoralist livelihoods can be implemented. The three most significant concern: (i) pastoral poverty, (ii) water and range management, and (iii) adopting a livelihoods approach.

- Understanding how to reduce pastoral poverty has been in the forefront of government and donor policy debate for many years in Tanzania and East Africa. EREOTO I's experience with the restocking component revealed a good deal about the specifics of pastoralist poverty, such as what constitutes a minimum viable herd for pastoralists. Livestock have multiple roles in the pastoralist economy (among others, subsistence, capital investment and insurance needs), and it is clear that to be viable, a minimum herd should consist of more animals than those needed for immediate living requirements. The roles of livestock are varied, complex and will be specific to each family and location. It is also important to consider the age/sex ratio of the herd as well as the
number of livestock required, since different categories of animal are needed for different roles—largely to act as insurance by mitigating risks, but also to allow for regular off-take for sale and consumption.

Herders’ management objectives are also an important factor that needs to be taken into account when trying to improve pastoralist livelihoods. Pastoralists seek to maintain an optimal balance between pastures, livestock and people in a highly uncertain and variable environment, to meet both their immediate and future livelihood needs. This involves maximizing the size and the returns from their livestock herd in good years to generate a surplus for the inevitable bad years. These returns are not simply the accumulation of livestock, but also the relationships and social networks that will prove significant factors in the survival of the family and their herd during times of drought, disease or raiding.

• Integrated range and water management. Another area of policy concern has been how best to manage rangelands in a sustainable manner. One of the most tenacious misconceptions about pastoralists is that they are nomadic, haphazardly graze their animals and keep as many animals as they can for prestige reasons alone, and in the process spread disease, cause conflict and degrade the natural resource base. Many policies in Tanzania contain specific mention to all or some of these preconceptions and propose measures to address them including instructions for pastoralists to settle in one place, practice sedentary livestock keeping and to sell their surplus animals.

ERETO’s work on the range and water component demonstrated how pastoralists in Ngorongoro have very complex grazing strategies that make good use of rangelands in response to seasonal and inter-annual variations in the quantity and quality of pastures and water. Through livestock mobility, animals are able to graze on rich wet season pastures during the rains while retreating to specific strategic areas during the dry season (e.g. highlands). These grazing strategies may cover large distances, but pastoralists are not nomadic per se. Each family has a home (boma) from which livestock are herded along different routes according to season.

Furthermore, grazing is strictly controlled, particularly in the dry season when resources are scarce. Although resources are shared between different users at different times of the year, rights of control and access are not equal. Local communities have primary user rights to resources within their customary area of residence, while visiting families have to negotiate secondary user rights to water and pasture. ERETO I’s work on water and participatory rangeland mapping also demonstrated the critical links between water rights and range management for the sustainable use of pasture, improved livestock productivity and peaceful co-existence of different communities (e.g., water rights normally determine who can access range).

• Adopting a holistic approach is critical. ERETO I’s work confirms that to address pastoral poverty and strengthen pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood system a holistic approach is critical. Pastoralism is not just a traditional form of raising livestock. It is a livestock-based livelihood system regulated by ecology with complex modes of social, political and economic organization with the capacity to adapt to changing environmental and socio-economic conditions. If fully supported, it has the capacity to contribute significantly to the local and national economy in Tanzania. The system rests on three central components:
  □ The sustainable management of natural resources, including grasslands, browse and water in an environment characterised by low, irregular and scattered rainfall.
  □ Resilient livestock herds and sustained productivity
in the face of environmental variation.

- Functioning social institutions to regulate labor, livestock production, marketing and rules of access and control over natural resources.

To support pastoralism effectively, policy and practice have to address all these three components in an integrated manner in recognition of its systemic nature.

Using the restocking component as an entry point to directly tackle the unacceptable levels of poverty in Ngorongoro in a very practical and immediate way, ERETO I also addressed the other key components of the pastoralist system through its water and range management, veterinary services and community empowerment components. This holistic approach was critical to the project's success in reducing poverty while building the resilience of the pastoralist system to such external shocks as drought and disease.

Endnotes

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
5 2003 National Census.
7 NSGPR 2005.
8 Mattee and Shem (2005); Brehony, Mattee and Nang’oro (2004).
15 IIED (1994).
17 Scoones (1994).
19 Scoones (1994).
20 ERETO II NPP Project document, p. 89.
22 United Republic of Tanzania (1990).
24 Lane (1995).
27 McCabe (2002).
28 ERETO I Project Document p. 89.
30 These were supposed to compensate the Maasai who had been moved from Serengeti to NCA for the loss of the permanent waters of the Moru Springs in Serengeti. Several schemes, funded by taxes raised from Maasai pastoralists, were completed in the 1950s (Fosbrooke, 1962).
31 They feel that they have more influence within the NCAA than outside it. Moreover, operating as independent agents could deprive them of benefits of up to 600 million TZ shillings a year, which they now administer as part of the NCAA.
32 ERETO NPP. Report of the gender study, Stella Maranga, MS-TCDC, December 2001; “What residents say about ERETO performance and possible expansion of the programme”
- workshop held on 11th
33 The 2004 assessment report on the veterinary services component of ERETO I notes poor accounting systems, non-compliance with PVP contracts, lack of quality control, poor quality drugs, etc. This prompted another review of the veterinary services through a consultancy study at the onset of ERETO II.
34 For example, the local NGO PADEO received a written reprimand for “sneaking” into NCA in early June 2000 to deliver training on land rights; HAKIARDHI was not allowed to run the land rights training re-
quested by the PC in 1999; and some anthropology researchers were prevented from conducting their studies in 2002.

This is illustrated by an anecdote from one of the elders in NCA: “Ngorongoro is full of wildlife so NCAA bought a bus, from revenue collected on our account, to take their staff’s children to school every day so that they do not get killed by wildlife. But our children do not get such privileges. Don’t the lives of our children have value?”

Workshops held in Endulen on March 30, 2003 and Dar es Salaam on May 24, 2005. See also draft report for a full list of the people met, workshop reports and a full list of the literature, including all documents produced by Ereto I.

Such as the Project Completion Report October 2003.

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Potkanski, T. 1997. Pastoral economy, property rights and traditional mutual assistance mechanisms among the Ngorongoro and Salei Maasai of Tanzania, PLT Series Monograph 2, p. 134. IIED.


Self-Determined Development: Lessons from Kalimantan Credit Union Movement*

by John Bamba

... the word “development” in its Pali equivalent means “disorderliness” or “confusion”... Ivan Illich once told me that the Latin word progressio, which is the root of “development,” can also mean “madness.”

Sivaraks, 1992: 35

Ever since the word “development” was introduced and used as frequent jargon in international affairs and diplomacy after World War II, it has widely spread, much like a religion, to become part of the dominant vocabulary. Development has been used by several dictatorships to suppress any critic to their anti-democratic policies. Under Soeharto’s regime in Indonesia, questioning any project or activity carried out in the name of “development” was considered a subversive act against the State and the government and could mean ending up in jail.

Experts all over the world have tried to define “development” and clarify what Ivan Illich believes “can also mean mad-

*This paper was first presented at the International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples: Development with Culture and Identity, Articles 3 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples held in New York on 12-14 January 2010.

Taking the case of Indonesia as an example, its 1945 Constitution recognizes the Indigenous Peoples (termed as “Customary-law Communities”) under four conditions:

1. that they still exist;
2. that they are in accordance with the development of societies, times and civilizations;
3. that they are in accordance with the principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia; and
4. that they shall be regulated by law.

This constitutional recognition is undeniably an advanced “development” that has given Indonesian indigenous peoples some freedoms, but at the same time the conditional recognition leaves them with no opportunities to exercise those freedoms. Therefore, the legal recognition, even when stated in the Constitution, becomes useless. It may after all be a “devil’s gift.”

As indigenous peoples, we have experienced, witnessed and become victims of this so-called “devil’s gift” of developmentalism. In the name of “development” our lands are taken over, our homes destroyed, our Mother Earth raped and ripped. In many places in the past, our brothers and sisters, including women and children, were even killed or tortured, kidnapped and brainwashed. Perhaps the most recent shocking case is The Guardian report about “A Peruvian gang that allegedly killed people and drained fat from their corpses ....which exported the amber liquid to Europe as anti-wrinkle cream.” The gang has been dubbed the “Pishtacos” after an ancient Peruvian myth about white colonialists who killed indigenous peoples, quartered their bodies with machetes, before extracting the fat and turning it into a range of perfumed soaps. A situation which is best described by Boris Pasternak as “...the bare, shivering human soul, stripped to the last shred...” (Pasternak, 1958:394).

However, the world has also been witnessing a constant and uncompromising commitment of struggle for change by indigenous peoples and their non-indigenous supporters. For more than two decades, our struggles have been able to achieve the most important thing real “development” can offer: “opportunities.” Opportunities that challenge us to exercise our “freedom” and thus bring us to the real fruit of “development.” The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) on 13 September 2007 by the UN General Assembly’s 61st Session provides vast “opportunities” to exercise our “freedom” and our own “development” model—self-determined development.

However, besides this achievement from our struggle, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also poses challenges. It is an undeniable fact that not all UN member countries supported the Declaration, among them the United States, which plays the most important roles in present world affairs, along with Canada, Australia and New Zealand (known as CANZUS group). At the national level, each of us is also experiencing a number of challenges, even if our government is among those who support the Declaration. The right to self determination (Article 3 of UNDRIP) remains a big problem for most of our governments, but indigenous peoples welcome it as the most important “opportunity” to push for the kind of development they want.

“Development with Culture and Identity:” Philosophies and Spirituality

Development with Culture and Identity, also referred to as Self-Determined Development, is based on the mandates emanating from Articles 3 and 32 of the Declaration. These are mandates “...for the development or use of their [indigenous peoples’] lands and territories and other resources.”
“Lands, Territories and Other Resources” are indeed the three most important elements which determine indigenous peoples’ culture and identity. However, these are at the same time the three most important interests and objects of “development.” And this has become the heart of the matter, the source of conflicts and challenges for indigenous peoples all over the world, in the past, at present and in the future.

“Development” is undeniably a foreign concept for indigenous peoples. It is something we have to approach with extra care, critical minds and determination for one simple reason: to make sure it brings us the freedom and the opportunities it is capable of offering. We have to avoid accepting any form of “development” that initially or eventually brings the opposite impacts: exploitation, destruction, appropriation of our lands and natural resources, and cultural genocide of our indigenous identities, in most cases for the sake of economic and political interests. Even with the concept of “sustainable development,” we have to make sure that all the economic, ecological, social, cultural and spiritual benefits are taken into account. None of these should be sacrificed or ignored for the sake of economic benefits alone because it would be contradictory to the real meaning of “sustainability.”

Drawing from the lessons and experiences in Asia, in particular of the Kalimantan (Borneo) indigenous peoples, this writer has summarized the “Seven Fortunes” (Bamba, 2008:241-249) received by the Dayaks (Kalimantan indigenous peoples) that cover the main principles and philosophies of their natural resource management. These Dayak principles and philosophies could offer some criteria and indicators for our self-determined development or development with culture and identity. Unfortunately, these are often in direct opposition to the activities of the “global development model” implemented by most governments and developers around the world.

The seven principles and philosophies are briefly summarized below:

<table>
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<th>Dayaks Self-Determined Model</th>
<th>Global Development Model</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. SUSTAINABILITY (BIODIVERSITY)</td>
<td>versus</td>
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<td>2. COLLECTIVITY (COOPERATION)</td>
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<td>7. CUSTOMARY LAW (LOCALITY)</td>
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**Sustainability (Biodiversity) versus Productivity (Monoculture)**

Sustainability and productivity are hard to compromise. Sustainability demands biological diversity, resulting in relatively lower outputs, while productivity needs massive, large scale, single type product to flood the market in order to generate cash income. The Dayaks’ rubber gardens and rice fields are two examples of how this biodiversity principle is essential in their philosophies. The rubber gardens are very rich in biodiversity since rubber trees grow with other tree species in the forests. The Dayaks need not clear an area to plant rubber trees, thus reducing environmental loads and preserving biological diversity.

The priority for biodiversity also manifests in the rice fields where the Dayaks grow not only paddy rice but hundreds of different local crops. But both Dayak rubber gardens and rice fields are being destroyed on a massive scale by monoculture plantations, such as palm oil and industrial trees. Having adopted
the global development model, the government, which is developing these huge monoculture plantations, argues that rubber gardens and rice fields are "unproductive."

Collectivity (Cooperation) versus Individuality (Competition)

The philosophy behind the principle of collectivity is that the world is home to all beings, not only humans, animals and plants but also spirits. Interdependency and coexistence occur not only among human beings but with non-human beings as well. Nature is managed by considering this coexistence. Opening an area for human interests and needs should be done by taking into account and respecting the interests of other beings. Before the Dayaks clear an area for a rice field, they perform a ritual to seek permission and agreement of the spirits which they believe might exist in that place. Omens and auguries are their media of communication. On the other hand, working on a rice field, building a house, dealing with sickness or death and celebrating a wedding are all done collectively by the members of the community.

This is one of the reasons why Dayaks live in longhouses. They are not used to competition and working individually. Rather they live in collective spirit and cooperation to manage their wellbeing. That is why they are not the favored choice of plantation or mining companies who have complained that the Dayaks are less disciplined, less intelligent and lack formal education to meet their required criteria. Companies instead employ migrant workers and the more companies operate, the more migrants flow into Dayak villages and territories. Indeed, indigenous peoples including the Dayaks are bad competitors and are always left behind in the competition over natural resource utilization.

**Naturality** (Organic) versus Engineered (Inorganic)

"Naturality" here should be understood as a philosophy to interact with nature based on its laws and carrying capacity. The ethic and moral behind it is that human beings should not exploit nature more than its capacity, and no matter how sophisticated, advanced and mighty the technologies and knowledge they have achieved, human beings cannot live without nature. The key words are "to manage and to maintain/preserve" nature at the same time, and these two actions are inseparable as prerequisites to avoid overexploitation and trespassing the limits of nature's laws and capacities.

This philosophy rejects overexploitation, which is based on greed rather than mutual benefits and coexistence. It rejects any form of genetic engineering of human and non-human beings as well as the green revolution that pollutes nature with man-made chemical substances, such as fertilizers and pesticides. Indigenous peoples believe that human sufferings in the form of natural disasters, the spread of new and incurable diseases, extreme hunger and poverty are the result of humans' failure to manage and maintain nature based on its capacities.

**Spirituality (Rituality) versus Rationality (Scientific)**

Spirituality is manifested in various rituals performed to maintain human beings' connection with nature and other beings. By performing rituals regularly, human beings tell, teach and remind themselves about their interconnectedness and interdependence with nature. Rituals also serve as a medium to enhance their capacity and understanding about "the way of nature." In the global development model, these are perceived as extravagant activities, irrationality and a sign of backwardness, as its underlying belief is that nature is to be conquered through the advancement of science and technologies, and rationality is the symbol of现代化 and an educated/civilized society.
Process (Effectivity) versus Result (Efficiency)

The consistency in performing various rituals shows how "process" is a top priority for Dayaks. Effective results are obtained through a consistent process, which sometimes goes through long and complicated steps to maintain the connection with nature and other beings. The effectiveness is determined by the process that is carried out; thus, what is done should be effective. In comparison it is the results that matter in the global development model, and they should be achieved as efficiently as possible to boost production. It is no wonder then why indigenous peoples' natural resource management systems and their way of life are under massive attack and destruction all over the world by global development activities.

Subsistence (Domesticity) versus Commerciality (Market)

The Dayaks believe that living in prosperity means living in harmony with nature. Overexploitation and mistreatment of nature will cause sufferings, miseries and disasters for human beings. Thus, wealth possession must have its limit. Money is a tool not the goal of life, and the goal is the quality of life rather than quantity. Human beings have four main needs on earth: physical survival, and sustainable, social and spiritual needs. The management of natural resources should be limited to the fulfillment of these four basic needs. Life should not be based on and driven by greed.

The choice of living a subsistent life where the use of natural resources is confined to domestic needs is the manifestation of this philosophy. Although the Dayaks also produce some local products to sell or barter with other villages, production is limited and controlled based on the principles and philosophies they believe in. When commerciality is pursued to fulfill global market demands as demonstrated by the global development sys-

tem, overexploitation of natural resources is unavoidable and the earth's carrying capacity is broken, resulting in one problem after another for human beings.

Customary Law (Locality) versus State Law (Global)

Customary laws (Adat) serve as the basis for controlling and safeguarding the harmonious relationship among human beings and their relationship with other beings and nature. Customary laws do not only involve penalties and punishment for wrongdoers but also a process of reconciliation and healing the disturbed relationship with nature caused by breaking commitments to their principles and philosophies. Therefore, customary laws are not universal laws and do not deal with universal norms and values, but rather are regulated based on local context and driven by local necessities. In comparison, State laws are not only meant to protect national interests but are also influenced by global concerns. Some State laws on forestry, investment and trade, for instance, tend to protect global interests rather than those of the people in a country.

However, customary laws also have weaknesses. When an authoritarian ruler is in power, the dispensation of justice is in his hands. Non-members of a specific community or outsiders also tend to underestimate customary laws. Since fines imposed under customary laws are relatively low, non-members tend to undervalue them. On the other hand, some community members themselves could also commercialize them for their own benefit, neglecting or ignoring the moral value of punishment under customary laws.

The above seven principles or philosophies are under threat by the global development system and may soon be found only in history books in school and university libraries. As we are witnessing and experiencing from day to day in our own community, the struggle is like that of "the elephants and the ants." Most governments, backed by police and military forces, are supporting multinational corporations and financial institutions.
to take over the management of natural resources from indigenous peoples. Three major development activities are now carried out in indigenous territories: monoculture plantations (for biofuels and pulp/paper), mining and logging. The “ants” have to continually fight these “elephants.”

However, as indigenous peoples’ various achievements especially at the international level open up opportunities for them, the concept of self-determined development could be continuously explored, promoted and exercised. The Dayaks’ seven principles and philosophies clearly show how self-determined development differs from the global development model. These philosophies could be further enhanced with the richness of knowledge and experiences of other indigenous peoples in the world.

Dayak Credit Union Movement: Empowering and Liberating

Self-determined development can only be achieved if it is rooted and emerges from the indigenous peoples themselves. It should be an initiative undertaken by, from, and for the indigenous peoples. Outsiders could give support by offering alternatives and sharing experiences or facilities. A fine example of an harmonious collaboration and initiative is the Credit Union Movement developed by the Dayak in Kalimantan. Initiated in 1987 the movement has grown impressively and spread all over Indonesia, and various groups have even come from overseas to learn about it.

As with the notion of development, the credit union is not originally a Dayak concept. As is widely known, the urban credit union was first developed in Germany by Franz Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch in 1852, and the rural credit union in 1864 by Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen, also known as the Father of Credit Unions. The Dayaks only borrowed the credit union’s financial management system to create their own model based on their cultural values and principles.

Credit unions were first introduced to the Dayaks in the early 1970s by the Catholic Church. In 1975, 95 credit unions were established all over West Kalimantan, but only five remained in operation after one year! The credit unions during this period were based on the original model and the Dayaks had to adapt to it. The failure of this first credit union movement shows how a foreign development model has a slim chance of succeeding when introduced and implemented without considering the local culture and identity.

In 1987 the nongovernment organization, Pancur Kasih, established its own credit union with a totally different approach and philosophy. It saw credit unions as a tool and as such, should be adapted to the needs of the users and the purposes to be realized. Human beings (members) rather than money are the target and goal. To Pancur Kasih credit unions are a tool for empowering and liberating the Dayaks from the many grave problems they face, such as poverty, lack of education and healthcare, as well as investment for their own and future generations.

The philosophies adopted in the Pancur Kasih Credit Union are drawn from Dayak farmers themselves. According to AR. Mecer, founder and chairperson of Pancur Kasih Movement, these are based on four main obligations the farmers must perform in order to secure their living in their community (GPPK, 2009: 127-128). These are: 1) to secure their daily basic consumption needs (Survival Need), 2) to secure the seeds for the next season (Sustainable Need), 3) to perform solidarity (Social Need) with their fellow farmers, and 4) to perform rituals as an obligation to nature and other beings who coexist with them (Spiritual Need). The Dayaks believe these four obligations are the four basic needs that no one should avoid in order to live safely and peacefully. These four needs are then implemented through various products of services provided in the credit union as seen in the following figure.
The Ways of the Farmers

1. Consumption
   (Survival Needs)
   - Saving with Daily Interest (±3%)

2. Seed
   (Sustainable Needs)
   - Saving with Annual Interest (±14-15%)
   - Protected by Insurance

3. Solidarity
   (Social Needs)
   - Funds for Health, Accident and Death

4. Religiosity
   (Spiritual Needs)
   - Funds for Religious, Cultural activities, etc.

However, the question remains: Why credit unions and why should it be something originally from Germany? A quick and simple answer to this is the credit union offers “freedom” and “opportunities” to the Dayaks. It gives them freedom to exercise their cultural knowledge, explore new possibilities in order to respond to new challenges and the opportunities to manage their resources independently and collectively. In the credit union, the Dayaks find a way to exercise their self-determined development model based on their own culture and identity. Although they are using foreign systems of organization and management, they have the freedom to choose which ones are beneficial and contribute to their empowerment and at the same time gain independence in altering the model to suit their needs and local context.

Within the Pancur Kasih Movement, credit unions are all about making changes—changes from the circle of impoverishment, desperation, feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, and from dependence on outsiders resulting from centuries of oppression and marginalization. And the changes have to be done by changing oneself with the help of others. Through this effort, a better quality of life could be achieved and when it happens, it is a liberating and empowering process for the community.

Credit unions are also about managing people. Changing oneself contributes to changes of situation. It is done simply by helping oneself first (1st principle: self-reliance); by helping him/herself, a person is also helping others (by not becoming a burden to others) and making him/herself capable of helping the others (2nd principle: solidarity). No matter how small the potential a person has, when collected with those of others, it could gradually become a powerful force to make changes. When this process is started, grows, and controlled through and backed by education (3rd principle: education), the changes are sure to happen sooner or later. In the education process through various training and discussions, the community tries to change their mindset (that they are hopeless), false beliefs (that they are too poor and uneducated to take actions) and mentality (of dependences) so they can start taking concrete actions together.

As a result of this process of change, the Pancur Kasih Movement Credit Union had reached nearly 100,000 members by the end of 2008 with total assets of more than US$6M (PKCU, 2009). When it was first established 23 years ago, it had only 61 members with assets of US$16. However, the PancurKasih Movement Credit Union is not the only credit union developed and facilitated by the Pancur Kasih Movement. By the end of 2008, the Movement had set up a total of 54 credit unions all over Indonesia in 13 provinces in nine islands, with a combined total membership of almost 500,000 (496,007) and total assets of US$313M (BKCUK, 2009).

The success of PancurKasih Movement Credit Union is clearly seen not only in its numbers and assets but also from a comparison with other credit unions in Indonesia. By 2008 Indonesia had 851 credit unions with a total 1,154,208 members and assets of US$ 575M (CUCO-Indonesia, 2009). Although Pancur Kasih’s 54 unions comprise only 6.3 percent of the overall number of credit unions in Indonesia, they have almost half of the entire credit union membership in the country and 54.43 percent of all credit union assets.
Credit Union: Reducing Poverty and Strengthening Indigenous Peoples’ Rights

Two decades of existence of the Credit Union Movement in Kalimantan have significantly changed the way the Dayaks perceive themselves in terms of their own potential and capabilities to make changes. It has opened up new confidence that a self-determined development is possible. Through the credit union, they have been experiencing a new process of development that can empower and liberate them from previous desperate conditions without destroying their identity and culture as indigenous peoples. The credit unions have brought the following financial and non-financial benefits:

1. Financial Benefits

Credit unions have given indigenous peoples the opportunity to secure their future through their investments as members, both in shares and non-share investments with reliable productive incomes from dividends of up to 15 percent annually. As credit union members, they now have direct access to financial sources that they can use to fulfill their needs for better healthcare and education, as well as productive activities to secure incomes for their family with low and reasonable interests (2% that can go lower or 1.5% flat interest rates). Through the spirit of togetherness and working in groups, they have more opportunities to manage community projects that provide better public facilities, such as roads, electricity, clean water. The credit unions also allow them to manage community funds to be used for their cultural and religious activities.

2. Non-Financial Benefits

By having access to financial sources in the credit unions, the communities have found better solutions to address their immediate and emergency needs. People used to turn to the only asset they had to meet their need for immediate cash—lands but credit unions have significantly helped to reduce land sales and extractions of natural resources, such as timber, to generate cash. As credit unions prioritize the continuous education of their members to have sound financial management, the communities are protected from gambling and consumerism. The universal and non-discriminatory values attached to credit unions have promoted peace building and reconciliation in conflict-prone areas, while multiculturalism and pluralism are implemented in concrete actions within communities. These and other contributions the credit unions are able to deliver have strengthened the safety, unity and solidarity of members of the communities where they operate. They eventually contribute directly towards achieving sovereignty and dignity for indigenous peoples.

Conclusion

Credit unions are only one example of a possible self-determined development model that has been implemented by indigenous peoples in Kalimantan and that brings empowerment and liberation. It shows how a “development” model, which originally came from outside indigenous peoples’ culture, could be implemented and transformed in accordance with local culture and identity. It might not be a perfect example and will still have to be tested though time. The development of this movement for more than two decades in Kalimantan, Indonesia has at least taught us a number of lessons, which could be valuable experiences to be shared with indigenous peoples in other parts of the world.
However, as with other development models coming from outside indigenous communities, credit unions should also be implemented wisely and carefully. In places where the communities have been disorganized and have lost their collectivity due to continuous marginalization and oppression, the establishment of a credit union should perhaps be done as a last step. There are a number of challenges that those who decide to implement it in their communities have to face. Experiences have taught us that the biggest challenge is how to manage a credit union within the principles, philosophies and spiritualities of the indigenous peoples. Therefore, credit union movements should be supported through strong community organizing, cultural revitalization and transformation as well as strengthening natural resource management. Credit unions deal with money and when principles, philosophies and spiritualities are replaced by greed and get-rich-quick mentality, they can also become a powerful destructive force for indigenous peoples, showing their real “development” face that is capable of creating “disorderliness,” “confusion” and even “madness.” However, when the community is able to manage a credit union with their wisdom, knowledge and philosophies, it could equally become a powerful tool to foster changes to bring real empowerment and liberation for indigenous peoples.

Endnotes


3 Article 32, point 1.

4 The term “naturality” is used here instead of “naturalism” to avoid it being misunderstood or associated with “fatalism,” which is perceived as “…living in harmony with whatever fate it delivers.” See: Darrow L. Miller, “The Development Ethic: Hope for a Culture of Poverty, University of the Nations.” <http://www2.gospelcom.net/uofn/kona/resources/worldview/devethic.html>.


References


Self-Determination and Indigenous Research: Capacity Building on Our Own Terms

by Dr. Jelena Porsanger

This presentation is on the theme regarding factors that enable or obstruct indigenous peoples’ participation in development processes. I intend to highlight capacity building efforts that provide the necessary conditions for development activities. I argue that there is a need for qualified indigenous human resources in order to succeed in development processes which are conducted on the terms of indigenous peoples. There is also a need for negotiations about research protocols and parameters.

Although I have never been politically involved, I believe that indigenous research in general, as well as my research work in particular, have political impact. I consider indigenous research as a means of empowerment of indigenous peoples through production of knowledge and capacity building. Empowering capacity building means the development of indigenous human resources on our own terms and for our own purposes. These purposes are to continue as indigenous peoples with our own distinctive culture, languages, traditional knowledge, philosophies, and worldviews.