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Perspectives of Poverty Alleviation

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Submitted To The Program Of Organizational Dynamics In The Graduate Division Of The School Of Arts And Sciences In Partial Fulfillment For The Degree Of Master Of Science In Organizational Dynamics At The University Of Pennsylvania
Advisor: Larry Starr

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Perspectives of Poverty Alleviation

Abstract
In this Capstone/Thesis, I present a proposal for a book tentatively called *Perspectives of Poverty Alleviation* in which the argument is made that worldviews, perspectives, and allied unconscious biases embedded in the thinking of people throughout the international development aid value chain have a significant impact on the efficacy of interventions dedicated to alleviate chronic poverty in rural areas that receive the services in Africa. In support of the argument, practical aspects of worldviews, perspectives and selected themes including private sector, development policy, international aid, program and project interventions are explored and offered through storytelling to help in understanding the relationship between unconscious biases, core assumptions and the efficacy of interventions dedicated to eradicate poverty. Finally, a plea is made for the implementation of a systems approach to counter the effect of flawed perspectives and subconscious biases that undermine the effectiveness of poverty alleviation.

Comments
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PERSPECTIVES OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION

by

Josiya E. Taundi

Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics
in the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of
Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2012

PERSPECTIVES OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION

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ABSTRACT

In this Capstone/Thesis, I present a proposal for a book tentatively called *Perspectives of Poverty Alleviation* in which the argument is made that worldviews, perspectives, and allied unconscious biases embedded in the thinking of people throughout the international development aid value chain have a significant impact on the efficacy of interventions dedicated to alleviate chronic poverty in rural areas that receive the services in Africa. In support of the argument, practical aspects of worldviews, perspectives and selected themes including private sector, development policy, international aid, program and project interventions are explored and offered through storytelling to help in understanding the relationship between unconscious biases, core assumptions and the efficacy of interventions dedicated to eradicate poverty. Finally, a plea is made for the implementation of a systems approach to counter the effect of flawed perspectives and subconscious biases that undermine the effectiveness of poverty alleviation.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

At Johannesburg Airport

I had a three hour layover in Johannesburg, on September 7, 2006, before boarding British Airways en route to Philadelphia via Heathrow. To kill time, I went to a cocktail bar to have a drink and sat next to a long haired and sturdy looking white fellow. For some reason his presence conjured feelings that I often get when names like Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Slobodan Milosevic, Hitler, Idi Amin, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, or Robert Mugabe cross my mind. The man ordered a round of drinks for the four of us sitting at the bar counter. We greeted each other and the man introduced himself as Brian van de Merwe. Judging by his last name and accent, he could have been an Afrikaans Boer. He remarked that I spoke very good English with a native Bantu accent. I did not take kindly to the compliment. The terms Bantu and native assumed derogatory dimensions.

After few rounds of drinks the man asked what I did for a living. I told him that I was part of a small development consulting firm in Harare. He asked me to tell him the most recent project that I had done. I told him we had just completed a Sustainable Livelihood Approach study commissioned by the Netherlands Institute for International Development (NOVIB) in four districts in Zimbabwe and I explained to him a few details about the project.

The man decried the failure of development programs particularly for rural areas. He

said since 1957 when Ghana became the first British colony in Africa to attain political independence, Africans and Europeans masqueraded looking for contracts as development consultants. He said the natives still languish in abject poverty in areas that have been served by development projects. He didn't see significant change resulting from the billions of dollars disbursed in the name of poverty alleviation and the high level brain power deployed to improve the situation. All he saw was African and European consultants driving high end SUVs coming and going out of swanky lodges and spending their days in poverty stricken Mpumalanga rural areas.

He said "Look at me. I just have Standard Eight Matriculation and I save more than 250 natives from starvation in the Transvaal. They extract juice for me from fruit and package oven ready vegetables for export to Europe and Australia. I don't understand what African politicians think when they see the failure in front of their eyes. They prefer to shut their eyes and mouth when they know that so much money is being squandered on fruitless activities.

His cell phone rang and I could hear him saying "I am in bar waiting to board Virgin and talking to an African consultant from Zimbabwe. We are having a few drinks together over a chat. Okay, hear from me as soon I arrive in Scotland." He turned to me and said "that's the wife always monitoring my where about and expressing surprise what the hell I am dong having a drink with an African".

The public address announcement echoed advising all passengers travelling Virgin to Glasgow to proceed to the boarding gate and get ready for takeoff. In a huff, the man collected his carry-on baggage and asked who I would be flying. I told him British Airways. He remarked "very risky. I travel Virgin because no one I trying to blow them up. American and

British carriers are targets" and he left. The man's condemnation of failure of aid programs was so powerful and unsettling that it made an indelible mark on my mind and it later inspired and motivated me to do this Capstone designed to look for answers into the questions of failure of development aid.

- The Capstone

This Capstone is a proposal for a book tentatively called *Perspectives of Poverty Alleviation.* The book is a collection of stories and anecdotes meant to influence interventions used to address chronic poverty in rural areas of Africa. The inspiration for the book resulted from my studies in the Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics program at the University of Pennsylvania between 2009 and 2011 which stimulated thinking and reflection on my previous efforts towards poverty alleviation in poor rural communities in Zimbabwe between 1996 and 2006.

Overview of the Proposed Book

The book attempts to explain why poverty alleviation interventions fail to eradicate chronic poverty in rural areas that previously received international development aid, poverty alleviation programs or projects. *Perspectives of Poverty Alleviation* offers a new and exciting dimension to understanding the challenges embedded in diagnosing, seeing, and managing anti-poverty initiatives in rural contexts. The book provides stories whose perspectives begin the analysis and evaluation of the efficacy of prevailing approaches to poverty alleviation interventions. Through stories derived from my previous work experience in the field with staff of development agencies, the hope is to make poverty alleviation players aware of either their unexamined

perspectives or assumptions on the efficacy of the interventions that follow from those mental models. I argue that to understand chronic poverty, donors and field staff need to look at the poverty problem through a systems thinking "lens". The systems thinking lens is both a worldview and a process for looking at wholeness and unity of elements (Teerikangas & Hawk, 2002:13) that interact to maintain the functions of the system. Viewing poverty alleviation through systems thinking lens also implies the ability to switch "positions" depending on whose perspectives you are organizing and managing anti-poverty interventions. A lens can bring openness and clearer definition to ways of reading situations (Packer, 2009:1). Through the lens of systems thinking, focusing on the whole, can lead to better understanding of the poverty situation. A systems thinking (holistic) lens might simplify or amplify answers to the question "from whose perspective is the whole poverty system being looked at?"(Packer, 2009:1). Poverty alleviation agencies and their field staff need to adopt the habit of self-consciously thinking about best perspectives from which to manage a given poverty situation. Stories about poverty alleviation interventions implemented in selected scenarios are presented in this capstone in order to illustrate how systems thinking could be incorporated to counter the impact of unconscious biases embedded in the diagnosis and management of interventions. Comments on lessons that each story teaches follow the narrative.

Readership/Market

Perspectives of Poverty Alleviation is written to appeal to international development aid agencies, donors, policy makers, nongovernmental organizations, government extension services and development workers who wish to enhance their understanding of the reasons behind the persistence of poverty in the communities that they serve. The international development aid section of courses in a university African Studies department could also use the book as a primer.

The book is particularly good for orientation, induction, and training of organizations, agencies, donors or individuals that contemplate or are involved in carrying out poverty alleviation work in rural Africa.

Personal Mission and Experience

My mission is to illustrate the problems that arise when poverty alleviation action is taken based on a single perspective or limited view of causes of poverty in different contexts and when staffs fail to take into account the whole poverty system and the interaction among the entire range of elements that maintain the poverty. I gained the insights from the Organizational Dynamics program and more than 20 years of working in poor, underserved and marginalized communities in Africa where I played different roles primarily as a capacity building facilitator, executive manager, trainer, teacher, link person, aid effectiveness catalyst, and consultant. I have experience in facilitating poverty alleviation interventions aimed at improving the quality of life of poor people in Africa. The majority of the programs and projects from which I gained experience were funded, promoted or sponsored by United Nations Agencies including North American, European Union, British, and Scandinavian-based agencies that operated anti-poverty programs in Africa. I derive additional insights from my current work as a free-lance consultant between 2007 and 2911 when I worked as advisor on designing and developing Africa bound programs and projects on behalf of United States of America based organizations targeting poverty alleviation in poor communities. The projects include a community tree planting program in Uganda; clean water and sanitation for southern Africa, Central America and Pakistan; a Theological Seminary in the Western Cape in South Africa; small sector crop irrigation and poor household agricultural development programs in Zimbabwe. I addition, I also work with a nonprofit called Ehobo to develop maternal and child health care projects for poor

communities outside Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The experience culminated into an arena for rethinking perspectives of poverty alleviation interventions.

Rationale for Perspectives on Poverty Alleviation

A staggering amount of literature condemns nearly half a century of failure of international development aid, poverty alleviation programs and projects, especially those dedicated to eradicate poverty in Africa. Large sums of money and human capital have been deployed to the programs but no significant or sustainable change has been achieved in the communities served. To this end, a new discourse on perspectives of poverty alleviation becomes imperative and I do so through stories as the real engine of world-view change.

Capstone Structure

Four parts make up this proposal. The first part, Chapter 1, provides the background, context, setting, and rationale for writing a book comprising an anthology of stories. The second part, Chapter 2, draws on management science and social psychology literature to help explain the role of perspectives or views from which poverty alleviation interventions are implemented. Chapter 3 explains the role of storytelling in poverty alleviation. Chapters 4 through 14 provide stories that illustrate selected but key perspectives of poverty alleviation and their efficacy on interventions players implement. Chapter 15 concludes this paper by recapping the impact of worldviews, unconscious dynamics, path dependence and how they constrain the efficacy of interventions players implement.

CHAPTER 2

ROLE OF PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Background

My mission in this chapter is to explain why international development aid, anti-poverty programs and projects fail to stop chronic poverty in African rural areas. This chapter provides some of the answers to the question. According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), international development aid started after World War II. The era between 1945 and the early 1960s saw many African nationalists campaigning for political independence and decolonization as the panacea for the continents' social and economic plight. As Third World countries in Africa and elsewhere attained independence, former European colonial bosses devised programs in the form of aid to help develop their former colonies. Unfortunately international development aid and poverty alleviation programs are on record for their fifty years of failure. In Africa, socioeconomic crises continue to worsen in places where development aid has been disbursed and programs run to eradicate poverty. The failure of the efforts has been widely noted (Moyo, 2010; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005:35 -355; Abubakar, 1989; The Economist, November, 2009; Bauer, 1972; Kiffle, 1998; Finsterbusch, 1989; Sims, 2007; Fleming et. al, 2007; Devlin and Yap, 2008; Dicer (2003; Easterly, 200; Abhijit, 2007). The World Bank itself, a leading international development institution, financed and implemented many rural projects that failed in Africa. For example, Cleaver (1997) reported the results of an evaluation of the World Bank's support, for a period of more than thirty years, for capacity building or institutional development in agriculture, integrated rural development, single crop development, agricultural credit projects, irrigation, and social agricultural services in Sub-Saharan Africa. The evaluation

concluded that the projects were largely failures. The Independent Evaluation Group (2001) also noted the failure of the World Bank support to organize regional herders into service organizations or main forces in livestock development in West Africa. The Bank's support failed to create sustainable livestock development institutions or anchor associations. The Organization of African Unity at the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action for Africa for 1980-2000 admitted that the effect of failure of promises of global development strategies was more sharply felt in Africa than in other continents (UNECA, 2012).

Thus, poverty eradication remains a distant dream that many people seem unlikely to see in their lifetime. Far from the traditional focus, providing financial aid, technical assistance, running programs or projects, a new discourse on perspectives of poverty alleviation is envisaged and becomes imperative if the efficacy of anti-poverty interventions is to be enhanced. New perspectives are needed to create new springboards for more efficacious poverty alleviation interventions.

Between 1996 and 2001 I worked for Rushinga Rural District Council as a capacity building facilitator. The job gave me the opportunity to learn about government extension services, nongovernmental organizations, private businesses, and international agencies and how they could be incorporated to bring their knowledge, expertise, capacities, and resources to bear on Rural District Councils' (RDCs) poverty alleviation programs. The experience gave me exposure to a variety of perspectives poverty alleviation players brought to the work. Looking back after the five years, the results are dismal. The social and economic condition of the people in Rushinga and other districts has not changed in any significant way. The evidence is seen in the persistence of food insecurity, lack of incomes, poor water, and lack of sanitation facilities.

Indeed, nearly half a century of international development aid to Africa has not made significant improvement to the quality of life of most rural people.

Is Poverty Intractable?

It is a truism that "poverty has become a global concern" (Stiglitz, 2007:13) and it continues to defy interventions despite big money, advanced technological developments, human capital, and involvement powerful institutional actors. The institutions include The World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and many others working to combat poverty (Stiglitz, 2007).

I argue that it is the prevailing perspectives of poverty alleviation that have remained flawed and development interventions following these perspectives are therefore inherently weak. Unconscious biases and path-dependence dynamics prevent poverty alleviation players from implementing more effective interventions. Path dependence is an important concept in "diachronic approaches to understanding" the dynamics of poverty systems, "social, and political processes" (Kay, 2005). In the path dependence model institutions and poverty alleviation staff are hemmed in to manage change and development along previously established paths (Wilsford, 1994). The paths may no longer serve any useful purpose because poverty systems are as different as there are varieties of social and economic contexts.

Poverty

According to Stiglitz (2007:13) "poverty has become a global concern." Ashley and Maxwell (2001:1) concur that "rural areas are in a troubled state. The evidence of the crisis is seen in the persistence of poverty." Poverty conjures different notions, situations and pictures of deprivation depending on one's perspective. Different perspectives of poverty lead to different

ways of solving the problems. It is not very effective to replicate the same solutions used in one community to another because the elements that perpetuate poverty are often entirely different in different places. Watson (2011) argues that current and widespread failure of rural development is exacerbated by many vague and generalized perceptions of poverty which makes it difficult to implement targeted solutions. A panel of discussants from the Southern African Development Countries met to explore perspectives and concepts of poverty in order to set strategies for combating it (Mwakapungi and Sadza, 2011). The participants at that colloquium acknowledged the diversity of definitions and measurements of poverty due to differences in perception, context and dimensions of poverty in different contexts. However, delegates reached the consensus that poverty was generally a condition in which people have not attained and sustained minimum basic income for survival. In Scandinavian countries, specifically Sweden and Norway, poverty is generally viewed as a problem for children. Children living in homes that receive welfare are considered poor. Juholt (2011), Berglund (2011) say that in Norway poverty is relative. People who earn the lowest wages rarely starve or become homeless. Families may not have much extra money for luxuries like taking their children on vacation but they are not marginalized. In United States, the government determined in 2002 that the poverty threshold for families with two adults and two minor children was $18,244 per annum (Besharov and Germani, 2004:4). Families earning below that figure were regarded poor.

The concept of poverty is not just limited to insufficient income from employment. The United Kingdom's Department of Foreign and International Development (DFID) adopted the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) for rural communities that have no opportunities for corporate employment. The SLA framework takes into account five key community assets: human, physical, social, natural, and financial capital that rural communities could leverage to

achieve poverty alleviation or promote individual or rural community development (http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0901/section2.pdf of November 30, 2011).

Individual and National Development

Poverty and development occur at both individual household and national levels. At the household level development it is concerned more with both deprivation of livelihood means and capabilities of individuals (The American Human Development Project (2011). This organization notes that "the process of development is seen in terms of enlarging peoples' freedoms, opportunities and skills necessary to improve their well-being." Rooted in this perspective is the idea that development may focus on self-development in order to achieve more literate, informed, healthy, food secure and economically active households. Other capabilities central to fulfilling quality of life goals include the ability to participate in the decisions that affect one's life and ability to act on the environment in order to enhance one's benefit, relaxation and to have fun (American Human Development Project, 2011). People capable of acquiring and developing vast capabilities possess the tools to seize opportunities and to achieve their quality of life goals. Development remains unfulfilled if people lack the opportunities, assets and capabilities needed to achieve a decent living. Therefore**,** development is seen in terms of how people are faring.

At a national level, development and poverty are expressed in conglomerate perspectives. These perspectives include life expectancy, income per capita, Gross National Product, daily stock market result, consumer spending levels, and national debt figures (American Human Development Project, 2011). Rural households are not necessarily concerned with defining poverty based on the conglomerate perspective because their activities are not concerned with addressing national issues (Anand & Sen, 1997). Conglomerate numbers are only just the other

side of the economic status of a people. They do not reflect the conditions of deprivation in marginalized and underserved remote rural communities that struggle under peasant farming (American Human Development Project, 2011).

Approaches to Poverty Alleviation and Development

Many approaches and strategies have been advanced in pursuit of poverty alleviation and development in rural areas. Ellis and Biggs (2001) say that the problem of attempting to portray major approaches to poverty alleviation runs into the danger of oversimplification of the concepts. Different disciplines, centers of learning, international think-tanks, international agencies, and governments subscribe to different approaches (Ellis & Biggs, 2001). Critical divergences exist between rural development narratives. However, all of them claim to address the plight of rural people. In the recent past there has seen a shift in rural development paradigms, from the top-down to the bottom-up (participative) approaches. On the other hand major approaches to anti-poverty have tended to reside within institutional and technical options or a combination of both.

Institutional Approaches

The institutional approaches to poverty alleviation are the collectively human devised "underlying glue" (Searle, 2005:9) "of the accepted system of rules (procedures, practices) devised to hold human societies together" (Searle, 2005:21) in order to achieve common development goals. The arrangements enable people to occupy special status and to perform functions that one could not perform as individuals unless they act as a collective entity. Institutions provide the structures and rules for social and economic interactions (North, 1991 97) designed to improve the quality of life of poor people. Institutional arrangements include

social networks, legal systems, political, administrative systems, the state, nonprofits, and businesses, which interact with each other and the extent to which they also interact with the poor. North (1991) argues that a key institution for rural communities "is social capital": informal norms or established relationships that enable people to pursue collective objectives and to act in concert with one another for the common benefit of their community such as poverty alleviation" (North, 1991).

Institutions such as the African Development Bank, national banks and governments have a mandate and can act in concert with international organizations to promote anti-poverty programs. The institutions also have their own perspectives of poverty alleviation (Deolalikar, 2002). At the global level, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) rallied the entire international community to endorse the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) perspective aimed at halving the number of poor people by 2015. UNDP appealed to various development players: planners and economists agencies, international and bilateral institutions to work toward the goals. Other regional organizations such as the New Economic Program of African Development (NEPAD) and the Southern African Development Countries (SADC) assumed the mandate for mobilizing member countries to intensify economic development and anti-poverty initiatives.

Technical Options

Technical approaches were intensified at the onset of population growth during the 1950s and 1960s after World War II. The era saw a surge in population hat exacerbated food deficits in Asia and Africa. The population growth gave impetus to public research, extension systems, and transferring production technologies in cereal and livestock production to other parts of Third

World countries (Dolberg, 2001). Other technical interventions included promoting micro-credit; smallholder irrigation; small grains chosen for their hardness, resistance to pests, and adaptability to low rainfall as ways to catalyze food production and prevent massive famine. Further technical options included the Borlaug's Green Revolution based on creating varieties of wheat adapted to resist disease. Crossing wheat varieties with rust-resistant types from other parts of the world (Dolberg, 2001) helped food production. Dr. Borlaug's plant breeding system led to very successful increase in food production in both Latin America and Asia and helped avert mass famines widely predicted in the 1960s. The sustainable livelihood approach mentioned earlier in this thesis was another technical approach to prevent famine. Krantz (2001) says that the approach was conceptualized by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development, and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In 1992 Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway described SLA as assets; stores, resources, claims, access and activities necessary to earn a livelihood. A combination of both institutional and technical options to poverty alleviation was also attempted when the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) partnered with the Government of Zimbabwe and later included the Danish International Development Aid to promote smallholder irrigation programs between 1980 and 2006.

Outcomes

According to According to Dwyer, Hiltz and Pesserini (2007) the European Union (EU) launched the Rural Development Regulation (RDR) in 2000 to promote sustainable rural development with the rhetoric that emphasized decentralized, participative delivery, and a territorial and multi-sectorial focus. Their experience suggested the need for further institutional adaptation to enable effective delivery. The relevance of lessons learned in the design and

delivery of EU regional policy is also highlighted. The prospects for more effective adaptation are assessed in the light of the most recent sets of Caribbean, African, and Pacific (CAP) reforms.

According to Dwyer, Hiltz and Passerine (2007) poverty alleviation tends to be exacerbated in rural communities due to weak linkages that underpin connections between institutional and technical approaches. The archetypical metaphor remains mechanistic (Morgan, 2006) and its domination which adds further challenges to linkages between the institutional and the technical options. Good technical approaches often fail to produce results because they are managed by weak and irrelevant institutional arrangements. I found that in Zimbabwe the stallholder irrigation program did not produce good results because there were very weak water user management committees that did not link effectively to obtain technical support from the Department Agriculture Research and Extensions (AREX). Although economic growth based on macro systems and distant mercantile trade were necessary, they lack automatic linkages with poor rural villages in remote parts of Africa. It is difficult for the poor to take advantage of expanding national economic opportunities directly. Borlaug's Green Revolution was one example that did not work as well in Africa as it did in the Asian Tigers. Weak linkages between institutional and technical options could have been the problem. Either institutional and technical approaches or their combinations have been rather too slow to make significant contributions to rural poverty alleviation.

Worldviews

Funk (2001:1) says "the meaning of the term worldview (German *Weltanschauung*) seems self-evident and is an intellectual *perspective* on the world or universe" and a set of beliefs a person

assimilated and from which the person sees, thinks, knows, and does whatever he or she has to do. The worldview is therefore like mathematical logic for solving a problem. A worldview forms the basis for selecting the rules by which reasoning operates and characterizes the way one chooses to behave.

A worldview also refers to the framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual, group or culture sees, interprets the world and how he or she interacts with it. It is "a set of assumptions about physical and social reality" which have powerful controls on cognition and behavior (Koltko-Rivera & Mark, 200, Pack-Brown & Williams (2003:246) 4). One's worldview plays an important role on the perspectives from which one understands and interprets chronic poverty. Sterling (2001) says ineffective change interventions are attributed to problems in re-visioning the poverty situation. Staff perspectives of poverty alleviation have remained in the mechanistic perspective: merely perceiving and developing poverty interventions from a technical position requiring only efficient administration of operations and resources. In this model the role of perspectives is given less prominence in interventions: reading defining and engaging in remedial action in poverty situations. Therefore, one's perspective can determine how well one reads and defines a problem, devises coping strategies and determines the long-term impacts of solutions (United Nations Environmental Program, 2011) and this certainly applies to players who dedicate their services and resources to eradicate poverty in rural communities. Differing perspectives of poverty alleviation embedded in the thinking of development workers, donors, and policy makers could be at the heart of failure of poverty alleviation interventions.

Perspectives, how people see, interpret, and react to situations, are rooted in cognitive schemas: "conceptual bridges between information processing and radical constructivism

viewpoints" (Derry, 1996:1) provide "mental codification of experience that includes a particular organized way of perceiving cognitively and responding to complex situations or set of stimuli." Schemas serve as a repository of experience and have a decisive role in directing attention and providing the context for interpretation of situations and events (Snyder, 2011:8). The schemas are part of worldviews created by antecedent experience and they direct players to act in concert with the thinking they impose. The phenomenon happens to every person irrespective of the level or amount of academic training or education he/she has undergone.

Poverty alleviation strategies implemented are also products of powerful hegemonic influence of worldviews and perspectives. Worldviews have the "effects similar to power that the state has on the conditions of self-knowledge and social action" (Nugengast, 2008:22-23). They operate in the form of what De Vries (2004) calls "unconscious dynamics assimilated from one's community and they have significant effects on how people in organizations operate." Models of worldviews assimilated from antecedent experience tend to persist and impose choices of action even in circumstances where such actions are no longer relevant. Paulo Freire (1992) noted that even after the attainment of political independence, many African leaders who had internalized derogative attitudes from colonial Western white administrators, tended to project those same and unwanted attitudes toward their own fellow black subordinates long after colonialists departed. These subconscious dynamics tended to constitute the "operating system" for dealing with subordinates. The point about this story is to illustrate how difficult it is for people to change the way of seeing and doing things that they internalized.

Baumann (1997) posits that perspectives are often used subconsciously in the business of initiating change. For example, Mason and Mitroff (1981:25), argue that "people tend to have unconscious biases when formulating problems and prescribing solutions because of their

technical backgrounds. Engineers tend to look at technical things; psychologists, at behavioral things."

To illustrate how different backgrounds, perspectives, or frames of reference influence how a problem is understood and solved, Mason and Mitroff (1981) cite Russell Ackoff, who described a problem in which a manager received complaints about delays in the elevator service of his building. In response to the complaints the manager assigned technicians and engineers to investigate the problem and to compile a report. The engineers reported that people were not happy with the elevator service. The manager held a staff meeting to discuss the engineers' report which recommended additional new elevators and replacing gears in existing ones to speed them up, both of which were financially prohibitive for the manager to implement. However, a young social psychologist from the human resources department who happened to attend one of the staff meetings offered to help. Because the opportunity was free, the manager allowed him to try. The solution offered was to install large mirrors on the walls of the foyer next to the elevators. Watching the reflections of those who gathered was found to be entertaining which filled the time waiting for the elevators. The complaints stopped. What was seen as a technical problem by engineers was reinterpreted as psychological by the person with a different worldview or perspective. This illustrates that people can alter and improve the nature of a problem and the solutions generated if they read and understand them from a variety of perspectives. This is not a new idea, of course. Nigerian storyteller Chimamanda Adichie (http://researchsalad.wordpress.com/ of October 24. 2011/the-danger-of-a-single-story/ of 11.10.2011) warns of the danger of relying on one side of the story or perspective when trying to understand situations.

There are many experts working in poverty alleviation at donor, policy, and technical levels that are locked in their world view when they read, diagnose, and manage poverty alleviation. According to Hofstede (1981) people engage in automatic behavior systems in doing their business. Automatic work related behavior is a result of mental constructs that people derive from collective programming (Hofstede, 1981).

I believe that poverty alleviation players who expand their perspectives stand a better chance of navigating the poverty alleviation terrain with more successful outcomes. Sterling (2001) brings attention to the fact that perspectives ought to shift when interventions fail to work. Metaphorically, worldviews are subconscious lenses or filters through which poverty alleviation players read and diagnose poverty situations. Worldviews work in the same manner as technologies such as tinted lenses that amplify or color people's abilities to read situations in a certain way and make certain judgments about them and assign solutions.

Metaphors

Implicit metaphors, according to Morgan (2006), persuade people to see, understand, imagine, and act upon situations in ways consistent with the way those notions and pictures dictate. Although metaphors create ways of seeing, they also impose a way of not seeing certain elements embedded in situations. It is difficult to find a metaphor that gives an all-purpose point of view. Thus, metaphors affect the way poverty alleviation players see situations and are potentially affected by its effects in the selection of poverty alleviation interventions players implement in specific communities. Lawley (2001) adds that "in all aspects of life, reality is defined in terms of metaphors that guide people to act on the basis of the metaphors." Morgan's (2006) images of organization presents theories of organization and management based on implicit archetypical metaphors and associated concepts that influence the way people read

organizations, define problems, and solve them. Different models of archetypical metaphors give rise to different practices in poverty alleviation. Metaphors influence the way people respond to situations whether or not the images they impose constitute the tipping point where change starts to happen. Managers, change agents, and poverty alleviation players carry different images of the same situation that they are trying to change or organize and different images of how they should go about the change itself.

Communities as Social Systems

Poverty alleviation players who view communities as social systems implement poverty alleviation interventions that emphasize creating stronger social bonds as a way to create more democratic participation where people work as groups. Helping communities to develop the capacity to fight poverty tends to be designed to "confront problems where the capacity to mobilize energies and to act as a coherent social force is at stake" (Solo, 2000:1). Programs might be organized and integrated in ways that address social action and social organization regarding gender, popular education, health, and other socially oriented activities. A donor tends to fill up social gaps and inadequacies in running these programs. The solution may not achieve sustainable poverty alleviation because it is one gear spinning in solo. The solution may not effectively interact with other elements to address poverty. A poverty alleviation player who sees the community's needs in terms of literacy becomes more concerned with extending educational opportunities to help children attend school or extend formal education programs for rural school drop outs. Other poverty alleviation players might see the needs of the community in terms of women empowerment, community health program, democratic participation, institution building, and getting people to work together in groups while other players see the community needs in terms of water and sanitation. They can put their effort and resources on water harvesting and

digging wells and promoting long-drop low-cost pit toilets. All these perspectives might be isolated elements of the poverty the system spinning in solo.

Mechanistic View

The mechanistic view of organization advanced in Taylor (1911) Scientific Management still dominates the thinking and planning of poverty alleviation players. A poverty alleviation helping agencies that subscribes to mechanistic view of interventions tends to put emphasis on quantification of outputs (Campbell 1976:8), whether it solves poverty problems or not. The quantitative approach may not take into account the quality of life outputs that interventions need to sustain. According Denning (2004), the challenges of managing change are embedded in the mechanistic view of organizing that is still ingrained in people's thinking. This way of seeing can misdirect players from the best alternatives for reading, seeing, organizing, and managing change. Poverty alleviation players tend to get caught up in this taken-for-granted mechanistic view. For example in a water and sanitation program, it is easy for poverty alleviation players to be caught up with statistics on the number of toilets built rather than the impact of the toilets on the health status of the users.

Organizations as Organisms

In another metaphoric archetype, people view organizations as biological organisms (Morgan, 2006). This means poverty alleviation players who see their communities from the basis of this metaphor take communities as organisms within ecological habitats. Improving their quality of life must take into account their unique habitat and circumstances. Facilitating change could be seen in terms of developing the community's capacity to adapt and survive in their ecological systems.

Different metaphors give rise to different assumptions and treatment that led to different results. In today's world, the major hurdle in finding, adopting, and aligning relevant perspectives of poverty alleviation is the increased specialization that comes with professional and technical specialization. While poverty alleviation players throughout the development aid value chains might feel safe and secure from applying their specializations, the worldviews internalized from such specialization could impose significant limitations from implementing innovative and more relevant practice (Mulroy & Austin, 2004; Taylor, Mulroy, & Austin, 2004; Taylor, Austin, & Mulroy, 2004).

Poverty alleviation is different from natural science that deals with objective phenomenon, functions and cherishes eternal laws. Poverty alleviation players work in social sciences and have to deal with issues that embrace institutional, environmental, and ever changing human conditions (Popper (1962).

In the organic view certain ways of professional thinking and practice that society replayed many times over create subconscious dynamics that influence people's ability to read situations (De Vires, 2004:183). According to Kentli (2009), Margolis (2001) experience constitutes the hidden curriculum that influences how people respond to situations. According to Koltko-Rivera, Mark E (2004) worldviews are sets of assumptions about physical and social realities that impose powerful control on cognition and behavior.

The failure of poverty alleviation interventions has been attributed to many different reasons where the activities fail to recognize communities as organic entities that exist in unique environments. The fault lies with change managers or poverty alleviation players who lack sufficient understanding of their own perspectives and the poverty situations in the area that they work.

Interventions implemented on the basis of surface issues (signs and symptoms of poverty) without a deeper level of understanding of the system and its underlying structures responsible for poverty in different communities tends to weaken the efficacy of the interventions. There is need for a framework for implementing poverty alleviation programs more effectively.

Systems Thinking

Systems thinking may be an appropriate framework for countering all the above subconscious biases, worldviews and perspectives that poverty alleviation players hold. Of great importance is to realize that "system thinking embodies a world-view" Bellinger (2004:1). A world-view which implies that people are hemmed in a mindset or orientation which they use as a frame of reference (Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2006:4) for perceiving, reading, interpreting, understanding, making decisions and responding to events and situations. The frame of reference is assimilated from one's interaction with the world system and it tends to be responsible for the choice of strategy people implement when dealing with situations. The failure to realize one's own worldview system can create problems for poverty alleviation players. Players need to reflect on their worldview systems constantly. The book I am going to write addresses these concerns.

System thinking is also a process. According to Smith (2012) systems thinking as a process is concerned with seeing and defining the big picture and assessing how the elements of the system interact and influence one another to maintain the existence of the system or the status quo. In poverty alleviation the process is what players do to analyze and understand how elements such as social, institutions, human, physical, financial, and other capital are linked and interact in maintaining the poverty system. Ackoff cited in Atwater, Kannan, and Stephens (2008:4) says systemic thinking is holistic versus reductionistic thinking, synthetic versus

analytic. The major task in systems thinking as a process could be described as discerning how the various subsystems and super systems work to maintain it.

Systems thinking imply that a change agent has to look at communities as whole systems and engage in the process of assessing how the dynamic and complex nature of the poverty system is maintained. Because systems are made up of interacting components, elements, and different stakeholders (Van Mai & Bosch, 2012), a change agent has to understand the most pressing social, economic, ecological, and political challenges, (Bosch, Maani, & Smith, 2007), that need fixing in order to eliminate the poverty system. The process enables players to focus on the whole system and those aspects of its constituent parts that contribute to its effective functioning.

Academics, scholars, managers, planners, and policy makers have used system thinking in development planning in the recent past (Jackson, 2003; Maani & Cavana, 2007; Andrew & Petkov, 2003; Macadam, Vanasch, Hedley, & Pitt, 1995; Schianetz, et al., 2009; Winch, 1993). Dynamic and complex systems like tourism have particularly benefitted from system thinking approach (Butler, 1991; Gunn, 1994; Leiper, 1990; Mill & Morrison, 1998). System thinking was successfully used in tourism research and planning at Cat Ba Island located in northern Vietnam and it demonstrated high potential for tourism development. System thinking approach helped to mitigate “the conventional approaches that sees organization as a machine and has tended to focus on parts rather than wholes” (Ackoff, Magidson, & Addiso, 2006; Vennix, 1996). Hence, the systems thinking concept could also be useful in poverty alleviation. “In an academic context, information systems is applied to an academic discipline or academic field that focuses on information systems (IS) and the IS organization functions as areas of academic interest, expertise, research, and teaching.” (Davis, Massey and Andersen (2012) (http://disc-

nt.cba.uh.edu/chin/speakerseries/Davis%20et%20al%20in%20proceedings.pdf of March 5, 2012)

CHAPTER 3

STORY TELLING AS METHODOLOGY

Storytelling has been adopted in this proposal as a method for illustrating the power of perspectives and worldviews. The method is a powerful mechanism for engaging people in a discourse, (Andrews, Hull, & Donahue, 2009), concerning the rethinking of the efficacy of anti-poverty interventions. According to Brady (1997) and MacDonald, (1998) storytelling has been used for thousands of years to teach powerful lessons. Kotter (2011) argues that people learn best from carefully crafted stories that address their priorities. "Sharing experiences through stories is emerging in various professions as a powerful way to exchange and consolidate knowledge" Sole and Wilson http://www.providersedge.com/docs/km_articles/storytelling_in_organizations.pdf (Of, 2012:1).

Stories, according to Wittenberg-Lyles, Greene and Sanchez-Reilly (2000) are also used in the medical field with terminally ill cancer patients to keep their morale high and accept their fate. Aircraft pilot training also uses stories. Experienced pilots tell stories of how they overcame dangerous development while they were air borne. Stories are selected or designed to narrate and raise awareness and interest about challenges posed by perspectives in diagnosing, designing, planning, and managing change (Boyce, 1996).

I argue that stories will help poverty alleviation and development practitioners to embrace a culture of critical analysis, reflection, and reframing of perspectives (Gladwell, 2000). Morgan (2006:3) says it is important to sensitize managers to become skilled in the art of reading the situation that they try to change and this also applies to poverty alleviation players. Stories

according to Renz (2009) are meant “to provide metaphor that is liberating in orientation by supplying new ways to shape perception.” In other words stories help players to read a situation and develop a useful storyline explanation Morgan (2006). Poverty alleviation organizations could use the insights to diagnose and deal with poverty situations (Grant & Oswick, 1996). The goal is to help poverty alleviation players rethink the impact of perspectives on the efficacy of interventions they implement. Perspectives are key factors underlying the efficacy of design of high-leverage interventions. Stories are a powerful way to engage and challenge perspectives, especially to overwrite those that are not effective with others that might me be more so (Greco, 2011)

What constitutes stories in different circumstances will always remain the same. According to Johnson (1998), stories are recognized in terms of their plot and archetypal characters. In this regard Guber (2011:122-132) views the hero in a story not just as a person. The place, the product or the idea can also be the hero that enables the audience to see the change that the story promises. Seeing and acting in the narrative form is a key part of action inquiry and “action inquiry is a kind of behavior that is simultaneously productive and self-assessing” (Tolbert et al. 2004). Heuer (2011) says storytelling is a motivational tool for training, investigating, and developing a study of how to achieve a better quality of life. Today, many poverty alleviation players tend to remain bounded by their perspectives and fail to think deeply. Stories regarding why certain interventions failed to alleviate poverty are critical to make people see the problems embedded in the seeing and thinking system. Using systems thinking "lens" helps to avoid implementing symptomatic fixes by deeply thinking about their reasons for being valid or about others that might complement or supplant them in the name of effective outcomes. Stories regarding why certain interventions failed to alleviate poverty are critical to enable

people to see the problems embedded in the seeing and thinking system that they are subject to. Storytelling is similar to systems thinking in the sense that one can only get to understand the meaning if they pay attention to vicarious experience (Greco, 2012) the whole or the system to be reviewed.

Stories presented in the proposed volume are designed as an intervention per se to raise awareness about systems thinking, looking at the poverty situation in a holistic way and identifying the elements that maintain the poverty system in order to design high-leverage interventions. Stories are powerful as an intervention in themselves because they help breathe life, emotional, social, and compelling messages, unlike slides and statistics (Greco, 2011 unpublished presentation). Audiences are more likely to think of or believe in the message when perspectives are presented in story form rather than in bullet points, charts, graphs, or statistical spread sheets. They bring life to dry facts and figures and they tend to add drama to facts and figures. They help to create mental images; critical elements in understanding. From stories, people develop emotional attachment with situations described. Statistics are hard to stick and are less capable of invoking feeling although they are quantitative and specific ((Heath and Heath, 2007).

Arguably, situations in poverty alleviation may not easily bend to fit a storytelling structure, but they can be engineered to work well to expose weaknesses and bring about some good lessons. Denning (2005) says that narratives succeed in persuading listeners to envision a broader and more ambitious future for the organization. Stories succeed where analysis and argument sometimes cannot. Stories help to create mental images -- critical elements in understanding. From stories, people develop emotional attachment with situations described.

In Chapters 4 through 14, I present 10 stories designed to make players rethink and shift their perspectives. They enable poverty alleviation players, as individual or as groups to assess the flaws embedded in how they read situations through the eyes of their own culture, their own educational background, their own special ability to think, or their own special disciplinary biases. Players will also see how systems thinking, both as a world view and a process could influence the efficacy of interventions. Following each story I provide a commentary which summarizes key issues in order make players realize that differences of perspective lead to differing interpretations of the poverty situation. Stories provided in this proposal cover selected themes that include private business intervention to improve food security, international development aid, and education as aspects of poverty alleviation, government policy, improving living conditions of rural people, law enforcement, food security and conservation.

CHAPTER 4

FOOD SECURITY

Between 1996 and 2001 as a Rural District Council Capacity Building Facilitator for Rushinga and six other districts in Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe, I attended an open-air momentous ceremony to inaugurate changeover from growing open-pollinated to hybrid seed. The Governor of Mashonaland Central Province hosted the occasion at the Chimhanda Rural Growth Point. The occasion was graced by big crowds. Many groups performed different traditional dances.

Bee Gee, the Provincial Governor, stood up and started his speech with the usual salutary protocol: “Members of the Provincial Council, the Provincial Development Committee, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, the Member of Parliament of Rushinga East Constituency, chiefs, headmen, our invited white commercial farmers, senior executives, and chief executive officer (CEO) of Mbeu Seed Production company, all invited guests, ladies, and gentlemen here present, welcome. Before I begin, where is the Capacity Building Facilitator?”

My adrenalin pumped, I felt nervous and perspired all over from anxiety as I stood up. The whole crowd turned to look at me as if I had turned a stranger.

The Governor went on to say, “I believe Josiya Taundi was brought to this province, specifically to Rushinga, to leverage expertise to eliminate poverty. How does he do that?” I stood up trying to figure out what to say. My heart pounded.

The Governor went on. “Okay, sit down. We will look into that question with you some other day. But before I hand over the program to the experts I want to find out from you Roy

Bennett and your fellow commercial farmers how you become successful commercial farmers"? The white farmer, Roy, stood up and answered, "Wise selection of good seed to grow and how to look after the crop, especially postharvest handling, and storage".

The CEO took his place at the podium and uniquely reaffirmed the Governor's point of view and remarked that rural farmers remained predominantly poor while white commercial farmers continued to be successful and symbols of wealth because they learned how to select seed and planned carefully. He told the crowd that African people had not learned simple secrets of choice of seed and pest control; foundations of successful farming and food security. His speech leveraged and uniquely capitalized on the Government's policy to uplift the rural areas. He told the crowd that it was high time that rural farmers learned the secrets of successful farming that white farmers used to achieve success. The crowd cheered, ululated, whistled, and gave him a resounding applause. The CEO called upon the Governor to donate packets of hybrid seed and fertilizer to named poor widows and the elderly. The crowd roared further.

Chiefs were called upon to receive free bags of seed and fertilizer for the "Zunde ra Mambo" (a practice where chiefs must grow spare food as custodians of destitute people). Under the system all adults in the community came to provide seed and labor at the Chief's communal field to contribute seed, plough the fields, plant corn, weed crops, and harvest grain that the chiefs would distribute to very poor or destitute people. I failed to understand all the benevolence. The feeling kept worrying me for weeks after the ceremony despite my conscious efforts to forget about the ceremony.

<u>Comment</u>

In response to what was an embellished marketing initiative, villagers were persuaded to buy massive amounts of hybrid seed and fertilizers. To do this, some villagers sold their precious assets including livestock and farm implements which were perceived as a necessary process to get money to realize higher agricultural production. Unfortunately, contrary to the expectation that hybrid was the road to food security, the seed brought pathologies that dropped agricultural production sharply in the years following its introduction. Stereotypes including some agricultural experts blamed villagers for the failure of hybrid seed because of lack of education, laziness and incompetence.

While the villagers were not informed about the risks or the ethical conflicts, the promoters including the commercial farmers and others knew that the purpose of the sale of hybrid seed was to make money for others. The seed was originally produced for large estate commercial growers who could afford the large capital required for farm inputs and who could manage the risk of pathologies that accompanied the seeds. Indeed, grain from hybrid seed was highly susceptible to destruction by weevils and moisture. But that day's promotion did not disclose to the villagers that the success of hybrid seed farming depended upon high capital inputs: fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and irrigation. Instead, the change from traditional to hybrid seed exacerbated food insecurity. Unlike growing retained or farm-saved open pollinated seed, hybrid grain collected from previous harvests could not be sown and do well in the following season. The grain did not have the hardness; necessary seed attributes that rural farmers required. Hybrid grain required sophisticated treatment and expensive storage conditions.

Use of chemical fertilizers was also known to exacerbate lifeless and dusty soils that caused soil erosion; the major cause of land degradation and siltation of dams and rivers. Local

village farmers ended up suffering genetic loss of open-pollinated seed varieties good for their positive attributes: flavor, and adaptability to local conditions.

Villagers, for generations, were known experts at evaluating attributes of open pollinated seeds for different types of soils and amount of rainfall on plots on different land elevations. This expertise should have been invoked to get more information about the attributes of hybrid seed. Someone should have braved to ask the big voices or their agronomists to explain the major attributes and propagation conditions of hybrid seed.

Had the villagers braved to apply that expertise to hybrid seed they would have saved themselves problems. The approach is what Klein (2007) calls “prospective hindsight”. This means that before any project is undertaken a “pre-mortem” is necessary to establish what might go wrong in a changeover. People must demand full disclosure regarding the future risks of a project from the onset. Government agricultural extension officers were present at the launch. They surely understood the implications of adopting hybrid seed. They should have helped to organize a technical session where villagers, Mbeu agronomists and extension workers could discuss the attributes of hybrid seed. Government agricultural and community extension agents were muzzled by the culture of silence and fearing to voice dissension. Both villagers and extension workers needed courage to get information more about hybrid seed.

CHAPTER 5

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AID

I grew up passionate about school and poverty eradication. This was a culmination of my father's repeated advice that education was the road to success and out of poverty. My father had only five years of schooling but he was inspired by his boss, the farmer for whom he worked. The farmer was a surgeon and urged that all my sisters and brothers became doctors. It never happened that way. My father had also seen how European lawyers, realtors, mine engineers, quantity surveyors, and other educated professionals were successful people in Johannesburg when he had worked in South Africa. I saw a bit of the proof of what my father advocated was true about my older brother. By the time I finished my first three years of schooling, my eldest brother had completed teacher training and taught primary school and showing symbols of success; attractive clothing, a big automatic disc-exchanger radiogram and was already building a big brick wall under corrugated iron roof house. He also owned a brand new Raleigh bicycle. After high school I enrolled at a college and graduated in the Theory and Practice of Education that prepared me to teach high school to fulfill my poverty alleviation passion and ambition.

At the Zimbabwe independence in 1980, the government convened the Zimbabwe Conference on Reconstruction and Development (ZIMCORD) to woo the international community to support education, especially the reconstruction of rural schools destroyed during 25 years of the protracted war of liberation. Existing primary school facilities and staffs were instructed to host Upper Tops, the name by which an additional four years of secondary education was known. I personally welcomed the development with enthusiasm. Foreign governments responded to the call for support and money changed hands from donors to the Ministry of Education. Mathematics, Science, and English teachers came from countries that

included Sweden, Denmark, Australia, Mauritius, and Canada. The government deployed the overseas teachers to existing and better schools within the urban areas. As well, the government also hired and deployed a number of unqualified educators to the rural Upper Tops.

I happened to be one of the teachers with a bachelor's degree to offer teaching at an Upper Top. The rest of my colleagues did not have much education beyond high school. The principal of the Primary School hosting the Upper Top expressed gratitude for my joining his school. He confessed that he did not have the necessary qualifications and experience to run secondary school education. He asked me to take responsibility for the secondary school. I was shocked to find that at the end of the four years, most children in Rushinga Upper Tops failed the Ordinary Level School Leaving Certificate offered by the Cambridge Examinations Syndicate of the United Kingdom. I realized that the lack of adequate resources to run the secondary schools had impacted negatively on the pass rate of my students. The students returned to the villages to join the rest of the other boys and girls who had not attempted secondary school. I am sure returning to the village must have dealt a blow on the boys' and girls' self-esteem. The failures cold not go to find jobs in the industrial and commercial sectors requiring full secondary education certificates.

Parents of children in the rural schools grew bitter. They had made a sacrifice. Some of them had sold valued assets and investments to ensure that their children went through the four-year secondary education. Rural parents felt that they had done their part for the children. The rest of the job was up to the school and the teachers.

Comment

Passing the curriculum offered by the Cambridge Examinations School Syndicate of the United Kingdom remained beyond the competencies of rural children. The education did not

offer skills needed in a predominantly peasant economy. It demonstrated that wholesale importation of curriculum created and designed for the British economy and tailored for application in industrial and commercial sector work was unsuccessful. Had the education model focused on four years of secondary education where children would learn-how to manage animal power, livestock production, building, metal work, carpentry, crop production, etc., their skills would have been more useful to the rural economy where they lived. The unfortunate outcome was a belief by parents that schooling beyond the first seven years of arithmetic, writing, and reading had no value. I agree.

Most African rural areas during the British colonial era from 1891 to 1979 received no money for economic development and were used as human sump for women, children, old people, and youth whose labor was not needed in the white commercial industrial and commercial sectors. The rural areas also received no support for social and economic development and hence remained underserved and marginalized. The perception that academic education can cure poverty in such nonindustrial zed environments was naïve. Education was one element in the poverty system. It needed to be looked at as part of the poverty system in order to fix it. Committing a person to for years of high school and let him or her come out with no practical skill could be a serious mistake. The manufacturing and commerce in African rural areas had not developed to the extent that they could absorb all the educated children. People still depended on the land for survival. If education was to be provided beyond primary school, it needed to address the containing system and fine-tuned to address key rural livelihood issues: crop production livestock development, natural resources conservation, health science, etc. In future, education programs need to be geared to answer vocational needs of the social and economic situations of the communities in which the people operate. Such a curriculum,

although dovetailed to needs of rural communities are still valuable anywhere in the world where farming takes place. That means the majority of teachers deployed to rural areas need to specialize in the relevant technical subjects. Even students who do not pass the full examination would have picked up some amount of useful skills. It is paradoxical that Zimbabwe has been hailed for more than 90% rate of adult literacy but condemned for more than 80% rate of unemployment in the last decade.

CHAPTER 6

IMPROVING RURAL RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

As a capacity building facilitator between 1996 and 2001, my job also included learning about the operations of government departments, private businesses, and nongovernmental organizations and to encourage them to bring their expertise, resources, and capacities to support Rural District Councils' poverty alleviation programs. To do the job, I had to get into contact with various institutions, organizations and agencies. I would table my findings in the Rural District Development Committee (RDDC) of the Council. Various experts deliberated on the recommendations and agreed to recommend to Full Council to pass a resolution to implement central government policy of growth with equity that gave rural areas priority for development.

Rushinga Rural District Council, under the policy, embarked on building a growth point (GP) at Chimhanda in the heart of the Rushinga rural area. The GP was expected to provide decent facilities, housing, electricity, piped water, paved roads, postal services, telephone lines, and sewerage to the residents. Unfortunately, during the GP efforts I found, during my monthly visits to healthcare records of treatment records a sharp rise in the number of cholera, dysentery, sexually transmitted, water borne, and communicable disease treatments. I reported the matter to the Rural District Council for onward distribution to key stakeholders. The health authority responded by to the report by appointing a commission of inquiry to look into the epidemics. The commission of inquiry found that the Electricity Supply Authority had disconnected power to the growth point rendering water pumping and purification impossible. This created a cascading set of losses: The Rural Council could no longer supply clean water to domestic buildings, sewerages pipes dried up and blocked. Council had also suspended its police surveillance system

and gangs of midnight commercial sex workers had invaded the growth point spreading HIV/AIDS epidemics. Trash was also no longer collected. Rodent and insect control stopped and the growth point had become a breeding place for flies, mosquitos, and rats. All the problems started after the Council failed to raise money to provide the services and following residents' failure to pay taxes which meant there was insufficient revenue to maintain services.

Comment

The growth point was a reasonable policy designed to solve the serious problem of poverty; but, it failed because the problem was not fully described and the implementation and contingency plans were not adequately considered. Residents needed an exchange commodity, money, to purchase town related services. The new town status started without corresponding growth in industrial and commercial development that would offer employment. People needed jobs to earn money to pay taxes. In future, the nature of the problem must be fully described and full environmental impact assessments must be undertaken before instituting a policy-driven development project. Promoters needed to realize that the growth point was only one aspect of the development system. The project needed to take into account the whole economic system of the area. Embarking on such projects as the growth point required systems thinking. In other words improved housing was one element connected to employment and economic projects in the whole development system. If I had known about systems thinking as a capacity building facilitator, perhaps I could have saved the growth point from the disaster. The growth point was an example of many anti-poverty programs and projects that are implemented without first taking into account the entire system.

CHAPTER 7

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

I stopped my project SUV at Nyamatikiti village and saw a group of petrified villagers watching old man government officers had handcuffed. They dragged the old man into the back of a government Land Rover to take him to court to answer charges of contravening the Natural Resources Board (NRB) Act and exacerbating land degradation. His charged violation was based on a previous and current colonial mentality that used NRB laws to restrict Africans from accumulating livestock wealth and limiting ownership of cattle to five cattle per family. The old man apparently had too many cattle and bureaucrats were not comfortable about it.

I followed to find out what would happen in court. The old man was asked to tell the court how many cattle he owned. He told the court 12. He was asked if he pleaded guilty to contravening the Natural Resources Board Conservation Act; keeping more animals than allowed for each household. The man denied the charge and pleaded not guilty. Laughter broke in the court. Asked what his reasons for denying the plain truth were, the man told the court that the law allowed a maximum of five cattle to roam the pastures. He said that he obeyed the rule. There was never a time when he released more than five beasts to roam the village pastures. He kept the rest of his beasts under zero degree grazing at home while releasing only five animals to roam the pastures per day whether they were the same lot or different ones. More laughter broke in the court again.

Comment

There can be significant differences between the statements of law, its interpretation and its meaning. If none existed, if everything written was perfectly understandable, courts would be unnecessary. In this case, the legal administrators remained fixed on the number of cattle while the old man believed the meaning came from the broader intention which concerned the number that were permitted to roam the pastures. The old man's perception of the spirit of the law and his voluntary moral behavior of checking and managing the number of cattle allowed to roam were not taken into account. Creativity was not an option for the administrators.

Government officers needed to see beyond the surface of policy and law particularly when there was reason to expect differing perceptions and when the rules are legacies of past governments that operated in different environments. Experts and government officers' worldviews system prevented them from seeing the spirit of the law. They lacked the flexibility needed to accept the way the old man went about to achieve the goal of conservation. There can be no poverty alleviation if government people and experts fail to respect creativity and innovation originating from affected rural people. Livestock constituted needed wealth and provided buffer required to cushion economic shocks.

People who had the energy to pen-feed their cattle should have been allowed to keep as many animals as they could afford to look after. Government did not need to have any say in wealth creation projects that did not contravene the Natural Resources Board laws. The story of the man is unfortunate perpetuation of the legacy of segregation used to discourage black people's enterprises and keeping them poor so that they could remain enthralled to the state when food handouts were distributed. This mentality was a definite ploy to manipulate Africans to stay tuned to the system of segregation. Money power in the hands of Africans was perceive a threat to White supremacy. In future government administrators and extension workers need

refresher courses to make them aware of the effects their worldviews and perspectives on development of rural people in an independent country.

CHAPTER 8

SOIL CONSERVATION

My role as Rural District Councils (RDCs) Capacity Building Facilitator between 1996 and 2001 included learning and facilitating how different issues, activities, developments, and situations could be addressed to achieve poverty alleviation. Of importance was to study the operations of institutions, agencies and organizations and to facilitate how they could bring their expertise, knowledge, resources and experience to support Rural District Councils in their efforts to run anti-poverty programs. I used to round institutions, agencies and organizations on a regular basis to review progress. In travelling through the countryside, I noticed a disturbing development about the state of soil conservation. Many parts of the arable land had been denuded and grown big gullies that threated to worsen and expand to destroy square miles of agricultural land, village roads and bridges. I reported my observations to the chairperson of the Sub-Committee of the Rural District Development Committee (RDDC) on Natural Resources Conservation. The matter was discussed and referred to the RDDC for recommendations to Full Council to pass a resolution to activate enforcement of soil conservation works. I advised that the department of Agricultural Research and Extensions (AREX) and the Natural Resources Conservation take photographs of the denuded land and draw maps of the worst affected parts of the district to accompany the agenda to Full Council to illustrate extent of the menace.

Full Council passed a resolution to enforce soil conservation works on farmland. Farmers were informed of the requirement and had to dig storm water drainage trenches across their land to check run off water from denuding the land and eroding soil that created the gullies. The

farmers hated the requirement because it demanded a lot of extra work for which they had not budgeted for in their annual programs. The sides of the trenches often collapsed after the heavy tropical storms. The farmers would have to restore the drains. This was extra work.

As part of the enforcement process, the Agricultural Research and Extensions (AREX) and Natural Resources Conservation teams had to undertake joint surveillance tours of farm lands to check if all farmers had built storm drains before the rainy season. Defaulters had to face the law. As capacity building facilitator I went on the inspection tours as well. The team came across land that did not have any storm drain trenches. The Provincial Agricultural Extensions Officer dropped a notice at the farmer's homestead to summon him to appear before the district administration offices to sign an admission of guilt and to pay a deposit fine for failing to construct conservation works as per Council Resolution. We proceeded on our way past the farm but noticed something unusual on the accused farmer's land. Dense belts of Napier fodder grass, interspaced with guava, orange, lemon, avocado pear, banana trees, tea and, coffee bushes stretched across the slopes of the farm land at regular intervals.

The farmer went to the district administration offices to contest the fine. I had the opportunity to follow and hear the decision. The farmer argued that he had not defied orders but had used plant growth as it was a more effective anti-soil erosion measure. Land under vegetation cover was not as susceptible to soil erosion as uncovered soil trenches. The method offered more benefits than bare trenches that repeatedly collapsed and caused more soil erosion demanding constant rehabilitation work.

Comment

Soil conservation needed to be seen from a systems thinking approach. In a systems approach, Natural Resources Conservation experts would recognize that knowledge and expertise is distributed among many, not held only by them. The farmer's strategy was a more sustainable conservation method not only for preventing land degradation but for saving time and work and that no extra resources were needed to renew storm drains. The strategy was economic and environmentally friendly. Napier fodder and banana tree roots provided dense, fibrous, and perennial roots; more effective method of checking soil erosion. Napier fodder fed the cows that produced milk and stronger draught power needed to pull ploughs. The trees provided people with fruit and they acted as quality shelter for livestock, a sanctuary for birds and a good base for biodiversity and maintenance of the ecosystem balance. The method improved environmental purity and saved the farmer some money because he would use cow manure for fertilizer and to promote organic farming. A shift in thinking could have been achieved through knowledge management where local farmers, government officers and experienced extension officers from the NRC and AREX departments could have jointly organized and facilitated annual look and learn tours across the farms to see how different farmers approached conservation. The ensuing discussion could have constituted excellent curriculum for shift in thinking about knowledge on different approaches to conservation. This should have been given top priority but it was overlooked.

CHAPTER 9

LOCAL VILLAGE LEVEL ACCESS, MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

I coordinated a transport study commissioned by the Ministry of Transport between 1995 and 1996 to determine the status of rural transport in three districts in Zimbabwe. The aim of the study was to generate sufficient data and information needed to formulate and develop new and more appropriate transport policy for remote rural areas that previous and successive governments left isolated, marginalized and underserved for decades. The idea behind the study was to mainstream transport into poverty alleviation and to bring rural economies into the main national economic arena. The Request for Proposals required consultants to carry out detailed road condition surveys, the feasibility of labor-based road maintenance, rural vehicle option appraisal and the capacities of Rushinga rural communities to produce commodities for urban markets in Harare, Mutare and Bulawayo cities, Consultants were also required to assess the feasibility of integrated passenger and freight transport between Rushinga and the towns. Linking the rural production with urban markets was perceived as a powerful incentive for commercializing rural agriculture and allied products. Many of the nongovernmental organizations were known to support villagers with small livestock, cotton, grain, and smallholder irrigation developments in Rushinga District and this was seen as an opportunity alleviate poverty.

After my company, Mannock Management Consultants won the bid in response to the request for proposals (RFP) we recommended that the Terms of Reference be expanded to

include access, personal mobility and transportation burdens generated by social and economic activities within the villages. The recommendation was approved and incorporated in the study.

The results of the study established that shortage of time and lack of support to women's activities exacerbated chronic poverty in the area. Women bore more than 80% of village livelihood support. Local mobility took more time of the women, especially in female headed households run by widows or women whose husbands worked in distant commercial and industrial areas. Women spent too much time walking long distances to collect firewood and water for domesticate consumption, taking cattle to the rivers, and going to work in their gardens on a daily basis. Women also used manual labor to carry materials. Additional travel included going long distances to buy perishable like bread, milk, or fresh vegetable. Incidental trips included visits to attend clinic for treatment. Young mothers made additional trips to attend ante natal clinics and child development monitoring. Therefore women spent too much time on repetitive chores that did not allow them to devote time to more important issues of food security and household incomes.

Our findings were recognized by local women's clubs, the Rural District Councils (RDCs)), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Ministry of Transport (MoT), and Swedish International Development Aid (SIDA) as new a perspective and a deviation from an emphasis on roads and motorized transport.

To prevent and mitigate the loss of precious time, we recommended the increase ownership of intermediate means of transport (IMTs) such as wheel barrows, bicycles, animal drawn water bowsers and scotch carts. These devices would enable households to reduce the amount of travel as they could carry bigger loads without head loading. We also recommended

construction of foot bridges at important river crossings, cutting tracks to create terraces trafficable by IMTs and build steps and install hand rails up and down pathways on steep slopes to make foot paths more user-friendly. On the policy arena, the local authority had to revise policies regarding location of new grinding mills, clinics, and other essential facilities in relation to centers of population concentration.

Comment

Transport, access and mobility needs, at the local village level, generated by social and economic activities were essential aspects of poverty alleviation. However, the commonly held view of motorized equipment and roads were only part of the story.

Personal mobility and transportation of goods were more demanding aspects of village life. Women, the most dominant village social and economic players never had enough time to devote to income generation and food security. Women remained locked in cycles of time-use that did not add value to poverty alleviation. This is an aspect of poverty that most experts often failed to see. Many things like location of schools, clinics and or grinding mills may not seem to be transport factors but they are part of it.

Inappropriate Government policy that required the location of schools, clinics and grinding mills to be located at shopping centers away from centers of village population created long trips that exacerbated shortage of time. Water bore holes, firewood, and pastures located far from homesteads also took up a lot of time to walk to get them. The prevailing perspective of roads and motorized devices as core issues in transportation was only a small part of rural transportation system. Most trips and movement of goods were confined to the village. To mitigate village transport burdens generated by social and economic activities within the village itself required affordable devices on the part of the villagers. Mannock Management Consultants approach to poverty alleviation was premised on freeing women from repetitive chores and errands that prevented them from devoting time to more important issues of food security and income generating related activities. According to Calvo (1994), a rural transport specialist, the main objective of rural local village transport is to introduce strategies that facilitate ease of

movement of goods and personal mobility that saved time. The application of systems thinking could have helped to take transport as an element interconnected with other factors in the development system. Systems approach is a method that many donors, development workers and government development extension agencies should seriously take into account when prescribing development or poverty alleviation interventions that work.

CHAPTER 10

FLOOD RIVER DISASTER

As I approached Mazowe North School one Monday morning to give a ride to Councilor Nyamushamba to go to a Ward Committee meeting, I approached the a shopping center and saw a group of men and women who appeared to be in a serious mood. Most of them had their arms folded across their chests. I had no doubt in my mind that something of grave concern had happened. I stopped my vehicle and jumped out to greet Nyamushamba who told me about a disaster at Mazowe River. He said a woman had just lost her two children that morning. She stood watching the boisterous water drowning her seven-year-old boy and ~~a~~ nine-year-girl clinging to each other as they drowned in the flooded Mazowe River. The two children were trying to cross the river by walking through the water in order to get to a school located on the opposite side.

Nyamushamba took me to the river to see the place the disaster had taken place. The water was brown, rolled boulders, pushed braches and continued to surge and covering maize fields along the river. A few goats had also drowned and swept down the river. The village had not yet attempted to recover the bodies of the two children. I tried to use my two-way walkie-talkie to radio the District Administrator, police and Council offices. The transmission started to break as soon as I started to call because of low battery power in my radio. Campfire game rangers operating in the area barely recognized my voice s they were on the same channel with

me. All I could barely hear from them was “Josiya your position, your position or location.” I called out that I was at Mazowe School and suddenly everybody went off the air.

My goal was to get the bodies recovered before they were destroyed beyond recovery. The river was crocodile infested, the water flowed fast and scavenging hyenas roamed the countryside. I resorted to travel back ten miles back to the Council offices to report the disaster. I picked up a fully charged radio battery from the Council in exchange for dead one. The police were called in and by mid-day the army aquatic group, divers, police with sniffer dogs and a helicopter had arrive at the scene to undertake the complicated rescue operations.

The following day I attended an emergency Full Council of Rushinga Rural District Council convened to discuss the disaster arising out of rivers commonly flooded in summer. At the meeting local people demanded a new school on the side of Mazowe River from which the drowned children came. The Rural District Council argued that the children from the northern side of the river were too few to warrant starting up a new school just three miles away from the existing one across the Mazowe River. Less than 25% of children had to cross the river. The numbers did not warrant a new school. Besides, the Council did not have the money to put up a new school. To do so would mean imposing unaffordable district wide heavy levies. The argument raged on for hours.

I suggested that the Council erect a footbridge across the river. The suggestion proved both financially and technically feasible, especially with parents providing a day’s labor and the local gold mine requested to donate steel cables that they discarded every year after renewing cage pulleys. The cables were strong enough to hold metal foot plates and side rails of the suggested foot bridge. The council engineering department would coordinate the construction at

no extra cost. All the Council had to buy was about a dozen wrought iron pylons to hoist the bridge over the river.

Comment

In analytic thinking, a problem is deconstructed into already existing parts and each part is optimized. In this case, the problem was determined to be a function of the location of the school and the number of students who had to attend. Arguments about a new school, location, cost of building and number of attendees became the focus. In systems thinking, a problem and answer are understood by asking about the containing system. In this approach the problem was determined to be how to safely enable any student to reach the school regardless of what side of the river it was located. The solution was to enable a safe way to cross the river even if it flooded.

People learned how perspective can influence choice of solution. Simple, feasible and affordable solutions are often overlooked. The footbridge was one such example of a solution. The tendency to proffer grandiose solutions seems to be inherent in people. In most meetings the first idea proffered tends to become the focus of debate. Most meetings lack opportunities for members to engage in brainstorming; an important method to generate ideas without people fearing to appear daft. In this particular case the chairman should have also pre-empt the idea of a new school by telling the meeting that building a new school would be impossible without imposing heavier levies on the community. The warning could have helped to induce diversity and more innovative thinking. Adults avoid voicing unconventional suggestions that work for fear of looking daft.

CHAPTER 11

COOPERATIVES UNION MOVEMENT

I always felt I needed to start my own income-generating enterprise. I lived with that feeling for many years but it never materialized. However, in 1981 the Government joined hands with various international organizations, Western donors, and agencies and nongovernmental organizations to promote cooperatives. The Cooperatives Act of 1981 required people to work together in groups to run income generation projects. The cooperatives approach was meant to channel capital grants to Africans not eligible for bank financing to operate incoming generating projects. People venturing to operate as a cooperative had to be registered to obtain start-up grants. The cooperative development should have been my opportunity to fulfill the wish that I had nursed for years but I still kept on procrastinating even to participate in the cooperative schemes where free money was offered.

The national cooperatives system stopped operating within unclear circumstances. The cessation had a cascading knockdown effect to grassroots groups that had formed cooperative ventures. People became disenchanted with working as groups because of numerous problems including late disbursement of grants to properly constituted groups, conflicts among members within the same cooperative and poor financial management and embezzlement of funds. The cooperatives that had received funds and started operating also stopped. Poor financial records, lack of governance procedures, sheer incompetence and other reasons were advanced for the failure of cooperatives. Most of the evaluation of the cooperative program dwelt on surface

issues regarding operations and financial administration. An endless list of issues including insufficient amount of grants, lack of good governance systems within cooperatives, lack of motivation among members, poor choice of projects and many other reasons were blamed for the failure of cooperatives.

Comment

Running a national cooperative program requires knowledge of how to manage an interactive organizational process. Those who managed the program had very little understanding of how to do this. Most successful cooperatives were created by successful entrepreneurs beyond start up positions. The main purpose of cooperatives was to leverage group power to serve and enhance economies of scale, collective advocacy, legal services or input supplies, especially in agro-based projects. Most successful cooperatives were created as service organizations with a mandate to look after collect interests of their members. The most powerful cooperative system in Zimbabwe was the Farmers Coop. Successful farmers contributed money to start the Farmers Coop to serve their needs and to operate business to generate profit for running cooperative. In the case of the cooperative union, the Government remained silent about the cessation of the cooperative system. My observation was that most of the cooperatives that received capital grants were members of favored groups who had nothing to contribute to their cooperative. The majority of members had not brought specific skills to the cooperative. They had neither been tradesmen nor accomplished farmers unlike members of the Farmers' Cooperative that brought together accomplished livestock, plantation, cereal and crop farmers. The cooperatives that failed would need to regroup into some more viable arrangement. Such as commodity associations and start from the bottom. Capital grants should have been given to

individual household farmers rather than loosely amalgamated individuals. Individuals might have been more accountable for their grants and looked after their projects better.

CHAPTER 12

AN ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN FAILURE MODE

I learned a lot from my job as a capacity building facilitator for several Rural District Councils on a project jointly supported by the World Bank, United Kingdom Department of Foreign and International Department and the Ministry of Local Government in Zimbabwe. The objective of the Rural District Councils (RDCs) Capacity Building Program was to improve the capacity of RDCs to meet their mandate of service provision and poverty alleviation in rural areas under their jurisdiction.

However, RDCs continued their notorious lack of efficiency despite the capacity building intervention. Failing to provide services such as village roads, telephone services, and community economic projects and fund raising for social and economic projects of people under their jurisdiction continued to be a problem. Many reasons were advanced for this failure of Rural District Councils. The Councils blamed central government for their failure because central government gave them insufficient grants, for equipment such as vehicles, computers, caterpillars and consumables. Other people blamed low academic qualifications of chief executive officers, untrained project managers and lack of qualified staff. I agree.

Prior to implementing the capacity building program, a staggering amount of data was collected by a consulting company. When the actual capacity building program began, those of us working as capacity building facilitators had to carry out elaborate capacity building baseline surveys in each participating Rural District Council. The results were used to benchmark

capacity building and to create milestones for rural strategic facilitation agendas. After five years Rural District Councils failed to show improvement despite heavy funding, equipment and technical assistance provided under the Program.

Comment

Most public institutions such as RDCs have a long history and are part and parcel of the government system. They are one element in the national government system for poverty alleviation. Capacity building interventions remained rooted in the mechanistic view of change. The intervention tended to address technical issues and other externalities. Players failed to see the RDCs as biological systems within their socioeconomic ecology. Rural District Councils were living organisms with a DNA. The RDCs had a history of many regulatory changes that failed to improve their functioning for many years. They ultimately became a hybrid of amalgamation between African Councils and European Rural Councils. Both systems had previously been designed to serve different objectives. RDCs operated in failure mode because their political ecology and DNA had not changed. The underlying values had not changed to assume a poverty alleviation focus. Local Councils had been created and structured as appendages of the District Commissioner later known as District Administrators (Das). The name changed but the DAs primary role remained, in essence, that of a government security coordinator and vigilante and enforcement of tax collection on behalf of central government.

Institutional memory and DNA are very difficult to abolish or change. Capacity building tended to address technical issues. The deep structures or the operating system (comprised of their relationship with central government) needed more careful attention. RDCs still had institutional memory of their former British colonial system. They needed new worldview system. Despite external inputs, the RDCs maintained their own internal homeostasis. Outsiders failed to comprehend the complexity of RDCs chronic failure. In the organic view of

organization capacity building needed to pay attention to systemic conditions surrounding the RDCs ecology. Future capacity building should take into account both the surface and the deep structures: intangibles that can constrain change in institutions.

CHAPTER 13

HOME BREWING

It was about mid-day in the heat of the tropics when I stopped under the shade of a big mahogany tree by the roadside to avoid the blazing tropical sun while I waited to give Ward Councilor Chimhanda a ride to a village meeting. I noticed men grouped under the shade of a tree at a homestead near where I had stopped. The men quickly dispersed upon seeing me and I noticed women carrying canisters, bottles and cups which they threw into a granary. I wondered why people at the homestead seemed to act in a huff.

Chimhanda arrived and I inquired why the people at the homestead appeared to run away from my presence. He told me that the men had been drinking home brewed wine or spirit called "kachaso." The men must have suspected that I was informer sent to find out about illicit brewing because Government mulled prosecuting home brewers.

Apparently local women had perfected the art and science of brewing, distillation and commercialization of homemade beer, spirits and liquor from locally grown cereals, pineapples, bananas, and other fruit. The projects had started to bring good income to the brewers. The government cracked down on the home brewers. Vigilantes were sent to the rural areas to identify secret brewers who were then arrested. The government allowed big commercial brewers to flood the rural areas with opaque African beer from Chibuku Brewery, lagers from

National Breweries, spirits and wines from African Distillers. The two-part strategy crippled home brewing in the rural areas.

Comment

While members of the government talked vociferously about the need for rural people to engage in creative and innovative income generating projects, when home brewing became the project they refused to allow it to continue. Bureaucratic mindsets were still bent on oppressing the people's creativity and innovative projects especially when they conflicted with entrenched government interests. Government preferred large foreign owned commercial enterprises to dominate the supply of alcoholic beverage in the rural areas at the expense of locally devised brews. They pretended to tell people that alcohol was a controlled substance. In the eyes of villagers alcohol was alcohol irrespective of who brewed it. The Ministry of Youth, Cooperatives and Employment Creation did nothing to defend the villager's enterprise. Villagers felt hat government had violated their rights. They were being arrested unlawfully because since the beginning of Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, in the 1890s rural home brews and consumption of alcohol were exempted from the control of the Liquor Undertaking Licensing Act except in designated urban areas. Up to the time the arrests started, there was no Act of Parliament controlling home brewing and consumption of alcoholic beverages in rural areas. Government should have instructed the big companies to subcontract the distillation of home brew and let them buy from the women for repackaging and marketing.

CHAPTER 14

STRATEGIC FACILITATION AGENDA

On September 15, 1996 I sat down in my Bindura office to write a capacity building inception plan comprised of a detailed three-year district poverty alleviation framework and strategic facilitation agenda. The exercise followed a two-week tour of poor households across four districts. I first flipped through a note book where I had written notes during the tour. But, my notes no longer made sense in terms of the facilitation agenda that I had to write. I could only remember the scenes of six-year school dropouts roaming the villages, teenage mothers with children in advanced stages of HIV/AIDS and families that went to bed hungry under make-shift shelters made of rough timber and grass roofs. Scenes of children who walked in tattered clothes and half bare stomachs still occupied my mind.

While still in that moment of deep thinking and despair, the Governor of the province knocked on my office door to use my photocopier and inquired how well my strategic facilitation agenda was taking place. I did not answer him but he promised to come back in two days to see my progress. I did not feel concerned about what he said because he was not going to see me in that office again. Indeed, he was never going to see the plan because I would be gone by then. My plan was to fake a medical emergency, leave the province by the end of that day and never return.

I decided to take an early lunch break and walked down from the third to the ground floor to see Brian, a friend who worked as the Provincial Health Services Administrator. His boss rang him about something urgent. So Brian left the office in a huff to see his boss, the Provincial Director of Medical Services. I remained in the office and browsed the literature on a bookshelf. There, my salvation came. The book shelf contained books on facilitating district health services. I skimmed through the blurbs and introductory pages of the literature and came across material on facilitating district health systems as an approach for delivery of primary health care. I concentrated on pages that read said something about incorporating different view holder's perspectives in defining needs of the system. The chapters I read said that individuals did not have the capacity to view the whole situation holistically. It was through interaction, mutual sharing and simultaneous learning that view holders could start understanding district health in its entirety. Holistic views only emerge when different actors of a system interact to share perspectives of the problem and generate solutions. Many members sitting in one room made it possible to learn more about a complex system. Facilitative skills were therefore becoming core competencies for staff who worked with groups.

Brian came back and I asked him if I could take the books upstairs for a couple of hours and return them to him by the end of that day. He allowed me to take the books with me for an indefinite period of time. I then spent the rest of that day reading them and made notes. I decided that my capacity building strategic facilitation agenda would begin by conducting a series of interviews with key informants in order understands poverty and how we could attack it. I would cap the discussion by a think-tank workshop of key stakeholders in order to sharpen the focus of my facilitation agenda.

Comment

My visit to Brian's office was the tipping point. His books helped to calm my anxiety and I decided to stay on the job. Many people are given poverty alleviation jobs based on college academic qualifications without training to handle soft skills. The majority of such appointees may not be as fortunate as I was to get literature that helps. I had decided to quit forever because I saw no way of proceeding with the task and I was not prepared to make a fool of myself. I now realize that facilitating poverty alleviation is a systems thinking activity requiring collaboration in defining the whole poverty system. As a facilitators I needed to find a way of seeing and understanding the whole poverty system the connectedness of elements that maintained it. I could only gain such insights from collaboration with other stakeholders who knew the district well.

CHAPTER 15

WORLDVIEWS AND UNCONSCIOUS DYNAMICS

The Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics degree program at the University of Pennsylvania inspired my ambition to review reasons why my previous efforts as a poverty alleviation player failed to achieve significant change. This thesis set out to explain why international development aid in the form of money, programs and projects failed to stop burgeoning poverty in poor rural communities that receive the services. I highlighted crucial issues that in the form of worldviews and unconscious dynamics that could be possible reasons behind the failure of interventions.

Worldview and Metaphors

One's worldview~~s~~ and unconscious biases tend to undermine strategic thinking. The dynamics impose hegemonic controls on how people read, interpret, and act on situations that confront them. Consider the god-centered worldview. When those holding this mindset encounter problems, they automatically turn to prayer when critical thinking could lead to a solution. Flawed and unconscious dynamics and taken-for-granted ways of thinking limit creative solutions.

Related to worldview is that people commonly interpret meanings of situations through implicit metaphors that assist thought by evoking a visual image that persuade them to read and

respond through existing ways. Flawed metaphors result in not seeing poverty within certain contexts in its right perspective. Wrong solutions end up prescribed to solve the problem (Morgan, 2006:396; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Morgan 1980, 1986).

One metaphor that has poor applicability to poverty alleviation is Taylor's (1911) mechanical view of management that has dominated the thinking of most change managers. Success in poverty alleviation is dependent upon the extent to which players can shift their perspectives along with the overwhelming challenges of change. Poverty alleviation players need more breakthrough worldviews, paradigms, and frames. As noted by Kuhn (1970), "Traditional paradigms and mindsets are no longer important managerial concepts and ideology for shaping management practice." Denning (2010) says that the failure of management to bring out good results is caused by the systems that constrain the performance of capable people. According to Bolman and Deal (2008) mental models or metaphors offer a code for exchange of meaning. This is why reframing of perspectives could be a central concern in poverty alleviation interventions. Overemphasizing the technical aspects of organization can lead to failure. Morgan (2006) illustrates how some of the key metaphoric archetypes create a way of reading and the level of understanding of events and situations. These implicit metaphors place powerful limitations on people's ability to find more effective ways to manage change.

Poverty alleviation players draw on their worldviews, cognitive schemas, and mindsets to design approaches for managing change. Different perspectives of poverty alleviation give rise to different approaches, solutions, and results. The challenges posed by chronic poverty become intriguing when one considers the brain power, financial resources, technologies, and powerful institutions driving alleviate poverty (Stiglitz, 2007). This point reinforces that flawed

perspectives and path dependence behind poverty alleviation exacerbate failure of interventions dedicated to reduce burgeoning rural poverty.

Antecedent experience plays a role in automatic thinking and action. Interventions that players implement tend to be affected by path dependence. Kenneth (1963), Liebowtz and Margolis (1999) say that in the path dependence model the decisions a person has to make when confronted by new situations are limited by the decisions that he/she made in the past even though the past circumstances may no longer be relevant. The world in which people live hems the actors to see the world around them and behave in ways informed by their past experience.

Each story in the thesis illustrates something about perspectives of poverty alleviation as means to illuminate the dynamics at play, and suggest ways to approach the situation productively.

Chapter 2 provided a synoptic overview of dynamics that constrain poverty alleviation players from implementing more efficacious interventions. I suggested systems thinking as a way to minimize unconscious biases arising out of worldviews, perspectives and allied dynamics that prevent poverty alleviation players from implementing more efficacious interventions. I presented storytelling as powerful method for sparking rethinking of perspectives of poverty alleviation in selected scenarios that present different perspectives and their influence on the efficacy of interventions dedicated to eradicate poverty. The scenarios include private sector participation, government policy, international aid, conservation and other initiatives dedicated to address burgeoning poverty. The key to effective poverty alleviation may lie on one's ability to define the problem and fundamentally change their perspectives (Deming 1993) to poverty alleviation.

I have argued that a system thinking approach is an alternative approach to frame, understand and decide the most appropriate poverty alleviation options. The systems thinking approach involves seeing the environment, people, culture, history and politics within African communities from a complex point of view where many elements interact to maintain the poverty systems. To reduce poverty, one must first diagnose the system using a systems methodology. Then one must redesign the whole and the sub-systems to change the status quo. Merely changing or trying to improve one element of the system cannot succeed unless the element being addressed is done from the perspective of the whole poverty system. Indeed, Deming's (1994) argues that sub-optimization and improving one part of a system is likely to sub-optimize another. From Deming (1993) we learn that there are benefits from optimizing all the elements of a system. If poverty alleviation players understood the theory of a system, and the role of cooperation in optimization of all of its parts, they can promote change through a cooperative mode rather than adversarial competition. The efficacy of interventions will be more enhanced that way. Therefore to get people really to hear and consider explicitly or implicitly a differing reality or worldview, stories enable a "trying on" of experience without necessarily mobilizing the walls of defense that other carriers of expertise may raise.

Efficacy of international development aid should be the responsibility of sovereign government. While prospects for improving the efficacy of poverty interventions are still very distant, the current World Bank's increasing attention on governance is an important dimension to promoting poverty alleviation (Currie, 1998) in African rural areas. . Dreze and Amarty cited in Currie (1998; 873) suggest that "pressure may be necessary to force 'public action' or political motion to move governments to deliver more effective policy and implementation of effective anti-poverty actions." Current developments at the World Bank give some signs of hope that

poverty alleviation may improve. Dr. Jim Yong Kim, a former development specialist, nominated to head the World Bank might be able to drive a more catalytic effect to efficacious poverty alleviation interventions. However, the prospects will still be slow and change will remain distant until sovereign governments take upon themselves the responsibility for the efficacy of poverty alleviation interventions. This capstone was a worthwhile discourse. "Now it is time to move on and contribute to the search for solutions to the many developmental challenges that confront the world" (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012).

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