

FOREWORD

The investigation of Philippine rural organizations was commissioned in the mid-70s to the Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, by the Asian Centre for Development Administration (ACDA), now the Asian and Pacific Centre for Development Administration (APDAC). Five Asian countries — Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka — participated in the project.

In an antecedent, APDAC — initiated study which explored the different approaches to Asian rural development, one significant finding was the identification of the rural organization as a strategic factor in the overall developmental process of Third World countries. The study here reported was envisioned to fill what some development planners thought was an abysmal knowledge and information gap on the true dynamics of the rural organization in Asia. To gain wider perspectives from the project, a common research design, providing for the development of micro- and macro-level data and insights, but flexible enough to allow adaptations, was proposed to the five participating countries.

The country study on the rural Philippines followed in general the research framework provided by the APDAC. The survey of rural organizations, assigned to Cristina Montiel, provided micro-level data on the characteristics of such organizations in two selected barrios in Nueva Ecija, Philippines. For her part, Blondie Po undertook a detailed socio-historical documentation of the histories of the major organizations committed to farmer welfare services in the rural areas.

The results of these scholarly efforts are presented in this thirteenth issue of the *IPC Papers*, with the hope that its publication may spark further interest and concern for in-depth understanding of the essential dynamics of rural poverty in the Third World. Much has been said about the ambiguity that characterizes many a program and project for underdeveloped countries. Only too often, it is discovered too late that well-meaning plans conceptualized at specialised, "technocrat" levels, "do not exactly conform," as Blondie Po suggests, "to the reality out there." How, for instance, does the unschooled farmer actually come to terms with the day-to-day condition of deprivation that is the lot of the majority of our rural populations? To date, we need much information to break down this problem into meaningful, operational variables if the action plans that follow are to be meaningful and relevant to

the farmer himself. Where indeed does the farmer stand in the criss-cross of "development strategies" dictated by the experts for his "liberation" from bondage to the soil? How does he perceive the innovations laid at his doorstep? And how far is he willing and able to cooperate to make these visions for him a reality? If these questions go unanswered in this issue, we might at least comfort ourselves with the knowledge that the search goes on, and is gaining ground.

The authors, and the editor as well, take the opportunity to thank the many persons and agencies that gave their support, by way of funds, ideas or encouragement, first, to the project, and then, to its publication. There is the APDAC, of course, whose sponsorship and creative guidance at different phases, made the project an accomplished fact. Mary Racelis Hollnsteiner, then IPC Director, coordinated the overall management of the project, and gave expert advice to the young scholars responsible for its implementation. The authors also thank Dr. Francisco Nemenzo Jr. and Dr. Patricia Licuanan, consultants, for sharing valuable insights on both content and methodology especially at crucial stages of the study. Dr. Ricardo G. Abad, current IPC Director, reviewed the final manuscripts, gave useful critical suggestions, and extended vital support throughout the preparatory stages for publication. And Vangie Tandaguen, with her limitless patience and thoroughness, assisted in the proofreading and production of the book.

To date, the Ford Foundation remains a gracious benefactor to the IPC's research publication concerns. Indeed, our gratitude deepens with every new publication it thus makes possible.

And finally, we have been reminded of the *tao* in the Philippine barrio, particularly the farmers in Barrios San Antonio and Sta. Rita, Nueva Ecija. May the new year, and the new data collected through their simple and spontaneous cooperation, lead to new avenues of progress in the rural Philippines.

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Editor