FORGE, Inc.: Examining the Organization and Its Capability-Building Needs for Policy Advocacy

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Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. (FORGE) exists to empower marginalized members of society. This sector constitutes the so-called "informal sector" that has no security of tenure, decent shelter, and access to basic services such as water, shelter, livelihood and employment. FORGE hopes to empower this sector by making interventions in its cultural, spiritual, economic and political life. FORGE firmly believes it is addressing cultural, spiritual and political aspects as seen in its efforts at community organizing and mobilization, the conduct of training, tactic, reflection sessions and the advocacy of alternative models such as gender sensitivity and community-based health care. Along with its efforts in alleviating poverty, FORGE has identified many capability-building needs for policy advocacy as reflected in its training needs survey: (a) program and project management, (b) technical writing, (c) policy research and analysis, (d) policy advocacy, (e) resource generation and utilization, and (f) access to information and resources. These areas for improvement would definitely go a long way in helping FORGE confront the many faces of poverty and would help it advocate alternative development models. FORGE realized that there are certain requisites to be able to translate these good intentions into effective actions.

The Project

This case study is part of the collaborative project organized by the Center for Leadership, Citizenship and Democracy (CLCD) of the University of the Philippines-National College of Public Administration and Governance (U.P. NCPAG) under the auspices of Christian Aid. The project aims to strengthen the capability for policy advocacy of partner nongovernment organizations (NGOs) of Christian Aid.

The initial phase of the project involved the conduct of three consultative meetings with partner NGOs of Christian Aid held each in Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon, between November 1998 and March 1999. The consultations were meant to: (1) facilitate self-reflection on the advocacy work of the partner NGOs; (2) surface their capability-building needs for policy

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advocacy; and (3) identify possible areas for collaboration between and among the partner NGOs, U.P. NCPAG, and Christian Aid.

As a parallel effort to understand the needs of partner NGOs, the project conducted four case studies to probe deeper into the aspects of organization, programs and projects, and advocacy work of selected NGOs. The NGOs included in the study are: the Balay Mindanao Foundation, Inc. (BMFI), the Community Action for Rural Development Foundation (CARD), the Philippine Network for Rural Development Institutes, Inc. (PHILNET), and the Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. (FORGE).

The Case Study

The field research in Cebu City for the case study on FORGE was undertaken from 1 to 6 March 1999. It was intended to gather as many data on FORGE as possible, to conduct interviews with heads and personnel, and to visit project sites and partner communities. The objective was not only to extract information but also to facilitate self-assessment on the part of the organization. Thus, effort was exerted to make the study as participatory as possible.

A week before the research, the CLCD sent an indicative outline of the case study to FORGE, reflecting therein the questions and the data to be gathered. The researcher, unfortunately, was unable to get hold of background materials on the organization before going to the field. Thus, the researcher devoted his first two days to acquainting himself with the structure and the many acronyms of FORGE, e.g., Urban Poor Development Program (UPDP), Integrated Program for Prostituted Women and Children (IPPWC), Kahugpungan Alang sa mga Kabus sa Barangay San Roque (KAPASSAR), (Pinaghiusa sa Riverside Organizations (PARIOR), South Bus Terminal Homeowners Association (SOBUSTEHA), Cebu Port Area *Trisikad* Operators and Drivers Association (CPATODA), and the like.

The researcher was able to interview, individually or in group, the following heads and personnel of FORGE: Executive Director, Acting Assistant Executive Director, Program Manager and Education/Training Officer of the Urban Poor Development Program, Program Manager of the Integrated Program for Prostituted Women and Children, HRD Officer, Community Organizer, Community Organizer, and Houseparent of the Pre-Rehabilitation Center called *Balay Pag-amuma*.

The researcher visited the following project sites and, when possible, talked to representatives of partner communities:

• CPATODA (association of *trisikad* drivers in Cebu Port Area);

- KAPASSAR (barangay federation affected by the Waterfront Development Project);
- SOBUSTEHA Childcare Center;
- *Balay Pag-amuma*;
- Pier 6 (meeting with organized prostituted females, both retired and active);
- Carbon Market (where prostituted children were sniffing a solvent, popularly known as rugby); and
- Night visit to selected work places of prostituted women.

The interviews with the staff became the venue for the researcher to identify the documents needed. The researcher skimmed the documents made available to him during the week. Most of the staff, however, would insist on site visits as a way of introducing their projects, and recounting, through first-hand reports from partner communities, the victories, problems, and challenges encountered. When asked for progress reports, for instance, one project staff suggested that the researcher better visit the place than read reports. That way, she explained, the researcher would be able to see and assess the real situation. During the latter part of the week, the researcher had to request cancellation of other scheduled site visits to catch up with his interviews.

Although the focus of the interviews and the document review was on the projects funded by Christian Aid, the researcher was also exposed to other ongoing projects, giving him a perspective of the organization as a whole.

FORGE's Early Beginnings

FORGE is one of the many NGOs that sprang after the EDSA Revolution in 1986. Four women organized FORGE in June 1987.[1] Two had been community organizers during Martial Law, and the other two had been involved in community work. Although all four were employed by the newly created Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP), they gave time, energy, and material support to the new organization. They worked as four Board members performing varied functions such as screening and hiring applicants, training organizers, evaluating trainee-organizers, facilitating periodic program assessments, assisting in weekly tactic sessions, and generating resource, such as office supplies, temporary office space, etc. (Ngolaban 1999).

The unchanging plight of the urban poor was a compelling reason for the four to establish FORGE. They had been exposed to many areas where the level of organizational development, consciousness, and vigilance were very low. Gwen Ngolaban was recounting one incident concerning an area facing

threat of demolition (Ngolaban 1999). She said the people in the area were depending on PCUP to settle the issue. They abandoned the barricade they earlier set up. They were therefore caught unprepared during the demolition. The four founding members of FORGE were also lamenting the failure of government to help the poor. PCUP, for example, had no teeth in preventing demolitions. They started to question whether what they were doing was the best way to help empower the urban poor.

Thus, they came up with a proposal to organize FORGE. Daphne Villanueva had contacts with People's Force, an organizing NGO based in Metro Manila. Karina David, head of HASIK (Harnessing Self-reliant Initiatives and Knowledge), an active NGO in Metro Manila, brokered the initial tie-up between FORGE and People's Force. Gwen Ngolaban later found that she also had friends sitting as Board Members in People's Force. People's Force approved the proposal and provided a seed fund of ₱300,000 in 1987.

FORGE started operation with six personnel, mostly urban poor leaders who had training and experience in issue-based community organizing, dealing with issues on basic services, housing, land tenure security, demolition and eviction. To monitor its progress, the national training director of People's Force would come every four months to conduct program assessments. People's Force was apparently satisfied with the performance of FORGE and continued its support beyond the seed fund. In January 1988, FORGE was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (Orientation Paper 1999).

In its initial years, FORGE was able to organize as many as 35 communities, three partner federations, two barangay-based federations, and one city-wide coalition (Ngolaban 1999). It had accomplished much given the limited resources available to them during the start-up years. The organization was only composed of community organizers. There were no written office policies to govern the conduct of the small staff, no other mission foremost in their minds than to organize as many communities as possible, and no full-time head to oversee the operations. Lacking the needed facility and logistics, the staff would sometimes use the telephone, photocopier, and paper of the PCUP office.

FORGE was experiencing an identity crisis at this stage (Ngolaban 1999). The founding members of FORGE were championing the cause of the urban poor, while serving as key persons in PCUP. Gwen Ngolaban, for instance, would be a target during mobilizations of urban poor communities since she was PCUP's Assistant Director. She would find herself supervising and conducting the training of community organizers who came from the same communities that had staged a mobilization against PCUP, and she would be introduced during the training as FORGE Board member. There were many

other instances of "soul-searching," especially during people's campaigns on national issues when PCUP would be asked to make its stand (Ngolaban 1999). In March 1990, Gwen Ngolaban assumed the position of Executive Director and devoted her work and time to FORGE.

The support of People's Force lasted for two and half years, until the ICCO, its partner-donor from the Netherlands, decided to cut its funding support in December 1990.[2] FORGE was direly affected since People's Force was its only funding source. With the unexpected turn of events, FORGE, with eight personnel, found itself without funds and no partner-donor. The organization learned important lessons from the experience: to look seriously into its finances, to diversify partners, and to link up with other NGOs, both local and international (Ngolaban 1999).

FORGE secured an emergency loan of ₱50,000 from HASIK through the intercession of Karina David. FORGE's number of personnel was cut to three. The organization then worked hard to establish contacts with other agencies, as it faced new challenges at different fronts, from its home organization to its constituents spread in Cebu City. Thus, the following years were a struggle to meet both the demands of the organization as it grew in terms of personnel and funding, and the demands of the urban poor sector as issues on poverty and homelessness remained acute. FORGE has since diversified its contacts to include partners from Canada, Germany, USA, Netherlands, and UK. It has consolidated the areas where it started organizing work. It has provided services to communities, conducted program on education and training, built and joined coalitions, and supported progressive candidates in national and local elections (Orientation Paper 1999).

The Organization Up Close

Since its establishment, FORGE has advocated the cause of the urban poor in Cebu City. It may be instructive at this point to look closely into the organization to know its strengths and weaknesses, and to explain its successes and failures. Thus, this section examines FORGE as an organization—what the organization believes in and stands for, how it is structured and makes decisions, what are its resources and how it utilizes them, what are its programs, projects, advocacy work and agenda, who are its constituencies, and other related issues. This also attempts to document the experiences of FORGE over the years, as embedded in the nature and workings of its organizations. It reflects both the things articulated by FORGE during the interviews and contained in its internal documents, and the observation of the researcher during and after his fieldwork.

Vision, Mission, and Goals of Empowering the Poor

FORGE's organizational vision, mission, and goals are articulated as follows:

> VISION. A gender-sensitive and ecologically balanced society where the marginalized sector is culturally, spiritually, economically and politically empowered.
>
> MISSION. FORGE, striving to be a stable and militant social development institution, aims to organize, educate, and mobilize the marginalized sectors, especially the urban poor in Central Visayas, towards holistic and sustainable development. Furthermore, in partnership with Partner Organizations, FORGE shall involve and advocate alternative developmental models.
>
> GOALS
> · Build and expand critical base of strong, autonomous and class conscious people's organizations effectively doing advocacy and engaging in politics and governance;
> · Implement support programs in partnership with POs towards their consolidation and sustainability;
> · Generate support from the middle and other sectors to advance the urban poor agenda;
> · Develop, promote and mainstream alternative development models;
> · Develop and advance FORGE organizational capacity to achieve its mission and effectively engage in advocacy and politics; and
> · Institute mechanisms for FORGE to eventually become a resource institution for the urban poor (Orientation Paper 1999).

FORGE exists to empower the marginalized sector. This sector constitutes the poor, the so-called "informal sector," that have no security of tenure, decent shelter, and access to basic services, such as water, shelter, livelihood, and employment.[3] FORGE hopes to empower this sector by making interventions in its cultural, spiritual, economic, and political life. Its core program is community organizing. Thus far, FORGE believes that it is addressing the cultural, spiritual, and political aspects, as seen in its efforts at community organizing and mobilizations, the conduct of training, tactic, reflection sessions, and the advocacy on alternative models such as gender sensitivity and community-based health care. FORGE recognizes, however, its failure in the area of economic empowerment. It feels that it does not have the capability and the confidence to engage in economic interventions for the urban poor, despite demands from the sector (Atienza et al. 1999).

FORGE ventured into micro-finance activity in the early 1990s. The experience, however, left a tremendous impact on FORGE, making the organization uneasy and wary of implementing another economic program for the urban poor. The economic venture led to the split and eventual

disintegration of the biggest urban poor federation ever established by FORGE. It left the organization shaken from the experience. It began to question seriously its organizational purpose, policies, and capabilities.

The micro-credit assistance program was meant to help members of the urban poor federation, named the Federation of Urban Poor Organizations (FUPO), which later became the Federation of Urban Poor Associations (FUPA) when it was registered with the SEC. The idea to put up the program came from leaders of the federation who were learning to think strategically (Ngolaban 1999). The federation was already a voice to reckon with in urban poor issues. It had been successful in campaigning for its cause, and negotiating with local government units (LGUs). The federation, for instance, was able to stage the biggest mobilization of urban poor in Cebu City, where an estimated 5,000 families joined the mobilization, dubbed "*Kalbaryo sa Kabus* (Calvary of the Poor)," during the Holy Week of 1991 (Fisalbon et al. 1999).

FORGE admitted to have encountered difficulties in campaigning for land use issue without the partner communities raising the reality of their "hand-to-mouth existence." The communities were clamoring for assistance in increasing their purchasing power. FORGE decided to go into micro-finance activity when seed funding was secured from the Philippine Development Assistance for Progress (PDAP) of Australia. The leader of the federation at that time had background in micro-finance having been once an insurance underwriter. FORGE's finance officer and bookkeeper had experience in handling socioeconomic projects. Armed with good intentions and with the federation leader and the FORGE finance officer willing to oversee the project, FORGE embarked on the micro-credit program.

The first phase of the program yielded modest gains with a capital build-up estimated to be less than 50 percent. It was in the second phase that the program ran into problems. The loan interest was upped by six percent, where four percent would go back to the federation, and two percent for FORGE (Atienza et al. 1999). Collections became increasingly difficult. Defaults on loan payments became frequent. City vendors, for example, could not pay when their stalls had been demolished. They then would not attend meetings anymore out of *hiya* (shame). FORGE finance officer adopted several schemes to recoup the investment, bringing the program to disarray. Rumors were going around that the president of the federation was reinvesting the funds of the federation for personal gain. Second-liners were questioning the leadership of the federation. Heated debates became a daily affair in the federation and in FORGE.

FORGE has not made a systematic and documented assessment of what happened in its first attempt at economic empowerment. Nonetheless, several lessons could be derived from the experience (Atienza et al. 1999):

- FORGE was not ready to go into the program because of the lack of skills and knowledge on micro-finance management and cooperative activities.

- The institutional preparedness of both FORGE and the federation was not seriously assessed before embarking on the project.

- FORGE did not subject the program to any research or study to test its feasibility and sustainability.

- FORGE did not provide adequate backstopping and there was no system of checks to sustain and monitor the program.

- FORGE put so much trust on the federation leaders and the finance officer of FORGE to run the program.

- No one was actually supervising the FORGE finance officer since Gwen Ngolaban was bedridden at that time and was out of commission for quite a while, leaving the finance officer in charge without being accountable to anyone. Although Alvin Dizon was assigned as officer-in-charge (OIC) at that time, the finance officer, being older and having more experience in NGO operation, went about her work without reporting to the OIC.

- A system of accountability in the different levels of the organization was not defined, and therefore was not clear to members of the organization.

The vision, mission, and goals of FORGE spell out in general terms the intention of the organization to empower the urban poor. As in other organizations, these vision, mission, and goals are statements of noble intentions. There would really be no major disagreement with them. But as evidenced by the case cited above, the problem would always lie in actualizing or operationalizing these intentions. As always, the devil is in the details. Good intentions are not enough to fulfill these avowed vision, mission, and goals. FORGE must realize that there are certain requisites to be able to translate these good intentions into effective actions. Thus, the need for FORGE to assess and build its capabilities.

As one of its goals, FORGE intends to develop and advance its organizational capacity to achieve its mission and effectively engage in advocacy and politics (Orientation Paper 1999). FORGE should not lose sight of the significance of this goal. There must be unwavering effort on the part of FORGE heads and personnel to empower themselves first to enable them to fulfil their mission. Any effort at capability-building should spring from this simple understanding of empowering oneself to empower others. There is,

therefore, the need to develop FORGE's human resources by equipping them with the necessary tools and competencies to do their current jobs and to assume other roles and meet other challenges in the future.

Structural and Decisionmaking Setup

The structure of FORGE was reorganized in 1997. It is composed of the following: Board of Directors, Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Management Team, and two support staff (i.e., Finance Officer, Human Resource and Administrative Officer), and three program clusters (i.e., Community Organizing and Development, Research and Advocacy, Special Project). (See Figure 1.)
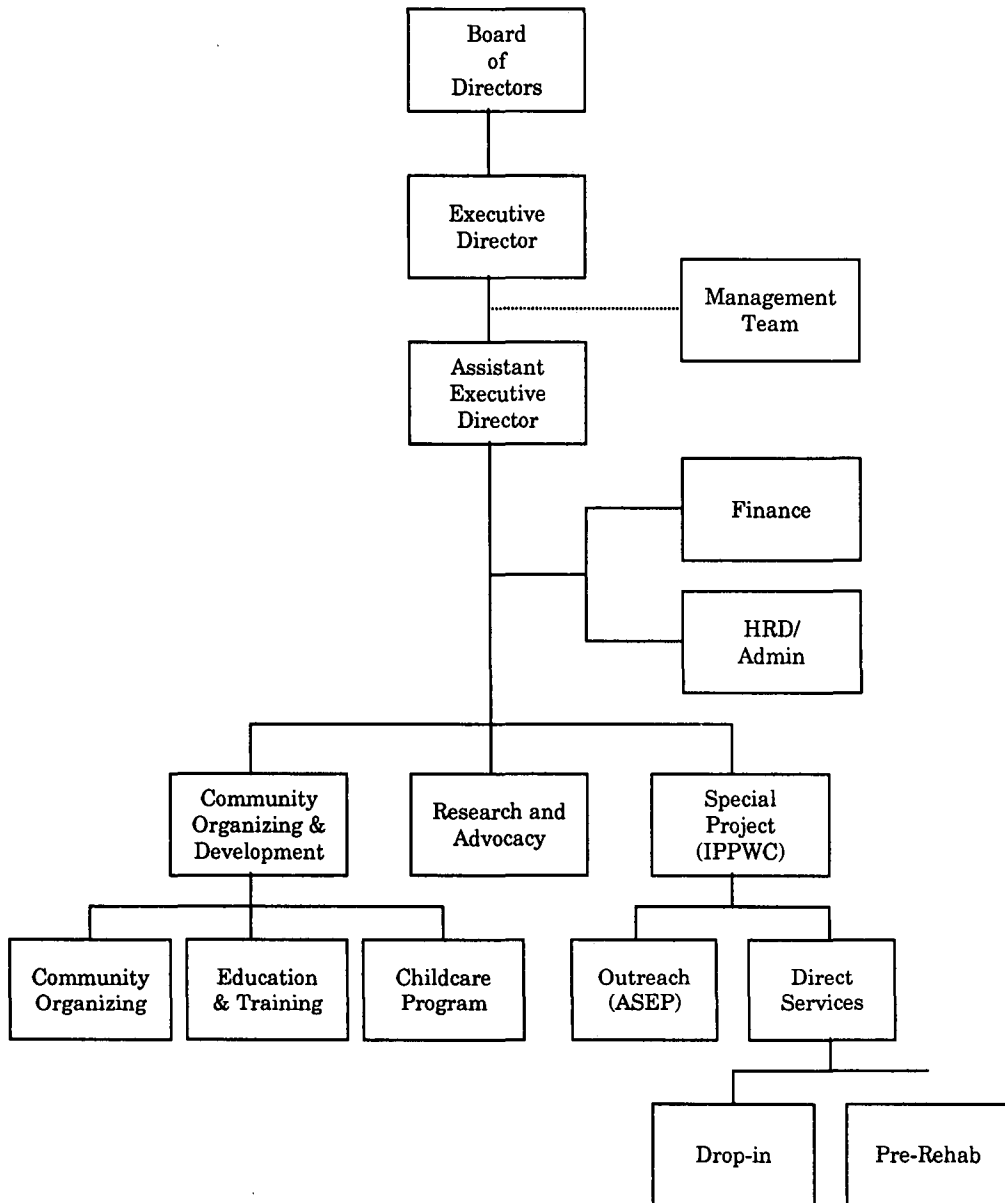
The Board of Directors is the policymaking and advisory body of FORGE. Six of the members come from NGOs, and two from government. Four are founding members, and two have been active Board members for more than five years. The FORGE Executive Director sits in the Board of Directors as non-voting member. Gwen Ngolaban, as Executive Director, enjoys a direct line of communization with Board Members for consultation (Ngolaban 1999). She oversees the day-to-day operations of FORGE, assisted by the Assistant Executive Director and the Management Team.

The Management Team is composed of the Executive Director, the Assistant Executive Director, the HRD officer, and the heads of the three program clusters. The Team regularly meets to formulate and decide collectively on matters pertaining to personnel, programs and projects, office rules and regulations, and other concerns. Important decisions by the Team that might be precedent-setting or might affect existing policies are elevated to the Board of Directors for consultation and approval.

The Management Team is, to a large extent, democratizing leadership and serving as training ground for second-liners. The problem of successor generation is common among NGOs, and FORGE faces the same problem. Gwen Ngolaban is a pioneer and a founding member of FORGE and has occupied the position of Executive Director since the start of the organization. There is no denying that she enjoys much authority and is accorded much respect by the whole organization. The organization, however, is aware of the need to institutionalize leadership. Gwen is trying to disperse leadership through the Management Team. FORGE is opening up opportunities for members of the Management Team to make important decisions, to supervise and be accountable to their respective units, and to meet with partner-donors (Ngolaban 1999).

The Community Organizing and Community Development (CO-CD), one of the three program clusters, has three sub-units, i.e., community

Figure 1. FORGE Organizational Structure (as of March 1999)

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                      │    Board     │
                      │     of       │
                      │  Directors   │
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                      │  Executive   │         ┌──────────────┐
                      │  Director    │·········│ Management   │
                      └──────┬───────┘         │    Team      │
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                      │  Assistant   │
                      │  Executive   │
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│ Community  │ │Research and│ │  Special   │
│Organizing &│ │  Advocacy  │ │  Project   │
│Development │ │            │ │  (IPPWC)   │
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Community Organizing & Development:
- Community Organizing
- Education & Training
- Childcare Program

Special Project (IPPWC):
- Outreach (ASEP)
- Direct Services
  - Drop-in
  - Pre-Rehab

organizing, education and training, and childcare program. It is undertaking a project titled, Urban Poor Development Program (UPDP), funded by Christian Aid, and a Childcare Program supported by Misereor of Germany. The Advocacy and Research Unit is newly formed. This unit used to be subsumed under the first cluster. Forming the Advocacy and Research

Cluster as a separate unit underscores the fact that advocacy and research cuts across the different program clusters (Atienza et al. 1999).

The Special Project Cluster is composed of two sub-units, namely: outreach and direct services. It is undertaking a project titled, Integrated Program for Prostituted Women and Children (IPPWC), with funding support from the USA and Netherlands. The outreach program, dubbed AIDS Surveillance Education Program (ASEP), focuses on HIV-AIDS prevention. The direct services unit involves the maintenance of a Drop-in Center and a Pre-Rehabilitation Center.

Much have to be done to strengthen the new cluster on Advocacy and Research. An advocacy officer has yet to be identified. The sole researcher of the cluster, who is a graduate of the U.P. Cebu, was planning to resign to pursue graduate studies. Apart from the lack of personnel, the cluster had yet to define its agenda in support of the other programs in the two clusters. A clear direction had to be set for the cluster to take off. The importance of the cluster cannot be overemphasized, especially since FORGE is struggling to re-define its policy advocacy agenda and needs all the available information and the research skills to formulate, define, and push its advocacy agenda.

There may be a need to seek out ways to maximize the support and involvement of the Board of Directors. The role of the Board should not be limited to approving what have already been thoroughly debated by the Management Team. The Board could be a resource for FORGE to tap. Having two government officials on the Board, for example, could be a source of information and contacts. The Board's treasurer, for example, who is from the Public Attorney's Office, could provide help in untangling the legal intricacies of local government, housing, and the like. The Secretary, who is a lawyer from the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), could also provide legal services or training needed by FORGE. Another member, an official of the Government Housing Agency, could give updates on policies and developments on housing. In other words, it may be advantageous on the part of FORGE to open up ways for the Board Members to participate in its activities beyond the occasional role of counseling and affirming proposed policies from the Management Team.

The reorganization that happened in 1997 put into effect few innovations in the structure, such as the installation of the Assistant Executive Director, the strengthening of the Management Committee which became the Management Team, and the division of the staff according to major programs. The program clustering was meant to emphasize the point of coordination among the three units and to facilitate the identification of staff, their positions, and their functions (Verdeflor 1999). As a small organization, FORGE enjoys the flexibility to reorganize its structure when needed. Caution must be exercised, however, on reorganizing the structure more than

necessary, especially on occasions when it is done only to accommodate the demands or priorities of funding agencies. Reorganization is effectively accomplished when it is done based on the needs of the times, the constituencies, and the organization.

Personnel Utilization and Needs

Personnel Distribution. FORGE started out with six personnel in 1987. Now, it is composed of 22 full-time staff and one youth volunteer. Heading the organization is the Executive Director assisted by an Acting Assistant Executive Director. Attending to the administrative needs of FORGE are four support staff, i.e., a Human Resource/Administrative Officer and an assistant, and Finance Officer/Bookkeeper and an assistant. Five personnel are backstopping the CO-CD cluster: one Education/Training Officer, three Community Organizers, and the Acting Assistant Executive Director who is heading the Childcare Project. For the Special Project cluster, the AIDS Surveillance Education Program (ASEP) has five personnel, while the Drop-In and Pre-Rehab Centers maintain five staff. FORGE has one youth volunteer, a Dutch married to a Filipina, who is a graduate student in U.P. Cebu taking up urban planning.

The distribution shows that ten out of the 22 personnel (i.e., 45 percent) are in the Special Project cluster. Six (i.e., 27 percent) come from the CO-CD, and only one from Advocacy and Research. The distribution reflects not only the higher manpower demands of the Special Project cluster, but also the fact that this cluster enjoys larger funding support from donor agencies. Given that FORGE's core program is community organizing, the personnel distribution may be lopsided against the CO-CD cluster. Although the Special Project also does community organizing among prostituted women and children, it has so far achieved limited success because of the transient and mobile nature of its constituents.

Addressing the personnel needs of the Advocacy and Research cluster remains a problem. Except for one researcher who is resigning, the cluster has no regular staff. Despite the importance of the cluster in redirecting and supporting FORGE's policy advocacy agenda, the problem remained unresolved since the reorganization in 1997. Again, funding might be a major obstacle. Recruiting a set of policy advocacy officer and researchers, however, is necessary to fully activate the cluster, and thus fulfill its strategic role in the organization.

Codifying Personnel Policies. FORGE is continuously codifying and improving its personnel policies. It has issued office policies on hiring, employment, wages, and remuneration, benefits and privileges, promotions, disciplinary actions, and general policies. FORGE continues to propose and

issue pertinent policies to clarify or elaborate existing policies (e.g., disciplinary action measures), and to respond to current problems or anticipate new ones (e.g., office financial control guidelines).

The growth in the number of personnel has underscored the need to set in "black and white" the personnel policies of FORGE (Verdeflor 1999). When the organization was just starting, establishing office rules and regulations was taken for granted. As noted earlier, the organization started out with only community organizers as its staff. The sole preoccupation then was to organize as many communities as possible, without much concern for office rules and regulations (Ngolaban 1999). What held the organization together was the commitment and dedication of these organizers. Agreements among them were easily reached through verbal communication, which would then constitute office policies.

With the growth of the organization, however, came new staff with varying and oftentimes conflicting dispositions, as well as different levels of commitment to the organization and their work. Problems arose due to this growth and diversity, thus the demand to set down office policies.

The codification of these policies, however, was not met without resistance. Old-timers were questioning the wisdom of having many office policies that have to be debated and agreed upon in consensus (Verdeflor 1999). But the organization needed a standardized means to deal with personnel who performed meritoriously or poorly, or have erred or violated the integrity of the organization. FORGE, at one time, had difficulty dealing with a staff member who was suspected of mishandling funds due to lack of clear office policies (Verdeflor 1999). FORGE has proposed measures that spell out the types and conditions of disciplinary actions for erring personnel, e.g., corrective counseling, written warning, suspension, and dismissal (Disciplinary Action Measures n.d.). Although the policy may not be as elaborate and well-defined as in government—which, for example, sets in detail the schedule of disciplinary actions for each corresponding act, or legislates the code of conduct of public employees and officials—it is nonetheless a positive start at professionalizing the organization.

Personnel Policies and Needs. The need for a Human Resource (HR) Officer has therefore become relevant and urgent in the light of the growing number of FORGE personnel. The HR Officer plans and implements human resources policies and activities of FORGE, including the recruitment and placement of personnel, salary administration, performance evaluation, incentives and disincentives, staff development, and the like.

In general, FORGE has attempted to systematize the policies concerning human resource. It has, for example, set the guidelines for recruitment and selection. It is explicit about the process of hiring, and the use of selection

techniques such as Behavioral Index Style, background investigation, on-the-job testing, simulation, exposures, and panel interviews. It has standard forms for employees' bio-data, interview report, and reference check form. For other personnel activities, it has forms for the following: post-activity evaluation sheet, cash disbursement procedures, incident/violation report, clearance, exit interview questionnaire, career assessment, training needs assessments, and performance evaluation.

Recruitment is usually done by (1) direct contacts of applicants who know the organization; (2) job posting in schools and/or universities; (3) referrals of previous employers; (4) referrals of previous workers/s (Proposed Guidelines for Recruitment 1999). The HR Officer, however, admits to having difficulty in attracting and recruiting people. A certain amount of idealism and sense of community service is needed for a person to join an NGO such as FORGE (Ngolaban 1999). For one, the compensation package is not as competitive as in the public or private sector's (Verdeflor 1999).

The salary scale of FORGE is an internal document. Based on informal talks in 1999, personnel salaries would range between ₱7,000 and ₱12,000. Personnel undergoing probation for three to six months before being regularized get ₱5,000 a month. The entry level of those with experience is around ₱7,000. Project or cluster heads get between ₱7,500 and ₱7,900. It is apparent that personnel funds from different projects are pooled together into a common personnel fund, which is allocated following a salary schedule.

The matter of retaining staff is a ticklish issue among NGOs. In the case of FORGE, the turnover of personnel has not become a problem of late considering that the last resignation took place two years before this study. This means that most of the younger employees in FORGE, constituting around 60 percent of the staff, have stayed in the organization for more than a year or so. The old-timers have stayed with FORGE for five years on the average (Verdeflor 1999). They were student activists, mostly from the University of Cebu, who started out as youth volunteers, receiving no compensation except transportation allowance.

Among the programs of FORGE, the Pre-Rehab and Drop-In Centers under the Special Project cluster are affected by fast personnel turnovers, especially the four positions in the Drop-In Center. The reason is work-related since the job in these centers would require emotional and psychological stability, and special training on handling unstable women and children (Verdeflor 1999). The work in FORGE, in general, would demand much sacrifice and dedication from employees who have to keep long or irregular working hours, and who have to perform multiple tasks. Oftentimes, FORGE employees have to put in additional time beyond the required eight-hours-six-days-a-week work.

Apart from the regular compensation, FORGE also gives incentives to personnel (Verdeflor 1999). These include those required by law such as Christmas bonus, and those initiated by FORGE such as Temporary Living Allowance (TELA) and longevity pay. Additional incentives are given depending on the availability of funds. These may come in the form of salary or merit increases, promotion, lateral job transfer, annual out-of-town rest and recreation, monthly outings called "sst" or "salo-salo" or "sama-sama" together, training, and exposure trips. FORGE recognizes the intense work demands of NGO work. It is therefore following a body-and-mind integration approach, which provides relaxation sessions and other means to ease the work pressure of FORGE staff. Such approach ensures a balanced lifestyle for members of the organization who are known to be workaholics to the detriment of family and personal life.

Another human resource problem of many NGOs is the issue of generating successors. Most of the heads and leaders of NGOs are pioneers or founding members. When they leave the organization, a leadership vacuum results. The transition becomes a trying period for the organization to find a replacement acceptable to everybody. Often, the process involves in-fighting and personnel demoralization. In cases when a new head assumes office, different priorities, policies, and directions are set and implemented. A worse case scenario is for the organization to fold up.

FORGE is addressing this relevant issue through a successor generation project. One important venue of the project is the Management Team. FORGE is training potential leaders in the Management Team and building the competencies of members to prepare them to assume bigger roles in the future. FORGE has come up with a developmental checklist that monitors the performance of the team members on a monthly basis according to several indicators on knowledge, skills, and attitude.

The HR Officer has conducted a survey of the training needs of the Management Team and the staff. The Management Team members felt that they needed to upgrade their knowledge and skills on the following areas: organization principles and processes; development principles; planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; financial management; human relations; emotional intelligence (EQ); networking/advocacy; conflict management; and basic writing skills (e.g., proposals and report writing).

The survey conducted among the staff resulted in an array of training needs that are either common or unique to the different units. (See Table 1 for the list of training needs categorized according to knowledge and skills.)

Linkages

Most NGOs put premium on networking as part of their advocacy agenda and day-to-day activities. Establishing linkages has been a source of support

Table 1. Training Needs of FORGE

Category	Training Needs Identified	Units/Staff/Programs
Knowledge	NGO development and management	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director HRD
	Exposures to successful projects of other NGOs doing similar work as FORGE	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director Special Project
	Management/Executive development	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director
	Sustainable development	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director
	Exposure to international networking	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director
	Sustainability	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director
	Child Psychology Extensive early childhood care and development	Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers Childcare Program
	Human Psychology	HRD
	Urban Development and Housing Act	Community Organizing
Skills	Planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director Special Project (ASEP) Childcare Program Community Organizing
	Communication skills (both oral and written)	Special Project (ASEP) Community Organizing HRD Special Project (Outreach Workers
	Module preparation	Education and Training Community Organizing Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers Special Project (Outreach Workers)
	Human relations	Community Organizing HRD Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Center Special Project (Outreach Workers)
	Financial management	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director Finance Officer/Bookkeeper
	Resource mobilization	Executive Director Assistant Executive Director Finance Officer/Bookkeeper
	Project management	Special Project (ASEP) Childcare Program Education and Training

Table 1 (*continued*)

	Project proposal making	Community Organizing HRD Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers
	Computer literacy	Education and Training Community Organizing Finance Officer/Bookkeeper
	Managerial and supervisory training	Special Project (ASEP) HRD
	Leadership training	HRD Special Project (Outreach Workers)
	Community organizing	Special Project (ASEP) Childcare Program
	Trainor's training	Education and Training Community Organizing
	Stress management	Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers Special Project (Outreach Workers)
	Visual aids making	Education and Training Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers
	Conflict management	Special Project (ASEP)
	Pre-school curriculum development	Childcare Program
	Gender-based planning	Childcare Program
	Gender sensitivity	Childcare Program
	Urban poor planning	Community Organizing
	Goal setting	Community Organizing
	Human resource/personnel management	HRD
	Cooperative bookkeeping	Finance Officer/Bookkeeper
	Credit management	Finance Officer/Bookkeeper
	Accounting and non-accountants	Finance Officer/Bookkeeper
	Budget preparation	Finance Officer/Bookkeeper
	Violence prevention	Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers
	Childcare	Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers
	Maternal health care	Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers
	Documentation	Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers
	Structured learning exercises	Drop-in and Pre-Rehab Centers
	Counseling	Special Project (Outreach Workers)
	Networking and linkaging	Special Project (Outreach Workers)

for these NGOs in terms of funding, information campaign, mobilization, policy advocacy, and the like. These linkages are sought at different levels, that is, international, national, and local. FORGE has established international linkages through its funding agencies, as follows: Christian Aid (United Kingdom); Misereor (Germany); German Development Service; Terre des Hommes (Netherlands); PATH (USA); and ABF (Sweden). Other linkages have been established through Eviction Watch Asia, where FORGE sends letters of appeal to concerned governments on behalf of Asian countries, and

through PESF-Harlemmermer of Netherlands for information exchange and international solidarity.

FORGE's linkages at the national level involve partnership with other NGOs outside Cebu. FORGE is an active member of the following: PHILSSA (Partnership of Philippine Support Services Agencies); WAND (Women's Action Network for Development); APL (Alliance of Progressive Labor); FDC (Freedom from Debt Coalition); UPC (Urban Poor Colloquium); and MAKALAYA (*Manggagawang Kababaihan Mithi ay Paglaya*). Its local linkages with other NGOs in Cebu include: *Kaabag sa Sugbo* (a coalition of Cebu City-based NGOs); SUPAK (*Sugboanong Pagpakabana*); SAMA (Stop Abuse of Minors Association); CNN (Cebu Children's NGO Network); and CWC (Cebu Women's Coalition).

FORGE's international linkage is largely defined in terms of funding support. There are no common agenda or activities on policy advocacy as carried on by both FORGE and its funding partners. Its national and local linkages, on the other hand, are geared toward mobilization and campaign support for issues both FORGE and the other NGOs are concerned with, such as labor, debt, urban poor, women, and minors.

A review of the agenda for partnership at various levels might be needed at this time. Apart from funding and campaign support, FORGE might explore other avenues by which these partnerships can grow. As it is redefining its policy advocacy agenda and identifying its organizational needs to support such agenda, FORGE can utilize its existing partnerships or can build new ones to develop technical expertise, access relevant information and databases, and participate actively in local legislation and governance. Other informal linkages, such as, the academe, the church, and the private sector, can also be nurtured beyond the traditional means of mobilizations and protest rallies.

Programs, Projects, and Constituencies

Urban Poor Development Program. The Urban Poor Development Program (UPDP) started almost two years after the barangay federation, called FUPA, disintegrated in 1995. FORGE built upon the remaining organizations of the federation by forging an alliance called KKK (*Kahugpongan Alang sa Kalamboan sa mga Kabus*) in 1996. The objective was to consolidate the people's organizations (POs), composed mostly of communities originally organized by FORGE.

The experience with the micro-finance project in the early 1990s led FORGE to reexamine the level of political consciousness and organizational

preparedness of the various POs. On hindsight, FORGE saw its limitations and shortcomings in terms of capabilities and preparedness in sustaining the federation in general, and in undertaking the economic project in particular. Following the experience, FORGE wanted to concentrate its efforts on consolidating the partner communities of KKK. It would assist in building memberships within the local organizations that were decimated with the disintegration of FUPA, and in strengthening the organizations through education and training.

The problem, however, was funding. FORGE did not have the funds to pursue its mission of community organizing. A few of the projects being implemented then in selected communities were geared toward service provision, such as childcare, feeding, and health care for the urban poor. For almost two years, community organizing was limited to maintaining contacts with previous partners and providing occasional services. The project with Christian Aid came at an opportune time in 1997. The project, under the title UPDP, matched the urgent concern of FORGE and the needs of its partner communities.

The UPDP's vision is put succinctly in the acronym DISCO, that is, to "develop integrated, sustainable, and child-friendly communities" (UPDP handout 1999). The program duration is three years. Its area of coverage is Cebu City. Its objectives are the following:

- organize and form new urban poor community organizations in Cebu City;

- institute a holistic formation and capability-building for POs;

- render organizational assistance to existing urban poor organizations;

- conduct action researches and documentation of local urban poor issues and concerns; and

- network and educate the middle sector in order to garner support for development actions and initiatives of the urban poor (UPDP handout 1999).

The program's various activities fall under four components, namely: (1) community organizing; (2) education and training; (3) advocacy and network; and (4) research and documentation.

Community Organizing

FORGE sees community organizing as a way to develop and enable POs to critically collaborate with LGUs without falling into the trap of cooptation (UPDP handout 1999). The objective is for the POs to mobilize communities as well as local government resources in the implementation of their development plans and sectoral agenda for the community (UPDP handout 1999). FORGE sees community organizing as an effective mechanism to empower its partner communities and to prepare them for engagement or critical collaboration with government.

FORGE has developed a schema on community organizing. It has an analysis matrix that defines the different stages of community organizing, the activities, topics and information needs for each stage, the interventions of FORGE, the nature of participation expected from partner communities, and the verifiable indicators to measure community performance. As gleaned from the matrix, community organizing is divided into three stages: base-building, consolidation, and institutionalization. The base-building stage is critical inasmuch as it entails much work and involvement from FORGE. Thus, activities at the first stage are well defined compared to the second and third stages. They include social investigation, survey, house-to-house visits, contact-building, spotting and training of leaders, problem identification, facilitation of meetings, coaching, etc. These activities are meant to raise consciousness of partner communities and to build organizational and resource generation capacities. Under the UPDP, FORGE sets a minimum of one year for the base-building stage.

FORGE adheres to the principle of issue-based organizing as entry point to the community. This approach is contrary to project-based organizing where services and projects are directly provided to the communities. The latter approach cultivates a culture of dependence or a "dole-out mentality" among the urban poor (Vasquez et al. 1999). FORGE had an experience operating a project simultaneously in two areas that reaffirmed the organization's belief in the sustainability of issue-based organizing. The project involved the establishment of childcare centers in two separate barangays, i.e., one in a fishing village in Talisay, Cebu, and the other in the upland relocation site for SOBUSTEHA in Oprra, Cebu City. The childcare center in Talisay was established by giving the project to an existing cooperative. The other one was identified and established by the PO to respond to the needs of the community. When funding support had ceased, the project in Talisay was abandoned, while the one in SOBUSTEHA continued with the support of community members.

FORGE has proposed to organize twelve new communities within the program duration, that is, four new—or what are called expansion—areas per year. In its first year of implementation, FORGE was only able to organize

two communities. FORGE traces the shortfall in the targets to the lack of community organizers. It adjusted its targets to two areas for the second and third year. FORGE should provide time to assess and reflect on the over-targeting and the consequent failure to meet the targets. Is it really the number of community organizers, given that the number remained constant before and during the first year implementation? The adjustment in the target for the second year might be supported, considering the impending resignation of one community organizer and the retirement of another. It might be interesting to know how other factors affected the target shortfall. These factors might be the unfounded optimism in setting the target, the relative difficulty in identifying and organizing communities, the varying disposition of communities, the changing community context, the effectiveness of current strategies in community organizing, the multiple tasking of FORGE personnel, and the lack of other resources, among other things.

Two newly organized communities—i.e., PARIOR and Mahayahay, both located in barangay Mabolo at the northern part of Cebu City—illustrate the unique circumstances of each community and the relative difficulty in community organizing. PARIOR was organized during the first year of the program, and Mahayahay was one of the expansion areas for the second year. PARIOR was considered "virgin" since FORGE was the first NGO to interface with the community. It has now become the most active PO among the *sitios* (clusters of 15-30 households) in Lahing-lahing, Mabolo. Sitio Mahayahay, on the other hand, has been a beneficiary of projects of a religious organization. Building rapport with the community was relatively easier in PARIOR than in Mahayahay. During her initial contact, the community organizer in Mahayahay was expected to produce milk and rice as dole-outs. Rumor also spread that the community organizer from FORGE was there to collect money (UPDP Six-Month Report, May-October 1998). It, therefore, took more time and effort for the community organizer to win the confidence of the people in Mahayahay and to convince them to organize.

The communities of PARIOR sit in what used to be a cemetery in Mabolo. About 134 families live in Lahing-lahing, of which 90 are members of PARIOR. No potable water was available in the area. Families bought water from neighboring communities. Water, therefore, became the issue for which PARIOR was organized. It began when one household in the area, i.e., the residence of Bonghanoy, started digging within its perimeter fence in 1995 (Bagares 1999). The Bonghanoy was hoping to find treasures allegedly buried during the Japanese occupation. Instead of treasures, the Bonghanoy found water, which unexpectedly became a cheap and convenient source of water supply for families in Lahing-lahing and a profitable business for the Bonghanoy.

For months, the arrangement between Bonghanoy and the community continued until a certain group complained in late 1996. Acting on the

complaint, the city government's Division for the Welfare of the Urban Poor (DWUP) ordered the closure of the water source. Other government offices were dragged into the issue. These included the Office of the City Mayor, tasked to decide on the complaint; the Zoning Board of the Office of the Building Officials, tasked to ensure safety standards of the deep well; the Mines and Geo-Sciences Bureau, which testified that the place was not a mining area; the Local Water Utilities Administration/Metropolitan Cebu Water District (LWUA/MCWD), which tested water samples; and the Natural Water Resource Board, tasked to approve application for water business (Bagares 1999).[4] The involvement of these agencies illustrates the many sided aspects of the water issue. PARIOR took up the cause of Bonghanoy clearly indicating to the city government its need for this basic service. The issue had a happy denouement with the city government awarding three artesian wells to the community.

FORGE came into the picture in April 1997 when it started community organizing activities in the area. FORGE was instrumental in guiding PARIOR through its advocacy efforts of convincing government to provide water to its community—from making formal statement as counter-claim against the closure of the deep well, to staging mobilizations before the Office of the City Mayor, and lobbying through radio appearances. The water issue has shown the effort of FORGE to develop social awareness, group confidence, community spirit, skills in lobbying, organizing, and negotiation. After the water issue, the community will be facing more difficult problems (e.g., land issue, demolition). Thus, the need for community cohesion, social awareness, advocacy skills, and consolidation makes the task of community organizing more urgent. PARIOR is facing decreasing attendance of members at its regular meetings because of internal conflict and squabbling among leaders. Another issue is land where a portion is claimed by a prominent family in Cebu City and is now fenced, thereby affecting the community's drainage system (Bagares 1999).

Mahayahay is another expansion area where community organizing took on a different track. FORGE had difficulty touching base with people in the community, who expected to receive rice and milk, and not to attend meetings and study circles. The initial months were largely devoted to explaining the role and intentions of FORGE, and building trust of the community. Thus, there were delays in forming an organized group or a leadership structure, and in dealing with community problems through making claims with local government.

The first issue that Mahayahay took up was garbage. The people petitioned the Cebu City Council to provide ways to dispose of garbage in the area. They had to go all the way to the City Council since the sitio is not recognized by the barangay, and therefore Mahayahay is not included in the barangay budget (UPDP Six-Month Report, May–October 1998). The people

held mobilization and "agitation" campaigns in City Hall. In response to the petition, the City Council issued Resolution No. 1049 on 12 January 1998, instructing the Department of Engineering and Public Works to provide 50 EMCOL cans to Mahayahay. The victory was not immediate, however, since the Department had to look for funds for the project, which was not planned and allocated for. The second issue the community has been working on is drainage. The community is seeking the support of the Mabolo Barangay Health to help push its demand in the City Council for the construction of a drainage-canal (UPDP Six-Month Report, May-October 1998).

Education and Training

As a component of UPDP, the Participatory Leader-Organizer's Training (PLOT) is envisioned to identify and train leader-organizers who can initiate and sustain the organizing process in their respective areas while ensuring maximum participation (PLOT handout 1999). The PLOT has the following objectives:

- to identify and develop leaders who can organize in their respective communities and possibly other expansion areas;

- to. facilitate formative processes such as cross-visits, seminar-workshops, weekly tactic sessions, reflection sessions, study sessions, etc. for the holistic development of leader-organizers; and

- to develop the Leader-Organizers Program as a sustainability mechanism in FORGE's development intervention with urban poor communities (PLOT handout 1999).

PLOT is a six-month training program for leaders of partner-communities of FORGE. Members of POs nominate participants during one of their caucuses. The trainees come from KKK and expansion areas. The seminars, study and reflection sessions, exposure trips, and cross-visits to other communities are intended to enhance the trainees' knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. There are two sets of trainees, one specializes on issue-based organizing and the other one on project-based organizing. Activities of the former include the conduct of caucuses, social investigation, negotiation, and conflict resolution, while the latter is responsible for the formulation and implementation of projects such as savings mobilization. Trainees are expected to complement and sustain the community organizing work of FORGE. Those from member organizations of KKK are also expected to perform the key role in strengthening the loose federation.

For the first year, FORGE was able to train 20 out of the 40 targeted participants. Between May and October 1998, 30 completed the training program. FORGE encountered the following problems: (1) most of the trainees

could not perform their role as organizer because they were busy earning a living; (2) the trainees found the reports and planning forms complicated; (3) the outputs of the trainees did not meet set standard (UPDP Six-Month Report, May-October 1998). FORGE is planning to conduct one-on-one tutorials to help trainees make plans and reports. Close supervision and monitoring have not been done because of other jobs by the UPDP team (UPDP Six-Month Report, May-October 1998).

Through PLOT, FORGE has fulfilled two important objectives of community organizing, that is, identify and train leaders and second-liners, and formally and systematically transfer the skills of community organizing. Admittedly, FORGE was reluctant to implement this kind of program in the past because of its perceived elitist approach. To democratize the education and training process, FORGE has complemented this with regular conduct of study circles for the mass membership (Ngolaban 1999).

Advocacy and Networking

FORGE sees policy advocacy as a means to an end. It equates policy advocacy with various modes or strategies to influence policymaking, such as mobilization, mass campaign, research, opinion forming, media advocacy, networking, and support group building. The end of advocacy is measured in terms of the benefit and betterment of FORGE's constituencies, that is, the urban poor. This perspective is clearly illustrated in the definition below.

> Advocacy means influencing decisionmakers to design, adopt and change policies and practices. Its purpose is to create a policy and structural environment conducive to the attainment of specific goals and objectives.
>
> It is done in a way which will be of direct benefit to the people with whom we [FORGE] work. The methods can include lobbying of decisionmakers, mass campaign, research, and opinion forming through the mass media (Policy Advocacy handout 1999).

FORGE claims that the government in Cebu City is not clear about its plans on the urban poor (Vasquez 1999). FORGE therefore sees its policy advocacy role as one that proposes alternative policy frame, policies, and programs that would respond to the needs of the city constituency. It performs a fiduciary role in advocating the cause of the urban poor. FORGE thus believes in the need for its partner communities to define their advocacy agenda and to do advocacy work themselves. That is why FORGE does issue-based community organizing to enable their partner communities to advocate their issues and to participate in local governance.

The arena of policy advocacy is local government. Campaigns and mobilizations are intended to influence policymakers in city hall and the

barangay councils. Issues taken up by FORGE and its partner communities not only relate to the provision and delivery of basic services, such as water facility, drainage system, and garbage collection, but also to contentious issues like livelihood, land tenure, demolition, and relocation. FORGE also participates in national campaigns for specific issues, such as the debt problem and the charter change.

But more than a means, policy advocacy is an end itself. This is well concretized in the advocacy agenda, which is defined by FORGE in terms of the full implementation of the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA). The case of KAPASSAR, a barangay-wide confederation composed of 14 organizations in the San Roque area, has been a showcase of a successful advocacy on the UDHA. The barangays are facing eviction to give way to the multimillion Waterfront Development Project which will upgrade the harbor and port facilities of Cebu City. A Sangguniang Panglungsod Resolution No. 2599 dated 9 March 1998 awarded KAPASSAR a relocation site covering 1.2 hectares in Tac-an, Talamban, Cebu. Specifically, the resolution allocated ₱4,889,600 for the purchase of the land. KAPASSAR attributes its victory to its negotiation and campaign efforts. It "critically" collaborated with the city government—the first time ever, as KAPASSAR and FORGE proudly claim—concerning site selection, lot acquisition, beneficiary identification, and subdivision planning (UPDP Six-Month Report May-October 1998). Of the 800 families affected, 124 will be the first batch to be relocated.

The advocacy agenda of FORGE and its partner communities is not limited, however, to the UDHA. The delivery of basic services has been a major advocacy effort resulting from issue-based community organizing. The case of the CPATODA illustrates another important advocacy concern among the urban poor, that is, livelihood. For almost ten years now, the *trisidad* (i.e., a pedal-operated tricycle) drivers have been keeping a campaign against attempts by the management of the Port area to boot them out. The trisidads have been declared illegal by a city ordinance since 1989 because they were deemed traffic hazards and the Port management wanted an alternative transportation service inside the area. The struggles of CPATODA to keep their only means of livelihood in the city have been contentious and confrontational, resulting in arrests, forcible impounding of *trisikad* units, imposition of exorbitant penalties, and very often, abusive behavior of Ports police such as physical assault (The *Trisikad* Drivers' Story n.d.). FORGE has been supporting the CPATODA in its various mobilization and negotiation efforts through the years. Recently, CPATODA has established its own project that generates a modest income for the organization through supplying water and renting out a small house space. The small income has been made available for credit assistance to members.

To FORGE, policy advocacy seems to be a new word to describe the old and familiar ways of engaging government. Equating advocacy with

campaigns, mobilization, and negotiation clearly manifest this perspective. The recent effort to go beyond strategies and to define a clear advocacy agenda is a positive step toward redefining the concept. Thinking in terms of concrete agenda, and not only in terms of strategies, forces FORGE and its partner communities to work for long-term goals, or better still to match short-term with long-term objectives. Mobilizations may be an effective strategy to draw attention, but these should be matched with concrete and feasible policy alternatives that would impact on the policymaking process and the policy content.

FORGE admits to the difficulty in having one advocacy agenda that would tie up the multifarious concerns and issues of its many partner communities. But coming up with a catchall advocacy agenda might not be the way to go. FORGE should instead come up with its own advocacy agenda. This does not mean, however, that its agenda should depart from its partner communities, but rather its agenda should support, complement, or even steer the latter. FORGE should realize that the concerns of partner communities are mostly confined to their needs to the point that they can be myopic. FORGE, as the organization being relied upon by the people's organizations, should be able to think strategically and creatively in maximizing the available avenues—or what is commonly called "democratic space"—to advance the interest of the urban poor. The case of Mahayahay provided an important lesson where the garbage problem is seen not only in terms of the failure of the city government to provide garbage cans, but most importantly as an institutional problem that denies the community the recognition to be part of a barangay. Attacking this existing institutional problem can impact on future issues affecting the community.

The networking component of the policy advocacy strategy of FORGE is intended to build support network from sectors like the youth, academe, other NGOs and POs, private sector, etc. As pointed out earlier in the section on linkages, the objective has been largely confined to mobilization or the show of numbers. FORGE has expressed misgivings against some support groups that took advantage of the rallies and mobilizations staged by the urban poor to gain media mileage, thereby taking credit away from the urban poor.

Research and Documentation

This is one area where FORGE is not only wanting in personnel, but also wanting in experience and expertise. Research and documentation have been sidelined by other activities deemed more important, such as community organizing, special projects, and policy advocacy. The value of research and documentation has been viewed only in terms of fulfilling the requirements of funding agencies. There is now a growing realization that the two are necessary in enhancing FORGE effectiveness. Research, for example, is seen

as essential to policy advocacy. Keeping an institutional memory for younger and future staff of FORGE is also being verbalized. The staff of FORGE, for example, has yet to read FORGE's history that would detail the victories and sacrifices of pioneers in setting up FORGE.

As part of the UPDP, FORGE has done research on the implementation of the Community Mortgage Program (CMP); but it has yet to release the result of the research. Another project undertaken was an effort to profile the urban poor through the Cebu City Urban Poor Situationer, which was prepared by FORGE's lone researcher. It compiles available statistics, programs, policies, and services for the urban poor. It was also able to produce a newsletter called *Barug*. During an Urban Poor Forum on Anti-Eviction and Demolition held by a sectoral alliance called *Alyansa sa Nagkahiusanga Kabus sa Sugbo* (ANAK-SUGBO) in 1998, FORGE conducted a quick survey of the thousand participants relating to experiences with demolition and eviction.

Still much has to be done in terms of upgrading the research capability of FORGE. The research personnel should be a main concern. There is only one researcher, but she has signified her intention to resign within the year. The matter of research skills is, of course, critical. FORGE must be able to produce and use policy-relevant information through the conduct of policy researches to support its policy advocacy. FORGE has been in situations where it was not able to substantiate allegations or propose concrete alternatives to the city government. For instance, in one of their meetings with the City Mayor to push for a moratorium on demolition and the establishment of a buffer fund, FORGE and its POs failed to push their position because of lack of data and their ignorance of different housing laws (UPDP Six-Month Quantitative/Qualitative Report, May-October 1998). Two years ago, Mayor Alvin Garcia made FORGE Executive Director Gwen Ngolaban a member of a consulting body on urban poor development as a result of a close dialogue with local government. Since FORGE does not have technical expertise on urban development planning and housing policies, Gwen Ngolaban was not able to contribute in the body and she later became inactive. The city government expects consultants to do full staff work on proposals and resolutions, which FORGE could not easily provide (Ngolaban 1999).

Integrated Program for Prostituted Women and Children. A special project of FORGE, the IPPWC is intended to organize, educate and assist prostituted women and children into rehabilitating their lives and accompanying them to the reformulation and realization of their dreams (FORGE's Work on Prostituted Women and Children: A Strategy Paper n.d.). It has two components: the AIDS Surveillance and Education Project (ASEP), and the provision of direct services through a Drop-In Center and a Pre-Rehabilitation Center called *Balay Pag-amuma*.

ASEP started in 1994 and is being funded by PATH and USAID. It is part of a larger program involving a number of NGOs in Cebu. FORGE focused on the education on and monitoring of the use of condom and safe-sex methods, initially targeting freelance prostitutes known as *akyat-barko*.[5] In the course of the program, FORGE adopted an integrated approach that included community organizing and the operation of two centers. At one point, FORGE was also directly involved in the rescue of minors in coordination with the local police force. The operation entailed long nights of surveillance and actual rescue operation where the whole FORGE staff did undercover work, portraying players in the prostitution ring, e.g., victims, pimps, drug dealers and users, and customers. FORGE gave up the operation because of the danger, controversy, and the excessive physical and emotional demands of such operation.

The education on and monitoring of the use of safe-sex methods, however, still pose danger not only to FORGE staff but also to target beneficiaries. FORGE has to go inside the network of prostitution, to deal with key players and to establish contacts with prostituted women to promote safe-sex methods and with minors to provide an alternative lifestyle (Atienza et al. 1999). It has an effective and trained staff that is aware of and sensitive to the danger and vulnerability of prostitutes who might be abused by clients and beaten by pimps. FORGE is careful not to antagonize other stakeholders and is including them in the program, such as, promoting safe-sex and making available condoms to bar owners, and educating seamen temporarily stationed in Cebu Port.

The community organizing component of IPPWC adopts an outreach and integration strategy to develop a network of prostituted women. The outreach and integration work has three stages: (1) contact work in workplace; (2) social investigation in hangout and community area of contact; and (3) deep integration with contact and influential people of the prostitute's life (FORGE's Work on Prostituted Women and Children: A Strategy Paper n.d.). The setting up of an organization is envisioned to facilitate the transition of the prostituted women from prostitution to an alternative lifestyle and alternative livelihood (FORGE's Work on Prostituted Women and Children: A Strategy Paper n.d.). Two organizations were established: one is called the Young Dreamers composed of prostituted women at the age of 17 and above who are still active in the profession, and the other one is *Babae Ka*, composed of the so-called "retired" women.

The Young Dreamers provides an alternative organization for young women who are at the critical stage of leaving prostitution. Babae Ka is a network of retired prostitutes who provide support group system both for its members and the Young Dreamers. It is envisioned to take care of the whole group's welfare, value formation through reflection and sharing, skills uplift through seminars and study circles (FORGE's Work on Prostituted Women

and Children: A Strategy Paper n.d.).   The Young Dreamers has gained only limited success in terms of organizing, owing to the transient nature of prostituted women who transfer work every so often and do not have a permanent address. Babae Ka, however, is active with members engaged in its own advocacy to help women find an alternative lifestyle.

The Drop-In Center was established to respond to the needs of the prostituted women and children who are looking for a place to get counseling, information, and skills training for other kinds of work. It is intended especially for minors below 17 years old who are victims of prostitution.   The children come and go and can avail themselves of the services in the Center. The Center works to convince the children that an alternative path is still available (Center for Initial Phase of Rehabilitation: A Concept Paper n.d.). After a series of counseling, they can decide whether to go back to their community or move on to a higher phase of intervention and assistance (Center for Initial Phase of Rehabilitation: A Concept Paper n.d.).

The Pre-Rehabilitation Center serves as a halfway house or shelter where children undergo preparation for their eventual referral to a rehabilitation center or reintegration in the community. It intervenes directly into the lives of children by providing them skills and education.   It is intended to change the lifestyle of children by instilling in them the value of discipline, work, and support group. FORGE claims that the Center provides liberal interventions in ways that are different from another pre-rehabilitation center run by a religious order.   FORGE believes in being firm but gentle in handling children who have been through much emotional and physical abuse.

The issue of sustainability seems to loom large when considering a project such as IPPWC. When funds cease, what will happen to the two centers? The component on education and community organizing is intended to address the issue on sustainability. FORGE, however, faces many obstacles in implementing the program—that is, from the transient nature of beneficiaries, to the many and yet unseen faces of key players in prostitution, to the dangers of the job, and to the administrative concern of measuring success indicators (e.g., improved self-worth of victims).   Another issue is the lack of clear advocacy agenda.   FORGE identifies its advocacy in terms of pushing for Republic Act No. 7610, or the Rights of the Child, and the struggles of women, and conducting public awareness.   But where does the government come into the picture? What public policies should FORGE advocate to address prostitution? Factoring in the potential contribution of government can lead to sustainable policies and programs for prostituted women and children.

Implications for FORGE's Capability-Building Needs

This section attempts to identify the general patterns arising from the discussion above and to draw out policy implications for the capability-building needs of FORGE for its policy advocacy.

General Patterns and Observations

Diverse issues and constituencies, thus diffused concerns and resources. FORGE has been confronted with the many faces of the urban poor, and the many issues affecting them. Thus, it organizes and serves several communities, federations, coalitions, trisikad drivers, prostituted women and children, including the so-called akyat barko and their male customers, among others. Along with its concerns and constituencies, FORGE has to grow in size and programs. From community organizing, FORGE is now into training and education, networking and coalition-building, and service provision. At this point, FORGE should step back and consider the diverse issues and its heterogeneous constituencies vis-à-vis its resources. Is FORGE spreading itself too thinly? That is, the growth in programs might not have been accompanied by an upgrade in the quantity and quality of resources as evidenced, for example, by the lack of personnel in major projects such as community organizing and the lack of skills in research.

Multiple roles in relation to many stakeholders, but unclear about its role in relation to government. FORGE performs a number of developmental roles in relation to its partner communities. It acts as catalyst when it organizes and educates the urban poor on sectoral rights and responsibilities. It is a service provider when it fills in what government fails to deliver for its constituencies. It also performs a fiduciary role, acting as go-between for its partner communities when negotiating with government. However, its role in relation to other stakeholders notably government has not been clearly defined. Its perception of government is not favorable, if negative, thus taking on an adversarial stance. The negative perception may be traced to past experiences and to the lack of understanding and knowledge about government. Government is thus seen as an adversary that reneges on its duties to serve the urban poor. It does not figure in FORGE programs except as target of and not as partner for reform. There is a need to define FORGE's role in relation to government since government is the subject of its policy advocacy and has the wherewithal to address the issues of the urban poor.

No dearth in enthusiasm and good intentions, but wanting in organizational capacity and adaptability. FORGE is composed of dedicated people trying to make a difference in the life of the urban poor. But intentions and enthusiasm are not enough. To be more effective, FORGE should equip itself with the necessary skills and tools to be able to propose

and advocate alternative policies, agenda, and models for development. It should look into its organizational capacity to improve its programs and, more importantly, to maximize the opportunities to affect changes in local government policymaking process, that is, maximize the available space in local governance, if not push its limits. Thus, policy advocacy becomes more urgent and relevant. With the skills, FORGE should then be able to adapt to changes inside and outside the organization. That is, FORGE should not be content with the old ways of doing things. It should expand its repertoire by learning from its experiences and from others, by improving and innovating. This requires a keen awareness and understanding of the slowly evolving environment. From the changing profile of the urban poor (e.g., possibly the growing population of second and third generation urban poor), to the changing personalities in local government, to existing and evolving policies (e.g., growth area concept), and to the opening up of local government to policy alternatives due to past victories of urban poor mobilizations—these are things that have to be understood and exploited.

Capability-Building Needs for Policy Advocacy

FORGE has identified many capability-building needs as reflected in its training needs survey. The following are priority needs where the U.P. NCPAG can make some interventions.

Program and Project Management. This is important inasmuch as FORGE is driven by projects funded by international and national agencies. Existing skills must be upgraded by making available appropriate tools and techniques that will help FORGE formulate, implement, evaluate, and monitor its programs and projects efficiently and effectively. FORGE should develop its knowledge and skills on problem analysis; objective analysis; project selection; operation planning and implementation; and project evaluation and monitoring. Modules on program management can be prepared to fit the needs of FORGE. To complement such modules is the conduct of an intensive training on program and project management for FORGE staff.

Technical Writing. Both heads and staff of FORGE identified this basic need. Gwen Ngolaban has lamented the fact that she has to write, edit, and finalize reports and proposals. FORGE needs interventions on writing and packaging press releases, local legislation, resolutions, technical reports, issue papers, policy papers, and proposals. A short course on technical writing can be conducted.

Policy Research and Analysis. FORGE has learned that policy advocacy takes more than ideological pronouncements and demonstrations to achieve results. Policy advocacy entails hard work, research, and analysis to be able

to come up with informed arguments and proposals to influence policymakers. FORGE should be able to produce and consume research to push its advocacy agenda.

FORGE should learn and develop its skills in policy research and analysis. As against basic research, policy research is applied and its main aim is to produce policy-relevant information to influence and facilitate the policymaking process. Policy analysis is an important skill in structuring and detailing problems, establishing evaluation criteria, identifying and choosing policy alternatives, implementing and evaluating policies. Training and guidance in conducting research and doing policy analysis would be helpful.

FORGE should be able to utilize its network of support groups, such as other NGOs, the academe, youth volunteers, as resource of data and research technology. It can, for instance, replicate similar studies done by NGOs dealing with the same problems on urban poverty. HASIK has conducted research on the urban poor, coming up with a concrete profile of the urban poor in Quezon City, thus debunking or validating long-held beliefs and assumptions about the poor. FORGE may adapt the research approaches and methodologies of HASIK.

Policy Advocacy. FORGE is still at a stage where policy advocacy is equated with mobilizations, campaigns, and sometimes service provision. FORGE has to graduate from this stage and take on a higher form of policy advocacy that proposes alternative policy frames, and concrete and workable policy alternatives. It should redefine the concept and the means-ends of policy advocacy. Having the skills and tools in policy research and analysis does not necessarily translate into effective policy advocacy. The skills in strategizing, influencing, pushing policy reforms, and using research and analysis for policy advocacy are likewise essential. FORGE should be exposed to various ways to influence local bodies, to the different arenas of conflict and intervention points in local government, to the many collaborative arrangements with local government bodies, and to alternative resources outside FORGE and the local government that can be mobilized.

The question on how to lead FORGE to a higher level of policy advocacy can be done through consultancy or "accompaniment" by a team of consultants. A training program can be formulated to expose FORGE to successful policy advocacy.

Resource Generation and Utilization. Financial security is a major concern for FORGE. Its programs and projects are donor-driven. To promote financial security, FORGE should be trained in resource generation and mobilization. The skills in resource management that FORGE would acquire in a training program can be transferred to its partner communities. Specifically, FORGE needs to learn the ropes in socioeconomic management to

fulfill its avowed mission of economic empowerment, if not also to sort of redeem itself from its failed attempt to manage a micro-finance project that left a bitter memory in the organization.

Access to Information and Resources. FORGE needs information and resources on urban development planning, local and national government operations, the Local Government Code, budget planning process, and organizational development, among other things. FORGE can do its part by improving its baseline data through the conduct of in-house research, by tapping resources of existing support groups, networks, and coalitions, and by broadening its contacts to include other organizations in civil society inside and outside Cebu. The U.P. NCPAG, on the other hand, can serve as resource center for FORGE and other NGOs where they can access data and consult the College on a need basis. It can provide consultancy, technical assistance, and training. It can also serve as conduit in tapping the expertise of other units in the University (e.g., School for Urban and Regional Planning, Institute for Small-Scale Industries, etc.).

Epilogue

After completing the case study in August 1999, the CLCD furnished FORGE a copy for comments and suggestions. FORGE made some corrections concerning facts and interpretations on FORGE history, its organizational structure and resources, and linkages. Apart from the corrections, FORGE also submitted updates reflecting the developments that have been happening in the organization since the time of the field research in March 1999. The updates are as follows:

- FORGE has decided to streamline its Special Project Cluster. From the original program called, Integrated Program for Prostituted Women and Children (IPPWC), this Special Project Cluster became the AIDS Surveillance and Education Project (ASEP). FORGE has given up the operation of the Drop-In Center that provides direct services to prostituted women and children. The ASEP continues to do outreach work, conducts its activities among the Young Dreamers, and helps the organization of erstwhile prostituted women.

- An advocacy officer has already been appointed. Ms. Condess Bagares, one of the three community organizers in FORGE, assumed this new position. Initial breakthrough has been reported in terms of pushing for the urban poor agenda, e.g., NGO representation in the Local Housing Board, creation of a tripartite body, among other things.

- A new community organizer has been added to the UPDP team.

- The sole researcher of FORGE's Research and Advocacy Cluster has decided to stay on. Instead of enrolling in law school, she has decided to pursue graduate studies to specialize in urban planning after realizing its relevance to her work in FORGE.

- The Administrative Support Staff is now composed of the HRD/Administrative Officer and an assistant, a Senior Finance Officer who handles the books, a Junior Finance Officer who handles the cashiering and disbursement, and an Accounting Encoder. Thus, the new staffing distribution is follows: six for UPDP, six for ASEP, five Administrative Support Staff, and one Executive Director.

- The Childcare Program under the UPDP, funded by Miserior of Germany, ended in April 1999. FORGE has proposed a new program on Childcare Mainstreaming to a funding agency.

Endnotes

[1] The four founding members are: Ana Maria Rellin-Ngolaban, Daphne Villanueva, Eppei Eden, and Evelyn Espinosa. Three are still connected with FORGE. Ana Maria Rellin-Ngolaban is the Executive Director, while Daphne Villanueva and Evelyn Espinosa sit in the Board of Directors.

[2] It was during this time that rumors of left-leaning NGOs channeling funds to the underground were strong, and funders reacted. People's Force was known to be a "multi-tendency" organization, accommodating various ideological tendencies, including social and national democrats. A number of NGOs was affected in the decision of ICCO to cut funding since People's Force was supporting six to seven satellite training centers and 60 personnel (Ngolaban 1999).

[3] Based on the statistics of the city government's Division for the Welfare of the Urban Poor (DWUP) as of 1998, 430,000 or 69 percent of the total population in Cebu City are urban poor.

[4] FORGE was able to document the struggle of PARIOR with these local government units in the community profile prepared by Condess Bagares, the community organizer assigned in the area.

[5] They are prostituted women and children "whose main source of income is dependent on passengers of boats and cargo vessels docking at Cebu City" (FORGE's Work on Prostituted Women and Children: A Strategy Paper n.d.).

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