Application of Biological Human Ecology in commnity development of ethnic groups in Mekong watershed

Together with evolution of **BHE,** Nine steps of approach to structural poverty reduction from practical work and development strategy of **PASTE** (**PA**rticipation, **S**hareresponsibility for **T**ransparency and **E**quality) are drawn out to become series of interacting actions and thinking of community development.

Nine steps of approach to structural poverty reduction and sustainable development

Step 1. To research and learn languages, practices, customs, beliefs, knowledge and experience of the community.

Lessons drawn from the first step of approach

- Identifying the difference between the two concepts about values;
- Understanding the traditional social structure and code of conducts between the human being and the nature;
- Understanding who we are, what to do and how to do, the point of departure that is psychologically suitable and does not violate the nationality will and self respect of the community.

Step 2. Sharing with villages' elders and heads, initiating a link between customary laws of the community and the formal legal system of the local authority.

Lessons drawn from the second step of approach

- Developing, at the highest degree, the traditional leadership role of the community, creating an environment of self control, self responsibility for the community's traditional leaders, identifying any inadequacy, analyzing impact of inadequacies of policies in the approach to the community. Participatory environment is created for critical sharing between elders and village, communal, district authorities;
- Understanding the meaning of the self control and self responsibility position of the traditional leaders, maximizing opportunities for community participation in the development activities, mitigating the inferiority complex psychology, enhancing the self confidence and mutual understanding between traditional and formal systems through various field study trips and forums;
- Creating an equal corridor for the interaction between traditional and formal socio-politic institutions during the deployment of activities in the community.

Step 3. Providing an opportunity for various ethnic minorities to meet, associate freely with one another during the formation of different interest groups.

Lessons drawn from the third step of approach

- Communities shall identify the common point by themselves, together seek for solutions to problems under the specific custom, culture and ecological, geographical conditions of each group;
- Coming to the community, you should be true in the heart, transparent in your eyes, true in your soul, wise in your mind, careful in the work;
- Communities will provide us actual solutions in psychological approach, in behavioural arts so as to continue exploring their mysteries.

Step 4. Promoting an environemnt for the community to meet the right people, right subject, right place and right time, so as they may together seek ways for settlement by themselves.

Lessons drawn from the fourth step of approach

- The community determine by themselves their key urgent matters, causes and consequence, coordinate with each other by themselves to solve their own urgent matters;
- The community determine by themselves their objectives and strategies to realize their objectives basing on their custom, cultural identity, consenting regulations of the interest groups. This is foundation for development and expansion of CBOs and CBIs[1] ;
- The community recommend by themselves steps in approach to help local development organizations and policy implementing persons avoid imposition in a wrong way.

Step 5. Facilitating a legal corrdor and minimum material conditions so that the community shall set up by themselves the model of community development and hunger elimination and poverty reduction.

Lessons drawn from the fifth step of approach

- Developing at the highest degree the opportunity of practicing local experience with model of hunger elimination and poverty reduction at the household, inter-household, community, inter-community levels in the manner of satisfactory to

---

[1] CBO = Community Based Organization, CBI = Community Based Institution

the local people, proper level, easy to apply, visibility, reliability so that internal and outside households of the community will employ and expand.

- Maximize voluntary involvement and sharing of constraints, initiatives, solutions among members of interest groups, to create foundation for building up trust among community members and precondition for decentralization and democratization in communities;
- Obtaining reliable reality indicator for analyzing, illustrating and providing criticism to policies relating to hunger elimination and poverty reduction and developing the self control, self responsibility.

Step 6. Nurturing with basic conditions and facilities for the communities to check by themselves as well as cross-check together.

Lesson drawn from the sixth step

- The community is open for free argument, initiatives are blooming. Nationality psychology and self-respect, inquiry and critical atmosphere appears through supervision, consultation and cross-check among interest groups of Savings & credit, Husbandry, Gardening and other community development programmes;
- Appear spaces and critical thinking among members, between interest groups on the basis of discovery of weakness through monitoring and cross-check;
- Competition has been developed among interest groups, communities and thematic networks as well.

Step 7. Offering different open forums to several partners: the community, the government, development organisations, the media, development researchers and policy makers.

Lesson drawn from the seventh step

- The values, traditional perception of ownership, land, forest and water resources are not corresponding between community and legalization;
- Overlapping of production materials - forest land and conflict between the state-owned forestry companies and the community is the key issue;
- The demand for direct discussion and negotiation with the implemention officers and policy makers;
- The demand for use right of production materials – forest land to be recognized;
- The demand for consultantative supervision and direct critique on the policy implementation by all levels of local government.

Step 8. Building up an institution-aware environment for community to develop self-control and self-responsibility regulations for implementing and approaching targets set by themselves.

Lesson drawn from the eighth Step

- The demand for self-organizing, managing and implementing contents of hunger elimination and poverty reduction, self-checking and cross checking of outputs, results and effects of contents of hunger elimination, poverty reduction and development;
- The demand for taking inititative in analyzing and deciding whether direct effects from outside are approved or not;
- The demand for direct exchange and market approach;
- The demand for information and culture exchange among communities;
- It appears the wish to establish groups and organisations accordingto independent specific objectives.

Step 9. Searching new partners – expand exchanges and network connections – combine network of groups by habit directly with community businessmen and developed economic organisations – create a premise for the formation of community enterprises.

Lesson drawn from the ninth step

- The demand for consulting how to maintain voluntary values of the thematic networks;
- The demand for reforming the thematic networks for exchanging with the market;
- The demand for self-managing and regulating service entreprises;
- The demand for strengthening the capacity to analyze cost-efficiency and benefit allocation;
- The needs for further exchanges.