

**PRACTICAL CHALLENGES TO THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM
EXPERIENCES OF SATUNAMA FOUNDATION OF YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA
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ABSTRACT

SATUNAMA has experienced three kinds of leadership under Soeharto (military dictatorship), Habibie, Gus Dur and Megawati (transition to democracy) and SBY (consolidation of democracy). The shift from charity to development, and then empowerment programmes, was marked by different directions and work methods. Reactions and challenges differed in each situation, but the reaction of government, if nothing else kept the SATUNAMA management on its toes. For them, ‘government’ means ‘giving orders’. Everyone must obey them, be it at central or regional level. In many cases, the solution hung on whether we were prepared to give money to government officials. Public reaction depended on the approach taken by the NGO. The new focus on empowerment spelled a change in programme strategy, too. Under the current administration, SATUNAMA has moved through various forms of empowerment, from “opposing and refusing to work with”, to “closely monitoring”, and now to “negotiating” with government. Challenges come from all sides. The challenges of empowerment in the broad sense are never ending; and are increasing in number, intensity and complexity. The central question remains this: when will public services become genuinely pro-people; and when will the people have genuine independence and self-determination? Addressing these problems may be easier if the approach adopted is not problem based, but comes from a conscious choice to seek the best for everyone concerned and the most appropriate for the situation. In this approach, SATUNAMA chooses to search for meaning, stand firm, and to never fig up searching for BONUM, VERUM, UNUM, PULCHRUM.

A. FROM CHARITY TO DEVELOPMENT (BEGINNINGS & PEAK OF THE SOEHARTO REGIME)

When SATUNAMA was still a branch of USC-Canada in Indonesia (USC-Canada Indonesia Office – USCCI), all programmes were run according to policy regulations and decisions made by USC-Canada in Ottawa. From 1975, in collaboration with the Indonesian national committee for social welfare (Dewan Nasional Indonesia untuk Kesejahteran Social – DNIKS), nearly all USCCI programmes were charitable² (assisting orphanages, lepers, people with TB, the elderly, breastfeeding mother and child programmes, disabled people, etc). There were only very few community development programmes. The target region included the whole of Indonesia, notably Nusa Tenggara Timur, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Sumatra Selatan, Kalimantan Barat, Java and Bali, and Papua. DNIKS was led by Ms. Johana Nasution. When General Nasution switched camps and became critical of General Soeharto’s government, the government cut all Johana Nasution’s social works, and even intervened to ensure that Ms. Nasution would not be re-elected as chair of DNIKS³. Completely dedicated to humanitarian social problems for dozens of years, this woman was forced to resign from DNIKS because she had fallen out of favour with the Soeharto government. All local, national and international partners that had been working with DNIKS were “forced” to find other, government-approved, partners. USC-Canada was “manoeuvred” into working with the department of social affairs (Departemen Sosial – Depsos), and signed an agreement in 1987. From that point on, the department of social affairs controlled all of USC-Canada’s

work in the field. Given that the predominantly charitable nature of USCCI's programmes and its close links with Despos, USCCI was rarely involved in partnerships with other NGOs working in development⁴. As a result, USCCI was somewhat removed from the NGO world in Indonesia. Because USCCI's programmes focused solely on those experiencing social problems; people for whom the government should have been providing services. Relations with the government⁵ were smooth, administrative problems⁶ and the difficulty of finding appropriate partners aside⁷.

To give USCCI more freedom in planning its social programmes, at the end of 1988, it recruited a Representative who had the authority to develop programmes in consultation with the department of social affairs. It was this Representative who introduced a new approach to development that would gradually replace the organisation's mainly charitable approach. USCCI's work partners were screened, and partnerships considered ineffective and inefficient were terminated. The work area was narrowed to focus solely on the eastern part of Indonesia, where almost everyone lived in poverty and where the physical and social infrastructure was far less developed than in other parts of the country. Development programmes were understood as a "process of freeing individuals and communities from all obstacles obstructing changes in behaviour towards a collective, self-reliant way of life⁸, or the ability to identify weaknesses, strengths and opportunities for achieving self determination of and responsibility for one's own future and to participate in changing the environment of one's community."⁹ From then on, USCCI built alliances with self-reliant organisations and NGOs in Indonesia¹⁰, and conducted advocacy programmes.¹¹

As USCCI's involvement in social affairs¹² and issues of justice¹³ grew, its alliances with other NGOs in Indonesia expanded, to. Initially, USCCI had never been involved in Indonesia-Canada alliances because of the charitable nature of USCCI's programmes. With the new role it had chosen for itself, USCCI became a major actor in the process of building alliances between Indonesian NGOs and Canada, culminating in the establishment of ICF (Indonesia Canada Forum), a forum that brought together Indonesian and Canadian NGO activists, to work together in all areas, including women's development issues, democracy, and human rights. Though ICF's activities moved forwards, alliances with other donor countries did not develop. In 1991/1992, CIDA finally gave ICF a grant for four consecutive years to be used to build solidarity between Indonesian and Canadian NGOs. Thanks to this intervention, USCCI was involved in, supported and even provided operational funding to INGGI (International & Indonesian Non Governmental Organisation for the Government of Indonesia). Headquartered in the Netherlands, this was the only NGO that had the guts to offer ideas to and voice criticism of the Indonesian government in the international arena.¹⁴ We encouraged USC-Canada to attend the INGGI conference in Paris in 1993¹⁵. The presence of USCCI at this INGGI conference was a statement that USCCI's programmes had a macro dimension and that it perceived advocacy as an integral part of grassroots assistance. At a meeting of NGOs in Puncak, West Java, advocacy NGOs were emphatic about their position as non government of Indonesia, and in their refusal to use the term 'NGO'. This meeting confirmed the differences in identity between developmental NGOs and advocacy NGOs.

There was a pressing need for USCCI to get involved in advocacy work because bad government policy had created new problems that were at the root of other societal problems in these areas:

1. The economy. More and more, government policy favoured owners of capital, with enormous numbers of large investors seizing opportunities from small and micro enterprises. USCCI support for small enterprises was invariably thwarted by the high cost economy and large enterprises swallowing up the small (loan facilities, business premises, technology).¹⁶
2. The environment. Environmental degradation had reached alarming proportions, with Indonesia losing a million hectares of forest each year as a result of legal and illegal logging¹⁷.
3. Education. The government's education policy prevented ordinary people from sending their children to school because of excessively high school fees and cost of books.
4. Agriculture and Health. Government policy on agriculture and health benefited large manufacturers of fertiliser, pesticide, and medicines. Any attempts to develop organic farming and preserve local seed were strictly forbidden.¹⁸
5. Security and Basic Human Rights. Government policy suppressed people's right to express opinions, organise, vote and be elected¹⁹. Tight security control killed public initiatives, and all efforts by USCCI partners support local communities utterly failed.

To get round the obstacles set up by government for foreign organisations like USCCI, which was headquartered in Ottawa, empowerment work at grassroots was done from the Yogyakarta office, and advocacy work through PPD²⁰ in Jakarta. This division of tasks was a signal that USCCI was involved in advocacy to fight for the people; not as political manoeuvre aimed at gaining a position as "Next Government Officers" (NGO). The peak of USCCI's involvement in advocacy came during the fall of Soeharto, symbol of dictatorship and corruption, when colleagues from PPD joined the first wave of activists entering the parliament building in Jakarta on May 12, 1998, and remaining there until Soeharto stepped down on May 21, 1998. The USCCI representative made the decision to give Rp 25,000,000 to the demonstrators for logistics. On the morning of May 20, in Yogyakarta, a "pisowanan Agung" was held, where hundreds of thousands of Yogyakartaans met with their king (Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X) to enlist his support in calling for Soeharto to step down. The office staff and training participants at the USCCI Training Centre took part in this "pisowanan agung"²¹. On the night of May 20, ministers of economic affairs hand picked by Soeharto resigned en-masse. Then on May 21, Soeharto stepped down, and so began a new page in the history of Indonesia.

FROM CHARITY TO DEVELOPMENT: PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

ACTORS	Challenges and Constraints Faced	Possible Solutions
Bureaucracy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The MoU between USCC and the Indonesian government was updated every three years, and kickbacks were expected before the new MoU was drawn up. 2. Regional government demanded respect, reports and their own MoU, in addition to the one with central government. 3. Differences in perceptions of development, and all government officials insist that their ideas are right and must be taken up. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop individual personal relationships and do not enter into business transactions. 2. Build relations with internal people to facilitate the process and ensure that partnership remains in the hands of central government. 3. Don't dispute their concepts. Follow the rules, but implement your own ideas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Continual requests for reports that are never read or commented on. 5. Critical education activities invariably scare government officials and are perceived as political activities 6. Wives, husbands and members of the families of government officials ask for staff positions or job opportunities, or services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Have on hand plenty of copies of reports to keep them happy. 5. Point out that according to the preamble of the Constitution, education is to develop the intellect for the advancement of the nation. 6. Introduce strict rules covering all these possibilities, allow healthy competition, and perform regular evaluations of performance and service quality.
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Troops and police watch over our work. 2. Ask for something in return for security services 3. Travel documents incomplete (forgotten to bring passport) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give them cigarettes and tell them you can't work with them watching over you. 2. Negotiate the fee if necessary. Tell them that one of their superiors is taking care of security. 3. Ask an Indonesian they know to deal with it.
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give marked up receipts for goods to your partners 2. Quality of goods and guarantee not as promised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request info about the unmarked up price, or file a report. We need to know local prices. 2. Ask for a replacement, or file a report.
Community or NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You/your organisation is perceived as a spy or agent of a foreign organisation or foreign country 2. Local people are slow in understanding and processing info. 3. Competition between NGOs 4. Low capacity of NGOs, especially their managerial capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry the MoU with the Indonesian government, to show that we are helping their government. 2. You must be skilled in your approach. Make good preparations and enlist the support of local experts. 3. No problem; could even be good provided that it is of benefit to the local community. 4. Must be capacity development programmes for NGOs and CBOs.
Religious Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traditional institutions resistant to our ideas 2. Your programme is suspected as having a religious mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build communication and approach the leaders, and start concrete activities that benefit the local community. Get faces know in the community involved. New ideas can then be introduced gradually. 2. Be careful here. If there's a problem, ask a government official to explain things to them or to the community or the public.
Political parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A political party wants to ride on the back of your programme, especially around election time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don't recruit anyone who is a political party official. Let the local people oppose political party intervention..

B. DEVELOPMENT TO EMPOWERMENT (End of the Dictatorship and the Transition Towards Democracy of the Habibie, Gus Dur, and Megawati Governments)

The different perceptions of development held by the Indonesian government and NGOs widened, and continued to do so, from the 1990s, making NGOs a symbol of opposition against the Indonesian government. This symbol became even more marked because there were no other organisations with the guts to take on this role. All mass organisations (political parties, farmers' organisations, labour organisations, teachers' organisations, and even religion leaders) had been taken control of by the government; so much so, that even their leaders were hand-picked ('elected') by the government. The term 'empowerment' entered the Indonesian NGO vocabulary thanks to the works of Jhon Friedman (1993)²², which were brought by participants to the INGGI conference in Paris. Almost all of these documents were seized by the security forces at Sukarno-Hatta airport when the seminar participants returned to Indonesia. This term developed with the increasingly popularity and dynamism of women's movements, especially after books by Jo Rowland (1997)²³, Caroline Moser (1996)²⁴, and particularly the analysis of Sara Hlupekile Longwe (1990)²⁵ (Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework-WEEF) entered the country clandestinely or semi-clandestinely and were spread among the advocacy NGOs. The term 'empowerment' gained even more in popularity after the idea of CIVIL SOCIETY arrived on the scene and became to be seen more and more as a concept suited to be developed in Indonesia.

Spurred on by success stories of Indonesia's economic development, especially after the Indonesian government embraced the economic liberalisation, many international NGOs planned to phase out from Indonesia. Before properly phasing out, USCCI planned to set up a training centre as a kind of "legacy". The idea was that this training centre would spread universal values (democracy, human rights, social justice, gender, concept of civil society etc) to young people, and especially students, since Yogya is home to more than 120 universities. The first education module to be developed was Civic Education for Future Indonesian Leaders (CEFIL). This course trained young people to be leaders in the post-Soeharto era, a period of true democracy. The curriculum was developed by 75 NGO activists with more than 15 years experience of struggle during the Soeharto years. This training was supported by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, based in Aachen, Germany. The first intake began training in October 1997. Initially, we had visits from the sub-village, village, sub-district and district administrations, the police and civvies employed by the security forces, on an almost daily basis. Discussions revealed that they felt responsible for the security of the trainees, who were from all over Indonesia and of every conceivable background. Indeed, we had intended that this course be a school of democracy, where the trainees learned to live together on a day to day basis. Intervention by government occasionally took the form of people looking for job openings for family members at our centre. Wives of government officials contacted us to ask if they could arrange food and laundry for the training participants. In response, we prepared a list of strict criteria and allowed competition, while making periodic, transparent evaluations of all work and services.

Discourse on empowerment became more and more heated two years prior to an economic crisis hitting the whole Asia, and Indonesia in particular. As an organisation that had worked directly with local communities²⁶ and as a training centre for social activists, we combined field experience and academic theory, by promoting local values. Programmes are considered empowerment if they are oriented towards social change and contain the following basic elements²⁷:

1. Build community capacity to fulfil their felt needs and real needs. The type and mechanism they determine themselves with the participation of all those who are felt able to help (increase social welfare)
2. Build and promote community capacity to achieve greater access to all the resources they need (increase access)
3. Build community capacity to collectively manage their own organisations (increase self management)
4. Develop broader and deeper critical thinking of oneself and ones surroundings (Critical Thinking)
5. Increase social control of the environment and all aspects of life: social affairs, economy, politics, and technology (Social Control)

During the period of transition towards democracy under the Habibie, Gus Dur and Megawati administrations, we encountered almost no significant challenges from government.

When Habibie was president, USCCI changed its status from a representative of USC-Canada to SATUNAMA, which was formed as the type of Indonesian legal entity known as a *yayasan*²⁸ or foundation. The founders consisted of (NGO sympathetic) professors from several universities in Yogyakarta along with several social activists. Officials in Jakarta took an age to understand the partition between USC-Canada and SATUNAMA. Confusion reigned on many an occasion because the two organisations shared one office address under one roof.

Serious challenges against individuals came from the military as a result of our involvement in Timor Leste during the Soeharto era, up until referendum for Timor Leste under the Habibie administration. As well as holding courses at the training centre in Yogya, we also organised training and conflict resolution activities in Timor Leste. Hundreds of young people from all our groups trained together, both in Timor Leste and in Yogya. The Indonesian security forces interpreted these activities as being ‘pro-independent’²⁹. Unrest in Dili and surrounding areas prompted many activists to flee to safety to Yogyakarta. We provided protection for these refugees by personally handing a report to the Sultan and GKR Hemas (the Sultan’s wife).

During the Gus Dur administration, all NGOs experienced a ‘honeymoon’ period with the government because the President called on activists at every opportunity; they were even free to come and go at the presidential palace. This situation was a first. There was no intervention from the state apparatus, and NGOs were free to develop human rights and democracy programmes and implement them freely. Between the Gus Dur and Megawati administrations, SATUNAMA developed new courses: CEFREL (Civic Education for Religious Leaders), developed in response to the rise in horizontal conflict with religious overtones; CERFUL (Civic Education for Rural Leaders), to train bureaucrats at the village through district levels, to understand the values of democracy and human rights, and that a new era had arrived; CELOP (Civic Education for Local Politicians) to train members of parliament and politicians in the values of democracy and human rights, and in developing regulations that protect human rights; STRECEW (Strengthening Civic Education through Women’s Organisations) to train women government officials and women activists in rural areas in the values of democracy and human rights. During the Megawati administration, we trained to hundreds of members of Village Councils (Badan Perwakilan Desa – BPD) to apply democratic values in the villages. In addition, we also provided training for NGO leaders (the number of NGOs mushroomed after the fall of Soeharto) from all over Indonesia, funded by USAID. Each year, our training centre trained between 1,000 and 1,500 community empowerment cadres and activists.

The challenge we faced most frequently was complaints that training participants were very critical when they returned to their communities; that they had the nerve to voice criticisms in the village, and some sub-district and village heads even prohibited their staff from taking courses at SATUNAMA.

FROM DEVELOPMENT TO EMPOWERMENT: PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

ACTORS	Challenges and Constraints Faced	Possible Solutions
Bureaucracy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Several sub-district heads and village heads prohibited their staff from training at SATUNAMA because it would make them too critical and assertive. 2. Many members of the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) wanted training, but SATUNAMA resources were insufficient. 3. Many regional governments asked for help training their staff, but no funds were available. 4. The bureaucratic machine, especially at mid level, is still controlled by the attitudes and habits of the new order regime. The reform teams in the offices of many ministries, do nothing but polish the surface to give the impression that they have made reforms. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform the district head, as their superior, that their attitude is hampering development. They are the ones who will lose in the end because they will lose public support. 2. Suggest that they find their own resources and use the facilitators from SATUNAMA. 3. Training funds are unnecessary if education is not considered a priority. 4. Changing behaviour takes time. The heads of the agencies involved must provide a guarantee that reforms are being made.
Security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The police takes over the role played by the military during the New Order. 2. Where the military feels that public security is at stake, there is no guarantee of security 3. Warnings of dangers of communism are spread everywhere by the military. 4. No change in military impunity. The military continues to act, although in different ways than it did during the New Order. Now, military intelligence is more active than the territorial commands. 5. Reform of paradigms within the military is starting, though some remain unconvinced. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong public support is needed for education of the police. 2. Need for education on conflict so that people's emotions are not easily inflamed by outsiders. 3. Take no notice of the communism issue. It will die its own death. Need for civil awareness education to prevent people being easily hoodwinked. 4. The fight for a Truth and Justice Commission must be stepped up continually. Human rights abuses must be investigated. 5. There need to be more military experts in the NGO community, and they need to lobby to influence the reform teams that are in place.
Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many businesses operate thoughtlessly, damaging the environment and depleting natural resources 2. Not all those who embezzled Bank Indonesia Liquidity Funds (BLBI), which are bills issued by the central bank, have been caught, and the funds remain overseas. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up business watch organisation and fight against black market businesses. 2. Continued advocacy, and public reminders to ensure that these people continue to be pursued.

Community	1. Grassroots radicalism following in the footsteps of the military in the New Order era.	1. Civic awareness education needs to be continued. Religious leaders need to be continually motivated to curb grassroots radicalism
Religious Leaders	1. Middle Eastern radicalism spreads throughout Indonesia, especially Java, Sumatra, and East Kalimantan.	1. The fight to uphold justice must be stepped up. Interfaith meetings should be held regularly at all levels. Revive local cultures that unify people from all backgrounds
Political parties	1. All political parties actively seeking support wherever they can. 2. Widespread corruption by political parties through members of parliament	1. NGOs must draw a firm line between political party activities and community empowerment programmes. Political party activists must be prohibited from becoming NGO activists 2. Must be continued support for the anti corruption movement, which must be promoted at all levels of society

C. EMPOWERMENT TO CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING (Consolidation of Democracy under the SBY administration)

During discussions with training participants, at during discussions at the grassroots community level, it is always pointed out that the first three elements of empowerment (economic based) were the parts that were allowed to be addressed and developed during the Soeharto regime, provided that mass organisation did not develop rapidly and have strong roots in the community. The Soeharto government would cut off and kill any organisation that had roots in the community. A floating mass policy³⁰ was adopted to put pressure on opposition groups that had mass support at grassroots. This policy allowed Golkar to win absolute majorities in all the general elections during the New Order period. The image that they wanted to build up during that time was that politics are bad, unsettling and unnecessary if security is to be guaranteed and if economic development is to progress smoothly.

Ironically, Soeharto himself fell as the result of an economic crisis. So, empowerment elements number 4 and 5 (democracy based) had to be implemented by organisations, including NGOs, in all post-Soeharto activities. After the fall of Soeharto, SATUNAMA became the most ardent of campaigners³¹ of the need for political education (democracy and human rights) at the grassroots level, by strengthening critical education and social control. Its motivation came from the practical experience SATUNAMA had gained since 1996 when Soeharto was still in power³². Its motivation came from a genuine desire to defend the Indonesian nation³³ from absolute authoritarianism, remembering the universal adage that “power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupt absolutely”³⁴. In the early days of the Megawati administration, SATUNAMA began setting up a community radio that would reach listeners within a 60 km radius. Empowerment from this angle in particular armed farmers and ordinary people in rural areas with information and critical thought appropriate to their world. Democracy education was the spirit behind all broadcasts, 19 hours a day³⁵. By the end of the Megawati government, SATUNAMA had introduced History of Thoughts³⁶ education, as a response to loud cries for the introduction of Islamic law in Indonesia, which had already begun in Aceh.

During the Susilo Bambang Yudohono administration, Indonesia entered a phase of consolidation of democracy, and according to Wolfgang Merkel (1999), there is still a long way to go before the development of a culture of real democracy³⁷. A study by DEMOS³⁸, an NGO concerned with the development of democracy in Indonesia, noted that democracy in Indonesia since Soeharto has stopped at procedural democracy, and has yet to touch the basic essence of democracy, notably protection of human rights. This sizeable academic study noted that almost all the instruments of democracy that are in place and used in Indonesia today are disabled and not functioning properly. The political elite, including New Order affiliates and their cronies, have dominated and misused democracy for their own ends, while campaigners for democracy since the New Order era (NGOs) have been left out of the picture because they lack the capacity to move forward³⁹.

The SATUNAMA empowerment programme at the various levels (macro-national, meso-district, and micro-grassroots) is taking a more focused shape. Political education for all—mass organisation activists and cadres, NGOs, bureaucrats, religious leaders, ethnic leaders, politicians, members of parliament—are held regularly. There are between 35 and 45 education events each year. The duration of the training can be anything from 5 to 30 days. The courses are live-in, facilitating day-long learning interaction. Another form of education the centre provides is facilitation of political education organised by other organisations, including higher education institutes, mass organisations and NGOs. Another form of empowerment is providing consultation⁴⁰ for other organisations, which includes development of programme strategies, organisational development, and programme monitoring and evaluation for local, national and international organisations working in Indonesia. SATUNAMA participation in NGO coalitions for public policy reform is carried out from the Yogya office and through YAPPIKA⁴¹ headquarters in Jakarta.

Grassroots community empowerment focuses on strengthening the economic basis, in particular developing small enterprises for women, strengthening farming enterprises by promoting sustainable agriculture, and developing biodiversity programmes⁴² through seed banks, greening of water sources, promotion of local seed, terracing, use of organic fertiliser and pesticide, and marketing of environmental-friendly produce. Direct support for people's organisations continues in the form of facilitating the strengthening of organisations and programmes through field visits at least once a month. The past five years has seen rapid growth and development of mass organisations, representing professions (farmers, labourers, company employees, etc) and others, such as customary institutions, and religious and political party organisations.

With the uncontrolled increase in the number of NGOs, their images ranged from good, to hard-line, to poor. Which is why, in 2003, SATUNAMA began promoting TANGO (Transparency and Accountability of NGOs)⁴³ with the aim of moving towards certification of NGOs⁴⁴, to enable them to engage in better quality negotiation with other empowerment actors and make a contribution to community empowerment and empowerment of government.

Competition between NGOs intensified and became more and more open at all levels. To encourage cooperation between NGOs involved in government watch and anti-corruption work, in 2004 SATUNAMA invited all these NGOs to Yogyakarta to discuss matters related to their main functions, and explore how they collaborate and divide work in community and government empowerment. One output of this meeting was an agreement on the need for a kind of clearing house that would enable them to exchange information, and to learn from

and strengthen each other. This mandate was undertaken by SATUNAMA with the introduction of the WATCH TERMINAL (WT) programme, which is managed from the SATUNAMA office. This programme involves 159 NGOs from around Indonesia that are involved in government watch and have anti-corruption programmes⁴⁵. WT also works with the Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi – KPK) and the Minister for State Administrative Reform. There are 13 regions, assigned according to the location of the members. Each region has its own meeting programme.

During 2006 and 2007, many of the activities carried out by the three regions in Papua will be geared towards building the capacity of NGOs in local budget watch.

Regarding issues at the macro level concerning relations with government, the feeling is that, on the one hand, there are signs that the government is promoting democracy and decentralisation; but on the other hand there have been incidents where other hands have come into play, signalling a tightening up of security⁴⁶. As such, the attitudes of NGOs towards government vary widely, depending on their ideological viewpoint. An increasing number of NGOs are working with and getting projects from government; others are willing to collaborate with government when the need arises; and some shun any contact with government because this would compromise their mandate to control government. The situation described by Philip Aldrige (1989)⁴⁷ as regards the attitude of NGOs towards government has, it seems, not changed. Of course, real changes have come about with the implementation of decentralisation and direct elections of regional heads. Central government and regional governments are not uniform by any means; it depends entirely on where their support comes from.

Through the period of transition, up to the present day consolidation of democracy, the focus of community empowerment programmes has been getting more people involved in the process of legal reform, in amending the foundation of the national legal system⁴⁸ and fighting for laws and public policy at the lower level. Government reform programmes and strengthening of good governance are a key element of community empowerment. SATUNAMA has a dedicated work unit for activities in this area—the Governance Reform (GR) unit, which is integrated with the Research and Development (RD) unit and the Special Desk for Gender and Mainstreaming, which is led by an integrated expert in political science from Tubingen University, Germany⁴⁹.

SATUNAMA also provides services related to natural disasters on a limited, ad-hoc basis, because our focus is more on long-term empowerment. Democracy and human rights education programmes were implemented in Aceh long before the tsunami at the end of 2004. Our programmes in Aceh continue today, though general assistance related to the earthquake will end, at the latest, in 2009.

The internal dynamics of the SATUNAMA organisation pose continual challenges. As an organisation that adopts the learning organisation principle, SATUNAMA faces all these challenges with optimism. It seems that the problems mount, rather than diminish, and that we are kept busier than ever as the issues broaden in dimension and increase in complexity. For this reason, a great deal of effort has been put into, and a great many discussions held about, the conceptual and practical aspects of programmes, at all levels in the organisational structure⁵⁰. Challenges are not seen as major issues. SATUNAMA adopts the principle of leadership by vision⁵¹, in which programme orientation is based not on the principle of problem solving, but on the visions, ideas and spirit of individuals and the organisation. What

this means is that although problems faced do need to be addressed, they are not the basis for programme choices. This visionary approach is well suited to the real conditions of life, especially so in present day Indonesia, which in the past three years has been bombarded by catastrophe after catastrophe, from a tsunami that claimed 140,000 lives, to widespread earthquakes, sinking ships, lost and crashed aircraft, to a mudflow in East Java that swamped eight villages.

One of the basic strategies for dealing with challenges without loss of enthusiasm or direction is to think and behave as if you were a powerless person seeking for something to fill your life. This “seeking” mindset is what makes SATUNAMA never give up actively empowering and doing whatever is necessary to seek truth (bonum), justice (verum), unity (unum) and beauty (pulchrum).

FROM EMPOWERMENT TO CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING: PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

ACTORS	Challenges and Constraints Faced	Possible Solutions
Bureaucracy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Little enthusiasm for work and persistently strong New Order legacy of corruption among bureaucrats. Golkar appears to be protecting them to retain their support. 2. Central and regional bureaucracy are “protecting NGOs” for economic gain. 3. There are suspicions that corrupt bureaucrats are using Islamic law as a wall to hide behind. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage all groups and parties to compete to demonstrate their interest in the ordinary people who will vote for them in the next election. 2. Promote an NGO code of ethics to enable the NGO community to control itself from within. 3. Increase people’s political education activities to enable them to take a more critical view of the benefits for the long term.
Security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is suspected that the military wing continues to play a part in security issues for their political ends. 2. Gross human rights violations by the military cannot be investigated. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote accountability and transparency of military budgets to minimise the possibility of manipulation for political aims. 2. Continue to encourage NGO coalitions to pull back the curtain of impunity.
Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Still a large number of foreign investors that damage the environment, and the new investment law is very much in favour of foreign investment. 2. Greater corporate social responsibility (CSR), but empowering element sorely lacking and no strategies for social reform 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage efforts to monitor and counter rogue investors from Indonesia and overseas. 2. Increase public education so that more people will not be hoodwinked by CSR, which only benefits the company concerned.
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An increasing number of people’s organisations with very low capacity and difficulties networking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide capacity building and political education programmes for people’s organisations and professional organisations.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. SATUNAMA is getting an increasing number of requests for training from community organisations 3. Poor people suffer most from the unrelenting natural disasters. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. SATUNAMA intensify fundraising efforts for services. Revise information communication strategy to reach a wider audience. 3. Each organisation should have disaster funds and each individual who asks should be given disaster funds for themselves or for others.
Religious Leaders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Religious fundamentalists refuse to participate in any meetings whatsoever except with their own kind. 2. US intervention in East Timor has become an excuse for radicalism by fundamentalist groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build community solidarity to prevent outsiders infiltrating and dividing communities. Intensify economic strengthening for poor communities. Local cadres keep local cultures alive. 2. More education and information about the positive and negative impacts of globalisation.
Political Parties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasingly intense competition between political parties. Many seek out illegal sources of funds and launch attacks on NGOs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuously promote NGO transparency and accountability. Never stop fighting against political conspiracies to undermine civil society.
Public Media	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public media conglomerates control public media in Jakarta and in the regions 2. Public media not interested in NGO issues because of the behaviour of rogue NGOs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage the AJI to take even firmer control of domination and discrimination. 2. Spread counter information for a more objective view. NGOs must improve their quality.
Internal NG	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uncontrolled mushrooming of NGOs, with no guarantees of quality. 2. In many cases NGO policies are determined by the orientation of donors 3. Many national and international NGOs do not “walk the talk”. For most, the focus is on keeping hold of the purse strings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote individual and collective codes of conduct per region/city. 2. Increase dialogue between donors and partners, and transparency and accountability of donors to their partners. 3. Reiterate again and again that the fight for a democratic culture must start from within.

CONCLUSION

Development created more problems than solution for powerless people. Empowerment gives respects and fulfill human needs and values. Empowerment is influenced more by a commitment rather than understanding. Commitment never afraid of terrors, rifles or bombs, created by formal bureaucracy or self satisfaction. Commitment to serve generates creativity to search, the best way to serve. It is about personal choice to live for others, means for many people. Hence never sufficient when it is arriving in oneself, as it will die, while live for many creates long life, sustainability. Sustainability means unifying with the law of the universe (UNUM) and that is the real truth (BONUM) the source of justice (VERUM) that creates beauty (PULCHRUM) and happiness.

THE 9th SATUNAMA's ANNIVERSARY APRIL 25, 2007

Meth. Kusumahadi

¹ The Head of Board of Trustees since May 1, 2007. Director of SATUNAMA from 1998-2007, Representative of USC-Canada from 1987-2000, Head of The Bina Swadaya Centre for Self-Help from 1974 – 1987. Youth/student activist from 1967-1974.

² Korten C. David, 1990. “Evolving Roles of Development Oriented NGOs in Asia”, unpublished articles, February 6, 1990.

³ Suharto became president in 1967 by way of a special session of the Legislative Assembly (MPR). In the 1972 general election, Soeharto swept to victory under the Golkar banner. In 1974, several political parties and mass organisations were squeezed and amalgamated, so that there was only one mass organisation of each type. All this was done in the name of development. Soeharto’s opponents were silenced and their mass networks cut off.

⁴ The government of Indonesia and NGOs have enormously different perceptions of development. The Indonesian government’s view is economic growth security based, while the NGO’s view is rights’ based. Since 1980, NGOs that are in opposition to the government have emerged.

⁵ In 1983, in the Law on the Environment, the terms LSM was used officially. NGOs whose perceptions tallied with those of the Indonesian government continued to be called LSM and had links with the Department of Social Affairs. Those whose views differed from the views of the Indonesian government continued to be called NGOs and were linked through the Directorate of Social and Political Affairs in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

⁶ Coming up towards the end of Ramadan holiday and New Year, many mid-level civil servants asked for ‘work reports’, even though the official reports had already been submitted to the department of social affairs. These requests for reports amounted to thinly disguised attempts to get “Lebaran /New Year gifts”. At one point, we had a list of 23 high-ranking officials in Jakarta who were supposed to get these gifts; but we put a stop to it.

⁷ There were thousands of LSM and foundations running charitable programmes the length and breadth of Indonesia. Provincial and district offices of the department of social affairs distributed to them the names of foreign donors. We were at a loss to select prospective partners in the field because every day we received three proposals asking for funding. What’s more, the quality of their proposals, in our opinion, was well below par.

⁸ Innayatullah 1983. UNRISD Cooperative Study at 14 Countries. ICA Publication.1984.

⁹ This definition of self-reliance from the 1980s was formulated and written down in the Statement of Bina Swadaya’s Philosophy in 1984. Bina Swadaya was one of the LSMs perceived to be in this category (developmental oriented), and today owns more than 17 companies in Indonesia..

¹⁰ From the early 90s, many NGO alliances were formed, both in Indonesia and overseas. The first were alliances of NGOs receiving funding from NGOs in the Netherlands (notably Novib, Cebemo and Hivos). Alliances were also promoted by Australia, Germany, UNDP, the United States, and Canada..

¹¹ Advocacy means giving input on and expressing criticism of Indonesian government development programmes. The government interpreted this as “opposition” from so-called NON GOVERNMENTAL organisations. Thus, advocacy NGOs were obstructed by government at all levels. Over time, the word NGO became a label for opposition of the Indonesian government.

¹² At a ceremony in the Pamekasan district office (1990), I was refused entry because I was wearing jeans and sandals and had long hair. Officials eventually came to look for me outside the room because as the representative of USCCI, I had to make a speech. During my address, I mentioned that government officials tended to judge people from appearances.

¹³ When it came to issues of justice, challenges came from indigenous leaders, too; notably in Flores, NTT, where women were denied land rights. To change this, USCCI facilitated obtaining land title deeds in women’s names on Lembata Island.

¹⁴ INGGI was set up in 1985 by several Indonesian NGO activists, with facilitation from NOVIB Netherlands, to make recommendations on Indonesian government development policy. The members of INGGI were NGOs with the guts to criticise the Soeharto government. Every year, INGGI held a conference and issued an Ad Memorie. To drum up wider support, after a few years, the INGGI conferences were held in locations outside the Netherlands.

¹⁵ At the INGGI conference in Paris, the Ad Memorie criticised many aspects of Indonesian government development policy, including criticism of the construction of dams in Kalimantan,

which prompted prospective donors to withdraw their support. This enraged the Soeharto government, and Indonesian organisations attending the conference were intimidated by the security forces. USCCI argued that it was USC-Canada, not USCCI, that had attended the conference. The Indonesian government threatened not to extend the department of social affair's contract with USCCI if it continued to provide support to INGGI.

¹⁶ From the early 90s, Kadin (Indonesian Chamber of Commerce) issued annual reports complaining of the high cost economy, but temporary measures aside, the government failed to take serious action to improve the situation..

¹⁷ Walhi (The most vocal Indonesian environmental NGO) demanded that Soeharto be taken to court for using reforestation funds to prop up development of the aircraft industry in Bandung.

¹⁸ In the early 90s, farmers in Dusun Jerukan, Cawas, Ceper, Klaten, Central Java, had their paddy fields stormed by troops from the local military command, who burned down the farmers' crops of Rojolele, the top, local variety of rice. These farmers had refused to grow the C4 variety (recommended and produced by the government-owned PT Dewi Sri) because it required large amounts of chemical fertiliser and pesticide.

¹⁹ AJI (Asosiasi Jurnalis Indonesia) was formed as a symbol of opposition to government policy limiting basic rights. AJI activists were arrested and jailed for various reasons.

²⁰ In 1996/1997, during the time of ICF as a joint project, a new programme called Partnership Program for Development (PPD) was initiated, focusing on helping the institutions and programmes of 13 NGO forums across Indonesia and their members. One focus of the programme was national advocacy for pro-people public policy. Financial assistance from CIDA was managed by USC-Canada, which meant that USCCI was involved in decision making at the highest level.

²¹ All too frequently, the USCCI office and training centre were disrupted by 'visits' from the government security forces. The disturbances became less frequent when GKR Hemas, the wife of the Sultan, presented USCCI a placard, which was displayed at the entrance to the training centre.

²² Friedman, Jhon (1993:33): 'Empowerment, the Politics of Alternative Development', Blackwell, Oxford.

²³ Rowland, Jo (1997:13): 'Questioning Empowerment, Working With Women in Honduras', OXFOM, Oxford.

²⁴ Moser, Caroline O.N. (1996:.) : 'Gender Planning and Development, Theory, Practice & Training'. Routledge, London.

²⁵ Longwe, Sara H. (1990:4) 'Criteria for Analyzing a Project's Contribution Towards Women's Development', paper (unpublished)

²⁶ We supported grassroots communities in 6 provinces, with activities determined together with the communities. The support was mainly strengthening community organisations. This programme was called the People Empowerment Programme. The training programme drew on a mixture of field experience and critical thought of academics in Indonesia and overseas. Local values were prioritised.

²⁷ These five basic elements were described in the thesis of one of our staff, Fajar Sudarwo, at Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 1996.

²⁸ SATUNAMA (established March 23, 1998) is an acronym from Yayasan Kesatuan Pelayanan Kerjasama., which is translation from Unity Service Cooperation Foundation.

²⁹ The label 'Pro Independent' indicated support for independence for Timor Leste. We received a fax containing threats of mutilation (your head in Comoro, body in Bobonaro, legs in Lautem). We shared this fax with all major foreign embassies in Jakarta to bring it to their attention. We took no notice of the threat. Five months after the referendum, I flew to Dili and continued the training activities there and nothing happened to me.

³⁰ In 1974, the government restricted political parties and mass organisations. Political parties could have offices only at central and district level. There were no political party representatives in the sub-districts, not to mention the villages. Golkar (the government party), on the other hand, was allowed to have a presence wherever it pleased. This was this policy, known as the "floating mass policy", that allowed Golkar to gain control, and the support, of the masses.

³¹ Post Soeharto, SATUNAMA received many invitations to local, national and international forums on “repositioning NGOs”. SATUNAMA promoted political education because it had experienced first hand all the negative effects of the completely uncontrolled New Order.

³² SATUNAMA is the only NGO in Indonesia to have offered political education on a regular basis from the time of the fall of Soeharto up to the present day. Its about 11.000 alumni are scattered across all of Indonesia’s provinces. During the Soeharto administration, this course was called Social Solidarity Training. The main topics of this course were the universal values referred to above.

³³ We loudly declared our aim of defending the Indonesia nation in rebuttal of claims that NGOs were tools of foreign nations and not nationalist. Many high-ranking officials, especially in the armed forces (TNI) doubt the nationalism of NGOs.

³⁴ Wise words from English historian Lord Alton, which turned out to be the most interesting learning topic during every discussion on the failures of the New Order system, especially in CERFUL training (for government officials) and CELOP training (for members of parliament and politicians).

³⁵ The Radio Service programme included technical assistance to develop radio programmes and make radio instruments. Thirteen districts in Timor Leste benefited from Radio SATUNAMA services. SATUNAMA continues to support around 15 community radio stations around Yogya. Next year, we will be supporting dozens of community radio stations in West Papua.

³⁶ SATUNAMA employs a staff member with a PhD in philosophy from Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA. Training facilitators are also brought in from higher education institutes in Yogya and from Driyarkara College of Philosophy in Jakarta. There are hundreds of alumni from this course, spread the length and breadth of Indonesia. Today, several higher education institutes in Yogya replicate this training module, with a few modifications.

³⁷ Four levels have to be improved: Institutional, Representative System, Informal Powerful Actors, Civic Culture. (Merkel.W.1999)

³⁸ DEMOS (leader, Asmara Nababan) in collaboration with Oslo University (Prof. Olle Tornquist, Norway), undertook research in 2003 and 2004 on development of rights based democracy.

³⁹ There was a great deal of discussion among NGO activists about whether or not they should join a party or form their own party to enable them to change the situation, because NGOs as institutions lack political legitimisation. Some are of the opinion that all NGO activists who have joined parties and hold key positions at the central or regional level, are simply toeing the line and are just as corrupt as other officials.

⁴⁰ SATUNAMA participation as consultant also generates income that contributes to the self-reliance of the SATUNAMA organisation. Consultancy fees vary depending on the financial capacity of the organisation concerned. There is no consultancy fee for local organisations; in fact, we make financial contributions to them. This internal income allows SATUNAMA to employ 56 full-time staff, only 19 of whom are funded by donors.

⁴¹ Set up in 1991, YAPPIKA was initially an alliance of Indonesian and Canadian NGOs. Although SATUNAMA was in fact one of three main actors in the founding of YAPPIKA, it is not included on the list of official founders, because at that time SATUNAMA was still a representative of USC-Canada in Ottawa. In 1997, YAPPIKA became an implementer of the PPD programme funded by CIDA, and SATUNAMA continues to participate in programme decision making.

⁴² SATUNAMA works with Perkumpulan Hari Pangan Sedunia (World Food Day Association) in Yogyakarta to promote organic farming (or LEISA, Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture) in all areas, especially in Java and Flores. Currently, with assistance from USC-Canada, we are in the process of setting up an organic product promotion centre in Yogyakarta.

⁴³ The inspiration for TANGO came from SATUNAMA and was developed with financial assistance from TIFA (The Indonesia Open Society Institute). Today, the TANGO empowerment tool has spread throughout Indonesia and can be freely accessed. Unfortunately, before SATUNAMA was able to develop all the required instruments, TIFA took over its promotion.

⁴⁴ The idea of NGO certification, which we initiated by inviting over an expert from the Philippines, had to be terminated because we were accused by other NGOs in Yogya of plagiarising foreign ideas, which amounted to corruption of ideas. This accusation was printed in Majalah Wacana in 2004. To diffuse the situation, we declined to respond.

⁴⁵ Eradication of corruption must come from within. As a declaration against corruption, all SATUNAMA personnel are required to sign a statement to the effect that they will be let go should there be strong evidence of their involvement in corrupt practices. Since this regulation came into effect in 2003, three staff have been let go as a result.

⁴⁶ There are still reports of now freed ex-political prisoners from 1965 being asked to report periodically to the military. SATUNAMA itself had difficulty enlisting support from the Department of Social Affairs to get a volunteer from Germany, the pretext being that the scope of education provided by SATUNAMA was outside the mandate of the Department. And this, despite the fact that SATUNAMA has the support of all social affairs offices at the regional level.

⁴⁷ Eldrige, Philip, 1989. "NGOs In Indonesia: Popular Movement or Arm of Government". Monash University Center of Southeast Asian Studies, Working paper 55. pg.11. 1989.

⁴⁸ The Constitution has been amended four times. Many new laws have been brought in line with these amendments. There is currently a movement towards the reinstatement of the Constitution to its original position.

⁴⁹ Dr. Michael Hollaender has been with SATUNAMA for four years, focusing on revision of political education. He has developed an Education For Democratic Citizenship (EDC) programme, which SATUNAMA now offers, and shares with all its partners in Indonesia.

⁵⁰ Staff discussions are held quarterly. Management discussions are held every Monday. Discussions at the division level are held by the individual work divisions as agreed by staff. Every month there is a learning day, at which a SATUNAMA staff member or a guest facilitates learning of something new. Every quarter there is a meeting of all personnel for open discussion of all matters related to the organisation.

⁵¹ SATUNAMA introduced this idea in 2002, after participating in training at St. Paul's University in Ottawa. This theory has been developed by Robert Fritz.