

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION FOR COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: A  
CASE STUDY OF AN AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY  
OF SAN PABLO, NORTH AUTONOMOUS REGION OF NICARAGUA

By

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Waters Ivone

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Waters Garth Ivone Glaudin, hereby declare the content of this report submitted for the degree of Master of Science in International Cooperation Policy, contain my original work. Any contribution by others have been acknowledged and referenced appropriately.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BICU CIUM	Bluefield's Indian and Caribbean University
CRISSOL	Christian, Socialist and Solidarity Program
ENABAS	Nicaragua Food and Basic Grain Company
EU	European Union
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiatives
HAMBRE CERO	Zero Hunger
INAFOR	National Forestry Institution
INIDE	Nicaragua Institute for Census and Statistic
INIFOM	National Institute for Municipal Development
INTA	Nicaragua Institute of Agricultural and Technology
IFM	International Monetary Fund
GRUN	Government for Reconciliation and National Unity
MAGFOR	Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry
MEFCCA	Ministry of Household's Economy, Cooperative, Associative and Community
MDG's	Millennium Development Goals
NHDP	Nicaragua Human Development Plan

NDP	National Development Plan
NGO's	Non-Governmental Organizations
RAAN	North Atlantic Autonomous Region
RAAS	South Atlantic Autonomous Region
RDC	Rural Development Committee
RDP	Rural Development Plan
PANA PANA	Microfinance Organization
PSCCD	Presidential Secretariat for Caribbean Coast Development
PRPS	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PROMIPYME	Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises
PRO-RURAL	Rural Development Sectorial Plan
PRO-RURAL INCLUYENTE	Rural Development Inclusive Sectorial Plan
UCOTAP	Tasba Pri Communities Unions
UNAG	National Union of Agricultural and Livestock Farmers
URACCAN	University of the Autonomous Region of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua
USURA CERO	Zero Usury
WB	World Bank



## ABSTRACT

This research studied the experience of a grassroots organization in developing community capacity and improving the quality of life of San Pablo community members. The purpose of the research was to develop a clear understanding of how grassroots initiatives can bring social changes to community life. In details, the research describes the basic strategy introduced by the grassroots organization to achieve a manageable and realistic community development. The research also introduces Nicaragua Government major rural development programs designed with the goals to reduce rural poverty and increase economic growth. In line with the context of the study, it illustrates the experience and success of few citizens' who have benefited with national rural development programs.

Community development and poverty alleviation has been the major concern of Nicaragua Government. Until date, several development strategies have been introduced by outside stakeholders, which mainly consist of microfinance loans, short-terms trainings, deliver of materials and equipment through projects, as a mean to increase production, economic growth and livelihoods. The study revealed that outsider programs are necessary, but not sufficient to ensure sustainability after program ends. These exogenous programs relief instant needs and does not focus on strengthening existing activities. This study demonstrate how rural people can also bring about endogenous initiatives for community development that can be more realistic, practical, cost less and appropriate to ensure sustainable community development. Community becomes more resilient, independent and sustainable when its individuals, groups and organizations existing capacity is enhanced. September 4<sup>th</sup> agricultural cooperative is demonstrated as an endogenous development initiative for community capacity. As the study focused on community members' activities, feelings and experiences; it adopts a qualitative

approach based on a particular case study. Two types of data were used to structure the content of the research which includes primary and secondary data.

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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The evolution of grassroots organizations in communities has been increasing numerically and playing a key role in carrying out the voice of community people. The nature and scope of informal groups' activities offers an alternative approach to localize development programs to community levels. We have been experiencing numerous examples of good endogenous development initiatives that have been sustaining rural households for a long time, which can also be a pathway to boost rural economies and reduce poverty rate. A practical case study of an endogenous development is presented in the course of this research focusing on a grassroots organization experience in improving the living condition of San Pablo community members.

The overall goals of the study is to explore community members' capacity for community development and the ability these possessed to bring about development changes for their community in a more practical and realistic manner. The shifted patterns of States administrative systems from centralization to decentralization reflect an opportunity for rural people scale-up out of their system and network outside community environment. Enhancing existing capacity is an important element for development.

The initiative of this study arose from the researcher experience involved in rural development and poverty reduction programs. As for many years, I have been working with municipal government and designed community development plans, programs and projects from a political perspective. After coming to Japan I wanted to explore new forms of developments that can contribute to enhance rural development programs of my region. After all I was lucky to be assigned a supervisor who's had a vast experience on community capacity and rural development from whom I have learnt a lot. This qualitative case study research was carried out in a rural

community of the north autonomous region of Nicaragua. The study is comprised of primary and secondary data.

The first chapter is structured into seven sections. It begins with a brief background of the study. The second section introduces the research problems identified. The third, section provides a range of research questions followed by objectives and the research scope and limitation of the research. The chapter concludes detailing the significance and the structure of the research study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Nicaragua is the second poorest nation in Latin America after Haiti (World Bank, 2014). Poverty eradication, education and access to basic services are among the principal challenges of the country. The political instability and ten years of civil war collapsed national economy and increased poverty and extreme poverty rate in urban and rural areas. Poverty rate are high in rural areas, especially in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN), home to most indigenous communities, where 37% of the populations live in extreme poverty (WFP 2013).

RAAN region is endowed with natural resources and cultural diversity. For over fifteen years, the centralized administrative system introduced different development approaches to develop community capacity most approaches were designed from a top-down level an urban perspective where external influence design the future of the poor. However, most rural development programs and approaches did not fit the context and needs of rural citizens. Many scholars have argued the need to change the traditional development approaches. Experts like Miyoshi (2010) claims “if centralize approach really appropriate for rural development? Can the development challenges of people residing in urban areas and rural areas be judged by the same perspective and criteria? Can the lives of people living surrounded by or with nature be equally and



adequately discussed alongside the lives of those who must seek and pay handsomely to come in contact with nature? I strongly doubt this urban centered approach”.

Within community there are different type's local organizations and traditional governments, through which citizen's identity, values, cultural system, community structure and capacity can be enhanced. The notion of strengthening people's ability to create or maintain organizations that can represent and be accountable to them is the essence of a capacity-building approach Eade (1997).

Even though that Nicaragua has shown its commitment to combat poverty and develop community capacity there are still some gaps identified between policy theory and citizens real situation. Community people priority and needs cannot be same as urban people, cause of their different surrounding environment, geographic location, illiteracy, culture and lifestyle; these areas require different types of development approaches. Continue introducing exogenous programs makes community becomes more dependent on outsider support.

Within the North Atlantic Autonomous Region, particularly in Puerto Cabezas district few studies has been done on rural community development conducted on behalf of donors or government to measure programs/projects outcomes these studies were focused on cultural revitalization, gender equality, increase of agricultural production and value added, sexual and reproductive health, environment degradation, child protection, etc. I haven't identified any research study focused on community capacity and policy structure. The promotion of endogenous development initiatives hasn't been yet valued by external stakeholders.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Governments and donors are compromised with community development and poverty eradication. For decades, community developments model have been flowing from one direction from a top-down level. “The links of modern scientific knowledge with wealth, power and prestige condition outsiders to despise and ignore rural people’s own knowledge” (Chambers1983). In some way, these types of model lead to more vulnerability than before.

Within Puerto Cabezas district were cultural diversity exist programs should be created based on each territories traditions or ethnic group culture. Miyoshi (2010) indicated the need to create an alternative development approach that matches the needs of rural communities; people in rural areas should conduct development based on the values, visions and norms of the community they belong to. Whilst, Chambers (1983) stated that for a more complementary combination outsider professionals have to step down off their pedestals, and sit down, listen and learn from the rural area.

Despite of the large investment made by government and donors in implementing large programs or projects, rural poverty continues to remain as the core problem in Nicaragua. Within rural areas there is still lack of capacity for self-development, irrational uses of local resources, high dependency and other factors than hampering down the development of authentic communities within RAAN region. Nonetheless, as capacity building is an integral tool of development; therefore this study focus to demonstrate the capabilities of rural people to bring about practical development initiatives that are more realistic to rural lifestyle, handy, in harmony with nature and capable to main sustainable community development.

### **1.3 Research Questions:**

To address the above problem the report main question was formulated as follow:

In what way grassroots organizations can contribute to community capacity development?

A range of sub-question was also formulated:

Sub-questions:

To what extent Nicaragua national rural development program enhance community capacity?

To what degree collective activities and social networks can empower grassroots organizations?

How community capacity can be transformed?

### **1.4. Research Objectives:**

To explore the grassroots organization capacity

To clarify the types of national rural development programs

To describe organization type of collective activities and social networks

To describes community social changes

### **1.5. Significance of the Research**

In the present era, all nations are compromised to improve the quality of life of those living in poverty and extreme poverty. There hasn't been a unique global development strategy or approaches each developing countries and donors have different types of approaches; it has been shown that these approaches are designed from a top-down level, by those who are powerful, dominant and received formal education, training and believes that their knowledge is advanced, sophisticated and valid to design the future of those uneducated poor people living in rural areas. As knowledge is considers as key element to uplift development and ensure sustainability. From this perspective, the significance of this research is to present the capacity of community people on carrying out self-endogenous development initiatives that can contribute to community development in a more rural atmosphere. The importance of flows knowledge in many directions is an alternative strategy to enhance community capacity.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Research**

The research focus on describing the experience of San Pablo community where a grassroots organization took the role of organizing community members, enhance group capacity and improve the quality of life of community members. The uses of quality approaches for case studies require talent and capacity to develop quality findings. The first limitation was timeframe and data gathering, since I was a student in Japan I had to go back to Nicaragua to identify a successful case study in a rural community. I had only four weeks to identify a successful case which result to be a bit difficult. Second limitation was the researcher inexperience in conducting and writing Master research report. Third, is language limitation since the researcher is not a native English speakers it limits my writing and analytical ability.

## **1.7 Structure of the Research**

The present research is structured into six chapters and each chapter is subdivided into section. Chapter I introduce the basic framework of the study such as: Introduction, research question, objectives, scope and limitations and significance of the research. Chapter II is a compress of literature review of previous studies related to the research topic, as a guide to clarify the concept and theory of the study. Chapter III describes in detail the methodology of the study and data collection methods utilized. Chapter IV illustrates Nicaragua rural development programs and the way this was adopted by the RAAN regional government and applied to rural people lifestyle. Meanwhile, Chapter V focuses on a case study of a grassroots organization role in the context of community capacity development in the north autonomous region. Chapter VI concludes with a summary of the study and provides a list of suggestion for further research.

## CHATER II

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

### 2.1 The Nature of Governance and Emerges of Decentralization

Literature on the term Governance is broad and it can be defined from different angle. Governance is the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanism, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (UNDP 1997). Researcher like Stoker & Chhotray (2009) defines Governance as the formal and institutional process which operates at the level of the nation and state to maintain public order and facilitate collection actions. On the other side, global institution such as the World Bank relate the terms Governance with Good Governance as the rule of the rulers, typically within a given set of rules (World Bank 2002). As globalization expands countries governing system tends to change. Furthermore the global institution states that good governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making; a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law (World Bank1994)

#### 2.1.1 Decentralization

Decentralization has been a long-term trend in developed countries (Todaro & Smith 2011p.547). Global agencies defines decentralization as the devolution by central government of specific function with all of the administrative, political and economic attributes that these entail, to local governments which are independent of the center and sovereign within a legally delimited geographic and functional domain (FAO,1997). There are different types of

decentralization. The World Bank (2001) relates administrative decentralization with three major forms of decentralization such as de-concentration, delegation and devolution each one having different characteristics

### 2.1.2 Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion is defined as a series of positive actions to achieve equality of access to goods and services, to assist all individuals participate in their community and society, to encourage the contribution of all persons to social and cultural life to be aware of and to challenge all forms of discrimination (Kelly 2010). Social inclusion was defined as the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities - that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to public services as well as enable citizens' participation in the decision-making that affects their lives (UNDP/n.d)

### 2.1.3 Participatory Planning

As society grows the planning process of governments has been changing. Participatory planning is defined as a tool to identify the needs of all individuals within a community, a way of building consensus and a means of empowering disadvantaged groups (World Bank 2013). The need for social participation is becoming a common practice in developing countries. As stated by Olthelen (1999) defines participatory planning as the initial step in the definition of a common agenda of development by a local community and external entity or entities. Over the period, this initial step evolves for the parties concerned toward a self-sustained development planning process at the local level. On the other hand, Karki (2012) claims that a planning process consists

of including stakeholders in the project design, in various collaborative capacities, from identifying critical problems, to setting priorities and deciding on which strategies to adopt.

#### 2.1.4 Bottom-up approach

Development programs traditionally been characterized by a top-down approach (Karki 2012). The term top-down is used to describe an approach where appropriate public policies are put first in place followed by roll-out of programs to implement those polices (WFEO 2010, p.18). The top-down approach is structured around the use of professional leadership that plan, implement and evaluate development programs (Macdonald, 1995). While the bottom-up approach means that local actors participate in decision-making about the strategy and in the selection of the priorities to be pursued in their local area (ELARD, 2014). On the other side, some agencies claims that bottom-up approach is initiated when a person, institution or community sense a need and establishes a program itself without necessarily considering public policies or the lack thereof, and with the intention of effecting wide impact (WFEO 2010, p.18). Furthermore, it is argue that experience has shown that the bottom-up approach should not be considered as an alternative or opposed to top-down approaches from national or regional/authorities but rather as combining and interacting with them, in order to achieve better overall results (ELARD 2014).

## 2.2 Poverty and Economic Growth in Nicaragua

### 2.2.1 Defining a Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers refers as PRSPs were introduced by the World Bank and IMF as a new framework to enhance domestic accountability for poverty reduction reforms; a means to enhance the coordination of development assistance between governments and development partners; and a precondition or access to debt relief and concessional financing from both



institutions' HIPIC Initiative (World Bank 2011). This strategy has created a new era of good governance and democracy for low income countries.

### 2.2.2 Poverty and Economic Growth

Poverty reduction has become a global concern. The term poverty is defined as a condition in which a person lacks many of the basic necessities of life and income needed to buy them (Economic-glossary 2008). Global governance like the United Nations claims that poverty is more than a shortfall of income and calories intake. It is about the denial of opportunities and choices that are widely regarded as essential to lead a long, healthy, creative and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem, and the respect of others (UN).

In 1996 the World Bank and IMF launched the Debt Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPIC) program to support those highly indebted countries as a means to support growth and reduce poverty. In 1999 Nicaragua became part of the HIPIC program and drafted its first poverty reduction strategy paper with major focus on economic growth and human capital. Nicaragua has developed several strategies to combat poverty and improve economic growth but it still remains as the second poorest country in the region with a poverty rate of 42.5% (World Bank 2012).

Practitioners consider economic growth as the solution to reduce poverty. Todaro and Smith (2011, p.109), claim that every nation strives after development. Economic progress is an essential component, but it is not the only component. For decades, Nicaragua's economic history has been focused on crops. The country's economy grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s as Nicaragua converted its best lands into fields of cotton and canes, or pastures of beef cattle. As

the fastest growing Central American economic at this time, by the turn of 1970s it was also the region's most prosperous economy (Wiggins 2006).

### 2.3 Grassroots Organizations

With the emergences of global entities around the world the meaning of grassroots organizations have been changing its definition gradually. The basic dictionary of Miriam-Webster defines of the word grassroots as being, originating or operating in or at the grassroots, not adapted from or added to an existing facility or operation (Mirriam-Websters dictionary). Researcher like Batliwala (2002) states grassroots as the basic building block of society-small rural communities or urban neighborhoods where the “common man” (or women) lived. Grassroots organization it is value based process where people are brought together to act in the interest of their community and the common interest (Shah *et all* 2013)

Organization is a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more person (Barnard 1939, in Kreitner & Kinichi 2007). Organization consist of groups of individuals, bound by a common purpose involving a defined set of authority relations and dedicated to achieve objectives (Alsop & Kurey 2005, p.5). On the other side, researcher such as Hatch (2007) states that an organization is a social structure, a technology, a culture, a physical structure and as part of an environment. The author argue that organization should be studied in terms of the central issues and recurring themes of organizing that its traced from a stage of control, conflict, decision making, power, politics and change. Whilst Kreitner and Kinichi (2007, p.5) considers organization as a social invention that help us to achieve things collectively, since we could not achieve alone both authors emphasis the organizational behavior on three basic level of analysis individuals, groups and organizational.

Organizing is the process of helping people understand the shared problem they face while encouraging them to join together to fight back. Rubin & Rubin (2001, p.6) claims that organizing enable people and their community to gain the capacity to take actions for change, a capacity that we label as development. Also, it can be seeing as place of people interaction, share information and gain confidence.

### 2.3.1 Organizational Leadership

Literatures on leadership is enormous and there have been many practical case studies illustrated by scholars and organizations. Leadership is a tool of change and development. Leaders play a key role in transforming society (World Bank, 2011). Whilst, Chaskin and colleagues (2001) defines leadership as one of the core strategies of an organization development; they facilitate and give direction to the work of a community organization, they advocate for community interest and catalyze the formation of informal groups to address emerging problems or capitalize on opportunity. Storey (2004) claims that transactional leader, are managers whose seek to operate and maintain current system, accept given objectives and meanings, control and monitor, trade on exchange relationships, have a short-term focus and focus on details and procedure. For the purpose of this study organizational leaders is considers as a visionary person whose naturally possess talents and ability to influence others individuals and to bring about social changer for the well-being of its surrounded members.

### 2.3.2 Collective Activities

The science of group dynamics is based on one core assumption that people act collectively. Forsyth (2010) defines collective activities as the action of a group of people who are responding in a similar way to an event or situation, including people who all occupy the same location.

Similarly, Barreda (2011) states collective activities as a collection action that emerges when people come together and work towards a collective goal. Whilst, Gilchrist (2004, p.44) express that collective action enable people without much power to assert their interest and influence decision maker.

### 2.3.3 Organizational Networks

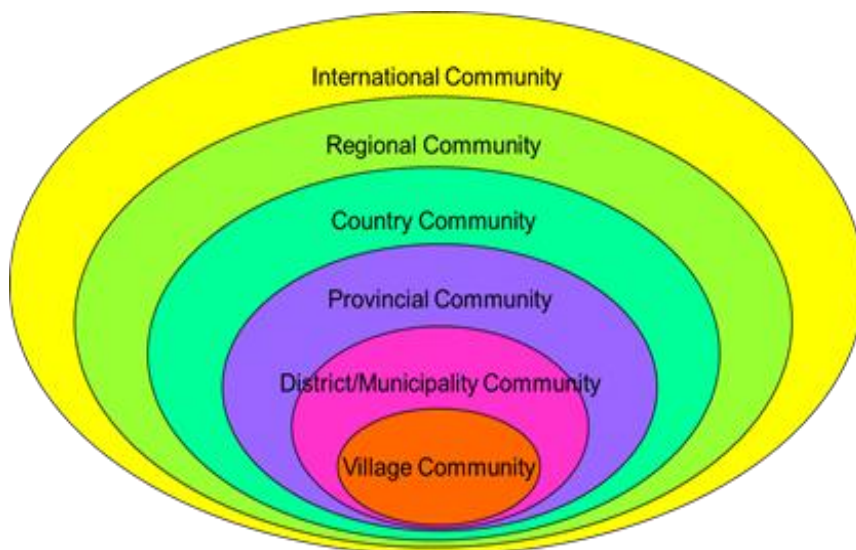
Social network is an element of social capital. Every kind of social aggregation can be represented in terms of units composing this aggregation and relation between these units is a kind of representation of social structure is called “social networks” (Martino & Spoto 2006). Network is an intermediate mechanism through which individuals establish trust and build the basis for enduring role relationship (Bott, 1995 in Kilduff & Shipilov 2011). Whilst, Putman argue that social capital and trust goes hand in hand due to reciprocity trust breeds trust and this build social capital into organizations and societies. Many scholars claim that network is a unique form of organization that takes time to develop (Kilduff & Shipilov 2011). Gilchrist (2004) confirm that network contribute to empowerment on a psychological level, by enabling people to compare their experience, learn from each other’s success and develop greater awareness.

### 2.4 Defining Community

Community is as a group of people who regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds have been able to accept and transcend their differences enabling them to communicate effectively and openly and to work together towards goals identified as being for their common good (Hampton 2000). The term community is also defined as a relative aggregation constructed by individuals, groups and organizations acknowledged by a specific area, generally defined by

administrative boundaries, and within this boundary, these individuals, groups and organization recognize themselves as being a member of the community (Miyoshi 2010). Moreover, international agency such as IFAD (2009) defines community as the locus where all members of a group of people, having some form of collective claim over a territory and reorganizing some form of collective governance, can be given the opportunity to influence decisions in matters of public choice that affect their livelihood.

Figure 2.4 Community Levels



Note Source: Miyoshi 2010

### 2.4.1 Understanding Community Capacity

Community Capacity is defined as the interaction of human capital, organizational resources and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems too improve or maintain the well-being of a given community. It may operate through informal social process and/or organized efforts by individuals, organizations and the networks of association among them and between them and the broader systems of which the community

is a part (Chaskin 1999). Also, community capacity is defined as the as a basic element that enables a community to function and refers to the ability to achieve the communities shared goals as well as to promote and maintain the richness of the community through the collective efforts of individuals and organizations within a community, utilizing the human, organizational and social resources available (Stenning & Miyoshi 2010). On the other side, Mayer (1995) defined community capacity as the combined influence of the community's commitment, resources and skills that can be developed to build on community strengths and address community problems. Furthermore, he argue that a variety of community groups and institutions contribute to community capacity. Each is a potential partner in the work of strengthening the viability and vitality of community. In partnership, each can gain in capacity.

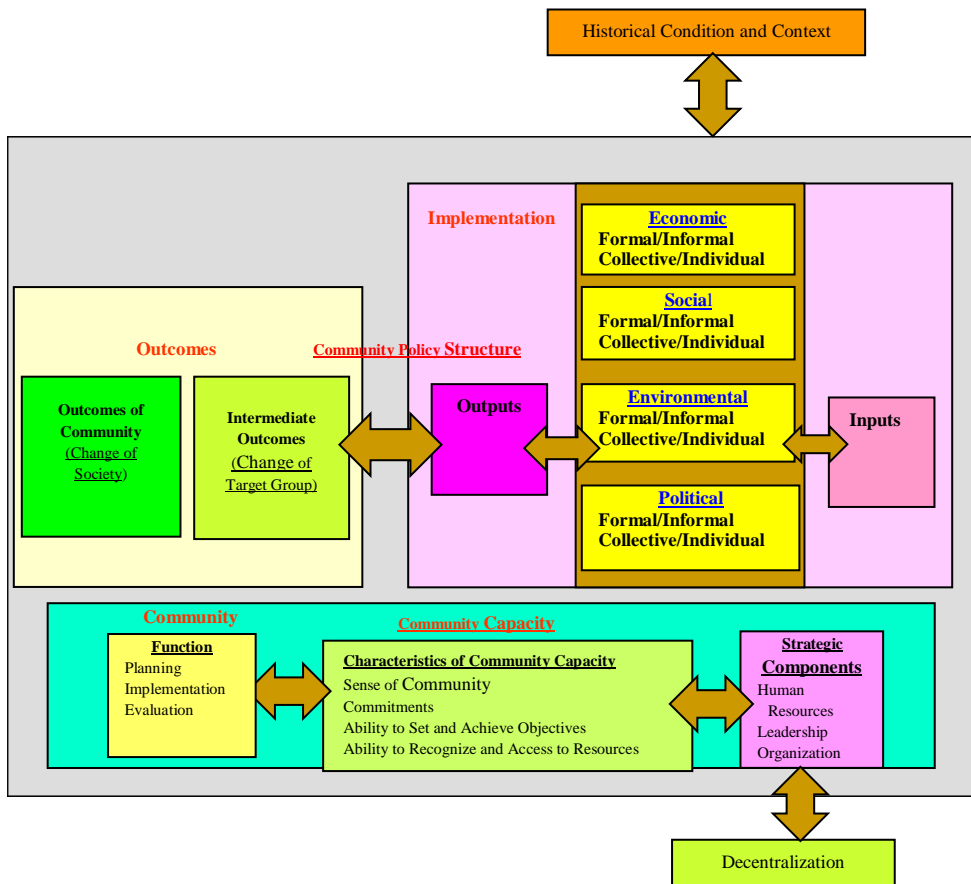
#### 2.4.2 Community Capacity Development and Policy Structure Model

Capacity Development is the central process of long-term development. It is the process through which the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner is developed and maintained over time (UNDP 2002). However, enhancing community capacity is referred to as community capacity development. Community capacity development is seeing and creating strengths and opportunities than can lead to development, in order to promote positive change within the community. Capacity is developed through attempts of the community to develop and maintain these discovered strengths and opportunities (Stenning and Miyoshi 2010)

Furthermore, the authors introduced a Policy Structure model that provides the foundation to analyze the community capacity development by utilizing a Program Theory Matrix (input, activities, output, intermediate outcome and final outcomes) to measure ends and means from a

policy, program and project levels. The Policy Structure model consist of community economic, social, environmental and political activities is implemented and carried out with the goal of changing people’s lives by creating a community that secure richer lifestyles with more added value. In figure 2.4.2 is illustrated Community Capacity Development and Community Policy Structure Model created by Chaskin and colleagues and modified by Miyoshi and colleagues.

Figure 2.4.2 Community Capacity Developments and Policy Structure Model



Note source: Miyoshi and colleagues 2010

## **CHAPTER III**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology utilized for the study and types of data collected. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first part provides a description of the type of research paradigm of the study. Second part, presents an overall view of the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as the strategy of enquiry utilized for the specific case study and the fact why this is relevant for the study. The third part, provide a description of the two types of data utilized and the way it was collected this is subdivided into three sub-sections such as field visit schedule, case study, interviews, observation and the list of challenges identified during the field work.

### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

Over decades the nature of social sciences has been a controversy to researchers. Until date, for many scholars when talking about science is understood as experimental chemistry and biology science. According to Neuman (2000 p.64) it was until 1800's philosophers and religious involved in armchair speculation studied or wrote about human behavior. In fact, that our modern civilization has agreed on the need of a special science to study the social life of people, looking deeply into human behavior within specific social setting rather than focusing on a broad picture.

Many philosophers argue that it does not matter the field or type of science people wants to study what's matter is the type of paradigm used to conduct the study. Brett (2007, p.9) argues that in



carrying out research into people's opinions, feelings, experiences or behavior need to use one of the two referred paradigms *qualitative* or *quantitative*. Both deliver useful and informative outputs but each serves a different purpose and has been the subject of academic circle discussion. On the other side, Holliday (200, p. 6) claims that quantitative is normative. He states that there is a normality that we can fathom and understand, and master by statistic and experiment. Qualitative approach is an interpretive it maintains that we can explore, catch glimpses, illuminate and then try to interpret bits of reality.

Naturalism or post positivism result to have a more traditional qualitative view much closer to positivism in that reality is seen as relatively straightforward interpretative and naturalistic focus to the world (Holliday 2007. p 18-19). Taken from Hammersley and Atkison (1995:11, their emphasis) states that postmodern qualitative researchers portray people as constructing the social world and researchers as themselves constructing the social world through their interpretation of it.

The roots areas of a qualitative method are embedded in philosophical, psychological and sociological sciences and it focus on resolving simple questions such: How do we know what we know? How do we know what other people feel? Is what people say different from what people do? These and other similar questions are discoursed to qualitative approach. As qualitative research consists of studying things in their natural and authentic setting, that makes phenomena visible to world. In this sense, this research adopts a “qualitative descriptive method”, because of the nature of variable information which cannot be measureable it is characterized by the feelings and opinion of the people.

### **3.3 Methodological Philosophy and Strategy Enquiry**

The nature of qualitative research can be, realistic, dynamic and interactive in the field. Qualitative research methodological process can be crucial and distinctive in its first stage. Some scholars consider that a research is a process of engaging in planned and unplanned activities related to the real world which can be explored, interpretive and constructed through various methods. However, researchers like Brett (2007, p.151) argue that qualitative research methods stretches from interviewers and observation to the use of artefacts, documents and records from the past; from visual and sensory data analysis to ethnographic methods.

Focusing on small case study can be very practical and ideal for new entry-level researchers. Case studies offer student the opportunity to focus attention on the topics relevant to their field without being tied to what they may see as too narrow an approach to methodology (Brett 2007 p.184). When talking about case study it can be focused on an organized small group, small town, a village, a seminar group or a family. Brett continues stating that this type of research includes the exploration of background statistic the review of documentary evidence and data from interviews, groups or observations. As this inquiry is focused on a qualitative research with emphasis on human being activities in their natural setting. The specific, case study strategy was adopted cause of the authenticity of field activities identified within the location of the case study which is in alignment with existing theories and elements that shape a qualitative research. Moreover, for a more comprehensive understanding the researcher adopts a descriptive case study utilizing interview and observation methods.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Gathering data for this research was very excited and fun I had getting the opportunity to live with rural people, interact directly, experienced their lifestyle as well as the community unique

and authentic environment. However, for this research there were two types of data collected primary and secondary data. The method employed to gather these data was through:

- Informal tailored interviews and open ended. I did not utilize formal interview category
- Observations of local citizen's daily activities including individuals, groups and organizations
- Visual data such as photographs
- Voice-recorder. and
- Collection of relevant documents

At the beginning I took few writing notes but to be more exploratory I decided to utilize two voice-recorded apparatus by placing one on the researcher and the other on the interviewee while having lunch, walking around the community and in other occasion while sitting on rocks in the corn plantation.

The primary data was collected from field visit through direct interviews, observations, photographs and using a voice-recorder (Iphone 4S). The data was collected from San Pablo rural community, specifically from three different groups. First, I collected data from members of the agricultural organization which is the target case study of this research, the organization is known as "September 4<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Cooperative". The second, range of data was collected from the community traditional government and territorial government members. The third range of primary data was collected from interviews made to local citizen's whose do not belongs to the agricultural organization but somehow has gained benefits from it.

Another range of primary data was collected from Bilwi urban city by direct interview made to public officers from central government institutions branches, Presidential Secretariat for the

Caribbean Coast Development members, RAAN regional government secretariats and councils board and Puerto Cabezas municipal government practitioner; all these public institutions are deeply involve with rural development planning and programs implementations. As a researcher after interviewing public officers and hearing all positive result of the government rural development programs, I decided to expand the interviewees list and rush towards society to interview citizens whose had been benefited with the national rural development program with the purpose to get the insight of these beneficiaries and to explore the social changes brought to their lives. All data was collected in Spanish language and translated into English language by the researcher.

The other type of data collected was secondary data that was used to shape the context of few chapters of this research. Some of the secondary data was given during the interview moment and others were downloaded from the institution websites as well as from journal articles and NGO's websites such as the World Bank, UNDP and IFM database site. These data are public documents and are accessible to everyone such as Nicaragua Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, National Human Development Plan, Government National Development Plan and the Caribbean Coast Development Plan. Also, others data was gathered through books, lecture notes and JICA training materials all are referenced at the end of this research.

At the time of collecting primary and secondary data I was a government public officer studying at the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan, as part of the technical cooperation program between the government of Japan and Nicaragua. I was sent on behalf of my country but representing Puerto Cabezas municipal government and the Rural Development Committee of Tawan Ingnika in my region, which has made possible the data collection process. Before going into to the field the municipal authorities provided me support with transportation facilities,

drivers and a technician to permanently accompany me during the visit Tasba Pri rural community.

### **3.4.1 Schedule**

During my visit to the Republic of Nicaragua primary data was collected through interviews made to policy makers and rural-urban citizens of San Pablo community and Bilwi city located in the north autonomous region of Nicaragua. The period scheduled for this fieldwork was from August 30 to September 30, 2013. Prior to my visit to Nicaragua previous coordination was already arranged with the President of Tasba Pri territorial government and RAAN regional government members. Initially, the field visit program was scheduled to conduct in two parts but after conducting the first field visit I found it necessary to return back twice to the community.

The first field visit was schedule from September 5 to 10 data was collected from local organization located in Sumubila, Naranjal and Sahsa communities which initially was the target case study of this research study; at the same time an informal meeting was held with the President of territorial government. The second visit was from 14 to 15 September, this is a national holiday in Nicaragua (Central America Independence Day) but I schedule field visit for these holidays, bearing in mind that it would be a proper moment to find all community people at their home. In fact, during this second visit I was able meet all target interviewees data was collected from San Pablo community government staff and members of September 4<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Cooperative organization; at the same time I was invited to attend the upcoming Community General Assembly. The third field visits was from 19 to 20 September, in this occasion the purpose was to homestay with rural people and attend as a volunteer community General Assembly as well as to observe Tasba Pri Cooperative Union organizations monthly

meeting. The Tasba Pri Cooperative Union meeting was held in Sasha community which is 30 minutes drives from San Pablo community. During the homestay days I continue interviewing few rural women's who's belongs to other organization inside the community and has been benefited with outsiders programs.

As was mentioned in chapter one of the introductory section, Tasba Pri territory is compose of 28 rural communities within each community there are different type of grassroots organizations constitute. However, when all gather together as a territory they are known as *Tasba Pri Cooperative Union* Organizations, currently these organizations directive board is manage by the President of the September 4<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Cooperative.

During the last week of September month visit was made to central government institutions branches local in Bilwi urban city such as Ministry of Households, Community, Cooperative and Associative, Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, Puerto Cabezas municipal government specifically at the department of environmental and natural resources, the north autonomous regional government secretariat for regional planning, secretariat for municipal and indigenous community development, secretariat for regional economic development and the Presidential Secretariat for the Caribbean Coast Development located in the capital city of Nicaragua. Finally, I interviewed few urban citizens whose has been benefited with the government national rural development programs.

### **3.4.2 Case Study**

San Pablo agricultural cooperative organization is the target case study of this research. Initially, I was targeting others community organizations but after conducting the first field visit and dialoging with local citizens and community governments leaders they pointed out San Pablo

community agricultural cooperative organization as the most organized and developed organization within Tasba Pri territory. At this time, I was in Sumubilia community interviewing the religious organization and community leaders they helped me to establish contact with San Pablo community government and the President of the agricultural organization, so I immediately moved forward to the community and overnight there.

The following day I visited the community leader and the reverend father of the Catholic Church to explain the purpose of my visit and time stay in the community, in order to get the community authority support. In Nicaragua it is very common when stranger visit rural communities most people believes that is for project purpose, so before starting the informal interview I had to clarify the purpose and uses of the data and therefore explain how this study can benefit the organization and community in the near future.

Since much study has not been done on community capacity development in my region, and as native citizen of this region who's has been involved in rural development programs over past five years, I had decided to focus my research study on identifying a successful case study utilizing Miyoshi and Stenning (2008) community capacity development and policy structure model, as a guide tool to identify endogenous development initiatives that can be uses as a reference tools for communities development as well as for present and future researchers.

### **3.4.3 Interviews**

Previous to my field visit some data did already collected via skype and telephone calls made from Japan. However, before traveling to the field a set of formal questionnaire was developed and printed to give to selected interviewees but after meeting with community leaders and cooperative members, I introduced myself as a native citizen of the north autonomous region. At

this point I notice there was no need of conducting formal structural interviews, I realized data can be much more explored and gathered through our social interaction and informal conversation (interviews). So I decided to be more flexible with interviewees in order to make community people gain confidence and freely express themselves.

As Puerto Cabezas municipal government assigned me a driver and a technician to accompany me full time to Tasba Pri rural communities. In this manner, I involved them in the fieldwork activities. Interviews were conducted with one leading the conversation, other holding and pinning the voice recorder instruments on the interviewee and the driver plays the role of photographer without previous experience of being a photographer. All conversation were hold in Spanish language and then analyzed into categories and translated into English language.

#### **3.4.4 Direct Observation**

When utilizing observation techniques it requires the researcher full concentration in order not to lose the balance between the conversation and the subject in observation. Observation is a tool to describe social reality it demands participant involvement in the study field. However, according to Taylor-Power and Steele (1996, in Suhonen 2009) stated that seeing and listening are key aspect of direct observation. The method provides the opportunity to collect such data for instance might be difficult to collect via questionnaire or interviews. Holliday (2007, p.65) consider that visual data and descriptive data both are ways of representing what a researcher sees.

### **3.5 Challenges and Experiences**

#### **Challenge 1**



As in all research challenges will always be along the way and new experiences and lesson will always be learnt. The first challenge confronted was the time frame. Despite the small sample of a case study, it require more time to explore people feelings and community activities, I needed to interact more with community people to explore information of the before and after of the agricultural cooperative organization existence. My trip to Nicaragua was prograded for 30 days and it took me 3 days to travel from Japan to the target community and vice-verse. However, I had a limited timeframe of three weeks to conduct my fieldwork, in such limited time, I had to manage to identify a successful case study and collect all possible data.

**Experience 1:** To explore the experience of a community capacity development it require time, especially when the focus case study is located in an isolated communities.

## **Challenge 2**

The second challenge identified was the climate season. Nicaragua autonomous regions are characterized by having tropical climate season known as the raining season. In RAAN region it usually rain from May and November months and during these six months it is very common to have floods and hurricanes. However, two week before conducting the field visit a tropical storm had recently affected the area and during the field visit another tropical storm was developing in Atlantic Ocean that has caused lots of heavy rains, strong winds and floods in some communities of RAAN region.

**Experience 2:** When planning to conduct field visit we need to take into consideration climate season of the target area as well as to have a plan B in case of heavy floods and hurricane.

## **Challenge 3:**

The third challenge was infrastructure accessibility, the highway road to San Pablo community is not paved and the target agricultural organization members farm was located about three kilometers away from the community center in the high forest zone which made it difficult for car accessibility. The researcher, helpers and farmers had to ride horses to enter the corn and rice plantations.

**Experience 3:** Exploring community people lifestyle through a dynamic interaction, observation and homestays has made me learned the quality of capacity rural people possess to bring about changes. As a government officer I never explored this type of development approaches before. It was a wonderful experience riding horses and dialoguing with local citizens.

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter presented the research methodology utilized and the reason for adopt a qualitative approach for this study. It provides the view of some philosopher's on the debate of quantitative and qualitative approaches as many agreed when studying human being researchers needs to be realistic, exploratory and flexible to catch of the world. The uses of artefact's is an important tools to help construct and interpret reality. As a qualitative approach is considers as dynamic and interactive in-depth interview and observation methods became part of the study of particular case study entitled "Grassroots Organization for Community Capacity Development: A case study of agricultural cooperative in the rural community of San Pablo, northern autonomous region of Nicaragua. This crucial methodology is distinctive and appropriate for student or beginner's researchers. In the context was highlighted a list challenges and experiences acquired during the field visit as well as the types of artifacts uses to gather data.

## **CHAPTER IV        NICARAGUA NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes Nicaragua government national rural development program introduced as a mean to reduce poverty, increase production and develop communities. It explores in details to what extent the program enhance community capacity and the types of development approaches utilized for community development. Furthermore, it describes the north autonomous regional government experience in localizing national programs to the context of indigenous and ethnic community development. Finally, the chapter concludes by highlighting the case of Puerto Cabezas municipal government agricultural program for community development.

Data for this chapter was collected through direct interviews made to authorities and practitioners from the national, regional and municipal governments. Furthermore, a second range of data was collected from local citizen whose has been benefited with the national rural development program with the purpose to get their opinion, experience and success of the government rural development program. To shape the context of the chapter I used some secondary data that was provided by interviewees. These were relevant public document such as Nicaragua National Development Plan, Population census and rural community development Plans documents.

## 4.2 Country Information

*Location:* Nicaragua is a Representative Democratic Republic, located in the center of Central America and north land of Latin America hemisphere. The country borders with Honduras to the north, Costa Rica to the south, the Atlantic Ocean to the East and the Pacific Ocean to the West. It is categorized as the largest but least densely populated country in Central America region.



Figure 4.2 Country Map - Source: Comupred 2010

Geographically, due to the country's climate, geology and divided into three regions: pacific south-western region, central region and autonomous region.

*Governance:* The administrative system of the country is governed by four principal organs:

- 1) Legislative, Parliament or National Assembly composed of 92 national deputies
- 2) Judiciary power maximum court for justice integrated by 16 judges assigned by the Parliament
- 3) Electoral organ is the supreme electoral council that seeks for national elections process and provide national ID card, and
- 4) Executive organ is integrated by the President of the Republic and its group of cabinet.

For administrative purposes the country is divided into 15 departments and 2 self- governing regions known as North and South Autonomous Regions. The departments and regions are then sub-divided into 153 municipalities or districts. Most of these municipalities are located in the

western pacific and central area of the country and less than 20 municipalities in the autonomous region (Campbell 2008). Table 4.2 illustrates Nicaragua departments and regions and their capital city:

Table 4.2 Nicaragua Political and Administrative Division

No.	Departments/ Districts	Capital City
1	Managua	Managua
2	Masaya	Masaya
3	Matagalpa	Matagalpa
4	Nueva Segovia	Ocotal
5	Rivas	Rivas
6	Rio San Juan	San Carlos
7	Madriz	Somoto
8	Leon	Leon
9	Jinotega	Jinotega
10	Granada	Granada
11	Estelí	Estelí
12	Chontales	Juigalpa
13	Chinandega	Chinandega
14	Carazo	Jinotepe
15	Boaco	Boaco
16	North Atlantic Autonomous Region - RAAN	Bilwi, Puerto Cabezas
17	South Atlantic Autonomous Region- RAAS	Bluefields

Source: designed by the author

For over fifteen year the country governing system was centralized at the central level. Since 2007 the administrative system were changed from centralization to decentralization system, national economic were reform and democratization became widespread.

*Population and Poverty Rate:* Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America after Haiti. According to the World Bank data on Nicaragua, the country has an estimated population of 5.992 inhabitants and a poverty headcount ratio at national level of 42.5% as 2009 latest report (World Bank 2010). The national population consists of 69% mestizos (mixture of Amerindians and European), 17% white (European ancestry origin), 9% creole ethnics (Afro-descendant) and 5% indigenous people's (Walker 2011). Poverty remains widespread and varied considerable by region. Nicaraguan rural poverty people is characterized as illiterate, lack of access to basic services, limited access to sanitation facilities, un nourished, poor housing quality, vulnerable to natural disaster, dependence and lack of capacity for self-development.

Spanish is the country official language although local natives' languages are widely spoken in the autonomous regions. Nicaragua is vulnerable to natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanoes eruptions, floods and hurricanes; the country also experiences constant civil strife and market fluctuations in commodity prices.

*Economy:* Economically Nicaragua is an agricultural based country, where 60% of its national exports are based on agriculture products produced in the central region of the country. Some of the main growing products for exports and consumptions are: coffee, beans, sesame, groundnuts, cacao, corn, cassava, banana, tobacco, sugarcane, vegetables, fruits, root crops (Walker 2011). Also, small industry such as textile goods (maquilas), banking, mining, fisheries are generally expanding within the country. Tourism has becoming a very important source of income and is

expanding across the country. Remittance from Nicaraguans living abroad and foreign assistance are also a source of foreign income that contributes to the national economy.

### **4.3 National Laws related to Rural Community Development**

Within Central America region Nicaragua is categorized as one of the country with most Public Laws, there are laws created most all developmental sectors. According to the country national constitution of 1987 in its article 99, defines that the State is responsibility to develop, promote and manage all public goods of the country. Also to promote social democracy, public-private enterprises, foster development at the urban and rural levels and guarantee freedom, rights and equality to all Nicaraguans. Since the adoption of the constitution until date there has been several amendments made to it, from which is derived a set of public policies related to administrative, social, political, environmental, economic consolidation with the purpose to create a more efficient and operational public sector.

The present administration known as Government for Reconciliation and National Unity (GRUN) which is in function since 2007 is considered as the first Nicaraguan government to have a humanist vision of development, where social injustice, poverty alleviation, social inclusion, gender equality and human capital is define as national priority. From this perspective all national laws, policies, amendments and protocols are design to achieve a sustainable growth.

The researcher have identified several public laws concerning to community development that are related to gender equality, citizen social participation, education and health policies, basic services, environmental and local resources protection and conservation, cultural promotion, agricultural and livestock policies and so on, but for the purpose of this report the three principal laws concern the north autonomous region developments which is described below:

#### 4.3.1 Law No. 40. Law for Municipal Government and its Reforms.

This Law concerns all municipal governments within the country. It was established to grant municipal governments rights and autonomy to administrate, manage and promote development at district and rural levels. However, for a more effective administrative process the Law of Transfer was created to support municipal government with the purpose to demand the State to transfer 4% of national income for municipal governments programs and each year the transfer should be increased to 1% until it reach to 10%. This Law is regulated by the Nicaragua Institute for Municipal Development by its Spanish acronym “INIFOM”. This institution INIFOM represents the interest of municipal governments and national government; it is responsibility to balance the administrative process between both institutions and to move decentralization forward.

#### 4.3.2. Law No.28. Autonomy Statutes Law

Officially established in 1987 to divide the Department of Zelaya into North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) and South Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS) granting all indigenous and ethnic’s rural communities’ rights to form and self-govern by a regional government. The regional government is composed of a regional council board and a regional coordinator, elected every four years. The Law 28 was introduced as a mean to decentralize public goods and to fully exercise the rights of citizens living in the autonomous regions of Nicaragua, through which communities can preserve and develop their own culture, manage, enjoy and use their local resources, develop their social and farming organization based on their own values, identity, traditions and to freely elect their own traditional authorities.



4.3.3. Law No. 445. Law of Communal Property Regime for Indigenous People and Ethnic Communities of the Autonomous Regions of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua and of the Rivers Bocay, Coco, Indio and Maiz.

This Law was created in 2003 with the purpose to regulate the regime of communal property ownership of lands inhabited by indigenous and ethnic's communities located in the north and south autonomous regions through a legal demarcation and titling procedure of communal lands. It was introduced as a mean to recognize the legal representation of community authorities and territorial authorities at the rural level as well as to grant right to these authorities to administrate and manage community local resources as the basic source of development. With the establishment of this law municipal governments and autonomous regional governments are clearly aware of their role and cannot intervene into rural community jurisdiction without the approval of community local governments.

Additionally to the above mentioned laws the researcher have identified others national Laws concerned to development that have a broader scope of social and economic development focused on regulating the usage, management, protection, conservation of public goods which to certain extent can be applied to community development. Moreover, the national laws for fisheries, and forestry and agricultural farming, Labor Law and Citizen's Participation law that promotes democracy from a bottom-up level are deeply linked to rural community development.

#### **4.4 Types of National Rural Development Programs**

Nicaragua after becoming a member of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPIC), it began to draft the first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 1999, with the main focus on economic growth, human capital, social safety nets and governability. In 2004, after a long

process of structural adjustment and fiscal discipline more than 80% of Nicaragua foreign debt was relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiatives program. This enable Nicaragua to move forwards its goals to achieve economic growth and reduce poverty, at the time new strategies and developmental programs was formulated with a participatory citizen's consultation to define priority and establish commitments in the implementation of national plan and social programs. However, this process includes several institutional reforms in the public administration that include State political, administrative and financial decentralization system.

The central government readjusted the National Human Development Plan (NHDP) and incorporated the government strategic vision to combat poverty, ensure macroeconomic stability and designed new programs as a mean to reactivate national economy and reduce poverty in rural communities. The country National Development Plan (NDP) is aligned with the National Human Development Plan operational goals, that mainly focuses on economic growth with increased employment and reduced inequality and poverty, which is also matches the overall goals of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. Taken from this perspective, several national programs were introduced to alleviate needs and priorities of more than 50% of Nicaraguans, especially those at the time living in poverty and extreme poverty conditions in the community. Most of these programs were designed to achieve outcomes in the short, mid and long terms and the target beneficiaries were middle and low class society living at the district and below levels. Followed is describes the country main rural development programs.

#### 4.4.1 PRO-RURAL 2005-2009

In 2003 with the purpose to draft the first macro rural development program the central Government began a wide consultation process with national public institutions, private sector

and international organizations. At the end of 2004 the first rural development program was presented to citizen known as Productive Rural Development Sectorial Programs refers to its Spanish acronym as PRO-RURAL 2005-2009. The program aims was to increase sustainable economic growth in rural communities, by enhancing farmers capacity to diversify productions, transform agricultural products into higher value-added products, promotes sustainable uses of forestry resources and to improve the management system of the forestry sector. The implementation and monitoring process was carried out with permanent assistance of government technicians.

The program began its implementation in 2005 as part of the National Development Plan and had great impact on rural households. As a result national list of export products was increased, rural people living condition was improved, community people became aware of conservation and preservation of natural resources and many rural communities land was reforested. However, the positive impacts and social changes brought to the life of rural people's made the government reformulated a second phases with a more diverse development approaches and included all lessons and good experiences learned from the Pro-Rural 2005-2009. This second phases is known as Pro-Rural Inclusive 2010-2014.

#### 4.4.2 PRO-RURAL INCLUSIVE 2010-2014

Pro-Rural Inclusive 2010-2014 is the current government Productive Rural Development Sectorial Program introduced in 2010, as a second phase of the previous rural development program. In this second phase, the word *INCLUSIVE* was added causes of social development elements included. PRO-RURAL INCLUSIVE 2010-2014 is the major rural development program of the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation, it has a broader scope of

development that goes beyond the concept of agricultural farming it encompass other social elements such as gender equality, partnerships, solidarity, social cohesion and agro-business development for local consumption and agricultural exports.

In this second part of the national rural development is included the country two autonomous regions development plans and two major programs of Central American countries such as: Central American regional development strategies programs for health and agro-environment and the Central American regional program for climate change. From this perspective, Nicaragua Pro-Rural Inclusive 2010-2014 is visualized as the nation platform programs towards a new rural development. This national program is under the management responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR) and Ministry of household, Communities, Cooperatives and Associations (MEFCCA) with the support of the National Institute of Forestry (INAFOR) and Nicaragua Company for Food and Basic Grains (ENABAS).

In the case of RAAN region the regional government and municipal government design their own programs/projects in alignment with national programs and macro development plan goals. The overall goal of Pro-Rural Inclusive program is to contribute to human development and increase communities' assets, without harming the environment and make proper uses of local resources. From this program a number of sub-programs were created directly to tackle poverty problem, ensure food security, increase household incomes, increase farming goods, reduce ecological and economic vulnerability. Some of the basic sub-program are enlisted below:

- NATIONAL FOOD PROGRAM

The National Food Program (NFP) was established with the aims to contribute to social equity, increase primary food production, ensure food security, access and consumption of healthy and

safe foods. The strategy of this program is to increase agricultural and livestock production (beef, pork, chicken, milk and eggs production) as a mean to guarantee food consumption in each rural household's. Nicaragua autonomous region rural communities are one of the principal targets of this program. The NFP program main focus is human development (transfer of technology and capacity building) and food security and sovereignty (establishment of farming seeds banks, municipal and communal nurseries, pigs and poultry farms, deliver materials to increase production of cocoa, root crops, coconut, cashew, citrus and so on). The type of training provided focus on building capacity to grow and diversity the above mentioned types of crops. This program is supported with the Zero Hunger programs which will be described further on.

#### - NATIONAL RURAL AGRO-INDUSTRY PROGRAM

National Rural Agro-industry consists of increase value added to primary products produced by small and medium farmers of the country. The program is expected to increase production of agro-rural enterprises, increase rural families' incomes, and enhance production chains. It targets the poorest sector of the country, especially rural communities of the autonomous regions involved in fisheries activities. The program provides storage centers, freezing rooms, equipment and materials for the processing of primary products.

#### - NATIONAL FORESTRY PROGRAM

National Forestry Program: Promote sustainable management of the forest ecosystems. The program was designed with the purpose to reduce rural communities' deforestation, increase employment in the forestry sector, increase forest export volumes and increase forestry sector contribution to national GDP. Many isolated communities surrounded by huge forest were most benefited with this program and important strategy was carried out known as communities' agro-

forestry project where lots of rural women's generated incomes by conducting small activities with forest trees.

- HAMBRE CERO (Zero Hunger) PROGRAM

Hambre Cero program was introduced as an anti-poverty program designed to combat hunger and reduce extreme poverty in rural communities. The program consist of providing rural households with pregnant cows and pigs, chicken, farming seeds, fruit trees, construction materials and technical assistances; the program aims is to better nutritional status of rural families and raise poor people incomes. According Iquigaya Borst (in personal communication on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2013) technician of the Ministry for Agricultural and Forestry (MAGFOR) narrated that

*“the logic of the program is to rebuild rural economy from a bottom-up level, by providing rural people basic materials to start their economic activities and in some cases to expand existed self-initiated activities. For instance, when the pregnant cows give birth rural women's can collect milks for their children as well as to develop products derivate from Milk. In the same manner, pick and chickens eggs. The Zero Hunger Program was implemented in 5,000 rural communities and benefited approximately 45,000 households”.*

- USURA CERO (Zero Usury) PROGRAM

USURA CERO (ZERO USURY) is another program with a microfinance approach that gives soft loans to rural women whose manage micro-business, the purpose of this program is to increase employment in the informal labor market. The loan is given under the methodology of solidarity groups with low subsidize interest and a grace period of 2 to 3 months. However, the strategy of the program is to promote citizen's participation through socializing into solidarity

groups, develop self-esteem, collective activities and mutual helps. According to Nelly Pissi (in personal communication, on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2013) a local citizen of RAAN region beneficiary of ZERO USURY program has narrated that “I am an independent and self-employed worker; I gather together with my sisters and cousins as a solidary group composed of 4 women’s to apply and access national loans program, once the loan was approved and given it was divided into equal parts; with my loan I was able to set up a small business shop of second hand clothes, now I can pay my debts, provide foods to my children and repair my little houses”.

#### - CRISSOL PROGRAM

The Christian, Socialist and Solidarity Program known as CRISSOL, was designed for those small agricultural farmers whose cannot access institutional microcredits programs cause of not having the basic requirements needed to access loans. This program consists of granting free-interest loans to smallholder farmers, which then repays the loans with the staple grains produced. The purpose of the government is to seek for the rights of impoverished farming peasant to access loans and to buy beans, rice, corn, sorgo seeds and farming tools needed for their cropping activities. This program has been expanding in the southern, central and autonomous region of the country with a permanent technical assistance support focused enhance farmer capacity, to increase crops productions and improve peasant quality of life. The technical support is provided by the three public institution involved farming and rural development activities these are MAGFOR, MEFCCA and INTA.

Moreover, there are others national programs related to economic development and are aligned to rural development such as the National Production Cabinet programs, PROMIPYME program (Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises), and the Free Education and Health Care Programs available for poor Nicaraguans. Also, two microfinance bank was set up to provide

loans to poor groups in rural-urban areas these banks are “Banco Produzcamos” and “ALBA CARUNA”, the purpose of these microfinance programs is to grant small farmers more access to loans in order to increase agriculture productions and national exports.

As the country National Development Plan main focuses is develop human capital to improve economic growth and reduce poverty rate. Most of the national programs were designed based on the pressing needs of the population conducted in an open consultation with civil society. The government categorized citizens participation as the new development model with a decentralized bottom-up approach where society is the center and protagonist of national, regional and rural development. In order to achieve a greater outcomes the government created council and cabinet groups in each neighborhoods, community, districts, departments, regions and at the national level. This initiative made civil society organize and participate in the planning process of common agenda and gives follow up to central government policies, plans and monitor institutions actions. The overall goal was to improve public administration and to contribute to State and society democratization.

#### **4.5. Localization of National Programs in the context of Development of Indigenous and Ethnic communities the North Autonomous Region**

Nicaragua North Atlantic Autonomous Region refers to its Spanish acronym as RAAN it is also known as Caribbean Coast, is the largest autonomous region rich in natural resources and cultural diversity. The region is inhabited by four ethnic groups such as Miskitos, Sumu-Mayangnas, Mestizos and Black Creole groups. Each ethnic group speaks their own languages and has different cultural custom, traditions and practices. These ethnic groups were originated as mixture of Ameri-indians, African-descendants and British-Spanish descendants.



Traced back to history when the Spanish voyagers conquer western Nicaragua their interest was driven by goals, silver lust and slave labor to work mines in South America. It is said that Spanish pirates never sat food on the Caribbean coast because there were unused dense forest, humid climate un-attracted soils and lack of deep-water harbors. However, as the region was inhabited by indigenous (Indians) that came across Latin American countries and settled there, it became a protectorate of the British Empery and governed for many years by a kingship system known as Mosquito Kings. It was until 1905 under Treaty Harrison-Altamirano the region was officially reincorporated into Nicaragua State, it is said that the Caribbean coast people were force to adopt a Spanish culture and language.

Despite of the region incorporation into to the national State it remains abandoned by the central government for many years. For decades, Caribbean Coast people struggled and demanded to become independent State, it was until 1987 the national government established the Autonomous Statute Law number 28, with the purpose to grant autonomy right to indigenous and ethnic citizens of the Caribbean of Nicaragua to elect and be governed by their own regional government. Although there was a regional government in the region central government granted concession to foreign companies to exploit and devastate lots of communities natural resources making RAAN communities more poorer than before.

At the moment, more than half of RAAN region populations lives in extreme poverty conditions and located in isolated communities. According to Carlos Aleman (in personal communication, on September 27<sup>th</sup> 2013) President of RAAN Regional Council narrated that with exception of Puerto Cabezas district where 45% of the population lives in the urban area, in other districts the urban population is minimal and poverty rate is much higher. Within Waspam district only 8% lives in urban area, Suina district 10%, Rosita district 20%, while Prinzapolka and Mulukuku

districts are completely rurally; this is due to the region large land mass and huge rainforest zones. For a more comprehensive understanding of the north autonomous urban-rural populations' distribution is described in table 4.5 below:

Table 4.5 North Autonomous Region Rural and Urban Population

DISTRICTS	POPULATIONS	URBAN	RURAL
<b>RAAN Region</b>	<b>314,130</b>	<b>88,065</b>	<b>226,065</b>
Waspam	47,231	7,038	40,193
Puerto Cabezas	66,169	39,428	26,741
Rosita	22,723	8,535	14,188
Bonanza	18,633	8,143	10,490
Waslala	49,339	8,604	40,735
Mulukuku	29,838	4,283	25,555
Siuna	64,092	10,345	53,747
Prinzapolka	16,105	1,689	14,416

Source: Institute of Statistic and Census 2005

When the national government program is expanded across RAAN region, the regional government adopts and readjusts national programs based on the region lifestyle. Aleman further explained (in personal communication on September 27<sup>th</sup> 2013) that

*“the development context of north autonomous region rural communities are differ from the western pacific communities of the country, this region has a more rural characteristic than others region, there are some national programs that can easily adapted to the region system such as rural roadways programs, safe drinking waters and electrifications among others; while others are needed to be readjusted to the context of rural people lifestyle. For instance, when the regional council is readjusting programs there are important elements that are taking into consideration such as cultural elements and languages of indigenous, mestizos, sumu-mayangna and afro-descendant ethnic’s groups. In the case of education schooling programs materials used to be design in Spanish and indigenous communities cannot speak Spanish Language, it is in this sense the regional council intervene to promote and demand a intercultural bilingual schooling for the indigenous and ethnics communities of the region. Schooling materials should be developed based on the culture and languages of each ethnics group, in this manner children’s can be educated in their own languages and culture can be preserved”.*

The regional government design regional development plan based on inputs provided by territorial and rural community government. The region master development plan is integrated into Presidential Secretariat for Caribbean Coast Development Plan and form part of the country National Development Plan. The regional plan main focuses is to overcome the social, political and economic conditions of the Caribbean coast peoples where citizens can have rights to basic services, farming opportunities, good schooling, proper health services, good infrastructure conditions, wide citizen participation and dynamic inclusion of all sectors, as a mean to contribute to human development and reduce extreme poverty in indigenous and ethnics rural communities of the autonomous region.

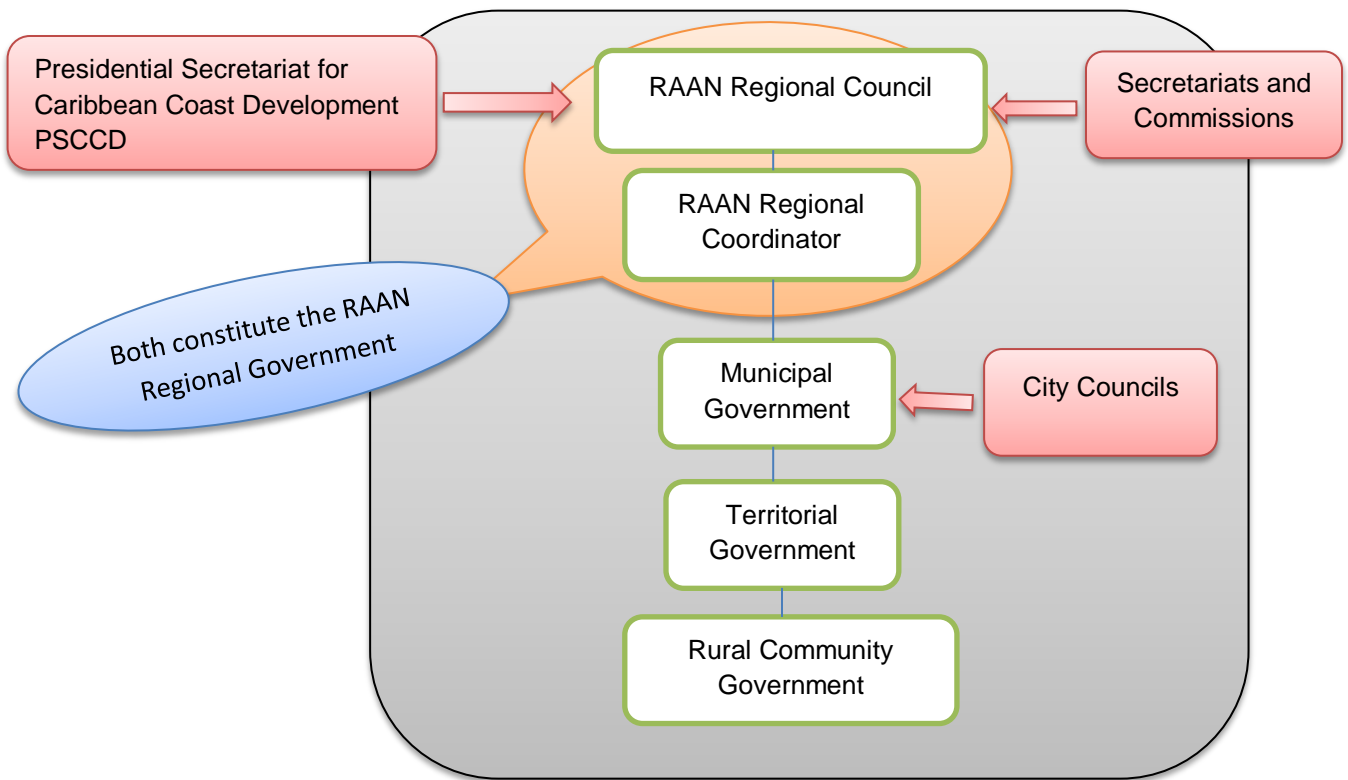
At the regional council and regional government level there are various secretariats and committees responsible for rural community developments. However, all these commission are articulated in the implementation of activities concerned to community natural resources, farming activities, environmental conservations, cultural revitalizations, gender equality, children and youth rights. Also, the regional secretariat for municipal and indigenous government, and the committee for community land demarcation and conflict resolutions are deeply involved and inter-connected with the council commission and municipal government activities. The north autonomous regional council and regional government development plan is focuses mainly on indigenous and ethnic community developments.

#### **4.6 Autonomous Regional Government Administrative System**

The governing system in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region is based on the Law 28 of Autonomy Statute for Caribbean regions. With the Autonomy Statute Nicaragua both regions south and north autonomous region policy structure system is design to be governed by regional government and administrated by a body with executive powers and responsibilities known as regional council. The Law grant the regional government rights to administrate the region resources, political system, culture, economic and social development, in 1990 both regions elected for the first time they regional council and regional government. The regional council function as legislator of regional policy while the implementer of the policy is the regional governor both together composed the north autonomous regional government. The regional government is composed of forty-five council members, elected every four years and deputies from the national assembly (hearing from Aleman on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013 by Ivone Waters).

The regional government is the highest authority figure at the region level. As the north autonomous region is divided into eight districts, within each district there are local municipal governments ruled by city mayors and a board of council; below municipal governments there are territorial governments (county government) that has a political figure at the county level and at the grassroots level there are traditional community government these are elected in community general assembly based on their own rules and cultures.

Figure 4.6 North Autonomous Regional Administrative System



Source: Created by the author

The Presidential Secretariat for the Caribbean Coast Development was established in 2007 as part is part of the Presidential Cabinet with the purpose to seek autonomous regions developments and to have representative figure at the national level.

## 4.7 The Case of Puerto Cabezas Municipal Agricultural Program

Puerto Cabezas is comprised of three territories, two coastal zones and Bilwi urban city all together constitute Puerto Cabezas district. It is located in the north autonomous region in front of the Atlantic Ocean that made up a population of 66,169 inhabitants (INIDE 2005). The capital city is Bilwi, wherein the regional government, national government institution branches and NGO's offices is located as well as a semi- international airport and sea port.

The local municipal government is the city major authority figure and has the faculty to create public policies at the district, territorial and communal levels. The municipal government main priorities is focused on agricultural farming, gender equality, governability, environmental and climate change, fishery, forestry conservation, cultural promotion, infrastructure, health and education. According to Reynaldo Francis (in personal communication, on September 4<sup>th</sup> 2013) Mayor of Puerto Cabezas municipal government narrated that

*“rural communities development is the principal priority of the municipal government council we cannot achieve development when farmers families are suffering for hunger, communities does not have basic services and infrastructure are in bad conditions, which is why an estimation of 70% of the municipal yearly budget goes to indigenous and ethnics communities development”.*

The municipal Government has created a Rural Development Committee to address communities farming activities at the grassroots level.

### 4.7.1 Rural Development Committee

The municipal government has created an inter-institutional Rural Development Committee (RDC) in indigenous language it refers as Tawan Ingnika. The committee was created to approve

and regulate farming policies with the principal goal to improve the quality of life of indigenous and ethnic people's through a restructuration and improvement of the farming system. The objective is to build capacity in a participatory manner where farmers can learn new farming technics, utilizing all good experience identified by farmers through the establishment of a farm school. The purpose of the farm school is to continue promoting traditional farming methods without utilizing much chemical and reduce conventional approaches. In Table 4.7.1 illustrates the purpose of the field school.

Table 4.7.1 Conventional versus Rural Committee Training Method

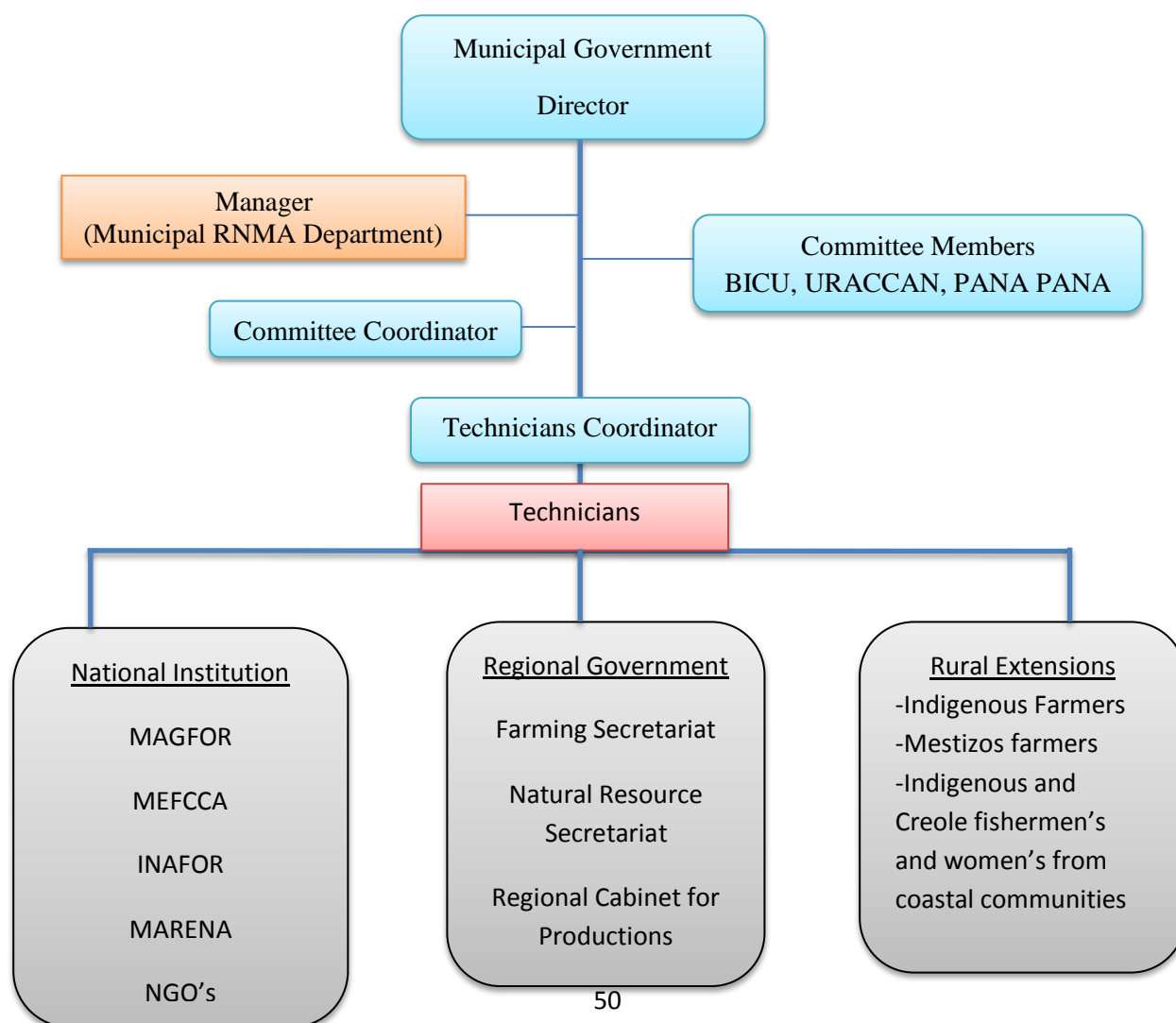
<b>CONVENTIONAL METHOD</b>	<b>COMMITTEE METHOD</b>
Training is provided in classroom	No classroom. Only land, plot and farms, etc.
Training is provided by consultancy or technicians	Learning together. Facilitator and farmers interact and share experience
Delivery of Materials	No materials. Uses of local resources and exchanges
Training is designed by outsider view	Training topic is selected by farmers based on their needs
Extension from Technicians to farmers	Extension from farmers to farmers
Incentives (refreshment, foods and others expense)	Farmers and technics prepare and share expense together.

Technician evaluate activities	Jointly review and reflection of activities
It should not fail	It can fail cause we learn from our mistakes

Source: Extension Guidelines CDR 2012

The Committee is composed by the municipal Government as President, two regional universities known as Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University (BICU CIUM) and the University of the Autonomous Regions of Nicaragua Caribbean Coast (URACCAN) and a microfinance organization known as Association for the Atlantic Coast Development (PANA PANA). Also, it involves other public entities that implement rural development program.

Figure 4.7 Rural Development Committee Structure





On the others side, Limborth Bucardo (in personal communication, on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2013) in representation of the microcredit organization PANA PANA narrated that “the region is categorized as the poorest region, while having all natural resources needed such as the Atlantic Ocean, lands, rivers and huge rainforest in where is located the second largest rainforest of Latin America. However, as 80% of the rural people income activities comes from agricultural farming the Rural Committee priority is to build capacity to change the dependency vision of the people, to make people uses their local resource, self-develop and become independent”.

Picture 4.7 Rural Development Committee Training Activities



Source: Photos provided by RDC members

The Rural Development Committee activities focus mainly on agricultural farming to improve the quality of life of rural people. Furthermore the municipal government included fisheries and livestock activities to benefit rural communities located around coastal zones. The committee triangle operational framework has a social, political and economic development content in where the municipal government plays a role of political figure and the two regional universities focuses on provide training to build capacity, whilst “PANA PANA” the microfinance organization facilitate loans to rural farmers and entrepreneur’s at a relative fair interest rates.

#### 4.7.2 Municipal Government Local Exhibition Fair

Additionally, to the Rural Development Committee activities Puerto Cabezas municipal Government also implements others farming activities through the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, designed exclusively for rural communities located in forest areas such as Tasba Pri, Llano Norte and Llano Sur territories. The purpose of this program is to improve rural families activities, promote and diversity local products, improve rural people quality of life, reduce food insecurity and guarantee access to basic services; this is carried out through a strategic network coordination with institutions and ONG's to enhance the mechanism of technical and financial assistance as well as transfers of technology (hearing from Nytzae Dixon on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013).

The municipal government farming program consist on deliver agricultural seeds, farming materials and training to rural farmers including men's and women's. Technicians provides training based technics to grow and diversify products with a constant monitoring visit to farmers plots; once the crops is harvested the municipal government organize a local fair at the city level with the purpose to market community products, increase farmer incomes and to make urban citizen consume fresh and cheap products. Reynaldo Mairena (in personal communication on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2013) municipal technician responsible for agricultural farming narrated that

*“the local fair has motivated rural people to participate and increase productions, every year the number of demand increased. For instance, in 2009 at the beginning of the first local fair mestizos ethnics farmers participate offering agricultural and livestock products the fair was organized only with communities located in territories zones; now people from the indigenous*

*communities along coastal zone participate offering fresh sea products such as fish and shrimps, this has diversity the local fair products (narrated by Mairena).*

*Picture 4.7.2 Municipal Government Local Exhibition Fair*



Note. Source: Photos provided by Mairena during person communication on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2013)

#### **4.8 Brief Summary**

Nicaragua national rural development programs have had positive impact on rural communities developments the major effect has been on hunger relief, employment opportunities generated, farming production increased, inequality reduced, gender equality promoted and rural people quality of life improved. In fact, Nicaragua national rural development programs had placed priority on capacity development as a mean to boost rural economy and reduce poverty in rural areas. Most national programs revised are well designed, needed and necessary for community development but capacity building approach need to be more localized to ensure sustainability after programs ends.

Within the RAAN region poverty still remain widespread. Many community individuals, groups and organizations still lack capacity for self-development. The national rural development program provided household with materials, loans and training to increase production and

household incomes. Increase productions not always reduce poverty no ensure sustainable community development. However, it would be much more effective for stakeholders to strengthen local institutional and community traditional government capacity to create a complementary development approach in where knowledge can flows from both side up-down and bottom-up.

The Government decentralized system has made civil society participate more directly in planning a common agenda through sharing views, connecting and interacting synergistically with policy makers this has made democratization process widespread within Nicaragua. The creation of citizen council in each community and neighborhoods has increase the number of people participation in government programs, but is it necessary to widespread public consultation programs right down to grassroots level since each ethnics groups and region different characteristic and lifestyle.

Puerto Cabezas municipal Government agricultural program was described as a case study to demonstrate the municipal role in building community capacity by making deep emphasis on the Rural Development Committee created as the main figure to regulate farming activity in the region and its strategy of involving the two regional universities to build capacity through rural extensions in indigenous and ethnics communities. This strategy has started to change the paternalistic vision of the new rural generations but the farming seeds provided should be different for each ethnics groups and training should be given base on farmers' activities.

The municipal government local exhibition fair has helped rural farmers to work in a collectively, increase income and improve their living standard. In dead, the articulation of several actors is a complementary way of enhancing community capacity. Nonetheless, it would

be cheaper for the Rural Committee to promote decentralized exhibition fair at the community and territorial levels, as a mean to increase the numbers of participants and products. Also, a wider and permanent marketing strategy is needed to help farmers market their goods and permanently generate incomes.

**5.1. Introduction**

This chapter explores the experience of a grassroots organization in organizing to tackle community people needs and priority and the way this organization activity contributed to enhance the existing capacity of the community. The chapter is structured into five parts. The first part provides information on how Tasba Pri territory emerges, the territorial Government responsibility and operational framework. The second parts, describes San Pablo community situation before and after the existence of the organization. The third part focuses on the grassroots organization experience in organizing community and networking with external stakeholders. The fifth part briefly describes the policy correlation between community/territorial government and the organization vision.

For the purpose of this case study when referencing to organization the authors refers to grassroots organization or community-based organization. Those organizations self-initiated at the rural community level. Data for this chapter was collected from the rural community of San Pablo whilst the researcher was visiting the territory of Tasba Pri. The method utilized was through informal interviews and direct observations, utilizing voice recorder apparatus.

**5.2. Tasba Pri and Territorial Government**

Tasba Pri is a multiethnic territory inhabited by mestizos (Spanish descendant) and miskito (indigenous) ethnic groups. The word Tasba Pri, is an indigenous word that means “Free Land”. The territory is comprises of 28 rural communities and has a population of 35,000 inhabitants (PDSTP 2010). The territory is located on the west of Puerto Cabezas district and possesses a

humid tropical climate; whereby its 28 rural communities are organized into a territory and represented by the territorial government known as “*Tasba Pri Territorial Government*” in Spanish refers as “*Gobierno Territorial de Tasba Pri*”; each one of its rural communities are internally represented by a community government which operates under the supervision of the territorial government.

The Territory of Tasba Pri, was established in the late 70’s and early 80’s, as causes of the beginning of the civil war were thousands of rural families from Waspam district near the Coco river was evacuated to the inner land of the north autonomous region, others communities was migrated to the western pacific side of the country and a minimal percentages immigrated to neighboring countries such as Honduras and Costa Rica, leaving behind their houses, lands and cultures.

The relocation of large numbers of families has made new communities emerges, it is in this sense Tasba Pri territory originated. After the group was relocated the people had the needs to organize themselves into a sole ethnic group at the time named “Aslatakan” in English means “gather together” the group was leaded by a coordinator with the support of religious pastors. Initially the migrated group was called “farmer settlements” Catalino Rugama (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013). It was until 2003 with creation of the Law 445 “Law of Communal Property Regime for Indigenous People and Ethnics Communities of the Autonomous Region of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua and of the Rivers Bocay, Coco, Indio and Maiz”; territorial and communal governments were officially constituted and granted right to administrate all local resources.

The Territorial Government is the highest authority and most representative figure within the territory, the board is responsible to seek for the social, political, cultural and economic development of its 28 rural communities. Before the official existence of the Territorial Government, Tasba Pri 28 rural communities were already organized and represented by a local organization named UCOTAP that means “*Tasba Pri Rural Communities Unions*”. The initial purpose of these communities was to gather together, find solution to their problems, and to be represented by an organization that can carry out the people's voices, needs and priorities to the regional and municipal government level. With time, UCOTAP organization grew and expanded successfully in the territory.

In 2003, Nicaragua's national assembly approved Law 455, granting all indigenous and ethnic communities the right to administer their local resources and to legally recognize the existence of territorial and communal governments. In this manner, the territory's local organization UCOTAP became the Territorial Government of Tasba Pri territory, the directive board members remain the same. The territorial government board is structured in the form of President, Vice-President, Second Vice-President, First Secretary, Second Secretary, Third Secretary, Administrator, and Supervisor. The directive board is elected in a general assembly with participation of its 28 rural communities.

Within Puerto Cabezas district level, there are two coastal zone communities and three territories. Out of these Tasba Pri territory is considered the most organized and developed territory in terms of social, political and economic development. The territory's soils are suitable for agricultural, timber and livestock farming activities. The two main economic activities are agriculture and livestock farming, these activities are conducted by local farmers in the form of

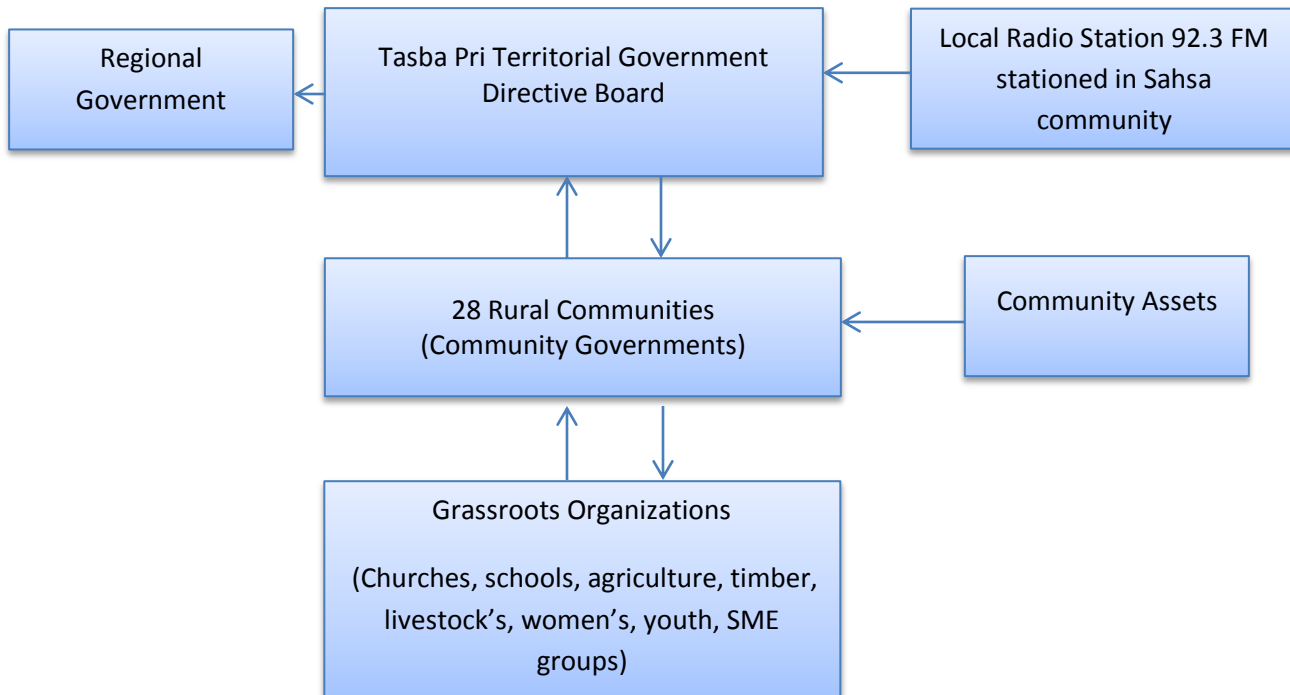


individual's peasant and through small organized groups in forms of cooperatives. Currently, Tasba Pri territory is Bilwi city major market supplier of agricultural and livestock products.

Within Tasba Pri Territory there are several grassroots organizations operating some are initiated because of national government programs or NGO's projects, Christian churches interventions, and other are self-initiated voluntary based citizens own interest, identity, common values, and commitment of the people. Many of these organizations are recently established and still in the process of legalizations, some does not possess legal status yet. The territorial government is still struggling and supporting the legalization process of community grassroots organization. However, in some cases the territorial government links big and small cooperatives to work collectively since few organizations are composed of a relative small number of groups which vary from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 100 members.

Within the operation system and internal structure of these grassroots organizations the researcher identified a high presence of female participations in each organization boards, farming and processing activities. Also, there are few sport activities supported and promoted by the territorial government such as the soccer and softball sports team compose of male and females and baseball organized only by males of all ages.

Figure 5.2.1 Tasba Pri Government Operational Framework



Source: Created by the author with information provided by Muller (in personal communication, on September 16<sup>th</sup> 2013)

In figure 5.2.1 Illustrates San Pablo community coordination and communication flows modality between territorial government and community local governments. The local ration station is an important element within the territory the territorial government utilize it to transmit information from one community to another, mainly to announce of upcoming government meetings, sport activities schedules activity, inform farmer weather season, religious organization conferences, promotion of human right and so on.

### 5.3. San Pablo Rural Community

San Pablo is a rural community located in the territory of Tasba Pri, it comprises a population of 493 inhabitants which is subdivided into 50.4% females and 40.6% males and possesses a land mass of 4,050 acres (INIDE 2005). San Pablo population consists of a mixture of Spanish people and Miskitos ethnic groups the official language of the community is Spanish. The community

was founded in 1972 when people from Sahsa, Sumubila and neighbors communities begun searching for forest areas to extract rubber and land to conduct farming activities, small plastic champs and timber houses were set up. In January 1981 a mass population came to settle into the area evacuated from 35 rural communities near the Coco River these communities were evacuated because of being located in hostile area.

San Pablo community is surrounded by huge forest trees whereas the diversity of flora and fauna can be observed in their natural environment the soil is humid and formidable for forest and farming activities. From San Pablo community foundation until date its main economic activity has been agricultural farming such as rice, beans, corn, banana, plantain, vegetables, fruits and roots crops (cassava and malangas). Cattle's breeding activity is practices on medium scale are used only for local consumption. In the early 90's timber cutting activities became an important source of income and still remain as the third important economic activity of the community. Jose Adan Fernandez (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2013) President of San Pablo community government has narrated that "an approximately 100 species of trees can be found within the community forest from which 35 are potentially commercialized by grouped and ungrouped timber cutters". Likewise, San Pablo community has a high potential for rural tourism activities but it has not been seeing as a priority by localities. Its rich multicultural history and valuable ancestral stories is narrated during homestays moments and through fluid interaction with elder citizens.

San Pablo community traditional government is the highest authority at the community level, it's composed of a directive board structured in form of President, Vice-President, General Secretary, development committee, cultural revitalization and promotion committee, Security manager, education and health committee; all members are elected democratically in community

General Assembly. The community governance system is recognized and mandated in the content of the national Law 445 “Law for Communal Regime Property of indigenous and ethnic’s communities of the autonomous regions of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua and of the rivers Bocay, Coco, Indio and Maiz”.

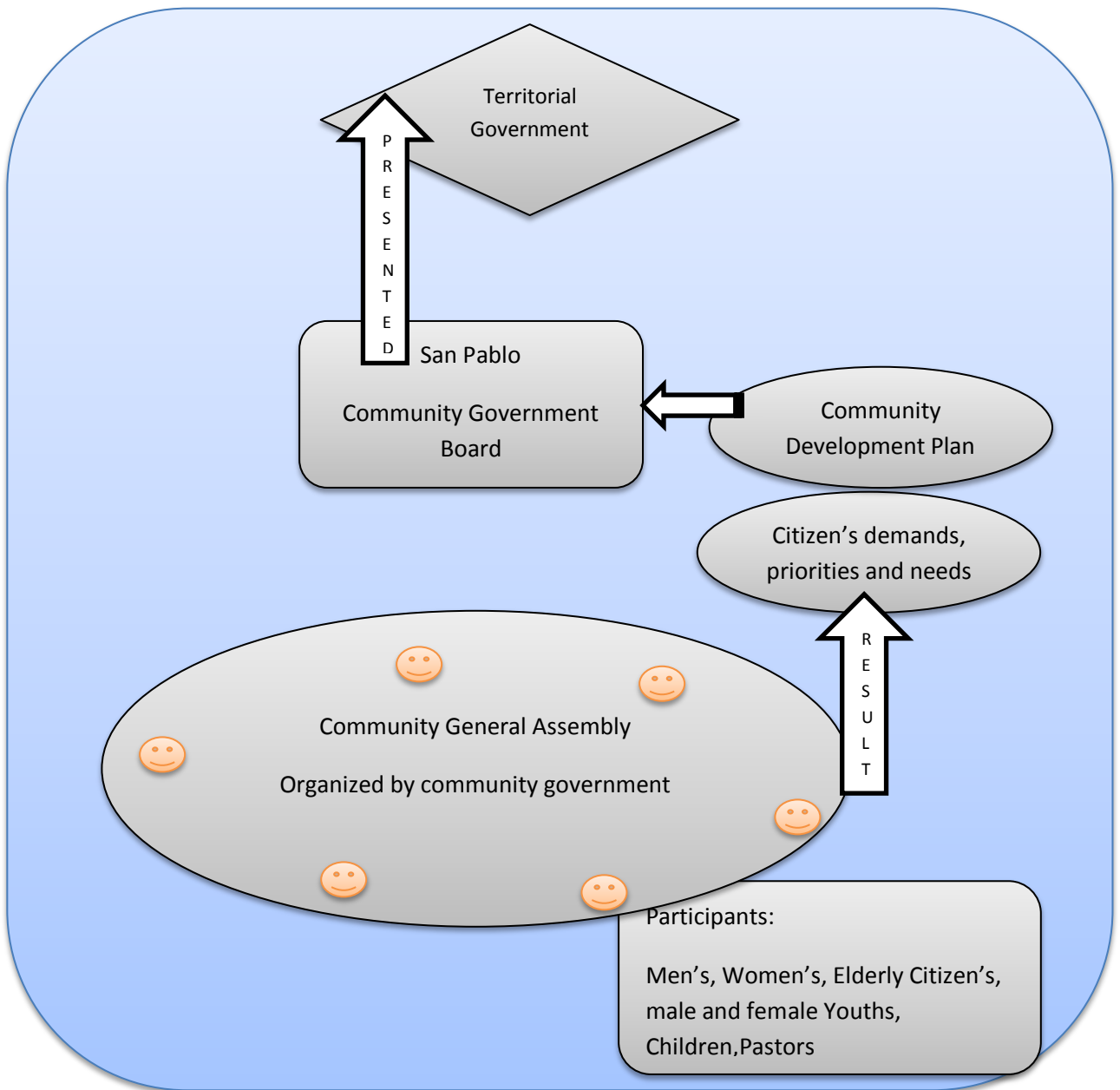
Within the community the first formal local organization founded was belongs to the Catholic Church the group was composed of Christian women’s and elder people, later on the youth and children groups was established. For many years, the local church was the playing a leadership role inside the community in organizing and leading the people’s. It was until 2003 the community traditional government was legally established to manage political, cultural, social and economic issues concern to the community. However, during those times the local church and the community government was been the central stakeholders in the community.

Before the existence of the September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative organization San Pablo community had difficulties and several limitation such as limited market accessibility, lack of organizing, no employment opportunities only teachers and pastor had formal jobs, each household conduct some types of farming activities for their self-consumption and marketing, farmer did not had enough seeds, materials, horses and cattle’s to expand their farming activities, poor infrastructure, limited basic services, absence of NGO’s projects and minimal presence of central government, the number of rural migration increased.

The community government did not have a clear vision of what they wanted for the community. The church space was used to announce the upcoming activities and to hold community general assembly the number of attendance were minimal and was attended mostly by women’s, children and elderly people. Males and youth used to pass full times in the farm and couldn’t attend some

of the general assembly. Fernandez (in personal communication, on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2013) stated that the purpose of General Assembly is gather together share information, present community needs and to identify collectively an alternative solution to community problems. The list of request obtained from the General Assembly is uses to design the community development plan and presented to the territorial government with the purpose to get external support. In figure 5.3 below is shown the San Pablo community General Assembly model.

Figure 5.3 Community General Assembly Model



Once collected all citizen's needs and demands community government lack capacity to respond to so many needs as well as to identify the main priority of the people, each household and groups presented different types of urgent needs and priorities. Adan Fernandez (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2013) narrated that farmers presented their main problems in the farming activities such as marketing and microfinance limitation, women's presented the problems of domestic violence, children health conditions and housing, while youths needed recreation centers for sports activities, education materials, employment opportunities and churches needed musical instruments, chairs and infrastructure rehabilitation, etc.

The pressing needs of the people were many and the community Government was unable to solve it on its own. On the other side, the territorial Government couldn't provide full support because it had the responsibility to respond to the needs of its 28 rural communities whose at the time presented different type of demands to the territorial government. However, the community Government gather with farmer and analyzed into details which should be priority needs and concluded that food security should be the basic priority, considering that once reduced malnutrition status of children, adolescent, women's and farmers; people will become more healthier and stronger to involve in their daily activities. The groups also presented the necessity to organize community members to work collectively as an alternative to reduce some of the citizens' problem.

The initial stage of organizing into groups of similar needs was challenges and did not succeed because people started to organize themselves depending on the community government to solve their needs. At the same time, the community was affected by Hurricane Felix of category five.

### 5.3.1 Hurricane Felix and Posts relief Supports

On September 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 Nicaragua north autonomous region was hits by hurricane Felix a tropical of category five. It destroys homes, lands and infrastructure along its way. The most affected areas were indigenous communities located along northern coastal zones where the fisheries activity was completely destroyed and thousands of forest trees were rooted it up leaving the soil completely bare. Also, territorial communities located in forest areas were largely affected due to the rains and winds, especially the farming activities of postrera harvest season, rain forestry areas, landslides, water supply systems, schools buildings, bridges, houses and basic sanitary utilities. The region ecosystem was destroyed the habitats of thousands of species disappeared causing an imbalance in the food chain. The national Government declared a state of disaster in RAAN region and minor alert in RAAS region.

Nonetheless, the number of Government projects and NGO's humanitarian programs inflows largely to reconstruct affected areas by Hurricane Felix. Global donors such as United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Funds (IMF) and many bilateral agencies provided immediate and long-term assistance the reconstruct affected communities. Programs and project was implemented in three phase's immediate relief, medium and long term projects:

The first assistance consists on providing foods, beverages, plastic and medicines to relieve hunger, prevent diseases and guarantee basic shelter. The second assistance had a longer support period it was focused more on delivering farming materials, equipment and training to reactive the agricultural, livestock and timber activities, as these were the main source of income for territorial communities. The third support had a longer period it was focused on rehabilitation and reconstruction of bridges, roads, churches, schools houses, medical centers and citizen

houses. The life time of these projects was between 6 months to 3 years. Some of the farming technics introduced was new and had inspired farmers to remain in their community and to continue working the soil, some these projects helped farmers to increase their ability and improve production levels.

According to Calderon (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2013) after the hurricane San Pablo citizens became more united and solidary. People started to gather together to help each other's and was motivated to organize themselves into a groups to work in partnership and challenge the root causes of their vulnerability as a team. From the post disaster programs the San Pablo agricultural cooperative received farming seed and materials but most of the seed did not germinated cause of the region climate.

The following section describes the experience of a successful organization that arose within San Pablo community after the hurricane Felix. This organization is the focus case study of this research and it refers as September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative. The study describes the organization purpose for organizing and how this organization contributes to improve San Pablo community capacity.

#### **5.4 September 4<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Cooperative: A model of community organization**

September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative is a cooperative organization located in San Pablo rural community in Spanish means "Cooperativa 4 de Septiembre". The organization is one of the most operational and organized cooperatives that exists in Tasba Pri territory, it is comprises of mestizo ethnic group (Spanish descendants), it was officially established on September 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, a year after Hurricane Felix hits RAAN region. The cooperative purpose for organizing was to collect and market San Pablo farmer products, work as a collective group, increase production generate incomes, promote community assets, access government programs and receive NGO's support.



The cooperative was initially created with 42 members whom at the time possessed big acres of lands, involved in farming activities and was the main market suppliers of agriculture and livestock products. Furthermore, the cooperative has evolved to become a formidable organization and its membership has increased to 92 members, all are native citizens from San Pablo community. However, prior to the organization official establishment, San Pablo farmers were already involved in farming activities as their main source of income generation and has been working in form of individual farmers and in some occasion in form of collective groups with no official recognition or support of governments.

Before the official establishment of September 4<sup>th</sup> cooperative organization others agricultural cooperatives has already existed and operating in the region. However, during the year 2008 eleven others cooperative were established in different communities of Tasba Pri territory, the purpose of these cooperatives was to find market opportunities, access government projects and foreign aids post disaster programs; which largely inflows after the Hurricane Felix.



At a time, these cooperatives aims were fulfilled, support were provided by external stakeholders for each cooperative to grow, expand and improve the living standard of its members. Although, after a time some did not succeed due to lack of management, financial limitation to ensure sustainability, members irresponsiveness, proper leadership and weak ties. Nonetheless, September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative was able to grow, expand and succeed; currently it is categorized as the most organized organization that brought significance progress to the life of community people.



The President of the September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Eufrazio Calderon (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013) narrated that agricultural farming is the main economic activity of San

Pablo community; we gather as a farming group cause of our similar needs and self-initiative, trustfulness, willingness to work collectively as a team. Furthermore, the cooperative member has evolved to increase its farming activities by bridging effort with ungrouped farmers whose produces roots crops (cassava and malangas) inside the community.

The organization main activity consists of farming and marketing agricultural products in form of certified dry seeds. The product is considered certified seeds once it completes the hygiene and phyto-sanitary control requirements established by the Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Technology. The cooperative organization major products are rice, beans and corn seeds which are produced during a period of four months. In San Pablo community due to the climate season, rice and corn are been cultivated over a period of four months, usually between May to June farmers' plant rice and corn; meanwhile beans grows from November to December months. In Table 5.4 shows the Cooperative Potential Products and Farming Period.

Table 5.4 Cooperative Potential Products and Farming Periods

POTENTIAL PRODUCTS		VARIETY	DAYS TO HARVEST	FARMING PERIOD
Rice		Orizica llanos-4	120-125 days	Primera season
Beans		Red	72-75 days	Primera season

Beans		Black	75-80 days	Postrera season
Corn		Yellow	120 -145 days	Primera and Postrera season

Source: Designed by the author with information provided by Calderon (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2013)

Local farmers like Bladimir Cerros (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2013) narrated that “in the community historically crops have been planted manually, horses and cows are part of the farming activities; animals are used to help pick the soils as well as to help transport products from farmers plots to the community and vice-versa”. Simultaneously, Abel Calvajal (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013) Secretary of the Cooperative narrated, that “all the cooperative members have knowledge and vast experience in farming agricultural products, because our parents were farmers and it is the community custom to make boys children accompany their parents in the farming activities”.

Pictures 5.4 Traditional Farming Methods



Source: Pictures provided by Calderon during personal communication

The agricultural cooperative products is manually processed by farmers, families members and some recruited personnel once the crops is harvested it is processed manually without the uses of machines, everything is done in a traditional way, during daytimes the product is exposes to the sun and winds for drying, in order to avoid pests during the storage period it is recommended to dry the rice up to 13% of dryness”.

Picture 5.4.1.1 Drying and Storage Methods



Sources: Pictures provided by Calderon during field visit

All crops are dried, packaged and trade as a certified seeds at the community, region and nationally levels. It is more profitable for the organization to market dry certified seeds instead of primary consumable products”. Farmer’s product is priced based on national market information share among members. Carvajal (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2013) narrated that “We are all from the same the community with same historical background and identity, our effort is to improve our family conditions and develop our community, which is why we are organized in forms of cooperative; we have confidence and trust in information provided by our members”.

In Nicaragua due to climate season agricultural farming activities is conducted by seasons, each region and departments have different climate season and farming period; these climate seasons

are known as Primera, Postrera and Apante. Primera Season in English it means “first” is the main planting season that starts from May to June months, and the harvesting period of this season is from September to October. Whilst, Postrera Season is the second cropping season that starts from November to December and the harvesting period is between March to April months. In the case of Tasba Pri territory rural communities where the soil is humid farmers can only plant during Primera and Postrera season. Apante farming season does not apply for this region.

During the other months of the year, the cooperative organization members focuses on producing secondary products such as roots crops (cassava and malangas), vegetables, fruits, firewood’s and livestock that are marketed in Puerto Cabezas, Suina, Bonanza, Waspam and Rosita districts.

#### 5.4.1 Leadership Influences

Empower followers to achieve a common goal for an organization is a basic characteristic of Leadership. Challenges along the process of development are evident in all organizations. However, solutions depend on leader’s capability to identify, select and properly address organization challenges. In the case of the September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative organization the researcher has identified a high sense of leadership role in the operation process of this organization.

The President of the September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative was elected to lead and represent the organization in two consecutive periods. Previous to leading the September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative, Calderon already had experience in organizing groups in rural communities. During the time he lived in the Pacific western side of Nicaragua where the country major agricultural and livestock organization operates he was able to manage the cooperative Julio Buitrago for nine years. Calderon experiences and knowledge in leading and connecting grassroots organization is

inherited from his father and grandparents. Years later, due to the civil war Calderon migrated to the north autonomous region of Nicaragua and settled there.

The initiative of organizing into a sole group was proposed and presented by Calderon to local farmers of San Pablo community. When the cooperative organization was first established Calderon was elected as President of the cooperative for a period of two years, during his first period of governance he was able to establish contact with outsiders and influence others agricultural, timber and livestock cooperative organizations for joint alliance and to work collectively with the purpose to achieve major goals that bring positive outcomes to the cooperative.

Furthermore, Calderon was appointed to represent the territorial cooperatives unions which are constituted of twelve multi-sectorial cooperatives. During his management period, some of the cooperative union basic goals were achieved, for instance he influenced the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and in return he received farming seeds and materials that were distributed among the twelve-cooperative unions.

Calderon influenced the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) branch located in Bilwi city. As a result of this influence, an office and storage center was established for the cooperative products. At the same time, he establishes contact with the European Union members from whom the cooperative receive office equipment and utensils. The cooperative center was built on a land provided by San Pablo community government to whom Calderon as well influenced.

During the third election period of the cooperative Calderon was reelected again as President. At this time his vision and creativeness has gone beyond grassroots organizations he was able to influence politician from central, municipal and regional government as a result of this

relationship a microcredit programs available for cooperatives members and others organizations belong to Tasba Pri cooperative union. Calderon (in personal communication 2013) narrated that previous to this microfinance loan the cooperative did already access a first loan from other financial institution but unfortunately on their way back to the community the members were assaulted by robbers. The member willingness and motivation was fallen but Calderon manages to inspire the group to continue working for the well-being of everyone's.

On the other side, Calderon coordinated with an agricultural cooperative located in Suina districts, with the purpose to provide training to community members on new technics to grow and process of cocoa, as a mean to diversify the cooperative products in the near future. In the coming year, the cooperative intend to begging farming 92 acres of cocoa and 80 acres of tuber roots (cassava and malangas). Suina agricultural cooperative exports cocoa to England and neighboring countries, September 4<sup>th</sup> cooperative will become a supplier of cocoa products to Suina agricultural cooperative.

#### 5.4.2. Collective Marketing

Collective activities strategy is one of the key success of September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative organization. Within Tasba Pri territory the cooperative has conducted collective activities with different actors such as Community Government, community organizations and with Tasba Pri Cooperative Unions. The types of collective activities are mainly focused on collective marketing of farming products. Below is described collective activities carried out with each actors.

- *Collective Activities with organizations inside San Pablo community*

Within the community others grassroots organization find it difficult to expand out of their environment, cause of lack of experience to negotiate and establish contact with outsiders as well as due to inefficient leaders, limited resources, market opportunities and so on. Most of these organizations is managed by youth, women and church groups whose find it difficult to transport their products to roadside or to urban markets. A mutual agreement was made with these organizations (youth, women's and Catholic Church) to collectively market all products through the cooperative utilizing the cooperative brand and marketing channels. In order to meet market standard the cooperative provided training to groups on farming, drying and value added technics. Some groups such as the Catholic Church whose produce small quantities for sale the cooperative provided seeds and technical assistance, once the crops was harvested the cooperative buy it back from the religious organization; in this manner the church gain a profit and the cooperative production increase. This is a form of collective activities that is called Gana-Gana is English means Win - Win strategy in where all members gain mutual benefits.

- *Collective Marketing Strategy with Multi-sectorial Cooperatives*

As agricultural farming is Tasba Pri communities' main economic activity. According to Fernandez (in personal communication, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2013) an average of 82% of Tasba Pri population practiced some types of farming activities for daily consumption and local trade. Through Calderon influence over Tasba Pri Cooperatives Unions a collective marketing strategy was set up with the aim improve communities' member's conditions. Tasba Pri Cooperative Unions is composes of twelve multi-sectorial cooperatives each ones represent a rural community these include Sahsa, Naranjal, Arenal, Columbus, Wakiwas, Wasimo, Sukawas Arriba, Milagros, Camaron, Greyton, San Pablo and Sukia Abajo. Some of these cooperatives



are less developed than others, the collective marketing initiatives occur because of the similar types of crops produced, similar needs, bonds of kinship, cultural identity and resources identified.

This collective marketing strategy consists of:

- *Collective Marketing:* Group Marketing Strategies (GMS) was created among cooperatives to increase value of goods and market all cooperative products. This was based on members trust and willingness to achieve common goals. The Group Marketing Strategy consists of marketing the twelve cooperatives products collectively. Whenever, there is a shortage of products members of the unions supply in order to satisfy consumer demands.
- *Sharing market information:* Is also part of collective marketing strategy. Cooperative leaders utilize the local FM radio station to broadcast marketing information as well as mobile phones (SMS text message or in voice services). This strategy of using modern communication system has helped farmers to contact traders, transfer price data from one community to another and calls at any time to ask for prices commodities across Tasba Pri territory. During raining season the communication system tends to fall, in cases like this, Calderon uses relatives or friends whose travels outside of the territory, to explore national market trade information, regional and district market information. Once information is gathered, it is shared among members Cooperative Unions; this is to make farmers feel confident when trading their products.
- *Growing same products and improve quality:* For an effective collective marketing all cooperatives members agreed to grow same variety of seeds, in order to ensure uniform quality, color, improve products quantity and to meet market standards.

- *Collective Transportation Support:* Most farmers' plots are located far away from the community center and rural road infrastructure is in poor conditions. Local farmers utilize horses, donkeys, wheelbarrows and also bicycle to transport their goods to their houses. During the crops drying process those cooperatives members whose own trucks and wheelbarrow support disadvantage cooperatives to transport collectively the product from one community to another and from cooperatives center to market places.
- *Sharing information on microfinance programs:* Because of their collective marketing strategy a national microfinance program CRISSOL was made available to the cooperative members. Most members obtained loans to buy inputs and improve their farming activities which in turn increased farmer incomes.
- *Knowledge and experience sharing:* Even do some of the cooperative are less develops than others, some good farming technics was identified, shared and replicated by other's cooperatives members.
- *Arranging meeting with Government institutions:* When the cooperative is going to visit Government institution, previously the information is shared with the twelve cooperatives President with the purpose to get members insight and prepare a common agenda.

Within the region several farming cooperative operates some are fully or partially assisted by NGO's, central Government or private sectors. These cooperative produces different types of crops, timber and livestock products but trade only one or two products collectively with no basic strategy. The number of members varies between 150 up to 300 farmers of different ethnic groups and they utilize high standard machineries to produce goods and also have experience in

crops farming and selling. These others cooperatives conduct collective activities as a whole only outside of their system.

Meanwhile, September 4<sup>th</sup> cooperatives collective activities were unique and different from major cooperatives operating in the region. For instance, the members are from the same community, same ethnic tribe, small groups and the bonds of trust initiated inside the system, later flows among San Pablo organization and furthermore it was expanded outside the community to join and collectively work with similar cooperatives. The setting up of a unique collective marketing strategy, the shifting from producing similar goods to produce same variety of products and the value added mechanism has enhanced and expanded the operation system of the cooperative unions.

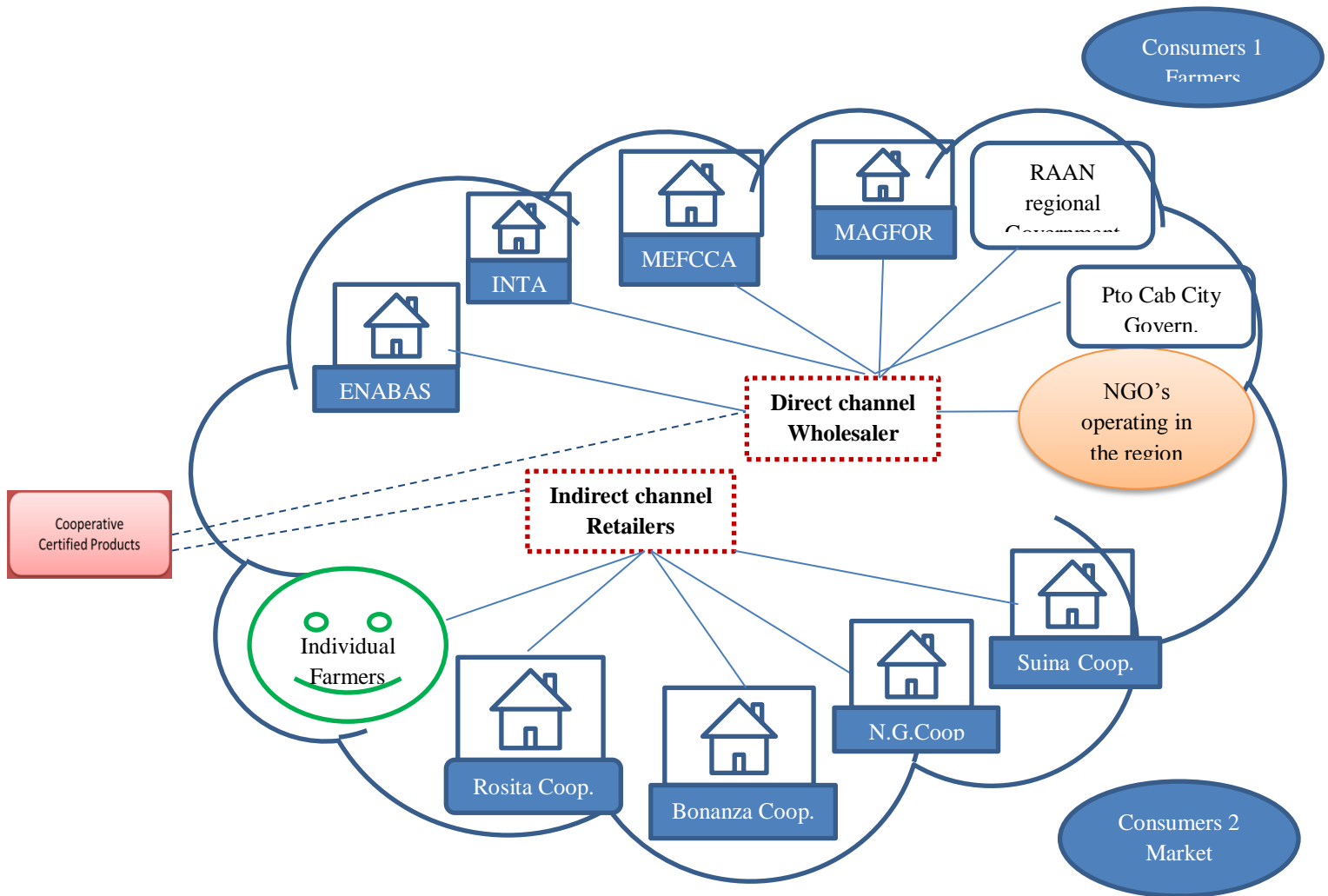
#### 5.4.3 Cooperative Marketing Distribution Channel

The cooperative certified seeds are adaptable to the region climate which makes it a unique and high demanded product as reported by Calderon (in personal communication, on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Within the north autonomous region September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative is the only organization that commercializes agricultural certified seeds. Before the cooperative began to produce certified seeds all public and private entities located in the north autonomous region, as well as communities organizations and NGO's used to buy agricultural farming seeds from the central and western side of the country at higher cost.

The cooperative major buyers are central government institutions, RAAN regional government and municipal governments, agricultural organization, ungrouped farmers from neighbor's communities, regional universities and foreign aid agencies whose implement agricultural projects in rural communities of the north autonomous region. According to Calderon (in

personal communication on September 8th 2013) government institution buy an approximately 65% of the cooperative products, the others 35% are sold to minor consumer such as farmers and agricultural cooperative located in the Puerto Cabezas and neighboring districts.

Figure 5.4.3 Cooperative Marketing Distribution Channel



Source: Designed by the author with information provided by Calderon (in personal communication on September 6<sup>th</sup> 2013)

The marketing channels for secondary products are minimal and it sells directly to merchandizer, restaurants buyers, small entrepreneurs, cooperatives, as well as to intermediaries that comes from the central and western side of the country. The profit generated from

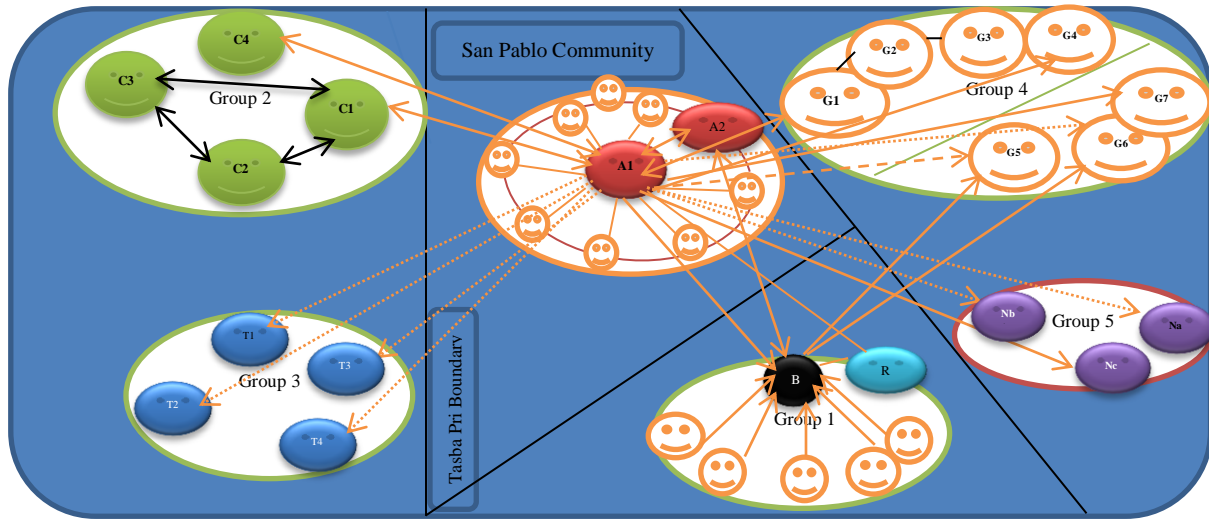
secondary products is less but has helped farmers to cover their basic needs and to daily survive. For instance, Perez (in personal communication, on September 6<sup>th</sup> 2013) stated that during the past Primera cropping season he was able pay his debts and could have saved up to C\$32,000.00 Córdoba's as profit.

#### 5.4.4 Organization Networks with external Stakeholders

In social science there is a similarity between collective activities and social networks both are focused on individual relationship in a social group. Establishing connection outside an organizational internal environment or outside community boarder provides favorable opportunities to members to enhance their internal system. Linking rural people vision with outsiders is the experience explored in this study.

Outside San Pablo community the cooperative organization was able to establish interpersonal networks within and between organizations. The first group was with Tasba Pri territorial Government and the FM radio station of the territory. The second group was with similar farming organizations located in neighbor district of Suina, Bonanza, Rosita and Nueva Guinea. The third groups were with traders. The fourth stakeholders group is with policy makers' institutions like Puerto Cabezas municipal government, RAAN regional government, and central government institution branches located in the north autonomous region and the fifth group is with UNDP, European Union and UNAG. In figure 5.4.4 shows the network connection outside the community.

Figure 5.4.4 Organization Networks with External Stakeholders



Source: designed by the author based on interviews

Table 5.4.4 Networks Description of above Figure

Groups/actor	ID		Stakeholder name	Network Quality
	ID	Colors		
September 4 <sup>th</sup> Cooperative	A1	Red	Calderon, President of September 4 <sup>th</sup> cooperative	
Community Government	A2	Red	Fernandez, Members of the cooperative and President of San Pablo community Government	Strong
Group 1	B	Black	Muller, President of Tasba Pri Territorial Government	Strong
	R	Aqua, accent 5	FM Radio Station	Strong
Group 2 Cooperatives	C1	Green	Multi-sectorial cooperative of Rosita district	Strong
	C2	Green	Multi-sectorial cooperative of Suina district	Weak
	C3	Green	Agricultural cooperative of Bonanza district	Weak
	C4	Green	Agricultural Cooperative of Nueva Guinea district	Strong
Group 3 Traders	T1	Blue	Basic grain and fruit trader	Weak
	T2	Blue	Basic grain trader	Weak
	T3	Blue	Basic grain and livestock trader	Weak
	T4	Blue	Timber trader	Weak
	G1	White/orange circle	Executive Director, ENABAS	Strong

Group 4 Policy levels	G2	White/orange circle	Farming Extensionist INTA	Weak
	G3	White/orange circle	Yamileth Sacasa, delegate MEFCCA	Strong
	G4	White/orange circle	Benjamin Dixon, Minister of MAGFOR	Strong
	G5	White/orange circle	Nytzae Dixon, Farming Department of Puerto Cabezas Municipal Government	Weak
	G6	White/orange circle	Silvio Downs, Regional Director of the Farming Cabinet. Regional Government	Weak
	G7	White/orange circle	Marcos Funes, Director responsible for the Secretariat of Municipal and Territorial Development. Regional Government	Weak
	Group 5 NGO's	Na	Purple	Virgilio Rivera - UNDP officer responsible for RAAN development
Nb		Purple	Sandra, European Union (EU) officer responsible for RAAN development	Weak
Nc		Purple	President of the UNAG (National Union of agricultural and livestock farmers)	Strong

#### Network Analysis of figure 5.4.4

**Group 1- Territorial Government:** Calderon (actor A1) initially began networking with Muller (actor B) and made uses of Actor R (radio station). Communication continued to flows among other members of the organization in where A2 actor plays an important role. B actor approved the cooperative organization existence and recognizes it as an important stakeholder within the territory from whom the cooperative received legal support. Network ties among actors A1, A2 and B became stronger after interacting cause of the similar vision and interest shared which in turn made the cooperative scale up easily and bridges ties with others external actor. R Actor (radio station) also form part of this ties and plays an important role in strengthen communication among these three actors A1, A2 and B.

**Group 2 - Cooperatives:** The social network established with cooperatives President of A1 and C1, C2 and C3 actors, was based on exchange of marketing and agricultural farming information's. In the figure a stronger network ties is shown between A1 and C1 cooperatives presidents, this is because both cooperative produce similar quality of goods and market it to the same institution. Also the connection tie with C4 president is also direct and strong. C4 actor is from the central pacific region of Nicaragua where climate and farming modalities is different. However, after networking together C4 shared with A1 members new farming technics which as a result enhanced the cooperative capacity and made it operate more effectively. By bridging September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative members with outsiders has empowered the organization to achieve major outcome.

**Group 3 - Traders:** Within the region many retailers often visit rural communities to buy farmers products. Calderon (A1 actor) was able to network with four retailers to negotiate cooperative products. These types of retailers often act as intermediaries between producers and consumer this is a common market chain seeing in most of Tasba Pri rural communities, especially in where cooperatives operates. As it is shown in the above network figure the ties among these retailers (T1, T2 and T3) and A1 actors seems to be weak because after trading, it is not sure if these retailers will come back to the community for the next harvesting season. On the other side, network ties between A1 and T4 actors are not permanently because this retailer only purchases timber and the cooperative main product is agricultural seeds. Whenever retailer T4 visits actor A1 Calderon will link this person with other cooperative, this ties can possible disappear because once T4 establish direct contact with timber cooperative the connection with actor A1 can possible can disappear.



***Group 4 - Government Institutions:*** The network ties with Government institution initially began with MAGFOR institution Calderon (A1 actor) directly networked with Dixon (G4 actor) from whom A1 actor received agricultural seeds for apante farming season. Furthermore, this network ties was expanded to G1, G2 and G3 institutions, it is important to note that these others institutions operate under G4 (Ministry of Agricultural and Livestock Farming). A continuous interaction is seeing between A1 and G1 actor, especially during the two main harvesting seasons. Calderon (A1) interacts directly with the executive buyer of G1 to negotiate prices and sell the cooperative products; with this actor a permanent marketing channel was created and CRISSOL microfinance program was made available for the cooperative members. Whilst, with G2 and G3 actors the network ties was carried out in a more diversify ways. A1 and A2 actors develops contacts with directors and technicians from whose cooperative members received training for soils preparations, uses of fertilizers, land and water conservation, methods of draying seeds and value added.

In regard to G5 stakeholders, the network was held by A1 and A2 actors with whom a strong tie was established. A1 actor first established contact with agricultural extension officers after continues dialogues the communication escalated to the city major from who's the cooperative received farming materials and participate in G5 local exhibition fair offering secondary products. Networking with actors G6 and G7 was also held through actors A1 and A2 actors, this interaction seems to be weak, because it was given in few occasions. Network was carried out once with G7 director as a result infrastructure conditions of rural highway roads were rehabilitated this created facilities for the community people to transport their products to the urban city. A higher synergy was made with G6 whose provide training to rural farmer and

annually conduct a regional encounter for agricultural farmers. Calderon cooperative was included to participate and received technical training.

**Group 5 - NGO's:** The network ties of A1 actor with Na and Nb actor are also weak. Calderon (A1) networked once with Sandra (Nb) and Virgilio (Na) actors during their visit to RAAN region from this network ties information of the cooperative was shared with the UNDP and EU, and as a result Calderon was able to get three computers, one printer, ink, papers materials for the cooperative office and finance to construct cooperative storage center. Whilst, the network ties with Nc actor is much stronger. UNAG (Nc –actor) operate nationwide with the aim to associate with smolder cooperative A1 actor has manage to sign mutual cooperation agreement with Nc actor from whom the cooperative members received technical support from the program Peasant to Peasant (in Spanish refers as campesino a campesino). The types of support A1 actor members received consist on technical training to grow cocoa and sorghum seeds. Until date, this social network is still ongoing.

## **5.5 Policies Correlation of Cooperative, Community Government and Territorial Government**

Within a territory there are several norms and regulations introduced by local authorities' and some community organizations. In some rural communities' religious organizations plays a key role in leading most developmental activities. However, in the case of RAAN region with the establishment of the Law 445, rural communities and territorial governments' authorities were legally recognize as the highest authority figure within the community and were granted right to freely administrate, uses, protect and conserve community local resources. Tasba Pri territorial government is the maximum authority of this territory and it's responsible to seek the development of its 28 rural communities. Each rural community has an internal community

government elected by community citizens. According to Waldo Muller (in personal communication, on September 14<sup>th</sup> 2013) President of Tasba Pri territorial Government has narrated that, “there has been good coordination and a fluid communication between Tasba Pri territorial government, community government and all village organizations, this has been one of the key factor to the success of Tasba Pri territory development”.

In regard, to San Pablo community government there has been a flow of coordination with the territorial government. Muller continues narrating that both local authorities does not centralize villages organization development, on the contrary major support is placed to these local organizations because there are closer to local people, can easily promote collective decision making over local resources and there a more capable to understand and respond to community people priorities.

Tasba Pri territorial government policy encompasses a broader vision and goals to achieve. Its policy is focused on the entire territory development such as infrastructure, water and sanitation, mining, health, education, cultural, environmental and agricultural farming. While, grassroots organization goals are more likely to focus on a particular interest of a small group. In the case of September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative, this organization focuses on agricultural farming activities its vision and mission is relevant to the territorial government and community government policy (hearing from Muller, in personal communication on September 14<sup>th</sup> 2013).

Agricultural farming is San Pablo community main economic activity; it is defined as the community government main priority. Fernandez (in personal communication, on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013) President of the community government stated that the cooperative policy and the community government policy are deeply inter-related and inter-linked. Simultaneously,

Calderon President of the cooperative, explained that when the cooperative was established, the objectives were designed based on the needs of the community people, by considering that once the cooperative objectives was achieved agricultural productions will increase in the community, more employment opportunities, access to market, incomes will increase, and community local government will also benefit”.

The collective activities of the community and the agricultural cooperative has facilitated small entrepreneurs to emerges and operate in the community. Small entrepreneurs get access to more credits as a solidarity group, provide assistance to religious organizations, support elderly groups inside the community, and therefore, contribute to the economic and capacity development of San Pablo rural community.

The territorial government does not implement project directly rather than accompany and monitor the implementation of communities’ projects. Muller’s consider that community organizing into groups has made local citizens share a common interest, acquire new experiences and develop new knowledge which in turn changes citizen’s life and therefore the entire community. Also, he considers that September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative is a model of sustainable community development, through which people can vision the high level of commitment, affection for their town and trust identified in members behavior. A well connected ties between local citizens and authorizes greatly empower community citizens and ensure long term development.

## 5.6 Community Social Changes

From the community establishment until date individuals, groups and organizations has experienced different types of social changes. When the cooperative was formally established farmers to farmers started to interact more frequently, communication and confidence increased and information was shared on how things can be done differently. Through cooperative interaction with the territorial government citizens of the region begins to know the cooperative activities and started to visit the community to buy farming seeds. The local FM radio station also contributed in broadcasting community activities and makes the cooperative an important member of the community. Table 5.6 demonstrates some of the basic changes brought to the community as a result of the cooperative ability.

Table 5.6 List of Community Social Changes

BEFORE  Cooperative establishment	AFTER  Cooperative establishment
<i>Uses of candles</i>	<i>Community have electricity</i>
<i>No TV channel</i>	<i>Houses have satellite dish for TV channel.</i>
<i>No mobile phones</i>	<i>All household have cellphones</i>
<i>Houses was made of plastic and timber</i>	<i>Farmers houses infrastructure has improved</i>
<i>Horses, donkey and bicycle was used as the main transportation</i>	<i>People does not uses bicycle anymore it was replaced with motorcycle</i>

<i>No cars</i>	<i>Some farmers have cars</i>
<i>Only elementary schooling was given</i>	<i>Farmers send their children to urban city for higher education schooling (high school)</i>
<i>No Employment opportunities</i>	<i>Employment opportunities increased for community people</i>
<i>Farmers travel to the western side of the country to buy seeds</i>	<i>Ungrouped farmers can easily purchase seeds inside the community</i>
<i>No micro finance accessibility</i>	<i>Microcredit organization was made available to farmers</i>
<i>No entrepreneurs</i>	<i>Small entrepreneurs was developed</i>
<i>Crops were produced only for daily consumption</i>	<i>Higher productivity and incomes generations</i>
<i>High rural migration</i>	<i>Rural migration reduced</i>
<i>No market accessibility</i>	<i>Market channel was created</i>

Source: Designed by the author with information provided by Calderon and Fernandez (in personal communication on September 14<sup>th</sup> 2013)

Picture 5.6 Farmers types of houses before and after production increased



Photo 1



Photo 2

Note. Source: photos taken by the author

Within the community there are still a few old houses that belong to old members of the community. In picture number 1, it is shown the type of houses that citizens had before increasing farming production. Although some farmers have two houses, the old traditional houses and the new ones recently constructed.

#### 5.6.1 Citizens' experience non-members of the Cooperative

The cooperative has brought benefit to other households inside the community. For instance, citizens like Ms. Paulina Aguilar, owners of a small basic grain shop, and Ms. Bernabe Suazo, owner of a cheese and other products shop, both are individual workers who have agreed that cooperative organization has brought life to the community, their land became more active, more outside people visit the community, local shops' sales increased (hearing from Aguilar and Suazo, on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2013 by Waters Ivone).

Picture 5.6.1 Mrs Suazo selling cheese in her little shop



Source: Foto taken by the author during field visit September 2013

On the other side, another community citizen Lorenza Amador (in personal communication on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2013) member of the Catholic Church organization narrated that “thanks to the September 4<sup>th</sup> Cooperative organization she has employed during harvest season and with part of the income generated, she was able to get involved into a micro lending scheme, in indigenous language it refers as PANA LAKA. The micro lending scheme consists of a small group of females gather together to put a sum of money between members that is given to a selected member and monthly be rotated. The micro lending scheme is based on trust and cooperation of its members, it is practical, reasonable and no interest rate is charged.

### **5.7 Brief Summary**

Despite the civil war and natural disaster affected and impoverished Tasba Pri rural communities, San Pablo communities citizen was able to overcome all social, economic and political challenges and improved their quality of life. Community organizing as groups, made farmers gain confidence and tackle together the root causes of their vulnerability. The official support provided by public institutions and foreign aid post disaster programs reduced hunger and



increased farming productions temporally. These programs were not addressed to where it was most needed cause in the short-term community farmers were still struggling to survive. It has shown that collectively actions develop confidence and enhance capacity; these types of efforts demonstrate group's talents and are more adaptable to rural community culture and environment.

The active role of leadership in building members capacity made the organization gain a formal position inside the community and gradually receives support from external stakeholders. Strengthening internal ties before scaling outside the system was an effective strategy to communicate and network with outsiders. Through the network connection farmers was able to produce new products, acquire value added information, access microfinance programs and establish permanent market connections. This type of marketing strategy result to be easy and manageable for farmers.

With the operation of the cooperative San Pablo community capacity was upgraded, farmers and local authorities shared a common goal, the number of endogenous initiatives introduced by non-members of the cooperative was expanded, community economy was boosted, rural migration reduced, and citizen's quality of life improved. Until date, San Pablo community still has rural characteristics but its road infrastructure, housing, telecommunication and mobilization facilities were gradually improved. The community becomes more resilient and its social, environmental, political and economic activities acquired a higher value. The next chapter provides a general conclusion of the research and suggestion for further studies.

### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general summary of the research outcomes and suggest possible areas for further studies related to grassroots activities and community capacity. As the researcher has been working in rural development field from a policy level, after coming to Japan I wanted to explore alternative development options. It is with this purpose I have decided to explore in details community organizing initiatives where rural people become the protagonist and leader of their own development and the various ways these collective efforts contribute to community capacity development.

The study provides a general definition of terms organizations and community also it describe the type of development approaches stakeholders introduce to improve economic growth and develop community capacity. The experience of a grassroots organization was described to demonstrate the capability of rural people to bring about endogenous development initiatives as an alternative development approaches to scale-up out of poverty and improve their quality of life in a more realistic and practical manner. The following section provides a general summary.

### 6.2 Summary of Analysis

Nicaragua as many others developing nations are still struggling to eradicate poverty, improve economic growth and develop community capacity. The country has experience several internal and external political confrontations which have resulted into ten years of civil war and collapse of national economy. However, despite of the social, economic and political challenges Nicaragua was able to achieve significant progress in growth and development. The national

poverty rate fall from 48.3% in 2005 to 42.5% in 2009, annual GDP increased from 3.2 to 5.6% (World Bank 2010) and community capacity has developed substantially in many rural areas.

Reforming national system from centralize to decentralize administrative system is an alternative to developed community and reduce poverty; this approach has placed individuals, organizations and institutions capacity as the principal tools to tackle their vulnerability. Until date, a large number of programs have been introduced to develop institutional and community capacity and has improved the living condition of rural people.

Community capacity is a key factor to achieve development. In fact, the central government rural development strategy is effective and needed to develop rural communities but the study has found out the is not sufficient to build community capacity for self-development and to ensure sustainability, an alternative approach is needed to change the paternalistic system of dependence. For an effective community capacity development, it is important to recognize and value rural people capacity and contribute to enhance the existing capabilities rural people already possessed. Within the community level there are a multitude of endogenous initiatives with potential to upgrade community member's capacity which can be more realistic and practical to ensure a longer term development.

It is evident that grassroots organization plays an important role bridging society together, build social values and empower community capacity. As organization is down at the grassroots level these are more capable to understand community lifestyle, culture, holistic environment and address the proper needs of the people. In Chapter five was described a practical case study of a grassroots organization ability and its contribution to community transformation. September 4<sup>th</sup> agricultural cooperative is a demonstration of San Pablo community capacity to organize, set

objectives, access resources through group engagements which has increased farming activities in San Pablo community, strengthen others disadvantage organizations, increase services providers activities, promoted community assets and reduced the rural migration.

As time changes the community social environment is continuously changing especially when its policy structure is ungraded. San Pablo community people had achieved a better quality of life through internal collective actions, networking with external actors and having a visionary leader whom was able to transform the organization dreams into result. The community social, political, environmental and economic activities were improved, community was transformed and members achieved a better well-being; these were linked to several internal and external factors. I fully agreed with Miyoshi & Stenning view on community capacity development, when stated that community capacity is transformed through the efforts of peoples and strengthening capacity is referred to as community capacity development.

### 6.3 Suggestion for Further studies

*The first*, suggestion would be for policy makers to revise the current community development approaches. In fact, it is needed to restructure the present approach or adopt an alternative development approach to enhance decentralization system, which is quite operative but not enough to ensure dynamic and long-term community development. Continue introducing large and expensive rural development programs designed by outsiders is continue ignoring and devaluating rural people existing ability which in short term generate more dependency and so make rural people become more vulnerable than before. A dynamic synergy of outsider and insider's approaches can also help create a more linear equilibrium and sustainable rural development.

*Second*, more research is needed on community capacity from rural people perspective this can create a more feasible approach that can compare with government and NGO's outcomes. Within Tasba Pri rural community there are several types of grassroots organizations (religious, women's, youth, cultural, education, etc.) a proper focus on each types can also develop community capacity; it would be interesting to explore more successful case studies that can be replicated to other's rural communities.

*Third*, community culture is a valuable source of community development. I strongly suggest more studies on community culture and environment because we cannot have proper community development outside the context of its realistic environment and rich culture.

*Fourth*, More studies is needed on rural depopulation for community development. Within RAAN region many authentic communities rich in cultural diversity are declining cause of the high rural-urban migration.

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