TITLE

The "Let The People Speak" model: An analysis of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches' Development Education Approach (1994 – 2004)

By

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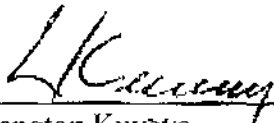
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Date: 11 September 2007

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my supervisor Professor Dr Steve de Gruchy who patiently and eagerly walked with me from the beginning to the completion of this thesis. I also dedicate this thesis to my wife Fiona, my daughter Nyasha Lynn and my son Lawrence Kudakwashe for they sacrificed their time and financial gains in support of the development of this thesis.
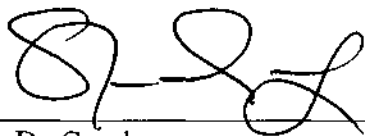
DECLARATION

This is to declare that this dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my own original work.

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Langton Kuveya   Date: 23 August 2007

As supervisor, I agree to the submission of the thesis

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Prof S. De Gruchy   Date   13 -5- 08

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Dr	Doctor
DFID	Department For International Development
Ed	Edition
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
Rev	Reverend
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
UK	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
W.V.T	World Vision Tanzania
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches

ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns the "Let the People Speak" approach to development of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). It evaluates the extent to which this approach can be considered to be legitimate Christian approach to development, that takes seriously the contemporary concerns of development theory and practice. In doing this, the thesis first lays down a theological framework for development drawn from the theologians Hans Kung, Jurgen Moltmann, Jose Miguez Bonino, and Desmond Tutu, and the educationalist Paulo Freire. This framework argues that human dignity and humanization should be the goal of Christian engagement in social transformation and development, and that this is achieved by paying attention to three themes: the agency of the poor, their assets, and an appreciative approach by outsiders.

The "Let the People Speak" approach to development is then introduced and examined in some detail. It was noted that the top-down approach that the ZCC first applied failed to achieve sustainable development because it did not promote human dignity and humanization through the promotion of the agency and assets of the poor and the marginalized through an appreciative approach. There were some positive changes in the ZCC's development work after the application of the, 'Let The People Speak' approach. In most of the areas where the 'Let The People Speak' approach was introduced human dignity and humanization were promoted. The 'Let The People Speak' approach encouraged churches and communities to be the agents of their development. Churches and community people were also encouraged to utilize their assets in order for them to achieve sustainable development. The church and community people started initiating their development because the 'Let The People Speak' approach gave them space to speak out their minds freely. It was noted that there are a lot of positive changes in people's lives in some churches and communities where the 'Let The People Speak' approach was applied.

From the analysis of the 'Let The People Speak' approach of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, it is clear that when people are given the opportunity to speak, express themselves and participate freely on issues that concern their lives they start to contribute meaningfully and positively towards their development. When people feel that they are accepted and are recognized as important human beings they become agents of their development and they become willing to utilize their assets towards achieving sustainable livelihoods in order for them to improve their standard of living. It was found that the 'Let The People Speak' approach promotes the agency and assets of the poor through an appreciative approach. The thesis argues that churches, NGOs, the government and other organizations that deal with development work are encouraged to apply the 'Let The People Speak' approach in order to achieve sustainable livelihoods and permanent development through the promotion of human dignity and humanization.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to the thesis

The thesis concerns an analysis of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches' (ZCC) development education approach, called the 'Let The People Speak' model. Eunah Ndlovu in an essay on the 'Let The People Speak' philosophy points out that after the War of Liberation in Zimbabwe came to an end in 1979 the government and churches in Zimbabwe worked tirelessly to develop Zimbabweans who had been colonized for more than a century. The goal was to make people self reliant. They secured funds and equipment from abroad and organized people to do projects which would make a difference[1]. However, she notes that these projects were not initiated by the people themselves, and as a result many of them were not successful.[2] The Training Department of the ZCC was established in 1984. This department is responsible for Christian Education and Training. It serves churches and communities in the context of poverty and underdevelopment in Zimbabwe. At the start, the education and training programmes were designed by the training officers in their offices. Participants were then invited to come and participate in the designed programmes. The choice of courses and the contents of those courses were the responsibilities of the programme officers. The participants were taught what the training officers thought was suitable for the learners. This system meant that the learners were denied participation in designing the learning and training programmes. The participants were treated like people who knew nothing about development.

It was in opposition to this approach that the ZCC established the 'Let The People Speak' model in 1992. This philosophy arose from the reflection that there are some people who think, choose, plan and do things for others. Ndlovu points out that these are people and nations who have power, wealth, education and many other resources.[3] The leadership at the time wanted to explore the idea that the poor and the marginalized people should be given the opportunity to express their opinions and feelings about their lives.

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[1] Eunah Ndlovu, "Let The People Speak: Zimbabwean perspectives on development" in Steve de Gruchy(ed) *Changing Frontiers*: *The Mission Story of the UCCSA* (Gaborone: Pula Press 1999) 268
[2] Eunah Ndlovu, "Let The People Speak" 268
[3] Eunah Ndlovu, "Let The People Speak" 268

I was then employed by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches as a Development Education officer responsible for putting the 'Let The People Speak' model to test. In the period 1994-2004, I was therefore intimately involved in the development of the model.

At the end of this period I began my post graduate studies at University of KwaZulu-Natal(UKZN), and over the two years gained much insight into key concerns in development. Theologically I have come to see that human dignity or humanization lies at the heart of development. Church based development must respect the dignity of the poor, and endeavour to create social conditions which are humanizing.

At the same time, the very process of reaching that goal must itself be humanizing. To take this seriously, and drawing on a whole range of contemporary development theory which will be explored in the thesis, Steve de Gruchy has argued that three fundamental themes in the field of theology and development must receive attention namely, (i) agency, (ii) assets, and (iii) appreciation. The question of 'agency' concerns the role that the poor play in shaping their own development agenda; the question of 'assets' concerns the attentiveness given to the skills, resources, different kinds of 'capital' and social networks that are 'owned' and therefore controlled by the poor and the question of 'appreciation' concerns the dialogical interaction between outsiders with skills, money and wider theoretical insight, and the agency and assets of the poor.[4]

These three themes have then formed the basis for a theoretical reflection upon the work undertaken by the ZCC under the banner of 'Let The People Speak'. It is not a formal evaluation of the programme, but a chance to examine in greater depth some of the key issues that had emerged. Given this, the research question at the heart of the thesis is therefore:

> To what extent does the 'Let The People Speak' model promote humanization through an appreciative approach to development that affirms the agency and assets of the poor?

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[4] Steve de Gruchy, "Of Agency, assets and appreciation: *Seeking some commonalities between theology and development*" in *the Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Vol 117,(November 2003).

Responding to this question involved a dialogue between theology and development theory and the practice of the ZCC:

- To test the theory in the light of the practice of the ZCC; and
- To test the practice of the ZCC in the light of the theory.

In this way the research of this thesis seeks to gain a deeper theoretical understanding of issues in church-based development which may be able to be applied in the ZCC and elsewhere. Thus, the broader issue to be investigated in the thesis is to do with the very heart of theology and development – namely, what is it that the churches can offer to the poor and marginalized? And how to do this in a way that does not reproduce the very power dynamics that make people poor and marginalized in the first place?

1.2. **Research process**.

As noted, the research was based on the emerging consensus that attention to 'agency' assets and appreciation' (as articulated above) constitutes the heart of good church-based development practice. In the light of this, the research involved:

- An empirical study using and analyzing existing data. (to unpack the work of the ZCC through the Let The People Speak approach), and
- A conceptual analysis and theory building, as it reflected on what could be learnt from the case be learnt from the case study.

Throughout, the research sought to answer some key questions:

- What are the theorists saying about agency, assets and appreciation
- How much of this theory can be affirmed theologically, and therefore by the churches?
- What is the Let The People Speak approach of development? When did it start? Why? What are its components? What has it achieved so far?
- To what extent does the Let The People Speak approach meet the triple concerns of agency, assets and appreciation?
- What can we learn from this for the Zimbabwe Council of Churches?
- What can we learn from this case study for the wider concerns of theology and development?

For the empirical part of the research covering the period 1994-2004, information was found in the archives of the ZCC – where there exists a comprehensive set of quarterly and annual reports, course reports, evaluation reports and participants' reports of various kinds that set out the establishment and progress of the Let The People Speak approach. Also there are a range of project evaluations undertaken by the ZCC for itself and for donor agencies.

No field work was undertaken for this thesis, although there were informal discussions with a range of key informants to clarify issues that emerge in the reports. The researcher's own participation in and experience of the Let the People Speak campaign also helped to shape the research.

In summary then, this thesis is not a formal evaluation of the "Let The People Speak" model but is an analysis of the "Let The People Speak" model which tries to find out to what extent the model promotes human dignity and humanization.

1.3. **Overview of the thesis**

In writing up and presenting this research the thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter one introduces the thesis and provides an overview of the research undertaken and signals the key issues that emerged. It also provides some brief background to the research context. Chapter two, 'Humanization: promoting Agency, Assets and Appreciation', introduces the fundamental theoretical framework in two sections. Firstly it argues that human dignity and humanization stand at the heart of the theological contribution to development. Then it argues that if we are to take humanization seriously, we must promote the agency and assets of the poor through an appreciative approach.

Chapter three, 'The 'Let The People Speak' approach of the ZCC', is the heart of the empirical research as it introduces the reader to the emergence of the ZCC's approach, covering its basic history, roll-out, key success and failures as noted in the archival material. As noted above, no new project evaluation of the Let The People Speak approach is undertaken.

Chapter four, 'Analysis of the Let The People Speak Model', is broken into three sections which examine the three themes, agency, assets and appreciation in a dialogue between the

theory and what I identified in the work of the ZCC. The lessons and insights that the ZCC(and by implication other such programmes) may want to learn, are clearly noted.

The final chapter, chapter five, is titled 'Towards humanization'. As noted in chapter two, human dignity and humanization are at the heart of the theological contribution to development – and so this chapter returns to this theological issue and draws out what the lessons learnt from the ZCC's contributions to the broader work of theology and development either through an affirmation of the themes of agency, assets and appreciation; or through a critique and re-formulation.

1.4. **Context of the thesis**

This thesis concerns the work of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches in development. Before we proceed too far, we need to locate the research within this context.

1.4.1. **Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe occupies 390,750 square kilometers in South Central Africa between the Limpopo and the Zambezi rivers. It shares its common borders with Zambia on the North and North West, South Africa on the South, Mozambique on the East and Botswana on the South West. Zimbabwe has a dual economy. On one hand it has a fairly advanced and sophisticated modern commercial industrial and agricultural sector and on the other hand a rural subsistence sector which is one of the most underdeveloped in the world.

Zimbabwe became independent in 1980. During the past decades the country went through the war of liberation, which caused destabilization in the region especially amongst its neighbours, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia. Zimbabwe also experienced long spells of drought. The situation of poverty in the country was worsened by the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and the way in which the government responded to this, both of which are responsible for mass unemployment, the high cost of living due to the removal of subsidies from basic food commodities, the deterioration of Health and Education systems and a general increase in poverty especially affecting women and children.

Since this thesis began, the situation in Zimbabwe has begun to deteriorate at a rapid rate. Owing to the time lag on the research and writing, it is important to note that this thesis

reflects a period prior to the political crisis that has engulfed the country since the start of 2007.

1.4.2 **The Zimbabwe Council Of Churches, and its involvement in development work**.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches was formed by the heads of Christian denominations in Zimbabwe in 1964. Its principal goal was 'Total Salvation for all and Total Elimination of Poverty' through the provision of services to the churches and communities.[5] It was also formed with the aim of bringing together the churches and Christian organizations for joint action, witness and coordination, particularly to adopt a united and common response to political and socio-economic problems. Its aims, objectives and current structure are clearly laid out in its constitution.[6]

The Council comprises 24 Christian denominations, including the Anglican, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, Congregational, Methodist and Baptist churches and a number of small independent denominations. The Roman Catholic Church, and Assemblies of God are observers, and there are 10 associate members including the YMCA, YWCA and United Theological College. It also has a service arm known as 'Christian Care'.[7]

The ZCC has three departments, these are: (1) The General Secretariat Department, which deals with the issues of administration, finance, staff welfare, recruitment, staff discipline, and many other issues that are related to the ZCC work as a whole;[8] (2) the Church In Society Department, which deals with the issues of evangelism, women and youth issues, voter education, economic literacy, and human rights issues;[9] and (3) the Training Department, which was established in 1984, and which is responsible for training and education programmes.

The Training Department is responsible for the issues of leadership development training, sustainable development, learning for transformation, development education (including the 'Let The People Speak Model and other approaches in development), skills training, capacity building, entrepreneurship development, project planning and project management,

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[5] Zimbabwe Council of Churches *1992 Handbook* (College Press 1992) pg 7
[6] Zimbabwe Council of Churches *1992 Handbook* pg 9
[7] Zimbabwe Council of Churches *1992 Handbook* pg 13
[8] Amended Constitution of the ZCC, Vision, Mission & Objectives (Madon Printers 1984) pg 12
[9] Revised ZCC Handbook, *'Total Salvation for all and Total Elimination of Poverty* (Madon Printers 1984) 13

HIV/AIDS issues, and gender and development. The Training Department has a staff complement of eight programme officers, six administration staff and one department Director.[10]

The ZCC plays a key role in the current situation in Zimbabwe today. However, as we noted above, the focus of this thesis concerns the period 2000 – 2005, and so we are not covering the most recent work in responding to the current political crisis.

1.5. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to the thesis by drawing attention to the key research questions that are being explored, and the research method that has been employed. Furthermore, the basic context of the research in Zimbabwe and in the Zimbabwe Council of Churches has been noted.

We turn now to lay down the theoretical framework for the analysis in chapter two.

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[10] Revised ZCC Handbook, The ZCC structures and responsibilities (Madon Printers 1984) pg 15

CHAPTER 2:

HUMANIZATION: PROMOTING AGENCY, ASSETS AND APPRECIATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the fundamental theoretical framework for the thesis in three basic sections. Firstly it will argue that human dignity and humanization stand at the heart of the Christian focus for development. Then it will draw on the ideas of Paulo Freire to argue that the struggle for freedom and development is a struggle against dehumanization. Finally it will argue that if we are to take humanization seriously we must promote the agency and assets of the poor through an appreciative approach. In this way this chapter will provide us with a framework from which to engage the 'Let the People Speak' approach of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches.

1.1 HUMANIZATION: A CHRISTIAN FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT.

Christianity has contributed much to the development of people in Southern Africa through such things as schools, hospitals, and agricultural projects. However, this is not the most important contribution of the Gospel to development. My argument in this thesis is that the most important contribution of Christianity to development is a focus on human dignity and humanization. Development, theologically understood, is not in the first place to be understood in terms of infrastructure, money, or skills; but in terms of people being able to have greater dignity as human beings. Thus the process of humanization is very significant, and needs to be at the heart of any Christian approach to development.

To take forward this argument we will look at the thinking of four important Christian theologians, namely, Hans Küng (a Roman Catholic in Europe), Jürgen Moltmann (a Protestant in Europe), Jose Miguez Bonino (an Argentinean Protestant Liberation Theologian), and Desmond Tutu (a South African Anglican Archbishop). All four have played an important role in ecumenical discussions in the past decades.

1.1.1. Hans Küng: Being A Christian as being radically human

The Roman Catholic theologian, Hans Küng in his book, *On Being a Christian* argues that humanization is central to the Christian message. He argues that the Christian factor must be made effective, not at the expense of the human beings but for the benefit of the human beings. In order to promote human dignity and humanization Küng ,points out that Christian strategies should be focused on the imperishable dignity and freedom of people as people and should seek to guarantee the human rights or democratic liberties involved in being a person.[11]

Kung says, "Christians are challenged to create an environment where people can claim their personal freedom, free from compulsion by state or party, to aim at suitable goals, at a life worth living, at values, norms and ideals to pursue their self-realisation and complete humanization."[12]   Küng points out that consciously and unconsciously a person has an elementary need of a basic spiritual bond, a bond with a meaning and truth, and certainly with values and norms. Kung challenges Christians to make sure that this need is satisfied because if it were not satisfied the church would lose its credibility. Kung further says, "The truth/meaning, values, ideals and norms be conveyed in a free system, without the individual having to sacrifice freedom of thought, speech and action".[13]

Küng argues that the churches should create a Christian environment in which human life is aided in its identity, meaningfulness, and values in which a person gains a meaningful and fruitful existence.[14] He further argues that churches should preach the gospel that should create the environment where people should realize not simply a principle or a universal norm, but themselves in all their dimensions. In this way humanization would be realized.[15] In supporting the importance of humanization, Küng says, "The whole Christian message should focus not merely on certain decisions, enterprises, motivations or dispositions, but on a wholly new approach to life."[16]

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[11] Hans Kung *On Being a Christian* (Glasgow: Fount Paperbacks 1978) 531
[12] Kung, *On Being a Christian,* 532
[13] Kung, *On Being a Christian,* 532
[14] Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 532
[15] Kung, *On Being a Christian,* 532
[16] Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 532

Küng further says, "As long as Christians today fail to address unjust structures and make convincing clarity on humanization the church would lose its credibility."[17] Churches should preach against all forms of injustice in order to promote humanization.

Having shown the importance of humanization from the perspective of the Gospel, Küng goes on to deal with some of the implications of this for society. He emphatically stresses the importance of commitment to liberation in order to achieve humanization. Looking at the social, political, cultural and religious situation in the world even as long ago as 1978, he argues that there are some countries that are still under the sign of underdevelopment which makes it impossible for them not only to enjoy material goods, but also to fulfill themselves. Kung says, "Despite all the efforts that are made the underdeveloped countries are faced with hunger and poverty, massive diseases and infant mortality, illiteracy and marginalization, profound inequalities of income and tensions between the social classes, outbreaks of violence and political disorders, and scanty participation of the people in the management of the issues that concern their lives".[18]

In Zimbabwe there are also signs of underdevelopment, such as hunger and poverty, diseases, marginalization, inequalities of income, tensions between the social classes, political disorders and inadequate participation of the people in the management of the issues that concern their lives. These are the challenges that the churches in Zimbabwe are faced with. The churches in Zimbabwe through the Zimbabwe Council of Churches are applying the "Let The People Speak' approach in order for them to address the above mentioned problems.

In the face of such structural inhumanity and violence described by South American Christians as a state of collective sin and as a scandal crying to heaven, Küng says, "Christians and the churches cannot and may not be silent, and they cannot ignore their share of responsibility and remain inactive"[19]. From what Kung is saying, Churches in Zimbabwe are challenged to register their prophetic voice and jointly oppose all sorts of economic, cultural or political oppression. Kung is urging churches to be committed to the liberation of people who are destroyed as human beings and of those who are denied the opportunity to participate on issues that concern their lives.

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[17] Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 532
[18] Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 532
[19] Küng, *On Being a Christian*, 532

Küng further says, "There should be a commitment to liberation so that an underdeveloped people may obtain basic commodities such as food, shelter and clean water and basic culture and the underprivileged full equality before the law, so that the unbalanced international division of labour, the constantly new sources of dependence of the underdeveloped peoples on the industrial nations are removed and the unjust economic conditions internally and externally abolished"[20]. In this way, the goal of humanization can be achieved.

1.1.2. Jürgen Moltmann: Humans as the *Imago Dei*

The German Protestant theologian, Jurgen Moltmann in his book, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* deals with the age old question of the *Imago Dei*, and what this means for human beings. Moltmann says, "From ancient time, the fundamental concept of theological anthropology has been *Imago Dei*, which means that human beings have been created to be God's image on earth, and this means that anthropology and theology are always mutually related"[21].

Moltmann tells Christians that God the creator is present in a community of human beings where men and women, boys and girls are living together.

Humanization cannot take place where there is only one individual. Moltmann stresses the importance of a community where humanization can take place. He argues that from the very outset human beings are social beings. Moltmann further says, "Likeness to God cannot be lived in isolation, but can only be lived in fellowship with other people".[22] In supporting the concept of humanization, Moltmann shows that the creation of human beings by God contains a democratization of royal theology.

Moltmann says, "Historically speaking the biblical story of the creation of human beings has a democratizing effect throughout the whole of Jewish and Christian political history because as far as the subsequent charge to rule over the earth is concerned, there is no distinction at all

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[20] Kung, On Being a Christian, 532
[21] Moltman Jurgen. *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (London SCM 1985) 219-220
[22] Moltman. *God in Creation*, 220

between human beings, there is only equality"[23]. According to Moltman Christians should preach the gospel of equality in order to promote humanization.

Moltman urges Christians to preach the gospel of equality in order to promote equal opportunity to participate fully on issues that concern people's lives. This will enable people to have equal opportunity to economy, politics, culture, education, health and to all issues that concern their lives.

To strengthen the promotion of humanization, Moltman argues that since human beings are created in the image of God, they represent God on earth and that God is ever present in the people that He created. Wherever there are people God is also found there. Moltmann says, "In promoting humanization among communities, societies and nations, all people should know that their lordship on earth is the lordship exercised by a tenant on behalf of God."[24] Moltmann argues that since human beings are created in the image of God they are God's represeantatives and stewards on earth to whom God transfers the preservation and continuation of the earthly side of creation. Moltmann says, "Human beings exercise divinely legitimated rule, and in the context of creation that, means, only as whole human beings, only as equal human beings and only in the community of human beings, not at the price of dividing the human person into spirit and body, not at the price of dividing human beings into rule and ruled, not at the price of dividing mankind into different classes."[25]

Moltmann is challenging churches to remember that in doing development work, they should know that they are doing it on behalf of the Creator because they are representing God on earth.

1.1.3   Jose Miguez Bonino:,   Room to be People

The Argentinean Protestant Liberation theologian, Jose Miguez Bonino in his book, *Room to be People*, makes a very strong argument for the centrality of human dignity and humanization in the Christian message.

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[23] Moltman. *God in Creation*: 220
[24] Moltman. *God in Creation*: 220
[25] Moltman. *God in Creation*: 220

He argues that many people think that in order to honour God people have to deprive themselves of their humanity, of those values which make their life richer, more pleasant, fuller, more human, love, joy culture, communion and friendship. Miguez Bonino says, "Some religions often literally sacrifice people to God in the form of bloody human sacrifices".[26] Miguez Bonino is challenging Christians to know that Jesus Christ was against such practices because those practices are far from what the Bible really teaches about God.

In the bible it is written that this was one of the great struggles Jesus had with those who made religion an end in itself and human beings its slave. Miguez Bonino gives an example where God instituted a day of rest, for people to pause in their work and enjoy the contemplation of the world, the community of the family, the glory and communion with God Himself. Miguez Bonino further argues that instead of people enjoying this rest, the rest had become a prison for many, for example they could not care for the sick people, or travel, or cut an ear of wheat or prepare food or eat any grain. Miguez Bonino says "It was God's day and therefore a day denied to people".[27]

Miguez Bonino provides a lot of examples of religions that misinterpreted sacrifices to God; and he argues that even nowadays there are religions or denominations that are following similar practices. For example some of today's religions or denominations do not assist sick people on Sabbath days or Sundays because they believe that they should not do or eat anything on those days because they are holy days. For example, these religions or Christian denominations do not take sick people to hospitals or give food to their family members or strangers on Sabbath days or Sundays because these days are holy days.

As a result of such practices, it would be very difficult to promote humanization. Miguez Bonino in his book, argues that Jesus responded indignantly to such practices saying, "You have things, backwards, the day of rest was made for man and not the reverse, it was made for a man to have good health, joy and fullness to life" (Mark 2:27) Miguez Bonino says, "According to the true faith, to honour God means to give freedom, to enrich life and to honour human beings. That is the will of God".[28]

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[26] Jose Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) 30
[27] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 37
[28] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 37

Elsewhere in the book, Miguez Bonino says, "Some people say that they don't believe in God because He is an instrument of the exploitation and subjugation of humankind"[29]. He gives an example of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, who told of the dialogues he often had with the poor peasants of his country.

The conversations centred around the peasants' situation; their misery, the fact that they could not own the land which they worked nor even the fruits of that land and the impossibility of meeting their minimal needs. These poor peasants came to the conclusion that things were that way because they had always been that way. Miguez Bonino says, "A person was a peasant because the parents had been peasants, and the grandparents, and the grandparents of grandparents"[30]! In some developing countries Zimbabwe included many people believe that some people are born poor, servants and peasants and others are born property owners, masters and leaders, to them, this is how things are. To the question, "Why is it so?" The response of the peasant would be simply: "God made it that way".[31] Miguez Bonino says, "According to the peasants, their situations are permanent."[32]

It is unfortunate that some property-owners and some priests agree that to try to change this unbalanced situation would be to disobey the will of God. Miguez Bonino says, "Some people believe that God created the rich and the poor, property owners and peasants and that it would be unnecessary to change the order created by God"[33].

Against this Miguez Bonino argues that it is important to say from now on with all clarity that the God of the Bible in no way guarantees the exploiter his or her property, nor has God authorized the slavery of the oppressed.

Supporting the promotion of humanization, Miguez Bonino argues that the ruler who practices justice and protects the rights of the weak and the poor is the one who knows God. (Jeremiah 22:13-16). God has created a human family to increase and form a community of work and love. He says, "For the promotion of human dignity and humanization good rulers

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[29] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 37
[30] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 37
[31] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 56
[32] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 56
[33] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 56

are those who encourage their people, guiding them to achieve their destiny, for God is the sovereign who guides, encourages and accompanies his people".[34]

Churches are challenged to promote systems that are conducive to the promotion of human dignity and humanization. Miquez Bonino argues that, human beings who are found in a bourgeois capitalistic individualism or communistic state bureaucracy end up being treated like objects and that they end up being manipulated and programmed like machines and dehumanized to the point that even their free time and recreational time is dictated by a structure from which it is not easy to escape.[35]

Furthermore, Churches are challenged to create an environment where peace, love unity and justice are condition of the family in which each member lives comfortably and happily, working and relaxing in that great home which is the world.[36] This would promote human dignity and humanization.

1.1.4. Desmond Tutu: Human Beings as the Children of God

The former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu, has written many books that deal with the importance of human dignity, especially for black South Africans under the racism of apartheid. Here we concentrate on some of his speeches and sermons that are gathered in his book, *The Rainbow People of God.*

Tutu stresses the importance of promoting human dignity and humanization by pointing out that, God dwells in people and that it is a blasphemy for God's children to be treated as if they were things. Tutu says "It is inhuman to uproot people from their homes and dump them in arid resettlement camps against their wishes".[37]

Tutu challenges Christians to know that it is the duty of the church to represent God in communities and societies. God does not want his people to be troubled by those who have power. The church should have the theological concern with the identity of the poor. Tutu says, "In some communities and societies there are political, economic and ideological

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[34] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 56
[35] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 56
[36] Miguez Bonino, *Room to be People* 56
[37] Desmond Tutu, *Hope and Suffering* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 140

apparatus that are used against the poor and the marginalized in communities and societies, all of which sought to strip the poor and the marginalized of their identity"[38]. Tutu further says, "Those who are victims of injustice and oppression should not have to suffer from a slave mentality in which they despise themselves and go about apologizing for their existence. They should know that they matter a lot to God."[39]

Tutu is urging churches to run programmes that challenge bad practices and systems that promote dehumanization, as well as to run those programmes that promote human dignity and humanization.

2.2. PAULO FREIRE: FREEDOM AND DEVELOPMENT IS THE STRUGGLE AGAINST DEHUMANIZATION

In the previous section, by looking at the theology of Hans Küng, Jurgen Moltmann, Jose Miguez Bonino and Desmond Tutu, we have argued that humanization is a central aspect of the Gospel, and therefore should be at the heart of the Christian contribution to society. In this section we now look at the work of Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educationist who has been so influential in Christian education and also on Christian perspectives on social change. We note how he has argued that the struggle for freedom and development is a struggle against dehumanization.

2.2.1. Humanization and Pedagogy

In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire argues that humanization is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression and violence by the oppressors. Dehumanization is caused by various forms of marginalization, undemocratic systems in communities and societies, unequal opportunities and unequal distribution of resources in communities and societies.   Freire argues that humanization is confirmed by the crying of the oppressed for freedom and justice and by their fight to recover their lost humanity. Freire further argues that fighting dehumanization is very possible because dehumanization was not created by God but is the unjust order which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed. Freire emphasizes that

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[38] Tutu, *Hope and Suffering* 140
[39] Tutu, *Hope and Suffering* 140

men and women are people who should enjoy freedom on whatever they are doing and that something should be done to do away with all systems that cause dehumanization .[40]

In some cases when people who have been oppressed fight for their freedom and become free eventually they also become oppressers. In order not to be in such a situation Freire says, "In order for the struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restore the humanity of both"[41]." This then is the great humanistic task of the oppressed, namely, to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. Freire further says, "Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both."[42] For people to free themselves from dehumanization, they need freedom to do that.

Freire argues that the oppressed should discover that without freedom they cannot exist authentically. Although they desire authentic freedom they fear it. Freire argues that the struggle to fight for human dignity and humanization must be fought by the oppressed in order for them to regain their humanity. Freire encourages the oppressed and the marginalized to be united so that they can fight for their humanity being united.

Freire further says, "As the poor, oppressed and the marginalized discover themselves to be hosts of the oppressors they can contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy".[43] The pedagogy of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized is the instrument for their discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestation of dehumanization. Freire reminds people that achieving freedom or liberation is not easy. It is a struggle that calls for a hard work. Freire likened achieving freedom or liberation to a childbirth which is a painful process. Freire says, "The man or a woman who emerges from dehumanization is a new person"[44] The oppressed often hear that they are useless and are good for nothing and are also incapable of learning anything. They also hear that they are also weak, sick, lazy and unproductive and that in the end they themselves become convinced that they are not fit for doing good things.[45] Freire points out that, self-depreciation is another characteristic of the

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[40] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*(London: Penguin Rev Ed 1993) 26
[41] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26
[42] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26
[43] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 27
[44] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26
[45] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26

oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion of the oppressors hold of them.

Freire says, "The solution to move from dehumanization to humanization is born in the labour which brings into the world this new being, in which there would be no longer oppressor nor oppressed but humans in the process of achieving freedom. Freire argues that what is required for the pedagogy of people is dialoguing with people about the actions that they are going to take in order for them to gain their humanity.

Freire is advising Christians that the basis for the oppressed to fight for their freedom is in dialogue. There should be dialogue between the oppressed and the oppressors in order for the liberation of both sides to take place. Freire argues that those who are oppressed should be actively involved in the process of liberating themselves. The oppressed should not wait for the outsiders or for the oppressors to fight for them. To strengthen this point Freire says, "Those who begin to recognize themselves as oppressed must be among the developers of this pedagogy because no pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunate and by presenting for their emulation models form among the oppressors."[46]

Poor people in churches and communities often wait for the outsiders to pull them out of poverty and other bad conditions of their lives. They feel that they are powerless to do anything for themselves. For example, when there is hunger they wait for some handouts from the government or from donors. This is the challenge which churches are experiencing. Freire therefore argues that the oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption. The pedagogy of the oppressed can not be developed or practiced by the oppressors.

2.2.2. Humanization, dialogue and dialogical action

At the heart of Freire's understanding of a liberatory pedagogy is his recognition that human beings are not built in silence but in word, in work, in action and reflection. He points out that that "word" is not the privilege of a few people, but the right of everyone. Freire argues that dialogue cannot take place between those who are not allowing other people to speak and

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[46] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26

those who are denied the right to speak. Freire further argues that it is by speaking what they want that their world is transformed and dialogue becomes a means that they can achieve their lost humanity. Freire further says, "If it is in speaking their word that people by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings"[47].

Freire points out that dialogue should not be the responsibility of one person who should deposit his or her ideas in another person but should be the responsibility of all in a participatory way. Freire further argues that because dialogue is an encounter among men and women who name the world, it must not be a situation where some name on behalf of others. It is a common feature in churches and communities that some people especially those who have power over others want to speak and think for the weaker ones. They assume that the weaker ones are incapable of coming up with useful ideas. To correct this notion, Freire says, "Dialogue is an act of creation, it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the dominion of one person by another and cannot exist in the absence of love, humility, faith, trust, hope and critical thinking."[48] Let us examine his argument.

Love is the foundation of dialogue because it is an act of courage, not of fear and love is commitment to others. Freire says, "Dialogue cannot exist in the absence of love for the world and for the people. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause – the cause of liberation.[49]" This commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical. Freire points out that love must generate other acts of freedom. Only by abolishing the situation of oppression is it possible to restore the love which that situation made impossible.

Freire asks the following questions, "How can one dialogue if he or she is closed to others and is even offended by the contribution of others? How can one dialogue if he or she is afraid of being displaced?" Those who lack humility cannot come to people and cannot be their partners."[50] Freire goes on pointing out that dialogue requires an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and recreate, faith in their

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[47] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26
[48] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26
[49] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26
[50] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 71

vocation to be more fully human which is not the privilege of the elite but the birthright for all.

Freire says, "Dialogical people believe in others even before they meet them face to face. Freire points out that dialogue founding itself upon love, humility and faith becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequences. Dialogue would be difficult if there is no mutual trust. Freire says, "To glorify democracy and to silence the people is a farce and to discourse on humanism and to negate people is a lie."[51]

The poor, the oppressed and the marginalized in churches and communities sometimes lose hope in life. They feel that their problems are permanent and cannot be changed for the better. Freire argues that when people lose hope they become silent and feel like running away from that situation of no hope. Freire further argues that where there is no hope dialogue cannot take place and that where there is hope people can search for a solution which can be achieved through the partipation of all the people.

Freire argues that dialogue takes place in an environment where there is hope and that dialoguers should have hope because if they expect nothing positive to come out of their dialogue their efforts will be wasted.

Freire says, "For dialogue to be fruitful, the dialoguers should engage themselves in critical thinking, thinking which perceives reality as a process, as transformation, rather than as static entity."[52] Freire explains the importance of critical thinking in dialogue. It is important for people to ask, why things are happening that way, why some people are poor whilst others are rich? Freire argues that dialogue requires critical thinking is also capable of generating critical thinking. Finally Freire says, "Without dialogue there would be no communication and without communication there would be no dialogue".[53]

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[51] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 73
[52] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26
[53] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 71

2.3. HUMANIZATION IN DEVELOPMENT: APPRECIATING THE AGENCY AND ASSETS OF THE POOR

Drawing on the insights of the four theologians noted above, Küng, Möltmann, Miguez Bonino and Tutu, and sharpened by the insights of Paulo Freire into humanization, pedagogy and dialogical action, we can argue that the Christian contribution to the struggle for freedom and development must keep a focus on human dignity and humanization, and therefore it must be characterised by dialogical action.

In contemporary development thinking this dialogical action has focused on three key elements: the agency of poor people, their assets, and an appreciative approach from outsiders who wish to contribute to their freedom. Steve de Gruchy in his essay, *Of agency, assets and appreciation: seeking some commonalities between theology and development*, has provided an integration of these themes, and in this section we will now look at these three elements for they will provide the formal framework with which to evaluate the 'Let the People Speak' approach of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches.

2.3.1. The agency of the poor

In our discussion on Paulo Freire we have already noted the stress that he places on the fact that the oppressed must be the agents of their own freedom, and therefore of their own liberating pedagogy. He argues that the oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption because the pedagogy of the oppressed cannot be developed or practiced by the oppressors. The oppressed should be the ones to fight for freedom and justice in order for them to recover their lost humanity.

Freire points out that the oppressed should be agents of change because they are better prepared than their oppressors to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society. The oppressed suffer the effects of oppression more than the oppressors. The oppressed better understand the necessity of liberation. Freire says, "The oppressed will not gain their liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest for it, and through their recognition of the necessity to fight for it."[54]

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[54] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 26

Freire argues that for people to be free they have to fight for that freedom. Freedom does not come like a gift but comes through fighting for it. Finally Freire argues that the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized should be the agents of change in order for them to gain their humanity.[55]

From quite a different starting point Amartya Sen, a Bangladeshi Nobel prize winner for Economics, argues in his book, *Development as Freedom*, that development can be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy.[56] Sen says, "Focusing on human freedom contrasts with narrower views of development such as identifying development with the growth of the gross national product, or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialization, or with logical advance or with social modernization."[57] Sen points out that it is true that the growth of the GNP or of individual incomes can of course be very important as a means to expanding the freedoms enjoyed by the members of the society.

Sen further argues that there are many forms of freedoms and they depend also on other factors such as social economic arrangements, for example facilities for education and health care as well as political and civil rights for example the liberty to participate in public discussion and scrutiny.[58]

Sen says, "Industrialization or technological progress or social modernization can substantially contribute to expanding human freedom, but freedom depends on other influences as well".[59] Sen argues that development requires the removal of causes of the problems such as hunger, poverty, poor economic opportunities as well as poor health care, or systematic social deprivation.[60] Sen argues that there are factors that influence people's achievement and that these are economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives."[61]

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[55] Freire *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 73
[56] Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom* (New York city, Random House 1999) 3
[57] Sen. *Development as Freedom* (New York city, Random House 1999) 3
[58] Sen. *Development as Freedom* (New York city, Random House 1999) 3
[59] Sen. *Development as Freedom* (New York city, Random House 1999) 3
[60] Sen. *Development as Freedom* (New York city, Random House 1999) 3
[61] Sen. *Development as Freedom* (New York city, Random House 1999) 3

Sen argues that there are also some factors that influence the institutional arrangements, these are the exercise of the people's freedom, the liberty to participate in social activities and the freedom to make decisions that influence the progress of these opportunities. Like Freire, Sen argues that those people who have the freedom to act are the only ones who are able to secure the kinds of freedom that they want. Sen further says, "The instrumental role of freedom concerns the way different kinds of rights, opportunities and entitlements contribute to the expansion of human freedom in general and thus promoting development."[62] Sen argues that development can be seen as a process of expansion of human freedom. If the ground for human freedom is expanded, this could mean that there is also meaningful development. Sen points out that expanding our freedoms allows us to be fuller social persons, exercising our own freedom and interacting with and influencing the world in which we live.

Sen also touches one of the important areas in development, namely gender justice. He shows that inequality between women and men afflicts the lives of millions of women and in different ways severely restricts the substantive freedoms that women enjoy.[63] Many times women are denied political, economic, social cultural liberties and basic civil rights, and thus one of the key aspects of development is encouraging the agency of women. Sen says, 'This is a theme that is taken up by those working in the area of gender, development and faith."[64] For example, Beverley Haddad has shown how the Manyano movement is a key site where poor and marginalized women are taking control of their lives in an attempt to alleviate their lived reality of poverty.[65]

Haddad defines gender as socially constructed and culturally defined differences between men and women, which are usually identified through a set of role expectations of men and women. Haddad points out that gender may determine our access to various roles such as education, work, tools and resources needed for industry and craft and that it can determine people's health, their life expectancy and their freedom of movement. Haddad says, "Gender as a social construct importantly identifies the relationship between the sexes in terms of power relations played out in social institutions such as the family, religion, culture and

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[62] Sen. *Development as Freedom* 15
[63] Sen. *Development as Freedom* 15
[64] Sen. *Development as Freedom* 15
[65] Beverley Haddad, "Theologising development: a gendered analysis of poverty, survival and faith" *in The Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 110* (July 2001) 441

education".[66]   Because of these power relationships, African women consistently earn the lowest income, have the least wealth and have far worse jobs than men and women of other races.

Haddad says, "In this context, we see the agency of women emergency as a powerful resource. Women of faith often harness physical and spiritual resources outside of the formal structure of the church in their struggle to survive."[67] Women of faith themselves see religion as a resource for coping with poverty. By meeting in their prayer groups singing, dancing and playing some games, poor and marginalized women would be reclaiming the value of self affirming their dignity and autonomy and thus asserting a spiritual power in their struggle to survive.[68] Haddad says, "In this process of self-affirmation and the assertion of spiritual power, communal bonding takes place as resources of power are offered to one another." Haddad says, "Individual spiritual power is thus pooled and it becomes a communal resource in their survival struggle."[69]

Gerald West, in his book, *The Academy of the Poor* points out that contextual Bible Study was formed by the coming together of the poor and the marginalized communities at the socially engaged scholars at the university. West argues that this form of Bible reading begins with an emancipatory interest that is grounded in the real conditions of poor marginalized communities. Throughout, West is concerned to give attention to the agency of the poor, as they read and understand the bible for themselves. [70]

In this type of the Bible study the role of the trained scholar is not to 'teach' the poor person, but to engage in dialogue so that they can both learn from each other. West argues that the contextual Bible study approach enables black Christians as members of a silenced, ignored and marginalized people in the Bible and develop an affinity within them. This type of Bible reading speaks through the silences people and their struggle to become free. The purpose of the contextual bible study is to liberate the oppressed from the stories being imposed on them by those who use the Bible to oppress others.

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[66] Haddad, "Theologising development" 441
[67] Haddad, "Theologising development" 441
[68] Haddad, "Theologising development" 441
[69] Haddad, "Theologising development 441
[70] Gerald West, *The Academy of the Poor*

2.3.2. The Assets of the Poor

As we have seen, to affirm the humanity of the poor, and to be engaged in the struggle for humanization means recognizing their agency, or taking seriously their ability to be actors in the process of freedom.

At the same time it also means recognizing the 'assets' that they have, and valuing their gifts, skills, associations, and resources rather than just assuming that they are empty vessels. Steve de Gruchy argues that the traditional solution or needs – driven approach sees communities as simply full of problems. He further argues that with such an approach we are confronted with images of needy, problematic and deficient people living in needy, problematic and deficient villages, slums or neighbourhoods.[71]

De Gruchy argues that the needs-driven approaches disempower the poor and the marginalized people because the poor and the marginalized would believe that they are useless and could not stand on their own. De Gruchy further argues that these people would feel that they could not produce anything but could only become consumers. The needs-driven approach weakens the assets of the poor and the marginalized to the extent that they become hopeless. De Gruchy further argues that the agency of the poor is important in development and the contributions of the poor to the process of development is very important. De Gruchy points out that policies and activities that are based on the capacities, skills and assets of the poor and their surroundings should be developed in order to have community development that is successful.

De Gruchy argues that what people should know is that the external resources will be more useful if local people are themselves investing and mobilizing their own resources and are able to set the agenda for outside help on the basis of their strengths and weaknesses. In development, people should start with the resources that they have before the external resources come in. It should be understood that the assets of poor communities are absolutely necessary but usually not sufficient to meet the challenges of development of those poor communities.[72]

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[71] Steve de Gruchy, "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation: Seeking commonalities between theology and Development" in *The Journal of Theology of Southern Africa* 117(Nov 2003) 30
[72] de Gruchy, *Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation* 30

There are three kinds of assets in a village, community or society, namely individuals (their skills, gifts, financial resources and some livelihoods), associations (resources represented by churches, clubs and local organizations) and institutions (libraries, schools, police stations and many others).

According to Kretzmann and McKnight the task of a community builder is to map these assets and then to seek ways to build relationships among and between them, so as to strengthen the community's own capacity to enhance its well being. Kretzmann and McKnight argue that the three interrelated characteristics of the approach are that it is (1) asset-based, in the sense that any development strategy starts with what is present rather than with what is absent in the community; (2) internally focused, with its assets upon the primary of local definition, investment, creativity, hope and control, and is (3) relationship driven, in that the challenge faced by community builders is to constantly build and rebuild the networks within the asset-base of the community.[73]

De Gruchy says, "The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, a widely-used approach for understanding poverty in the developing countries, recognizes that poor and vulnerable people are agents rather than clients of their development, and it does so by working with the already existing portfolio of assets of the household and the community, as well as the livelihood strategies that are already in place"[74]. Along with Kretzmann and McKnight, it recognizes that you cannot build a community on what people do not have. The UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) says, "Working with the assets and relationships that already exist in development efforts, a key objective is to remove the constraints to the realization of potential. The people will be assisted to become more robust, stronger and better able to achieve their own objectives".[75]

DFID further argues that at the household and community level there is a portfolio of five key livelihood assets that people have access or entitlement to. These are; Human Capital, Social Capital, Natural Capital, Physical Capital and Financial Capital.[76] Finally the Department for

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[73] *John Kretzman and John McKnight, Building Communities from the Inside Out (Acta Publications USA Chicago 1993) 6*
[74] Steve de Gruchy, "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation" 30
[75] de Gruchy, "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation", 32
[76] de Gruchy "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation", 32

International Development argues that the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is helpful to the discussion about assets.

De Gruchy says "This is an immediate recognition that we are dealing with people who are at risk, not because they are stupid or lazy, but because their portfolio of assets and their livelihood strategies are subject to a range of influences that prescribe and determine the opportunities and choices that they have for their livelihoods strategies".[77]

2.3.3. An appreciative approach to the poor.

De Gruchy points out that the approach of the outsiders towards the poor on sustainable development should be an awareness of their agency and assets can be gained by following the shift from Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) to Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to Participatory Learning and Action (PLA).[78] The first approach, RRA was an investigative method used by outside experts to quickly gauge the development needs of a given community through on-the-spot fieldwork This was itself an innovation, namely, the idea that it was better to send someone to go and look at the situation on the ground than simply to sit in a government office and make plans on paper.

Robert Chambers on Rural Appraisal points out that the PRA approach grew out of RRA and the word rapid was replaced with participatory. The idea here was to stay with people in their community in order to understand how they operate on daily basis. This was also to encourage the active participation of the poor in the process of 'Participatory Learning . This is focused on the goal of social, cultural and economic transformation of poverty. Thus the term 'action' was added to create 'Participatory learning and Action'. Chambers points out that PLA exercise is properly done, the poor would discover how much they really do know, what resources and skills they already have, and how resourceful they have been in the past. Chambers finally points out that the movement from RRA to PRA to PLA, "is responsive to the growing recognition of the role of the agency, and assets of the poor in development.[79]

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[77] de Gruchy, "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation", 32
[78] de Gruchy, "Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation", 32
[79] Chambers R. Rural Appraisal: Rapid Relaxed and Participatory institute of Development Studies, Discussion paper 311 (University of Sussex, Brighton IDS Publications 1992)

A further development of this movement is called Appreciative Inquiry. It was developed by David Cooperrider and his colleagues at the department of Organisational Behaviour at the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University. Cooperrider says, "Appreciative Inquiry is based on the theory that positive change comes from focusing on the peak experiences and successes of the past."[80]

The connection between this approach and community development field is natural. Cooperrider says, "Appreciative Inquiry is a highly inclusive process in which organization or community members take responsibility for generating and gathering information that concerns their lives."[81] Cooperrider further says, "The groups form strategies for development based on the findings from the journey to their positive past".[82]

The outsiders should listen to the stories of success from the people instead of ushering in programmes on development to the communities. Cooperrider points out that Appreciative Inquiry is based in the power of belief in an organization, community, or merely in possibilities. Appreciative Inquiry has been described as a way of thinking, seeing and acting for powerful purposeful change. Cooperider says, "Appreciative Inquiry has been an example of the paradigm shift from a needs-based approach to one that builds on a community's past achievements".[83]

Although much of the major work in Appreciative Inquiry has been focused at the organizational level, there are a growing number of examples of Appreciative Inquiry in community initiatives around the world. Cooperrider says, "World Vision Tanzania (WVT) is using Appreciative Inquiry to help communities develop Community Capacity Indicators. Through this development process WVT has enabled communities to develop key competences that support the unfolding of an ongoing appreciative learning culture."[84]

Cooperider further says, "Another example of Appreciative Inquiry in International Community Development is its recent application by Myrado an Indian non-governmental

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[80] Cooperrider D and Whitney D *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* (Case Western Reserve University 1999) 4
[81] Cooperrider and Whitney *Appreciative Inquiry* 4
[82] Cooperrider and Whitney *Appreciative Inquiry*: 4
[83] Cooperrider and Whitney *Appreciative Inquiry* 4
[84] Cooperrider and Whitney *Appreciative Inquiry*: 4

organisation that helps the poor achieve their maximum potential by creating networks of formal and informal institutions and influencing public policy in favours of the poor."[85] The people's goal in using Appreciative Inquiry is to empower the rural poor and to plan and carry out village level projects that emphasize the promotion of gender equity, the diversification of incoming-generating opportunities and the improvement of local environment conditions. Finally Cooperider says, "The project provides training and support to communities and uses Appreciative Inquiry to identify successes, build visions of a desired future and mobilize local capacity to achieve these visions."[86]

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundation for the rest of the thesis. Here we have first argued that human dignity and humanization are key elements of the Gospel, and therefore need to be taken seriously in a Christian approach to social transformation and development.

Paulo Freire's work then helped us to see that humanization involves the struggle against dehumanization, and that we must work in humanizing ways to get rid of dehumanization, and this means respecting the poor and the oppressed, and engaging in dialogical action. In the third section we have seen how this has had an impact on some thinking about development – and how it leads us to take seriously the agency of the poor, their assets, and an appreciative approach to working with the poor.

These three elements in development practice will now become the framework against which we will reflect on the 'Let the People Speak' approach of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. First, however, we need to describe what this approach is in the next chapter, before turning to the analysis of the approach (chapter four), and laying out the learnings for the Council of Churches and other Christian agencies involved in development (chapter five).

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[85] Cooperrider and Whitney *Appreciative Inquiry*: 4
[86] Cooperrider and Whitney 4

CHAPTER 3:

THE 'LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK' MODEL OF THE ZIMBABWE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we laid out a theological and development framework against which we will evaluate the 'Let the People Speak' model of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). In order to do this, however, we need to explore the emergence of this model of development work. Having presented the background of the Council itself in the first chapter, here we will look at the background to the development work of the ZCC, and then why this model came to be adopted. We will go on to look at its basic history, roll out, key successes and its failures as noted in the archival material of the Council of Churches.

3.1. THE ZCC'S TOP-DOWN APPROACH IN DEVELOPMENT WORK

Before the 'Let The People Speak' Model was introduced, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches' Training Department applied a top-down approach in its development work. The field officers designed most of the development projects without reference to the beneficiaries, and they then went to the people with tailor-made programmes. Three examples will suffice to show the problems that this approach caused.

3.1.1. Toilet construction in Marume village in Buhera District

In Marume village, the programme officers went into a community with a programme of toilet construction. The programme officers ordered the community members to build toilets at each homestead. The programme officers told the community members that, it was good that each homestead had a toilet. The whole programme was initiated by the programme officers and not by the community members. The programme officers supplied the material for this project and the contribution from the community members was their labour.[87]

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[87] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Repor t*(ZCC 2003) 4

The project was started and completed on time. To the programme officers, this was a job well done. They left the community. After a period of one year the programme officers made a follow-up of this project. They found that the toilets were· extraordinarily clean. There was no smell in each toilet. Eventually the programme officers discovered that the toilets were never used. This was a surprise to the programme officers because they assumed that people would be very interested in using the toilets.

The programme officers then asked the community members why they did not use the toilets. The community members' answer to this was that toilets were not their pressing need, their pressing need was food. Hunger was prevalent in this community. The community members further argued that had they been given the opportunity to choose the project of their choice, they would have chosen a project that would give them more food. They needed food for themselves and their children. They argued that after having adequate food, when their stomachs were full, they would then think of toilets. The community members further pointed out that the headmaster of a school in their community went to use the school toilet. When he was inside the toilet, the floor of that toilet gave in and the headmaster went down with the floor and was baptized in human faeces. The community members did not want to have the headmaster's experience.[88]

Upon reflection it was realized that the toilet project failed because the community members did not participate fully because they were not the ones who initiated the project. They did not feel the ownership of the project. To them, the project belonged to the programme officers because they were the ones who initiated the project. Had these people been given the opportunity to choose what they wanted, they would have chosen projects that would give them adequate food for them and their children.[89]

3.1.2. Piggery in Marange Community

Another example of the top-down approach was a piggery in Marange Community. The programme officers introduced a piggery project to the community members.

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[88] The *ZCC course report*(ZCC 2003)pg 4
[89] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 6

The programme officers initiated this project without the community members in the designing of the project. The community members were told that they would get a lot of money out of this project. Because of poverty, the community members joined in the implementation of the project. The programme officers assumed that the community members would benefit a lot from this project. They left the community members to carry on with the project on their own.[90]

After ten months the programme officers made a follow-up of the project. They were very surprised to find that the project was abandoned. There were no pigs and people had no money. The programme officers asked the community members why they abandoned the project. The community members argued that the majority of them did not eat pork. They were not keen to handle the pigs. It was very difficult for the community members to market pork in their area because most of the people in their community did not eat pork. This project did not achieve what it was intended to achieve because it was not what the people wanted.

3.1.3. **Learning from Government mistakes: Fertilizer in Binga District**

While the ZCC was itself experiencing failure with top-down approaches, it also became aware of the failure of a government project in Binga district, where fertilizer was given to people without consulting them.[91] Binga District is one of the remotest areas in Zimbabwe. It is a well known district because of its problem of hunger. Binga District experiences hunger all the time because the district receives very little rainfall. The government was aware that people of Binga District were starving because they always got inadequate food from their fields. The government set a committee which looked into the ways of assisting people in Binga District.

This committee was working without people from Binga District. The committee was working in Harare the capital city of Zimbabwe and Binga District is about 900km from Harare. The committee came up with the idea of giving the Binga people free fertilizer.

To the committee this was a brilliant idea because they thought that people would increase their food production and get adequate food for themselves and their children and would also

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[90] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 8
[91] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A. Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 9

get surplus food, which would be sold to get money. When the committee finalized the idea of helping the people of Binga with fertilizer, it was then that hundred thousands of bags of fertilizer were shipped to Binga District. Fertilizer was now in Binga District. Those who took fertilizer to Binga expected the people in Binga District to be very happy because of receiving this special commodity. They expected people to sing, dance and say poems on the good work that the government had done to them.

Instead, the people in Binga District became sad when they saw thousands of bags of fertilizer. This surprised the people who brought that fertilizer because in some parts of Zimbabwe fertilizer is in high demand. It was assumed that the people in Binga District would be happy to receive the fertilizer. When the people in Binga were asked why they were not happy to receive the fertilizer, they argued that their soil was very fertile and their areas received very little rainfall. They asked this question, 'Who told you that we want fertilizer?' They further argued that, if they applied fertilizer in their fields, their crops would wither quickly because their area receives very little rainfall. They refused to receive that fertilizer and asked those who brought it to take it back to Harare. This project failed completely. The financial resources, time, labour and wear and tear of the vehicles that ferried fertilizer to Binga were wasted. Had the committee that made the decision to give the people of Binga fertilizer just sent one person to go and find out what the people of Binga wanted, a lot of money and time could have been saved. The people in Binga argued that had they been given the opportunity to choose what they wanted, they would have chosen the project that would give them water. They needed a dam.

They argued that they would do a lot of farming using the water from the dam to irrigate their crops. This would give adequate food for them and their children and would sell the surplus food in order to get money to buy clothes for their families and money to send their children to schools. They also argued that their live stock and wild animals would also get water so that they would get a lot of meat from them to feed their families. What the people of Binga District wanted was water not fertilizer.[92]

The same committee did not learn a lesson from their experience. The committee quickly concluded that the people of Binga District were fools, not educated and not civilized. The

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[92] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 10

committee repeated the same exercise to the people of Maranda area in Mwenezi District. The people in Maranda area were also experiencing hunger. Fertilizer was ferried to this area. The people in this area pretended that they were happy to receive the fertilizer. They wanted to please their leaders. When those who brought fertilizer to Maranda area left for Harare, the people in Maranda area mixed the fertilizer with a certain type of soil found in their area and it became paint to paint their huts.

Again the rainfall pattern in this area is very little. People argued that if they applied fertilizer in their fields their crops would quickly wither because there was little rainfall in the area. Had they been given the opportunity to choose they argued that they would have chosen to have dams in their area. They needed water for themselves, for their animals and for farming using irrigation system. They argued that they would get adequate food for their families, water for their animals and water for irrigating their crops. They would be able to send their children to schools by selling the surplus food.[93]

3.1.4 The failure of the top-down approaches

We have noted some projects that were dominated by the top-down approach applied by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the government in trying to achieve sustainable development but failed in most cases. The following were some of the results of the top-down approach. First, the impact of the programmes was very small because they were not addressing the burning issues of the people.

Second, the demand for these programmes was very low because the programmes were not initiated by the people but by the outsiders. Third, the coverage of the programmes was limited because participants were invited to the training centre where most of the programmes were run. Finally, very few people were trained because some of the selected participants could not afford transport fares to and from the workshop.[94]

The bottom line is that these projects where the top-down approach was applied failed because the people in the communities were taken to be listeners and implementers of the already designed projects.

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[93] ZCC Internal *Evaluation repor t*(2003)pg 8
[94] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute ,A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 12

The important point is that local people, irrespective of how poor they are, usually have the appropriate information about the hardware and software that is suited to their particular conditions. It is not up to outsiders to prescribe to the local people what the local people's priorities are in terms of development, It should be emphasized that the local people are the experts in their particular area and the value of their knowledge should not be underestimated.

3.2 THE EMERGENCE OF THE 'LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK' MODEL

The failure of the Top-Down Approach influenced the emergence of the 'Let The People Speak' Model. It was against this background that a man called Dr Mai, a German who was working for Bread For The World organization in Germany and which was supporting the activities of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches financially, and Rev M C Kuchera, the former General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, together crafted the "Let The People Speak" Model in 1992.[95] Dr Mai and Rev Kuchera had an experience of development work in developing countries. They believed that development is about people, their needs and their circumstances. The two argued that development is not the development of an area or of things such as roads and railways, but is a total transformation.

Dr Mai and Rev Kuchera wanted to explore the idea that the poor and the marginalized should be given the opportunity to express their opinions and feelings about their lives. The two agreed that there should be a unit in the Zimbabwe Council of Churches Training Department which was to explore the 'Let The People Speak' Model in churches and communities. In 1993 Miss Janet Moyo was employed as the secretary and Langton Kuveya (i.e. the writer of this thesis) as the Development Education Officer for the 'Let The People Speak' Model.

Before we introduced the 'Let The People Speak' Model to churches and communities, we started by studying how some organizations were working in churches and communities in order to achieve sustainable development. As we have noted above, we found that many organizations and some government units went to people with ready-made programmes which denied people's input. The beneficiaries of these programmes were just listeners and implementers of those ready-made programmes.

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[95]T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute,A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* ,12

The basic philosophy of the programme according to Dr Mai and Rev Kuchera [9] was about giving people freedom to decide on what type of development they needed and to give them an opportunity to speak on issues that affected their lives. This allowed all members of the community to fully participate on issues or common interests concerning their lives.

Dr Mai and Rev Kuchera's focal point on development was on the approaches that are firmly grounded on Participatory Approach, Experiental learning and on the environment of the learner. The two argued that it is the poor and the marginalized people who should initiate the ways of improving their own situation.[96] Rev Kuchera and Dr Mai had observed that the church and the community leaders have a tendance of practicing the top-down leadership approach system. They argued that the top-down leadership style did not give ordinary people in churches and communities space to participate fully on issues that affected their lives.[97] The two men argued that all people in their varied environments have their interests, needs, wants and their wishes. Given the space to express their wishes, and to practise their freedom could develop themselves.

What the people need are the resources that would accompany them on the journey to accomplish sustainable livelihoods. They further argued that the outsiders should come in with the resources that are needed by the church and community members to assist them in their development. Those resources should not dictate what the outsiders want. Dr Mai and Rev Kuchera finally concluded that the "Let The People Speak" model should be put to test.[98]

The 'Let The People Speak' Model was then started as a Pilot Programme in three different communities. These were Siachilaba community in Binga District, Marume community in Buhera District and Chinyanyaugwi community in Maranda area in Mwenezi District.

3.2.1. Siachilaba Community in Binga District

The people of Siachilaba community were given the opportunity to talk about the type of development they would like to see in their community. The following were the generative

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[96] Zimbabwe Council of Churches *Manual*(ZCC manual 1993) 9
[97] Zimbabwe Council of Churches *Manual* 11
[98] Zimbabwe Council of Churches *Manual* 13

themes they were talking about at various places such as market places, bus stations, washing places, shopping centers, clinics and many other places:

- poverty in the community
- illiteracy in the community
- no primary school in the areas
- shortage of water in the area
- problem of unemployment of youth in the area
- and many other problems

The people of this community were then given the opportunity to discuss and prioritize the issues that they raised. The question was, which of those mentioned problems would they want to solve first and why. They chose to deal with the problem of illiteracy first. They had stories behind their reason. Their first story was that a letter from the City of Bulawayo was received in a certain family. The members of this family were all illiterate. They stayed with the letter for more than one week because they were busy working in the fields.

One day the mother and father of that family took the letter to the headmaster of a school which was 10km away from their home. They asked the headmaster to read the letter for them. The message in the letter was that the first child of their son in Bulawayo passed away. The two cried from the school to their home. They had stayed with the message of death in their home for more than a week.

The second story was that a Non-Governmental organisation donated a number of sewing machines to their community in order for the community to sew items for selling so that they could get money. The idea was a brilliant one but these people did not know how to sew. They could not know how to measure because they could not read and write and they could not know how to calculate money when they wanted to buy material. The donation of those sewing machines became useless.

The Siachilaba people argued that the programmes that were coming from outside in the name of sustainable development were not helping them. They further argued that the

churches, non-governmental organizations and the government were giving them the programmes that were failing to make them achieve sustainable development.

When given the chance this community chose an Adult Education Programme because they wanted to become literate. I challenged the community to start with what they had in their community, at that time that community had a simple man and a woman who reached the middle level of primary school education, and a meeting place. The man and a women who were literate volunteered to teach their fellow villagers. They started with a class of 16 women and 12 men, 28 altogether. There were no books to write on and pencils to write with. They started to use their fingers as pencils and were writing on the ground. The two teachers improvised a chalkboard where the learners were reading from. This programme went on bit by bit.[99]

The well-wishers saw what was going on in this village and started to donate towards this programme. Some started donating reading and writing books, others pencils. Normal learning started to take place in this community. Some local school teachers volunteered to teach these adults after school hours.

Friends in Germany visited this community and saw that the learners were serious learning under the trees. When they went back to Germany, they requested me to take two learners a man and a women to Germany. They wanted the two to narrate their story to people in Germany. I took two people to Germany where they told their story of how they started the programme of Adult Education in their community. The people in Germany were quite happy to hear such a story from local people.

The German friends donated some money towards the building of permanent structures for learning. At the present moment there are some classrooms for adult learning. All the 28 learners managed to write the examination of the last level of primary school education. 26 of the 28 passed all the subjects and 2 failed one subject each. In other words they all passed because they all became literate.

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[99] ZCC *1994 Annual Report*, The impact of the course done (ZCC 1994) 15

Now that there were men and women who could read and write in this community, a lot of development began and a number of programmes came as a result of Adult Education Programme. There was garment-making, in which project members of this programme could sew school and church uniforms and clothes for people for sale. A carpentry project was started and items such as chairs, doors, tables, stools, benches and many others were made in this community. The Adult Education Programme is continuing, and there is also now a pre-school programme, and a formal primary school at the centre where Adult Education Programme started.

Furthermore, this community had managed to request programmes of their choice such as Leadership courses, Skills training courses, HIV/AIDS Programmes and Courses on 'Let The People Speak' Model. At the same time, other communities have started learning from the Siachilaba community. Another important breakthrough concerned issues in gender and development. Up to this point, the culture in this community was that, no woman was allowed to hold leadership position. But now there are many women who are in leadership positions in this community because of application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model.

3.2.2. **Marume community in Buhera District**[100]

A second pilot was with the Marume community in Buhera District. Here, the first exercise was to listen to the community's generative themes. Some of their generative themes were:

- Poverty in the area
- Problem of the unemployment of youth in the area
- The nearest Primary School was too far for their children
- Lack of adequate water for vegetable gardens
- Lack of training on sustainable development programmes

The community members were asked to prioritize their problems and choose one which they would want to deal with first. The community wanted to solve the problem of the school which was too far for their children. In some areas their children would walk a distance of 28 to 30 kilometres to and from school per day. The community itself had the following things to contribute to the building programme: skilled bricklayers, a site where the school could be

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[100] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 9

built, a place where bricks could be made, manpower to play different roles towards the building of the school and some crops to sell in order to buy building materials.

The first stage taken by the Marume community towards the building of their school was to hold several meetings where they made some plans. The design of the school was also made. They started pulling their resources together. Each family was given a target of bricks. Families started moulding bricks. Six bricklayers were exempted from moulding bricks because they were the ones who were going to do the bricklaying of the building. The people started digging the foundation and carried bricks near the site. Some people brought water to the site. Each family was requested to contribute one bag of maize which was to be sold in order to buy building materials.

The whole community was committed to the school project because that was what they wanted. Our friends from Germany visited the Marume community and found the people busy building their school. The visitors were impressed by the commitment shown by the people towards the building of their school. When the Germans went back to their country, they requested me to take two people to Germany. To share the story of their school project. The Germans gave the Marume community a donation for the roofing and painting of their school, which the foundation and walls of the building of the school were done by the community members without outside assistance. The school buildings are now completed and children are walking shorter distances. The Marume community people argued that there were a lot of programmes that were brought to their community by the churches, non-governmental organizations and the government but they all failed to answer the problem of long distances walked by their children.

A number of lessons have been learnt from this programme. The Marume community learnt that a development programme that is initiated by the people themselves answers people's problems, as opposed to a development programme that is imposed on people. They also learnt that people should initiate their own development and start with what they have instead of waiting for external assistance.

In the process, this community have managed to request for courses of their choice such as, leadership, entrepreneurship, and skills training. Furthermore, though access to gender and development courses there are now many women who are holding leadership positions. All

in all, Marume community members are proud that they have done, and neighbouring communities are making enquiries on how the Marume Community managed to build the school without the assistance from the government.

3.2.3. Chinyanyaugwi – Maranda community in Mwenezi district[101]

There were several generative themes in Chinyanyangwi community. Some of the generative themes were:

- Hunger in the community
- Poverty in the community
- Lack of water for people and animals
- Lack of employment for youth in the community

After looking at all of their problems, the people of Chinyanyangwi decided to deal with the problem of the shortage of water for people and their animals. They decided to construct a dam. They were then challenged to identify the resources that they had in order to solve the problem of water in the area. Their resources included a small river that runs through the community, manpower to construct a dam, stones from some hills in the area, and sand from the dry river. They started the project by holding meetings trying to organize themselves on how they were going to construct the dam in their area. As a community, they all agreed on the site of the dam. They divided themselves into groups. The youth girls and boys were carrying stones and sand from far places. The young women and young men were constructing the dam. The old men and women were crushing stones sitting on the rock. Everyone had a task to do.

The construction of the dam started, with men and women, boys and girls and old men and old women all working on assigned roles. Some experts of dam construction saw what was happening in this community. They volunteered to train people on how to construct a dam. Those who were carrying stones from the hills were using their heads and those who were carrying sand and water were using buckets. One sympathiser donated a tractor so that people would use it to carry stones from the hills. One sympathizer donated 200 000 bags of cement to this community for them to construct a strong dam. The whole community became

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[101] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report*,12

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committed to this project because people used to walk long distances to fetch water for themselves and their animals. This project took some time but finally it was completed.

It was clear to all, that people had made a project of their choice and their major problem was solved, and that all members of the community were highly committed because they knew why they were carrying out that project. As a result of this project, water was available for people and their animals. Furthermore, neighbouring communities learnt a lot from the Chinyanyangwi community and started to construct small dams in their areas because they also needed water for the people and their animals.

In conclusion, reflecting on the three pilot projects that human-centred development requires that the people whose lives are affected must have the power to influence the process of development and participate fully in determining their own needs.[102] The projects from all the three Pilot Projects were initiated by the people themselves and not by the outsiders. All of the three projects were people-centred projects because they were the choices of the people who really wanted to solve their problems.

The successful implementation of these projects meant that people wanted to be involved in further projects. The Siachilaba community in Binga District has now managed to build a church building on their own using local available resources.

The church building is grass-thatched and is beautiful. Other activities which are happening at this centre, are garment making, carpentry, basket making and gardening. They found a market for their baskets in Germany. In Marume community in Buhera district, because people managed to build a school, they are motivated to do other development programmes such as tree-planting, dam construction, garment making and gardening. The people in this community are no longer waiting for the outsiders to initiate development for them. In Chinyanyangwi community in Mwenezi District there is plenty of water for people and their animals. The area is now full of vegetables for family consumption and for selling as their source of income.[103]

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[102] Frik De Beer Hennie Swanepoel, *Introduction to Development Studies*(Oxford University Press Southern Africa 2nd Ed 2000) 135
[103] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 16

3.3. AN EVALUATION OF THE 'LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK AFTER 3 YEARS

After running the 'Let The People Speak' Model as a Pilot Project in Binga, Buhera and Mwenezi Districts two evaluations were carried out, an internal and an external evaluation.

3.3.1. Internal evaluation

The Internal Evaluation was the first one to be carried out in 2000. It was carried out by the following people.

- Rev I Sibanda, of the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe
- Sr Mary, of the Anglican Church (Diocese of Manicaland)
- S Moyo, former Learning for Transformation participant
- Rev S Dube, of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
- Mr L Kaseke, Christian Care director
- Mrs N Kennedy, community based development trainer

The following is what came out of that evaluation:[104] First, in all the three areas where the model was applied the majority of the people who took part in the application of the model expressed satisfaction because they were free to speak out their minds, and secondly, in all the three areas, more women were participating in community development activities than men.

Thirdly, there was sense of achievement in all the three areas, and people were very happy to say "It is us who did it". They all admitted that prior to the projects they did not know that they had the capacity to do some important projects in their life. All three of the communities requested that they needed more development programmes that were linked to the 'Let The People Speak' Model.

3.3.2. External evaluation

Anne Hope, a South African, was the leader of the external evaluators. The team included T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute. The external evaluation was carried out in 2003 and it

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[104] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 18

lasted for about a month. The evaluators visited the three Pilot Projects.[105] The team heard many successful stories.

The following is what came out of external evaluation: Firstly it was noted that the rate of the people's participation in development work was very high. Secondly, •people spoke with confidence on what they were doing because they knew the whole process from the beginning to the end since they were involved in all the stages of their projects. Thirdly, the sense of ownership was prevailing in all the three communities. They were proud to say 'It is us who did it'.

3.3.3. Recommendations arising from the evaluation

The internal evaluators, the external evaluators and the community participants made a number of recommendations arising from the evaluation of the three pilot programmes.[106] All three of them recommended that that the model should be spread to all parts of Zimbabwe, and that leaders at all levels should be educated on this model. The external evaluators specifically recommended that the model should be introduced at all levels of life that is from family, church, community, national and international communities; That the model should also start by investigating how the communities are surviving before the model is applied; and that the model should be included in all ZCC programmes.

3.4. THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODEL

After receiving positive feedback from the evaluators and participants the model was then spread to all parts of Zimbabwe. It was then the responsibility of every programme officer to include the 'Let The People Speak' Model in their programmes.

3.4.1. Development of the training programme

The 'Let The People Speak' Model started to be highly demanded by churches, communities, non-governmental organizations and some government units. In order to meet this demand,

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[105] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 21
[106] T. Chikuku, S Matindike, L Mukute, A Hope *2003 Evaluation Report* 22

the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, through its Training Department started training Community Based Trainers who facilitated this model at community level.[107]

The first three communities where the 'Let The People Speak' Model was started are now used as referral centers for other communities. Some communities visit these three communities to learn how they applied the model. The model has become popular because it gives people space to initiate their development without force or imposition of programmes from the outsiders. Some of the participants came from various parts of Africa who then went spreading the 'Let The People Speak' Model to their countries.

In Zimbabwe I have been invited to some church gatherings such as Synods, Conferences, Assemblies and meetings to facilitate on the 'Let The People Speak' Model. I also facilitated this model to some countries in Africa. Some of these countries are Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa and Swaziland.[108]

3.4.2. Acceptance of the 'Let the people speak' model

The 'Let The People Speak' Model was easily accepted by many people because the model accommodated everybody, the rich and the poor, the leader and the subordinate, the young and the old, men and women, employer and employee, Christian and non-Christian, the educated and the non-educated. Some examples will illustrate this.

Sir Humphry Gibbs School in the city of Bulawayo is a school of the handicapped/disabled students. One of the training officers Mrs E Ndlovu introduced the 'Let The People Speak' Model to this school. The students requested that they wanted to be trained on *freezit*-making. About 20 students of this school were trained on how to make *freezits*. After training the students started making *freezits*. The *freezits* are now being bought by students , the school staff and the public. The school is now fundraising through the sales of *freezits*.[109]

There is a lady who attended courses of this model and started to implement the model, she became one of the church leaders and also became a very prosperous business woman in Buhera District. She is now nick-named the "Let The People Speak' because she speaks her

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[107] 2004 ZCC *Annual Report*(ZCC 2004) 7
[108] 2004 ZCC *Annual Report* 8
[109] 2004 ZCC *Annual Report* 9

mind with confidence.[110]   One of the church ministers of the Christian Marching church in Zimbabwe attended a course on this model and went and implemented it in his church is now the General Secretary of the church.[111]   Another church minister from the Independent church who attended a course on the 'Let The People Speak' Model implemented the model in his church is now the Bishop of his church.[112]

A church minister from Malawi who attended a course on this model went to Malawi and applied the model to his area became the Minister of Commerce in the Malawi Government.[113]   A good number of women who attended course on the 'Let The People Speak' Model are playing major roles in churches and communities.[114]

3.5.   The lessons learnt through the Let the People Speak model.

Through engaging in the Let the People Speak process, a number of role players have gained valuable learnings. Here we reflect on the lessons learnt by the beneficiaries, other development agencies (both government and non-government) and even in other countries.

3.5.1. The community beneficiaries

It was clear from the evaluations that the beneficiaries themselves had learnt a great deal from the Let the People Speak approach.   Here we draw on the evaluation reports from church and community members to identify what the key lessons were.

The first lesson was -that before the introduction of the 'Let The People Speak' Model, they were not quite sure about their roles in development work. They were used to listening and implementing the ready-made programmes that were brought by the outsiders. For example, they were told to run a project on piggery yet they were not eating pork, garment-making project yet they were not trained to make garments and some other projects which had no relevance to their lives.

When they were introduced to the 'Let The People Speak' Model, they had the opportunity to choose what they wanted to do. They argue that they were empowered to speak up their

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[110] 2004 ZCC *Annual Report* 10
[111] 2004 ZCC *Annual Report* 11
[112] 2004 ZCC *Annual Report* 12
[113] 2004 ZCC *Annual Report* 13
[114] 2004 ZCC *Annual Report* 13

minds and to make up choices on the projects of their choice. They discovered that they had a lot to contribute towards their development. They started to know their roles in their churches and communities. For example, in one community, people chose to build a dam because they wanted to fight the problem of the shortage of water for the people and their animals in the area.

They discovered that, everyone had a role to play in the dam construction project. Some members of the community were carrying sand from some areas to the dam site, stones from nearby hills, water to mix sand and cement and others were building the dam.

Everyone was committed to the project because the project was addressing the problem of shortage of water in the area. Everyone was affected by this problem. The old and young, women and men came together and worked together. The community members felt the ownership of the project because they chose the project and it was their project. This project was successful because every member of the community had a role to play.

Second, they reported that they learnt to initiate their own development strategies. Through the 'Let The People Speak' Model the church and community members where the model was introduced learnt how to initiate their projects. Before the introduction of the model they thought that they knew nothing about projects. They thought that projects designing was the responsibility of the outsiders who would bring those projects to the people to implement.

After going through the 'Let The People Speak' Model step by step, they ended knowing that designing of project was their responsibility. For example, after the introduction of the 'Let The People Speak' Model, the people of the Chinyanyaugwi community in Mwenezi District chose the project of dam construction. They built the dam and water was available in a community where there was no water. They now grow variety of vegetables near the dam for home consumption and for selling. People are getting money through vegetable sales. This project is now having water for the people and water for their animals and fresh food from their vegetables and money from the vegetable sales.

Third, -in many areas where the 'Let The People Speak' Model was introduced, women are now playing major roles in their communities. The traditional and cultural boundaries which used to oppress women were broken.

Women started to be recognized as important people in churches and societies because they are participating meaningfully in church or community levels. Culturally in some places women were not allowed to speak in the presence of men.

Very good ideas from women were lost in the process. But now that the women are given the opportunity to participate in the development of their churches and communities, they can initiate developmental projects in their areas. Women and men in some areas are calmly working together and understanding more on Balances Gender and Gender sensitivity

The fourth thing that was noted by the beneficiaries is that they -now talk of the utilization of locally available resources. Before the introduction the 'Let The People Speak' Model in churches and communities, church and community members thought that their resources were inferior and thought that there was nothing good for meaningful development in their area. But after the introduction of the "Let The People Speak' Model, they discovered that there was plenty of relevant resources in their areas. For example, the first three pilot projects on the 'Let The People Speak' Model used more than 90% of the locally available resources to work on their projects. In some cases only 10% came from the outsiders. People are proud that there are plenty of resources in their communities which could be converted into various uses in order to promote sustainable development.

Another example is that people can make some jam out of some pumpkins. These types of pumpkins used to be thrown away to animals. Now people are making some jam from that type of pumpkins. Instead of spending money buying jam from the shops people are now saving some money, they make their own jam and use the money for other items.

Fifth, -the beneficiaries said that they were empowered to speak out on issues that concerned their lives. Before the introduction of the 'Let The People Speak' Model was introduced people left everything to the leaders. They were told what to do and how to do things. The 'Let The People Speak' Model opened them up. They discovered that it was their responsibility to speak out their minds about issues that concerned their lives.

Finally the beneficiaries pointed out that the 'Let The People Speak' model accommodated everybody. They learnt that everybody was free to speak about issues that concerned his or

her life and that the model accommodated every person from the family level to the international level. In other words the model respected every person and put people at the centre of development. People's views were respected.

This is why people were willing to come together to discuss their issues. As we have noted above, a key group that was accommodated was the women. Before the introduction of the 'Let The People Speak' model, women were left out when decisions about the family, the church, the community and the national were left out. Women had no roles to play in decision making before this model was introduced.

3.5.2. Non-governmental organizations

There are many non-governmental organizations that are working in development work in Zimbabwe. Some of these organizations invited the staff from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches to facilitate on application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model in development work.

Those who attended workshops on the application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model went and applied the model in communities where they were working as development officers. Here we can point to the highlights of what those development officers learnt from the application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model. They learnt -that the 'Let The People Speak' Model is the foundation of democracy because it allows every person to be heard and to participate fully and freely on issues that concern his or her life. They further noted -that the model promotes the sense of ownership. If people's contributions are converted into the development programmes people would become committed to those programmes and would want those programmes to be successful because they are theirs. Another key learning was that the 'Let The People Speak' Model can be applied at all levels of people's lives from the family to international level.

As we have noted above, one of the key lessons that has been noted by everyone through the Let the People Speak model is that women are major players in development work. They are given the opportunity to express themselves freely on issues that concern their lives. Women used to be marginalized at all levels, but because of the 'Let The People Speak' Model they are now found in the areas that were men's areas. For example there are now some women

leaders in communities. This was unheard off. Women were not supposed to hold community leadership positions. Now because of the introduction of the 'Let The People Speak' Model women have become champions of development.

Another lesson that was learnt by other NGOs in Zimbabwe is that development is influenced by the people's assets. Development officers used to go into communities with tailor-made programmes without taking stock of what the community people had. After the application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model, the development officers from the non-governmental organization learnt that a lot of locally available resources could be utilized to develop people's lives. Kretzmann and McKnight support this point by arguing that each community boasts a unique combination of assets upon which to build its future. A Thorough map of those assets would begin with an inventory of the gifts, skills and capabilities of the community's residents. [115]

3.5.3. The Government

Many communities wait for the government to do everything for the people. If the government is used to the system of giving people free handouts people are bound to expect the government to do everything for them. Most of the governments in developing countries have inadequate resources to support all their citizens. It is from this point that mobilization and utilization of community resources is very important in development work. Some government officials in Zimbabwe learnt that the 'Let The People Speak' Model empowers people to make use of the locally available resources in order for them to become self-reliant. The government officials through the 'let The people Speak' Model learnt that locally available resources are intended to affirm and to build upon the remarkable work already going on in communities across the country. Locally available resources acknowledge and embrace particularly the strong community-rooted traditions of community organizing, community economic development and community planning.[116]

A further lesson for government officials was that Community development which is influenced by locally available resources is by necessity internally focused. That is, the

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[115] John Kretzmann and John McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out* (Acta Publications, USA Chicago 1993) 6
[116] Kretzmann and McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out* 9

development strategy concentrates first of all upon the agenda building and problem-solving capacities of local residents, local associations and local institutions.[117]

By allowing people to speak they know that every person has capacities, abilities and gifts. Which means living good life depends on whether those capacities can be used, whether the abilities are expressed and whether the gifts are given. If the capacities, abilities and gifts of a person are fully utilized, the person will be valued, feel powerful and well connected to the people around him/her. The community around such people will be more powerful because of the contributions the person is making.[118]

The government officials learnt that each time a person uses his or her capacity, the community is stronger and the person more powerful. This is the reason why strong communities are basically places where the capacities of local residents are identified valued and used.

Weak communities are places that fail to mobilize the skills, capacities and talents of their residents. Kretzmann and McKnight argue that the raw material of community building is the capacity of its individual members. The two further argue that one of the reasons this basic resource is undeveloped in weak communities is because the community has come to focus largely on the deficiencies rather than the capacities of its members.[119]

3.5.4. Other countries

The 'Let The People Speak' Model was spread to some countries through invitations from Christian organisations to the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, and also through the work of some non-governmental organizations. These countries include Swaziland, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Kenya, Botwana, South Africa and Germany. The following are the general common remarks that were drawn from the evaluation reports that were compiled at the end of each workshop.

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[117] Kretzmann and McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out* 9
[118] Kretzmann and McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out* 13
[119] Kretzmann and McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out* 13

Participants noted that There are various problems in most of the participating countries such as hunger, oppression, diseases and poverty in general. The question is Who is going to solve those problems and How these problems are going to be solved?

The participant concluded that people who are affected by these problems should solve these problems but the question still remains How? After going through the stages of the 'Let The People Speak' Model, the participants concluded that the 'Let The People Speak' Model could be the solution. But they observed that for the people to speak openly they need freedom to speak. In most of the participating countries, people are facing problems because they are not able to speak openly about their problems. The participants saw the 'Let The People Speak' Model as a starting point because it allows every person to speak on issues that concern his or her life.

Thus The participants' evaluation reports concluded by saying that the families, groups, churches, institutions, organizations, the governments and other groupings should create an environment that is conducive for people to speak freely. This would enable the 'Let the people Speak' Model to yield the intended results.

A second key point that emerged from these wider discussions is that development should be initiated by those who are suffering and affected by some problems. The participants concluded that the 'Let the People Speak' Model tries to empower the poor and marginalized in order for them to struggle for their freedom from all ills of life.Thus the evaluation reports commonly agree that the 'Let The People Speak' Model encourages the poor, marginalized and the oppressed to initiate their development. The external support should be added on to the people's own assets and efforts.

Furthermore it was noted that the leadership at all level of the people's lives should listen to what their subordinates are saying. The imposition of development strategies on people does not work. Many resources have been wasted through the imposition of the programmes on people. Those programmes that are imposed on people are not relevant to the people's lives. Adults participate in issues that they think are beneficial to them.

The leaders should understand that development becomes more meaningful when it deals with the real life situation.

The participants' evaluation reports concluded by saying that leaders should know that if people are denied the opportunity to express themselves, to participate on the issues that concern their lives and not to be listened to, the struggle for humanization, for sustainable development, for emancipation of labour, the overcoming of alienation, for the affirmation of men and women as persons would be meaningless.[120]

Finally, there was a recognition that the 'Let The People Speak' Model promotes democracy, because it gives everybody the opportunity to speak, participate and air his or her views on issues that concern his or her life. The participants further argued that the model restores humanity through justice, peace, love and unity. When people have the opportunity to speak freely justice prevails. When people's common problems are solved, unity of purpose prevails. When people feel accepted love prevails and when people's problems and conflicts are resolved, peace prevails.

3.6. THE STRENGTHS OF THE MODEL THAT HAVE MADE IT SUCCESSFUL

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches has identified a number of the strengths of the 'Let The People Speak' Model that have made it successful. The model gave all people the opportunity to say their feelings on issues that concern their lives. It sincerely made it possible for all the people to be listened to, and it respected everyone's contribution. It was noted that the model put people at the centre of development, and promoted the sense of ownership. The model is the foundation of democracy because it allows everyone to be heard, and to participate freely on issues that concern his or her life.[121]

3.6.1. Involvement of women

One of the key strengths is that the model recognized women as important players in the development of a family, community, church and nation. Indeed, the 'Let The People Speak' Model has done a lot in the area of gender and development. In most of the cultures in Zimbabwe women are marginalised and dehumanized because of culture.

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[120] Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Penguin Books 1970) 52
[121] 2004 *ZCC Annual Report*(ZCC 2004) 14

In some settings, women are not supposed to speak in the presence of men and in other cultures women are not allowed to hold leadership positions where there are men. Women are not allowed to make decisions. This happens even in some churches. Where this model was introduced and implemented, there are very positive changes. Women are now making decisions and participating fully on issues that concern their lives.

3.6.2. A model that can be adapted

The model is also easily adopted and adapted by other communities. A number of people in Mulindi community in Pashu area attended workshops on the 'Let The People Speak' Model. There are a number of women who are in leadership positions and are mobilizing people to work on development programmes such as irrigation scheme where they are running a big commercial garden.[122]

The same community is also carrying out garment making, where they are sewing church and school uniforms; an Adult Education Programme where adults are taught how to read, and write in order to overcome the problem of illiteracy; a Basket-making project and the finished baskets are sold locally and others are sold in tourist areas such as Victoria Falls and Wankie National Park.

Again, in the Simatelele area in Binga District, there are groups of people who are running viable businesses in this area.[123] A major business is fish selling. They catch fish from Lake Kariba and sell them to local people and others to some tourists who visit the area. There is a Projects Committee which mobilizes people to run viable businesses. There are a number of women in this committee.

3.6.3. Standard of living

In most of the areas where the 'Let The People Speak' Model was introduced the standard of living has improved. For example, in some areas where people had no sources of income, the people there started to embark on income-generating projects.

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[122] 2004 *ZCC Annual Report* 14
[123] 2004 *ZCC Annual Report* 15

They started selling what they produced in their projects. This means that they are now able to buy clothes, food, and other basic items for them to live a better life.[124] Another example is that, where people had inadequate water for themselves and their animals, people constructed some small dams. Now water is available for the people and their animals. They are now growing vegetable for their families and selling the surplus in order to get money to buy family items and send their children to school. People also wear clean clothes because of the availability of water.[125]

3.6.4. **Promotion of Human Dignity**

Perhaps the most important benefit has been that development has come with the promotion of human dignity. Participants have shared their experiences with us. Peace is promoted when the environment allows people to speak expressing their feelings and bridging the gaps of misunderstandings.

People started to concentrate on programmes of their choice. The 'Let The People Speak' model promoted love among people. People were able to talk to each other sharing their common interests and assisting each other. In areas where the 'Let The People Speak' Model was introduced people were able to speak against unfair practices because they were free to speak. Where ever there were unfair practices people would speak against that so that justice could prevail.126

People were brought together by the common issues that they wanted to solve as a community. When people have common problems they come together and start sharing their problems so that they could make common solutions. By giving people the opportunity to speak, there should be an element of acceptance, security, peace, love, justice and freedom.[127]

The 'Let The People Speak' Model promoted humanization because everyone was free to choose and free to participate on issues that concern their lives.

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[124] 2004 *ZCC Annual Report* 16
[125] 2004 *ZCC Annual Report* 17
[126]2004 *ZCC Annual Report* 18
[127] 2004 *ZCC Annual Report* 19

Generally the 'Let The People Speak' Model promotes humanization because the model is after the promotion of human dignity.[128] The 'Let The People Speak' Model promotes dialogue because it engages people into talking. People were very eager to participate fully on development programmes because they initiated these programmes through talking..

3.7 THE CHALLENGES AND FAILURES OF THE 'LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK' MODEL

We have noted a number of strengths of the Model, but the evaluation and further experiences has also pointed to a number of challenges and weaknesses that face the application of the model.

3.7.1 Challenges

The following were some of the challenges that were met when applying the 'Let The People Speak' Model. The 'Let The People Speak' Model is a very sensitive and political model to some people. Some church and community leaders were not interested in this model because they felt it threatened their positions. This is especially true of those leaders who used to tell people what to do, directing and giving orders to people did not accept the model. They felt that by allowing people to speak out their minds their power base would be destroyed.[129]

Some community leaders believe themselves to be the centre of information, knowledge and power. They did not accept the model because they felt that their subordinates would challenge them. Even some church leaders did not accept the model because they thought that they were the only people who had the knowledge, information and power to tell the church members what to do and how to do things.[130]

Another problematic area was that of the subordinates themselves. They were not used to discuss their issues openly and make decisions. To start with they were not willing to accept the model. They felt that that was the responsibility of their leaders to tell them what to do about their lives. Another reason for the ordinary people for not accepting this model was that they were afraid that they would be victimized by their leaders.[131]

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[128] 2004 *ZCC Annual Report* 20
[129] 2005 *ZCC Annual report* 9
[130] 2005 *ZCC Annual Report* 11
[131] 2005 *ZCC Annual Report* 12

The women too had a problem of expressing themselves because of their positions in their churches and communities. Some church and community cultures could not allow the women to speak. The issue of gender and development was not discussed in the churches and in communities.[132] The 'Let The People Speak' Model encourages every person men and women, boys and girls, young and old, leaders and subordinates and employers and employees to speak out their minds. Women and girls were prohibited from speaking by the church and community traditions.

The political environment was also another problem area because some political leaders would not want to give people the opportunity to speak. Political positions are held by very powerful and influential people who would dominate all the time without allowing ordinary people to speak out their minds. Especially with the current situation in Zimbabwe, wherever people get together to discuss their issues it is assumed that they belong to the opposition party or to the ruling party. At times people were not allowed to meet as a group or sometimes we were expelled from certain areas. I personally experience some serious problems when I was introducing this model in one of the districts in Zimbabwe. The Member of Parliament in the area felt that he was the only person in the area who had the right to tell his people about their development. When he heard that the model was saying, 'People have the right to make decisions about the issues that concern their lives and that they should tell their leaders about what and how they wanted their issues to be addressed', he expelled me from the area. He felt that his position was threatened.[133]

3.7.2 **Failures of the 'let the people speak' model**

The 'Let The People Speak' Model also registered some failures. Firstly, it created high expectation. When the 'Let The People Speak' Model was introduced to people in churches and communities, many people started opening up and said out all their needs. Many people were expecting financial support from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. For example, people requested a course on entrepreneurship development. At the end of the workshop the participants expected financial assistance to start up their businesses. ZCC could not meet that request because it had no funds for that . Many people ended up with knowledge but without businesses.

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[132] 2005 ZCC *Annual Report* 12
[133] 2005 ZCC *Annual Report* 13

Secondly there were problems in areas that were not properly served by the political leadership. The ZCC managed to service the grassroots people in churches and communities and did not service the political leaders who were denying the ordinary people to speak out their minds. This means that those people who gained useful knowledge from the 'Let The People Speak' Model could not implement it because the political environment could not allow them to do so.

Thirdly, the model struggled to unearth previous success. The 'Let The People Speak' Model concentrated on current issues. It did not give people the opportunity to say out more about their previous success stories. The model should have balanced its approach by giving people space to say more about the good things that they achieved and how they achieved those good things. The model was used as if the people did not achieve anything in their lives.

Fourth, the 'Let The People Speak' Model did not investigate the assets that the people had in their churches and communities. The model's approach missed a lot on people's resources because it started by asking people to say out their needs and problems instead of asking what resources did the people had which made them survive.[134]

Fifth, the 'Let The People Speak' Model did not start by checking whether people had freedom to speak. Amartya Sen argues that development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom such as poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states.[135] The model did not investigate the conduciveness of the environment for the people to speak freely.[136]

Finally, people also spoke about a lack of support. After the people had spoken then what? Sometimes people spoke out their minds but there was no financial or material support to achieve what the people wanted.[137]

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[134] 2005 *ZCC Annual Report* 14
[135] Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Anchor Books New York 1995) 3
[136] 2005 *ZCC Annual Report* 16
[137] 2005 *ZCC Annual Report* 17

3.8. CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the 'Let the People Speak' approach of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. It began by showing the kind of problems that were encountered by the Council in their development work when a top-down approach was used, and showed how the 'Let the People Speak' model emerged through the leadership of Dr Mai an Rev Kuchera.

Thereafter the three pilot projects were presented, and the findings of the evaluation of these projects. The chapter then focused on further development of the model, and noted the strengths that were identified in the model before going on to note the challenges and failures of the model.

The Let the People Speak model is promoted by a Council of Churches, and therefore makes claims to being an authentic Christian approach to development in Southern Africa. Having fully explored the model, we are now in a position to reflect upon it in the light of the three themes, agency, assets and appreciation that were identified in Chapter two as the key elements of a Christian contribution to development. To this we now turn.

CHAPTER 4:

AN ANALYSIS OF THE 'LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK' MODEL

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In chapter two drawing on the theology of humanization and the insights of Paulo Freire into dialogical action, we looked at the importance of the three themes of agency, assets and appreciation for Christian involvement in development work.   Then in chapter three we provided an overview of the Let the People Speak model of development that is used by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches.   In this chapter we now want to bring these two things together and analyse the 'Let the People Speak' model with the use of the three themes. Therefore, this will be broken into three sections in which I will take the three themes; agency, assets and appreciation and engage in a dialogue between the theory and what I have identified in the work of the ZCC.   The lessons and insights that ZCC (and by implication of other such programmes) may want to learn, will be clearly noted.

4.2. AGENCY

Paulo Freire on *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* argues that the oppressed should be agents of change because they are better prepared than their oppressors to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society.[138]   By applying the 'Let The People Speak' Model, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches is trying to put the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed at the centre of development.   ZCC is trying to empower the weak, the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed in order for them to be the agents of change so that they could live better life.   To support Paul Freire's point of view Eunah Ndlovu points out that the 'Let The People Speak' Philosophy should be practiced at all levels of human interaction: family level, group level, village level, community level, church level, national level and international level.   At all these levels she argues that people should be given a chance to speak their minds.   Finally Ndlovu points out that people should participate fully on issues that concern their lives.

That means that people should be involved in all the stages of development such as:

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[138] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (London Penguin Rev Ed 1993) 36

1. problem identification
2. prioritisation
3. decision making
4. planning
5. implementation
6. management and control
7. evaluation [139]

An analysis of the ZCC's application of the 'Let The People Speak' model from the perspective of the 'agency' of the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed shows a range of strengths and weaknesses. We will explore some of these now.

4.2.1. Strengths in promoting the Agency of the poor

(a) Freedom To Speak:

The 'Let The People Speak' Model enabled people to speak out their minds on issues that concerned their lives. Where the model was applied, people had the freedom to speak, to choose what they wanted to do, to plan their activities, to make decisions on issues that concerned their lives and to act on the issues that they had planned to do. Before the 'Let The People Speak' Model was applied in the areas where it was applied, the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed were waiting for the outsiders to speak and do things for them.

Amartya Sen in *Development as Freedom* argues that development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency.[140] For the people to speak, they need freedom. For the 'Let The People Speak' model to function effectively people should have freedom to speak. In some areas people were able to speak on their behalf without waiting for the outsiders to speak on their behalf.

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[139] [139] Eunah Ndlovu, "Let The People Speak: Zimbabwean perspectives on development" in Steve de Gruchy(ed) Changing Frontiers: The Mission Story of the UCCSA (Gaborone: Pula Press 1999) 268
[140] Sen, *Development as Freedom* 3

(b) Self reliance

The model promoted self-reliance within churches and communities. People became agents of their development. Before the model was applied in churches and communities people believed that their well-being depended upon being clients, where they saw themselves as people with special needs that could only be met by the outsiders, in this way they became consumers of services with no incentive to produce. The poor, the marginalized and the disadvantaged in churches and communities thought of themselves as fundamentally deficient victims incapable of taking charge of their lives and of their community's future. To illustrate this, let us examine some concrete examples that have come out of the experience of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches.

In chapter three we noted that the Bunsiwa Community members became the agents of an Adult Education Project in Binga District. They started by deciding on the project that they wanted to carry out. It was not the outsider who made a choice of the project. This community started by holding meetings where everybody had the opportunity to participate in the decision-making. After various contributions from all the community members, finally they all agreed to start with the project of Adult Education. Every member of the community had an opportunity to participate in the planning process. They decided on how the project was going to be carried out. This programme was successful because the members of the community became agents of their programme. They were committed to the programme because they knew what they wanted to achieve. The people were proud of the success of the programme because they owned it from the beginning to the end.

In chapter three we also examined the Marume Community who wanted to build a school in their community for their children because their children were walking long distances to the nearest school. Firstly they made a special appeal to the government and to some organizations for financial assistance. They waited for many years for financial assistance but their waiting was in vain. They thought that the government and some organizations were going to do everything for them. After receiving the 'Let The People Speak' Model the Marume community members started to be agents of their development. They started to meet and make decisions about their development.

The people started to mobilize the resources that were found within their locality. Every member of the Marume community participated fully on the school project because that was

what the people wanted. They owned the school project. The Marume community is now proud of the project because they now say "It was done by us."

The third example where people became the agents of their own development is seen in the dam construction by the Chinyanyaugwi community in Mwenezi District. Before the 'Let The People Speak' Model was introduced in this area the main problem was shortage of water for people and their animals. As in other areas, the Chinyanyaugwi people started by asking for external support to solve their problems. No external came and their problems were not solved. After the introduction of the 'Let The People Speak' Model in this area, the Chinyanyaugwi community members began to be agents of their development. This project became a success because every member of the Chinyanyaugwi became an agent of development in the area. A further example of the success of the model is the Bunsiwa Church of Christ congregation who wanted to put up a church building in their area. They asked for donation from well-wishers. They received nothing. When the 'Let The People Speak' Model was introduced in this area, people started to understand that they had to be the agents of their development. Members of the Church of Christ started to hold meetings for them to discuss how they were going to be the agents of their development. They all wanted a church building. People started mobilizing local resources and started building their church without external assistance. The external assistance came towards the end of their project. A few window-frames and a few bags of cement were donated. The external assistance came when people were already working on their project. Again this was a successful project because people were fully involved from the beginning to the end of the project. They owned the whole project.[141]

There are a lot more examples where people became agents of their development after they were introduced to the 'Let The People Speak' Model.

4.2.2. Weaknesses in promoting the agency of the poor
In analyzing the work of the Let the People Speak model, we can also identify some weaknesses in terms of promoting the agency of the poor.

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[141] Zimbabwe Council of Churches Annual Report(ZCC Annual Report 2001) 4

(a) Lack of full support

At times people showed that they wanted to be agents of their development. For example people from a certain community wanted to work on the road so that they could have a bus in their area to carry people to and from urban areas. People worked on the project and built a good road. At the end nobody provided a bus into this area. This project failed because there was no support from the outside to make it a success. People did not achieve what they wanted because they were not externally supported.

(b) Fear

In some areas, people wanted to be agents of their development. However, because of fear of being victimized by some leaders, people could not express themselves freely. For example in a certain area a local leader brought a piggery project into the community because he thought that was one of the best projects for the people in that community. People in that community wanted water instead of piggery project, but because of fear they could not speak out their minds. At the end the project failed because the majority of the community members in that area were not pork eaters.

(c) Slowness

At times, the people wanted to be the agents of their development but were hindered by the slowness caused by delays of support from the outsiders. For example, there was inadequate food supply in the community.

Members of the affected community ventured into intensive farming in order for them to have more food production so that they could have enough food for all people in the area and could sell the surplus. They started working very hard in their fields preparing the land and sewing the seeds. Time came that they needed fertilizer, but that fertilizer came after the farming season. The whole project failed the fertilizer did not come on time.

4.3. ASSETS

In chapter two we noted the importance of working with the assets of the poor. John Kretzmann and John McKnight in their paradigm-shifting workbook, *Building communities form the inside out: A path torward finding and mobilizing a community's assets*, argue that one cannot build a community on what people do not have. They further argue that successful

community development grows out of policies and activities based on the capacities, skills and assets of poor people and their neighbourhoods.[142] This is the second theme with which we can analyse the work of the Let the People Speak model of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. Again we look at the strengths and weaknesses.

4.3.1. Strengths in working with the assets of the poor.

(a) Starting with what people have.

The 'Let The People Speak' Model tried to encourage people to start with what they had in their development work. The model was discouraging people from totally depending on the outsiders. For example, the Siachilaba people in Binga District started their adult education programme with what they had. They had some people in their community who could teach them. They used their fingers in place of pencils to write with and they also used the ground in place of writing books to write on. The Siachilaba community members learnt that the utilization of locally available assets is the basis for achieving sustainable development.

Another example of using the people's assets first before asking for external assistance in development work is seen amongst the community members of the Marume people in Buhera District, who built a school for their children by using what they had first before they asked for an external assistance. For example, in their community, they were people who would mould bricks, those who could dig foundation and those who could play various roles towards the building of their school.

Another example is that of the people of the Chinyanyaugwi community in Mwenezi District who would build a dam starting by using what was available in the community.

For example, they used the stones, sand, water and the manpower all from the community. The external assistance came when these people had already started building the dam by using the assets that were available in the community.[143]

Kretzmann and Mcknight argue that a community builder should map out the assets that people have before starting a development programme in any given area.[144] Any

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[142] de Gruchy, 'Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation" 30-31
[143] Zimbabwe Council of Churches Evaluation Report(ZCC Evaluation Report 2001) 6

development programme should start with what is present rather than with what is absent. Wherever the 'Let The People Speak' Model was applied, the emphasis was on the utilization of the people's assets first before they seek for the external assistance. What should be known is that the outside resources will be much more effective if local people are themselves investing and mobilizing their own resources and are able to set the agenda for outside help on the basis of their strengths rather than their weaknesses.

The 'Let The People Speak' Model is trying to avoid the use of Needs-Driven Approach where people specially the poor are not given the freedom to speak freely on issues that concern their lives. They become clients and listeners instead of producers. By giving the poor and marginalized people the opportunity to speak, their assets would be known. These assets would be used when promoting sustainable livelihood development in any given community.

(b) Uncovering the resources that exist in the community.

For the past ten years the 'Let The People Speak' Model has been trying to encourage people in communities to utilize the resources that are available in their environments. We noted in chapter two that the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework points to five kinds of assets that are available to households and communities, and we can see how the Let the People Speak model encouraged people to utilize these resources.

In terms of *human capital,* people were encouraged to use the skills that they had already had such as, knowledge, good health and the ability to work. People were encouraged to start development work with what they already had.

In terms of *social capital,* people were able to make use of the networks, links and organizations that they had in their communities, such as churches and clubs and societies. In terms of *natural capital* people were encouraged to use the natural resources that were available in their environment such as trees, grass, soil, plants and others before they looked for external assistance. In terms of *physical capital,* people were encouraged to use the infrastructure and producer goods that existed in the community rather than waiting for the government to deliver more of these things. Finally, in terms of *financial capital,* people

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[144] De Gruchy 'Of Agency , Assets and Appreciation" 31

were encouraged to take stock of the money that was available to the household in a range of forms such as cash, livestock, jewellery or the other regular inflows of money.[145]

4.3.2. **Weakness in terms of working with the assets of the poor.**

(a) A different approach

There are many organizations in Zimbabwe that are working on sustainable development and are focusing on a community's needs, deficiencies and problems.

With this type of approach the poor and marginalized begin to see themselves as people with special needs that can only be met by outsiders. The poor and marginalized become consumers of services with no incentive to be producers. Introducing the 'Let The People Speak' Model to the people who were used to free handouts was not easy. A community-needs approach which was and still being used by some organizations and some government units weakened the 'Let The People Speak' Model.

For example when people were hungry they were given some handouts in the form of food. For people to understand and accept the 'Let The People Speak' Model which was not giving handouts became very strange to them.

People want things that could solve their immediate problems. For the poor and marginalized the 'Let The People Speak' Model was a long process. In this sense the Let the People Speak method perhaps did not take into account how difficult it is for poor people to shift to a different approach, and did not make allowances for this.

(b) Wider constraints to assets

Although the 'Let The People Speak' Model tried to encourage people to utilize their assets it did not go deeper. It did not see the asset portfolio of the local household or community in relationship to the wider constraints that are in society such as the institutions, organizations, policies, legislation, cultures, religion and customs that shape their livelihood. Although the people were given the opportunity to speak they were speaking about their problems and

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[145] De Gruchy, 'Of Agency, Assets and Appreciation" 33-35

difficulties. The model did not ask people to go deeper than their problems and difficulties. The model did not touch much on policy issues, legislation and cultures.

When people spoke about their problems the development officers straightaway started to draw strategies on how to solve those problems, and did not really address the causes of the people's problems. The 'Let The People Speak' Model did not do a thorough map of the people's assets which would begin with an inventory of the gifts, skills and capacities of the community's residents, and then look at the things in society that make it difficult to use those assets.

(c) Lack of Support from outsiders

Another weakness of the 'Let The People Speak' Model was seen after people had spoken their burning issues, there was lack of support from the outside. For example, people had spoken that they wanted a clinic in their community.

They started with what they had. They moulded bricks, and hey built the walls but they needed roofing material. They were expecting the roofing material from the government according to the promise that was made.

The government did not keep to its promise. The people were demoralized. In many cases people were able to speak out and were able to start their development with what they had but failed to get to finish up what they had started. This is one of the weaknesses of the 'Let The People Speak' Model.[146]

This reminds us that the assets of the poor are absolutely necessary but not sufficient for building community life. Working with what the poor have, must go hand in hand with linking to outside resources. This is an area in which further work can be done by those responsible for Let the People Speak.

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[146] Zimbabwe Council of Churches Evaluation Report(ZCC Evaluation Report 2001) 9

4.4. APPRECIATION

David Cooperrider and his colleagues at the department of Organisational Behaviour at Weatherhead School of Management argue that appreciative inquiry is based on the theory that positive change comes from focusing on the peak experiences and successes of the past. They further argue that appreciative inquiry is a highly inclusive process in which organization or community members take responsibility for generating and gathering information that concerns their lives.[147] When applying an Appreciative Inquiry the outsiders should listen to the stories of success from the people instead of ushering in programmes on development to communities.

The theme of appreciation therefore is crucial to shape the way that outsiders approach poor people in terms of development programmes.

4.4.1 Strengths in terms of appreciating the community.

The Let the People Speak method is similar to Appreciative Inquiry because the two aim at empowering the poor and the marginalized because they both want the outsiders to listen to the poor and the marginalized. The two do not want the outsiders to impose their ideologies on development on the poor and the marginalized.

The two also encourage the poor and the marginalized to be the agents of their development so that they could claim the ownership of those development programmes. The two try to empower the rural poor and to plan and carry out village-level projects that emphasize the promotion of gender equity, the diversification of income-generating opportunities and the improvement of local environmental conditions.

4.4.2. Weaknesses in term of appreciating the community

(a) Did not remember the past.
The 'Let The People Speak' Model gave very little attention to the people's previous achievements. The emphasis of the 'Let The People Speak' Model was on the present

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[147] Cooperrider D 7 Whitney. *Positive Revolution in Change* (Case Western Reserve University 1999) 4

strengths not on the past experiences and previous achievements. It missed the area of using the poor and the marginalized's success stories.

Instead of starting with the people's previous achievement, the model started on what the people had. This shows that the model started on the middle of development. It should have started on the people's previous achievements. The 'Let The People Speak' did not appreciate the people's previous achievements. It also did not appreciate the people's past experiences.

This model could have done better had it appreciated people's past experience and previous achievements. The people had the opportunity to speak, but their speeches were centred on their current issues and current problems. The journey for development started from there leaving out the past experience and the previous achievements.
This means that the model produced half-baked sustainable development because it missed the very important part of development. Past experiences and the previous achievements are the backbone of future development. They are the foundation of sustainable development.

(b) Appreciating the stories of subordinates
Another problem area was that although people had the opportunity to speak out their minds, their authorities, such as community leaders, church leaders and other leaders, did not appreciate what the poor and marginalized people had raised as their important issues. At times the leaders could not support the issues raised by the poor and the marginalized people.

This means that the leaders did not appreciate the issues raised by their subordinates at the same time the 'Let The People Speak' Model did not recognize the past experiences and the previous achievements of the same people. This demoralized the poor and the marginalized people.

4.5. RECOMMENDATIONS
Given the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Let the People Speak model in terms of the key themes of agency, assets and appreciation, we are now in a position to suggest a number of recommendations to the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and their staff who are engaged in promoting the mode.

4.5.1. On Agency

A number of issues have emerged that need to be addressed. Most importantly the Zimbabwe Council of Churches should facilitate the application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model to all people at various levels.

By allowing people to speak is to allow them to take part in the development of their environment. Every member should contribute to the development of his or her community because the basic information needed to develop strong communities is an inventory of the capabilities of its residents. This has two implications.

First the "Let The People Speak' Model should try to enable every member of the community to realize that she or he should contribute towards the development of his or her community. Some people think of themselves and their neighbours as fundamentally deficient, victims incapable of taking charge of their lives and of their community's future. The 'Let The people Speak' Model should try to convince every person that they are useful and are expected to contribute to the development of themselves and their communities.

Second, leaders should be made aware that every person has capacities, abilities and gifts. If all these are utilized, the communities around the people will be more powerful because of the contributions made by all the people.

The leaders at all levels should know that strong communities are basically places where the capacities of local residents are identified, valued and used. The opposite is that weak communities are places that fail, for whatever reason, to mobilize the skills, capacities and talents of their residents.[148]

This means that the community leaders such as chiefs, councilors, church leaders, members of Parliament, Cabinet ministers and all leaders at various levels should go through the 'Let The People Speak' Model so that they could support the poor as much as possible.

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[148] John P Kretzmann and John McKnight, *Building Communities From the Inside Out* 6

Third, when the poor and the marginalized people initiate their development they need to be supported. The 'Let The People Speak' Model should try to encourage the leaders at various levels to support the initiatives of the poor and the marginalized.

The poor become demoralized when they put all their effort in trying to develop themselves without any support from outsiders. For the poor to be full participants in their development the 'Let The People Speak' Model should also be addressed to those in authority so that they can also support the poor.

4.5.2. On Assets

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches in applying the 'Let The People Speak' Model should seriously go deeper to the community's assets. When people are given the opportunity to speak, they should speak about their assets and how they wish to utilize their assets in order to achieve sustainable development.

The 'Let The People Speak' Model should begin by going through a thorough map of the community's assets. It should begin with an inventory of the gifts, skills and capabilities of the members of the community because each community boasts a unique combination of assets upon which to build its future.

Kretzmann and Mcknight argue that the basic truth about the giftedness of every individual is particularly important to apply to persons who often find themselves marginalized by communities. They further argue that it is essential to recognize the capacities, for example, of those who have been labeled mentally handicapped or disabled, or of those who are marginalized because they are too old or too young or too poor.[149]

The 'Let The People Speak' model should aim at recognizing and mobilizing the assets of a community in order to accommodate the participation of the poor and the marginalized in community development. The poor and the marginalized will be part of the action, not clients or recipients of aid but as full contributors to the community building process.

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[149] Kretzmann & McKnight, *Building Communities From Inside Out* 6

The 'Let The People Speak' Model in focusing on the assets of lower income communities should know that it does not imply that these communities do not need additional resources from the outside. It should be known that his guide simply suggests that outside resources will be much more effectively used if the local community is itself full mobilized and invested. Those who apply the 'Let The People Speak' model should know that the assets within lower income communities are absolutely necessary but usually not sufficient to meet the huge development challenges ahead.[150]

The 'Let The People Speak' Model is an asset-based approach, this approach needs to be strengthened because it is a community development strategy that starts with what is present in the community, the capacities of its residents and workers, the associational and institutional base of the area and not with what is absent or with what is problematic or with what the community needs.[151]

The 'Let The People Speak' Model should discourage community members from building their communities by an inventory of deficiencies. The common name for deficiency inventory is a 'needs survey'.

This is basically an effort to count up the emptiness in an individual. This type of information is not useful for community building because it deals with people as potential clients and consumers.

The 'Let The People Speak' Model must build powerful communities which have people who are citizens, and producers. The model should focus on capacity inventory to identify what local citizens can contribute to community building. The 'Let The People Speak' Model should not just focus on solving individual problems. It should also focus on community building using the people's capacities.

Another area where the 'The Let The People Speak' Model should concentrate on is the area called priority skills where people are asked to identify their best skills. Kretzmann and Mcknight argue that the area of the priority skills is the most important area because the people with the skills are usually best able to assess their own abilities and they are most

[150] Kretzmann & McKnight, *Building Communities From Inside Out* 1
[151] Kretzmann & McKnight, *Building Communities From Inside Out* 1

likely feel confident about these skills. They are more likely to be willing to contribute them to the community or sell them in the market place. They further argue that these are the foundation of community building. Therefore, identifying and mobilizing these skills is the basic work of leaders, associations and local institutions that are building communities on the assets of those communities.[152]

The 'Let The People Speak' Model has been trying to utilize the people's skills where it was applied but did not go deeper like ways that Kretzmann and McKnight are suggesting.

4.5.3. On Appreciation

An Appreciative Inquiry is an example of the paradigm shift from a need-based approach to one that builds communities on communities' past achievements. De Gruchy argues that Appreciative Inquiry starts from a fundamentally different and more positive point, and is designed to help local people identify their achievements. The process can be very empowering for people who have always considered themselves poor and disadvantaged. De Gruchy argues that when the poor people look for their strengths, they are often amazed to discover how resilient, adaptive and innovative they are.[153]

By focusing on their strengths they can use the positive present to build a shared vision of a better future, one that is grounded in reality. Appreciative Inquiry creates a development pathway based on what is right rather than on what is wrong.[154] The area of an Appreciative Inquiry is one area where the Zimbabwe Council of Churches 'Let The People Speak' Model was very weak.

The model did not focus on the peak experiences and successes of the past. The 'Let The People Speak' Model started by focusing on the assets of the communities and from the development strategies programmes were designed. The communities' past experiences and previous achievements were totally missed out. I recommend that the Zimbabwe Council of Churches should seriously focus on the people's past experiences and previous successes. When applying the 'Let The People Speak' Model people should be encouraged to speak about their successful stories and about the good things that they have done and explain the strategies that they have used in order for them to succeed in the past events.

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[152] Kretzmann & McKnight, *Building Communities From Inside Out* 7

- There are many ways that the Zimbabwe Council of Churches can go about conducting an Appreciative Inquiry. One of the more common models that are used is called the 4D model.
- This model provides a good example of how Appreciative Inquiry works. The 4D's are Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver Destiny.
- DISCOVER: In the discovery stage, participants are encouraged to gather stories and insights about what has made their community successful in the past.
- DREAM: Once the positive and the life-giving energies of the community have been discovered the group comes together to dream about how these past experiences can apply to the community's future
- DESIGN: Then the community must design a plan from the brainstorming of how the ideal complement of past successes and future possibilities would manifest itself.
- DELIVERY/DESTINY: The final stage of this model is how to make the dream a long term reality. The specifics of the inquiry and the results that it yields will vary between individual organization and communities.

An Appreciative Inquiry is therefore very flexible and can be used in many different situations.[153]

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches' goal in applying the Appreciative Inquiry through the 'Let The People Speak' Model should be to empower the rural poor and to plan and carry out village level projects that emphasize the promotion of gender equity, the diversification of income-generating opportunities and the improvement of local environmental conditions. The communities should be encouraged to identify successes, build visions of a desired future and mobilize local capacity to achieve these visions.[154]

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[153] Cooperrider D and Whitney D, *A Positive Revolution in Change* (Case Western Reserve University 1999) 4
[154] Cooperrider and Whitney, *A Positive Revolution in Change* 4

In conclusion, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches should enrich the 'Let The People Speak' Model by applying the Appreciative Inquiry approach in the field of Sustainable development.

4.6. Summary: Lessons for the Zimbabwe Council of Churches

Clearly the 'Let The People Speak' Model needs to be improved to make it a stronger model. In this process, however, there is much to be learnt for the Zimbabwe Council of Churches work in development. Here we summarize these learnings:

The first is that human dignity and humanization stand at the heart of meaningful sustainable development. Before the application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model, the Council used to go into communities with its development agendas. The impact of that approach made the local people not feel the ownership of those programmes. The community members were listeners and implementers of the programmes which were brought to them by the outsiders.

Those programmes did not answer the real problems that the people had. It was after the application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model that the Zimbabwe Council of Churches learnt that to promote human dignity and humanization there should be a system where there is openness and freedom where a person seeks the guarantee of human rights or democratic liberties where a person can claim his or her wholly personal freedom, free from compulsion by others. This would be achieved by the 'Let The People Speak' Model because this model aims at suitable people's goals, at life worth living, at people's values, norms and ideals which allow the person to pursue his or her self-actualization and complete humanization.[155]

Secondly, the Council can learn that development should not be imposed on people and should not be done for the people. The Council learnt that sustainable development would only be achieved when the approach involves people and respects their views.

The Council also learnt that poverty reduction would be achieved only if external support works with people in a way that is congruent with their current livelihood strategies and their social environments.[156] The 'Let The People Speak' Model gave the community people space to speak out their views on issues that concern their lives so that the external support

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[155] Kung Hans, *On Being a Christian* (Glasgow: Fount Paperbacks 1978) 532
[156] Department for International Development, *Sustainable Livelihoods framework* (London 2001) 9

would assist them. The Council learnt that significant community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort. This explains why communities are never built from the top down or from the outside in. Outside assistance can be provided to communities that are actively developing their own assets.

Kretzmann and Mcknight support the idea of not imposing development on people by arguing that development must start from within the community.[157] Paulo Freire also supports the idea that development should not come from outside by arguing that only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both the oppressed and the oppressor. To strengthen this point, Freire further argues, that "Who can better understand the necessity of liberation the oppressed or the oppressor?"[158] This shows that those who are suffering should initiate development from within the community.

The next lesson learnt is that the utilization of locally available resources is very important when people want to achieve sustainable development. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches through the application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model learnt that people become motivated and committed to development work when they make use of their resources. The 'Let The People Speak' Model encouraged the church and community people to use the resources that they have first before they look for the external assistance.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches was very impressed by the positive results that came out where the community people start their development programmes by using the resources that were found in their localities.

Fourth, the council can learn that women are very significant members of their communities. Before the introduction of the 'Let The People Speak' Model, women were passive, they were listeners and implementers of decisions that were made by men in the communities. The traditions and cultures were not allowing women to play leading roles such as leadership roles in the churches and communities. After the introduction of the 'Let The People Speak' Model in the churches and communities, women started playing leadership roles in both churches and communities. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches learnt that women can play

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[157] John P Kretzmann and John L McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, 5
[158] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London Penguin rev Ed1993) 27

important roles in churches and communities when they are given the opportunity to play those roles.

The final lesson that we can note here is that the Council needs to learnt that people need freedom in order for them to participate meaningfully in development programmes that can achieve sustainable development.   For people to speak out freely they need freedom to do that.   Amartya Sen on Development as Freedom supports this concept by arguing that development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. Amartya Sen further argues that development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom, such as poverty as well as tyranny, poor economy opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states.[159]

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches can learn that the lack of substantive freedoms relates directly to economic poverty, which robs people of the freedom to satisfy hunger or to achieve sufficient nutrition or to obtain remedies for treatable illnesses, or the opportunity to be adequately clothed or sheltered, or to enjoy clean water or sanitary facililties.

Sen supports the concept of development as freedom by arguing that the unfreedom links closely to the lack of public facilities and social care, such as absence of epidemiological programmes or of organized arrangements for health care or educational facilities or of effective institutions for the maintenance of local peace and order.[160]

Through the application of the 'Let The People Speak' Model the Zimbabwe Council of Churches can learn that what people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives.

The institutional arrangements for these opportunities are also influenced by the exercise of people's freedoms, through the liberty to participate in social choice and in the making of

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[159] Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom* (Anchor Books 1999) 3
[160] Sen. *Development as Freedom* 4

public decisions that impel the progress of these opportunities.[161] The Council concluded that for any meaningful development to take place freedom should prevail.

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[161] Sen. *Development as Freedom* 5

4.7. Conclusion

The analysis of the "Let The People Speak" model through the Zimbabwe Council of Churches records has shown strengths and weaknesses of the model. On strengths, following the three themes; agency, assets and appreciation the information found from ZCC's Annual reports, manuals, handbook and evalution reports show that to some extent the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed had an opportunity to express their wishes. For example, the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed were able to identify and implement the development projects of their choice. This brought positive change to the people's lives because they were participating fully on issues that concerns their lives. To some extent, human dignity and humanization were promoted.

On weaknesses, it is clear from ZCC's reports that there was lack of support on what the people had asked for. For example, some poor people pointed out they wanted a clinic in their area and promised that they would start the project with what they had, such as moulding bricks for the clinic, digging the foundation but could not have roofing material. The project failed because no one gave them the roofing material. At times people were speaking but their needs were not met. Where human dignity and humanization were supposed to have been promoted they were not because of lack of support to the people's needs.

CHAPTER 5

TOWARDS HUMANIZATION

In chapter two, drawing on the insights of four theologians, namely, Hans Kung, Jurgen Moltmann, Jose Miguez Bonino and Desmond Tutu we argued that humanization was at the heart of the message of the gospel, and of the contribution of Christianity to development. The most important contribution of Christianity to development is a focus on human dignity and humanization. Development, theologically understood, is not in the first place to be understood in terms of infrastructure, money, or skills; but in terms of people being able to have greater dignity as human beings. Thus the process of humanization is very significant, and needs to be at the heart of any Christian approach to development.

Following on from this, we looked at the pedagogy of Paulo Freire, and how it sought to promote humanization through dialogical action and to move the poor and oppressed from being the objects of history to being the subjects of their own story. We drew that chapter to a close by examining how contemporary development thinking and practice has taken dialogical action seriously with its focus on the agency and assets of the poor, and of the need for appreciative inquiry in engaging with the efforts of the poor to survive and flourish under difficult circumstances.

Then in chapter three and four we looked at the Let the People Speak model or approach of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, and analyzed this in the light of humanization, dialogical action, and the three themes of agency, assets and appreciation. We saw in the previous chapter that there is much in the Let the People Speak approach that is positive and has contributed to the development of people in Zimbabwe, but that there are also weaknesses and shortcomings that can be addressed. In this way, the Let the People Speak approach has been a case study to explore a Christian approach to community development, and we are now in a position to identify what have emerged as the key learnings for Christians in development.

We can point to the following seven themes:

5.1 Every person is a child of God and is important in the process of development

To start with, we can remind ourselves of where the "Let The People Speak" model gets its name from. In Luke 18:35-43 we read that Jesus Christ met a blind beggar at Jericho. He was a marginalized person in his society. When Jesus heard the beggar calling his name, he went to him and said, "What is it that you want me to do for you? The blind beggar was given the opportunity to speak for himself and he chose that he wanted to see and was healed.

What this story tells us is that from a Christian point of view, every person – no matter how marginalized they are in society – is a child of God, and their dignity and participation is important in the process of development. From a Christian point of view, humanization is not just the goal of development, it is also the process of development, and the foundation for this must be the recognition of the equal humanity of everyone in society.

While we have noted some of the weaknesses of the Let the People Speak approach, nevertheless, we can learn from it that it is absolutely important to listen to the people – even the most marginalized – and in this way to include them in the development process.

5.2 People have ideas and are keen to contribute to the process of reflection and action.

From the analysis drawn from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches documents it is clear that when people are given the opportunity to speak, express themselves and participate freely on issues that concern their lives they start contributing meaningfully to their development. I have learnt by applying the "Let The People Speak" model, people begin to feel that they are recognized as important human beings. I have also learnt that by giving people the opportunity to express their views freely on issues that touch their hearts one would be promoting human dignity and humanization.

According to Christians, development does not only mean the quantity or quality of goods or items, but development that is focused on the improvement of the human beings, promoting human dignity and humanization.

This is where the link is between the Christian approach to development and the "Let The People Speak" model. By promoting human dignity and humanization one would be

promoting Christian principles. This makes the "Let The People Speak" model become a Christian approach. I have learnt that when people are listened to and have freedom to express their views in issues that concern their lives, they start initiating their development.

In supporting the idea that people should initiate their development, Paulo Freire argues that those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their views must first claim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanization aggression"[162]. For people to claim their rights they need to do that in an environment where the can have the opportunity to speak freely.

The churches, some NGOs and some government organs that deal with development work are challenged by this model to come up with approaches that could achieve sustainable livelihood development that could promote human dignity and humanization.

In other words, the "Let The People Speak" model is challenging all those who are in development work such as, churches NGOs and some government sections that deal with development work to put people at the centre of development. Their development approaches should promote human dignity and humanization. The model is also challenging those organizations that are in development work to give people space to initiate their development and not to impose development on them.

I have learnt that, where people are free to initiate their development, they become motivated, committed and active because they are interested on what they want to do.

5.3 People have much to contribute to development in terms of themselves and their assets

The "Let the people speak" model has taught me that, before one introduces any development approach in any given area he or she must begin with an inventory of the gifts, sills and capacities of the community's residents.[163] This model has also taught me that every human being is important and that every community has a unique combination of assets upon which to build its future.[164] These assets are classified into five groups, these are:-

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[162] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
[163] Kretzmann, and McKnight. *Building Communities From The Inside Out.* 7
[164] Kretzmann, and McKnight. *Building Communities From The Inside Out.* 7

(i)   individuals

(ii)   local associations

(iii)   local institutions

(iv)   physical assets and

(v)   the local economy.[165]

I have learnt it that churches, communities, some NGOs and some government units that deal with development work to achieve sustainable livelihood development they mist start by building on the assets of the communities. Individuals should come in with their gifts, talents and capabilities and institutions, associations, physical assets and the economy of the community should be brought in order to achieve sustainable livelihood development.

This model also taught me that when people are given the opportunity, to bring their assets to development programmes they feel listened to, accepted and respected and start to participate fully. This is called the Asset Based Community Development Approach and it promotes human dignity and humanization. This is a Christian approach because Christian approach in development puts people at the centre of development. The model accommodates all the people including the poor people even those who have been labeled or marginalized within the communities they feel free to participate in community development programmes.

5.4   People need encouragement and freedom to speak out their minds

The "Let the people Speak" model taught me that for people out their minds expressing their views they need freedom to do that. This idea is supported by, Martya Sen who argues that "Development is nothing other that the process of expanding human freedom"[166] Sen further emphasises the importance of freedom by arguing that "Freedom is a principal instrument of individual initiatives and social effectiveness. Greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world and these matters are central to the process of development"[167]

The "Let The people Speak" model has shown that before people have the opportunity to express their views they should have freedom to do that. Where people were denied freedom to speak out their minds the "Let the people Speak" model failed dismally.

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[165] Chambers R. *Rural Appraisal. Rapid Relaxed and Participatory.* Institute of Development Studies Discussion Paper 311(University of Sussex, Brighton IDS Publication 1992)2
[166] Chambers R. *Rural Appraisal. Rapid Relaxed and Participatory* 2
[167] Sen. *Development as Freedom* (New York City, Random House 1999)

The Churches, communities, NGOs and the government units that deal with development work are challenged to create an environment where people have freedom to speak out their minds expressing their views on issues that concern their lives. Giving people the freedom to speak would be promoting human dignity and humanization because people would feel accepted and respected. This would encourage them to participate and contribute productively to their development. Promoting human dignity and humanization is a key issue to Christians because Jesus wanted to promote human dignity and humanization of the poor people and the marginalized.

5.5 People want to be respected and when they are their contribution rises in value

From the way how the "Let The People Speak" model was applied, I have learnt that appreciating what people had already done successfully would encourage them to participate willingly on new development programmes. Taking development work from the people's positive experiences and their past success would make people feel accepted and respected. One of the lessons learnt from the "Let The People Speak" model is that people engage themselves very seriously in development work when they are listened to, respected and taken seriously.

This is a challenge to churches, communities, NGOs and government units that are dealing with development work. If they want to achieve sustainable livelihoods developments, they should consider seriously what the people are saying about their views on issues that concern their lives, take account of their experiences an their success. People begin to feel that they are valued and respected and in turn they would value the new development programmes.

When people feel that what they have done or are doing is appreciated by outsiders, they become motivated, and committed to do better on other issues to come. Human dignity and humanization is achieved when people feel that they are accepted and respected through the appreciation of their experiences and past successes in supporting the concept of appreciating what the people have done, David Cooperrider argues that "Appreciation inquiry

is a highly inclusive process in which organization or community members take responsibility for generating and gathering information that concerns their lives."[168]

This model is telling Christians, non-Christians, community members, NGO's government units and all those that are doing development work to appreciate the people experiences and their past successes in order to promote human dignity and humanization . This approach works in harmony with the theological theme of agency, assets and appreciation.

5.6 An intentional focus on the dialogical process of development contributes to humanization.

The "Let The People Speak " is telling Christians, and all those who are doing development work including the government to create the environment for dialogue. People should be given the right to speak so that they can express themselves in a free environment.

I have learnt that those who were free to speak when "The Let The People Speak "model was applied in their areas made very positive changes in their lives because owned the development programmes that were running in their areas.

This model promotes human dignity and humanization when people have the freedom to dialogue. Paulo Freire argues that, "Dialogue cannot take place between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them"[169]

I have learnt that for people to speak, there is an element of love because love is commitment to others. If those who are in position to give others the opportunity to speak do not have love for those who want to speak, dialogue cannot take place. In other words, where there is dialogue, there is a promotion of human dignity and humanization because love is at the centre of a meaningful dialogue.

How can one speak if he or she is closed to others and in even offended by the contribution of others and how can one speak if he or she is afraid of becoming victimized by those in authority?

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[168] David Cooperrider and Whitney D on *A Positive Revolution in change*(Case Western Reserve University 1999)
[169] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin rev Ed 1993)

The Christians and those in development work are challenged to take dialogue variously if they want to promote human dignity and humanization.

5.7 Understand in this way, the gospel has much to contribute to development as humanization

The "Let The People Speak" model is challenging Christians to listen to the marginalized and the poor and encourage them to participate full in the process of development. Christians are challenged to come up with development strategies that would promote human dignity and humanization. To the poor and the marginalized people development that promotes human dignity ad humanization would be relevant to them. The marginalized and the poor need the gospel that addresses their social, economic and political problems.

The "Let The People Speak" model has proved to be one of the models that promote human dignity and humanization because it allows all people regardless of their status, race or class to speak out their minds freely. Ordinary people have a lot to say about their lives if the gospel does not accommodate the wishes, interests and views of these ordinary people the Christians' gospel would become irrelevant to the ordinary people. If the ordinary people's concerns are not addressed by the Christians gospel they would not participate fully in the process of development.

Conclusion

The following is an analysis of the "Let The People Speak" model from chapter 1 to chapter 5.

Chapter 1, has provided an introduction to the thesis by drawing attention to the research method that has been employed. The research method that was applied was the analysis of how the "Let The People Speak" model was applied getting information from the Zimbabwe Council of churches documents such as annual reports, evaluation reports, constitution, handbook and other periodic reports.

Chapter 2, introduced the fundamental theoretical framework for the thesis in three basic section, these are agency assets and appreciation. This chapter shows how human dignity and humanization are at the heart of he Christian focus for development.

Chapter 3 describe how the "Let The People speak" model has emerged as a model for development work. This chapter explains how this model was crafted and the people who designed it. This chapter also shows the areas where the "Let The people Speak" model was started as a pilot project. Chapter 4 brought chapter 2 and chapter 3 together and analyses the "Let The People Speak" model with the use of the three themes, agency assets and appreciation.

Chapter 5 identifies what emerges as the key learning's for Christians in development.

The following were the key leanings that were drawn from the development activities where the "Let The People Speak" model was applied that should be applied by Christians, communities, NGOs, government an all those that are in the field of promoting sustainable livelihoods development that promotes human dignity and humanization:

That education, training and introduction of development programmes should not be imposed on people. Impose development programmes should not be imposed on people, they will not be accepted by people. That before introducing the new programmes on development to people one should take stock of what assets are in the churches and communities.

Development starts with what people have not with what they don't have. That when dealing with issues of development in churches and communities, the people should be given the opportunity to describe on what they want to do ("Let The People Speak") That Christians, NGOs, government and all those who are in development work would appreciate the post success and experiences of people. This would promote human dignity and humanization.

I urge all Christians, NGOs, the government and all those who are in the field of development to apply the "Let The People Speak" model because this model is a vehicle to achieve sustainable livelihoods development that would promote human dignity, human integrity and humanization. This model puts people at the centre of development because it respects, accepts and empowers people so that they start initiating their developments.

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