# Lessons from the Field Instruction Program: Learning Together, Theorizing Change, Fostering Discussions of Power

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*Recognizing community development (CD) practice as a 'learning journey', I embark on this endeavor to step back, see my work and its background, and to reflect on my CD journey, both as a practitioner and a teacher.*

*In these times of resurgent populist politics, autocratic governance and compromised democratic processes, social transformation workers are caught in a 'moment of truth': to unmask and grapple with elusive natures of power and inequalities. It is our duty to persist in our conversations about the ways to nurture CD workers to assist and enable, as well as to live, work, and fight alongside marginalized communities.*

*By examining my experiences of facilitating the Field Instruction Program (FIP) of the Department of Community Development, UP-CSWCD, I contribute to the conversation of three processes I found useful in teaching CD. First is the process of learning together through dialogue. This encompasses the challenging task of listening to and learning from one another; albeit critical of perspectives that need to be unlearned. I also talk about the facilitation of theory of change thinking, referring to the examination of the dynamic realities surrounding CD work as basis for potential Community Organizing-Community Development (CO-CD) strategies. Finally, I propose fostering discussions on power, cognizant that the changes we want to see in relationships, individuals, processes, systems and conditions need the understanding and reconfiguration of power.*

Key words: fieldwork, dialogue, teaching CD, CO-CD perspectives

## Reflecting on Community Development (CD) pedagogy and practice

"We are, always, poets, exploring possibilities of meaning in a world which is also all the time exploring possibilities."
– Margaret Wheatley

There is no denying that community development practice is a 'learning journey'. CD workers and communities need to accept that the contexts of social transformation work post new challenges. And this dares us to face these hardships, make meanings out of our experiences, live by the principles and values that continually guide our work, as well as examine emerging knowledge and propositions for new practice.

I embark on this endeavor to step back, see my work and its background, and to reflect on my journey in the community development discipline, both as a practitioner and a teacher. My motivation is to seek clarity and gather evidences of critical community development processes that 'restores people's self-worth and dignity' (Manalili, class discussions, September 2017), rejecting processes that have the propensity to persuade people to think little of themselves. I also draw inspiration in redefining CD as the process and goal of affirming the life and capacities of communities to perform, create and relate (Ferrer, 2017). At the same time, I am interested in the 'doing' and 'thinking' of community development and community organizing work for power, advocacy, and for equal and just relationships (Pagaduan, personal communication, September 2017).

As an educator, resolutely I yearn to ask, "*What pedagogy can enable this critical practice of CD?*" I want to seek processes and content that can help facilitate learning of CD of present-day learners.

In these times of resurgent populist politics, autocratic governance and compromised democratic processes, social transformation workers are caught in a 'moment of truth': to unmask and grapple with elusive natures of power and inequalities. It is our duty to persist in our conversations about the ways to train CD workers to assist and enable, as well as to live, work, and fight alongside marginalized communities.

My assumption is that, in cultivating CD learning, it is crucial to sort out the elements in the present context where CD learning is taking place. We traverse challenges—socio-political drivers that continually test CD principles and values; differences in experiences and resources of both teachers and students; and complex expectations and needs of communities. In these contexts, we continually refine CD pedagogy to enable CD learners and communities to pursue the visions and outcomes of community development. In the same way, I aspire to contribute to multiplying practitioners who will continue to put passion, commitment and enthusiasm into CD work.

In this paper, I turn my attention to the Field Instruction Program (FIP) of the Department of Community Development (DCD), College of Social Work and Community Development (CSWCD), University of the Philippines - Diliman. FIP is a community-based practicum course in the undergraduate and graduate coursework of the Department of Community Development (DCD), which has been running for four decades now.

**Key concepts for framing my reflection**

I first considered the CD concepts, values and principles as important contents of CD teaching. Then I drew examples of how some academic institutions facilitate CD learning, including the conceptual underpinnings of the CSWCD-DCD's Field Instruction Program. Finally, I articulated the knowledge gaps that my reflection addresses.

*What Community Development goals, values, principles need to be taught to CD learners?*

CD pedagogy encompasses facilitating access of learners to CD theories, principles and values. With this, I briefly reviewed key perspectives of CD that I have found relevant in our work with Philippine communities.

The International Association for Community Development (IACD) promotes this global definition of community development:

> Community development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings.

The possibilities for development work framed through this definition of CD are explored and given meaning in unique and complex social, economic, political and cultural contexts. When several practitioners argue that CD has no single framework and is amorphous (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006; Nickels, 2015), some would potently espouse particular CD agenda. Ledwith for instance argues for CD's radical intent. CD theory revolves around the analyses of power and discrimination (Ledwith, 2011).

Rooted in the rich history of CD practice in the Philippines, including social movements, and decades of working alongside the poor in the context of farms, fishing coasts, factories, and urban settlements, the Department of Community Development (DCD), as academic institution, has crystallized several principles and practices of CD work with Philippine communities.

DCD places community organizing (CO) as a pivotal strategy in undertaking community development; hence the community organizing-community development (CO-CD) concept. CO is a complex process of living and working with the people through *pakikipamuhay* (community immersion), social analysis, consciousness-raising, forging unities through organizational formation, leadership development, and community actions (Manalili, 2012; Pagaduan, 2017). It also consists of other collective efforts that promote people's capacity to assert their rights and power towards self-directed development.

Pagaduan (2017), who proposed a CD theory rooted in practice in Philippine communities, emphasized the relation of community organizing work and power. CO as political work urges practitioners to analyze power as it is expressed and manifested in community life. All kinds of relationships are sites of everyday power—with family, communities, organizations, in relationships within religious and

governance institutions. Power in these relationships is expressed in processes of deciding which things are important or should be neglected; what should be prioritized or less preferred; processes of domination and subordination (Pagaduan, 2017). These expressions of power in relationships need to be understood to advance the political work, of encouraging the process that allows people to believe in their own strengths and capacity for collective action towards transformation for equality (Pagaduan, 2017).

*How is teaching CD conceptualized by academic institutions?*

I considered the experiences of two academic institutions offering CD training. Here I briefly referred to how they teach CD, and the philosophies underlying their CD pedagogy. Jakubowski and Burman (2004) for instance, shared their community-based CD program as an academic requirement for their students. They discussed the principle of 'critically responsive pedagogy' and flexible learning environments. (Brookfield, 1990:30) articulates the philosophy of the pedagogy:

> As a critically responsive teacher, your practice exhibits a constant interplay between action and analysis. Although you are guided by a clearly defined organizing vision, you change your methods, content and evaluative criteria as you come to know more about the way these are perceived by the students. Which knowledge and skills to explore next and how best to examine these decisions are made in the midst of the teaching activity itself, rather than being planned in detail from the outset. Thus, regular discussions with students concerning how aspects of the educational process might be altered to make them more meaningful are an important aspect of such teaching.

Westoby and Ingamells (2012) also talked about how they facilitated learning of framewoking for CD practice through 'personal practice frameworks' with graduate students of community development. Students are asked to articulate their own personal practice frameworks that can serve as guidelines for their CD practice. This involves collecting data (from experiences, anecdotes, insights), analyses and clustering, finding symbols and trailing, and critiquing (sharing the framework publicly). This learning process allows students to "read widely, engage with others, reflect on one's own

practices, values and orientations, and consider observations and analyses of the world" (Westoby & Ingamells, 2012:386). This process is deemed important because this creates opportunities for learner-practitioners to articulate propositional and procedural proficiency as they work with communities. The process is also helpful in revealing their own worldviews, identifying practice dilemmas and the reading and re-reading of the contexts of their work (Westoby & Ingamells, 2012).

On the other hand, the CSWCD-DCD instituted the Field Instruction Program (FIP) as the culmination of students' CD training, both for the undergraduate and graduate CD programs. DCD conceptualized the FIP as a field-based learning program that allows faculty and students to jointly employ, validate and further theorize on CD concepts, vision, and approaches.

The FIP is a learning process of experiencing life in the midst of the poor. It prefers the method of group work and an iterative and continuous process of planning, assessment, implementation and reflection, done always *with* the people—and not *for* the people. In particular, students are placed in urban and rural settings to work with partner development organizations (usually non-government and government organizations) and communities. Work can be focused on various fields (community-based health, women organizing, resettlement governance, farmer's development, social enterprise, indigenous people's organizing, etc.).

The FIP is not just a learning space but the students' and faculty's pursuit of commitment and service—doing CD practice that recognizes people as capable actors, not mere recipients of service; CD work that lays emphasis on people's lives and needs rather than organizations' and donors' agenda; and CD work that facilitates change from the bottom-up rather than from top-down constructions (Tungpalan, 2008).

I uphold that the FIP is a learning space where student-practitioners become knowledgeable, skillful and committed to CD practice and service. They are expected to:

- understand the contexts (the complex conditions and imbalances in power) of communities through an openness to feel, see, affirm the lives of people and partake in their struggle; and

- work with people, working towards a process where the poor reclaim their voice, their power and capacity for relating and acting.

As a CD educator of the FIP, I ask, "How do I cultivate CO-CD learning mindful of this kind of development work/learning space?" Correspondingly, "How do I help students frame their practice of CD work within complex communities? How can we affirm the political nature of CO-CD work?" I recognize that enhancing my academic practice would entail a continuous reimagining of CD pedagogy. It is not a 'one-size-fits-all' procedure but an adapting process based on the challenges and resources posed by the learning contexts.

*What intellectual gaps do I want to explore?*

The DCD has created spaces to systematize current practices in the FIP, and regularized discussions on ways to improve and address issues in field instruction. This paper is an extension of these efforts: the continuation of conversations on how to strengthen facilitation of CD learning through the FIP, hoping that this will eventually contribute to enhancing the CO-CD practice.

I wish to elucidate on the dimensions of CD pedagogy, in the context of the FIP, that merits more conversations. In particular, I want to seek more wisdom concerning the mutual learning interactions between educator and student; the process of making explicit the framework for doing CD work together with partner communities; and creating opportunities for a critical approach to CD work through the interrogation of power in various aspects of our practice.

I intend to perform this inquiry by reflecting on the following themes, which shall structure my discussion:

- The surrounding realities shaping our learning
- 'Learning together' through dialogue
- Employing a 'theory of change thinking' rather than linear thinking as frame for our work with communities; and
- The process of fostering discussions of power.

This reflection is largely from my point of view as an educator. Although inevitably, this inquiry also touches upon the stories of students and communities I work with.

I present these reflections as part of my explorations for possibilities. I attempt to propose three processes that can be explored in facilitating CD learning through the FIP. These are of course easier said than done. Conflicts and dilemmas continually emerge as teachers, students, communities and partners traverse the CD process. More conversations are definitely needed.

**The surrounding realities shaping our learning**

*What am I bringing in?*

Some experiences that had a profound impact on my life and my work include my solidarity work in the peasant sector in the early 2000s, organizing work with women-led urban poor and peasant organizations as well as youth development in urban communities. These allowed me to witness the passion and courage of women and men in poor communities as they engage powerful entities and lay down their communities' development aspirations.

Reflecting on my experiences, there was a growing recognition of how development organizations dichotomize macro and micro storylines of development, favoring one explanation of poverty and development and neglecting the others. I had a share in the implementation of short-term projects of NGOs and LGUs, projects that may have undermined the poor's self-reliance despite the good intentions of helping organizations. I can also recall being part of projects that do not challenge unequal power relations.

This time was an important episode in my CD praxis. I found myself embarking on the challenging task of handling the Field Instruction Program first in Cavite and at present, in Tarlac, and supervising students in the CD discipline.

*Our work with communities (Through the Field Instruction Program)*

As a budding practitioner, my growing consciousness tried to recognize and grapple with the elusiveness of the structures of discrimination and unequal power in our partner communities.

We were able to witness the denial of social services to people and contested power in resettlement site in Cavite, as in many relocation areas. Traditional politics as practiced in the local government contributed in the shaping of the political dynamics of a Home Owners' Association (HOA) as a formal governing mechanism inside a resettled community. HOA officers tend to reproduce perspectives on community governance and development based on top-down and bureaucratic management.

In Tarlac, farmers have lived through structural injustices for generations. Legacies of historical exploitation continue to afflict farmers. Tenancy remains. Vast lands are allocated to military reservation, private businesses such as Aboitiz Land and proposed government projects. An NGO assisting farmers towards sustainable agriculture recalled how their work was impacted by the changing administrations, some more repressive than the others. Some former staff of this agriculture-focused NGO even faced imprisonment during the time when working with farmer groups was seen as subversive.

*Present learners of the CD discipline*

Students of CD come from different backgrounds (family circumstances, socio-economic status, motivations), which influence their work in the community. Undergraduate students are more homogeneous compared to the graduate students in the sense that they completed at least three years of classroom-based learning of CD perspectives and important strategies, such as community organizing, participatory planning, community education and project development.

Resources and experiences of students who pursue a Master in Community Development degree are more varied because many come from prior disciplines as wide-ranging as Business Administration, Development Communication, Sociology, Law, Psychology, Nursing, etc. Many of them are in development practice, while some have little or no development work background.

It is also a reality that universities and students are impeded by the prevailing neoliberal agenda. Motivations of students can also be shaped by market forces, rather than by personal convictions towards social transformation.

**Learning together**

By reflecting on the context of learning, I recognize that both the students and I bring in different resources. In the same way, the realities of communities are truly multi-faceted. Because of this, we need to gather different interpretations to gain a sense of the complexity of the situation.

I talk of *learning together* in the context of the FIP as a process of dialoguing. This describes the process of conversations and reflection using our theoretical backgrounds and experiences as tools to understand and face real-life problems in the communities.

Here, I use dialogue to signify several things. Aronowitz in Freire (1998) presents Paulo Freire's educational philosophy that both teacher and student participate in learning; that education happens when both learners engage in ongoing dialogue and bring knowledge. This process aspires to allow learners to discover what each already know and what they can share to one another. Dialogue should also cultivate reflection on the self as actor in the world.

Dialogue, for Freire, is also aimed towards social and structural transformation. People engaged in dialogue partake in naming the world and questioning reality, leading them to act and to challenge dehumanizing structures.

In the same way, I turn to the tenets of dialogue education, as conceptualized by Jane Vela (2008). As teachers, facilitating learning demands that we meet learners, learn from them regarding their contexts and shape content that will nourish them (Vela, 2008). We need to organize content that is well-sequenced, with clear learning tasks that are understandable and challenging (Vela, 2008). Dialogue education involves the preparation of a series of steps, fostering a space of safety and respect, and the designing of learning challenges. The teacher facilitates illustrating relationships between the learner's context and the complex content, substantiating the learner's reflections with the teacher's own stories and factual knowledge (Vela, 2008).

*What does this imply to our fieldwork practice?*

Learning together urges us to embrace the necessity of unlearning, the examination of our own worldviews, negotiation with partners and the questioning of reality. These are briefly discussed in the following points.

1. Meeting of student-learners and supervisor-learners

This necessitates conversations and understanding of what each learner is bringing in. This is not an easy task. As mentioned, learners come from different backgrounds and motivations. The FIP, as a course, is also built on several assumptions about student readiness and certain competencies in CD theories and skills. Conversations become necessary to know the students' contexts and resources to help supervisors structure the learning tasks.

Students doing fieldwork are tasked to reflect on their work, and this is substantiated by the teacher's knowledge and stories from experience. One difficulty in dialogue is in recognizing the students' previous experience and expertise while at the same time challenging them. During fieldwork, students have asked, "Why are the people, despite being poor, still buying things they don't need? (referring to big LCD TVs in poor households)". This becomes an opportunity to direct students to critically assess their understanding of poverty conditions and worldviews concerning the poor.

CD practice brings out the motivations and biases of the practitioners. Learners need to replace cherished beliefs that do not serve the aims of CD, to make way for new beliefs. And this unlearning must be done in a safe learning space.

To reiterate, dialogue does not mean it is an open-ended debate. "Freire … doesn't hesitate to put his own intellectual sources to the table" (Aronowitz in Freire 1998:9). The teacher also brings with him/her several 'contents', such as factual information on the explanation of economic, political and social conditions, as well as perspectives, knowledge and skills to help the learner translate CD concepts and values into practice.

2. Learners-practitioners reflecting on their experiences

Among CD practitioners, dialogue gives the opportunity to expose their own worldviews.

A student once reflected, "People's participation is time-extensive work. Is there a short-cut? An alternative?"

The FIP becomes an opportunity to talk more about the assumptions underlying our CO-CD work. It also involves a process of questioning, testing and validating CD principles and values as they are practiced in actual development contexts.

Dialoguing can also permit us to constantly hold conversations as we recognize the uncertain, unpredictable and ambivalent nature of our work. This is discussed more in the succeeding theme on theory of change.

3. Dialoguing between CD practitioners-students and partner communities and organizations

Dialogue in the context of the FIP allows negotiation of different agendas. CD practitioners undeniably connect with different people. Though they need to keep their partisanship (pro-poor bias), they should hold lightly their own CD agenda while listening intently to the people's perspectives and agenda. This process is a meeting of both of their agendas (Westoby, 2014). This process of engagement demands that CD workers be skillful in analyzing what is said, the possible connotations, and what shape these meaning in order to sustain dialogue and engagement.

Westoby (2014), informed by Buber's idea, describes CD as a dialogue which allows the negotiation of the practitioner's agenda, with the community's agenda to arrive at a shared agenda.

4. Dialogue also means reading reality together, questioning reality

The FIP provides spaces to dialogue, a process characterized by Ledwith (2011) as a process of talking about what's going on, collecting stories of everyday lives, bring in of intellectual resources, questioning reality and articulating how to re-create the world.

CO-CD students, together with partners are engaged in gathering stories of communities in order to understand why things are happening the way they are.

On one occasion, a CO staff from a partner organization asked, "Why do our projects abandon the farm communities that will be displaced by a development project, when these are the communities that need help the most?"

A community leader also asked, "Why don't the local government, and the water and electricity service providers listen to us? Is it because we are only weak people?"

These are important moments in the CD process, when a new consciousness has the opportunity to turn into action. These can become the basis of designing community organizing and development work.

**Employing a theory of change thinking**

*Ang makata ay naghihintay,*
*Sinasalansan sa isip ang mga hugis at salita,*
*At kinukulayan ang mga kataga,*
*Tinatapon sa hangin at sinasalong muli,*
*Hanggang sa huling sandaling humulagpos ang mga taludtod,*
*Sa pagwawakas at pagsisimula ng mga kataga.*

- Joi Barrios, 1997

(The poet waits,
Arranging in mind the shapes and utterances,
Coloring particles,
Tosses them into the wind and racks them again,
Until the very last, the verses come
For the end and beginning of every chapter.)

- Joi Barrios, translation by Mark Pangilinan

In starting fieldwork, how do we conceive the work to be done? From the DCD's experience, students usually orient themselves on the realities of the communities by reading past FIP papers and relevant literature, and by listening to stories from previous fieldwork students. They also conduct orientation/leveling-off activities with partner organizations regarding the latter's development visions,

strategies and relationships with communities. The students also attend workshops to look back on knowledge, skills and perspectives that will be useful in doing CO-CD with communities. Getting-to-know-you and team-building activities among the students comprising the fieldwork team are also found to be very useful in understanding each team member's worldviews, capacities, limitations and motivations. The FIP supervisor also gives guidance on setting the broad direction of CD work with the communities.

Ultimately, however, it is through the process of living and working with the people that the FIP team can gain more clarity on the possibilities for specific CD practices in the context of fieldwork. To underscore this, *pakikipamuhay* (living with the people) is what instills a bias towards the voice of the poor and marginalized. Through listening, sharing stories and learning to work with the community, the CO practitioner engages in reflective analysis of the situation, raising his/her knowledge and consciousness alongside that of the community.

It is admittedly challenging to discern which activities can be premeditated before fieldwork begins (based on the accomplishments of previous FIP teams in the community, and the CD program of the partner organization); and how flexible the CO-CD fieldwork plan can be, to adapt to the complex and present context of the community.

Most of the time, the students feel inadequately prepared before going on fieldwork, knowing only the direction and not the deliberate activities to be done. Within the first or second day of living in the community, they would complain, "Our work is not clear to us" or even "We don't know what we are going to do."

I explored tackling this dilemma by turning to the reflective process offered by the theory of change thinking. Here, I am inspired by Margaret Wheatley, "Thinking is the place where intelligent actions begin. We pause long enough to look more carefully at a situation, to see more of its character, to think about why it's happening, to notice how it's affecting us and others" (2001).

Theory of change is a growing area of practice where critical thinking is employed in devising, implementing, and evaluating development endeavors for social change. It is usually presented as a tool or methodology but was argued to be more of a reflective process

(Vogel, 2012). As Patricia Rogers (in Vogel, 2012) expressed:

> Every programme is packed with beliefs, assumptions, hypothesis about how change happens—about the way humans work, or organizations or political systems or ecosystems. Theory of change is about articulating these many underlying assumptions about how change will happen. (p.4)

Vogel (2012:3) also stated that theory of change thinking is a "deeper reflective process and dialogue amongst colleagues and stakeholders reflecting on the values, worldviews and philosophies of change…" It usually consists of making explicit the practitioners' understanding of the context of the work, long-term change hoped for, strategies and/or sequence of change, as well as the underlying assumptions. These statements are usually shown in diagrams and accompanying narratives. It supports practitioners to articulate and situate their work through a logical path, while incorporating critical reflection on the complex process of change (Vogel, 2012).

*What are its implications to our fieldwork practice?*

The reflective process of theory of change enables learners for critical thinking to sort out intelligent actions. It also allows the recognition of complexity, flexibility of learning tasks, identification of practice dilemmas and the appreciation of multi-level change, as discussed below.

1. Facilitating theory of change reflection workshops to frame our CO-CD work with communities

*The poet waits; pausing long enough to look more carefully at a situation*

CO-CD workers need to carefully reflect on the things necessary to make a difference. Theory of Change workshops allow us to arrange our thoughts about conditions, relationships with our partners as well as proposed tactics into flows and pathways. These would also bare the relationships and assumptions beneath our work.

In particular, the fieldwork team, facilitated by the supervisor, deliberates on the questions:

- What is the context?
- What could be our work?
- Who are the people we work with?
- How do we work with them?
- Why do we do the things we do?
- How do we do them?
- What challenges emerge, or what recurring dilemmas are posed by the contexts of our work? How do we adapt to them?

Theory of change thinking opens spaces to be explicit on the basis of our work and locate it in a broader development process. In particular, this exercise allows us to locate community organizing and other CD strategies in our work (e.g., participatory research, advocacy and mobilization, community education/consciousness-raising, etc.) as well as specific activities (e.g. social analysis, core group formation, spotting of leaders, conflict management, leadership development, etc.).

Exercises on theory of change also demands that we draft theory of change diagrams as evolving frameworks. It could entail performing several workshops to accommodate new reflections about the context and about the result and evidences of success/failure from implemented activities.

Most importantly, CO-CD workers should be expected to do theory of change reflections with communities. And that this could be incorporated into participatory planning, implementation and evaluation of initiatives.

2. Recognizing changes beyond the control of fieldwork

One student requested, “Is there a way not to deal with too much uncertainties in our work?”

Most of the time, we draw confidence from knowing that our work can somehow be controlled; that to some extent, we can manage the behavior of our partners, community members, and even

the outcomes of our activities. Theory of change thinking, however, does not invite us for deeper reflection about the context to be able to control it. Rather, it leads us to appreciate the complexity and to accept the challenge of continuous innovative adaptations. Ultimately, this needs CO-CD workers who do not fear confusion and constant discovery.

3. Encouraging flexibility of learning tasks

Principles of both theory of change thinking and dialoguing demand for flexibility of learning tasks.

Many development practitioners assume that carefully planned initiatives are automatically good initiatives. This cherished idea in many development organizations contributes to shaping CD learners and development practitioners. This, in turn, leads to a distaste for changes in plans and learning activities. It is not uncommon that some teachers of field-based community development programs had students exhibiting hesitancy, resistance and skepticism in reaction to flexible context-responsive teaching and learning (Jakubowski & Burman, 2004). This flexibility, however, is imperative in both responsive CD practice and CD teaching.

Changing contexts also necessitate adaptability of learning activities. Shifting commitments of partners, new discoveries of community issues or possibilities, and an unpredictable political climate can alter learning needs and tasks. Students must learn to initially identify possible fieldwork activities, and then rethink them, as needed, based on changing context: to "toss them into the wind and rack them again."

4. Exposing contradictions and dilemmas in our work

CO-CD workers need to be reflective, honest and critical. Theory of change thinking exposes uncertainties in social transformation work, to help CD workers examine their practice.

In one fieldwork experience, a partner organization changed the priority in its community organizing program. They had initially planned to work with a poor farming community for their agricultural

development thrust. Later, the organization decided to look for another partner community since the first community was to be displaced from their farms because of a land conversion project of the government.

Theory of change provokes us to continually expose, check and debate on our assumptions about our social transformation agenda. In this particular situation, we dealt with the dilemma of whether to proceed with development work with communities that would be displaced from their lands or to simply comply with the development program of our partner organization. We needed to re-evaluate the CD principle of 'bias for the poor'.

5. Looking at different levels of change

Theory of change posits that change can happen at different levels.

In one community meeting regarding a social enterprise, a woman who wanted to join the enterprise organization brought her small children along. The chairperson of the organization scolded the woman, saying that small children should not be brought to any meetings because they can distract their parents from the proceedings.

That meeting had initially been planned to facilitate social enterprise training, but we saw the need to shift to a discussion on the reality of gender-based obstacles and the inequities in relationships between community members. It then became essential to critically re-think our standpoint: how do we facilitate changes in individuals, structures and processes? Drawing from feminist thinking, transformation comprises "many small revolutions…many small changes in relationships, behaviors, attitudes and experiences" (Kenway in Ledwith, 2009:59).

**Fostering Discussions of Power**

It would be a disservice to depoliticize our practice of social transformation work. The changes we want to see in relationships, individuals, processes, systems and conditions need the understanding and reconfiguration of power.

As mentioned, central to CD work is the political work of community organizing. It is the obligation to find evidences of people's agency and capacity for action; to understand relationships as sites of power and work with people as they transform relationships to be more equal (Pagaduan, 2017).

In addition to Pagaduan's assertion, I am also laying down prominent conceptualizations of power relevant to development work, from VeneKlasen and Miller (2002):

- Power is not unchanging. It can have both positive and negative forms.

- Expressions and forms of power can be domination, resistance, reworking, transforming.

- Power over is seen as a dominating kind of relationship. Power with is based on 'mutual support, solidarity and collaboration' (p.39). Power to is the potential of a person to direct his/her life and conditions. Power within relates to a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge and the capacity to imagine and to hope.

- Power can be denied to people through hurdles in processes, practices, and access to ideas. Examples can be discriminatory rules, authorities, institutions, rejection of people's participation, propagation of a 'culture of silence' and exclusion.

- People can reclaim their power through participation, education, confidence-building, political analysis, organizational strengthening, movement-building, advocacy, demonstrations, and collaboration.

- From gender theory, reclaiming power involves initiating relational and structural transformations in the public (jobs, public life), private (relationships and roles in families, among friends, marriage and partnerships, etc.) and the intimate realm (sense of self, relationship to body and health).

The FIP, as a commitment to critical community development work, avows that transformative work involves uncovering the

different expressions of power, encouraging the poor's recovery of their power. The FIP can also enable reworking of conditions to become more just.

*What does this imply to our fieldwork practice?*

CD learners need to analyze power, continue to journey with the poor, facilitate the strengthening of voice and agency and help communities as they prepare for collective action.

1. Understanding power

Through the FIP, CD learners are tasked to analyze power in everyday dynamics. In the same way, they uncover the manifestations of power in structures of oppression and discrimination, with a keen eye on the multi-dimensional features of these structures—across different levels (local, national, global); across different identities (class, gender, ethnicity, race, disability, etc.) and contexts (economic, cultural, intellectual, historical, etc.) (Ledwith, 2009).

Fostering the discourse of power does not end in knowing. Freire's critical pedagogy tells us that learning about the world leads us to the role of engaging in the relations of the world (Freire, 1998). Understanding power demands us to affirm our covenant of journeying with the people (*pakikipamuhay*), reclaiming power in everyday CO work and problematizing power in partnerships and programs.

2. *Pakikipamuhay*: being humbled by the truths of people in the community

The FIP creates opportunities where learners immerse themselves in the lives of the people they serve, to be humbled by the stories of people in the community.

Discussing power leads us to continually recognize and affirm how women and men express how they get by amidst systematic denial of rights and wellbeing; how they resist disempowering structures; and how they collaborate with different people and groups to rework their conditions. For Pagaduan (2017), the most important theme of life is the voice and agency of people—that the power of individuals in their own lives is a manifestation of the potential of collective action.

We in the FIP are constantly inspired by many alternative stories of freedom – one, for instance, being that of a peasant woman who asserts her voice against a government project that will displace farmers without fair resettlement conditions.

3. Dissecting and reclaiming power in everyday community organizing work

Everyday organizing work in communities confronts us with hierarchical relationships based on class, gender, ethnicity and age. All these provide opportunities during fieldwork to engage such contradictions.

On one occasion, a woman leader in a community organization approached the organization head and the FIP students who were helping in their organizing. The woman leader announced that she could no longer attend the activities of the organization because her husband had forbidden her to join and instead said she needed to focus on taking care of their children. This is undeniably an important concern regarding community leadership that exposes gender issues. This moment became an affirmation of how community leaders courageously face and respond to challenges. CD learners witnessed how the organization head (also a woman) helped the woman leader advocate the importance of the organization to the latter's husband.

As mentioned, the CO process is a site where issues in relationships and power can be contended for. Fieldwork students reevaluate their position in contributing to more equal relationships within the community. In particular, they are called to be keen on challenging hegemonic narratives and practices and replace them with more positive expressions of power, together with the community.

4. Working with people and preparing for collective action

CO-CD learners work with the community, not for the community. Thus, the small victories that people carved out of their efforts became sources of continued hope. For instance, CD learners collaborates and celebrates with a resettlement community that has been able to conduct a dialogue with a water service provider, gained access to training on micro-enterprise, or has received commitment for small financial support for their social enterprise development project.

In the same way, students redefine CO as a solidarity work with oppressed communities. Students listen to one leader saying, "*Nagpapatuloy pa rin ang pang-aapi sa lipunang ito. Nalulungkot ako. Kaya kailangan patuloy tayong kumilos para baguhin ito*" (Oppression in this society persists. This saddens me. That's why we should continue to act to change it).

5. Problematizing power in partnerships and programs

CO-CD students do not only seek and interrogate expressions of power in everyday CO work. They also analyze the power dimension in partnerships and programs.

In particular, they ask the critical questions:

- Who acts?

This allows CD workers to clarify who the main actors in development are. Are the main movers in development the community? Or the development organization? Or the community organizers? In addition, are both community members and community organizations involved in planning activities?

In this process, CD learners are invited to clarify their roles as catalysts and not saviors.

- What kind of development?

CD learners are not passive implementers of planned activities. CD teaching is also about teaching to question. "Are development projects relevant? Are they doing harm to the community members? Do they help transform relationships? Do they ensure equity, empowerment and social justice?"

In this light, students are also encouraged to articulate alternative possibilities.

- How can NGOs, GOs and funders support an empowering process through their projects?

The FIP program can also be a form of advocacy for transformative CD work towards its partner organizations. Aside from challenging the processes that run counter to people-centered development, the FIP can help partner NGOs and government agencies to redefine their work as solidarity efforts to empower the poor.

## Conclusions

The three processes (learning together, theory of change thinking and discussing power) for CD learning I presented are not separate from each other. Employing theory of change and interrogating power both require dialogue between and among practitioners, partners and communities. Critical understanding of power is also necessary for theorizing change and democratizing learning.

In summary, the process and content of CD pedagogy explored through my FIP supervision involves:

*Learning together through dialogue*. This encompasses the challenging task of listening to and learning from one another; recognizing students' experiences while fostering unlearning in a safe space; exposing worldviews; reading and questioning reality together with the people and telling stories of development possibilities.

*Theory of change thinking*. This refers to the process of carefully discerning possible CO-CD work within respective contexts. It includes reflecting on the dynamic realities surrounding CD work as bases for potential CO-CD strategies, at the same time exposing assumptions about these strategies; continuously discovering, embracing confusion and acknowledging dilemmas in CO-CD work; preparing for flexibility; and appreciating that change needs to be initiated on various levels.

*Fostering discussions on power*. This involves understanding power in relationships concerning community life and CD work; humbling oneself in recognition of the agency and power emanating from the people; addressing inequities in everyday CO work; supporting collective actions; and challenging unequal power expressed in programs and partnerships along with propositions for alternative possibilities.

From these reflections, I draw several recommendations for both CD pedagogy and CD practice.

- Faculty supervisors of the FIP are also called upon to persist in dialogue and theorizing change. This creates capacity for critical examination of our work. We need to continue to sustain our "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), a space where we as practitioners expose the continuity, discontinuity, the elusiveness and ambiguity in our work, and go through the painful process of critical examination of one's practice in a safe place.

  The FIP supervisors in this community of practice also needs to support each other as they face the challenge of fostering a safe space for reflecting on and critiquing learners' practice. Tough challenges in our work include the lack of eagerness and readiness of students, the tendency of uncritical self-confirmation of students of their previously-held beliefs, as well as students with little or no pro-poor convictions.

- Supervisors will have to face the challenge of situating CD pedagogy informed by what Jakubowski and Burman (2004) refer to as a careful balance of teaching important content and approaches while maintaining adaptability; that teachers constantly observe students' learning, and re-design learning endeavors on the basis of these assessments.

- Mentoring and coaching are necessary when students have little experience and knowledge to draw from, in order to enable them to engage actively.

- Practitioners can strengthen the process of building knowledge from practice by articulating theories of change. Classroom-based learning prior to the FIP can help strengthen students' practicum experience by integrating theory of change exercises. These exercises can allow students to test out the conceptual and theoretical bases of community development in actual practice. They can utilize their early experiences of immersing in communities and engaging with CD practitioners. This is supplemented through reading widely and articulating their own ideas for practice.

- The FIP teams and faculty must continue to advocate to partner organizations a brand of community development work that restores people's dignity, affirms lives, restores people's voice and agency, and transforms relationships and structures.

This paper does not in any way present the abovementioned processes as a formula for facilitating a field instruction program. My aim is to articulate how I draw practical theory in action, based on the unique contexts of our work in the FIP of UP-CSWCD, my interactions with my own students and our partner communities. Clearly, other theories-in-practice abound. Articulation of these practices can hopefully lead to more discussions and examination to collectively evolve our CD pedagogy and CD practice.

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