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Her professional involvement in disaster management began in 1990 as Director for the Philippine Business for Social Progress, a nongovernmental organization set up by Philippines business, when she helped convene a formal network for NGOs and corporations for disaster response.

She has served as a consultant to the Association of Foundations, a coalition of 121 NGOs in the Philippines; the Bankers Association of the Philippines the Corporate Network for Disaster Response; the US Agency for International Development, the World Bank and other bilateral and multilateral agencies.

Building Bayanihan

The partnership role of NGOs in a new disaster management paradigm

*Disasters magnify societal problems
such as poverty and environmental
abuse. Man's folly, not natural events,
is often the root cause of disasters.
And many disaster victims today
are victims tomorrow.
To go beyond lip service in integrating
emergency management and
development, we need to encourage
indigenous, community-based,
multisectoral partnerships. Disaster
partnerships need a cultural basis for
unity. The Filipino cultural norm of
"bayanihan" — or mutual aid and
cooperation — is one model.
Partnership basics and blocks are
discussed, with an emphasis
on the role of NGOs.*

I am a citizen. The institutions that I represent are my family and my community. My professional commitment is strengthened because of my personal experience with disasters. I have buried my staff workers and I have lost my ancestral home. So disasters for me have become interesting and important, mainly because I have few answers for my children.

■ Bayanihan — a cultural basis for unity

Like a scalpel, a disaster cuts through a society and lays bare what is good and what needs help. It cuts through artifice and social structures and reveals the cultural norms of a people. It gives birth to heroes, bravery, and courage.

In the Philippines, the spirit of "bayanihan"¹ — or the Filipino spirit of cooperation — naturally moves into place when volcanoes erupt and tropical cyclones destroy homes. This cultural value is indigenous, ingrained in Filipino personalities and able to generate an inner strength in times of need. Bayanihan is an offshoot of what Philippine scholars recognize as the Filipino core value of "kapwa," which the noted anthropologist F. Landa Jocano defines as partnership, shared orientation, a meaning of togetherness.²

Filipinos have a cultural basis for partnership and finding unity. Grouping together and forming a service organization is viewed as a common solution when there are gaps in the delivery of public services. In a country where poverty is a blight and the government bureaucracy can be ineffective, private social development organizations have learned to combine criticism with action in the field.

■ Philippine NGOs — part of development process

The Philippine NGO sector is considered as one of the most dynamic in Southeast Asia. Philippine NGOs number in the tens of thousands. The participation of NGOs in Philippine development is mandated by law and by circumstance. This is

1 "Bayanihan" is a Filipino value meaning togetherness in common effort.

2 Jocano, F. Landa. ASAL: The Expressive Core of Filipino Value System. Puniad Research Paper No. 4 (Series on Filipino Values), Puniad Research House, Philippines. 1993.

"Bayanihan" in action during a flood in the Philippines.



Photo: World Meteorological Organization

articulated in the 1987 Philippine constitution and in the Local Government Code of 1991.

Philippine development plans since 1986 have recognized the vital role that the community and the individual play in defining and charting their own development. The greater responsibility to local-level structures and entities to continually improve on and accelerate the development processes. It is acknowledged that the nongovernmental organization is closest to the people.

Philippine NGOs, since 1986, have increased their capacity and skills in order to meet expectations of increased involvement in all phases of development. They have moved from the advocacy mode that characterized most of their work during the Marcos dictatorship, to the skills required of professional development workers and managers.

For a sub-sector of NGOs referred to as social development NGOs, an overriding concern has been how to empower the majority of Filipinos to have access to resources to improve the quality of their lives.

The magnitude and battering frequency of Philippine disasters in recent years have forced Philippine civil society —

with NGOs in the forefront — to participate in disaster relief, resettlement and rehabilitation work. Schools, civic clubs, and private corporations, whose workers are often also victims of calamities, joined in sharing their resources to hasten the return to normalcy. Networks for disaster response have formed among NGOs and among corporations which realized that no one sector possessed all the expertise required.

For quick action and mobilization of volunteers, NGOs have been effective. But the frequency of disasters (some say the Philippines is the most disaster-prone nation in the world) has led Philippine disaster workers, public and private, to ask for new approaches. Multisectoral partnerships are one solution

■ Partnerships for emergency management

Why form partnerships? Partnerships at the sectoral or multisectoral level are essential to the sustainability of NGOs. NGOs are often constrained by their reliance on public and donor support for their activities. NGO involvement in complex issues that spread beyond small communities shows that the

resources are limited for the magnitude of need.

Partnerships help stretch out meagreness. They consolidate gains, reduce duplication and turf battles. They help in knowledge-sharing and capacity-building. They filter out the real NGOs from the fly-by-night NGO merchant, and build the credibility and integrity of the sector. They consolidate a political presence and provide a formal mechanism where government and private groups can speak on equal footing and minimize finger-pointing. Partnerships emphasize that there should be no monopoly on good ideas and right approaches and theoretically allow for maximum participation of all concerned

■ Examples in the Philippines

The Philippine experience in partnerships for disaster response is varied. It includes multi-sectoral coordination, led by government-mandated disaster coordinating centres, sectoral groups among NGOs and among corporations. Significantly, with the move in Philippine governance to decentralization of functions to local units, more local partnerships have formed

Inter-Agency Network for Disaster Response. At the national level, ten NGOs now regularly meet and implement common projects as the Inter-Agency Network for Disaster Response. These NGOs are the Philippine National Red Cross, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Citizens Disaster Rehabilitation Network (CDRN), the Council for People's Development, Catholic Relief Services, Luzon Secretariat for Social Action, National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Philippine Business for Social Progress and the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement. The Philippine

National Red Cross is the Network host. Every two years the host rotates

United NGOs of Zambales and Olongapo. Parallel with collaboration at the national level, provincial NGO networks have formed. In Central Luzon, the continuing disaster from lahar flowing down the slopes of the volcano Mt. Pinatubo threatens communities. One of the three provincial NGO networks is the NNZO, or United NGOs of Zambales and Olongapo (Nagkakaisang NGO as Zambales at Olongapo). This provincial NGO network has as its mission to build a strong, committed network of genuine development NGOs in Zambales and Olongapo working for and with marginalized people, facilitating their empowerment for the protection and enhancement of their basic rights, socio-economic development and sustainable relations with the environment and ecological balance. There are four programmes that the network is pursuing: socioeconomic, governance, ecology and disaster management

Albay Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council. In the Bicol Region, the Albay Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council composed of the local government, Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare, Office of the Civil Defence and the Philippine National Red Cross efficiently coordinated a disaster response when Mayon Volcano exploded, without warning, on 2 February 1993 and killed 76 people. Their adequate response is directly linked to a 3-year disaster preparedness and response programme funded by the Italian Government in the area. This project recognized the community's capacity to cope with the risk of recurrent natural phenomena and stressed inter-institutional coordination. The

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What about before the disaster and in-between? This is the malaise that the disaster scalpel exposes. Disadvantaged communities are the main victims. The problems before a disaster are the problems after a disaster, albeit worse. They are victims because land use zones were not implemented, forests were denuded, and they were not made aware of hazards in their environment.

project resulted in a Provincial Disaster Operations Center which was adequately supplied with materials and equipment to facilitate coordination work during disasters.³

Corporate Network for Disaster Response. A unique grouping is within the Philippine corporate sector. The Luzon earthquake caused leading industrialist Mr. Andres Soriano and his brother, Carlos, leading industrialists and philanthropists, to suggest that perhaps the business sector should get involved in disaster rescue and relief, beyond the ad hoc relief campaigns. Shortly after, a network of concerned corporations agreed to form the Corporate Network for Disaster Response after a workshop in January 1992 on Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Preparedness.

The Corporate Network for Disaster Response is a voluntary alliance of private corporations, business associations and corporate foundations operating in the Philippines. The CNDR objective is to rationalize and institutionalize resource mobilization within the business and NGO community during times of disaster. Past experience showed that corporations were among the first to be approached during Philippine disasters. The impact of their help was often scattered — or worse, channeled to the public market for sale. Second, the corporation's employees were often among the victims of the disaster and third, there was something morally wrong about getting on with business while the communities or their neighbours were limping along.

Accepting that the "island in the sun" stance was unacceptable to the business role in society, corporations have acknowledged the network and are supporting it. What corporations also accepted was that they did not relate well to communities affected by disasters. Nor could they implement the development programmes that were needed to get the victims to start new lives.

These limitations of the corporate sector, were, however, traditional NGO strengths. Corporations thus formed partnerships with NGOs, which have worked for the Mt. Pinatubo, Typhoon Ruping, Ormoc (torrential rains/mudslides) and Mt. Mayon relief programmes.

New Paradigm of Disaster Management

- **Thinking & Approach: Disasters and Development**
- **Management & Organization: Indigenous multi-sectoral partnerships**
- **Goal: Disaster Reduction and Sustainable Development**

Donor initiatives. Donors have also initiated collaboration. The first donor agency to convene government agencies, donors, NGOs and the corporate sector was the US Agency for International Development (USAID). In preparation for a second wave of eruptions and lahars, USAID organized a conference entitled "Pinatubo II: the PVO/NGO/Private Sector/People's Organizations Response" on 24-25 April, 1992. While the conference mainly guided USAID in focusing its efforts for the Pinatubo area, it allowed professionals in disaster management to meet and find common areas where work could be possible.

A year after, in May 1993, the UNDP initiated its Disaster Management Training Programme and invited a multisectoral group to sit together. Sadly, many of the action points remain unaccomplished.

The Mt. Pinatubo Commission has sponsored multisectoral technical consultations, and plans to complete these with a general consultation on the Master Plan for the region in June 1994. Clearly, and with some disappointment, efforts have been limited to meetings. There are no partnerships, particularly in PMP (prevention/mitigation/preparedness) that can be looked on as a model of intersectoral coordination and efficient use of resources. What exists are the basic building blocks needed for partnership among NGOs, nationally and at the provincial level, in the corporate sector, and among governments and donors.

■ Questions on disaster relief

Questions are now raised on how effective sectoral disaster relief networks have been in terms of getting things back to normal. It is becoming apparent that not all organizations have the capability to participate in relief work with the efficiency, for example, of the Philippine National Red Cross. Nor are such

3 An evaluation of the Disaster Preparedness and Management Programme of Albay Province, Philippines. College of Public Health, University of the Philippines, Manila. 1993

networks always able to operate for extended periods of time

Relief may last longer than a week, extending in some disasters to over 6 months. Relief needs professional skills, such as search and rescue. Manuals have been written and training programmes designed to ensure that the after-disaster response is not lacking.

But what about before the disaster and in-between? This is the malaise that the disaster scalpel exposes. With large bandages, we have been trying to treat symptoms of terminally ill societal distress. Considering the environmental marks our planet has been receiving, is it not conceivable to propose that all disasters are man-made?

The Philippine disaster experience has vividly shown that it is the disadvantaged communities that are the main victims of natural disasters. Relief does not automatically put them on their feet.

Disaster after disaster, the same communities are affected. The problems before a disaster are the problems after the disaster, albeit worse. Land, lack of jobs, malnutrition, poor public services. They are victims because land use zones were not implemented, forests and mangroves were denuded, and they were not made aware of the hazards in their environment.

Clearly, programmes other than relief are needed. Resettlement. Rehabilitation. Preparedness. Mitigation and Prevention. NGOs need not crowd the relief begging bowl. There is room for all. And not only when disaster strikes.

Poverty and the urgent demands of sustainable development dictate the need for a new definition of disaster management that looks beyond the present linear concept of relief. A new paradigm that sees the interlocking reality between disasters and development. A new approach that is based on the formation of multisectoral partnerships.

■ Blocks to a new sustainable approach

There are blocks to the acceptance of this new paradigm.

The first block is within government, donors and the

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NGOs themselves. Disaster relief is placed on a separate floor away from discussions of environmental degradation and land use planning. An acceptance of the paradigm will mean breaking up of divisions, changes in donor aid guidelines and NGO development programming. Breaking the mystique of disaster management can be done by setting in place multiple redundant channels of communication. Disaster science and its language should become popular. In my country, everyone knows what lahar is.

If we are successful, hazard mapping will soon be part of the vocabulary of the corporate planner and real estate developer and home owner. PMP (prevention, mitigation and preparedness) will no longer be an acronym for a new tyre or battery or Philippine Military Police.

A second is that there are no universal recipes for a disaster management partnership. We propose two considerations: the culture of the people and the projected nature of the disaster.

The cultural norms of a people will shape the disaster management organization or collaborating mechanism. Advocates of management by culture claim that Philippine productivity is often limited by the use of western management principles. They repeat that management is not only output, but a social and cultural encounter.

Our disaster workers have been frustrated by the unresponsiveness of communities after months of community training on what to do.

Discussions have led to the possibility that the western-originated teachings need to be adapted to the culture of the people. For unless properly understood, the differences can generate more conflicts than harmony.

The scale and complexity of a disaster will dictate a unique mix of resources and expertise. The needs of the Albay residents are different from those in the Pinatubo disaster-prone areas.

Mary Anderson, in evaluating the Mt. Pinatubo resettlement programmes for USAID/Manila stressed that "differences in people's circumstances mean that there are differences in

*Living with
the winds —
Residents
survey the
damage of
typhoon Sisang
(Albay,
Philippines,
1987).*



Photo: Jacqueline Jakubowicz

their suffering" and recommends that assistance must take account of these differences.⁴

Third, disaster management should stop being a project but move into being an approach. The disaster, and in this we refer to a disaster continuum, should cease to be viewed as a military logistical exercise. This means that beyond the training for technical skills, there needs to be support for the planning process to create the links between the different phases in the continuum. A planning process that considers not only the individuals' capacity for action but the environment in which he must use new skills. Is there policy and a mandate? Are the roles defined? Has sufficient societal acceptance been created through public information and education? It means a new view that allows us to see the problem as interrelated with other systems and not compartmentalized and ad hoc.

Fourth, there is an attitude that disaster management is mainly the government's job. This has labeled disasters as political exercises, heightened minute mistakes and diminished good public sector work.

Part of this block is the age-old distrust that NGOs have

towards government. NGOs have traditionally kept themselves aloof from working with government. They cite corruption, bureaucracy and fear of contamination as main reasons. They maintain the shield of suspicion, caution and cynicism. This limits their being able to take on new roles and responsibilities.

The Albay experience, among a few others in the Philippines, shows that it is possible and effective for different sectors to work together.

A fifth is an acceptance beyond lip-service of a new partner in promoting the paradigm — the community themselves. At the heart of the disaster is a community of people who need to participate in planning their own future. A multitude of top-down decisions, based on a score of national and international master plans, compound the disaster by creating another disaster in itself. Without the participation of the people, the response is polite silence, apathy or outright rejection of the plans.

■ Critical NGO self-assessment

NGOs are uniquely placed to bridge the transition to a new view on disasters that links it to sustainable development. As

4 Anderson Mary B. Lessons learned in Rehabilitation/Resettlement of Populations displaced by Disasters and Policy Implications of these Lessons for Programmes to assist the Mt Pinatubo Victims. Collaborative for Development Action, Cambridge, Mass., USA. May 1993

groups of citizens, they better understand the needs of communities at risk. As private organizations providing public services, they can better understand formal structures and responses. But there are flashing caution lights as NGOs look for new roles.

First is an acceptance of the NGOs limitations and strengths. There are some large non-profits that posture as being capable of being a parallel government. Donors may have inadvertently contributed to this reticent arrogance by using NGOs as a convenient conduit for disaster funds when government relations are strained.

Second, NGOs have to recognize that many problems are no longer solvable by merely focusing at the micro level. In small scale disasters that are short in duration, indeed non-profits have proven that their flexibility can outpace the slow bureaucratic reaction of government agencies. But in long gestating, broad scale complex disasters, the non-profits' weaknesses are seen. In the Pinatubo disaster, jobs are the issue. Beyond the attractive business proposal that a non-profit can package, fiscal incentives may be needed to lure reluctant investors into what is an unstable environment. Incentives that non-profits can prod government into providing proper research and debate.

Third, NGOs need to understand and respect the different members in the partnership — the government, the scientific community and the private-for-profit corporation. This means an acceptance of the fact that change cannot happen in isolation. Consensus — no matter how tedious — needs to be built among all stakeholders. Innovation needs to be reinforced and multiplied. Or it fails and gets filed away as another bright idea before its time.

Fourth, NGOs need to remember as they build up their professionalism, skills, capabilities and often little bureaucracies, **that their greatest strength and role is in building bridges and bonds of community between informal and formal structures.** The size and complexity of government makes direct participation of the citizen difficult. In the NGO, the citizen can participate in the democratic shaping of a future.

■ New roles for NGOs

The first is as resource mobilizer — not only for funds — but for the talent and expertise needed to limit the risks from natural disasters under the disaster continuum approach. Relief is an important role; the trained volunteer that helps and not hinders is invaluable. Applying the disaster continuum model on the Philippine experience, a wide and varied list of needs arise.

Under the new definition for disaster management, the list is as long as the list of jobs in the Sunday Classified: cartographers, trainers, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists, entrepreneurs, pipe fitters, heavy equipment operators, home builders, architects, economists, land use planners, environmentalists and the list goes on.

The second job is to integrate and facilitate the smooth introduction of volunteer resources into existing disaster management partnerships so common visions are understood and adhered to. Of particular importance is the participation of the private-for-profit sector, who may be impatient for action as consensus is built up in the partnership, and the communities who may feel inferior about voicing their hopes.

The third is to continue to innovate, catalyze and advocate. Quick, moving in and out, creative and critical, the non-profit asks questions on behalf of those who are silenced and disempowered. Models, policy research and advocacy are again areas where the NGO needs to lead in promoting a new sustainable approach to disaster management. Culturally-sensitive approaches to disaster management should be documented and proposed.

The fourth is to specialize and learn the trade needed to be subcontracted as effective managers of disaster continuum projects that are within their capabilities to implement.

And the fifth and most important is to market and lead in promoting the disaster continuum approach and build up a new store of knowledge, of technology and method on disaster management that excites those who are comfortable in addressing disasters in the old way and answers the doubts of the new entrants into the partnership. The new role is that of being a partnership worker — building communities that are not sectoral but united in seeking a sustainable solution to natural hazard reduction.

In the Philippines, we would refer to this as building bayanihan. ■

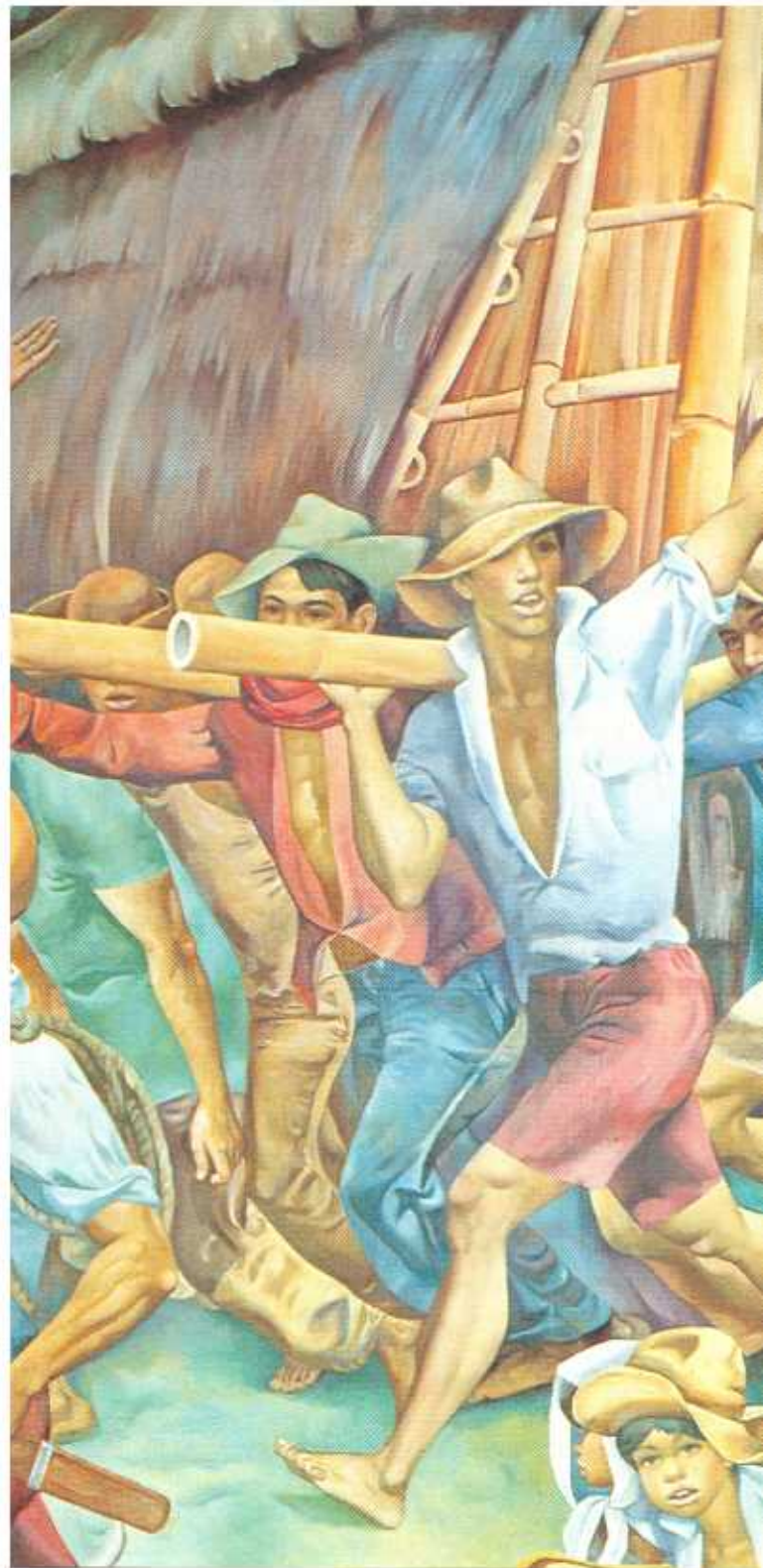
New Roles for NGOs as Partnership Workers

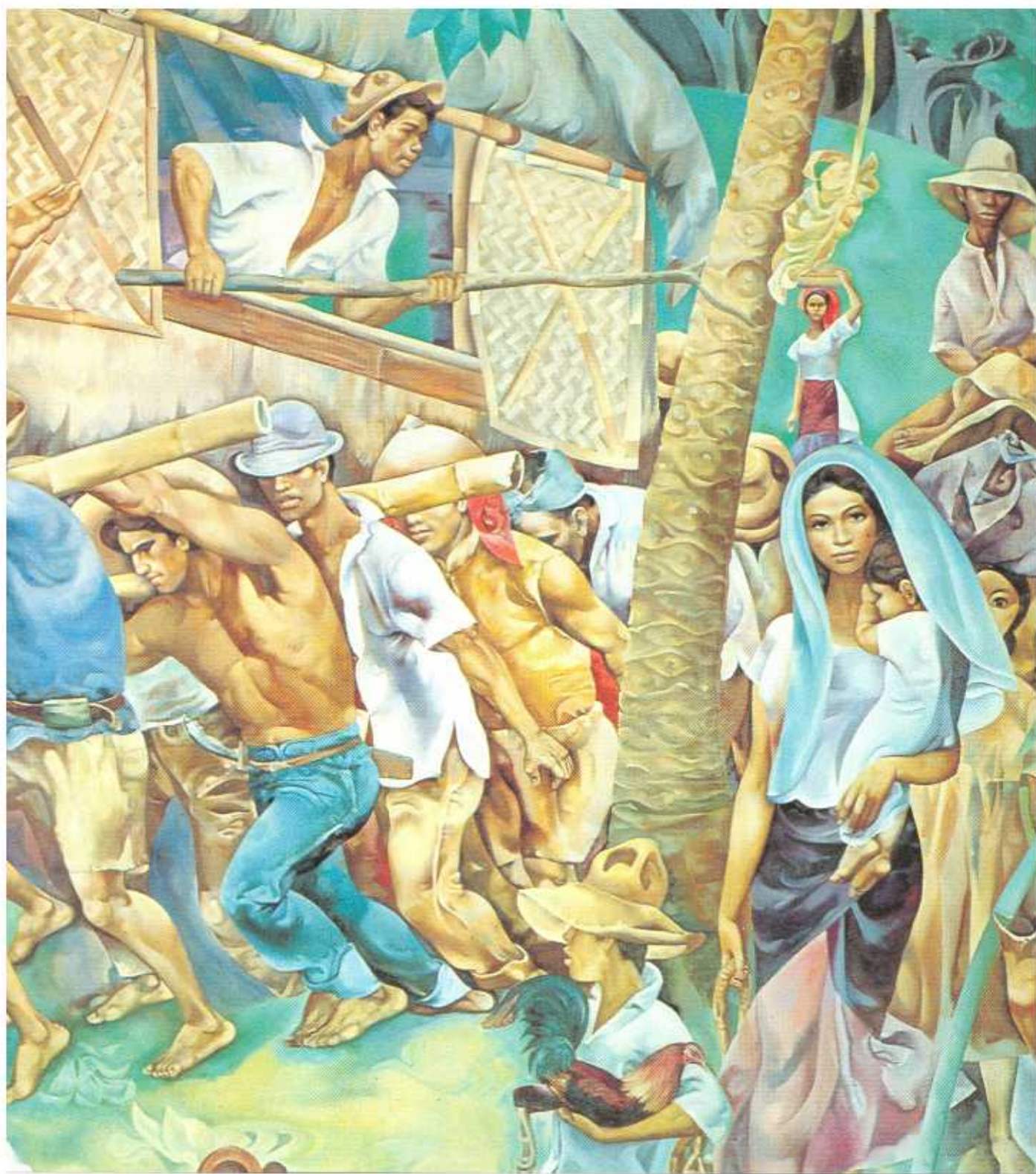
- ▶ **1- Resource Mobilizer of technical experts, information and volunteers**
NGOs can act as resource mobilizers — not only for funds, but to mobilize talent and expertise for all phases of the disaster continuum. From photographers to pipe fitters to psychiatrists, NGOs are strong in identifying and mobilizing community talents.
- ▶ **2- Facilitator and Integrator**
NGOs can ensure the smooth introduction of volunteer services into partnerships with the public and private sectors. They can also facilitate relations between public and private sector partners, in order to forge a common vision.
- ▶ **3- Innovator and Advocate**
NGOs often have the advantage of being more flexible than government and business, and closer to cultural approaches and needs of local communities.
- ▶ **4- Experts, Specialists**
NGOs need to specialize and “learn the trade” in order to be effective managers when subcontracted to implement projects
- ▶ **5- Social Marketers**
NGOs need to take the lead in “marketing” the disaster continuum approach and building new partnerships before, during and after disasters.

Solidarity

The spirit of cooperation for disaster management is often strongest at community level. All communities have traditions which reinforce the human traits of solidarity, strength and bravery in the face of tragedy. These are the traditions that we must appreciate and build upon in order to encourage culturally-rooted, "bottom-up" partnerships for disaster management. For while international organizations provide needed manpower and resources in times of disaster, it is the local community which bears the brunt of the disaster impact. Such indigenous partnerships grow in fertile ground — communities threatened by disasters have a powerful incentive to work together to prevent disasters, reduce their impact, and recover quickly.

Right: Carlos Francisco, the nationally acclaimed Philippine artist, depicts the Philippine spirit of "bayanihan" — people banding together in a common effort in times of need.





"Bayanhan" — painting by Carlos V. Francisco reproduced from "Carlos V. Francisco the Man and Genius of Philippine Art," Ayala Museum, Philippines

