



## Chapter 12

# Hard Learning in Zimbabwe (SADET) and in post-civil war Mozambique

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"Why Zimbabwe, of all places?"

This is the question Raff Carmen put to us at the start of our 12 years of contacts. Raff, searching for Third World approaches to Organization and Management had come upon the method in the magazine "*Workteam*",

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published by the NGO “Co-operation for Research, Development and Education” CORDE, in Botswana, and got our address from the Netherlands Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries, HIVOS. Gavin Andersson<sup>2</sup>, then editor of Workteam, had heard about the method from Ian Cherrett, then working for HIVOS, Netherlands, and became one of the essential people for its introduction and adaptation to Southern African contexts. In his capacity of HIVOS representative to Central America, Ian Cherrett learned about the Organization Workshop method, and was instrumental in the creation of the ‘Honduran Institute for Rural Development’ IHDER (see also Chapter 6, Honduras).

This Institution, in turn, attracted the staff of a just terminated FAO project headed by Clodomir Santos de Morais, and managed to continue to work until today for the capacitation of the peasantry in Central America, mainly in Honduras. In the early eighties, Ian, then still in Central America, was appointed HIVOS representative to Southern Africa. After several hours of in depth consultation on the technicalities of the approach, we outlined our potential involvement in the introduction of the method to Southern Africa. Whilst this was taking place in Central America, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, in landlocked Zimbabwe, Cephass Muropa, another key figure in the introduction of the method to southern Africa reminisces: *“When Zimbabwe attained its independence, in 1980, I was a member of Cold Comfort Farm Society, an agricultural collective co-operative formed in 1964 and later closed down in 1970 by the Rhodesian authorities. This experience convinced me that the collective ownership of the means of production was the only answer to the problems our black population was subjected to, by the colonial masters. The closing down of our co-operative by the illegal authorities strengthened our spirits even more. When we finally attained independence, our new government set up a department responsible for Co-operative Development, under the Ministry of Agriculture. The Minister, at the time, was Moven Mahachi, one of the members of our co-operative and a prominent cadre of Zimbabwean struggle for independence. Our government was facing the big task of resettling tens of thousands of refugees, ex-combatants and displaced people, and several thousand hectares of land was acquired for resettlement purposes. Under the resettlement model “A”, a family was allocated 5 hectares of land to be individually cultivated and collective grazing pastures. Those who were interested in pooling their resources together and form co-operatives were*

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<sup>2</sup> Gavin Andersson in the then Apartheid S. Africa had started a Woodworkers Co-operative using the artisan form of labor, ie with each member making each article from beginning to end. The need to increase production and productivity led this co-operative to introduce the division of labor. When Gavin heard about the role of division of labor in the Organizational Workshop, he had no doubt in his mind about the suitability of the OW approach to the South African context and became instrumental to the adaptation of the method to the region. (PS: For Gavin see <http://www.seriti.org.za>).

*allocated big farms under model “B”, to be cultivated collectively. The history of Cold Comfort and its contributions to the armed struggle was still fresh in the minds of many people and the new co-operators started to come and seek advice on co-operativism. 13 agricultural co-operatives met at Cold Comfort Farm in January 1982. This meeting was followed by another one that was attended by 33 co-operatives, and by a conference, where 76 co-operatives created the Organization of Collective Co-operatives in Zimbabwe OCCZIM. I became the first Chairman”*(Personal recollections of Cephass Muropa)

The answer to the question “*Why Zimbabwe, of all places?*”, therefore, is that Zimbabwe holds a lot in common with those Latin American countries that went through Land Reform land redistribution processes. Even before independence, Zimbabwe developed its own co-operative experience. *Cold Comfort Farm Society* was a commercially viable co-operative, operating under the difficult conditions imposed on the black population by the successive colonial and white settler rule. Its profits went into funding the struggle for independence, taking care of the families of the jailed freedom fighters, sending recruits to Mozambique for training, and posting them to the war fronts, thereafter. Zimbabweans thereby demonstrated their ability to organize both the political-military and the productive, market oriented side or an enterprise. Farm operations provided a convenient cover for people's participation in the armed struggle under the strict principles and procedures that looked very much like the principles held dear by the Organizational Workshop approach: “*Cooperatives urgently needed management training and financial resources, and OCCZIM’s Executive Committee embarked upon a successful fund-raising campaign and opened training opportunities, even abroad, for the membership of the collective cooperatives. We soon realized, though, that newly trained co-operators, once equipped with certificates, would leave the co-operatives and join private enterprises. That is when Mr Ian Cherrett, then HIVOS representative to Southern Africa told me about OW-EWTO.* (Muropa ibid)

### **The first Organization Workshops in Southern Africa**

Ian Cherrett and Cephass Muropa, with the help of HIVOS, Glen Forest Training Center, (a local NGO) and OCCZIM sponsorship, ran the first Field OW ever in (anglophone) southern Africa. The place was **Rujeko** Co-operative (Makoni District Union, Zimbabwe) and the year was 1986. This was followed by another OW in Serowe, Botswana. Cephass Muropa gives us the following “*before-after*” account of this workshop:

*“The situation at Rujeko Co-operative before the OW was very bad indeed. The leadership was using the co-op’s property to their own private advantage and a lot of embezzlement was taking place. The Chairperson, for example, took*

*over one acre of land as well as the borehole, meant for the co-operative vegetable garden, and started cultivating for his own account. The leadership used some of the buildings to rear their own chickens and distributed fertilizer belonging to the co-op among those members who supported them. This practice led the rest of the members to demand their own pieces of land for individual cultivation. It was striking to see very healthy individually cultivated plots next to the wilting collective ones. The members thought that the leadership were into witchcraft to keep their positions, and hoped for outsiders from the Ministry of Agriculture or Donor Organizations to redress the situation. One expatriate had spent three years there, without much visible success. Superstition, allegations of witchcraft, gossip, indiscipline and confusion prevailed. The success story of the Rujeko OW, though, was shortlived. Training institutions failed to come up with the complementary skills and managerial training needed. There just was no follow-up, and the newly acquired democratic decision making procedures, namely the Critical Analysis and the Work Plan had not yet become a deeply established routine. New members brought new ideas and the co-op went back to its pre-OW vertical, authoritarian ways". (Muropa ibid)*

The results of the Rujeko OW, though, made a great impact on further developments in the southern African co-operative movement. The first issue of "*Workteam*" (1986:1), reported on the Rujeko workshop and thereafter carried stories of others which took place successively in Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia and the Caribbean. "*Workteam*" also published a cartoon series on the de Morais' Theory of Organization. Between 1986 and 1988 Organizational Workshops took place in Serowe, Otse, and at a salt production workshop in the desert, in Botswana. In South Africa, the NGO *Akanani*, in the then Northern Transvaal built, part of its training centre through an OW event. The Rujeko and Serowe workshops, in turn, led to the invitation of the authors, who were brought to Zimbabwe to develop the approach further. The Glen Forest Training Center a rural vocational training center hosting the approach would soon prove to be not up to that task.

## **Hard learning**

Once in Zimbabwe, we started by creating the conditions to run an Organizational Workshop at Glen Forest Training Center. Only the center's Director had been exposed to the method, at the 1986 Rujeko Workshop and the rest of the staff was completely new to the exercise. It was just like trying to stage an opera with people who did not know either music or drama, letting alone the combination of both. A new intake of trainees was coming to attend several rural vocational training courses, and we thought we could run the workshop by handing-over to the trainees all the facilities of the center, plus all

the training staff and food for the first days. The enterprise formed by the trainees would have to organize all training activities, plus catering, recreation, sports and whatever the group could think of. It was clear to us that we were not achieving the right social composition of the group, but this seemed to be the only possible way to get started. We had drafted in some teaching aids to illustrate the *Theory of Organization*. They were a set of *flip charts* with drawings that we put on the walls of the lecture hall. Women sat on the floor, the men on the available benches. After the director's speech, time dragged on without the and the participants seeming able to get organized. Three meals a day were served for the first three or four days, after which the group could not put to use the remaining food that had been handed over to them, let alone organizing any other productive or learning activity. People would gather in the grounds, the women with their small babies, waiting for food, running into a second and a third day. The only activity taking place was singing and dancing. The workshop was about to collapse.

During our previous years in Latin America we had begun explaining the changes that occur in the OW by means of Leont'ev's theory of the *objectivized activity*<sup>3</sup>. We thought that this theory would be able to explain the phenomena that was taking place with our 120 participants, and this understanding, in turn, would help us take the experiment forward. The Theory of Organization has introduced the concept of "*ideological behavior*" applied to four social strata, namely the *artisan (or individual producer)*, the *worker*, the *half-worker* and the *lumpen* (social misfit). Deep insights had been achieved into the psychological traits belonging to the artisan form of labor, but research had never carried out into the psychological traits attaching to the other forms of labor. Therefore, the situation we faced in the *Svetaida* Workshop could not be directly explained by the Theory of Organization and was going clearly beyond what had been termed "the *anomie* period", known from our Latin American experience. The facts on the ground pushed us to go one step further in the analysis of how the activity determines psychological reflection, to look into the activities that this particular group of participants used to perform, and explain, thereafter, their reaction to the conditions of the workshop.

The participants were not exactly "individual, self-sufficient workers". Although, like tailors or shoemakers, they individually perform all operations needed to produce one article, subsistence farmers do not draw all they need from this one activity, and, therefore, are far from self-sufficient. The classic self-sufficient peasant farmer obtains the milk and meat from a few cows, the

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<sup>3</sup> Leont'ev, A.N. "*Activity, Consciousness and Personality*" translated in English by Mary Hall 1975 (dyatel'nost in the original Russian: '*objectivized activity*')

meat from pigs, chickens and small livestock, and a variety of vegetables, fruits and cereals from the fields. Therefore the stereotype of the “artisan” does not account for the context of their activities and can not explain all the characteristics of their social psychology. On top of seasonal subsistence farming and cattle rearing, hunting and gathering are not a distant past, but something they still resort to. In an effort to explain this particular form of psychological reflection of these activities, we coined the expression “*pastoralism*”<sup>4</sup> to define the attitude of *waiting for any given situation to sort itself out, with little or no attempt to intervene in the course of events*. In the activity of the small subsistence farmer, *waiting for the rain* shapes the social psychology of subsistence farmers, who resort to prayers, and, in some cultures, to singing and dancing, as the only legitimate “intervention” allowed in their situation. This explained why the participants witnessed the total disintegration of their enterprise, “*sitting to the death*”, even when they had run out of food for themselves and for their children. As said before, as a result of the situation the OW had placed them in, the only thing they could do was to engage in singing and dancing, apparently as a culturally determined expression of their defencelessness in front of a situation that they could not control. At the same time, this could be an expression of hope and claim for the intervention of external actors to do something for them, or on their behalf.

Some of the participants came to ask for the intervention of the director, saying that the group had failed to organize itself, asking for the director to take control of the center and organize the activities for them. Trying to shake them up, the director addressed the participants in a way that in Latin America would have provoked a violent reaction. “*This would mean that you are unable to organize yourselves, and that you need the white man to come and organize things for you?*” The immediate unanimous response was clapping hands, ululating in agreement, and relief! As said before, when designing the workshop, we did not control the variable “social composition of the group” and we did not include assembly-line workers or people with experience in social or technical division of labor. Their expected “*ideological behavior*”<sup>5</sup> would have made them to contribute the organizational framework that is characteristic of their different life experience, assisting other participants to find the way around their problem. So, in order to rescue the sinking Svetaida<sup>6</sup> Workshop, we resorted to

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<sup>4</sup> The term '*Pastoralism*' has been considered dismissive towards rural communities whose main activity is cattle herding. The intention of the authors is only to describe the general attitude affecting those people who would rather not intervene in matters affecting their social situation in preference to passive acceptance of the natural conditions that govern their habitat.

<sup>5</sup> The concept of '*ideological behavior*' has not been defined by de Morais. We understand it as a set of psychological traits shared by individuals who perform the same type of activity and would prefer to refer call it '*Social Psychology*'.

<sup>6</sup> *Svetaida* means 'Let's Learn' in Shona. Meaningful names of development initiatives is a tradition in this part

constitute what de Morais had termed a “*primary structure*”<sup>7</sup>, to overcome the inability of the group to organize themselves and make progress in the self-sustaining way, as a group. The workshop then managed to meet its objectives. A small group of participants were able to constitute themselves into a small enterprise that undertook construction work at the Center, lasting a few months, but without further follow-up. One of the participants to the Svetaida workshop successfully lobbied for another OW to be held at his co-operative, and Norwegian People’s Aid, a donor agency, sponsored a workshop in *Mauya* Co-operative. This last one led to an interrupted chain of workshops covering a whole district. The method had stepped into the country.

### **The adaptation process**

The model of Organization Workshop that we took to Southern Africa came from the Honduran experience. There, most of the workshops took place in the capacitation center “*David Funez Villatoro*”, that had been specially set up to this effect. The participants used to receive the property rights over 40 hectares of maize ready to harvest, chicken run, cattle, piggery, orchard, vegetable garden, tractors with their drivers, one small pick-up truck, secretarial staff, offices and all the facilities of the center. The participants should harvest, take the maize to the neighboring town San Pedro Sula, sell, and record the sales and the money. The center would serve food 3 times a day for 3 days only, and from the fourth day onwards the participants should buy and cook their own meals from the proceedings of their sales. From the very moment in which the participants gave themselves any form of organization, precarious as it might have been, they received the property rights and managed all productive, service, cultural and sportive activities that took place during the workshop. The participants’ enterprise used to be, therefore, a *real*, though temporary enterprise. The quantity and quality of the means of production in the hands of the participants, plus the need to generate their own means of survival used to be complex enough to prompt the participants to the development of a proper management system.

When the authors came to Southern Africa, they did not find the described conditions in the Glen Forest Training Center, and must, therefore, create in the villages the conditions for the establishment of a real, though temporary capacitation enterprise. In this situation, they resorted to a so-called

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of Africa.

<sup>7</sup> *Primary Structure*: the concept is used by de Morais to refer to a small group chosen by the OW Director from the larger group of participants, preferably 'workers' who are perspicacious in spotting dangers of group cohesion and discipline breaking up and have the skills to remedy such situations.

*'Development Fund'*<sup>8</sup> that was instrumental in concentrating the population around some productive activities chosen by them, and to prepare the set-up of a village enterprise. In 1989, the Norwegian People's Aid NPA funded an Organisational Workshop at Mauya Cooperative, within the Nyama Resettlement Scheme, Hurungwe District, Mashonaland West, Zimbabwe. Before the Workshop, the cooperative was collapsing, despite the large amounts of money granted to it by NPA. In the three seasons after the workshop, the cooperative achieved a significant increase in its tobacco crop, which allowed it to pay back its huge loan to the Agricultural Finance Corporation. The lack of operating capital and the drought hindered the possibilities of overcoming its financial difficulties once and for all, but the continuing relationship with the financial institution allowed the Coop to remain viable. In this example, it was very clear that the co-operative attained a sound level of organizational strength after the workshop. Other major achievements of the Cooperative to date are the establishment of literacy and an adult education programme, which lasted for many years and graduated several cooperators. Based on this accomplishment, the next step would have been to turn the organizational strength into economic success. This was not possible due to the prevailing economic conditions in the country, characterized by prohibitive interest rates that prevent an adequate capitalization of the farms.

Three villagers of neighboring 7B village participated in the Mauya Organizational Workshop, after which they encouraged their own village to request for a similar exercise. The Village had obtained the services of Zimbabwe's Agricultural Extension Services (AGRITEX) which provided a feasibility study and the blueprint for the construction of a small earth dam. This prompted Catholic Relief Services (CRS), to sponsor another OW that took place at Village 7B, from June 30, 1990 to July 28, 1990. After that, virtually each and every village at Nyama, Pote I and Pote II resettlement schemes and the communal lands of Mukwichi, Kasangarare and Chundu would request for Organizational Workshops to take place at their villages. The informal grouping constituted by the authors, Cephas Muropa and Panganayi Fobo decided to create the *Southern Africa Development Trust* (SADET), a non profit organization that would seek for funding and implement the corresponding projects. At this stage, it was essential to produce documents that could explain the process. Literature on the method was reduced to a few paragraphs of the Theory of Organization that did not help spreading the approach, raise funds, or explain it to the newly recruited local staff. Therefore, all workshops held so far were documented, and the authors produced a collection of papers on what the Organization Workshop was all about. Initially, in the NGO community there

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<sup>8</sup> *'Development Fund'* is the way we found around the problems of handling money, which is as necessary a capacitating teaching aid as all the others. The Development Fund allows the participants to be involved in real decision making about real money

was little or no doubt that the two expatriates from Latin America, could effectively run such workshops, but nobody would believe that local personnel could replicate them. High illiteracy rates made lectures difficult to follow, and put the content beyond the reach of most of the current development workers, even those with University degrees. The role of the Director had not been made clear nor transparent. It seemed inextricably linked with the personality of the Director, taking a cue from de Morais' own personal style. The results obtained in the field seemed to be the work of a "guru" and his followers, rather than the result of a consistent, systematic, replicable developmental approach. The method seemed to dwell on the Director's role, and this role seemed to be non-transferable.

Nonetheless, the results appeared so impressive that the International NGOs Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and *terre des hommes* Germany (tdh) funded SADET to the tune of US \$ 1 1/4 m. This created an acute need to put together a Director's formative process, aimed to build a team able to undertake mass capacitation operations. This process had to take care of the following:

- .Development of teaching aids to deliver the Theory of Organization.
- .Analysis of the Director's tasks and role.
- .Analysis of the intended productive activities of the workshop.
- .Development of the theoretical basis of the process.
- .Systematization of the process.

Initially, lectures were delivered in English, with either Shona or Ndebele translation. Lectures would last for about one hour, allowing time for questions at the end. Sometimes the question period could last for 30 minutes or more, and depending on the interest the director is able to get, the participants can still ask for extended lecture time. The lectures were greatly facilitated by the preparation of more than 100 Overhead Projector *transparencies*, explaining each one of the concepts of the Theory of Organization. At the beginning of our experience in Southern Africa, we could see that the participants, especially illiterate women were taking pains to copy the drawings and the concepts from the transparencies. This was utterly impossible, for they did not have literacy or drawing skills, let alone the ability to hold the pencil. The transparencies' presentation time was always too short, and they got frustrated when the next transparency came on. The authors then developed a second set of teaching aids, with the same content of the transparencies, enlarged to A3 size, conveniently laminated. After the lectures, the posters corresponding to the lecture would hang on the walls of the lecture hall, or even from trees, for the people to study them. It is impressive to see small groups of participants copying from the posters after every lesson, whenever they have the time to do so. The teaching aids helped quite a lot in the Directors' formative process,

since the basic script of each lecture is already in the transparencies. Therefore, inexperienced lecturers resort to the transparency to remind people of the concepts, until they achieved the ability to elaborate on them on their own, adding real life examples to the content of the lectures. One of the members of the *Facilitator's Enterprise*, acting as the director's assistant on rotational basis, would initiate the lecture with a quick review of the contents of the previous one, which allowed them to gain lecturing experience, until able to handle a lecture independently. The analysis of the Director's role allowed the differentiation of 3 main functions: *lecturer*, *organizer* and *organizational instructor*. The Director performs an "organizer" task in terms of the facilitator's enterprise, when setting up the conditions for the workshop and directing the team. The Director acts as *organizational instructor* in respect of the participants' enterprise, when allowing them freedom of organization and non-intervention in their process, and as a *lecturer* in respect of both enterprises when delivering the Theory of Organization and other technical advice.

The analysis of the intended activities allows listing of all resources and vocational skills needed, and these, in turn, allow the listing of the facilities required to perform the intended activities. These lists are essential to the procurement and storage process prior to the workshop. The theoretical effort of developing further the social psychology, beyond the limited boundaries of the *small group dynamics*, allowed the understanding of the organizational processes of *large groups of people*, and the facilitation of the formation of enterprises and creation of jobs. The systematization of the approach facilitated the dissemination of information and the replication of the workshops. Equipped with these tools, the authors were now in a position to recruit 45 villagers that had showed the best performance as participants in the organizational workshops held so far, and bring them into a one month theoretical course, where they studied the following disciplines:

- .Didactics of the Theory of Organization.
- .Teaching aids.
- .Skills of organizing, running and follow-up of an Organizational Workshop.
- .Large Group Social Psychology.
- .Self-management techniques.
- .Theory of Organization.
- .History of Organization of Labor.
- .Political Economy

After the theoretical part of the course, successful graduates designed, planned and directed OW's under close supervision. Thereafter, each local director had the opportunity to direct at least one organization workshop by themselves.

Lectures were delivered directly in Shona, and in other cases participants asked for English and translation into Shona, so they could pick up from both versions. Participants enjoyed the Theory of Organization, and even today, they vividly recall its contents. The formative process achieved 15 local Directors of Organizational Workshops. SADET was able to simultaneously deploy 4 teams of Organizational Instructors in 4 villages at 10 to 40 kilometres from each other, and run 4 consecutive workshops attended by an average of 200 participants each. The Organization Workshop, or Large Group Capacitation Method (LGCM) had finally landed and made its home in Zimbabwe.

### **The Large Group Capacitation Operation in Hurungwe District, Mashonaland West, Zimbabwe.**

The 1992 drought highlighted the need for water resources in most villages pertaining to resettlement schemes and communal lands in Zimbabwe, leading to a large-scale programme, whereby the Organizational Workshop approach was instrumental to the development of water resources through the construction of labor intensive, *small earth dams*. In this process, the method became a well-known routine of operations that repeated itself about 35 times in three years. Once a community had identified the need to embark on a dam construction programme, the Agricultural Extension Services' (AGRITEX) technicians would come and look at the viability of the intended dams, studying the best possible location, and come out with a blueprint for the dam. Thereafter, the implementing agency would bring all the required hand tools to the site, food for the first 4 days, and a development fund that would pay the enterprise of the participants proportionate to the value of labor, properly recorded and calculated at local market prices. During the workshop, participants would start by digging the core trench for the foundation of the dam wall. This could be up to 2 meters wide, 70 meter long, and 2 or 3 meters deep, depending on the location of the necessary impervious layer of soil which marking the actual depth of the foundation. Later they would locate clay soil, bring it to the site until it filled the core trench, compact it up to ground level. The actual dam wall would require 1 or 2 weeks' tractor work in support of the labour intensive effort by the villagers.

Villagers would organize themselves into committees according to different tasks. Committees include the following:

- .Measuring and pegging sites
- .Tree stumping and removal of roots from the site of the works
- .Tool repairs, replacement of handles
- .Stone carrying
- .Buying and collecting food supplies

- .Daily distribution and collection of tools
- .Keeping the storeroom
- .Cooking and distributing lunches
- .Supply of drinking water for the workers
- .Child care
- .Keeping records of individual and committees' labour input
- .Keeping records of expenditure
- .Attending to specific skills and management courses
- .Literacy and Numeracy
- .Sports and culture

Each one of the tasks on its own is simple enough to be done by people without specialised skills or education, but the whole entrepreneurial set up is complex enough to impress upon people's minds what *management* is all about. Within each committee the work is planned for, assigning individual responsibilities to each member. After work, committees learn how to assess their own results, pointing out mistakes and devising ways and means to sort them out. The representatives of the different committees meet to discuss the work plans and critically analyse the work done by the Enterprise, combining committees' work plans and assessments into one single document for the whole enterprise. This document goes to a General Assembly Meeting, where each member has the chance to critically appraise the proposals. Once approved, the plan is binding for each member of the enterprise, and is therefore enforced by the elected leadership. This is a bottom-up planning cycle, composed of:

- The production of the 'Work Plan' by each and every committee of the enterprise,
- The meeting of the representatives of each committee to sort out resource allocation,
- The final approval by the General Assembly Meeting.

In each single workshop, this cycle takes place at least 3 times, and thereafter the villagers' enterprise is well equipped to continue to work on its own. The organizational workshop process takes the participants from a very loose and sometimes chaotic organisation to an efficient one. Lectures on Theory of Organisation allow them to reflect on their own mistakes and correct them by themselves. Their level of *consciousness* rises from the naïve level, where they expect their fate will bring something better for them, to an organizational level, where they realise that a better life can come about if and only if they are properly united and organised around common goals and democratic decision making(4). Participants work productively all along the workshop, and attend vocational and managerial courses as well. As a result, communities can build

large infrastructures, which they use and care about, for they will have "done it themselves".

The method displays some unique features, the most important of which are:

- Large groups of people, 40 as a minimum, 300 or 400 as an average, and 1000 or 2000 at a time when the program has the necessary resources.
- All villagers participate on an equal footing. This creates an enabling environment for women participation and empowerment.
- Courses take place on the spot, either in the workplace, in the village or in the neighbourhood where people are.
- Courses assist participants in carrying out productive activities identified by the communities beforehand. The program makes available the resources and the community assumes ownership and control over those resources, as needs arise.
- The workshops develop the professional capacity of the participants to perform productive and service activities, management techniques, literacy, numeracy development, primary health care for the mother and child and whatever activities respond to immediate needs of the communities.

The programme funded by "*terre des hommes*" Germany and the European Union (EU), had a very promising start. During the first 9 months, several organizational workshops took place. The mass capacitation operation included a complex logistics, transport, careful financial records and financial management. Later, irregular release of funds slowed down the pace of the process. Funds meant for 36 months trickled through over a period of 57 months. Only 12 communities were able to complete their dams, and 26 other remained incomplete. SADET accumulated a huge debt that determined its fate and eventual closure. Whilst the programme succeeded in accelerating the evolution of the *organizational consciousness* within the peasantry, it could not control managerial issues pertaining Funding Agencies which did not seem up to the challenges posed by a proper developmental process. Agencies, as a whole, are more adept at justifying failures in the field than to deliver the goods in a manner which assures success.

### **Other experiences**

Besides the major thrust described in the previous chapter, NGOs like the Zimbabwe *Foundation for Education with Production* (FEWP) invited the authors to run several workshops in collective co-operatives in Mashonaland East and Matabeleland South. In general terms, after these workshops the co-operatives were better equipped to deal with their debts with the omnipresent Agricultural Finance Corporation. *Shandisayi Pfungwa* Cooperative, for

example, was able to pay back outstanding loans, but it did not want to get into assuming new credit anymore, as the interest rates had made it prohibitive. In the prevailing economic climate, the gains produced by the organization workshop in the organizational consciousness of the cooperators was unable to fully express itself in economic success. Agricultural co-operatives in Zimbabwe became the only available means for people with low literacy levels to improve their skills. Since the cooperatives had no incentives to offer to retain members that had improved their skills, they usually left to take up gainful employment. Whilst individual co-operatives collapsed, Zimbabwean society gained from improved levels of skills in social strata that, without cooperatives, would not have remained barred from education and training of any kind.

### **Ventures in Mozambique**

International NGOs like *Weltfriedendienst* (WFD), *Concern World Wide*, *'terre des hommes'* Germany and *Redd Barna* did subsequently sponsor organizational workshops in Mozambique. In three separate incidents towards the end of the workshops, when the *'Development Fund'* was being calculated and decisions were made on how to use the money, violence broke out, creating difficult situations that were hard to handle. These experiences triggered a process of reflection, which allowed us to realize our mistakes which were a result of an incomplete understanding of the extent to which the organizational workshop mirrors the surrounding reality in any given country, in this case, post civil-war Mozambique, where over 16 years, Mozambique had witnessed massive displacement, loss of life, property, and disruption of the social and economic fabric. Afterwards, emergency aid had flooded in: UN and international NGOs were in the habit of doling out unusually high salaries to their own relief workers and their counterparts. People had grown accustomed to receiving handouts. The OW Development Fund was perceived in a similar manner. A culture had set in of vociferous demands and violent revindications of what was perceived to be due, in particular by demobilized youths in pursuit of their demobilization benefits. This culture infected the OW processes, especially at the moment when Development Fund matters came up. This brought the authors to seriously consider abolishing the Development Fund practice. A deeper reflection made us realize that the Mozambican youngsters who made up the bulk of the OW participants, were, in fact, *survivors of the civil war*. And they owed this survival to their ability to assume the surrounding violence and asserting themselves in the only way they knew, out of sheer self preservation. Use of violence to defend the interests of the group must therefore have come across as a positive attribute, including in the workshops. It should have been possible to turn this negative energy into a positive one. During subsequent workshops we managed to improve the explanations of the why and how of the

Development Fund, appealing to the youngsters' capacity to mobilize, their sense of initiative and courage, which could be turned to their own benefit and that of their communities. In this way, the knowledge of the social context, and better reflection on the social composition of the group allowed subsequent OW Directors to foresee the potential problems, to exclude repression as a social response to the demands of the groups, and to establish a cooperative relationship between participants and facilitators.

This Mozambican experience came in very handy when called upon to direct OW's in Vitória, Espírito Santo, Brazil in the course of 1997. Violence is a daily occurrence in the poorest slums of the city, affected by rampant unemployment, crime, and drug trafficking. The youth in these neighborhoods, with a life expectancy of 27 years, are *survivors of the prevailing violence of the social environment*, too. The insights gained in the process accounted for the fact that the fourth series of the workshops, held in Mozambique in 1995, and the last workshops held in Brazil in 1997-8 no such problems caused by violence were encountered.

The behavior of ex-miners from Lesotho and Mozambique was similarly a rich learning ground for the facilitators. In Village 7 B, *Nyama Resettlement Scheme*, Mashonaland West province of Zimbabwe, a group of 8 trade unionists belonging to the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa performed exactly the contributing role that the Theory of Organization expects from "workers" (in contrast to "artisans"). This group, possibly because of their position of trade union leaders in the thick of the apartheid struggle, transferred their experience with the technical division of labor to the participants' enterprise. They constantly encouraged the group to organize, unite, and be disciplined. At the end of the workshop, they donated their share of the Development Fund earned by the participants' enterprise of to the capital fund of the recently established village enterprise.

In stark contrast, during a workshop held at the *Munguine Co-operative Union*, Manhica, Mozambique in January 1995, a group belonging to the ex-miners Coop took over the leadership of the enterprise. While they did contribute towards the establishment of the division of labor, they (ab)used their leadership positions to deviate collectively owned resources to their own benefit. They moreover used their leadership qualities to manipulate the poorest OW participants into working their private plots. At the instigation of the directors and the funding agency, clearly committed to the most vulnerable groups, a democratic discussion took place. This resulted in some of the poorest, illiterate women being voted into leadership positions. It even affected the internal Co-operative Union's power relationships which had remained unchanged for years and had severely slowed down progress.

## Results

Summarizing the results of a 12 year experience covering 60 OW events, with an average of 200 or more participants each, most of which took place in Zimbabwe, but also in Mozambique, Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Brazil and Grenada is not easy. The only systematic impact-evaluation performed, so far, took place in November 1998: it covered 4 co-operatives that had gone through the OW process, even though the focus was more on the aid they had received from '*Norwegian People's Aid*' (NPA), rather than on the results achieved by the OW as such. Even so, we think the following can be mentioned:

- **Social Psychology**

The 'large group' traits described by Clodomir Santos de Morais proved to be valid across the Oceans, notwithstanding the vastly different cultural settings. Moreover, experiences obtained in Mozambique proved to be equally valid in Brazil. As a result of these experiments, Social Psychology may be redefined as "*a cluster of psychological traits shared by individuals that perform similar types of activities*", and "*the science that studies the shared, common or **social** psychological traits*". At the same time, Social Psychology may be close to the formulation of a **law** that establishes causal relationship between the type of activity performed and some of the characteristics of psychological reflection. In other words: change the activity (in a planned manner), and obtain a changed psychological reflection. This relationship has been further defined in a book published by the authors in Spanish and Portuguese, presently being translated into English ("Social Psychology: Responsibility and Need").

- **Changes at the individual level.**

None of the experimental workshops held in southern Africa had a proper follow-up, nor a proper impact evaluation. Nevertheless, all data obtained so far, albeit informally and non-systematized, indicate that individuals that have gone through the OW process made considerable gains in their ability to improve their quality of life. The most dramatic example of the difference between what happens at individual vs group level came after the Otse Workshop, 1988, Botswana, where a group of unemployed women had mounted the "*Baratani Co-operative*" making bread and biltong<sup>9</sup>. 12 years later, Gavin Andersson, one of the coop initiators, visited the place and found the buildings deserted; the equipment, however, was still in place: a handwritten

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<sup>9</sup> *Biltong*: from the Afrikaans for buttock(bil) and tongue(tong): a popular type of dried and salted meat in the region

sign on the wall warned unwanted visitors: “*Do not steal, for this belongs to the people*”. All the women are now in employment.

- **Changes at the group level: Enterprise formation.**

Compared to mainstream methods, the OW approach provides meaningful capacitation and educational opportunities to people otherwise excluded. Compared to the “enterprise” and 'role playing; games typical of present day conventional enterprise training workshops, the OW provides participation in a *real* self-managed democratic enterprise. The element “*reality*”<sup>10</sup>, not present in other approaches, makes the OW into a unique tool to address the problem of unemployment and social & economic exclusion, so prevalent everywhere.

- **Agencies**

Whilst the method succeeds in its commitments to the communities, getting implementing and donor agencies on the bandwagon is still an uphill struggle: Agencies invariably lag far behind the leaps and bounds the communities in the field make in developmental and organizational terms. Agencies' failure to put in place follow-up activities that can take communities from the level achieved at the end of the workshops, and usher them into the mainstream economy, has been little short of dramatic.

## ZIMBABWE 1986



### **SADET\*: the first OW in anglofone southern Africa**

- **I. & I. LABRA (Chile), from their Glen Forest Training Centre base, were the first to introduce the LGCMethod in this part of the world**
- **Cephas MUROPA (Coop. Organizer banned during Ian Smith) and Ian CHERRETT, with the help of HIVOS (Neth) ran the very first **Field O.W.** in Rujeko, Zim.**
- **Mayua O.W. (1989) – “7B” O.W. (1990) – Mukwichi, Kasangarare, Chungu O.W.’s in the following years.**
- **COURSE O.W.’s held in Harare**

(see “A Future” p 117ss for more details)

\* SADET: Southern Africa Development Trust, founded by the Labras

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<sup>10</sup> ” a “Work’shop” where people actually *work*: quite exceptional rather than small group meetings followed by plenaries and “Talk”shops.

## ZIMBABWE ctd

Locally trained OW Facilitators, in the 1990's ran:



### **20 Field OWs**

**3,077** Zimbabweans organizationally and entrepreneurially capacitated

**3 dams** completed

**21 dam foundations** built

- *"The formative process achieved **15 local O.W. Directors.** **SADET** was able to simultaneously deploy 4 teams of organizational instructors in 4 villages 10-40km apart and to run 4 consecutive O.W.'s attended by an average of **200 participants each**". (A Future 124)*