



LIFECYCLE OF AN ADVOCACY NETWORK: THE CASE OF THE POPULATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT (PHE) NETWORK IN THE PHILIPPINES

*This case was written by
Cecelia D. Noble of IMDM,
under the supervision of
Ramon San Pascual
for Philippine Center for Population
and Development, Inc. (PCPD)*

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The best way to predict the future is to create it. Peter Drucker

Introduction

This case examines the Population, Health and Environment (PHE) Network in the Philippines, using the lifecycle of an organization framework. The PHE network is a social construction of the Philippine civil society. Social actors, leaders, members and partners armed with their vision and concepts of these critical sectors, enabled the formation of a PHE network. As a social model, it can be strengthened by ideas, social structures and social relationships. These ideas consist of the principles and justification on the integrated PHE approach, best practices and lessons learned in the pursuit of its mission and activities. The social structure may consist of the organizations built such as the network itself and laws enacted as a result of PHE advocacy

and lobbying. The social relationships are the partnerships built and enabled by participating in network activities. In addition to its theoretical framework, the case explores the application of the life cycle process in predicting and creating the future of the PHE network.

Categorically speaking, the PHE Network is a coalition of international and national non-government organizations, research institutions, government agencies, professionals, and policy technicians. The Network aims to bring science into integrated practical approaches to environmental and health governance, and community development. By linking the dynamic relationships of P-H-E, the poor and vulnerable populations shall benefit through integrated interventions for health and a sustainable environment.

According to USAID documents, as of 2004, roughly one-sixth of the world's population, or close to 1.1 billion people – live in ecological hotspots, those areas that are richest in biodiversity, and yet most threatened by human activities. While these hotspots comprise only 12 percent of the earth's surface, they hold nearly 20 percent of the total world population, who have very limited or no access to basic government services like health and education. Sad to note, this hotspot-based population is growing nearly 40 percent faster than that of the world population growth rate as a whole.

To reach these hotspot-based areas that are critically important to the conservation of biologically diverse ecosystems, the USAID supports integrated population, health, and environment (PHE) programs and projects that acknowledge and address the complex connections between humans, their health, and their environment. The key objective of these projects is to simultaneously improve access to health services while also helping communities manage their natural resources in ways that improve their health and livelihoods and conserve the critical ecosystems they depend upon.

The concept of integrating population, health, and environment that can potentially lead to synergistic successes and greater outcomes is defined by the Population Action International (PAI) as the “linkage, within a community or group of communities, of natural resource management or similar environmental activities and the improvement of reproductive health, always including but not limited to provision of family planning services” (Engelman, 2005, p14). The Population Reference Bureau (PRB) defines PHE as an “approach to development that recognizes the interconnectedness between people and their environment, and supports multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination.” While its underlying philosophy is based on the interdependencies between the three sectors of population, health and environment, PHE also “can accommodate other sectors and be successfully applied to achieve a range of development goals, from poverty reduction to food security to gender equity” (PRB, 2007).

Based on these considerations and concept, the USAID in the 1990s looked at several countries for its PHE initiatives. The USAID’s cross-sectoral initiatives that incorporated family planning and health interventions into conservation and natural resource management (NRM) were those implemented in Africa (Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo), Asia (Cambodia, Nepal and the Philippines) and Latin America (Mexico and Guatemala). The majority of these were undertaken in tandem with international or domestic NGOs with environmental missions, but a few were started by health organizations that took on NRM or conservation activities to redress food insecurity and malnutrition concerns in impoverished rural or urban communities.

The need for integrated approaches has already gained global attention, as exemplified by the 2005 United Nations (UN) sponsored Millennium Ecosystem Assessment – an exercise that involved over 1,300 experts from 95 countries in analyzing the effects of ecosystem change on human health and well-being. This UN-sponsored activity revealed that people have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively over the past 50 years than during any other period, primarily to meet increasing demands for food, fresh water, timber, fiber, and fuel. It also estimated that 60 percent of the benefits people obtain from ecosystems are being degraded or used unsustainably. An important inference the assessment report shared was that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals requires particular attention to improving ecosystem management, which necessitates cross-sectoral (or integrated) policies, institutions and investment on local, national, regional and global scales (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005).

In the Philippines, the various experiences of the USAID, David and Lucile Packard foundations and other international funding institutions from the integrated health, population and environment projects became a very rich source of data because of the high impact and widespread effects these projects were able to generate on the lives of their beneficiaries.

Such experiences led the involved government and non-government organizations from various levels – national to local, to form a PHE network. Likewise, involvement in PHE projects created partnerships between local government units and NGOs or among international agencies and local NGOs that facilitated PHE integration and networking. These organizations saw a major potential advantage for integrating their efforts, i.e. a network offers a strong possibility for widening project impact and achieving economies of scale.

Moreover, involved GOs and NGOs can potentially implement their projects in a more efficient manner, sharing transportation and field staff expenses with other organizations. These entities also looked at the specific example of PATH Foundation Philippines which implemented a quasi-experimental evaluation of the Integrated Population and Coastal Resource Management (IPOPCORM) approach during 2001-2006.

As experienced by IPOPCORM in some communities, independent approaches to coastal resource management (CRM) were applied to conserve marine ecosystems; in other communities, independent approaches to reproductive health (RH) management were implemented to improve human health. Then, in the IPOPCORM study areas, communities were empowered to implement CRM, RH and alternative livelihood activities in an integrated manner so as to improve food security, conserve marine ecosystems and enhance human health. (Amarillo & Mamauag, 2007).

PRH PHE-funded projects in the Philippines have helped establish a vibrant national PHE network. The HE- Philippines network's members include the Balay Rehabilitation International, Population Commission, the Philippine Legislative Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), Save the Children, Family Planning Organization of the Philippines, the Forum for FP and Development Incorporated, Employers Confederation of the Philippines, Path Foundation, Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, Oxfam International, Philippine Business for Social Progress, Reproductive health Advocacy Network, Population Reference Bureau, and Conservation International. The secretariat is managed by the PLCPD.

After the first National Conference, all seven convenors of the first PHE conference continued to work together. Their next agenda was to organize the second National Conference. These included PLCPD, which served as main convenor and secretariat, Balay Rehabilitation Center, Inc., Conservation International, Inc., PATH Foundation Philippines, Inc., Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, Save the Children/USPhFO, and the U.S.-based Population Reference Bureau. PLCPD initiated a partnership mechanism at the early phase of the preparation with five other influential groups from the government, business sector, and civil society to broaden the membership of the convenors' group, to include the Commission on Population, Philippine Business for Social Progress, Reproductive Health Advocacy Network, World Wildlife Fund, and the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines.

However, expansion of organizers was not only at the national level but was also realized at the local level. Two key departments at the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and Office of Population Studies and a local NGO, Coastal Conservation Education Foundation, Inc., provided technical support (i.e. equipment, expertise, volunteer staff) and enthusiastically promoted the conference in Cebu province. PLCPD held regular monthly meetings, created a convenors' e-group (phe_convenors@yahoo.com) and launched a website (www.pheconference.com) to effectively coordinate the event with its partners.

With PLCPD as main convenor, there was an active engagement and commitment of its board of trustees, member-legislators and staff from the preparatory, conference proper to the post-activity stages. PLCPD's co-chairpersons Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon and Representative J.R. Nereus O. Acosta, who was the conference's honorary chair and Cebu Representative Nerissa Soon-Ruiz shared their views and gained support from PLCPD officers during board meetings. National legislators made a significant presence at the conference.

The main funding support for the conference came from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Considerable financial support in terms of scholarship of participants covering registration fee and transportation cost, came from the United Nations Population Fund, Philippine Center for Population and Development, and the Philippines NGO Support Program, Inc., Conservation International – Philippines and from new partners: Office of Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia and the Foundation for Philippine

Environment. All convenors provided counterpart funding for their own delegates and took turns in hosting the series of preparatory meetings in Manila.

The wide support for the Conference was also expressed not only in terms of expansion of convenors and funding support but also in the increased number of participants, as compared to the first conference. The second conference had a participation turn-out that was double the targeted number. Future conferences have been envisioned for greater impact as venue for integrating PHE efforts that would facilitate the formulation of supportive national policies on PHE, the sharing of PHE data, capability building of local communities on PHE program implementation and participatory monitoring of PHE projects in their respective localities.

With this as backgrounder, former Air Force General Melchor Rosales, one of the undersecretaries of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), was discussing the role of the PHE network as an organization that can actively participate in a government initiative called the Local Peace and Security Assembly (LPSA) led by the National Security Council in close collaboration with major government agencies like the DILG. His staff was trying to find enough materials on the network that will justify an invitation for its representatives to present their project mix model because of their successful integration of PHE efforts at various levels of governance.

Just late last year, a new Presidential Assistant for Western Visayas, Dr. Raul Banas of Iloilo was appointed because of the sustained accomplishments of his PHE project that was being implemented in nine (9) coastal municipalities in his province. The group of USec Rosales would like to identify the success factors of PHE project integration at the municipal level to determine if such factors could be replicated for local peace and security programs; thus, their interest in the history and current status of the PHE network undertakings.

Social Construction and Lifecycle of PHE as Network Organization

The social model and the lifecycle of an organization are theoretical frameworks used in studying PHE as a network organization. Effective management practice recognizes the fundamental truth that organizations, like any living organisms, have a lifecycle and undergo very predictable and repetitive patterns of behavior as they grow and develop. At each new stage of development is a unique set of challenges. How well or poorly management addresses these challenges, and leads a healthy transition from one stage to the next, has a significant impact on the success or failure of their organization.¹ As organizations mature over time, they progress along several stages. Each stage requires a corresponding jump in organizational complexity - disciplines become departmentalized, motivations of people become different, contrarian points of view are dulled and decisions bog down.²

In order to sustain a vital, thriving workforce that retains the nimbleness of a start-up, each stage demands a different level of leadership, management and team skill sets. Equally important, the PHE approach is customized to address the particular challenges specific to each level. The Advocacy Institute in Washington, DC uses the following table to show the different stages of an organization's life cycle and next steps for advocate groups as PHE (Advocacy Institute (2004)).³

¹ Adizes (2004). *Managing Corporate Life Cycles, 2nd Edition*, page 2, retrieved on Dec 12, 2007 from <http://www.adizes.com/pdf/lifecyclesoforg.pdf>

² Pathways Business Institute (2002), retrieved on Dec 12, 2007 from <http://pathwaysbusinessinstitute.com/lifecycle.html#>

³ Advocacy Institute (2004) retrieved on Dec 12, 2007 from http://www.advocacy.org/pdf/organizational_life_cycle.pdf

Table 1: Organization’s Life Cycle Staged and the Next Steps for Advocates

Stage	Characteristics	Actions to Take
Birth	An organization is created and establishes its presence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help develop the leadership skills of others within the organization • Develop preliminary systems for the organization
Childhood	An organization begins to learn new skills and to build a solid, supportive organizational infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite and accept nurture of organizational potential by more experienced leaders, organizations, and funders
Adolescence	An organization expands the scope of its actions, learning as it goes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment • Take on more difficult challenges • Take responsibility for action or inaction • Learn from and be mentored by those with more experience
Adulthood	An organization assumes a greater level of responsibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the lead on an issue even without significant credit • Take appropriate risks even if defeat is possible • Nurture and mentor organizations in their childhood and adolescence
Maturity	An organization uses its legacy to strengthen the movement overall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn over responsibility to others • Share wisdom and experiences • Set an example for personal and organizational renewal
Renewal	An organization resists the urge to stay comfortable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new strategic focus or new organizational leadership

At this point in the PHE’s organization life, project implementers at the local communities in the Philippines felt they have graduated from the adolescence stage and are well into adulthood for some and into maturity for a selected few, as gleaned from an assessment of the successful scaling-up of the geographic coverage of the Integrated Population and Coastal Resource Management (IPOPCORM) Initiative (2000-2007) implemented by PATH Foundation Philippines Inc. – a local health NGO, and the Population and Environment Co-Existence Development (PESCODEV) project (2000-2005), implemented by SAVE the Children/Philippines.

Both organizations promoted similar approaches to integrated coastal management (ICM) that incorporated family planning as a strategic intervention to reduce fishing pressure and assure sustainability of coastal resources. Collectively, these two Packard Foundation-financed projects served over three-quarters of a million people living in half of the most imperiled marine conservation areas in the country.

In addition, PATH Foundation Philippines was able to take advantage of an existing food security framework within the government and link their IPOPCORM initiative to an existing integrated coastal management agenda promoted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR). The framework was based on three essential prerequisites for sustainable use of coastal resources that included family planning as a strategic intervention to reduce human pressure on the natural resource base and fisheries resources in the coastal zone.

The PHE approach, its successes and challenges : the Philippine Experiences

PHE programs are carried out efficiently and at relatively low cost, using a variety of community mobilization models. They can achieve significant improvements in population and environment objectives even in isolated settings. These include innovative approaches that can be replicated in diverse settings and address some of the obstacles to attitude change, knowledge gain, and behavior change. And these assessments have noted three possible areas for further attention:

1. Additional evidence of value added: While the value added merits have been noted in some projects in the Philippines, there is a need for more data and field studies to substantiate the value added of the PHE approach;
2. Scaling up: The potential for intensifying, replicating and expanding the PHE programmatic approach to different landscapes (urban and rural settings; from a community to an ecosystem approach; across varying landscapes such as coastal and upland areas; and others; and to different strategic points of intervention (disaster mitigation, poverty alleviation, food security, HIV-AIDS programming, and others) is tremendous. Specific conditions and methods for scaling up need to be determined, tested, documented, and disseminated.
3. National-level discussions: Successful national discussions and deliberations have raised consciousness of the value and possibilities of this approach and have engaged a wide range of stakeholders across various disciplines. Such discussions can continue to share evidence and stimulate opportunities for adoption of this approach by a variety of sectors and actors.

Making the Link Work

Using Research Data to Show PHE Linkages

The second national conference further clarified the value of the PHE approach through the use of research and data such as case studies from different settings in the country. These data concretely show that tackling population, health and environment issues simultaneously are promoting better community cohesion, greater outcomes for initial capital investments, and concrete improvement in people's lives. The sharing of different integrated programs, best practices and lessons learned from national and international areas showed value-added of PHE projects, how these are best planned and managed and where they are most appropriate.

A new datasheet on population, health and environment entitled "*Making the Link in the Philippines: Population, Health and Environment*" was launched and disseminated by PRB at the conference. The wall chart presents national, regional and provincial data for 15 indicators which highlight the link among population, health and environment issues in the Philippines. Disseminating the PHE datasheet can help decision-makers and the media understand P-H-E interactions and support population and health policies. These data can also help program managers and policymakers design strategies that take into account these linkages to improve people's lives while preserving the natural resource base that provides for their livelihood and health.⁴

Frequent communication (press releases and media rounds) with various media outfits in print and broadcast at the national level and new partnership with popular broadcast studio such as ABS-CBN Network, government-run Philippine Information Agency- Cebu and local media group, Media

⁴ Report on the Second National Conference on Population, Health and Environment (PHE) on March 15-17, 2006 in Cebu City, Philippines

Advocates for Reproductive Health Empowerment, at the local level facilitated in getting media's attention to widely cover the event. The event was carried in national and local newspapers, radio and television shows, particularly in the Visayas region where the event was held and in several websites for three months before and a month after the conference.

Several Filipino journalists from across the country who attended previous PHE workshops were also present. The conference provided opportunity for them to further study and report on the interrelationship of PHE issues. Getting PHE on the media greatly helps capture the attention of busy policymakers particularly national legislators and the public at large.

Capacity building activities

In November 2002, a group of development professionals met and trained on PHE for two weeks in Antipolo, Philippines. Also conducted by the PRB and its partner, the Philippine Field Office of Save the Children- US, the training was geared towards designing and communicating policy-relevant PHE projects. This group called themselves the PHE Sigue with the word *sigue* drawn from the five action words they chose to live by during the workshop. They had since then aspired to bring the PHE concepts into the consciousness of their own organizations and at the same time advocated for the same among policymakers.

Advocacy Initiatives

In the halls of Congress or Local Government Units, NGO offices or in public at large, advocating population management under the umbrella of PHE took many forms.

In Congress, the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation Inc (PLCPD) had been in the forefront of advocacy work. PLCPD provides information on and helps develop legislative proposals on population and human development. It also develops and publishes materials that will help the general public in tracking down bills in Congress. During the 12th Congress, PLCPD was able to disaggregate about 808 population and human development-related measures from the 3,814 bills filed in Congress. PLCPD mapped out 137 of these bills which dealt mostly with the legislative agenda formulated by the People's Legislative Advocacy Network (PLAN) which PLCPD helped establish.

For the 13th Congress, PLCPD in coordination with government and non-government institutions sponsored a round table discussion on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and drew up policy proposals. From these policy proposals, about 42 proposed measures were filed, covering MDGs such as -- Improvement of Maternal Health, Combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases, and Ensuring Environmental Sustainability.

Using the same parameters which presumably served as success factors for the PHE network in linking other organizations working in related fields all over the Philippines, such as capacity building, advocacy projects and documentation of all programs, projects and activities, the staff of USEC Rosales started to compile the department's initiatives and active participation in Local Peace and Security Assembly meetings, aimed at initializing a network at the grassroots, provincial and regional levels.

Strategies to meet priorities and challenges

PHE Guiding Principles

- ✧ Sustained commitment to integrated PHE in action
- ✧ Respect for nature and culture
- ✧ Unity in diversity
- ✧ Scale up partnership

Integrative Development in Population Advocacy

While the concept of integrating population with environment had long been introduced by social and natural scientists and scholars, it was the Washington-based Population Reference Bureau (PRB) that helped shape, refine and popularize PHE, especially among non-government organizations. Founded in 1929, PRB is a leader in providing timely and objective information on US and international population trends and their implications. Being so, its PHE program is also anchored on bringing critical information to decision makers and the public on how population, health and environment trends interact and affect people's lives.

The Population Reference Bureau (PRB) flagship project on PHE is a six year venture called the Southern Population and Environment Initiative which started in 1999. Through publications and training activities, the program disseminates the latest information and analysis on PHE linkages. The project also produces training manuals and case studies for researchers, program staff and experts working in field-based projects. The Southern Population and Environment Initiative is working with institutions in various countries including Costa Rica, Mexico, Tanzania, Madagascar, Thailand, India and the Philippines.

Challenges: Meeting Strategic Funding Priorities

A discussion among donor agencies and private foundations addressed the daunting challenges of PHE funding. A situationer on funding and possible opportunities for PHE further strategic funding priorities have been provided by PRB in a paper circulated during the session. The paper outlines the following:

Funders that best understood the PHE approach have suffered financial reversals and have needed to focus limited funds to their core areas in which they have history, experience and expertise. These funders have identified the following problem areas:

Financial constraints: Cross-program funding is particularly vulnerable when belts are tightened. Additionally, funders seeking to link PHE funding typically pursue this strategy after their core program goals are already in place.

Cross-program collaboration: Differences in training, motivation, expertise, and experience among program staff complicate cross-program collaboration. Matching country priorities across different programs within funding agencies is challenging and restricts program possibilities.

Describing and defending PHE: The lack of program-wide monitoring and evaluation systems, the short timeframe of some PHE grants, and the indirect connections among PHE components sometimes makes the PHE portfolio more complicated to describe and defend.

Two key results are evident from recent assessment on PHE programming. These are:

Value added

Project results have been compelling enough to convince most population environment and PHE practitioners that integrated programs have better results than single-sector programs and are more programmatically efficient. Some of the lessons learned about how programs have added value are that they have strengthened family planning efforts by increasing gender participation, including greater access to men and adolescent boys; sharing positive changes in community perceptions of women and promoting benefits from multiple health interventions. Also these programs have demonstrated cost-effectiveness by reaching more beneficiaries than single-sector interventions, while achieving lower operating costs and fostering community goodwill and trust.

Significantly, it became apparent, based on the Philippine experiences that the sustainability and scalability of PHE projects are often overlooked in the planning phase of these projects because of the implementers' preoccupation with the take off concerns of said projects. However, it has been determined that in order to achieve sustainability and bring interventions to scale, mechanisms that would ensure these conditions must be considered and formulated even during the design phase.

Common features of these PHE projects that facilitated rapid scale-up include decentralization, private-public partnerships, the presence of existing alliance and the leadership role that local mayors played in convergence of national or sub national policies and local PHE initiatives. The Philippine PHE Network experiences showed that PHE projects could be sustained even after the termination of external funding. Basically, the contributing factors that were built into project designs for its sustainability include cost recovery mechanisms for family planning and other essential health products; alternative economic opportunities that enabled resource-dependent families to maintain and diversify their sources of household income; and strategic campaigns that focused on overarching themes - such as food security – which made possible an improved understanding of PHE linkages and helped sustain institutional and community interest and involvement in integrated population-health-environment initiatives.

In a relatively short span of time, the Philippines has achieved progress in terms of building institutional capacity and mainstreaming PHE in local governance - both of which enhanced the PHE's long-term sustainability. This is partly attributed to the fact that the Philippine Local Government Code devolved significant resources, in addition to authority, to local government units for the delivery of basic services in agriculture, environment, water supply, health care, local infrastructure and social welfare. Such devolution made possible an accessible avenue for proponents of PHE to engage local decision makers in their programs. The same Code also included provisions for the masses' participation in local governance, particularly at the barangay (village) level, through provisions that created "special bodies" such as local health boards, barangay development councils (BDC) and barangay fisheries and aquatic resource management committees (BFARMC). The provisions also mandated that at least 25 percent of the membership of these bodies to come from NGOs, people's organizations (i.e., fisherfolk, farmers) and other civil society groups (i.e., women and youth clubs). As a result, there is significant opportunity for managers of community projects to work with and through these "special bodies" to advocate uses for local development funds (De Souza, 2007).

Areas of Development for the Future

The following have been identified as possible areas for the development of future application of the PHE approach:

Articulate a clear hypothesis on how population dynamics interact with the environment and human well-being and how those dynamics can be influenced – and apply this hypothesis strategically to all funding decisions in priority funding areas. Hypotheses are valuable even if they are ultimately modified or proved wide off the mark. They help make sense of the world’s complexity, to select opportunities from the myriad possibilities, and ultimately to build theories on how the world works. The lack of *theory* in population and reproductive health – as in many of the social sciences – is among the reasons policymakers do not pay more attention to these disciplines.

Monitor the globe for developments that test this hypothesis and target funding to research, advocacy, operations and measurement opportunities that may help validate or falsify the hypothesis.

Commission research aimed specifically at validation, refinement or falsification of the hypothesis. Then review it at least annually to see if it needs rewording or other modification. As confidence in the hypothesis grows, consider ways to apply it to funded communication and advocacy efforts.

Continue to fund operational PHE projects in developing countries. This approach provides untapped material for reproductive health communication and advocacy and retains promising potential for demonstrating that applying the PHE linkage can improve lives. Successful implementation of a “scaled up” PHE program carried out at the district or regional level, in the Philippines can affect the lives of a much larger target audience.

Support advocacy and dissemination of PHE successes: Field-based practitioners and political leaders typically become strong advocates for the integrated PHE approach, based on their personal experiences. However, most donors and national government officials are not familiar with the positive results of PHE programs and, even if they are, still often find traditional sector-specific programming to be more bureaucratically convenient. Aggressive advocacy and dissemination campaigns that highlight the successes of PHE projects will help share these success stories and demonstrate ways in which the PHE approach can be further applied to strategic interests other than reproductive health and natural resource management including such areas as disaster mitigation, economic development, conflict resolution, security and governance, and poverty alleviation.

Herald successes, record best practices and create centers of innovation: The funding community could support centers of excellence that have successfully implemented integrated PHE programs. These real-life sites could help train others in lessons of innovation, generating income for the local communities and encouraging visitors from other regions to learn first hand about the programs they implemented. These centers of excellence and learning could serve as “living universities” to educate future leaders on how to design, promote and sustain linked approaches to poverty alleviation. These centers could be linked to local and global experts and mentors.

Closing

Social actors - the leadership, members and partners enable the synergy and effectiveness of the PHE network. Together, they enable the links in population, health and environment (PHE) through an evolving strategy for development programming that they propagate in the Philippines at the national and local levels. The challenge in pursuing this link is through demonstrating the connection in the variables and trends in population change, health impacts and human and natural systems, the seriousness of the problem and how they cannot be ignored. As a development approach, the linked programming and integrated effort create the synergy needed to bring greater results for the same amount of resources compared to addressing sectoral concerns separately. Clearly, its gameplan involves a unified vision, linked programming and coordinated social action.

PHE has already made inroads in various aspects of development work in the Philippines: in capability building of NGOs and development workers, in the field of research, in policy advocacy as well as in implementing national and community based projects. The call of the times is to stick to the gameplan, bring all initiatives to fore and argue its case on a national scale with one unified voice and one global message. Either we make the link or we sink. – link up or sink down! This is the same battlecry of the DILG staff in its attempt to touch base with the PHE Network, so that the success factors for integration can be experimented in a different albeit just as critical area of concern – local peace and security.

GUIDE QUESTIONS:

- 1. What is the goal of PHE as a network organization? How is it different from other network organizations in the Philippines?*
- 2. Analyze the mission of PHE as a network organization. Do you agree with its mission? [does this vision capture its unified goal and intended impact to influence national population policy]*
- 3. Discuss the role of the network secretariat in the development and sustainability of the organization.*
- 4. Identify innovation and best practices in the management of PHE as a network;*
- 5. At what stage is PHE in its lifecycle as a network organization? Predict its likely future in advocating a Philippine national policy.*
- 6. If you were a member of USEC Rosales's staff, what parallel mechanisms of the PHE network would you consider for replication in DILG's own initiative?*
- 7. What specific PHE Network programs and initiatives would you recommend and why?*