

## **Core Values of the VDC Members:**

What do villagers believe are their most important core values?) What kind of leaders do villagers want? What are the Core Values villagers want their leaders to adhere to?

### **VDC Core Value Training**

When the RDFs meet with the village leaders (both formal leaders and informal leaders to discuss Chapter Four of this Training Manual, the RDF should briefly describe the process the RDF used to identify the core values mentioned by villagers in their VDC areas and to share with the leaders what their villagers defined as core values. Next, the RDFs will also review the 20 core values, listed below, engaging these Village Leaders to consider which of these core values would be most important for the leaders in the VDC area. At this point the RDF should break the village leaders into small groups of 5-6 people. Each individual by him or herself will pick the five values they think are most important for village leader to have. Then they meet together in their small groups to have collectively decide which are the ten most important: Once they have agreed on ten, they are to develop a definition showing what each value really means, developing a list of behaviors associated with each core value selected, but also to consider what are the positive results when people abide by these values and what are the negative consequences when people violate or ignore these core values.

### **RDF Assignment 6 Introduction:**

A. Read through this list below of 20 qualities that leaders should have and pick five that you believe one needs to be a good leader in Nepal. In your group of 5-6 people each shares his or her list and together, then seek to find the ten most can agree upon. After completing their list of ten, have a general discussion what two additional values might at the list of ten

B. Each group is not to think of two good behaviors that come from adhering to this core value and then think of two bad behaviors when a person doesn't adhere to this core value.

C. Have each person look at this list of twelve and pick the three where they feel they need to improve and share that with the member of that small group

1. **Creativity (originality, ingenuity innovative):** Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things.

2. **Fairness, (seeks justice and equity)** seeks to treat people equally, fairly; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others.

3. **Tolerance (nonjudgmental, Open minded):** Accepting, collaborating, and compromising with people of other religions, ethnic groups and castes.

4. **Knowledgeable, (skillful and capable):** Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally in school.

5. **Wisdom: (Broad Perspective, Prudent)** Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having new ways of looking at the world that make sense.
6. **Courage (valor, bravery):** Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; acting on convictions even if unpopular.
7. **Persistence (perseverance, industriousness):** Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles, making things happen.
8. **Integrity (authenticity, honesty):** Presenting oneself in a genuine way; honest in personal dealings, free of corruption and dishonesty
9. **Vitality (zest, enthusiasm, energy):** Approaching life with excitement and energy; feeling alive and activated, focuses on getting things completed
10. **Compassion (generosity, caring, concern and kindness for the poor):** Doing service and good deeds for others.
11. **Humility (Modest, Not Proudful):** Not regarding oneself as more special than one is. Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves
12. **Self-Disciplined: (Self-control, temperance)** Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions.
13. **Self-Actualizing:** seeks excellence, quality and beauty in life, work, and community, encourages exceptional performance in various domains of life.
14. **Hope (optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation):** Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it.
15. **Spirituality (Reverence, Commitment to Core Values):** Having coherent beliefs about important higher purposes/values and making the world a better place.
16. **Grateful (Appreciative, Thankful)** Being aware of and thankful for life, the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks to others.
17. **Citizenship (social responsibility):** seek interests of community over self, participates and supports the improvement of society for both men and women.
18. **Loyalty (Faithful, Honor Bound)** to spouse, family and friends, keeps promises, is dependable, steadfast and responsible.
19. **Self-Awareness (Mindful, Sensitive)** Aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself and how your behavior impacts on others.
20. **Humor (playfulness):** Likes to laugh, bringing smiles to other people; emphasizes the lighter side of life, to enjoy the simple things in life.

\*\*\*Let us now review the seventh basic approach of CHOICE model.

**Seventh Approach A Self Developing Rural District Approach (2012):** I remember visiting with Chris Johnson, our director of field operations, in my home in mid-2011 indicating to him that CHOICE over the past thirty years had learned a lot of important truths about rural development: (1) We learned that expeditions, where if Americans were allowed to spend some time in a poor village in Africa, Asia or Latin American and if they were properly oriented this could energize and transform both the visitors but also the villagers themselves, (2) that projects devoted to providing services in health, education, and income generation, could clearly help villagers to have a better life, (3) that outside experts/facilitators when properly trained and supported could be an invaluable source of help to villagers, (4) that village leaders trained in processes of planning, resource mobilizing, implementation, and evaluation were absolutely crucial in ensuring that projects were appropriate, relevant, and sustainable, (5) that programs implemented at the rural district level were first much more apt to be better coordinated, more properly planned, with economies of scale and administrative staff adequate to ensure projects in health, education, and other needed services would be efficiently and effectively implemented, and finally (6) a rural district area would have a population large enough for a sustainable market demand to be generated, and various market chains and employment enhancement enterprises would be the key to an economic development effort that could bring people out of poverty. A much more comprehensive review of this seventh approach will be described in a later chapter.

It was then that I suggested to Chris Johnson that there was still a missing ingredient and that recently in rereading a book I had written back in 1986, I had rediscovered the missing ingredient. This book, *Go to the People*, describes the life and work of James Yen, a Chinese scholar who taught 50 million Chinese to read and write. He was my mentor and friend who more than any other person has influenced my thinking about rural village development. Dr Yen had always argued that effective development required three components: (1) Good Science and Appropriate Technology, (2) Effective Field Staff with the four C's (competence, creativity, commitment, and character), and (3) Spirituality or adherence to villager-determined core values: Compassion, Hard Work, Optimism, Perseverance, Integrity, Service, Tolerance and Respect for others, Justice etc.

Understanding the Missing Ingredient: Why do the approaches and technologies developed by scholars, bureaucrats and field staff so often fail to achieve expected goals and why is the scourge of extreme poverty still with us? For Dr. Yen the reason was found in his third component, what I am calling the missing ingredient, the adherence to Spiritual Truths and Villager-Determined Core Values.

In another setting I described this third component as follows: "The essence of this dimension is best found in the lives and teachings of special leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi in India, James Yen in China, Muhammad Yunis in Bangladesh, Ahmad al-Naggar in Egypt, E. T. Ariyaratne in Sri Lanka or Paulos Freire in South America). Such leaders were able to evoke a vision, portray a new view of reality, engender a sense of meaning and purpose that often defies logical and practical analysis . . . It springs from

historically confirmed human values and cultural and religious norms that challenge people to strive to fulfill their potential, and form holistic ideals of humankind that exalts not just the economic but the artistic, not just the social but the philosophical, not just the political but the humanistic.”

From my fifty year experience in rural development, I have seen billions spent on projects, training programs, approaches and research with most of these efforts failing to eliminate the scourge of extreme poverty. I have come to believe this third component is very significant, perhaps even crucial, to understanding why and when poverty elimination may be successful in the lives of the neglected poor.

### **Change in Paradigms for Village Development**

A significant change in how village development should be implemented began to take form in my mind the early 1990s. Historically, development agencies had assumed that the key to development was the establishment of projects through which resources, technologies, and services could be distributed. This was a “service delivery” paradigm in which the poor were considered “beneficiaries,” who needed to be taken care of, who needed to be given free food, clothing, medicine, and supplies, with little or nothing expected in return.

Gradually I began to realize that a different perspective or paradigm was needed. The old “paradigm” of development assumed outsiders knew best what villagers needed, that if you provided them with free services and resources, they would respond with gratitude and appreciation. Unfortunately, many development programs of the past tended to spawn the opposite: increased dependency, increased frustration, even animosity, and a kind of fatalism and welfarism that breeds apathy, disillusionment and certainly a lack of pride and dignity.

Over the years I began to realize that the old ways were not working, that giving services and resources were having the opposite effect we wanted. In my mind, a new paradigm was needed and gradually I began to argue that when people learn to mobilize their own resources when they see themselves achieving results based upon their own efforts, there is pride, a sense of self-esteem and dignity that is infectious and self-perpetuating. The old paradigm emphasized people’s physical and material needs and entitlements, suggesting that people improve when someone takes care of them. The new paradigm emphasizes, first, that there is a motivating force from cultural and moral values and responsibilities and local people must be allowed to design their own development programs based on their perceived needs and cultural values. Second, there is a power unleashed when people are free to choose for themselves, suggesting that people improve when they are allowed to participate in their own processes of decision-making and when they can align their lives to a set of cultural values and moral principles that they find meaningful and significant. Mahatma Gandhi in his work among the poor of India argued that development devoid of human values and principles that motivate people to a higher standard of ethics and morality (honesty, compassion, tolerance, service to others, generosity) will seldom generate the social energy (sometimes called social capital) and the sense of individual responsibility that is needed to implement a sustainable process of village development. It was then,

with the help of Chris Johnson and Bishnu Adhikari and his staff in Nepal that the Seventh Approach to Village Development emerged to best reflect the CHOICE model.

### **Village Leaders learning to appreciate the Importance of Core Values.**

Mahatma Gandhi is a classic example of someone who sought to establish a “transformative bond” between village leaders and the villagers living in extreme poverty. The creation of this powerful “bond” between villagers and their leaders rested on an enhanced level of motivation (energy), morality (dignity), and potential (vision). Village leaders who have integrated their positive traditions and their core values, with the hopes and dreams of poor villagers, will come to reflect a village society based upon fairness and justice, compassion and service, trust and respect, all values needed for an improved quality of life. Mahatma Gandhi in his work among the poor of India argued that: (1) development devoid of human values and principles that (2) motivate people to a higher standard of ethics and morality (tolerance, service, generosity) (3) will seldom generate the social energy (sometimes called social capital) and individual responsibility (4) needed to implement a sustainable process of societal development. Have village leaders discuss the following questions:

\*\*\*Now the RDF has each group answer these five questions, one at a time.

1. What does this statement by Gandhi mean?
2. What are the four components of this statement?
3. Why is this statement true?
4. Why is this statement Important?
5. How is this statement relevant for?
  - a. A family,
  - b. A business,
  - c. A community.

So how does a village community identify and establish a rural community based upon such a high standard of moral values? Many might challenge the possibility of such a system being established in most villages characterized by selfish elites, greedy local merchants, and exploitative landowners, poor miserable villagers with little hope for their future, few dreams, and no vision for a better life. Scholars who have studied the lives of rural villagers acknowledge that change for the better is rare, and while some few have moved out of extreme poverty mostly through a chance of education, most are caught in a perpetual multi-generational trap of poverty.

Experts in the study of change throughout the world have suggested that charismatic leaders as the major source of change and improvement in societies. Such leaders often provide a role model for a new set of beliefs and values that inspire their followers into a higher standard of morality and virtue. Follower trust and respect for this kind of leader will often motivate them to accept these new core values. Inherent in the new leader's message is the promise for a better quality of life for all who adhere to a higher set of moral values. Such leaders communicate high expectations from their followers, motivating them to greater heights of goal achievement in both their public and private lives. Such leaders often link followers' needs to community needs, encouraging behaviors that move people from selfish interest to community interests.

First, let us consider some of the most common qualities of a good leader mentioned by Mahatma Gandhi who has been successful in helping villagers improve their quality of life.

1. Such village leaders raise villagers' level of awareness of the importance and value of identifying and seeking to implement goals that benefit the whole village.
2. Help villagers transcend their own self-interest for the benefit of the whole village.
3. Help motivate villagers to seek high standards, values, and goals that benefit everybody in the village.
4. Good village leaders seek to improve the quality of life for the whole community and help all villagers in their community to achieve their potential.
5. Good village leaders have a strong set of internal values and ideals (standards) they follow and support the greater good of the community rather than their own selfish interests. In the literature on leadership, scholars often reflect on the characteristics of a good leader.

1. Leaders as **A Good Role Model**: A good leader acts as a strong role model for people in their community. Villagers come to identify with these good leaders and want to emulate them. Such leaders have high standards of moral and ethical conduct and seek to do the right thing. They are deeply respected by villagers, who usually place a great deal of trust in them. In return, villagers will see village leaders as predictable and reliable, consistent in keeping their promises, demonstrating integrity, doing what they say. They reflect the core values of the community (trustworthy, kind, just, tolerant, compassionate, courageous, etc.)

\*\*\*\*Ask the villagers to give examples of people who do things they believe are right or good and also things that are wrong and bad.

2. Leaders **Presenting a Motivating Vision**. A good leader helps villagers to take ownership of a vision and a sense of mission that is motivating to the whole community. Villagers are quite capable of identifying what things need to be changed, what things would make their village better place to live, and what things are needed to provide a good quality of life for the whole community. This vision should be clear, attractive, realistic, believable, simple, understandable, beneficial, and motivating. The vision must be defined by the village leaders in coordination with the villagers themselves, defining where the village will be in five years, ten years, and twenty years.

\*\*\*As the villagers develop a list of things that need to be changed in their village, help them to prioritize these things from most important to least important.

3. Leaders **supporting Village Councils and Other Village Institutions**. As we shall see in latter sections of this Manual, the village development council as a key local institution in the VDCs must be based upon principles of good governance, systems of management by results, and reflect outcomes that ensure their legitimacy by the villagers. A good leader helps the villagers to develop a set of action steps (norms, roles, and responsibilities) needed to achieve their prioritized list of goals. This type of leader supports villagers to try new approaches and develop innovative ways to achieve their goals. A system of participation is encouraged which helps villagers to think things out on their own and engage in careful problem solving. Villagers are encouraged to help all adults to become functionally literate, able to analyze problems and develop good solutions. To participate together is thinking about how best to make their community a better place to live. Good solutions provide specific action steps with specific results identified so villagers will know when their goals have been achieved.

\*\*\*Help villagers to think about specific goals they might want to achieve and what specific results they might want to achieve that can be measured and empirically verified.

4. Leaders **Showing Consideration and Giving Support to the Whole Community**. Good leaders learn to provide a supportive climate in the village in which they listen carefully to the individual needs of the villagers. Such leaders are especially concerned about the extreme poor (living on less than \$1.25 per day) (elderly, widows and disabled, unemployed and sickly). They often encourage the non-extreme poor (upper and middle poor living on more than \$2 to \$3 a day) to participate in organizing programs and activities that help bring the extreme poor out of extreme poverty. These kind of good leaders have the ability to motivate the whole community to ensure the extreme poor have their basic needs for their survival met.

\*\*\*Every village will have some living in upper, some in the middle and some in extreme poverty. Invite the village leaders in this training to discuss among themselves who are the neediest families in the village and what specific things the village could do to help the extreme poor help themselves move up into the middle and upper poor category. Finally, the village leaders, working with the RDFS assigned to their VDC area will have a discussion on how these core values might encourage the village leaders to want to identify the extreme poor in their VDC area (Remind them of the numbers of extreme poor were identified by the PPI) and how the people as a whole might seek to find ways to help them move out of extreme poverty. The RDFs as trainers will seek to explain that the CHOICE program is a ten-year program and that the first three years are structured to ensure all families that want to move out of extreme poverty will be helped, encouraged, and supported until they have moved out of extreme poverty. When extreme poverty has been eliminated, they will be ready to expand the Self Developing District Program through the development of a District-wide local economic development program where every family will be able to improve their quality of life as they would like. The RDFs as trainers will conclude this first section with a brief summary of how the rest of the villagers in this VDC area might be motivated to ensure that all the extreme poor (living on less than \$1.25 a day) could be moved up into the middle, poor group or higher.

## Conclusions:

The RDF should explain that it is easy for a village leader to articulate the core values of their village. Making certain a leader's behavior reflects those values in their daily interactions with other villagers is quite another thing. For a core value to govern how people behave, members of the village development council (VDC) must consciously make certain their own decision-making processes actually reflect these same values. Only if the villagers see that the VDC membership practices what it preaches will they listen and change their own behavior. This is far easier said than done, especially in a council meeting making a major decision on something of real significance in which there are competing, legitimate concerns, among people with different agendas, needs, that may conflict with the core value being tested. Different ways to distribute limited resources can be justified on the bases of different values. One of the challenging goals of the three-year curriculum of the SDV program is to help leaders learn to make decisions, judgments, in a wider context, that are based upon clear values that represent the broader interests of the whole community, and not just the interests of the few, who might have more influence and wealth.

Choice has learned through over thirty years' experience that while some basic universal core values do seem to appear and flourish in many different cultures and regions of the world. How the core values espoused by CHOICE are presented and outlined in South America, Africa and Asia vary considerably in actual practice. We have learned that the CHOICE model will always be interpreted, implemented and shaped by the local RDFs and village leaders, all of whose experiences, tastes, and values are shaped by their own local cultures and background.

Both RDFs and village leaders must remember that what they have learned is very simple. Be trustworthy, respect the local villagers, their culture and way of life, seek to find common objectives, enhancing the choices people have to improve their quality of life as they define it, identify your complementary strengths and bring those to the joint venture. Of all of these, trust is the most important. Without trust no cooperative relationships are possible. When RDFs and village leaders can demonstrate that they can be trusted, that they keep their promises and do what they say they will do, it is usually reciprocated in full measure by the villagers. Equally significant is the value of respect. When you show respect for the culture and people of the village as well as the humility required to listen and learn, the first step or phase of the Self Developing Village program has been initiated. Of all the core values that appear to have universal appeal, common respect and appreciation from the other person is high in most cultures. Most village leaders will respond well to the trust that RDFs place in them and the respect shown to them. While RDFs and village leaders come prepared to share the things they know, this may not always be appreciated, especially if villagers feel put down or criticized, but when the RDFs and village leaders involve the villagers in creating their own definition of the CHOICE model, can add to it and make it consistent with their own core values and traditions, and relevant to their own problems and their own aspirations for a higher quality of life, as they would define it, Villagers will then be ready to move to phase two of the CHOICE model, the introducing of the capacity building phase of the Self Developing Village program.



Gradually, as trust grows, the villagers recognized that the CHOICE staff possessed many useful skills in village development and could offer some advice and guidance particularly in the management and funding of needed projects. Often RDFs have found village leaders very willing to listen and learn. Most impressive, however, was the ability of many village leaders to take the RDFs new ideas, consider them carefully, then re conceptualize them in ways that made the SDV program more relevant and effective in meeting the real needs and desires of the villagers themselves.

Especially interesting was the ability of villagers to go beyond the traditional projects related to water, agriculture, health or literacy programs to a totally different perspective. For example in one village school, a teacher introduced a musical program, helping his village's youth to purchase musical instruments, to perform at local ceremonies, school functions, and fairs. Gradually their reputation generated significant income from their tours to other villages and even local towns. But most important was the community pride and mutual cooperation that emerged among the entire village, stimulating a whole series of projects to improve the quality of life in the village: improved health services, collection of garbage and community beautification, an adult literacy campaign in which all adults became literate, a youth soccer team, and women's club to teach income generating activities.

It was not the projects that improved the quality of life, but the values of good music, community pride and a sense of dignity and cooperation, appreciation and confidence expressed not just among the leaders, but more importantly among the villagers as engaged citizens. Emphasizing such core values has often been the missing ingredient in most rural development programming. While many might take exception to the idea that core values are so important, our experience over many years suggest that villages lacking any commitment to a set of values, traditions, and norms that define what is good and right in their lives usually fail to understand that values are critical to the success of any village development program. Without them, a village community has no guiding compass, no sense of the spiritual that gives hope and meaning to their lives. Clear values set a framework for good behavior, a sense of discipline and an environment in which people feel confident and secure. The sense of values and their importance is equally useful and appropriate among government officials and private sector entrepreneurs working in the village. Business people are often motivated by profits and government officials seek power and influence. Rarely, though, does one get the sense that core values are the driving force in the lives of these bureaucrats and business people. All too often local government bureaucracies have suffocated these core values with targets, rules and regulations, and orders from on high.

\*\*\*Now return to the list of 20 core values and have each group of 5 or 6 people determine which 10 of these core values would be most important.

RDF Assignment One last exercise that RDFs might consider are the following four steps which RDFs can help village-leaders move from thoughtful reflection to practical action. Following is a straightforward three-step approach that is designed to help you as you work through situations that challenge one's commitment to stay true to your core values.

**Step 1:** Think of a time when you or someone you know was faced with a moral dilemma: Offered a Bribe, Breaking a Rule or Regulation, Misusing Public funds, violating a family or community rule or tradition.

**Step 2:** Outline the general details, protecting the confidential of the people involved. What were the options and alternative paths you or someone you know could take? Describe how those being challenged and their character tested were feeling. What core values were involved? Outline both the apparent path to virtue and the alternate course of action people might take.

**Step 3:** Explain what teachings and principles were involved in deciding what the people involved finally decided to do. Whether this is from the Bible, the Quran, the Gita or some other teachings. Now seek to identify the core value that was violated and where that core value came from (from religion, philosophy, and their culture or family or society traditions).

B. Note below there are four case studies. Start with the first one. 1. What are the two conflicting values: (being honest or pleasing your boss)? 2. Why is this a conflict of values? 3. If you saw someone telling an untruth: How might you react: A. Tell the boss, B. Confront the person lying, C. Do nothing, or D. Do something else? Now have a general discussion about why things like this happen, and what different things an organization could do to reduce such behavior? Now go to the other examples and go through the same three questions, continue until all four examples have been discussed, asking the basic three questions about each example.

Examples:

1. An RDF lies about the number of projects completed in a given village to satisfy the NGO's leadership in Katmandu. (Honesty vs. Pleasing NGO Leaders)
2. RDF quietly allowed some farmers who were in the middle poor to receive some benefits that were mandated for the extreme poor. Both the middle poor and the extreme poor needed this particular benefit. (Commitment to all villagers vs. commitment to extreme poor)
3. RDF working with VDC leaders accepted a bribe from a contractor who was building some biogas digesters. The contractor was a family member who needed the money for his family. (Family loyalty vs. NSDP loyalty)
4. Women, RDF has a woman from the village tells the RDF in confidence that her brother-in law-raped her, but he denies it, and the village leaders are siding with the man. What does the female RDF do when she believes it really happened? (Women's rights vs Village traditions).

Now with their own list of good leadership qualities, these village leaders should go back into their own hamlets and have a discussion with some of their families and try to discuss ways to make certain that everyone in these nine hamlets, not only knows what the core values are, but also what they mean, have some understanding about the positive consequences (results) that happen when people practice these core values and the negative consequences (results) when people do not follow these core values, ignore them or even do the opposite of these core values. It may be that the final list of ten qualities for

good leaders will be developed gradually, perhaps several weeks after the training session for Chapter Three.

RDF Assignment 7: for example in an eight groups of five, the participants are to develop an action plan for helping every family in their nine families to know what the core values are , why they are important, and what each village leader can do to ensure the people in this VDC have an understated of these core values, are committed to abiding by these core values, will teach their children what these core values are any they are important and will seek to support and elect only those leaders who are committed to these core values and will adhere these values in their personal lives.

Participants with these lists of twelve list of leadership quality are encouraged to return into their own hamlets and have a discussion with some of the families and to discuss the ways to make certain that everyone in their hamlet not only knows what the core values are but also what they mean, has some understanding of the positive consequences (results) that happen when people practice these core values and the negative consequences when people do not follow these core values.