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Empowerment

A Challenge of Non-Governmental Organizations in Development Cooperation Partnerships

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to research *empowerment* in the context of Non-Governmental Organizations. The study aimed at depicting an empowered organization, outlining means of empowerment, and detecting empowerment inhibitors. The secondary research interests related to the role of culture in empowerment and testing a modified Delphi application. The research interest arose from practical dilemmas faced in development and humanitarian interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite a long history of development initiatives and vast experience, bringing about sustainable development remains a problem. A number of stakeholders in development initiatives seem to think that the concept of *empowerment* would be a part of the solution to the problem. Yet, there seemed to be an evident lack of depictions of an empowered organization, ways of empowerment, and empowerment inhibitors in the research literature. The study sought to create them. In addition, the studies on empowerment have touched relatively little on the role of culture in empowerment efforts despite the fact that a number of empowerment efforts have been and are conducted in cross-cultural contexts. The other secondary research interest related to Delphi method. One of the key features of Delphi-method has been anonymity during the Delphi-rounds or -iterations. However, in this study, the second Dephi-round was conducted in a group setting that was not anonymous. The aim of this piloting was to contribute to the scientific discussion on the method and its various applications.

The research was a qualitative inquiry using Action Research as the overall research method. The Delphi-method was used as a strategy to gather and process information. In addition data was gathered in Action Research seminars. Some of the seminars were video-taped. The seminarians also produced short-essays, notes, and written assignments that were analyzed. The Delphi experts were nine (N=9) during the first Delphi-round and fifteen (N=15) during the second Delphi-round. They were persons in senior positions in Fida International that had substantial experience or education to qualify as an expert. In addition, during the second Delphi-round six persons that represented other organizations or possessed methodological expertise were involved. They were included to increase the validity of the study by contributing views from other organizations and having expertise on methodology. The total number of informants in Action Research seminars was 102 (N=102). The seminarians were practitioners of development cooperation. The data was gathered over a period of three years.

The results could have, for example, the following applications. The depiction of an empowered organization can be used as *an* ideal to strive for in building empowered organizations. It can also be made use of in evaluating organizations and the outcomes of empowerment efforts. The depiction of means of empowerment can serve in planning the empowerment activities in development interventions and as a reference list for leaders and managers of organizations for practical empowerment tips. The depiction of empowerment inhibitors is helpful for evaluators and leaders in identifying factors that stand in the way of empowerment. The discussion on the relationship between culture and empowerment will be useful for cross-cultural organizations and leaders to be more sensitive of cultural factors in empowerment and while empowering. In addition, the results challenge some of the prevailing propositions on empowering leadership and empowerment practice. The experience gathered and reported on the Delphi application may contribute to the scientific discussion on the method. The Delphi-design that waived anonymity during the second Delphi round seemed to work and add value to the method. Hopefully this will inspire other researchers to try out a similar application and to consolidate or challenge these results.

Key words: empowerment, Delphi-method, Action Research, development cooperation, culture, cross-cultural, leadership, organization, evaluation, Non-Governmental Organization.

ABSTRAKTI

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli pohtia voimaantumisen (*empowerment*) käsitettä kansalaisjärjestöjen toimintaympäristöissä. Tutkimuksessa pyrittiin luomaan kuvaukset voimaantuneesta organisaatiosta, voimaantumista edesauttavista sekä sitä estävistä tekijöistä. Tutkimuksen osaongelmat liittyivät delfoi-menetelmän sovellukseen ja kulttuurin rooliin voimaantumisessa. Tutkimusintressi syntyi tutkijan kokemuksista Saharan eteläpuolisessa Afrikassa, jossa hän on työskennellyt kehitysyhteistyö- sekä humanitaarisissa tehtävissä. Vaikka kehitysyhteistyöllä on pitkä historia ja aiheesta on kertynyt varsin merkittävää kokemusta ja tutkimustietoa, kestävän kehityksen synnyttäminen on yhä ongelmallista. Monet kehitysyhteistyön osallistujista pitävät voimaantumista osana ratkaisua tähän ongelmaan. Tästä huolimatta voimaantumista käsittelevästä kirjallisuudesta ovat puuttuneet kuvaukset voimaantuneesta organisaatiosta, voimaantumista edesauttavista ja voimaantumista estävistä tekijöistä. Tutkimuksen keskeinen päämäärä oli tuottaa mainitut kuvaukset. Tutkimuskirjallisuudessa on myös varsin vähän viittauksia kulttuurin ja voimaantumisen välisiin yhteyksiin. Tämä on mielenkiintoista myös siksi, että huomattava osa voimaantumiseen tähtäävistä toimista tapahtuu monikulttuurisissa ympäristöissä. Toinen tutkimuksen osaongelmista liittyi metodologiaan. Tutkimuksessa tiedonkeruustrategiana käytetyn delfoi-menetelmän keskeisenä ominaisuutena on pidetty anonyymiyttä. Tutkimukessa delfoi-menetelmää sovellettiin siten, että toinen delfoi-kierros ei ollut anonyymi vaan tutkimukseen osallistuneet asiantuntijat tapasivat ryhmänä. Kokeilun tarkoituksena oli tuottaa aineistoa tieteelliseen delfoi-menetelmän ja sen sovelluksista käytävään keskusteluun.

Tutkimus oli lähtökohdiltaan kvalitatiivinen. Tutkimuksen laajana menetelmällisenä viitekehyksenä käytettiin toimintatutkimusta. Delfoi-menetelmää käytettiin aineiston hankintaan sekä käsittelyyn. Delfoi-kierrosten lisäksi aineistoa kerättiin toimintatutkimus-seminaareissa. Osa seminaareista videoitiin. Videotallenteiden lisäksi seminaarilaiset tuottivat esseitä sekä lyhyitä kirjallisia vastauksia, jotka analysoitiin. Tutkimuksen ensimmäiselle delfoi-kierrokselle osallistui yhdeksän asiantuntijaa (N=9) ja toiselle kierrokselle viisitoista asiantuntijaa (N=15). Ensimmäisen ja toisen kierroksen osallistujien ydinjoukko koostui Fida International:in palveluksessa toimivista henkilöistä, joiden katsottiin omaavan asiantuntijuuteen riittävä kokemus tai koulutus. Tämän lisäksi toiselle delfoi-kierrokselle osallistui kuusi henkilöä, joiden katsottiin edustavan Fidan ulkopuolisten järjestöjen näkemyksiä tai omaavan tutkimuksen validiteetin kannalta tarvittavaa asiantuntijuutta (metodologia). Toimintatutkimus-seminaareihin osallistui 102 (N=102) henkilöä. Henkilöt toimivat käytännön kehitysyhteistyötehtävissä. Tutkimuksen aineisto kerättiin kolmen vuoden aikana.

Tutkimuksen tuloksia voitaneen hyödyntää esim. seuraavilla tavoilla. Voimaantuneen organisaation kuvausta voidaan käyttää mallina organisaatioita luotaessa ja kehitettäessä. Sitä voidaan myös hyödyntää viitekehyksenä organisaatioita ja toiminnan tuloksia arvioitaessa. Voimaantumista edesauttavien tekijöiden kuvaus soveltuu apuvälineeksi voimaantumiseen tähtäävien toimintojen suunnitteluun sekä pienimuotoiseksi referenssiksi käytännöllisistä voimaantumista tukevista tekijöistä organisaatioiden johtajille ja hallintohenkilökunnalle. Voimaantumista estävien tekijöiden kuvaus helpottaa esim. johtajia ja toiminnan arvioinnista kiinnostuneita tunnistamaan kyseisiä tekijöitä. Kulttuurin ja voimaantumisen yhteyksiä pohtivat osiot ovat hyödyllisiä monikulttuurisissa ympäristöissä toimiville organisaatioille ja johtajille. Ne rohkaisevat nykyistä kulttuurisensitiivisempään toimintaan. Tämän lisäksi tulokset haastavat joiltakin osin vallalla olevia käsityksiä voimaantumista edistävästä johtajuudesta ja käytännön toimista. Tähän liittyvät huomiot haastanevat jatkotutkimuksiin. Tutkimuksessa käytetty delfoi-sovellus, jossa luovuttiin anonyymiyden vaatimuksesta toisella kierroksella, näytti soveltuvan tutkimuksen tarkoitukseen varsin hyvin. Toivottavasti tämä rohkaisee muita tutkijoita kokeilemaan käytettyä sovellusta omissa töissään ja siten vahvistamaan tai kyseenalaistamaan saatuja tuloksia.

Asiasanat: empowerment, voimaantuminen, delfoi-menetelmä, toimintatutkimus, kehitysyhteistyö, johtajuus, kulttuuri, kulttuurienvälinen organisaatio, arviointi, kansalaisjärjestö

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Action Research
AS	Action Science
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSOPP	Civil Society Organizations & Participation Programme
CBG(s)	Community Based Group(s)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
FFFM	Finnish Free Foreign Mission
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPRS	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy
KEPA	Kehitysyhteistyön palvelukeskus ry.
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
NEPAD	New Partners in African Development
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PM	Project Manual
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PRWP	Policy Research Working Paper (The World Bank)
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program
WB	The World Bank

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INTRODUCTION

Development cooperation is an issue that generates heated debate. By some, it has been seen as a naïve and futile effort with no end in sight and little results to show in comparison to the massive financial investments made. Some others say that development collaboration is nothing but an extension of the political foreign affairs of the more developed countries. On the other hand, it has been seen as a legitimate effort to work for a more peaceful, equal and democratic world. No matter what conclusion one arrives at on a personal level, there are good arguments for opinions at both ends of the continuum.

The Finnish development cooperation[1] has many faces. Finland is engaged in bi- and multilateral cooperation that takes place on a governmental level. In addition, Finland supports the agencies of the United Nations and other international agencies. On a civil society level, Finland supports the efforts of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The fuel keeping these organizations running may be a variety of issues running from religious beliefs, political stand, concern for environment, to philanthropy in general.

The present study is conducted in the context of the NGO collaboration. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) grants funds for Finnish NGOs that have partners in the developing countries. The Finnish organization in question here is Fida International. It could be classified as a Faith Based Organization (FBO). Fida International (preceded by SuVUL and LKA)[2] has grown to be one of the biggest recipients of Government grants for development collaboration and humanitarian assistance. Currently, it enjoys the status of a partnership organization with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA).[3] To qualify as a partnership organization with MFA, the organization must have clearly defined goals that are in line with the general policies set by the Ministry, substantial capacity to raise and manage financial resources, a sufficient record of long-term and successful development interventions, avenues for Finnish citizens to engage in development cooperation, and

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[1] The terms cooperation and collaboration are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.
[2] SuVUL is an acronym for Suomen Vapaa Ulkolähetys [Finnish Free Foreign Mission] and LKA is an acronym for Lähetyksen Kehitysapu [Development Aid of the Mission].
[3] <http://global.finland.fi/uutiset/teksti_popup.php?id=2990> 16.5.2006.

reliable partners in developing countries. Fida has around 50 ongoing interventions in almost 30 countries. A more detailed background and history of Fida will be provided later in the study.

The rationale of development collaboration could be depicted as consisting of three levels. On a global level the donor countries and organizations form policies and debate development trends, of course, the developing countries play a role in these processes as well. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are, perhaps, the best-known result of these processes. On a national level, the Government of Finland has set policies for its development collaboration. They reflect global trends but are, of course, more practically oriented. The policies contain also the framework in which NGOs are to operate. Finally, the activities of the development NGOs should reflect the Governmental and Global goals and policies.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland has laid out the purposes and principles of NGO collaboration in Development Cooperation Manual.[4] It suggests that NGO collaboration should contribute to global security, poverty reduction, promotion of human rights, prevention of environmental problems, and economic interaction. Individual NGOs have considerable freedom in defining the contents of a given intervention. However, the above-mentioned principles should be reflected in the project documents and activities. A project, by definition, is to give a temporary input in solving a development related problem, or, for example, improving the capacities of the local actors in developing countries. It should lead to interventions whose impact will be sustained after the external human resources and financial inputs have been withdrawn. By default, projects should be clearly defined in terms of time, resources, and objectives.

The concepts and ideals of development cooperation have been defined through a long dialogue between the donor community and other players in the field. However, anyone who has substantial experience in development cooperation will probably agree that, in practise, constructive collaboration is extremely difficult. The spark for the present research can be traced back to personal experience of the challenges and dilemmas in NGO collaboration. After about five years in development cooperation, the researcher

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[4] <http://global.finland.fi/english/projects/ngo/> 15.5.2006.

conducted a study that aimed to generate ideas and dialogue as to how Fida International can improve on its interventions (Järvinen 2001). The research revealed a spectrum of practical problems faced by project personnel:

- Interventions are too big and ambitious in light of the local resources
- Dependency on foreign funding and implementation capacity forms subtly if the issue is not addressed from the start and monitored during the course of implementation
- Interventions are planned by outsiders and insensitive to local realitiesThe local counterpart does not "own" the project financially and psychologically
- The interventions are seen as activities by foreigners in a local setting
- Prolonged development cooperation has created a culture that inhibits real development

The issues are by no means novel. They have been long debated. Solutions have been sought. While carrying out the research, the researcher became familiar with the concept of empowerment. It is widely used in relation to development interventions. In addition, it has drawn the attention of researchers of other scientific fields as well. At a first glimpse, empowerment-thinking seemed to encompass a solution to a variety of problematic questions and to provide substantial light on why some interventions fail and others prosper. However, in the reviewed literature, there were depictions of empowered communities, suggested courses of action at a community level, calls to improve human right situations, proposals of how to measure empowerment, but relatively little on what empowerment means in NGO work in terms of day-to-day activities. A discussion with a friend and development consultant Wilfred Amalemba paints the picture of development problems vividly:

> *Why are we in this present condition of dependency? Here is what I have come to conclude. You see, long time back, our lives were determined by things that we were not able to control, rain, dry seasons, wild-fires and so on. Life just so happened. Then, we learned to trust the chief and the local spiritual leader who was also the medicine-man to tell what is best for us.*
>
> *Missionaries and colonialists came along. They built schools and administrative centres. As soon as they noticed that we were not really interested in them, they thought of incentives. If you would put your child to school, you would be handed a portion of sugar in return.*
>
> *We got independence. The government promised to do all for us. "Water for all; health for all; education for all; jobs for all. We needed not worry." When the government realized it is too big a task, they went to IMF, The World Bank, other governments and so on for help.*

Where the governments have failed, the NGOs have stepped in. They give us seminars with sitting allowances and travel reimbursements. Should you not pay these allowances to the participants, they challenge you and your organization for not giving them "their rights". I ask: 'when you take your child to school, should the school pay you?' 'Of course not.' 'No, because you value the education they impart. Then, why should I pay you for attending a seminar?'

I have read about South Korea. It seems that some forty years back, the development there was at the same level as in Kenya. What is the current situation? We have nothing to show while the South Korean economy thrives. It really puzzles me. What is it that makes the difference? The only thing that I can think of is culture or the philosophy of life. They (Koreans) respect personal discipline, hard work, group discipline. We do not. Our way of life does not emphasize those things.

Mr. Wilfred L. Amalemba
Consultant, Nairobi, Kenya[5]

So, the following is a study into the development dilemmas from the perspective of empowerment. The first chapter will provide the reader with an introduction to the logic of development efforts, present culture as a key factor present in all aspects of development cooperation and its research, and introduce the research questions.

Chapter 2 presents empowerment as a multifaceted context comprising of individual, organizational, and practical aspects. All aspects are pertinent to empowerment in development cooperation contexts. Some of the current theories on empowerment will be discussed as we all as practical attempts to empower. The definition of empowerment for the present context is also coined.

The methodological chapter is quite substantial since one of the secondary research questions relate to an application of Delphi method that deviates from normal Delphi applications. Therefore, although the Delphi method was used here as a data collection and procession strategy rather than an independent method, it is discussed in length in Chapter 3 to assure the reader that the researcher has substantial knowledge on the normative applications of the method and its underlying philosophy to argue for a new application of the method and its consequent implications and contributions. Chapter 4 provides the descriptions of the data analysis and key findings. The key findings are depictions of an empowered partner, means of empowerment, and empowerment inhibitors. Chapter 5 is the summary of results and suggestions for further research.

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[5] The quote is from an informal discussion while planning a seminar in Nairobi 22 March 2005. The wording has been checked by Mr. Amalemba.

1 THE RESEARCH SETTING - CROSS CULTURAL COOPERATION

1.1 Development Cooperation of Fida International

At the core of the current research is the relevance of empowerment-thinking in the context of NGO development cooperation. The collaboration of two or more NGOs is often called a partnership. Usually, partnership exists between two organizations and is established by a mutual agreement. The current research studies empowerment primarily in the context the partnerships that Fida International has in Eastern Africa. The Action Research Seminars have provided data from among project personnel in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. However, the Delphi experts who participated in the research have experience in development interventions beyond these countries. This aspect of the research provides an expanded research perspective since the scope of research data is not limited geographically and culturally to Eastern Africa.

Usually, Fida partners with churches that, using development terminology, can be classified as Faith Based Organizations (FBOs). Some of the partner churches have registered an NGO to administer and manage development and humanitarian efforts. Others have set up departments to address these issues. Below is a short description[6] of the Fida partners that bear the most on the current study. It is important to keep in mind that the number of members in each church is an approximation.

> **FPCT (the Free Pentecostal Church of Tanzania)** is a registered organization established in 1932, with an estimated 300 000 members. Its purpose is to serve the people of Tanzania, both spiritually and physically. It has about 150 social projects in 7 departments, including schools, hospitals, and over 100 pre-schools. In 2002, they drafted a 10 year plan of holistic ministry.

> **Pentecostal Churches of Uganda (PCU)** was started by Scandinavian missionaries in 1986 and has about 25,000 members. Several large social projects were initially implemented at its inception, but the partners' participation was minimal. PCU has now embarked on a restructuring program emphasizing local ownership and jurisdiction. One of the latest developments is the reopening of national office and strategic plan under preparation. They have asked Fida to endorse and support the process. Social programs for victims of war and AIDS are currently in progress.

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[6] From the drafts of project plans of project no. 5260 and Leadership Training Programme.

Full Gospel churches of Kenya (FGCK) was registered in 1949 and has more than 250,000 members. A recent change in leadership has challenged FGCK to reinforce management of both its church and social work to avoid the transitional vulnerability which they experienced. Social programs in the areas of health, education, and social work are active, but need better management and sustainable strategies. Ratification and refining of a policy and procedures document is in process.

Ethiopian Guenet Church (EGC) consists of 50,000 members in six regions, and has several social programs. Most of the projects started by Fida were large, and were handed over to the Government in 2002. A capacity building program was launched in 2000, and works in partnership with the EAEP. EGC has plans to initiate development projects to meet social needs in its areas of operation.

To gain an understanding of why Fida International, an FBO, is engaged in development collaboration, a short historical overview of the organization is necessary. Fida International is the mission agency of the Pentecostal movement in Finland. The Pentecostal movement in Finland is a part of the world wide Pentecostal movement and as Hämäläinen (FFFM 1997) puts it, a part of the even bigger Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. The origins of the movement in Finland are generally traced back to 1911 when Thomas Barrat, a Norwegian Methodist Pastor, visited Finland (Helluntaikirkko 2006; Hämäläinen 2003; Kuosmanen 1979). The persons who at that time experienced a similar spiritual experience continued to fellowship together. The group consisted of people from various different denominations and the Lutheran Church that has a state church status in Finland. Interestingly, as early as the following year 1912, Emil Danielsson was sent to Kenya as a missionary (FFFM 1997; Hämäläinen 2003). At the time, the people sharing the Pentecostal experience had not formed any formal structure. The same applied to sending out the first missionary. In fact, the idea of structure for sending missionaries was questioned altogether (Hämäläinen 2003). However, Kuosmanen (1979, 339) notes that although the movement was not formally organized, at the time, it had all the characteristics of an independent movement.

As a whole, Pentecostalism in Finland has been characterized as a lay movement questioning the importance of formal structures. This applies both to the organization of local congregations and the foreign missions. For a long time, the legal framework for the local Pentecostal churches or assemblies has been that of an association and not of a religious denomination. If viewed from the local perspective, each assembly has had its own registration and administration. Strong organization at local level has

probably boosted local commitment and psychological ownership of the activities in a particular local assembly. When the local assemblies have recognized the need to collaborate in regard to, for example, training, missions, media ministry, and so on, new associations have been registered for the purpose. Hämäläinen (2005) holds that the Swedish Pentecostal leader Lewi Pethrus had a great impact on the development of the structure of the organization of Pentecostals in Scandinavia, and Finland in particular. The argument was that the New Testament does not recognize any structure beyond the local church. Yet, Lewi Pethrus and the Pentecostals in general have recognized that certain activities need to be addressed on a national level, therefore, there has been some kind of tension throughout the history of Scandinavian Pentecostals in regard to the need for formal organization and the lay accent of the movement. An example of this is the establishment of mission organization in Sweden 1926. The move created a debate and the organization was abolished not more than three years later. The event had an effect also in Norway where the organization was dissolved a few years later. In Finland, the events took a similar course. An organization for mission work was established 1927 and closed two years later. The organization was reinstituted 1950. (Hämäläinen 2003; Hämäläinen 2005.)

In short, it seems that Pentecostalism in Finland has been characterized from the beginning by loose formal organization, a deep bond of fellowship based on common experience rather than structure, reserved attitude towards formal organizational structures, and love for foreign mission. The foreign missionaries have from the beginning been involved in social ministries. In addition, on the home front, the church has also had strong ministries for prisoners and substance abusers to mention but a few. Some of these social ministries may have been very informal by nature. But, it can be argued that the Finnish Pentecostals have had a social concern from the start. Over the years, the social ministries have fought to survive in an atmosphere where social concern has been seen as somehow subordinate to the more spiritual issues. Nevertheless, currently, social ministries and social involvement are being recognized as legitimate ingredients of foreign mission on their own right (Hämäläinen 2003; Hämäläinen 2005). Consequently, the Department for Development Cooperation of Fida International has grown rapidly and its organization has been strengthened.

1.2 Policy Context of Finnish NGOs

Finnish NGOs that receive grants from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland do not operate in a vacuum. Their operations reflect international policies on development cooperation, policies put in place by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, policies in the country(ies) of operation, and their own policies. All of these policies should form a hierarchic harmony.

1.2.1 Policies and Principles of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

The development collaboration, partnerships, assistance or whatever the term in use has been or is, has a long history. It is not the task of the current study to dwell on the history. However, a short description of the policies or principal decisions made by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) is necessary to understand the research dynamics and contexts of this study. The MFA funds the Finnish NGOs as well as some the southern NGOs. The funding is conditioned by guidelines set and expressed in the development policies of Finland. In this policy setting and drafting, Finland is not an isolated player. Rather, it is monitoring global trends which will bear on policy making.

The current priorities of Finnish development funding are spelled out in the Government Resolution on Development Policy (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 5.2.2004).[7] From the opening remarks, the policy is aligned with global initiatives and frameworks. It recognizes the Millennium Summit, its culmination the Millennium Declaration, Doha meeting, the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development, and Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. At the core of the recognitions is the pursuit to harmonize global development efforts. In addition, the opening lines of the Development Policy underline the responsibility of developing countries for their own development.

The key principles of the Development Policy of Finland are:

- Commitment to UN Millennium Goals and their underlying values
- Commitment and coherence in all policy areas nationally

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[7] Unless indicated otherwise, the introduction of the MFA framework for development cooperation is based on this document.

- Taking the international human rights as the starting point of Finland's development policy
- Sustainability of development
- Comprehensive financing of development
- Participation of public and privates sectors as the drivers of development
- Respect for the integrity and responsibility of developing countries so that Finland's assistance will be directed to support the indigenous plans of the developing countries
- Transparency and Long-term commitment

The key principles need to be operationalized. The Government Resolution suggests that in practise the Government will take a number of steps. The first priority is to increase funds for development cooperation and consequently improve on the content, quality, and administration of development funds. Finland will also aim at harmonizing the development procedures so as to improve efficiency and effectiveness. In order to achieve this, the Government will encourage Finnish citizens to support the values and targets of MDGs. Finland also recognizes that one of the principal means to eradicate poverty is to support economic growth in developing countries and secure an equitable distribution of wealth. A key issue in supporting economic growth is to support the poorest countries to gain influence in international forums. Finland will also support the strengthening of the multilateral system and increasing of the effectiveness of the UN. The Government will consider the interests of developing countries in WTO negotiations and encourage the inclusion of trade issues in their poverty reduction strategies. Finally, Finland promotes effective implementation of debt management programs, collaboration of public institutions in Finland to improve on coherence and effectiveness in development activities, participation of Finnish companies in supporting the MDGs and investing in the poorest developing countries, and accessibility of developing countries to new and appropriate technologies.

The Government Resolution also discusses the strengths of the Government and the focus of activities in development cooperation. It suggests that in the experience of Finland, growing from the poor post-war country into one of the most competitive welfare and information societies, such issues as internal and external security and stability, respect for human rights, democracy, good governance, equal participation of women, environmental issues, responsible economic growth, and sustained investment in education, health, social services and children have been vital. In these sectors, Finland can add value. The Resolution also discusses cross-cutting themes that are to

permeate all developing activities irrespective of the specific sector. Finland will seek to promote the rights and the status of women and girls together with gender and social equality. It will also aim at promoting the rights and the equal participation of groups that are easily marginalized. Among such groups are children, the disabled, indigenous peoples, and ethnic minorities. Finally, Finland will also give special attention to environmental issues.

The Government Resolution also prioritizes the activities of Finland so that they reflect the content of the MDGs. The focus areas are basic education, health care systems, fight against HIV and AIDS, social security networks, access to clean drinking water, sustainable management and protection of natural resources, support for provision of staple foods, promotion of forestry as a part of rural livelihoods, and measures to bridge the digital divide. The Resolution recognizes that the goals it presents are ambitious. Their achievement will call for serious work in Finland, partner countries, within the EU, within the UN, and with other partners. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will assume overall coordinating role in the process. The key stakeholders in carrying out the implications of the Government Resolution are other ministries, government agencies, private sector, and the NGOs.

The Government Resolution on Development Policy recognizes NGOs as key stakeholders in implementing the Development Policy. The recognition emanates from the understanding that civil society is a vast and important resource in development. The achievement of MDGs and goals specified in poverty reduction strategies presumes a developed and strong civil society. The Government is committed to securing the role of NGOs in development cooperation. In doing so, it is also committed to respect the independence and autonomy of them. Finland has noted the rapid growth in terms of the number of NGOs and their improved capacity of implementation. The Government wants to support this phenomenon by securing funding for the NGO-sector and providing more services to it.

There is also another document that discusses the implementation or operationalization of the development cooperation facilitated by the Government of Finland. The document is called *Operationalisation of Development Policy Objectives in Finland's International Development Co-operation* (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 22.2.2001).

Although the document is of an earlier date than the Government Resolution on Development Policy discussed above, the spirit of the documents seem to be quite similar and demonstrative of succession rather than policy conversion. However, the document is crucial in that it specifies the criteria for bilateral partner countries. The partner countries fall into two categories: Long-term partner countries and Other partnerships. Of course, the criteria are different. At the core of the Decision-In-Principle is the desire to concentrate on fewer countries in long-term partnerships. This is supposed to enable a more significant impact. In a long-term partnership it is important to have a continuous and active presence in a given country or area to engage in proper dialogue. In accord with the Government Resolution on Development Policy, the Decision-In-Principle underlines the importance of sensitivity to international forums, taking into account of EC policies, and UN leadership in international development dialogue.

1.2.2 Policies and Principles of Southern Cooperation Countries and Organizations

The cooperation partners of Fida are obviously an integral part of their societies. The main development related activities of Fida International in East-Africa[8] take place in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. In all of these countries governmental development activities are supposed to be carried out within the framework of poverty reduction strategies (PRS) or poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP). These are national strategies to eradicate poverty and bring about development. In the PRS papers, the aspect of development that is, perhaps, emphasized the most is economic growth. They are updated every three years and monitored with annual progress reports. The PRS are formed in a process involving the country concerned, domestic stakeholders and external development partners. Some of the key external development partners are the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The paper discusses the poverty situation in a country, macroeconomic, structural, and social policies and programs to promote growth and reduce poverty. In the discussion below, the PRS(P)s and Interim Poverty Reduction Strategies (IPRS) that cover the years of data collection for the current study (2002-2005) are commented on. In special cases related papers from periods other than 2002-2005 are referred to.

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[8] For Fida International East Africa encompasses DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, and Malawi.

The language employed to express the plans for sustainable development and poverty reduction of Ethiopia encompasses same trends and emphases as the Government Resolution and the Decision-In-Principle of the Government of Finland. For the purposes of the current study, it is interesting to note that the Ethiopian Sustainable Development and the Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) refers to empowerment as a crucial ingredient in brining about sustainable development and alleviating poverty (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, July 2002). In the paper, empowerment seems to encompass the ideas of transferring decision making and budgetary autonomy to the regions and also increasing powers at the district levels. To simplify a bit, it seems that empowerment is taken to mean more or less the same as decentralizing governance. However, in the same context, the paper emphasizes capacity building to secure competent human resources to oversee the process and the participation of beneficiaries in planning activities relevant to them. As a whole, the paper refers to MDGs, sustainable growth, minimizing dependency on foreign aid, capacity building, equitable growth, good governance, role of the justice system, and the marginalized groups as factors in development. The paper also has a section on partners in development that discusses the role of the NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The Government of Ethiopia emphasises that such players must act in a coordinated way. A critical part of this coordination is the alignment of activities with the SDPRP. The regional and district authorities are exhorted to facilitate a conducive environment for the NGOs and CSOs to operate.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of the Government of Tanzania (October 2000) is relatively simple. It promotes the roles of the districts, municipalities, and communities in formulating, implementing, and monitoring development efforts. However, how this process is to take place is not specified. The paper addresses three key areas in tackling poverty: income poverty, improvement of human capacity, and extreme vulnerability of the poor. It is also emphasized that the responsibility of the Government is to secure a stable macro-economic environment in order to increase market effectiveness. In general, the role of the Government is seen more from the perspective of policy making that is to enable the grass-root level take responsibility on their own development. The PRSP states explicitly that the poor and the private sector are to develop durable mechanisms at the micro-levels to enable for economic growth. Special attention is to be paid to the role of the vulnerable groups, specified as

handicapped and orphans, in bringing about development and giving them a chance to be heard. A crucial factor in the overall development of the country is the broadening of the tax base and the improvement of the tax administration. All of the above mentioned factors are, of course, important. However, the Tanzanian PRSP could be judged as relatively shallow in terms of the concrete steps and actions to be taken. For the purposes of the study at hand, the important issue in PRSP is that the Government realizes the role of the grass-root level players in bringing about development. Further, it is concerned about the involvement of the poor and vulnerable in development. In general, then, the role of the civil society is deemed crucial in the PRSP.

The Ugandan Poverty Reduction Paper (Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development 24.03.2000) lists the root causes of poverty as land shortage, low level of education, families headed by female widow or senior citizens, limited access to markets, insecurity, unsatisfactory quality of public services, macroeconomic instability, limited access to health information and technical information, unequal distribution of wealth, and the unsatisfactory functioning of markets. The main concerns of the Government are to reduce absolute income poverty, raise educational performance, improve on the health of the citizens, and to secure a voice to poor communities. The principle actions the Ugandan Government are to develop the poorly functioning markets, employ NGOs for service delivery when appropriate, integration of the efforts of the Government and its development partners, and mainstreaming distributional considerations, gender, children's rights, and evaluation of environmental impacts into all government policies. The pillars to support development actions for poverty eradication are the formation of framework for economic growth and transformation, good governance and security, and smart actions directly increasing the ability of the poor to raise their income and improve their quality of life.

In relation to the role of NGOs in the development of Uganda, the World Bank conducted a study as early as 1994 (World Bank 1994). The document discusses at length the advantages and disadvantages of working with NGOs. The advantages emanate from perceptions that NGOs are value driven and thus able to generate strong commitment to address urgent needs in communities. This is thought to derive from the fact that ideally the NGOs are near the communities and composed of community members. The NGO responses often result from gaps that the government agencies

have failed to fill in. In general, the perception is that NGO activities are truly sensitive to community and an embodiment of work at the grass-roots. Since the NGOs are often small, there is a prevailing perception that their operations are efficient and that they are quick and flexible in their responses. (World Bank 2004.)

The advantages of NGO development responses may easily turn out to be their disadvantages as well. NGOs are normally small which translates into small impact as well. They are often focused on local problems. Focus on local problems may lead to overlooking the broader economic and social perspective, yet, it affects not only the macro but the micro levels of economy and social welfare. The NGOs are also criticised of their loose structure and *ad hoc* spirited operations that in practice means difficulties in what comes to any real accountability. In case the NGOs work with donors, there will usually be accountability measures to be taken. However, even in such cases accountability to the beneficiaries may remain unclear and shallow. The fact that NGOs and Community Based Groups (CBGs) are small in size and limited in their financial and human resources may result in inadequate planning and management. The Ugandan study also noted that quite often the NGOs compete with the private sector and government agencies in their service provision. In addition, surprisingly perhaps, the World Bank study also found that not all NGOs are based in the rural but have centralized their operations in larger cities which isolate them from the poor communities that have been perceived before. (World Bank 2004.)

In all, the World Bank study recommends that the Bank should cooperate with NGOs. In the cooperation attention should be paid to not flooding the small NGOs with too vast monetary resources since they may, in fact, reduce their effectiveness not increase it. NGOs are in unique position to hear the voices in the communities and device innovative responses to the emerging needs. Therefore, the NGOs do offer added value at the grassroots. However, having said that, the Report is careful to remind that NGOs should not assume the role of the Government in providing basic services. While working with the NGOs, the World Bank suggests that their accountability to the beneficiaries should be enhanced and the Government should be encouraged to create an enabling environment for them to operate. The planning of activities and collaboration with the Government agencies should be more formal and permanent. (World Bank 1994.)

The Government of Kenya has focused on five key steps to battle poverty: facilitate sustained and rapid economic growth, improve governance and security, increase ability of the poor to raise their incomes, improve the quality of life of the poor, and improve equity and participation (Government of Kenya 13.7.2000). The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy also recognizes that the voices of the poor have not been paid adequate attention to in poverty reduction plans in the past. In terms of economic recovery, Kenya will tighten monetary policies related to governmental expenditure, create an enabling environment for economic activities, expand the private sector, establish policies that promote economic activities in the poorest areas, stimulate foreign and domestic investment, expand the tax-base and at the same time relieve the tax burden of the poor, provide incentives for investments, and diversify the banking system. Improvement of governance includes measures to address corruption in public sector, creation of code of ethics for public office holders, increasing transparency in public procurement and contracting, strengthening Government finance, accounting, and internal audit systems, enforcement of financial regulations and procedures, and tightened audit of Local Authorities. The poor are to be given better economic opportunities by increasing their access to skills, resources, and services, expanding the non-farm sector in rural areas, dismantling intrusive, outmoded and restricting legislation, creating an effective agricultural advisory system, establishing an efficient private marketing system for the agricultural produce, rehabilitating and maintaining an effective infrastructure, and overcoming electricity shortfall and reducing its cost. The most important measures to improve the quality of life are increasing primary school enrolment, securing primary school completion, enabling poor children to attend secondary school, providing the public with primary health care access and necessary drugs, securing potable water in poor areas, and preparing legislation to privatize urban water supply. In relation to equity, Kenya aims at securing equitable distribution of income and economic activities among the regions. In addition, equity and participation are seen as cross-cutting themes that should permeate all sector policies formed. Although the IPRS realizes the importance of participation in forming sector policies and the potential of the private sector, it is quiet about the roles of NGOs and CBGs. (Government of Kenya 13.7.2000.)

In all, the strategies to eradicate poverty are quite similar. The differences pertain to style and emphasis but not that much to substance. They highlight the importance of

democracy, good governance, equity, and market driven economy as the basic elements to foster development. The role of the government is to create a facilitative and conducive policy environment to promote entrepreneurship and investment. If reviewed critically, the government programmes seem to pay minimal attention to innovative approaches in poverty reduction and contain rather minimal discussions on the role of the civil society in poverty reduction. Of course, the strategies are mainly written from governmental perspective that might explain the relatively shallow discussion on some of the issues. However, on the other hand, governments exist for the civil society and the aspect should be considered in decision and policy making.

1.2.3 Policies and Principles of Fida International

A specific theology on social and development issues has not been formulated by the Finnish Pentecostals. The justifications for social involvement range from the idea that it is the expression of Christian virtues and, on the other hand, a Christian duty (Hämäläinen 2005, 315). Social concern has also been linked to human dignity that Christians are supposed to promote and fight against social injustices that are at the root of poverty (Hämäläinen 2005, 316-317). The philosophical and theological foundation of Fida International for engaging in social ministries has not been defined in a single statement. Arto Hämäläinen, Executive Director of Fida International has touched on the issue in a number of writings but these do not constitute an official standpoint of the Pentecostal churches in Finland. Yet, they can be held as indicative of general thinking, especially, of Fida as an organization.

The researcher has attempted to form a short justification for churches to be involved in social ministries in development countries and qualify as relevant and legitimate organizations to receive public funding. This has been done in the context of creating the development intervention programme for East Africa 2006.

> The role of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), such as the churches, has been debated. However, Fida believes that the churches are relevant, justified, and indigenous partners in development interventions. This is because:
>
> - Churches form a network in most East African countries that reaches to most villages.
> - Churches attract regular attendance of masses of people and therefore provide a unique platform to address people long-term and regularly.

- Churches are a major force in an African context. It is hard to imagine remarkable development in a given African country without the involvement of the church.
- Churches are part and parcel of the African societies. They have not been artificially created for carrying out development work or for the purposes of channeling foreign development funding.
- Whatever will happen in the global development policies, ways, means, the churches will continue to exist in most of the African countries.
- Since churches are part of the civil society at large, they have the right to be involved in developing their country and having the duty and privilege to contribute towards it.

This is not to say that the involvement of FBOs in development is not problematic. However, the importance for churches in African societies and development has been increasingly recognized by, for example UN agencies, Oxfam, and the World Bank.[9]

Originally, as mentioned, the quote above is a part of Fida International East Africa Program Draft. Its content has been commented on and approved in principle by Dr. Jukka Harjula[10] and Olli Pitkänen[11] who were at the time of drafting this document in charge of Fida International Program planning for the period of 2007–2010. Consequently, it became a part of Fida international overall plan submitted to MFA of Finland. Dr. Harjula suggested that, in addition to the notions above, churches are by definition organizations that should genuinely believe in and promote the values that are pertinent to development efforts.

Fida has linked its development cooperation strategy and plans into the MDGs and PRSs of those countries where it is operational (Fida International May 2005).[12] The core idea is to empower partner organizations to be positive and powerful influences in their societies. In the Project Manual (PM), reference is made to promotion of democracy, equality, training, environmental protection, cultural identity, gender, disabled, and minorities as the key areas of emphases. The PM (May 2005, 32-33) lays out the following guidelines and principles:

> *Partnership*
> The vision of Fida's development cooperation operations is to empower the abilities of local partners to become positive and

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[9] Belshaw, D., Calderisi, R. & Sugden, C., 2001; Oxfam, 2002; UNISEF, 2003.
[10] Email 30.04.2006. Dr. Harjula at the time served as Program Development Director.
[11] Telephone conversation 15.05.2006. Mr. Pitkänen at the time served as Programme Director.
[12] Unless otherwise noted, information is based on the Fida International Project Manual, v. May 2005.

powerful influences in their own communities and societies. Partnership is to be equal, and the decisions concerning projects and programmes are to be made together.

The prime partners of Fida International are the national Pentecostal Churches in the cooperation countries. Partners can also be other Christian dominations, communities, and NGOs. In countries which have no official or organised civil society, the local partners can be village communities, cooperative societies, local authorities, schools, or university faculties.

Community-based approach
Together with its local partners Fida aims to improve the communities' position and life management. Individuals are helped by supporting the communities to work through their own challenges.

Participatory cooperation
The improvement of the communities' life management begins from their own personal needs and their own initiatives. Communities are encouraged, trained and engaged to be involved in the projects' cycle, from ideation to evaluation. The community members take part in the process equally. Their expert knowledge is appreciated and has a determining influence on the planning and implementation of the activities.

Ownership
The goal is to help people of the community to realise that they themselves can have a significant and positive change in their own lives. The communities will feel that they own the projects from the beginning. The role of Fida and its local partners is to support and encourage the community's ownership.

Holistic well-being
The goal is to retain holistic well-being in the communities and lives of individuals. The term holistic refers to physical, psychical, social, financial, ecological, and spiritual well-being.

Sustainability
The communities will have improved facilities to operate in changing circumstances and to encounter different challenges. The improved quality of life, which is due to the development cooperation process, will continue after the programme and lead to a sustainable development in the community. At its best it will also spread in a wider perspective.

Expansion and multiplication
The goal of the development cooperation process is to make the changes in the community so positive and significant that the community will be an example for other communities. At its best it

will lead the community to develop its neighbouring communities as well.

Love for one's neighbor
Fida offers Finns and Finnish communities the opportunity to show love and solidarity to their neighbours (e.g. to the poor children of the development countries through the Child Sponsorship Programme).

The PM lists sense of calling, expertise, commitment, community-based approach, cooperation, participation, equality, and human rights as the core values of the development cooperation of Fida International. The indicators of successful development cooperation are also discussed in the PM. In short, indications of good development cooperation are:

- Improved capacity of local partners to operate
- Measurable impact in the lives of the final beneficiaries
- Harmony with the policies of MFA of Finland, MDGs, PRSs of the cooperation countries, and DAC guidelines
- Good quality of partnerships; good governance (management)
- Equality and improved status of minorities
- Improved project evaluation systems
- Significant role in supporting civil societies and advocacy in development policy making

The specific content of the indicative areas can be viewed in Appendix VI. Closely related to the principles of work expressed in the PM is the Code of Conduct for Development Cooperation (May 2005, 21-22). Fida International holds it crucial that it operates with its partners as equals. The idea is that Fida staff is not on the ground to work for our partners, neither is the partner there to implement Fida's plans and vision. Rather, they are to work together towards an agreed goal. Fida also aims at working with the whole community of which its partner is an integral part. Work should not be limited to improving the lives of individuals but aim at developing and transforming the whole community where possible. The same principle of working with the community rather than the community working for "us" should be applied by our partners as Fida seeks to apply it in relation to its partners. Development work has been successful when the partner of Fida and the community involved can say that "we have done it ourselves". The Code of Conduct also refers to the definition of holism. Fida attempts

to bring about holistic development. To put it simply, development cannot be measured in materialistic terms only. Development includes physical, mental, social, and spiritual elements as well. At the core of development is the idea of sustainability. A project, by definition, is limited in time and scope. However, ideally, a limited intervention is supposed to result in an impact that will be sustained after the project itself has ceased. Finally, linked to the idea of sustainability, Fida seeks to implement activities that can be multiplied and disseminated. It means that the educational methods and contents should be suitable for local contexts. Further, this means that interventions can be multiplied in other communities.

In summary, the Fida guidelines and principles for project planning, management, and evaluation follow the generally accepted practices. The principles and guidelines are to be materialized in project plans and activities specified in them. During the data collection period, the projects that were being implemented had the following purposes (Fida International a-j):[13]

- Improved capacity of FGCK Narok to work with Maasai girls and their communities.

- Improved capacity of FGCK to work with street children and Aids-orphans with emphasis on preventive approach (= dealing with root causes and empowering the communities to provide better care for children).

- Improved vocational and life-skills of youth.

- Sustainable FPCT Youth Centres in Wete and Zanzibar towns.

- Sufficient capacity of churches to meet the needs of youth in their communities in the rural areas and in the cities.

- A well functioning community self-help program extended to six to nine new villages in Northern Tanzania.

- The partner's improved capacity to respond to the educational needs of preschool aged children.

- Developed capacity of churches to be positive and powerful influences in their communities & Empowered partners in Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania,

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[13] Project purpose is defined in Fida PM (May 2005, 4) as "Desired concrete change to be achieved during the project phase in concern". In other documents the term purpose is used interchangeably with the term immediate objective.

Sudan, and Uganda, who have initiated and managed several new community interventions that transcend cultural differences and use local resources.[14]

- Reduced vulnerability to HIV/AIDS among high-risk groups in Debre Zeit. More PLWHA & their dependents in Debre Zeit receive proper care and support.

- Empowered Ethiopian partner churches / organisations as positive and powerful influences in local communities.[15]

The project purposes reflect the main philosophy of Fida International during the programme period of 2004-2007. Seven out of ten project plans included referred to here, reflect the idea of strengthening the partner organization's improved capacity to address development problems in their contexts or the improved capacity of the community to solve its own problems. In addition, for example in the case of HIV and Aids Program in Debre Zeit Ethiopia, involves strong elements indicating the responsibility of the community to bring about development. Further, in the case of Mwanza Youth Centre, Fida International has played a facilitating and supporting role in the planning and implementation process. Therefore, even if the project purpose itself reflects more the impact on the community rather than the empowerment of the partner, the aspect is involved in the intervention implicitly.

1.3 Cultural Context

The current research relates to culture in a number of ways. First of all, the research is carried out in a context where the Delphi experts, participants of Action Research Seminars, and the interventions are functioning in or have functioned in multicultural settings. Although it could be said, that the primary cultures interacting in the intervention and research contexts of this study, are Western and African, this would be an oversimplification, to put it mildly. In Africa, tribal cultures vary. In addition, for example, the Kenyan culture is an exiting mixture of Western, Asian, Islamic, Christian, tribal, English etc. cultures and influences that in themselves are increasingly becoming more vague and hard to define. Therefore, culture affects the research context

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[14] The purpose and name of the project has changed during the data collection period.
[15] The purpose changed significantly end of 2005 / early 2006. However, at the time of data collection the purpose was very indicative of Fida project philosophy.

significantly. In casual discussions, culture is quite often viewed as something exciting and positive. However, casual discussions and short term exposures to cultures do not paint the whole picture about their realities. The cultural dynamics are different when you are to settle down into a culture and work in a different cultural context. Indeed, as cultural anthropologists have noted long ago, after the initial excitement and courtship period, a foreign culture becomes more a foe than a friend. Of course, such a state of affairs need not be the final one. It seems that one can learn to navigate cultures and operate satisfactorily in different cultural contexts. Cultural issues affect development cooperation in many ways. Culture is the core reason why employment practices are different, expectations are different, leadership styles are different, attitude toward work is different, skills are different, value systems are different, and so on. It goes without saying that such a vast array of differences can become a source of constant frustration in a setting where a number of cultures interact.

Secondly, the current study aims at increasing understanding as to how cultural factors affect empowerment. Is culture a blessing or a curse in relation to empowerment efforts? How could the empowerment agent take cultural traits into consideration and make use of them? The empowerment agent must, for example, decide whether he or she aims at a genuine multicultural intervention. In other words, shall the agent aim at strengthening and preserving the existing culture prevailing in a given operational environment or promote new culture. On an idealistic level the answer might be easy. Of course, we should promote the existing culture! However, on a practical level, the answer is far more difficult to give. For example, if the existing culture does not promote planning, saving, and innovation, how is the agent to implement a micro-enterprise intervention successfully unless cultural issues are changed? Should the prevailing culture be preserved while it is clearly, in this regard, counterproductive? The development agent needs to ask if it is really true that democratic leadership and low organizational hierarchies are the best practices in terms of empowerment. What about the position and role of women in development? How does one involve the women in development in a culturally sensitive way? Should the empowerment agent just jump on the barricade, raise the standard for women's rights and change the traditional beliefs through revolution? All of these dilemmas evolve around cultural issues and have an immense impact on development cooperation.

Thirdly, culture relates to the reliability and validity of the research. It will be later pointed out that research is often culturally centered and blind. Research measures may be culturally tainted. The researchers themselves observe things through the cultural glasses of their native countries or cultures that they have assimilated into. What about transferability of the results? Can the results derived from an African context be transferred to Asian or Western contexts, for example?

1.3.1 Some Windows into Culture

Defining Culture

As most theoretical concepts, culture is a dynamic and elusive concept difficult to define. Koivisto (1998, 56) has noted that culture can be understood as an individual's or a collective' relation to the environment. However, he suggests that such a view is narrow and does not encompass the current usages of the concept. Therefore, he adds that culture embraces the acts of an individual or a collective that arise from their relationship to the environment. These acts are typical to individuals or collectives that share either a historical, religious, ethnic, or a lingual background. (Koivisto 1998, 56.)

Bohannan (1963) has already decades ago warned against misconceptions related to culture. He refers to difficulties in defining the meaning of culture in relation to two different contexts. First, one can attempt to define culture in relation to race and language. Bohannan suggests that race is a biological concept and language is a behavioral phenomenon. Secondly, culture can be looked at in the contexts of personality and society. In the final analysis, he proposes that culture, personality, and society are not empirically separable in the first place. It seems that they are facets of the same phenomena interrelated and inter-defined. Therefore, one does no exist without the other. If Bohannan's discussion is placed in the context of culture as descriptive of society and human relationships, it can be described from a number of points of views as:

- Quality in which social relationships are made empirically manifest
- Abstraction involving words, ideas, equipment, and attitudes
- Phenomenon involving personality, values and modes of perception.

Though he has identified and discussed a number of ways to look and parse culture, Bohannan is careful to emphasize that culture is a unifying factor that should not be narrowed too much to scientific angels of observation. (Bohannan 1963, 15-31.)

Adler refers to a few cultural definitions in his treatise. It can be viewed as the knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs, and capabilities, and habits a person has acquired as a member of a society. Culture can also be viewed more generally as the way of life of a people, the learned behavior which is transferred from generation to another. It can be seen as a result of action and, at the same time, the conditioner of future action. Culture is something that is shared by the majority of a group, valuable enough to be passed on to next generation, shapes and regulates behavior, and helps to define the world around. (Adler 1986, 8-9.)

Säntti has looked at culture from a more philosophical perspective as the current tendency seems to be. His entire discussion is helpful for those who want an orientation into theoretical understandings of culture. Here, some key aspects of his discussion are pointed out. To Säntti, postmodern understanding of culture sees it as a human product. It consists of values and norms defined and invented by man. Culture is a social phenomenon and as such elusive and dynamic. It involves learning and teaching. Such a view is, to a great extent, in opposition to the thinking of the modern era that sought for an exhaustive definition of culture and believed that it can be consciously shaped to suit, for example, the purposes of governments. In the postmodernist view, reality and culture are shaped to a large extent by language. Language itself, is constantly changing, therefore, the understanding of the surrounding reality is changing. In some sense, related to language is the importance of symbols and signs to structure reality. Language, signs, and symbols enable us to mentally define, classify, negotiate, argue and contest social interests. This, in turn, enables to set preference and values. A definition of culture could then be a monopoly of norms and values in a given social context. (Säntti 1999, 51–66.)

Peng refers to cultural definitions that emanate from institutional points of view. Institutions can play a role in that they can set rules in a society, formalize human interaction, provide normative and regulative structures, and set political, social, and legal rules that bear on human relations and activities. In some sense, institutions can be

held as the products of a culture or agents that shape and create culture. Institutions provide both formal and informal boundaries as to which choices are acceptable and preferable. (Peng 2002, 52–56.)

One of the most widespread definitions of culture in our time is that of Hofstede. He suggests that culture, in essence, is the "…collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (Hofstede 1984, 21). To him, culture describes the society as a whole, while subculture can be used to describe groups within a society. Cultures make behavior predictable to an extent. This, in turn enables the existence of social systems. However, to Hofstede, behavior is always determined by a person and the situation. Because of mental programming, it can be assumed that a given person is quite stable in his or her actions over time. Yet, changes in situations or contexts may cause deviations from normal behavioral patterns. Therefore, the more one knows the person's mental program and the context, the more accurate is the prediction of behavior. Mental programs cannot be studied directly. They can be inferred from behaviour, words, and deeds. In a society mental programs are shared to a degree. However, the mental program of each individual is also unique. Mental programs are partly inherited and partly learned. The construction of the mental program continues throughout our lives. But, the most fundamental programs are learned while we are young. (Hofstede 1984, 13–16.)

Vasko and others (1998, 8) have studied culture in development intervention contexts. They refer to a number of definitions on culture. Culture has been seen as:

- Totality of life: know-how, technical knowledge, customs of food and dress, religion, mentality, values, language symbols, sociopolitical economic behavior, indigenous methods of taking decisions and exercising power, methods of production and economic relations, etc. (Thierry Verhelst)
- Entity of facts and beliefs, history and present, material realities and mental conditions. (Juhani Pallasmaa)
- Communication (Edward T. Hall)
- The way things are done here (John Mole).

The writers also point out that what permeates most definitions of culture is the idea of common. People with similar backgrounds share something in common that can be

recognized as culture. Vasko and others (1998, 8) give examples of some of the issues that can be common in a culture:

- Values, beliefs, norms
- Assumptions
- Perceptions
- Attitudes
- Symbols
- Heroes
- Rituals, ceremonies
- Behaviour, patterns of communication
- Customs
- Etiquette

Seppälä and Vainio-Mattila (1998) have also explored culture in development intervention contexts. They hold that culture involves values, practices, and institutions. Values relate to religions, ethics, norms, myths, and attitudes. Practices have to do with traditions, gender roles, games, and bureaucracy. The researchers have also related cultural definitions to specific aspects of development interventions as seen in the table on the following page.

Table 1. Cultural definitions in relation to specific aspects of development interventions.

DEFINITION OF / COMMENT ON CULTURE	ASPECT OF INTERVENTION	THEORIST	REFERENCE IN SEPPÄLÄ & VAINO-MATTILA
Aspects of a social environment that are used to communicate values such as what is considered good and desirable, right and wrong, normal, different, appropriate, or attractive. The means through which society creates a context from which individuals derive meaning and prescriptions for successful living.	Culture in a program environment. Culture in justifying decisions, resisting change, and expressing identity.	Adams et al. 1997	p. 16ff.
The total sum of the original solution that a group of human beings invent to adapt to their natural and social environment.	Differences in behaviour and thinking patterns that are the root cause to cause puzzlement, bring out differences, cause wrong impressions, may result in intolerance.	Thierry Verhelst	p. 22ff.
An organizing concept, a system of allocating meaning with conceptual, perceptual, organizational, relational and communicative aspects.	Importance of both governmental and non-governmental institutions to be considered in planning and carrying out of an intervention. Especially the non-governmental and often informal institutions are neglected.	Joanne Prindville	p. 25ff
Cultural freedom, unlike individual freedom, is a collective freedom. It refers to the right of a group of people to follow a way of life of its choice. Cultural freedom guarantees freedom as a whole. It protects not only the group but also the rights of every individual within it. Cultural freedom, by protecting alternative ways of living, encourages experimentation, diversity, imagination and creativity. Cultural freedom leaves us free to meet one of the most basic needs, the need to define our own basic needs. This need is now threatened by both global pressures and global neglect.	Culture is not a threat to development but healthy diversity can be a vehicle for development. Development interventions may unintentionally harm cultures which may turn against the intervention itself.	De Cuellar	p. 27ff

Verhelst with Tyndale (Oxfam, 2002) paint a positive and forward-oriented picture of culture. They emphasize that culture is not an archive of the past but a constantly evolving phenomenon. It innovates and creates new traits. At one time, culture consists of given, or inherited traits and those that are created presently. They define culture as: "…the complex whole of knowledge, wisdom, values, attitudes, customs and multiple resources which a community has inherited, adopted, or created in order to flourish in the context of its social and natural environment" (Oxfam 2002, 10). They note,

especially in relation to development contexts, that local cultures can effectively block development if it seen as a threat. On the other hand, Verhelst and Tyndale suggest that cultures are capable of innovating and finding new solutions and alternatives for development. (Oxfam 2002, 1–14.)

Maleševic (2002) has pondered globalization from cultural perspective. He recognizes in it traits of culture. He emphasizes that there is a difference between the process of globalization and the ideology of globalism. Globalization is historical, cultural, and political artifact – a historical process. Globalism, in turn, is the ideology underlying the process. As an ideology it consists of ideas, values, and principles. These are promoted by a group of people, and as other cultures, it seeks a position of preeminence. As an ideology, globalism can be opposed and analyzed, while the historical process of globalization is, to a great extent, irresistible. Globalization, like cultures, seeks to set an ideal for the organization of societies. (Maleševic 2002, 38–39.)

Levels of Culture
The general concept of culture can be further examined in terms of levels or depth. Hofstede (1994, 10-13) has suggested that culture has six layers: national, regional/ethnic/religious/linguistic, gender, generation, social class, and organizational/corporate. National level consists of politically determined areas. A nation can embrace tribes or other groups that do not have, strictly speaking, the same culture. However, most nations have integrated to the point that speaking of typical behaviour within that nation is more or less meaningful. Hofstede suggests that national cultures differ in four basic dimensions: power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, femininity vs. masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance (1994, 14).

The second level of culture, regional/ethnic/religious/linguistic, may transcend politically determined boundaries.[16] This level differs to an extent from the national culture and traditional group culture (except perhaps on the linguistic dimension). (Hofstede 1994, 15–16.)

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[16] In his text on this level, Hofstede comments only on regional/ethnic/religious aspects of the level. However, to the researcher, it seems that there is no reason to leave the linguistic dimension out of the discussion.

He has also suggested that the differences associated with gender can be viewed from the perspective of a culture. The gender roles existing in a given location or group of people breed a gender specific culture. The fact that such a culture exists, makes it very difficult to change gender roles associated with that given culture. (Hofstede 1994, 16.)

Generations differ, for example, in terms of symbols, values, and rituals. A variance in these areas will occur with each pair of generations. However, fundamental societal changes can cross-cut generations and affect all in a profound way. (Hofstede 1994, 17.)

Social classes differ, among other things, in exposure to education, occupation, profession, accents, manners, and words. There is no standard definition for social class. The definition of social classes varies in different contexts. (Hofstede 1994, 17.)

Finally, Hofstede suggests that there is also an organizational/corporate level of culture. Corporate culture has been understood as the common nominator that explains a degree of common thinking, feeling, and acting in an organization. Though organizational culture can be compared and contrasted with, for example, national cultures, there is also a fundamental difference to it. One of the greatest differences is that, usually, an individual can influence to join it, spends only a limited time exposed and functioning in it, and may choose to abandon the organization and culture associated with it. (Hofstede 1994, 18.)

Säntti has reviewed and commented a host of approaches to culture. He refers, among others, to Schein and Porras who have described ways to look at culture in terms of levels. Schein looks at levels by way of the seen and the unseen. The researcher suggests that the three levels from visible to invisible are artifacts, values, and assumptions. Artifacts are visible in a real sense. Values are invisible. However, to an extent, they can be written down and discussed. If thought in organizational terms, values can include strategies, goals, and philosophies. At the deepest, most unconscious and invisible level there are assumptions. Assumptions can be characterized as unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. (Säntti 2001, 79.)

Porras has viewed organizations from a cultural perspective, especially, from a systems point of view. Säntti has commented on this systems model from a cultural perspective. Basically, there are three levels of systems: environmental, organizational, and individual. In his view, for example, the national culture corresponds to the environmental level of systems thinking. In systems thinking, all the three levels are interactive and influence one another. Following this line of arguments, culture could be thought of as having environmental, organizational, and individual levels. (Säntti 2001, 73.)

Koivisto suggests that cultures have at least two levels. He labels them as the levels of essence and manifestation. The level of essence is the foundation of a given culture. Koivisto describes it also as the subconscious of a culture. The essence of culture has developed over history. The level of manifestation consists of cognition, deeds, acts, common values, artifacts, educational systems, and behaviour patterns. It can be seen as the subconscious level of culture manifested in time and place. (Koivisto 1998, 58.)

Lévi-Strauss uses the terms surface- and deep-levels. He has also applied the language of conscious and unconscious in relation to culture and its levels. His understanding of culture is also dialectic in a sense that the surface- and deep-levels of culture are not static but change over time through a dialectic process. (Lévi-Strauss 1963; see also Koivisto 1998, 58–64.)

Spradley and McCurdy talk about explicit and tacit culture. Explicit culture can be discussed and explained by its members. Tacit culture refers to shared knowledge that people cannot talk about, at least not easily. Spradley and McCurdy agree that the "wall" between the tacit and the explicit can be permeated. However, there is a clear distinction between the two. In practice, cultures involve behaviours and taken-for-granted beliefs that are very difficult to explain. They are tacit. (Spradley & McCurdy 1980, 16–17.)

Components of Culture

Cultures can also be viewed from the point of view of components. Cultural components can be understood as areas where cultural peculiarities are manifested in. If levels of culture connote a horizontal approach to culture, discussing the components of

culture is a more vertical approach. In fact, the definitions of culture that were referred to may combine both approaches.   However, usually, they tend to list cultural components rather than to describe the different levels of it. Cultural components are especially useful in cross-cultural comparisons. They enable the interested person to grasp where cultures differ.

The following table is a glimpse of cultural components as used by different scholars. Of course, there are a number of other classifications and organizations of culture and even the scholars mentioned can make use of a number of cultural component classifications in their treatises. These are included to depict the variety of approaches to cultural comparisons.

Table 2. Various classifications of cultural components.

Hofstede	Hiebert	Spradley & McCurdy
Affectivity	Material products	Language
Orientation (self/collective)	Cultural ecology	Social structure
Absolute/relative	Symbols & communication	Family & marriage
Ascription/achievement	Statuses, roles, relationships	Kinship & descent
Specificity/diffuceness	Time, life-cycle	Groups, association, age sets
Process/results orientation	Social organization	Rank &stratification
Employee/job orientation	Family & marriage	Ecological system
Parochial/professional	Kinship systems	Economic system
Open/closed system	Associaion	Law & order
Loose/tight control	Geographic groups	Religion & magic
Normative/pragmatic	Legal systems	World view & values
	Political organization	
	World views	
	Religious systems	
Bohannan	**Hatch**	**Hampden-Turner & Hompenaars**
Biological network	Assumptions	Universalism/particularism
Network of agreements	Values	Individual/communal
Space and things	Artifacts	Specificity/diffusion
Image of unknown	Symbols	Achieved/ascribed
		Inner/outer direction
		Sequential/synchronous time

Sources: Bohannan 1963; Hampden-Turner & Hompenaars 2000; Hatch 1993; Hiebert 1985; Hofstede 1984; Hofstede 1994; Spradley & McCurdy 1980.

1.3.2 On the Concept of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a complex phenomenon. It has been defined in a number of ways depending on the context. For the purposes of the current study, it is important to define the concept and discuss its implications in an organizational setting.

Defining Multiculturalism

Lepola (2000) has summarized a number of ways to understand multiculturalism. Multiculturalism can be looked at from the point of view of self-understanding and self-description. In such a case, the society tries to understand itself and make sense of the multiple cultural phenomena that are taking place in it. The need for self-understanding may arise, for example, as a result of a migration of skilled labour to a given country. (Lepola 2000, 198.)

A society may also be defined as multicultural when it is possible to identify differing cultures within a society and if it is organized based on the differences. In addition, there should be evidence that these cultures are, to an extent, institutionalized, transferred from generation to another, and able to function independently. This kind of multiculturalism may stem, for example, from ethnicity, language, social class, or religion. (Lepola 2000, 199.)

Multiculturalism may as well refer to a political disposition. Karppi (2000, 83) refers to Rex's definition of political multiculturalism as a provision of an opportunity for all to participate in economics, politics, and law. In such a case, the state controls the public sphere of affairs but allows relative freedom in the development of private matters. The "size" of public sphere may vary considerably. For example, the Scandinavian countries tend to have a large sphere of public control. In other words, as Joppke and Lukes (1999, 3) put it, political multiculturalism may be defined as: "…multiple cultures coexisting under the roof of a neutral state".

Leggewie has identified three kinds of multicultural societies. Multiethnic apartheid refers to a situation where multiple ethnic groups may exist but political decision-making is in the hands of an ethnic group. The marginal existence of ethnic minorities describes a situation where a minority may exist alongside with a culture that has a preeminent position. However, it is presumed that within a few generations, the

minorities will assimilate with the preeminent culture. This comes close to the cultural melting pot ideology, where cultures can exist but are somehow melted together by strong sense of political nationhood (Joppke & Lukes 1999). Thirdly, multiculturalism may mean a state of affairs where there is no prevalent culture. In a real sense, the state is no longer defined by conformity to norms but by plurality of cultures. (In Lepola 2000, 199–200.)

In summary, multiculturalism can be understood as an ideology that promotes the positives of cultural differences. It advocates that all cultures should be treated equally and with respect. It must be differentiated, for example, from the concepts of cultural diversity, intercultural management, diversity management that have more practical connotations to them. (Kemppainen 2003, 193-195.)

In regard to political and governmental issues multiculturalism is, to a great extent, an ideological issue with practical legal, economic, and human right implications (Lepola 2000). It promotes an ideal where ethnic groups and their "ways" are to be respected and given the right to exist (Joppke & Lukes 1999; Lepola 2000).

Multiculturalism and Organizations
In the present research setting, however, multiculturalism is primarily a practical organizational issue and a prevailing working context. But, what does multiculturalism mean in the context of organizations, businesses, and institutions smaller in scope and different in task than the modern states? In this regard, the question comes close to the idea of organizational culture. Du Gay (1996, 151) sees that the importance of organizational culture emanates from the assumption that it structures the way people think, feel, and act in organizational settings. Further, it is assumed that the adoption of a kind of organizational culture changes norms, values, and attitudes so that the personnel make a maximum contribution to the success of their organization. Consequently, the prevailing organizational culture will define the kind of persons that can exist within an organization. (du Gay 1996, 151–152.)

Perhaps one of the most famous definitions of organizational culture is that of Schein's. He sees organizational culture as the basic assumptions that a group has adopted to solve problems related to conforming to the external environment or internal coherence.

An organizational culture is the preferred way to feel about, observe, and think about problems. It is comprised of artifacts, values, and assumptions. Artifacts relate to the most concrete level of culture including technology, behavior, and art. This level is observable but not always easy to interpret. Values pertain to the more abstract level of culture. Values are traditions, orientations, and principles that are to make coexistence smooth and predictable to a degree. Values can be processed at a cognitive level with some effort. When values become "taken for granted" they turn into assumptions. Assumptions are subconscious and in a sense preset. (Schein 1987.)

Paalumäki (2004, 17) sees organizational culture as a common system of meaning of a group that enables the members to interpret their experiences and directs their behavior. It is build up in social interaction over time. It is a dynamic process that never ends. She also proposes that organizational culture does not automatically make people uniform. Rather, it means that a person shares with others a collective experience that produces and maintains culture (Paalumäki 2004, 17–18).

It seems that organizational culture is often researched and discussed as if it should form a homogenous essence. It is difficult to find academic literature on organizational cultures that would have been written from a truly pro-multicultural perspective. In management and leadership literature, cultural diversity is not the goal and value in and of itself. Rather, cultural diversity should be managed in some calculated way (e.g., Mäkilouko 2003). In fact, Kavoosi (2005), proposes that it is exceptional to think that cultural distance would automatically be something positive. Rather, the tendency seems to be that it can become something positive if managed. Diversity, as a multicultural phenomenon has thus secondary value. It is acceptable, if it is an organizational asset, adds value, and increases profit. (Juuti 2005, 17–18.) Usually, as it will be noted later in this study, it is by no means inevitable that when people with different cultural backgrounds come together that they would form a new homogenous culture that would assimilate all the other cultures.

To summarize, multiculturalism in the context of organizations and businesses seems to connote the idea of managing and leading people with different cultural backgrounds. It lacks, at least to an extent, the connotations that the concept of multiculturalism has in connection to the discussions dealing with building multicultural societies. (Juuti 2005;

Kemppainen 2006.) In development collaboration, the issue is more complex. In that context, it does not relate only to managing a work force with culturally diverse backgrounds but to the issue of how to bring about culturally sustainable change.

1.3.3 Implications of Cultural Studies for Research

Culture bears on the practice of science. As noted earlier, it is a concept hard to define in scientific terms. Culture can blur the objectivity of the researcher and the informants alike. It can taint the reliability of the scientific instruments and affect the validity of the results. Culture is also an ever-present phenomenon in the study of development interventions. They are carried out in bi- or multicultural contexts. Therefore, these aspects call for a short discussion in a study like this.

Culture and Science

Culture poses a challenge to scientific research. The challenge derives from the fact that culture is difficult to define, has a number of components or ingredients, and is tacit on a deep-level. As Lévi-Strauss has noted, culture deals, to a degree, with issues that are hard to justify, rationalize, subconscious, and rarely critically examined (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 18-25). Traditionally, science is more comfortable with tangibles, things that can be seen, touched, tested, and controlled. Culture, at least on its subconscious level, seems to be at the other end of the continuum of scientific efforts. It has to do with a way of life, actions that are habitual, internalized, and so common that, under normal circumstances, they need not to be intellectualized about.

Campbell and Koutsoulis have pondered the difficulties that culture poses on scientific measurement. They note, for example, that psychological tests used to detect people with special abilities have cultural biases in them. In addition, they note that certain phenomena can only be understood at an emic level. By this they mean that researchers must spend time and give considerable effort to understand a given group under research. This is in contrast with the etic level of research that approaches the group being researched from the researcher's values and culture. Campbell and Koutsoulis suggest that, at times, the scientific methods used and accepted in the west have been applied to different contexts and cultures without paying sufficient attention to the issues of validity and reliability in such cases. (Campbell & Koutsoulis 2004, 17–25.)

Campbell, Heller and Feng have studied attributions in cross-cultural settings. They sternly warn about oversimplification when constructing research instruments. They refer to studies that have employed only two basic categories of attribution to explain success and failure – effort and ability. Campbell, Heller and Feng argue that such a model is too simplistic to provide a valid description of reality. The researchers think that over-simplification should be avoided especially in cross-cultural research contexts. They list seven reasons to support their argument:

- Complex nature of socio-psychological constructs.
- Measurements should be subtle and not too obvious to the respondent.
- Obvious approaches trivialize findings.
- Simplified approaches do not require enough thought on the part of the respondent.
- Simplified approaches encourage stereotypical responses.
- Reliability is low or unattainable.
- Validity is unattainable. (Campbell, Heller & Feng 2004, 61–69.)

If the suggestions of Campbell, Heller and Feng are looked at in terms of impact on cross-cultural research, they are quite easy to agree on. It seems quite obvious that socio-psychological constructs are complex by nature and therefore simplified constructs cannot be judged valid and reliable. Measurements should contain an element of subtleness to encourage answers that do not suggest too simplistic explanations. This notion makes sense if reflected on in light of the wide spread consensus that cultures have at least too levels, the observable and the tacit. Simplified approaches, for example, in relation to the concept of empowerment, are easy to "validate" shallowly since in development country contexts a considerable number of people are familiar with the jargon of local and foreign development organizations. In addition, cultures are traditionally described and compared in polarized terms: self-orientation/collectivity orientation, universalistic/particularistic, ascription/achievement, affectivity/affective neutrality, and specificity/diffuseness (Hofstede 1984, 36). Such practices may quite easily feed taken-for-granted answers and explanations.

When commencing scientific efforts in different cultural contexts, the researchers should be aware of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view the culture of one's own group or race superior to others. Ethnocentrism, as described above, can be present already in the data collection instruments. However, ethnocentrism is a broader concept that encompasses the world-view, attitudes and biases of a given researcher. It

involves an element of judgment. Judgment is involved in a sense that other cultures are judged from the perspective of the values stemming from the culture of the observer. (Hiebert 1985; Hofstede 1984.)

If a researcher spends considerable time in a different cultural setting, he or she must be aware of the effects of culture shock and reactions that result from confusion in one's cultural identity. Culture shock could be thought of as the result of confusion. A person is conversant with his or her own culture. However, when he or she moves to another culture, after the initial courtship period with the new culture, a reverse reaction occurs. It could be described as regression. Regression here means that one has to learn a new way of life. Such a condition is humiliating and requires considerable effort if one is to recover. If one recovers, the result is a person that is more or less bicultural, or at least, able to function in two cultures. If the process is interfered, a person isolates oneself from the new culture. A successful recovery from the cultural shock is beneficial for the scientist, since it is assumed that he or she has become more aware of his or her own cultural assumptions and gains a better understanding of the culture where research is conducted. (Hiebert 1985, 38–41.)

Salakka has recently studied missionaries that re-enter their own culture. Although, his research deals with re-entry, some of the reactions can be identified as one enters into a new culture. From the perspective of scientific observation and gaining reliable and valid information, some aspects of his study are worth noting. When a person spends a significant amount of time in at least two different cultures and survives the cultural shock, an interesting phenomenon occurs. On one hand, a person develops a feeling that he fits into and understands the surrounding culture. On the other hand, others in the surrounding culture still note that the person is different. It seems that the ideal situation would be that the researcher has become aware of his or her own cultural assumptions and reaches a level where he or she can appreciate both the culture of origin and the new culture. If both cultures are seen as important and significant, there is a genuine possibility to integrate the two in a meaningful way. (Salakka 2006, 65–70.)

Bi- or multiculturalism can serve scientific interests by challenging existing interpretations and understandings. Cultural anthropology as well as humanities in

general has been conceived as mainly interpretative science. Exposure to other cultures provokes a host of other interpretations to a given cultural phenomena. Since, as noted earlier, cultures involve taken-for-grated assumptions, immersion to other cultural contexts challenges those assumptions and enables the researcher to look at phenomena from new angles. For example, the African leadership style is often viewed as authoritative, even dictatorial. However, the experience of the researcher is that quite often the African leader conducts extensive consultations before arriving at a decision. Because this is not necessarily done in public, the image transmitted to an outsider is that an African leader makes decisions on his or her own. Another widely accepted stereotype of African culture is that it is primarily communal, community oriented. A critical person, however, may ask that if it is so, why is it that, for example, the East African governments are among the most corrupt in the world. In practice, what governmental corruption means, is that communities are robbed of their share of the wealth and resources available in a given country for their development. How does this fit the concept of community oriented culture? Exposure to new cultures, therefore, can breed healthy critique, not only on the researchers own culture but on the other cultures as well. (Marcus & Fischer 1986.)

Culture and the Study of Development Interventions
Above, some of the general challenges that bi- or multicultural contexts pose for the scientific inquiry have been pointed out and commented shortly. The following lines are an attempt to relate the implications of culture to the present study.

The mainstream development interventions usually take place within the contexts of bilateral (government to government) or civil society collaboration. Civil society collaboration, most of the time, takes the form of Northern and Southern NGOs partnering in a joint venture. Although the NGOs may be quite simple in their organizational set ups, nevertheless, they are supposed to be formally registered and thus have a structure, an organization of some sort. The current study focuses on the nature of NGO collaboration. Therefore, a few comments on culture and organizations are necessary.

Cross-cultural collaboration of organizations is not a new issue. Such ventures have been carried out by, for example, companies, mission organizations, and development

organizations over a significant period of time. Such ventures have bred common sense opinions about and myths evolving around cross-cultural cooperation. One of the most frequent ideas surfacing when discussing the joint ventures of Southern and Northern collaboration is that when organizations from these cultural contexts come together, they form a common culture having nuances from both cultures. In addition, it is commonly believed that workers employed in these multicultural organizations gradually yield some parts their original cultural identity and form a cultural identity blending the best traits of the two worlds. However, Hofstede's research seems to charge such beliefs. He suggests that, by no means, intercultural collaboration automatically results in mutual understanding and mutually shared culture of integration. On the contrary, it seems that the cultural identity of each group in the collaboration is confirmed. (Hofstede 1994, 211–212.)

Hofstede has also commented on the role of culture in ineffective development collaboration. He points out that for years, the problems of developing countries have been researched as economic and technical problems. However, some issues and dynamics that hinder development and economic growth are deeply rooted in culture. Unless, one grasps the cultural dynamics affecting the development efforts, the intervention is likely to fail. Hofstede suggests that cultural gaps that bear on development collaboration exist at least in the areas of individualism-collectivism, power distance, masculinity-femininity, and institutional frameworks. Further, he refers to other studies that suggest the effectiveness of development intervention depends on intercultural interaction and training, professional effectiveness, and personal/family adjustment and satisfaction. It seems that expatriates can often excel in professional effectiveness, and personal/family adjustment and satisfaction. However, there is a tendency to perform poorly in intercultural interaction and training. (Hofstede 1994, 218–222.)

The cross-cultural collaboration presents a host of challenges also in terms of management. Human and financial resource managements are often viewed very differently across cultures. *The Blackwell Handbook of Cross-Cultural Management* (Gannon & Newman, 2002) discusses eighteen (18) different areas that affect cross-cultural management. They start from frameworks for cross-cultural management, proceed to strategy, structure, and inter-organizational relationships, comment on cross-

cultural human resource management, explore the motivational and leadership peculiarities across cultures, discuss relationships, and finish with corporate cultures and related values (Gannon & Newman 2002, 5–392.)

Although, all of the areas mentioned above would be relevant to the current study, we will comment only on human resource practices, goal setting, motivation, and leadership. These are, perhaps, the areas that are the most tangible in everyday collaboration of organizations from different cultural backgrounds and bear the most on empowerment. Development interventions, at least those that claim to any degree of professionalism, are based on Goals, Objectives, Results, Activities, and Inputs (e.g., European Commission, March 2004). In practice this should mean that the partners from different cultures should come together, discuss the resources needed, and choose the activities that lead to desired results. These, in turn, contribute to the objective of the intervention. When all is said and done, this process, along with other similar initiatives should lead to achieving a goal. The planning, implementation and evaluation process touch explicitly on human resource management, goal setting, motivation, and leadership.

Human resource management (HRM) may be one of the most common words in managerial and development jargon. On a practical level it concerns, of course among host of other things, such elements as leaves, benefits, gender, training, participation, organization, and reward systems (Brewster 2002, 138). Although such things are the basis of all formal organizational systems, there seems to be evidence, that the issue has not received the attention it deserves, especially, in not-for-profit organizations (Brewster 2002, 129, 140). Although Brewster offers hardly any definitive suggestions as to how to manage human resources in multicultural contexts, he raises a few questions that should be answered. First of all, who will set the paradigm within which human resources are managed in bi- or multicultural ventures? How to be sensitive about the culture in the operational context and yet to add value by drawing from the multiculturalism of the organization? How to balance the organizational and national cultures? It seems that there are no ready answers. Each context is independent and special. However, there seems to be agreement among the HRM researchers that it should be constructed in a way that is sensitive to local culture and needs. Yet, at the

same time, the organizations in collaboration should benefit from the international know-how, economics, and relationships that international joint ventures avail.

The idea behind setting goals is that specific and challenging goals enhance performance. In the development settings, they also serve a more practical purpose – the donor wants to know what is being supported and towards which end the money is spent. To what extent the goal is achieved is suggested on depending on four major issues: direction, effort, persistence, and strategy. Audia and Tams suggest that what comes to goal setting in cross-cultural contexts, two major dimensions have received attention in research: the effect of cultural values on goal commitment, and goal choice. (Audia & Tams 2002, 142–143.) One of the most interesting observations they make is that the way a goal is set seems to bear on people's commitment to the goal. The preferred goal setting mechanism varies across cultures. For example, in some cultures, goals set by the immediate superior evoke more commitment than goals set by someone with more power distance. In other cultures, there seems to be little or no difference in goal commitment whether it is set by the immediate superior or a person higher up in the hierarchy. Yet, in some cultures the higher up in the hierarchy the goals is set, the more people commit to the goal. (Audia & Tams 2002, 143–145.)

The researchers have also commented on appraisal and giving feedback in cross-cultural contexts. Their comments suggest that the modern western ideal of team- and group-evaluation might be very insensitive practices in certain cultural settings. Such practices are considered foreign and although people may participate in and contribute to such exercises, the contributions might not provide genuine opinions but rather what is judged fitting the situation by the participant. The researcher coming from a western cultural background may find it also interesting that positive feedback has been suggested to affect the recipient differently in different cultures. Americans might be more responsive to positive feedback than for example Britons. The same dilemmas exist in relation to negative feedback as well. In some culture negative feedback is tolerated and even expected. In other cultures direct negative feedback may be extremely harmful for the working relationship. In terms of performance appraisal, some cultures find it foreign to work in organizational settings where two-way communication is expected between the superior and the person lower in the hierarchy. (Audia & Tams 2002, 145–148.)

In the theoretical discussion on empowerment, we will point out that motivational theories bear significantly to the understanding of the phenomenon. Development workers will at some point of their career have to ponder what the idea of development means and who defines development. Development, at least in the casual usage of the word, brings into mind connotations of modernism. Steers and Sánches-Runde (2002, 197) have discussed a study by Inkles that suggests a modern person to be: independent, autonomous, open-minded, open to new experiences, and politically informed. In turn, traditionalists are supposed to be: interpersonally distrusting, hostile towards government, not innovative, fatalistic, limited in world view, and not very empathic. Most probably, anyone with some exposure to other cultures than his or her own would recognize the Western tints of the definition. However, one can hardly escape such connotations in relation to development interventions. In addition, no matter how simplistic the definition may be, there is some value in it. It drives home the point that cultures differ in terms of their basic orientation. This, in turn most probably, bears on the way people respond to stimuli, in relation to motivation.

Steers and Sánches-Runde (2002, 199) propose that such factors as personal beliefs, values, the strength of individual needs, cognitions, goals, perceived equity, incentives, rewards, reinforcement, and social norms as to the level of required effort all relate to motivation. In addition, cultural factors play a role in all of the variables. The cultural factors may not be only intrapersonal in the sense that they become part and parcel of the person's psycho-/volitional make up. Cultural factors may mold the living circumstances in such away that even if a person is industrious, the political climate, general mood of the population, or other factors may inhibit, for example, entrepreneurship. Chinese and Indians have been referred to as examples of people who come from humble beginnings in countries of their cultural origin but become very successful in the West. (Steers and Sánches-Runde 2002, 200.) One of the explaining factors could be the removal of some real or imagined cultural barriers.

Steers and Sánches-Runde challenge a number of taken-for-granted western thoughts on motivating human resources in organizational settings. It is not the task of the present study to go into detail in this regard. However, some assumptions that might be looked at in a new light in cross-cultural contexts are worth mentioning. First of all, the ideal of equity may not be a shared cultural assumption or value in all parts of the world. In

other words, a Western scholar or manager should not be surprised if it is acceptable for a person to be remunerated better than his or her peers based on other things than his or her performance. Furthermore, in terms of awards, rewards, and reinforcements, the emphasis can be put to very different things than in the west. While the western ideology may concentrate on tangibles such as money or assets, other cultures may give priority to status, respect, harmony, relationships, job security, congenial work environment, etc. (Steers and Sánches-Runde 2002, 204–211.) In summary, cultural variables bear on organizational and individual performance. However, cultural norms and values are not necessarily uniform even in a given geographical location or among members of a given group. They vary individually. The overall culture of origin bears on one's work norms and values. Such factors that affect motivation on an organizational and individual level can be exposed. However, what a manager or a leader should do about them cannot be dictated. It seems that the at best, the cultural instincts of a manager or a leader can be exercised and developed gradually.

Work in development collaboration inevitably involves leadership. Leadership is a multifaceted and elusive concept. The modern studies of leadership touch, among other things, such areas as attitude, personal life, style, influence, ethics, people, relationships, and so on (e.g., Covey 1999; Maxwell 1993; de Pree 2002; Spears 2002). In this light, there is no single definition for good leadership. In development co-operation, a number of views on leadership will come face to face. When differing views on leadership conditioned by such factors as culture, personality, and education are put together with the human nature and overall cultural differences, things may turn complicated, to put it mildly. On the other hand, as much as it has been argued that there exist cultural variations of leadership, there have been suggestions that some leadership traits are universal (Smith & Peterson 2002, 219).

Again, what comes to academic leadership studies, they have been accused of being too western in tone. However, it seems that the disposition of western leadership studies and understanding is becoming to be more and more defined in terms of relationships and influence than performance and technique (Maxwell 1993, Senge 1999). Although Smith and Peterson are careful not to make too conclusive remarks in their article, they offer a few helpful precautions for the cross-cultural researcher and leader. If a leader is not considering the cultural setting where he or she operates and the possibly differing

leadership concepts, he or she is in a risk of attempting to lead using concepts that have no meaning for those being led. The leader and his or her foreign organization are at risk to value aspects of leadership that are not so appreciated in other cultures and contexts. For example, it has been argued that leading towards a goal is a universal leadership trait. However, it may well be that the way the leader moves followers towards a goal is culture specific. On the other hand, if leaders are in danger of emphasizing their culture specific leadership traits and ways, they may fall pray of neglecting the locally important leadership specifics. However helpful the final remarks of Smith and Peterson are, it seems to remain difficult to offer concrete ideas and examples about how to lead successfully in a cross-cultural context. It may well be that cross-cultural leadership skill is tacit, a developed instinct rather than something that yields to scientific modeling and definitions. (Smith & Peterson 2002, 234–235.)

1.4 Research Questions

As mentioned, the spark for the present inquiry was triggered by practical situations and problems in development cooperation. Some of the problems recurred time and again. As time elapsed and the researcher became introduced to and familiarized himself with the concept of empowerment, the research interest began to narrow down to a few specific questions that can be considered as the **primary research questions**.

- *What kind of a development partner can be considered an empowered partner?[17]*
- *What are the means to empower an organization?*
- *What are the empowerment inhibitors?*

In addition, some **secondary research questions** began to emerge. *How do cultural issues relate to empowerment?* Since most development efforts take place in bi- or multicultural contexts, the dynamics of empowerment cannot be researched reliably without considering the cultural factor. In a way, culture permeates the whole inquiry into the primary research questions. Therefore, the research cannot be limited to the study of the concept of empowerment alone, cultural factors need to be taken into

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[17] In most cases, some kind of an organization is established for a particular intervention or it exists. The organization is often expected to continue the work when the partner exits.

account throughout the research process and in relation to each research question. Another secondary research interest relates to research methodology. ***Would the waiving of the demand of anonymity during a Delphi round add value to the method and widen its possibilities of application?*** In this study the overall methodological framework is that of Action Research. The Delphi method has been used more as a data collection strategy within the larger AR framework. In regard to the Delphi method, the study applies a slightly modified process from what is normally described in the methodological literature. Ideally, the Delphi experts are to remain anonymous throughout the research process. Here, a model is used where the first Delphi round is anonymous. The second Delphi round could be characterized as an expert panel. The analysed data derived from the first Delphi round was sent to participants of the second Delphi round. During the second Delphi round there was an interactive discussion on the findings. Therefore, it is in the interests of this study to test such a Delphi application and enrich the scientific discussion on the applications of the Delphi method.

The first research question aims to produce a description of an empowered partner. Such a description seems to be lacking in empowerment literature. Kuokkanen (2003) has attempted at depicting an empowered nurse. Such a depiction relates to personal empowerment. While useful, it is not enough to clarify what empowerment is in an organizational setting. It seems to be easier to describe the attributes of empowerment at an individual than organizational level. Empowerment and organizations seem to be, for the most part, discussed from the point of view of facilitating individual empowerment by administrative support (Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Koberg et al. 1999). Therefore, if it is judged that it is meaningful, considering the nature of empowerment, to talk about collective organizational or institutional empowerment, a description of an empowered collective would make a significant contribution to current empowerment understanding. For practical purposes, the depiction would provide an ideal to strive for.

If it is assumed that a theoretical model of an empowered organization is possible to construct and adds value to scientific efforts and the practical operation of organizations and institutions, then, it is meaningful to revisit the practical actions and administrative means that are supposed to catalyze empowerment. These means have been researched

by many, for example, by Antikainen 2005; Beairsto and others 2003; Herrenkohl and others 1999; Koberg and others 1999. The present study seeks to explore whether data gathered from development practitioners and experts will yield results that are supportive of the present views of catalyzing empowerment and whether any new ideas to foster empowerment will emerge. In addition, it is interesting to ponder whether the means to empower individuals and collectives differ in any fundamental way.

Furthermore, if empowerment can be catalyzed, it is logical to assume that it can also be hindered. Ruohotie (2001), for one, sees empowerment as the removal of those inhibitors that restrict a person from achieving an optimal performance. Therefore, mapping out the inhibiting and suppressive factors in relation to empowerment may help organizations to remove them and to plan operations in such ways that the interfering factors will not be in place in the first place. On the other hand, if inhibiting factors are mapped out, they may provide implicit hints as to the factors that can be assumed to catalyze empowerment.

Development work, as noted, usually takes place in bi- or multicultural contexts. The importance of cultural factors for the operations of multinational corporations has been popularized by Hofstede (e.g., 1984; 1994). A number of studies have been conducted on management and leadership in multicultural contexts. However, it is difficult to find references to specific studies on the concept of empowerment and on cultural factors that may bear on it. Therefore, the present study will aim at finding out how cultural factors bear on empowerment efforts and how they can hinder or foster it.

Finally, as discussed above, the present study attempts to contribute to the usage of and the scientific debate on the Delphi method. A modified Delphi research process is used and its practical applicability will be critically examined as well as the related philosophical implications. The modified Delphi method aims at employing two of the assets of Delphi, anonymity and the use of expertise in generating empirical data for research and decision making purposes. However, by restricting the rounds to two and making the second round an interactive panel of experts, the study aims to make Delphi more effective (in terms of administration and time) and participatory. Such a Delphi modification, if successful, would make a practical contribution to development cooperation and an academic contribution to Delphi methodology. The proposed

application integrates two important features. First, it is anonymous. Anonymity is crucial in settings where it can be assumed that, for example, village elders, those holding important positions, or men rather than women are likely to override other opinions. However, since the second round is not anonymous, it leaves room for collective debate and decision making which has been considered crucial in relation to development interventions.

2 EMPOWERMENT IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

2.1 Introductory Comments on Empowerment

In our language we use a lot the term "ours". We say "our" Tanzania. If things are ours, then it is not my responsibility to see that things are managed well; it is the responsibility of some others as well. The personal responsibility that I have is to get my stomach fulfilled.

A participant in Dar Es Salaam seminar

The words cited, might not capture the whole reality of empowerment, however, they reflect a reality that anyone working with development interventions will face in one form or another. Development interventions are being carried out, improved, experimented, researched and fiercely debated. The phenomenon that is often referred to as "globalization" has definitely not quenched, but rather fuelled the debates and dialogue on development issues. In this current debate, along with the concept of participation, perhaps, the most frequently used word is *empowerment*. Empowerment debate and its ideology is by no means the property of the field of development interventions. It is used in various contexts and in multiple ways – from rehabilitation of the convicts and mystical personal experiences to the cutting edge business practices and academic research (Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Dewettinck et al. 2003; Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Siitonen 1999).[18] It is quite easy to agree with Beairsto and Ruohotie (2003) and Dewettnick and others (2003) that empowerment is considered as something positive. Yet, at the same time, there are those practitioners and students of empowerment that have become sceptics in what comes to the word empowerment and its practical applicability.

Having noted that the word and concept of empowerment has been interpreted and applied in numerous ways, the context in which it is used in this study must be determined. This is, of course, true of the definition of the term as well. The broad

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[18] The referred are but a few academic works that have pointed out and discussed the multiple contexts and ways in which the concept of empowerment is used. For the curious mind, a simple search in the www using key words such as "psychological empowerment"; "self-empowerment" will render hundreds of sites with the wildest ideas about the concept.

context and parameters for the usage of the word and concept of empowerment are suggested by the subject of the study: "Empowerment – A Challenge of Non-Governmental Organizations in Development Cooperation Partnerships". The title has several implications. First of all, empowerment is considered as a challenge. Challenge, in this context suggests a purposeful attempt at bringing about empowerment. Therefore, special attention will be given to what Beairsto and Ruohotie (2003, 127) refer to as technical factors. These are the changes that administration (comprising of management and leadership) can effect to pave way for empowerment. In addition, the title of the dissertation refers to Non-Governmental Organizations. Empowerment will be discussed, to a large extent, in an organizational context. Since the aim is to bring about empowerment in an organizational context, the technical aspects of empowerment and other topics that relate to organizations are to be considered together. Empowerment in an organizational context is an angle that has stirred fervent dialogue. Furthermore, it seems to be at the centre of academically oriented studies (e.g., Dewettnick et al. 2003; Herrenkohl et al. 1999: Thomas & Velthouse 1990). In addition, at least in the developing countries, most NGOs have been established to address problems that reside in communities. This demands the current study to address the social or communal aspects of the concept of empowerment. In his dissertation, Juha Siitonen (1999) has suggested that empowerment is indeed a social process having intrinsic and external aspects to it. External aspects refer to the social aspects of the concept of empowerment. Finally, no matter how one approaches the concept of empowerment, the critical student soon realizes that in addition to the technical/organizational and communal aspects one must address the individual and intrinsic aspects of empowerment (Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Nayaran 2002; Siitonen 1999). This individual and intrinsic aspect has also been referred to as psychological empowerment (Eklund 1999, 43; Spreitzer et al. 1999, 512).

The definition of and the content of empowerment will be tackled by looking at some of the prevalent scientific approaches to empowerment, excavating the common usage of the term in the current development debate, and finally drawing conclusions and agreeing on the usage of the term in this study. First, the academic views on empowerment will be discussed. Then, the aspects of intrinsic and organizational empowerment will be considered. Finally, the communal aspects of empowerment will be addressed. This is due to the fact that there is more material of scientific nature on

empowerment written in the contexts of organizations and psychology than in the communal context (especially in relation to development practice). It is the various players in the field of development interventions in the developing countries and those interested in community development projects in the more developed countries that have contributed to the empowerment discussions related to the community angle. Unfortunately, the materials written in development circles may not always match scientific criteria in what comes to their theoretical understanding of empowerment. However, they are useful in establishing what empowerment is thought to encompass in a development intervention setting. Therefore, this aspect will be considered lastly, presuming that the reader has familiarized him-/herself with the more scientific discussion on empowerment before plunging into this more practical approach to empowerment.

The following is a brief overview of different definitions of empowerment among researchers and practitioners of empowerment. Empowerment can be seen as a general concept that describes the efforts of individuals and communities striving for development, liberation, growth, rights, resources, change, and problem solving (Alinsky 1971). Rappaport (1981) has defined empowerment as enhancement of the possibilities of people to control their own lives. In this context empowerment includes the recognition of a strong feeling of powerlessness.

Empowerment is often discussed in contexts where a group or groups of people are oppressed and marginalized. Such individuals and groups are seen as powerless – disempowered (Adams 1996; Freire 1970; Gutiérrez et al. 1998). Such conditions have been seen as partially created by society and they call for critical reflection and change (Adams 1996; Freire 1970; Järvelä & Laukkanen 2000). In such circumstances, individuals need to be made aware of the opportunities and resources that are available for them. This may take such forms as legal advice, access to information, support-groups, micro-credits, self-help groups, etc. (Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Fetterman et al. 1996; Nayaran 2002.)

External conditions might contribute to disempowerment. However, even if the external conditions are altered or improved, intrinsic processes are needed for empowerment to occur. These intrinsic processes relate to motivation, volition, self-image, efficacy

beliefs, self-authorization, self-determination, and other similar cognitive, affective, and conative processes and constructs (Beairsto et al. 2003; Fetterman 2001; Kuokkanen 2003; Pintrich & Ruohotie 2000; Siitonen 1999).

In the organizational settings, empowerment has been discussed, among other things, in relation to leadership styles, efforts to increase productivity, employee well-being, organizational development and change, quality, and delegation of power to lower levels of organizational hierarchy (Antikainen 2005; Argyris 1998; Dewettinck et al. 2003; Koberg et al. 1999; Luoma 2005; Spreitzer et al. 1999; Ruohotie 2001). As Heikkilä-Laakso & Heikkilä (1997) have suggested, empowerment in an organizational context attempts to tie together the individual strivings for development and the goals of the organization. Empowerment can also relate to the sense of responsibility for realizing the strategy of the organization. Understanding one's responsibility and authority in an organization may lead to a feeling of empowerment (Herrenkohl et al. 1999).

Empowerment can be viewed as a concept connected to emancipation and professional growth. Kincheloe (2003) sees research as the key to teacher's professional growth and a way to produce relevant knowledge. At best, inquiry can lead to a positive feeling about the teacher's competence in the classroom and produce academically valid information. In this way, professional growth has been linked to empowerment. Beairsto and others (2003) have also linked empowerment to professional learning. Beairsto and Ruohotie (2000) integrate the concept of empowerment to lifelong learning. Empowerment can fuel lifelong learning or it can be the outcome of it.

Siitonen has summarized contemporary views on empowerment. The following is a summary of nuances on the concept of empowerment in his theoretical overview (adopted from Siitonen 1999, 82-90):

Semantic nuances of empowerment

The term empowerment has been used to convey the following ideas and concepts closely related to empowerment: *to have a sense of power, to feel empowered, to delegate power and authority, to strengthen, to feel able, to release personal potential, to authorize, to give power, to allow for initiatives and actions, to allocate resources, to trust, to develop a personal*

sense of power, to possess a strong sense of power, to experience a sense of intrinsic empowerment, to be authorized, to maximize the use of human potential, to develop one's own power, to experience collective power in working together, to discover resources, to enable, to become powerful, to develop positive ability and context beliefs, to have a sense of control, to have autonomy, to energize.

Process and practice nuances of empowerment

When empowerment has been described as an organizational or psychological process the following meanings can be detected: *motivation for professional growth through personal reflection; increasing freedom of choice; increasing capacity to act on one's own behalf; to feel able to learn; to authorize to make work related decisions; to give (leadership and decision making) power; to enable activities, to allow for initiatives, to secure resources, and to trust in relation to knowledge creation in a company; in relation to intrinsic beliefs and affections it can relate to development of an intrinsic sense of power, and self-empowerment; to enable the development of intrinsic sense of power and consequently assume responsibility over one's own growth and work related decisions; to become empowered one needs to be encouraged, be activated, participate, utilize all personal resources, and feel one's own intrinsic power; empowerment can refer to a process of enabling, discovering of personal resources, management of one's personal life, and gaining of capabilities to act and being able to function; becoming powerful having social justice, collaboration, and harmony as the building blocks as opposed to simply taking authority with exhortation; building up of a personal sense of power through enabling individuals to see that they have the capacity to achieve significant things; a sense of controlled power to support personal growth and well-being; a sense of commitment in a work context; gaining of power in the sense of juridical decision making – authority; power in a sense of ability or capacity; a sense of critical awareness of one's own environment and a sense of personal control; a feeling of power in a community based on a clearly defined personal identity; a process where an individual can actualize his/her primary goals in collaboration with others.*

The definitions of empowerment are quite context bound. At times, it is difficult to point out what differentiates empowerment from organizational development, organizational learning, organizational change, intrinsic motivation, ability and efficacy beliefs, etc. In some sense, empowerment could be thought of as an over-arching concept accommodating a number of concepts listed. However, in such a case, there is a danger that the concept of empowerment itself is robbed of any meaning (Adams 1996; Eklund 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999).

As noted above, the concept of empowerment can be approached from a number of orientations. The following figures illustrate some of these approaches. The first figure

is a depiction of some of the processes related to psychological or intrinsic understanding of empowerment. The figure is not meant to exhaust all of the processes and components but to create an understanding of some of the processes and components involved in psychological or intrinsic empowerment. The boxes are dotted to emphasize that the processes are inter-related.
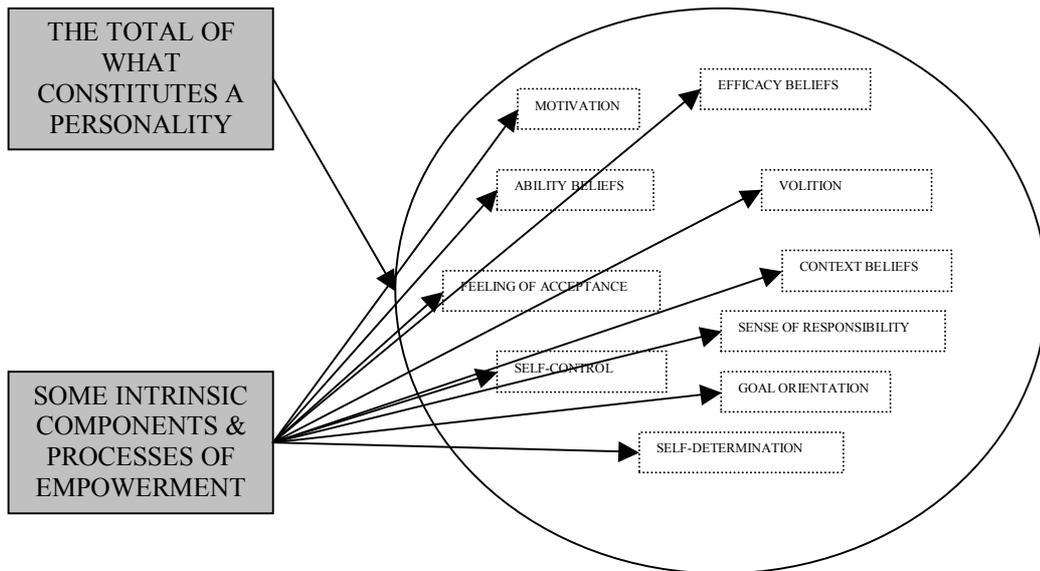
Figure 1. Some components and processes of psychological / intrinsic empowerment.
Source: Synthesis of Argyris 1998; Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999.

Table 3. Components of psychological empowerment.
Source: Adopted from Zimmerman 1995.

INTRAPERSONAL	**INTERACTIONAL**	**BEHAVIORAL**
• Belief in an ability to influence	• Understanding of how the systems work	• Having a personal sense of control in his/her context
• Beliefs of personal efficacy	• Contextual beliefs	• Participation in his/her community
• A sense of competence	• Commitment to collaboration	

Zimmerman's understanding of empowerment suggests that empowerment is a complex phenomenon that includes three components as depicted in the table above. The

intrapersonal aspects are more or less synonymous to those exposed in relation to psychological view of empowerment. In turn, the interactional component refers to the understanding of systems in terms of how a person may act in certain contexts, make use of the context, and influence the context. This component views empowerment in terms of relationships. The behavioural component relates to empowerment in action. In other words, it could be seen as the manifestation of empowerment.

The concept of empowerment can also be examined in terms of spheres and processes or activities that are typical of these levels. The spheres run from personal to institutional levels. Each level has typical processes and activities that are essential when discussing empowerment in these contexts. For example, in relation to the personal level, empowerment studies evolve around cognitive processes. On a community level, empowerment research is interested in participation. How does one empower communities through collective action that often gets the form of a project or a programme? On an institutional level, the focus is on the processes of advocacy and influencing legislation. These spheres and typical processes of each level are illustrated in figure no. 2 below. Therefore, it is quite natural that empowerment studies have different interests depending on or influenced by a given context. Empowerment research may take a very different form if one studies individual prerequisites for empowerment or institutions as empowerment enablers.
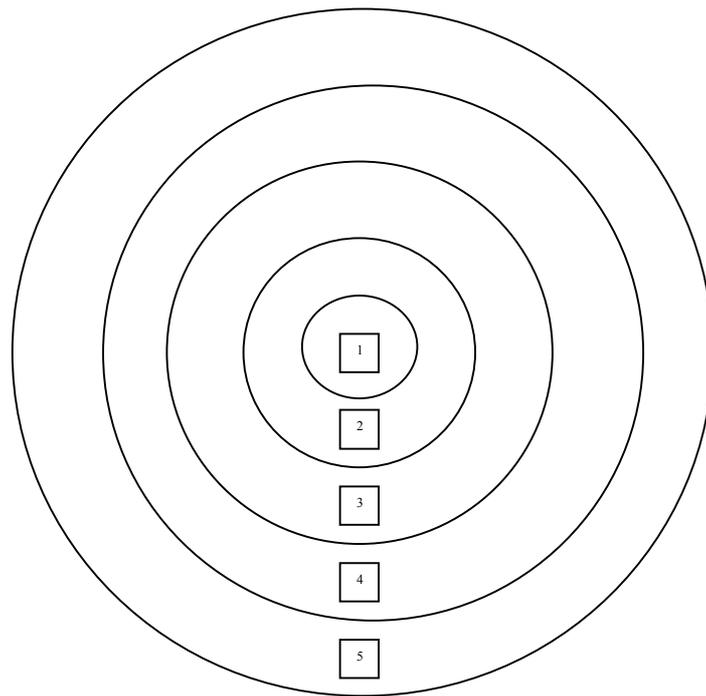
Spheres of empowerment	Typical processes and activities related to spheres
Personal	1) Cognitive, conative, affective, self-reflection
Group	2) Teams, support- and self-help groups; awareness raising, training
Organization	3) Organizational change, training,
Community	4) Community Projects and Programmes, participation
Institution / society	5) Advocacy, lobbying, policy and legislation influence

Figure 2. Spheres of empowerment and typical processes and activities related to the spheres.
Source: Synthesized from Adams 1996; Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Beairsto & Ruohotie 2000; Eklund 1999; Fetterman 2001; Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Järvelä & Laukkanen 2000; Kuokkanen 2003; Pintrich & Ruohotie 2000; Siitonen 1999.

Furthermore, empowerment can be studied in terms of prerequisites, processes, and outcomes. Prerequisites refer to those mental or contextual conditions that enable empowerment. Processes are the mental or contextual processes that take place when empowerment is thought of occurring. Outcomes, in turn, relate to individual or collective outcomes of empowerment.

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                        │      EMPOWERMENT        │
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INTRINSIC PREREQUISITES	INTRINSIC PROCESSES	INTRINSIC OUTCOMES
• Conative • Cognitive • Affective • Etc.	• Motivation • Self-reflection • Self-efficacy • Etc.	• Volition • Mental adaptation • Getting to task • Etc.
CONTEXTUAL PREREQUISITES • Collegial • Environmental • Organizational • Institutional	**CONTEXTUAL PROCESSES** • Leadership actions • Organizational adjustments • Group dynamics	**CONTEXTUAL OUTCOMES** • Enabling atmosphere / work environment • Institutional recognition • Shared responsibility of success

Figure 3. Intrinsic prerequisites, processes, and outcomes of empowerment.
Sources: Antikainen 2005; Argyris 1998; Eklund 1999; Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999.

The figure no. 3 points out that empowerment prerequisites, processes, and outcomes can be studied separately. In addition, each sphere, for example the sphere of processes, can be studied from the intrinsic or contextual process point of views. Intrinsic processes relate to individuals whereas contextual processes can relate to, for example, an organization or community. Some of the items may be placed in all spheres depending on the approach the researcher takes. For example, self-efficacy could be logically thought of as the prerequisite for an empowerment process or the outcome of an empowerment process. However, the point of the figure is that the authors of the literature on empowerment have discussed empowerment in terms of prerequisites, processes, and outcomes. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that empowerment is a very complex phenomenon and it cannot be presented in neat "boxes". The various processes that together form the substance of empowerment are interrelated in a multi-dimensional way (Siitonen 1999, e.g. 157-158).

2.2 Intrinsic Aspects of Empowerment

It seems that in the recent discussion on empowerment the emphasis has been on the intrinsic notions of empowerment. The researchers have linked empowerment to feelings, motivation, ability beliefs, cognitive processes and other such phenomena that are personal by nature. Here these personal aspects of empowerment are called the intrinsic aspects.

2.2.1 Descriptions of Intrinsic Empowerment

When the academic literature discusses the subject of empowerment in relation to individual, it is often called either psychological or intrinsic empowerment (e.g., Koberg et al. 1999; Ruohotie 2001; Siitonen 1999; Spreitzer et al. 1999). Psychological empowerment refers to the intrinsic mental processes and feelings that are connected to empowerment.

Spreitzer and others (1999) and Thomas together with Velthouse (1990) have suggested that psychological empowerment can be defined by breaking the concept into four main dimensions. These dimensions are: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. All of these dimensions relate to intrinsic work motivation. Meaning has to do with the individual's beliefs, values, and behaviour in relation to the role she/he is supposed to play at work. If the task and the individual's values, beliefs and behaviour do not match, intrinsic motivation is reduced. By competence Thomas and Velthouse refer to a person's belief to perform a task with skill. Such a belief boosts intrinsic motivation. Self-determination refers to choice in initiating and choosing an action. A person has a sense of autonomy in starting and performing activities. Self-determination is also related to having a say about work methods, pace, and effort. Impact, in turn, has to do with influencing strategic, administrative, and operative outcomes at work. Impact could also be defined as the opposite of learned helplessness. (Spreitzer et al. 1999; Thomas & Velthouse 1990.)

Koberg and others identify psychological empowerment as a motivational construct. It relates to the individual cognitions and perceptions that form the feelings that determine the behavioural and psychological efforts one will put into work. Based on the level of feeling empowered, a person will mobilize cognitive resources and act on a given

situation in order to control it. They also see that empowerment will boost self-efficacy beliefs and positive expectations as to the realization of expected results. The feeling of empowerment is not static. It can differ depending on a task at hand or the context among other things. Therefore, psychological empowerment is related to personal cognitions that are, at least partially, shaped by the environment. As such, it can be looked at from the perspective of the social cognitive theory (SCT). SCT focuses on the individual explanations, interpretations, and attitudes related to work in a given context. (Koberg et al. 1999, 72-73.)

Kincheloe (2003) discusses teaching profession from an empowerment point of view. His views could also be discussed in an organizational context. However, since his discussion relates in many ways to teachers' professional growth, we find it legitimate to treat his views in relation psychological aspects of empowerment. If Kincheloe's work is looked at from the empowerment point of view, it seems that empowerment is characterized by cognitive processes. We gather information, interpret it and construct knowledge through these processes. In relation to the professional growth of teachers, such mental processes are important since they enable emancipation. Teacher empowerment seeks to define the role of a teacher amidst the tension caused by rigid curricula characterised by the technical understanding of knowledge derived from positivism and the reality of the classroom. Kincheloe's work suggests that educational theory is often created in contexts that are foreign to the classroom. Therefore, teachers should become the instruments to produce knowledge on their practice. The image comes close to that of a learning organization. The main difference is, perhaps, that of a context and point of view. Kincheloe's empowered[19] teacher would be trained, motivated/self-regulated, problem-solver, researcher, and a mentor.

Beairsto and Ruohotie (2000) take a similar view of empowerment in relation to teachers as Kincheloe. Kincheloe approached the subject from the angle of teachers as researchers. They discuss the reasons and problems related to teacher empowerment. They suggest that it is not enough that teachers are equipped with information and pedagogical background. The emphasis in terms of professional competence will shift towards such qualities as: persistence, self-regulation, motivational control, self-

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[19] Of course, he does not list the characteristics as attributes of an empowered teacher. However, they are easily identifiable in his work.

efficacy, curiosity and optimism (2000, 3). Such qualities are crucial to life-long learning. Life-long learning, in turn, becomes an agent of empowerment and crucial part of the empowerment process. Kincheloe (2003) saw inquiry as a path to empowerment. Beairsto and Ruohotie see life-long learning and supporting it as an avenue to empowerment.

Beairsto (2000, 50-56) has taken a deeper look into the qualities of a life-long learner. He suggests that individuals must learn to adapt, change, endure insecurity, and work in groups/teams. In terms of his or her personality, a lifelong learner is curious, insightful, honest, courageous, and optimistic. A curious person keeps on inquiring and wondering. An insightful person is aware of assumptions that are not stated. By honesty, in this context, Beairsto means a commitment to see things as they really are. Courage relates to abilities of permitting ambiguity, acknowledging paradox, and initiating change. Finally, optimism is defined as an inclination to anticipate positive outcomes. These characteristics become important when placed into the context of psychological empowerment. By insisting that lifelong learning is a significant part of teachers empowerment process, Beairsto and Beairsto and Ruohotie suggest the listed qualities to characterize an empowered person (specifically, an empowered teacher). The following figure no. 4, adopted from Beairsto (2000, 56), could be used to paint a partial profile of an empowered person with emphasis on the psychological dimensions.
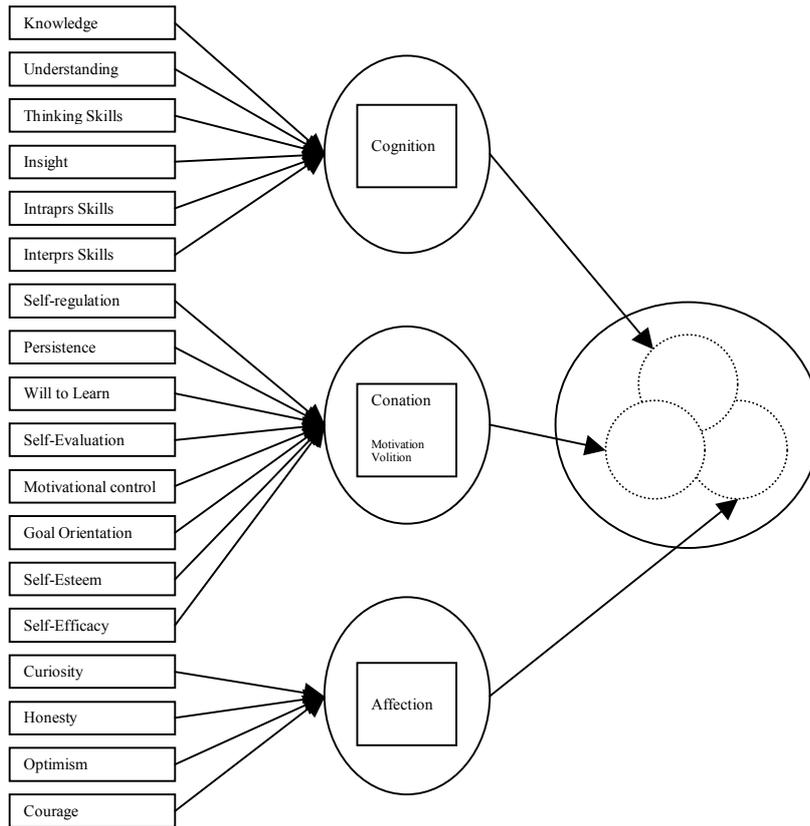
Figure 4. A profile of an empowered person.
Source: Beairsto 2000.

Beairsto has used in his figure the categories of Personality and Intelligence as the summaries of the sub-categories of affection, conation, and cognition. His categories are drawn from Snow and others (1996). The figure above attempts to bring out the nuance present in their original categorization that affection, conation, and cognition interact in the hierarchically higher categories of personality and intelligence. However, as Ruohotie (2000, 3), has noted, personality could be held to be the summary of all factors that make an individual. Therefore, in the figure here, the higher hierarchies are not mentioned.

Some tinges in the qualities of a lifelong learner are worth pointing out since they are rarely discussed in depth in the empowerment literature. These are curiosity and courage. If reference is made to these factors in the empowerment literature, it is usually by implication. Beairsto has defined courage as an ability to permit ambiguity, acknowledge paradox, and initiate change. Curiosity has been related to the qualities of inquiry and wondering. It might well be that these are some of the qualities that

differentiate a truly empowered person from an average one. Ambiguities and paradoxes can challenge motivation, commitment, and resolve. Could it be that an empowered person is more immune to these factors in terms of his or her professional performance? What about inquiry and wondering? These qualities have been recognized as important qualities in improving business. However, are these not irritating factors to an organizationalist and a manager? Inquiry and wondering shake the status quo. It might take an empowered person to keep on inquiring and wondering amidst increasing regulations and controls imposed on the working environment. Although agility, innovation and emancipation are the words of the day, the reality seems to be something different (Argyris 1998; Grimmett 2000; Kincheloe 2003; Otala 1996). Finally, Beairsto's treatise brings out the word change, particularly, the initiation of change. Could it be that an empowered person is not only cognitively and socially skilled, self-regulated, and motivated machine but a human being who can utilize these qualities to bring about change?

Kuokkanen (2003) has studied empowerment in a nursing context. She has suggested an ideal model for individual and environmental factors pertinent to empowerment. She has reviewed studies in the field of nursing that propose psychological empowerment to be made up of such categories as behavioural, verbal, and outcome bound. Behavioural category refers to a sense of control in the working environment. Verbal category refers to the employee's sense of ability to express and defend his/her views in a working environment. Outcome, in turn, refers to employee's sense of influence in terms of the outcomes of his/her work. Again, psychological empowerment is strongly linked to self-reflectivity, motivation, self-regulation, goal orientation, and a sense of contextual control. (Kuokkanen 2003, 20-21.)

Kuokkanen has also presented an ideal model for nurse empowerment. In terms of the individual and psychological factors, she has described an ideal nurse from the point of view of personal qualities and performance. The following chart is an adaptation of Kuokkanen's (2003, 33-43) model with an aim to highlight the personal qualities of an empowered nurse and their manifested performance.

Table 4. Qualities of an empowered nurse and related work performances
Source: Kuokkanen 2003, 33-43.

QUALITIES	PERFORMANCE
MORAL PRINCIPLES	MORAL PRINCIPLES
Respect for individuals	Treats others with respect
Honesty	Acts honestly
Equity	Acts justly
PERSONAL INTEGRITY	PERSONAL INTEGRITY
Mentally resourceful	Looks after own well-being
Courageous, assertive	Dares to say and act
Able to act under pressure	Acts effectively under pressure
Broadminded, flexible	Acts flexibly
EXPERTISE	EXPERTISE
Competent	Acts skilfully
Has personal power	Makes decisions
Autonomous	Acts independently
Personally responsible	Consults and teaches
colleagues	
FUTURE-ORIENTEDNESS	FUTURE-ORIENTEDNESS
Innovative, creative	Finds creative solutions
Enthusiastic promoter	Promotes new ideas at work
Forward thinking	Acts after planning, assesses effects
SOCIABILITY	SOCIABILITY
Open minded	Discusses openly
Respected by others	Works for the common goal
Socially responsible	Solves problems

A closer look at the terms comprising the categories in Kuokkanen's results helps to understand some of the ambiguities involved in them.[20] In terms of the moral principles, the empowered nurse demonstrates respect for others. This respect for human dignity does not relate to work contexts only but is a quality that applies to the nurse's personal life as well. Neither is this quality limited to the care of the patent only, but it is demonstrated in all work related tasks. Personal integrity involves issues of courage, tenacity, and self-esteem. A nurse with these qualities is able to stand criticism, take a stand, and take action. As to expertise, an empowered nurse recognizes him-/herself as an important link in the co-ordinated effort of patient care. He or she is responsible, seeks further training, and is autonomous. An empowered nurse is aware of that he or she can influence work related decisions and has influence over others. He or she is assured enough to submit suggestions for the colleagues to discuss and judge. Future-orientation in this context has to do with innovation and creativity. An

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[20] Unless otherwise noted, the description of the contents of Kuokkanen's categories are derived from Kuokkanen (2003), pp. 33-36)

empowered nurse is not satisfied with immediate outcomes of the work, but he or she is eager to suggest new procedures and ways to look at nursing issues. He or she is able to turn criticism into a constructive experience. Finally, as a socially skilful member of the working community, an empowered nurse creates ambience at the work place by being flexible and active. The social qualities of an empowered nurse also include such issues as willingness to contribute to problem solving, assuming responsibility over others, active responses to others, and working for job development.

In Kuokkanen's work a few qualities of an empowered nurse strike out in a way that may be crucial for the definition of the term: innovation, social responsibility, creativity, and morality (or moral principles). Innovative aspects of empowerment have also been pointed out by, for example Argyris (1998), Beairsto (2000), and Spreitzer and others (1999). Social issues of empowerment have been explored from the point of view of empowerment context (Adams 1996; Siitonen 1999). In addition, Fetterman and others (1996) devote considerable space to discuss socially concerned communities. However, on an individual level, it seems that empowerment literature merely touches the issues of responsibility and morality (in the sense of moral principles). For Siitonen (1999, 158), ethics is an ingredient of the emotional sub-process. For Kuokkanen, moral principles form one of the five main categories that describe the qualities of an empowered nurse. Social responsibility is a part of the main category of sociability. Nevertheless, she has discussed social responsibility in relation to an individual's qualities and not as a quality of a group like Fetterman and others (1996).

Parsons has studied the perceptions of empowerment among clientele in five different empowerment programs. She has used participatory methods to compile a table of empowerment components and dimensions. It seems that on a personal level, the components of empowerment are very similar to what Spreitzer and others, Thomas and Velthouse, and Koberg and others have described above. Intrinsic empowerment has been related to: self-awareness, self-acceptance, belief in self, feeling of having rights, and self-esteem. (Parsons 1998, 213–214.)

To Parsons, an empowered person is self-determined, informed, and respected. He or she is involved with what happens around him or her. An empowered person has some powers to affect decision making and a sense of self-respect. Such a person relates to

the environment with ease. He or she receives information and is able to share it with others. An empowered individual feels that his or her needs are met. (Parsons 1998, 215.)

Parsons has also identified factors that inhibit empowerment. She has listed them as poverty, stigma of mental illness, effects of institutionalization, and lack of power in relationships with professionals and others (1998, 215). She does not discuss the causal relationships between these factors. However, one could easily conclude that they are interrelated and causal relationships can be manifold. Extreme poverty could lead to a sense of lack of power. This in turn could lead to lack of power in relationships, which in turn could result in mental conditions. Or it could be the other way around.

In the field of sociology, psychological empowerment is strongly related to feelings of powerlessness, lack of choice, and influence. Sociological definitions are crucial to the current study since NGO interventions are very often social by nature. In the development cooperation jargon such interventions are often referred to as community interventions. Andrus and Ruhlin (1998, 113–117) have identified three levels of empowerment: personal, interpersonal, and environmental. Personal feeling of powerlessness is built up from the individual's restricted ability to control time, space, and options. This results in the overall feeling that one cannot influence and solve the problems in one's own life. Life situations seem uncontrollable. At the lower end of this emotional scale are the feelings of grief and depression.

Fetterman, a sociologist as well, shares a similar view of empowerment with Parsons, Andrus and Ruhlin. Self-regulation and self-determination are at the heart of empowerment when discussed from a sociological point of view. According to Fetterman (2001, 13) self-determination refers to a person's ability to steer one's life. An empowered person is able to solve problems and make decisions. An empowered person acts proactively and demonstrates control in problematic situations. (Fetterman 2001, 12–14.)

Adams (1996) sees such concepts as self-help and user-led activities as coming close to the idea of empowerment. Indeed, he suggests (1996, 1) that in relation to

empowerment it would be better to talk about versions of empowerment rather than a unitary concept. In addition to what has been put forth above, Adams (1996, 6) relates the concept of self-advocacy to empowerment. He understands self-advocacy as a process of where a person represents herself or himself. In relation to handicaps of various kinds, Adam sees empowerment as an engagement in movements that promote the right and need of handicapped persons to maintain independent lives and to manage their own lives. In his discussion on psychological empowerment, he also makes reference to user-led practise. By this he means action where in a regulated context (e.g. a person receiving welfare benefits), a person seeks to influence how the service is being administered.

Siitonen (1999) has suggested that empowerment is in essence an intrinsic quality. In his doctoral dissertation, Siitonen proposes that empowerment is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon. He has pointed out a number of intrinsic factors that contribute to empowerment feelings: intellectual competence, ability beliefs, self-confidence, self-reflectivity, self-talk, voice, optimism, motivation, risk taking, freedom of action, possibility thinking, and self-awareness (Siitonen 1999, 90).[21] Although Siitonen has argued that empowerment is primarily an intrinsic phenomenon and power cannot be imparted to another person, he recognizes that, for example, professional/vocational empowerment always exists in a social setting. In other words, intrinsic empowerment manifests and develops in social networks and relationships. In presenting the final conclusions of his dissertation, Siitonen (1999, 157–158) uses four main sub-processes or categories to describe the empowerment process. All of these categories reflect the intrinsic nature of empowerment. Intentions (goals), ability beliefs, context beliefs, and emotions all have strong cognitive and psychological connotations to them. Even if the external context affects the intrinsic feeling of empowerment, it is through the mental assessments that take place in the mind.

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[21] The factors are deducted from the discussion and the figure on p. 90. They are mentioned as examples of intrinsic empowerment factors and not meant to suggest that they exhaust Siitonen's theory.

2.3 Organizational Aspects of Empowerment

As mentioned earlier, bulk of empowerment discussion has taken and takes place in relation to organizations. Organizations can be approached from the angles of leadership, change, management, learning, group dynamics, human resource management, strategy, policy, power, and sociology to name but a few. It seems that in an organization the intrinsic aspects of empowerment and the social aspects of the concept marry. Heikkilä-Laakso and Heikkilä (1997) have argued that the organization will benefit as its personnel arrive at an experience of empowerment. Here, the angles that seem to be most prominent in the organizational literature and that have the strongest linkages to empowerment thinking will be visited.

2.3.1 Collective Efficacy

Bandura sees that empowerment occurs through the development of personal efficacy beliefs (1997, 477). Although his work concerns primarily self-efficacy in its personal sense, he is careful to point out that self-efficacy perceptions develop in social interactions. His concept, coined as perceived collective efficacy, comes close to organizational empowerment. The concept and his logic in associating the personal sphere of personal efficacy beliefs to collective experience are helpful in understanding how intrinsic empowerment and organizational empowerment could have links and how they may correlate. Bandura defines perceived collective efficacy as: "…a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (Bandura 1997, 477). He suggests that when a group interacts and is coordinated properly, it can "create an emergent property" that is beyond the capacities and abilities of the sum of its individual members. (Bandura 1997, 477–478.) The perceived collective efficacy will influence, among other things, the collective's goal setting, resource management, planning and strategizing, level of effort individuals are ready to invest in collective action, endurance in face of obstacles and opposition, and vulnerability to discouragement (Bandura 1997, 478). It is not easy to determine what Bandura would conceive as the difference between self-efficacy perceptions and empowerment. However, his discussion is helpful in that it could be taken, by implication, to support the idea that phenomena taking place in individuals occur in some ways on a group level. This is challenging, for example, to Siitonen's (1999) view that that empowerment is primarily an individual

phenomenon. In fact, Bandura's discussion (1997, 478) leaves room to conclude that a person who has a low self-efficacy perception may have a higher perception once he or she is a part of a group. Since the concept of self-efficacy, according to Bandura, is close to the concept of empowerment, it seems logical to assume that individual and collective empowerment could have similar ties as do personal self-efficacy beliefs and perceived collective efficacy .

2.3.2 Organizational Learning

Beairsto and Ruohotie (2000) have suggested that learning, more specifically life-long, is a feature of an empowered person. Researchers have also proposed that organizational learning could be a prerequisite for organizational empowerment. There are a number of angles to look at organizational learning. It can be debated in an academic context or, for example, in a more practical context of organizational development and change. Here the discussion evolves around the linkage of organizational learning and empowerment. The following discussion suggests that openness for organizational learning could contribute to empowerment by creating an enabling environment to trigger empowerment and providing an operational platform for empowered employees. In addition, triple-loop learning could be the kind of learning that enables empowerment at its highest level.

Motives for Organizational Learning

Organizational learning and ideas related to it have been enthusiastically debated for a long time. Just a quick glimpse on the recent doctoral dissertations from the Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training of the University of Tampere suggests how important the concept has become. Luoma (2001), Turpeinen (2005), Säntti (2001), Pohjonen (2001), Lehtonen (2002), and Antikainen (2005) all devote substantial space to discussing organizations and learning. What has created such an interest and what keeps the interest alive? Could there be a link in the motives to study organizational learning and empowerment?

Braham (1995) suggests that learning is an advantage in the competitive market. In fact, she sees learning as the only way to survive in the turbulent world we live in. The same is true of organizations. Organizational learning is needed to gain market advantage and survive in the ever-changing market environment. Braham (1995, 13–

14) has outlined a check list of 20 reasons for organizations to focus on learning and take seriously the challenge to become a learning organization.

Otala (Otala 1996) suggests similar reasons for organizational learning. She sees that organizational learning is needed to respond to the continuous change in the operational contexts (1996, 19). As if adapting to change would not be challenging enough, Otala reminds the reader that change is rapid. Rapid change calls for agile organizations. Agile organizations are created by agile people. It is here where Otala uses language that comes close to the language used when empowerment is depicted and discussed. She sees that agile organizations are made of small and flexible units. Flexibility is facilitated by teams, replacing traditional rigid leadership structures with self-authoring work force, and increasing the employee's responsibility and distribution of power to further develop the work that they are involved in.

The concepts and language of self-authorization, personal responsibility, and distribution of power/authority come very close to those used by Siitonen (1999), Fetterman (2001, also Fetterman et al. 1996), and Adams (1996). This, again, suggests a link between the organizational empowerment and individual empowerment. There seems to be similar elements in the collective processes of organizational and mental processes of individual empowerment. The difference can be thought of as a matter of level or sphere. Based on the data presented above, one is tempted to suggest that for an organization to become an empowered one, it must learn. Learning is facilitated by, among other things, self-authoring work force, increased employee responsibility, and distribution of power. Interestingly, Siitonen (1999, 158, 118–142) has used similar if not identical terms to describe the intrinsic empowerment process.

Enkenberg and others (1996) have concluded that to survive organizational learning is a must. For an individual to be empowered (survivor) as opposed to disempowered, he or she must be motivated in general and motivated to learn in particular (Antikainen 2005, 68–74; Siitonen 1999). Argyris and Schön (1978; 1996) have proposed that organizations learn as their work force keeps learning. However, the organizations can only utilize individual learning if it is supported, planned, retrieved, experimented, and disseminated (Argyris & Schön 1978; Enkenberg et al. 1996). Organizational learning

comes closer to the concept of transformation rather than mere training of individuals (Burgoyne 1996, 15).

Defining Organizational Learning

What is organizational learning and what kind of models or descriptions have been used to make it understandable and communicable? Senge (1993) has depicted a learning organization as:

- Systems oriented
- Able to prioritize, able to clarify reality, able to detect weaknesses in order to improve
- Conscious of the importance of mental models for perceiving reality and affecting systems thinking
- Having a vision shared by majority of the workers that in turn energizes learning
- Utilizing groups to solve problems

Such a depiction of organizational learning implies that it is not something isolated and independent in an organization. Organizational learning becomes meaningful when it is placed into, as Senge has done, the contexts of the organizational systems theory, which leads to understanding organizational improvement (whether focused on organizational structures or activities), problem solving, mental processes, and vision. Organizational learning can be seen as something contributing to these facets of the life of an organization.

Burgoyne (1996, 14–15) has proposed that learning in organizations occurs in three degrees or levels: procedural, adaptive, and developmental. Procedural learning is in a sense bureaucracy. It is finding something, forming a procedure, and finally institutionalizing it. Adaptive learning has to do with adapting to changing markets and factors that determine survival. It is refining and readapting the systems of an organization to a changing environment in order to stay alive. Developmental learning is characterized by sustainability. An organization genuinely contributes to its environment. Instead of simply adapting to its working context, an organization moulds it better for itself and other stakeholders to work in.

Argyris and Schön (1996, 3–6) begin their discussion on and definition of organizational learning from two important points of departure: what we mean by learning in general, and what we mean when learning is attributed to an organization. Such aspects become crucial in order to theoretically establish the possible link between

individual and organizational empowerment. As pointed out earlier, discussion on organizational empowerment becomes meaningful if there are clear linkages between the concepts of intrinsic empowerment and organizational empowerment. It was also suggested that learning can be seen as one of the key elements in intrinsic and organizational empowerment. Yet, one must constantly wrestle with the disturbing question that whether it is meaningful to attribute activities such as learning, reasoning, innovation, knowing, and so on to collectives or not. If it can be agreed that it is, then there are at least some theoretical grounds to argue that attributes related to intrinsic empowerment could be used when discussing organizational or communal empowerment. Here, Argyris and Schön's discussion on organizational learning is crucial.

To Argyris and Schön (1978; 1996, 3–4), organizational learning as a concept goes beyond information acquisition and task improvement. For a truly learning organization, it is not enough to acquire, process, and store information. These are elements of a learning process in an organization and as such important. Neither is it enough to see a learning organization in terms of instrumental learning. Instrumental learning can be understood as such organizational learning that leads to improvement of task performance. A learning organization accommodates learning in both senses. It employs the processes of information acquisition and task performance improvement. However, to fit into the Argyris and Schön's concept of organizational learning additional components are needed. They see (1996, 15–17) that[22]:

- Organizational learning takes place when members of an organization construct their own understanding of the "theory-in-use"[23] of the whole organization. This image is always incomplete. The members are in a constant process of refining this image in relation to the image of others.
- Organizational learning and the individual refining of understanding can be guided by diagrams of work flow, organizational maps, organizational charts, and other organizational information (files, records, data-bases, programs, procedures, etc.).
- Organizational learning is often related to problem solving. In order to become organizational, the learning that takes place in an individual must

[22] The descriptions of Argyris & Schön's understanding of organizational learning are not direct quotes but the author's attempts to compress their thoughts from the indicated chapter.
[23] "Theory-in-use" definition in Schön & Argyris (1996): Constructed and often implicit theories of action underlying a performance of a task. It relates to strategies, values, and assumptions embedded in routines of an organization. It is often tacit and may not match the espoused theories of an organization. It is often difficult to describe and discuss.

become embedded in the minds of other members of the organization. This takes place through more or less coherent restructuring of theories-in-use of the members. Learning can also become embedded in the epistemological artefacts of an organization (files, maps, programs, etc.).

- Organizational learning should not be studied in the context of static organizations. Rather, it relates to active processes of organizing and should be studied in this context.
- Organizational learning that changes the organizational theory-in-use may occur through:

  o Interpretation of past successes and failures
  o Inferences of causal connections between actions and outcomes
  o Reflection on changing organizational environment and its possible impact on the future
  o Analysis of alternative strategies, structures, techniques, etc., and their possible impacts on the organization
  o Description of conflicting views that arise in complex and uncertain situations
  o Inventions of how to reach the imagined future
  o Critical reflection on the organizational theories-in-use and their restructuring
  o Analysis of the experiences of other organizations

Organizational learning is attached to change in the theories-in-use of the organizations. Learning that acquires information and improves performance can be considered as related to, or even as a part of that process. Yet, it does not constitute organizational learning as Argyris and Schön understand it unless the often tacit theories-in-use are transformed. This understanding might benefit the purpose of the current study in some ways. First, if it can be concluded that learning is essential in relation to empowerment, then, it might be that the kind of organizational learning that is required is of the kind Argyris and Schön suggest.

Secondly, Argyris and Schön's understanding of learning might help in building bridges between intrinsic, organizational, and communal empowerment. If the qualities that characterize organizational learning for empowerment are the same or similar to those characterizing individual learning for empowerment, it adds credibility to the idea that it is meaningful to talk about organizational empowerment.

The answer to both questions presented above seems to be positive. Argyris and Schön (1996, 21) explicitly mention that they have borrowed the concept of double-loop

learning from Ashby who has used in relation to personal learning. Similarly, Beairsto and Ruohotie (2003, 131–133) link the learning theories of Kegan and Lahey, Kegan and Mezirow that emphasize intrinsic cognitive aspects to organizational learning. This suggests a positive answer to the second question. There are most probably enough similarities between the processes that take place in the cases of intrinsic and organizational empowerment that discussion can be judged as meaningful. In addition, the learning required for intrinsic empowerment seems to be of the same kind as learning required for organizational empowerment. For example, Mezirow's theory that relates to psychological empowerment has ideas that are similar to Argyris and Schön's propositions. Both theories have the idea of transformation (Argyris & Schön 1996; Mezirow 2000). Mezirow (2000) argues that an empowered person needs to be able to transform one's frame of reference. This enables an empowered person to act on one's own values, feelings, and meaning. These values, feelings, and meanings are self-constructed and not uncritically assimilated. Argyris and Schön (1996) have referred to change in theories-in-use which shares many of Mezirow's components of transformative learning. The following figure helps to link the two.

Orientation	Intrinsic / psychological	Organizational
Theory	Transformative learning	Organizational learning
Key Concept	Transformation of personal cognitive frames of reference	Transformation of organizational theories-in-use
Means	Construction of personal frames of reference incl. feelings, values, meaning	Construction of new theories-in-use incl. values
Purpose	Act on own purposes, feelings, and meanings	Act on company values and not to exploit the business environment
Result	Control over personal lives in a socially responsible way	Controlled and sustainable organization and environment

Figure 5. Comparison of Mezirow's transformative learning and Argyris & Schön's changes in theories-in-use.
Source: Argyris & Schön 1996; Mezirow 2000

As noted earlier, Argyris and Schön have pondered about the linkage of individual learning and organizational learning. Their debate evolves around the question of meaningfulness of attributing learning to an organization. They note that the notion that such a concept has received fierce critique. Argyris and Schön (1996, 3–7) suggest that organizations, teams and other collectives perform tasks that are similar to those performed by individuals. In fact, they are hard to describe otherwise. If terminology that is used in relation to human beings cannot be employed in a context of organizations that are formed by human beings, the situation becomes awkward. In that case, organizations would become totally impersonal. Yet, organizations are not impersonal in practise. For the sake of academic endeavour, organizations are studied as impersonal entities and this has contributed to scientific discussion as well as organizational practise. Argyris and Schön suggest that the same applies to attributing individual human processes to organizations. They argue that if organizations are studied from an outsider's point of view and seeing them as impersonal entities, it can contribute to the body of literature but not to the practitioner's action.

So, in some sense, there is a linkage between individual learning and organizational learning. Yet, as Argyris and Schön (1996, 6) point out, if an individual or a substantial fraction of them learn, this does not automatically qualify as organizational learning. They suggest that at times an organization can know more than some of its members, at other times it can know less. They have pointed out a host of other important linkages between individual and organizational learning. In all, the concept is extremely hard to define exactly. What can be concluded is that there is an interaction between individual and organizational learning. At times, individuals can contribute to the organizations reservoir of knowledge. On the other hand, if organizational systems are fine-tuned and the leadership is aware of the learning processes within an organization, the knowledge of an individual or a team in it can be communicated to its other members (1996, 12–15).

Competence and organizational learning

If the technical side of empowerment is discussed from a learning point of view, it could be related to the concept of *single loop learning*. Single loop learning facilitates competence (Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003, 132). Competence alone is not empowerment.

Competence, as Beairsto and Ruohotie use it in this context, has technical, behaviouristic and mechanical connotations to it. The same connotations can be seen in Leino's (1999, 5–10) article on professional competence. Though he explores the everyday, vocational, academic, and psychological approaches to competence, there is a technical/mechanical connotation present in the discussion. Even in relation to the psychological dimension of competence, the discussion is embedded in references to task performance in a technical sense. Therefore, in our view, learning a competence can be a particle in the empowerment process, but empowerment has deeper psychological dimensions to it than what mere technical competence requires. Empowerment seems to be a broader concept than competence. For example, Argyris (1998) sees that empowerment has to do with innovation and motivation. Competence does not necessarily breed innovation or enhance motivation. In a sense, then, a professional can be competent but not necessarily empowered.

Single and Double Loop Learning

Herrenkohl and others (1999) have noted that learning (knowledge and learning, to be more exact) is a key ingredient in empowerment. Though they also discuss learning in the context of skills and competence, the connotation is less technical than in the references discussed above. To them, it is important that the workers are enthusiastic about learning new skills. Learning is not limited to skill alone, but involves the motivation to keep on learning that is explicitly supported by the organization. In this, they are in agreement with Argyris (1998). Beairsto and Ruohotie (2003, 134) link learning that relates to empowerment to Argyris' second loop of learning. They also describe such learning in the terms of Mezirow's transformative learning, and Kegan's self-authoring mind. The core idea in all of the theories is that learning related to empowerment goes beyond behaviour (skills, competence [as defined above]) and touches the mental models and processes of a person. This, again, reminds us that the organizational aspects and intrinsic aspects of empowerment form a close symbiotic relationship. Learning, in a very real sense, is deeply intrinsic. Yet, on the other hand, organizations should operate in a way that they encourage learning, enable learning, and reward learning. In other words, organizations should institutionalize learning. (Argyris 1998; Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Koberg et al. 1999.)

Triple Loop Learning

Though they connect empowerment to double loop learning, Beairsto and Ruohotie are not satisfied with it but move the debate on empowerment in a learning context to a deeper intrinsic and cognitive level. In their model (2003, 134), they have proposed a third loop: "Generation of new processes to create new mental models". This, to them, represents a higher level of empowerment than the one on the level of second loop of learning. The third loop relates to a mind that is hospitable to alternative views. It readily accommodates new mental models. This kind of a mind enables an empowered person to collaborate with other self-authoring individuals. This view looks at the learning process within an organizational context from a reverse point of view than what we have been used to. Usually, the training programmes start with the desired results. Then the organizational or professional behaviour that brings about the desired results is envisioned. Behaviour, in the long run reinforces mental models that might be later changed. Beairsto and Ruohotie's model suggests a different way to look at learning in relation to empowerment. Instead of starting simply with the desired result and the changed or initiated behaviour needed to achieve this result, an empowered person operates on a cognitive level that constantly processes new mental models and evaluates them. This, in turn, results in revised or new mental models that trigger the desired behaviour to bring about the envisioned results.
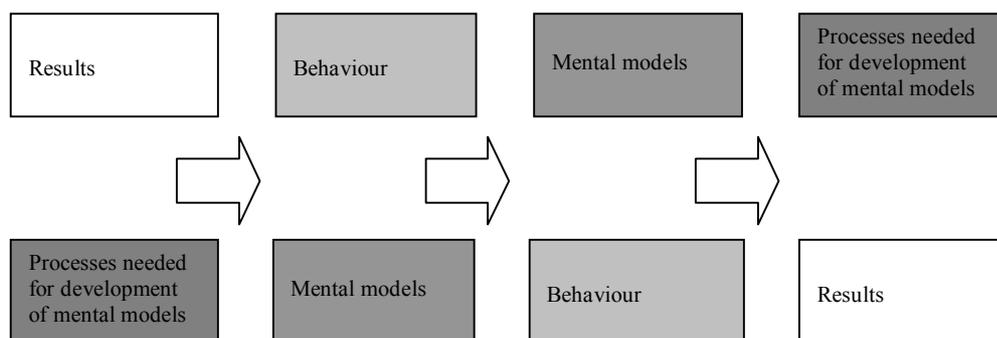
Figure 6. The emphases of learning in traditional organizational learning thinking and in Beairsto & Ruohotie's suggested model.
Source: Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003, 134. Terms and contents from Beairsto & Ruohotie, presentation by the author.

The model and understanding of Beairsto and Ruohotie suggest at least two important things. First, organizations cannot blindly emphasize results as the starting point of obtaining desired results and for learning processes. Rather, organizations should shift the emphasis on individuals. What kind of individuals, are likely to generate and adopt new mental models and necessary professional and organizational behaviour to bring about results? Certainly, in reality, there will always be work force that is satisfied with and, perhaps, capable of merely operating on the axis between the desired results and necessary behaviour needed to obtain those results. However, if Beairsto and Ruohotie are right, it seems that those employees that are capable of adapting new mental models, and generating new models, will be more likely to be empowered.

Secondly, organizations need to be more sensitive to new types and dimensions of learning. It is no longer enough to provide opportunities, resources, and time for learning new professional skills to get better results, or results that had not been achieved before. The challenge will be to create a work environment and work atmosphere where innovation and new ways of understanding are welcomed and encouraged.

2.3.3 Technical Factors

Beairsto and Ruohotie (2003, 125–131; 133–138) refer to the technical factors of empowerment (or the technical side of the empowerment process) in the context of organizational management and administrative support to the process. They suggest that the management usually holds a technical view of an organization. It aims, in their words, to "…to be just, efficient, and reliable" (2003, 135). The technical side of empowerment process should be seen as a necessary ingredient of it, but in itself, it does not equal to nor does it constitute empowerment. Technical factors support empowerment.

They also see that the duty of managers is to put in place the technical factors that support empowerment (2003, 135). These technical factors include: articulation of empowerment intentions, making of structural changes, providing resources, and rewarding empowered actions. These actions clearly relate to the more external facets of the empowerment process. Such activities can come close to the concept of delegation of power and control. Ruohotie (2001), however, is careful to distinguish

delegation from empowerment. It seems that putting emphasis solely on the technical factors of the empowerment process can enable delegation but not empowerment. Delegation is merely a transfer of duties of one person to another (Ruohotie 2001, 4). This can be achieved by management decisions and organizational changes – by making technical adjustments.

2.3.4 Participation to Organizational Life

It is not always easy to distinguish the intrinsic facets of the empowerment debate from the organizational facets as we have noted. A good example is the commitment factor of empowerment. Commitment is deeply intrinsic by nature. Yet, as Argyris (1998) points out, organizations tend to breed either external or internal commitment. He suggests that both are important but it is the internal commitment that supports empowerment. To evoke internal commitment, employee participation and involvement is needed. The employees should have authority and freedom to make decisions and act (Ruohotie 2001). When internal commitment is discussed in an organizational context, the emphasis is on enabling environment and structures. Internal commitment can also be looked at from a more individual and psychological perspective (e.g., Siitonen 1999).[24] These perspectives are inter-related but different. The enabling environment and structures relate to what the organization can do. The individual and psychological perspective relates to the invisible and subtle mental processes that none but the person concerned can have any control on. Argyris (1998) has argued that the more the organization (its management) involves the workers in planning the work, deciding how to carry out the plans and goal setting, the more likely it evokes internal commitment. It seems that he sees almost full correlation between the level of participation and internal commitment. A logical consequence of such a proposition would then be that participation should be institutionalized and nurtured.

2.3.5 Empowerment Evaluation

One approach to empowerment in an organizational context is empowerment evaluation. This discussion could fall under the headings of organizational aspects (2.3) of empowerment or communal aspects of empowerment (2.3.8). Fetterman (2001, 1–3) sets the context to discuss empowerment evaluation mainly to the context of various

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[24] This aspect will be addressed in greater detail later on.

social programmes. These programmes are quite often delivered by institutions, government departments, schools, and so on. Therefore, there should be no objection in viewing these as organizations and discussing empowerment evaluation in an organizational context. This is in line with Fetterman's own understanding of the empowerment process and empowerment evaluation. He agrees that empowerment evaluation can be applied to individuals, organizations, communities, societies, and cultures (Fetterman et al. 1996, 4).

What is empowerment evaluation then? Fetterman (2001, 3), who has been one of the pioneers of empowerment evaluation approach has defined the term as an evaluation approach to "…foster improvement and self-determination". To Fetterman, the novelty of such an evaluation approach lies in the fact that it is not essentially designed to judge the value of a programme, but rather contribute towards the improvement of the same. To us, such an approach is not necessarily that novel but, in fact, a normal way of looking at evaluations in development work context. However, the approach has other merits for the current study. Fetterman's empowerment evaluation sheds light on empowerment in a community or group context. It suggests that empowerment discussion in a community context is not futile. Since Siitonen (1999), has quite strongly emphasized the intrinsic side of empowerment, Fetterman's emphasis on the collective side of empowerment process offers a welcome balance.

In his discussion, Fetterman touches issues that help us to understand how the individual and social/communal sides of empowerment integrate. To him, it is essential that there is a democratic and an open atmosphere in a group that enables to set a common vision and agree on common goals. These are then used in an evaluation that is also participatory by nature. The group is not only involved in the evaluation but collectively responsible for conducting it. It is essential to note that empowerment evaluation in itself becomes an instrument of empowerment. In other words, it evaluates the process itself and its outcomes. However, the evaluation of these facets is not the end itself – it is the value of this evaluation and learning process to the empowerment itself (Fetterman et al. 1996, 4–6; Fetterman 2001). Thus, empowerment evaluation is not evaluation of empowerment as such, but evaluation for empowerment.

It seems that one could look at the empowerment of a group through this democratic process – through participatory methods a group of people is able to dialogue, and then come to a state where there is a common purpose and a more or less coherent group determination.   Such a view comes very close to the description and elements of empowerment in Siitonen's empowerment theory (1999, esp. 157–165). The difference is that Siitonen emphasises the individual and intrinsic side of empowerment and Fetterman discusses empowerment in a social and group contexts. The following figure summarizes some of the shared elements of Siitonen's theory and the discussions of Fetterman and others 1996, Fetterman 2001, and Gutiérrez and others 1998.
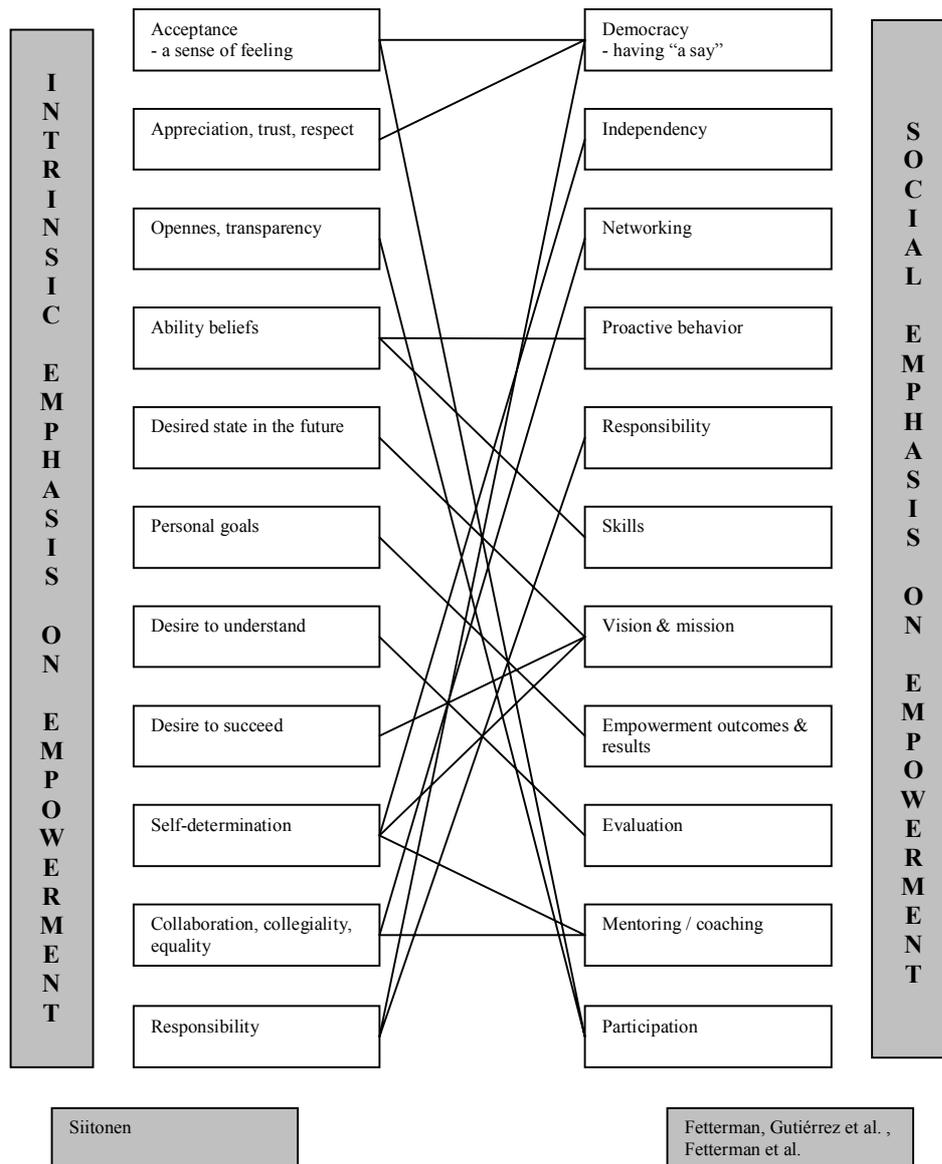
Figure 7. Intrinsic dimensions of empowerment in comparison to collective dimensions of empowerment.
Sources: Fetterman 2001; Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Siitonen 1999.

The figure aims at bringing out the fact that the empowerment discussions which emphasize, on one hand the intrinsic nature of empowerment, and on the other hand its social nature have a lot in common. The terms might not be exactly interchangeable, but they have ingredients that relate to similar realities. It is to be noted that the categories presented, are examples from the above mentioned authors and by no means intended to exhaust the corresponding categories and terms occurring in their texts. In addition, the correlations between the terms are not intended to be exhaustive either. As

noted, the idea is to point out that there are significant substantial similarities between the two approaches to empowerment.

Since the task of the current study is not to look for all corresponding categories of processes that apply both to intrinsic and social/communal empowerment debate, we will comment only on a few of them. For example, Siitonen (1999, 158) has suggested that in order to be empowered, one should have or develop a sense of acceptance. When such a feeling has developed intrinsically, one feels welcome in a working context. Though Siitonen does not point it out clearly in this context, the feeling of acceptance is intrinsic. However, the external factors can contribute to and facilitate the feeling. In the discussions of Fetterman and others (1996, e.g., 5–6) and Fetterman (2001, e.g., 6–22), that kind of a feeling is facilitated in the context of empowerment evaluation by[25] agreeing that it is essentially a democratic process, by maintaining an environment that allows for successes and failures, by understanding that the role of an external person is that of a collaborator/coach/facilitator, and by ensuring that empowerment evaluation is essentially a helping process not a criticizing process. Empowerment evaluation is also described as a participatory process. It invites participation in all phases: planning, carrying out an evaluation, and determining program improvements (Fetterman et al. 1996). Therefore, there are grounds for maintaining that Siitonen's intrinsic feeling of acceptance would correlate with the ideas of empowerment evaluation as a democratic and a participatory process.

Another good example would be Siitonen's sub-category of self-determination. This has some relation to a number of concepts found in the discussion on empowerment evaluation. First of all, Fetterman and others (1996, 4; also Fetterman 2001) quote Zimmermann who argues that empowerment is a process aiming at developing such skills that enable them to solve their problems and make their own decisions. He also refers to Mithaug (Fetterman 2001, 112–113), who has researched self-determination and self-regulation among disabled persons. Self-determination is, of course, intrinsic. The study suggested the following personal abilities to be integral to empowerment:
- Ability to identify and express needs
- Ability to establish goals
- Ability to establish a plan of action to achieve them

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[25] There are other things as well. These are examples.

- Ability to identify resources
- Ability to choose between alternative courses of action
- Ability to take steps to pursue objectives
- Ability to evaluate short- and long-term results
- Ability to reassess plans
- Ability to take detours (when pursuing a goal)
- Ability to persist in pursuing the goal

Breakdown at any point of this network of interrelated capabilities and environmental factors can reduce the likelihood of personal empowerment. Fetterman says that these observations form the core of the theory underlying empowerment evaluation (2001, 12–13).[26] This implies that despite the fact that the capabilities are very intrinsic and personal, Fetterman has concluded them to be applicable in organizational and group contexts (see also Fetterman et al., esp., pp. 6–9). The implication is, although it is not explicitly spelled out in the literature mentioned above, that an empowered group or an organization should have the same features.

2.3.6 Evaluation of Empowerment Processes

In the previous section, empowerment was discussed from the point of view of empowerment evaluation. That is, how a participatory process of evaluation can serve as an instrument to empower. This section will dig into the processes of how to evaluate whether empowerment has taken place or not. Such an overview can offer further clues as to the nature of an empowering organization and the concept of empowerment. The section is largely based on the discussion of Parsons (1998). It must be noted that although her title "Evaluation of Empowerment Practise" suggests that the practise is evaluated, the body of the text in the chapter is at times very similar to the approach of Fetterman (2001). Fetterman, as noted, has discussed evaluation process as an agent of empowerment.

Parsons (1998, 204–218) has identified a number of issues to evaluate in order to judge the success of empowerment processes. First of all, the attitude of the empowering agent[27] must be evaluated. The attitude is reflected in the professional role she/he takes. Parsons suggests (1998, 207) that the role should be characterized by respect of the

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[26] Other works and persons who have contributed to the theory are listed in Fetterman et al. 1996, 6-9.
[27] In Parsons's text the empowering agent is a social practitioner.

clients. No matter what difficulties they have, they have inherent strengths, aspirations, and goodness in them. The empowering agent should focus on these.

Empowering agents should also aim at enabling clients to choose and assume power over themselves. In this setting his/her work can be described as enabler, helper, leader, and midwife in the process that aims at self-empowerment. Rather than considering him-/herself as an expert, the empowerment agent considers the clients as possessors of sufficient expertise in their living contexts. (Parsons 1998, 207-208.)

Parsons has proposed that when evaluation of the impact of empowerment process is taking place, the following facets should be examined (deducted from Parsons 1998, 209-210):

- Have the problems, solutions, needs, and aspirations under study been defined by the clients or groups of clients?
- Has the client focus stayed at the core of the empowerment process?[28]
- Have the stakeholders and clients collaborated in the evaluation of the empowerment process?
- Is there evidence that the clientele have come up with indigenous solutions to difficulties and situations that demand coping?
- Has the complexity of client's living environment been oversimplified?

Parsons's propositions are the researcher's deductions from a section that describe both what to study and how to study empowerment process. The ideas have a lot in common with the views of Argyris (1998), Koberg and others (1999), and Siitonen (1999). In all, Parsons's views emphasize that at the core of the empowerment process is the individuals' feeling and perception to influence their lives and the environment where they act.

In their attempt to compose an operational definition of empowerment, Herrenkohl and others had to differentiate between groups that were considered more empowered than other groups. The researchers suggested that the more empowered groups "…were described as solving real problems, needing little outside direction, seeking new ideas,

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[28] Parsons sees that there is a danger that in social work practice and in the evaluations of the practice, the social science values may overrule client focus.

acting independently, being confident about their abilities, and having positive interactions among members of the workgroup" (Herrenkohl et al. 1999, 378).

The descriptions of Herrenkohl and others of an empowered group have a lot in common with Bandura's views on social cognitive theory and self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura 1988; 1993). In fact, many of the scholars who have studied or study empowerment refer to Bandura in this context (e.g., Eklund 1999; Fetterman 2001; Koberg et al. 1999; Siitonen 1999). Bandura suggests that self-efficacy beliefs relate to how readily a person engages in difficult tasks, how long the person perseveres in when facing difficulties, and what kind of standards they set for their performance (Bandura 1988, 279–281). The value of Bandura's thoughts on self-efficacy lay in his claim that others (e.g. organizations) can strengthen competencies, self-regulatory capabilities, and sense of efficacy that will improve psychological well-being and boost personal accomplishments (Bandura 1988, 299). Organizations can facilitate this in a number of ways such as: engaging people in goal setting, teaching, breaking difficult tasks into more manageable goals, setting immediate goals, setting high enough goals, setting explicit goals, assigning realistic tasks and exposure to success experiences (Bandura 1988, 284–299).

On the Finnish front, Antikainen (2005) has recently studied the linkage between growth-oriented atmosphere and empowerment. She argues (2005, 50; also Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003) that growth-oriented atmosphere is a crucial element of the organizational empowerment process. She has used Ruohotie's instrument in her study. The instrument covers the organizational facets of leadership, tasks, group dynamics, work related stress, and personal work-related attitudes (Antikainen 2005, 264–269). The following broad principles may be deducted from the growth-oriented atmosphere instrument:

- Leadership should support the staff
- Work related tasks should reflect independence and the work force should have a say in their design
- Group related tasks are challenging and an individual worker both contributes to and receives from it
- Stress-level should not be overwhelming but challenging
- Personal interests are acknowledged and their realization supported.

The instrument will be revisited in greater detail, for example, in connection to leadership and its organizational role in relation to empowerment (2.3.7). What comes out clearly here is that in the opinion of Antikainen, Beairsto and Ruohotie, an organization contributes to empowerment process through leadership, task-design, group activities, stress/challenge-levels, and employee sensitivity.

Koberg and others (1999) have also tried to depict the antecedents and outcomes of empowerment in an organizational setting. They have conducted the research in a hospital setting. The setting is interesting in a sense that it is characterized by features such as excessive regulation. Excessive regulation could be thought of as an empowerment killer since one of the key attributes of empowerment has been considered as freedom (Fetterman 2001, Gutiérrez et al. 1998, Siitonen 1999).

The approach of Koberg and others is particularly interesting for the purposes of the current study since it ponders the relation of psychological empowerment to group and organizational settings. They have employed an instrument that includes ingredients from other instruments used by well-known scientists such as Friedlander, Thomas and Velthouse, and Spreitzer to name but a few (Koberg et al. 1999, 73–82). Koberg and others have viewed empowerment in relation to three different aspects: characteristics of individuals, characteristics of groups, and characteristics of organizations.

Koberg and others (1999) emphasize the feeling of empowerment as the crucial factor in the phenomenon. Demographically, when excavating into the individual characteristics of empowerment influencing the feeling, the following factors are highlighted: age, gender, ethnicity, self-concept, self-esteem, motivational needs, profession, and cultural background (1999, 73–74).

In relation to organizational empowerment, of special interest are the categories Koberg and others have used to measure how organizations are presumed to contribute to the feeling of empowerment. They hypothesized that group decision making, sharing of responsibilities and problems openly, and feeling mutual trust enhance feelings of self-determination and competency. The two feelings are then expected to bear on the feeling of empowerment. (1999, 75–76.) The process is depicted in the figure below.
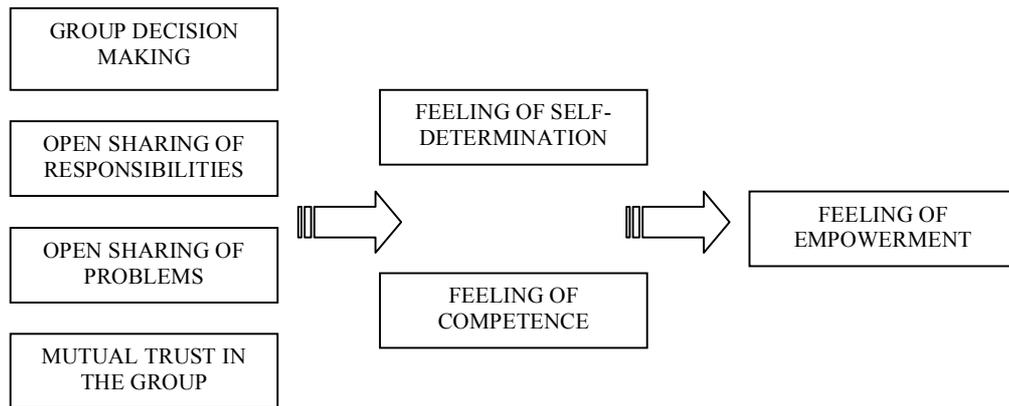
Figure 8. Formation of feeling of empowerment.
Source: Koberg et al. 1999, 75–76.

The researchers also presumed, based on other studies (Fagenson, Rudolf & Peluchette, Spreitzer), that one's status in the organizational hierarchy bears on the feeling of empowerment (1999, 76). If a person perceives to have access to information, resources, and influential persons, she or he is likely to feel empowered as well. This feeling of empowerment then enhances work productivity and success since people value their work and find it satisfactory.

Based on their research, Koberg and others (1999, 85–88) have suggested the following:

- Persons are more likely to feel empowered if the leader of the group is approachable, encourages the worth of the group, and facilitates group effectiveness.
- Organizational variables contribute towards feeling of empowerment as much, if not more, as the individual variables. Therefore, organizations affect greatly the intrinsic feeling of empowerment.
- Individuals who are on those levels of organizations that traditionally hold most power feel more empowered. The same is true of tenure. The persons with a longer tenure feel more empowered. In fact, there might be a natural link between the two factors. The persons with a longer tenure tend to be higher up in the organization than those with a short tenure.
- The results seem to give further support to the view that managers and supervisors can help workers feel empowered. This takes place by providing workers necessary resources, abilities, and authority. In addition, the workers should be involved in the decision making process. However, they agree with Rudolph & Peluchette that this may only create necessary conditions for empowerment.
- Compensation and reward programmes support organization by creating a sense of ownership (having a stake).
- Orientation, training, and mentoring programs contribute to the feeling of empowerment by providing a sense of competence.

Koberg and others' article as a whole can be used as a piece of scientific evidence to support the view that organizational measures contribute significantly to empowerment.

Their theoretical understanding of empowerment puts emphasis on the feeling of empowerment. This feeling can be boosted by organizational measures including the actions of superiors and colleagues. There is a strong correlation between the intrinsic feeling of empowerment and organizational context. At least, in relation to work, intrinsic feeling of empowerment cannot be divorced from the organizational factors that enable, enforce or disempower.

2.3.7 Empowering Leadership

Leadership[29], naturally, is in the key position to enhance or inhibit empowerment and empowerment processes. Leadership is a social process that has the potential to influence. It is exercised in a relationship that includes a two-way influencing process between leaders and followers. Through the influencing process the leader has an opportunity to impact the followers. A leader can enhance an individual's commitment to an organization, his/her objectives, group cohesion, and organizational culture among other things. (Sadler 2003, 415.)

Antikainen sees that the role of leadership in empowerment is to facilitate a growth-oriented atmosphere. This encompasses a number of processes. It must communicate clearly. Clarity is expected in relation to strategy and job descriptions. In addition, leadership should articulate clearly the expectations that it has towards employee performance. Communication is enhanced through regular contacts with the subordinates and stakeholders. Leadership is expected to form a clear vision about the future and communicate it to all. Leadership should respect innovative ideas springing up from the staff. In this way they enhance new approaches to work, innovations, development, and participation. When these factors are enhanced, the staff develops a sense of influence that we have noted as crucial to empowerment. Leadership can also contribute to empowerment through incentives. Incentives may be concrete rewards (money, study-leave, etc.) or positive feedback. In an organization, the leader can support interaction. Interaction is often facilitated by forming groups and teams. Groups may facilitate empowerment by enabling collective learning, problem solving, development, mutual help, and formation of team-spirit. (Antikainen 2005, 204–222.)

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[29] In this context, leadership is thought of encompassing such persons who through their position in an organization can influence conditions that can contribute towards empowerment. Such persons can include chief executives, directors, managers, supervisors, team-leaders, etc.

Antikainen has put together a useful summary of what her study suggested as the qualities of a transformational and interactive leadership.

Table 5. Qualities and actions of transformational and interactive leadership.
Source: Adopted from Antikainen 2005, 243.

Influence on presuppositions	Two-way communication	Interaction	Open dialogue
Ability to translate new goals into desireable objectives	Enabling and ethical leadership	Open & understanding attitude and empathy	Building working contexts "safe" and empowering through dialogue
Good social skills ability to support and encourage	Ability to listen actively	Control of moods calmness in critical situations	Questioning of practices and welcoming of differing opinions without confrontation
	Positive and constructively critical feedback	Ability to make difficult decisions	
	Opennes for feedback and ability to receive it		Searching for new approaches to achieve consensus and to find innovative solutions
	Encouragement of open group dialogue and problem solving		

Securing staff competence	Recognition of expertise	Stress elimination	
Assessment of training needs	Explicit recognition of expertise	Development of organization and processes with the to secure smoothness of operations	
Development of culture that enables learning together and encourages innovation	Increasing responsibility and giving related feedback	Securing such experiences that give feelings of job satisfaction	
	Rewarding system of incentives		

Ruohotie (2004, 4–14) has examined leadership from the point of view of an interactive process (see also Sadler 2003). He notes that leadership is often researched from the point of view of a leader. However, it is also important to discuss the leadership process from the point of view of the follower. The traditional view sees leadership as an initiating force and often limits itself to descriptive accounts of leadership. Ruohotie proposes that a deeper and broader look is needed in order to understand the mechanisms involved in leadership processes. According to him, the leadership process should aim at changing cognitive structures that are open to influence: attitudes, schemes, and scripts. In addition, a leader can influence emotions, motivation, observation and group cohesion.   The nuance of importance is that leadership in empowerment contexts cannot be viewed as a process influencing organizational structures and other external factors. Empowering leadership should aim at changing

cognitive structures to make changes permanent. Especially, leadership should aim at changing self-image and identity of the followers.

Senge's (1993, 339–360) discussion on the modern leadership role challenges the traditional view as well. He has listed some of the traditional views on and roles of leadership as directive, manipulative, hero, captain of the cavalry, navigator, captain of the ship, etc. Such images have dominance, display, admiration, and strength in common. Senge suggests something different. Although he describes the new work of a leader in a context of learning organization, his views might help us understand the qualities of an empowering leader as well. Innovation, change, learning, organizational agility, and vision are just a few common denominators of organizational learning and empowerment (Antikainen 2005; Argyris 1998; Kuokkanen 2003; Ruohotie 2001; Spreitzer et al. 1999). In addition, Senge uses the word empowerment in connection to all his three qualities. Therefore, there is sufficient ground to argue that the qualities of the leader of a learning organization are, at least to an extent, the qualities of an empowering leader.

Senge suggest that the key tasks of new leaders are to design, to exercise stewardship, and to teach. Senge illustrates the leader's task of design through an illustration of a ship. When asked what role a leader should assume in an ocean liner, the answers fall along the lines of what is described above. Senge claims that seldom do people associate the leader with the designer of a ship. However, it is the designer that to a great extent determines the performance of a ship. Traditional views on leadership and the view of a leader as designer are at odds for many reasons. What the designer does is not applauded and recognized. It is forgotten that what is seen today are consequences of what has taken place in the past. Senge (1993, 341) says: "Those who practice it [leadership by design] find deep satisfaction in empowering others and being part of organization capable of producing results that people truly care about".

Secondly, an empowering leader is a steward. He or she has a sense that his or her actions are apart of something greater than mere good and efficient leadership or management. Such a leader has a sense of bringing change into the society. A steward leader considers his vision precious because it reaches beyond an immediate benefit to a greater purpose. The focus of an empowering leader is not on his or her organization

but on the part that he or she plays in the larger vision, purpose, or story. Finally, Senge sees an empowering leader as a teacher. By teaching he does not refer to "teaching how" but to fostering learning. A teacher leader is able to help the bulk of the work force to understand systems thinking that will affect the performance of the organization. Senge sees teaching as the safeguard against creating an untruthful understanding of reality. Such a reality might be more insightful and empowering, but it is untruthful and cannot stand the test of time. (Senge 1993, 353–357.)

Spreitzer and his associates (1999) conducted research on three leadership qualities that they hypothesized as relating positively to empowerment. They concluded that empowered leaders were seen as innovative, upward influencing, and inspiring by the subordinates (1999, 520–522). These leadership characteristics relate especially to transformational leadership. Unfortunately, the hypotheses of Spreitzer and others did not explicitly touch on how these empowered leaders empower others. Some implications might be noted. It seems that innovation breeds innovation. When new innovations emerge, it will create positive expectations of success (similar ideas shared by e.g., Antikainen 2005; Argyris 1998; Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003). Secondly, when an empowered leader is able to influence his or her superiors, it can boost a sense of influence in his followers as well (similar ideas shared by Eklund 1999; Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Koberg et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999). This feeds a sense that the intrinsic needs of the workforce can be fulfilled. Thirdly, an empowered leader is able to inspire others. This can take place by being proud of, showing respect, putting confidence in, and trusting the workforce (similar ideas shared by Antikainen 2005; Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Koberg et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Senge 1993; Spreitzer et al. 1999, 513–515).

Nokelainen and Ruohotie (2003) have argued that Ruohotie's instrument of growth-oriented atmosphere can be used to explore the prerequisites of empowerment. The growth-oriented atmosphere model accommodates a factor of leadership and management. The components of the factor include: appreciation and rewarding of learning and securing resources for it, empowering of individuals, support for the growth or professional identity, career development through interaction, setting goals for development, evaluation of learning and development, and creates commitment to the job and to the organization (Ruohotie & Nokelainen 2000, 151–154). Although

there are a number of dimensions in leadership that contribute to facilitation of growth-oriented atmosphere and consequently to employee empowerment, Nokelainen and Ruohotie argue that the single most important leadership trait in this context is encouragement (Nokelainen & Ruohotie 2003). Their study seems to imply that encouragement catalyzes commitment to work and organization over three times as much as strategic leadership. Encouraging leadership is also crucial in a sense that it makes work related tasks incentive. Workers feel that their contribution is significant and therefore appreciated by themselves, colleagues, and organization. (Nokelainen & Ruohotie 2003.)

2.3.8 Communal Aspects of Empowerment

The communal aspects of empowerment relate to organizational and psychological aspects in many ways. However, since the present inquiry deals with NGOs that characteristically work with communities, this aspect will be treated separately from the two. The discussion falls into two main parts: theoretical understandings of communal empowerment, and practical understanding of communal empowerment. The first part will deal with the academic literature on the subject. The second part will consider the non-academic but authoritative literature on empowerment in the development literature.

Theoretical Understandings of Communal Empowerment

Development interventions are usually carried out in community contexts. Therefore, they relate to the field of sociology. For example, in an African setting, development initiatives are aimed at improving the lives of marginalized groups such as: women, poorest of the poor, disabled, refugees, and HIV positive persons. The initiatives share a lot with similar initiatives among marginalized groups in the more developed countries (see, e.g., the examples of marginalized groups and beneficiaries of social intervention in Gutiérrez et al. 1998).

When discussed in the community context, the concept of empowerment becomes charged with political and civil rights connotations (e.g., Adams 1996, 5–11; Eklund 1999, 39). The political and civil rights related understandings of empowerment see it as touching the issues of democratization, advocacy, consciousness-raising, and anti-oppression (Adams 1996).

Adams has also suggested that in the sociological debate, empowerment is often seen as something which is done to a person. Interestingly, he sees an inherent danger in such thinking. Attempts to empower may turn disempowering. Another danger that Adams has pointed out is to tie empowerment too closely to enabling acts. In line with his introductory comments, Adams avoids coining a simple definition of empowerment. What seems to come through from his treatise is that empowerment in a social setting is characterised by notions of self-help, ability to manage problems, people having a control over their circumstances, reduction of hierarchies and bureaucracy, cooperation, and common experiences. As a whole, empowerment in a community setting springs from notions of personal empowerment, but when channelled through a group or an organization, it loses its selfish connotation. Adams sees empowerment as concrete, subjective, experiential, and intuitive. This is in opposition to the notions of distance, perspective, reflection, systematic knowledge, and understanding that are associated with professional social action. In all, the tension between personal empowerment and community empowerment is ever present in his discussion. (Adams 1996, 12–24.)

Eklund (1999) has contributed to the empowerment debate in a community setting in her dissertation *From Citizen Participation towards Community Empowerment*. On one hand, she has attempted to define empowerment in the context of community action. On the other hand, in her operationalization of the empowerment concept, she has coined a useful list of dimensions mirroring key processes in empowerment. The same can be said of the indicators she has suggested for community empowerment. Since Eklund has drawn from researchers that have been referred to in the earlier discussions, it is not necessary to restate all nuances in her summaries. She has distinguished four dimensions in empowerment: personality, cognitive, motivational, and contextual/other. The following is a table of the aspects of her interpretation of empowerment in a community context that have not been addressed elsewhere.

Table 6. Eklund's four dimensions of community empowerment.
Source: Adopted from Eklund 1999, 76–79.

Personality dimension

      Chance control
      Belief in powerful others
      Control ideology (belief that one can influence social and political systems)
      Emotional variables (understanding other people, meaningful content of life, fulfilment)

Cognitive dimension

      Political efficacy (the belief that it is possible to influence political processes and community decision making
            Internal political efficacy: the belief to possess personal skills to influence political systems
            External political efficacy: the belief that political systems are responsive to change efforts

      Sense of political efficacy (the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have an impact upon the
            political process; a feeling that political and social change is possible

Motivational dimension

      Desire to control the environment
      Sense of civic obligation (the belief that one ought to participate in the political process as a responsibility to
            others; a belief that oneself and others should engage in the political processes; a sense of concern
            for the common good and connectedness to others
      Sense of causal importance and purposefulness that feeds a feeling of hope

Contextual/other dimension

      Involvement in collective action (in order to exercise control in the social and political environment; perceiving
            e.g. a programme as a channel for influencing decision making
      Consciousness rising
      Understanding of programme purpose

Eklund's categories are not novel in themselves. Similar categories have been employed, for example, by Andrus and Ruhlin (1998), Fetterman (2001), and Siitonen (1999) – not to mention the host of scholars Eklund has indicated in her work. Some items in her categorization a particularly noteworthy. For example, the motivational and cognitive dimensions are specified in terms of beliefs to influence through concerted action and in individual influence. The categories are similar in content to Siitonen's context and ability beliefs (1999, 158). However, they are coloured, as mentioned, by community context.

Eklund provides helpful insights into the concept of empowerment in community context also by identifying useful indicators to observe empowerment levels in the community. In her list of indicators (1999, 79), it is possible to identify different categories where indicators can be placed. One can determine indicators that relate to

perceptions, results, and capacities. The following table is an effort to group Eklund's indicators into these three categories.

Table 7. Empowerment indicators for perception, result, and capacity categories.
Source: Derived from Eklund 1999, 79

Perceptions	*Results*	*Capacities*
Stronger sense of community	Equity of resources in communities	Capacity to identify problems and their solutions
Identification of oneself as part of the community	Increased participation in community activities	Capacity to analyze the world critically
	Raised level of psychological empowerment	Capacity to manage time
	Improved neighbourhoods	Capacity to organize people for action
	Improved quality of community life	Capacity to identify service providers
	Improved social justice	Capacity to cooperate to achieve a goal
	Participation in decision making and political action	Capacity to work in teams
	Achievements in redistribution of resources or in decision making	Capacity to grasp factors that influence decision making
		Capacity as a group to identify problems, select goals, and act for social change

From the characteristics presented in the table, one could easily describe an empowered community.   In an empowered community, individuals have a strong sense of community and see themselves as an integral part of it. The members of the community are able to work together.   They demonstrate this ability by identifying problems, figuring out problems, and organizing for concerted action to influence their environment.   To this end, the community is able to mobilize resources and identify parties that can help it to achieve its goal.   Through such processes, an empowered community is able to attain measurable goals.

Erben and others have made similar conclusions to Eklund on empowerment in relation to health promotion that encompasses the society at large. They agree with Henderson and Thomas, Minkler, and Daly, and Cobb that in a communal setting empowerment means the improvement of individual and collective skills to regain control over living and working conditions. Furthermore, it is the aim and means of community organization. Thirdly, empowerment can be interpreted as a constant process of enabling individuals and groups to participate in community action. The researchers put heavy emphasis on alliances as a means of empowerment. Empowerment occurs when people interact. The interaction should be characterized by mutual respect, tolerance, and social support. To them, alliances are the means to gain political influence and power that is key to change and impact crucial issues in a society. (Erben et al. 1999.)

Principles, Frameworks, and Approaches of Community Empowerment
Governments and NGOs have set up guidelines and frameworks for their empowerment effort. The documents where they are presented cannot be considered as academic. However, it is important to present a few examples of these documents to provide the reader with a glimpse of material that guide development activities in relation to empowerment. Although, these documents cannot be considered scientific in the strictest sense of the word, they have a similar function on a practical level as scientific theories – they guide planning and praxis, and they provide the background for evaluation and research.

NORAD (1999) has published a handbook on gender and empowerment assessment. It defines empowerment as:
- Power to make decisions
- Power to have your voice heard
- Power to put things on the agenda
- Power to negotiate on something that is not negotiable
- Power within yourself to challenge past customs

The clauses that are indicative of NORAD's understanding of empowerment are well in line with the scientific theories on it. The ideas of influence, having one's voice heard, and to change the existing state of affairs have been noted by a number of researchers as ingredients of empowerment, especially in community contexts (e.g., Adams 1996; Eklund 1999; Fetterman 2001; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Nayaran 2002). The assessment of

empowerment covers ten factors. The ten factors can be divided into three main categories that they aim to address: the immediate and basic needs, participation, and quality of life.

Table 8. Categories and factors of NORAD gender and empowerment assessment.
Source: NORAD 1999.

IMMEDIATE & BASIC NEEDS	PARTICIPATION	QUALITY OF LIFE
PROVISION OF INCREASED ACCESS TO BASIC SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE	INDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS IN PROJECT PARTICIPATION	INCREASED OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
ENHANCED ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY	PROMOTION OF OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES	
IMPROVED HEALTH		INCREASED CONTROL OVER RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY
IMPROVED EDUCATION & TRAINING		ENHANCED DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS
ENHANCED INCOME OPPORTUNITIES		

Mason, McNulty, and Aubel (2001) have composed a manual for community empowerment for CARE. They relate empowerment quite closely to participation but emphasize that participation alone is not empowerment. Yet, the differences do not come out very clearly in their manual. In the section defining community empowerment, the following characteristics have been judged crucial: a) all groups have a voice in decision making, b) concern for common good prevails over personal ambition, c) the community recognizes and prioritizes needs of all members, d) the community can take action locally to solve problems, change behaviours and access services, e) and the community is able to plan, implement, and evaluate activities or projects on their own. Mason, McNulty, and Aubel have drawn attention to putting the needs of the community ahead of personal interests. This, of course, is frequently addressed in relation to fighting corruption and other political contexts. Inability to commit to a common cause might be one of the key ingredients in why empowerment efforts fail. Ethics, empathy, and values have also been recognized as playing a significant part in empowerment (e.g., Antikainen 2005; Kincheloe 2003; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999; Spreitzer et al. 1999). However, values, ethics, empathy, and empowerment seem to be debated in relation to collegiality, work ethics, common

vision, working environment, and just decisions rather than in terms of commitment and sacrifice for common good (e.g., Kuokkanen 35–36; Siitonen 1999, 156–157). It is very difficult, if not impossible, to find academic research in terms of philanthropy, values, and ethics related to it as the catalysts for empowerment.

DANIDA (1999) has evaluated its development efforts in relation to human rights and democratization. In the section that presents the findings and recommendations of the evaluation team, there are a few issues that are of special interest in the context of empowerment and development activities. First of all, there are explicit comments that link empowerment to the popular development concept of ownership. The evaluators comment that although the two terms do not denote the same thing, the concept of ownership comes very close to empowerment. Secondly, the evaluation suggests that the degree of empowerment correlates with the kind of decisions the stakeholders are able to make. Ownership has connotations of responsibility and decisions relate to power – both are relevant aspects of empowerment in community context. Finally, the evaluation suggests that participation in relation to empowerment tends to be instrumental and not transformational. Instrumental participation could be thought of as using the recipients of aid as tools to improve project planning and implementation. Transformational participation, on the other hand, would allow the participants the authority and resources to control all aspects of the development process.

The understanding of the United Nations on empowerment could be researched from a number of documents. One of the key documents is the annual Human Development Report. Interestingly, its references to empowerment are quite scarce and it is not defined in any way except in relation to gender empowerment. The level of gender empowerment is measured from three aspects: political participation and decision-making, economic participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources. In gender empowerment, economic participation is looked at from two perspectives: 1) female and male proportions of positions as legislators, senior officials, and managers, 2) and female and male proportions of professional and technical positions. In addition, the *Human Development Report 2004* refers to empowerment in the context of globalization. Increased exposure to cultures, travel, and new experiences are suggested as empowering or disempowering depending on a person.

2.4 Practical Aspects of Empowerment

To complete the picture on the concept of empowerment, one needs to address the praxis of the concept. Although many researchers emphasise the intrinsic nature of it, they also admit that it is not a static state in such away that external factors would not affect it in any way. Social practitioners and development actors, to name but a few, seek to facilitate empowerment. The facilitation of empowerment may include the creation of conditions that would favour empowerment or removing the barriers on its way.

2.4.1 Empowerment Enhancers

Järvelä & Laukkanen (2000) have reported experiences from nine projects that have sought to empower such groups as: immigrants, offenders, drug addicts, long-term unemployed people, criminals who have finished serving their sentences, and the marginalized. They claim that in the European empowerment debate (related to social services), the emphasis has been too much on the individual level. Therefore, they suggest that labour markets and societal structures should be changed to serve the marginalized better (2000, 3). This suggests, again, that empowerment is not a psychological phenomenon in an absolute sense, but that empowerment is related to contextual factors.

In their report, Järvelä and Laukkanen (2000, tiivistelmä/summary) have summarized the following as critical factors in the empowerment process (in relation to unemployment and marginalization):[30]

- Proper recruitment
- Commitment to client advocacy with "unofficial" attitude
- Changes in political decision making processes
- Changes in the working cultures and attitudes of those in the public service
- Creating more flexible structures
- Innovative ideas for new ways of rehabilitation
- Cooperation (networking) between the numerous departments of social services involved in the rehabilitation process

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[30] Since some of their Järvelä & Laukkanen's suggestions are so employment rehabilitation specific that they are not relevant for the purpose of this paper, we have included only such proposals that are deemed relevant.

- Integration of social entrepreneurship and rehabilitation
- Development of praxis oriented rehabilitation methods

A number of factors in their list related to empowerment should be interpreted in the light of motivation. Järvelä and Laukkanen consider motivation to be a core feature in empowering people. Flexible structures, unofficial attitude, innovative ideas, entrepreneurship, client advocacy, and so on are motivating factors. Through such structures, attitudes, and actions, the official departments and institutions send motivating signals to the individuals. In this way, they also create trust in the system, increase freedom of choice and challenge the customer to act on his or her own behalf. Järvelä and Laukkanen have also included entrepreneurship as a part of empowerment practise. In their contexts of unemployment and marginalization, entrepreneurship might be the utter challenge for the clientele.

Kuokkanen (2005) has also discussed factors that she considers as empowering. She argues that common moral principles are important for empowerment. If the working unit shares a common philosophy of work and values, empowerment is catalyzed. A leadership that enables participation, delegates responsibility, and trusts the subordinates can create feelings of empowerment in the work force. Continuous training, sharing information, evaluation and team work are thought to be empowering elements since they enable development and improvement. The nurse's feeling of influence can be added through participatory decision making. Reciprocal assistance in problematic situations creates a positive atmosphere at the work place. A positive atmosphere enables disclosing and solving problems. It also allows for experiments and creative freedom. (Kuokkanen 2005, 35–26.)

Argyris (1998) has noted a number of issues that need to be considered in empowerment efforts. The first step is to recognize that all organizations have elements of top-down controls and bottom-up empowerment efforts. This tension should be recognized and openly discussed. Otherwise, the tension will create confusion. He also suggests that it is important to recognize that there are limits to empowerment. Since empowerment is not easy and a cure for all, it should not be evoked unnecessarily. An empowerment effort in an organization should be realistic. Argyris also points out that in every organization there are tasks that do not require empowerment (tasks that

demand external commitment). If empowerment programs are implemented in the contexts of such tasks, it might result in confusion. Empowerment is a powerful concept that promises a lot. If these images related to empowerment are not realized, it will bring about cynicism, disillusionment, and inefficiencies. Therefore, it should be realized where empowerment efforts may be beneficial and where not. Argyris also suggests that self-reflection increases commitment and therefore contributes to empowerment. The leadership should be sincere about inconsistencies in the empowerment programmes and reinforce internal commitment by rewards. Finally, Argyris suggests that organizations should not fool themselves about the importance of morale, satisfaction, and the sense of empowerment. He argues that ultimately the most important thing for organizations is performance. The other factors listed are secondary. (Argyris 1998.)

Parsons (1998) sees an enabling environment and a creation of an empowerment friendly institutional culture to be crucial in empowerment practice. An enabling environment is characterised by safety, interaction, trust, mutual aid, interdependence, hope, and collaborative action. The relationships with peers and professionals are collaborative. People's self-confidence should be fostered. People should also be challenged and confronted. From an educational point of view, an empowerment process should encourage people to try out new skills, raise their consciousness, teach conflict management, and point to resources that can be accessed. (Parsons 1998, 216–217.)

Parsons, Gutiérrez and Cox (1998) have identified four dimensions in empowerment interventions. The first dimension concerns the establishment of a worker / client relationship. When the relationship is established, the needs and resources of the client can be assessed. At this stage, it is crucial that the worker is sensitive to clients' views of the problem and their perceived capacity to manage the problem. The second dimension relates to education. The client is provided with the knowledge and skills to deal with the problems identified. The third dimension evolves around change or mediation in the client's context. The client and the worker reflect on the impact of the environment on the problem at hand. The client learns to access organizational and institutional help. The fourth dimension has to do with the political aspects of the client's problems. Instead of merely accessing the organizations and institutions that

might help clients in their problems (dimension 3), the client is supported in impacting key environmental forces influencing his or her situation. (Parsons, Gutiérrez & Cox 1998, 14–19.)

Okazawa-Ray[31] (1998) has drawn attention to four principles that should be present in empowerment interventions. He suggests that an intervention should not focus only on the client and his or her immediate context, but should include the broader factors that contribute to the problem. Among these factors are social, economic, and cultural issues. The client's cultural background and personal experiences should be honoured and used to catalyze the empowerment process. Okazawa-Ray mentions, for example, such a sensitive issue as prayer as a means of empowerment that should not be excluded. If it is a part of the clientele's cultural background and their coping mechanism, it should not be dismissed lightly. The third principle deals with understanding the structural inequalities that affect the marginalized. Social structures may be stigmatizing and create a sense of powerlessness. Therefore, empowerment interventions should consider these issues and, if need be, address them. Finally, Okazawa-Ray sees that the promotion of collective support and action must be included in empowerment processes. Contributing to a common good, sharing emotions and knowledge, and having an experience of being understood, can be crucial to empowerment. It is quite easy to find common denominators with the views expressed by Parsons, Kuokkanen, Parsons and others, and Okazawa-Ray. (Okazawa-Ray 1998, 62–63.)

We have earlier referred to Fetterman's (2001) view of empowerment evaluation as a means to empowerment. A similar notion that inquiry can be an effective agent of empowerment is suggested by Kincheloe (2003). Fetterman (2001, 109–112) sees empowerment evaluation contributory to empowerment since he sees it as emancipating, fostering self-determination, building capacity, and improving the skills for self-assessment.

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[31] Okazawa-Ray's article deals with the communities of color, therefore, some of the suggestions are quite specific to such communities. However, to us, it seems that most of the principles apply to other marginalized groups as well.

Adams (1996) has discussed empowerment in the context of a social practice. It seems that he propagates a practise where different methodologies and views on social practise are used in a general context of empowerment. His examples on disempowering and empowering practices are particularly enlightening. Adams suggests that an empowering practitioner is holistic, integrated, ready to learn and assertive. The opposite of such a person is fragmented, segregated, trained, and acquiescent. An empowering relationship is described as reflective rather than technical. The empowering approach to a problematic situation is divergent, focused on the problematic, and descriptive. The disempowering approach is convergent, focused on the solution, and problem solving. In terms of assessment, an empowering social worker experiments in practice and in some ways becomes part of the evaluation. (Adams 1996, 37–42.)

Dewettinck and others (2003) conducted a research to see if empowerment really contributes to work performance. They concluded that there is a correlation between employee empowerment and performance. In their discussion, they suggest some ways to facilitate empowerment. First, they agree that distribution of authority, information, knowledge, and rewards towards the lower-levels of organization can contribute to empowerment of employees. They are also in accord with other studies showing that participatory working climate is empowerment enabling. Such climate is inviting for the workers to play active, rather than passive, roles at work. In their study, Dewettnick and others found that the most significant factors contributing to empowerment are the perceived feelings of employee competence and impact. Therefore, these feelings should be enhanced. Feelings of competence do not always relate directly to the actual level of competence. However, those who feel competent usually perform better. A two-edged approach is needed. The leadership should offer avenues to develop competence and reinforce positive feelings of competence. Self-confidence can be enhanced by providing feedback and an atmosphere where it is safe to take risks and learn. The employees' feeling of influence can be enhanced by involving them in decision making processes and making the workers more aware of their impact on others. (Dewettinck et al. 2003, 15–17.)

Avolio and others (2004) conducted a study among nurses that explored empowerment in the context of transformational leadership. They detected that transformational

leaders may evoke psychological empowerment by trusting the employees and their capacity. Such trust creates a sense of impact on their work. This, in turn, may lead to higher levels of identification with and commitment to the organization. Avolio and others (2004) also discuss a peculiarity worth mentioning. We have noted above that empowering leaders are usually described as approachable, informal, and not very hierarchy conscious. However, the issue might not be that self-evident and simplistic. It might well be that structurally distant leadership can empower effectively. It could be easier to empower staff that is hierarchically distant rather than close. Being too close can make it more difficult for the leader to empower the immediate subordinates. The researchers also report another interesting curiosity. We have pointed out that empowerment is often linked to freedom, holistic approaches, and self-authorization. Avolio and others offer a differing view. They suggest that specification of tasks, roles, and rewards contribute to feelings of empowerment, at least, in immediate supervisory relationships. They also emphasize the role of top leadership to offer a clear vision that should encourage employees to take up greater responsibility for their work at all levels. (Avolio et al. 2004, 962–964.)

Saifullah (2001) has referred to a number of ways NGOs have attempted at empowerment in his dissertation on their capacity to manage development. He takes up examples of micro-credit, self-help groups, and human rights & legal education. Such activities have been considered empowering since they are supposed to breed responsibility, increase a sense of control, and raise awareness of issues that might underlie poverty or other types of conditions leading to marginalization. The micro-credit approach could be thought of containing a number of elements contributing to empowerment. The client is held responsible, must learn to save, and receive training. Responsibility is often required through paying back the loan and being a member of a group that might be mutually responsible for the management of the loan scheme. Saving, on the other hand, is an activity that demands consistency and goals. The future orientation of goals demands the client to develop plans that go beyond their immediate life situations teaching planning and goal setting in a way that directly relates to their lives. (Saifullah 2001, 161–218.)

Adams (1996) has drawn attention to principles that are particularly important for community empowerment processes. He points out that a person who works with and

for communities might him- or herself be part of the problem. This calls for humility. As to the actual organization of a community effort, Adams warns of some phenomena that relate to professional involvement in a set up. If professionals are involved in the initiation of a community effort, care must be exercised that false hopes are not created. In addition, if the community is given a notion that they may influence the services provided, this must be evidenced in the project set up. As to the organization of a community effort, it should be kept in mind that large institutions tend to be formal and bureaucratic. This might not be an inhibiting factor for their purposes. However, excessive formalism and organization might inhibit empowerment on a community level. Community empowerment efforts may be more informal and sensitive to individual demands. Adams also notes that leadership issues must be carefully thought through. Community initiatives can very often be traced back to strong individuals. Yet, on the other hand, these founders can become the inhibiting factors for future success. Therefore leadership, crucial information, and knowledge should be shared as broadly as possible. In terms of the future development of a self-help group, Adams deems it important that they grow beyond addressing their own needs to helping others with similar problems. (Adams 1996, 116–135.)

Nayaran (2002) has explored the meaning, importance, and praxis of empowerment in poverty reduction. Four major factors that bring about empowerment are suggested: access to information, inclusion/participation, accountability, and capacity building of local organizations. Access to information is considered important since it is considered a form of power. Empowering information should flow from the poor to the government and vice versa. Information enables the poor to take advantage of opportunities, access services, exercise rights, and hold institutions accountable. Inclusion/participation recognizes the authority of the poor to influence actions and legislation that may bear on their lives. It can ensure that public resources are spent in light of the priorities of the poor and, therefore, facilitate commitment. Accountability refers to the crucial element of responsibility in empowerment. Accountability has three dimensions: political, administrative, and social/public. Political accountability is increasingly exercised through elections. Administrative accountability refers to internal accountability mechanisms of government institutions both horizontally and vertically. Social accountability holds institutions accountable to citizens. Capacity building of local organizations has to do with the abilities of people to work together,

organize themselves, and mobilize resources to solve common problems. Organized groups are more likely to get their voices heard than individual champions (Nayaran 2002, xix-xx.)

Nayaran has suggested a number of factors that contribute to empowerment. It is not necessary to repeat those factors that are similar to those explored earlier in this study, but a few nuances are worth of visiting. Good governance is important for empowerment. It has been shown that adherence to the rule of law enables financial growth through impartial justice and information as to how the legal system works. Good governance eradicates corruption. Eradication of corruption creates a positive investment climate and motivates poor people towards entrepreneurship. In terms of the role of an institution, Nyaran suggests that in order to facilitate empowerment, an institution[32] should support four areas of analysis/evaluation/advice, convening, enabling, and capacity building. Analysis/evaluation/advice is to be supported since external institutions are often in positions where they have gathered information from empowerment efforts and reforms. Analysis/evaluation/advice should ensure that the poor really benefit from reforms and that the reforms are mutually reinforcing. Nayaran also sees that an institution such as The World Bank can facilitate the establishment of strategic relations among government, legislature, civil society, civil organizations, research institutions, private sector, and donors. The aim of convening these players together is to stimulate debate, consensus, and coalition in order to bring about reform. Enabling, in turn, refers to creation of space to support empowerment activities. Enablement may take forms of disclosure of information and public accountability mechanisms, fostering of over-all accountability from institutions to the grass-root investments, opening space for local actors to participate in creating accountability, and to support the emerge of local organizations. Finally, capacity building can be understood as conscious efforts of an institution such as The World Bank to ensure that local organizations are capacitated to assume such responsibilities as assessment of poverty eradication related issues, monitoring of the advance of poverty reduction efforts, and reporting the same to poor people to create awareness and facilitate their inclusion into the crucial poverty reduction processes. (Nayaran 2002, 2–10.)

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[32] Nayaran refers specifically to the role of World Bank.

Strachan and Peters have recorded the story of Oxfam's Kebkabiya project in Sudan. To them, it is an example of successful empowerment effort. It seems that successful empowerment takes two fronts in their treatise: empowerment of the project and empowerment of the beneficiaries. The means of empowerment highlighted by Strachan and Peters are not novel in themselves. Rather, it seems that they seem to have been used in a proper way and at the right time. The key to success of the project seems to have been inclusion of the local communities at stages and levels of project implementation. The communities were consulted in the planning stage, involved in implementation, and consciously prepared for a hand-over. The opinion of the communities and other stakeholders were taken so seriously that Oxfam adjusted its project programming in line with the voices of the beneficiaries during the implementation stage. The aim of the project was to bring people as close to the resources of political and economic power as possible. Such an approach of involving and allowing people to significantly influence the project activities resulted in trust between Oxfam and the community. Special attention was given to the utterly marginalized in the community – in this case, women. Oxfam enabled, at least a segment of poor women, to unlearn the subordinate role they were conditioned to. In Oxfam's case, empowerment can also be seen as a state where the local community owns the project and runs it independently. To secure this it must be planned from the inceptive stages of project planning and implementation. A key factor in the handing-over process seems to be a commitment to hand-over from the part of the donor/implementing agency and a commitment to assume responsibility from the part of the local community and beneficiaries. (Strachan & Peters 1997, especially vii, 11–13, 16–17, 23–24, 61–76.)

2.4.2 Empowerment Inhibitors

While frameworks and practices to enhance empowerment offer valuable clues to essence of empowerment and the practice of it, factors that are thought of inhibiting empowerment are valuable as well. They enable to provide a broader picture of empowerment and some of them present challenging views to present empowerment frameworks. A number of inhibiting factors could have been picked from the previous discussion on what is thought to enhance empowerment. The following is a short summary of the inhibiting factors.

Kuokkanen's (2003) model of nurse empowerment suggests that empowerment might be impeded if a person has to work in a working environment where conflicting values exists. If there are no values that have been agreed on, it will make decision processes ambiguous. Authoritarian leadership has been seen as inhibitory factor since it does not propagate trust, restricts the flow of information, and does not allow for involvement in the planning processes. The model also suggests that a rigid working environment may block empowerment since it is not open for innovation and, thus, may lead to stagnation. As to terms of employment, short-term working relationships may hinder empowerment since usually influencing and change take time. Lastly, if the atmosphere at the working unit is not open, it affects empowerment negatively. (Kuokkanen 2003, 35–36.)

Argyris (1998) has pointed out a number of factors that he thinks has made empowerment efforts in organizational contexts less successful than expected. To him, managers know and trust the command-and-control model better than any other leadership style. Change and empowerment programs are initiated with good intentions but quite often contain a host of inner conflicts that affect their credibility in the eyes of the employees. Managers and those in supervisory roles seem to think that workers embrace empowerment as long as it does not demand personal responsibility. In addition, empowerment processes often work from the assumption that all workers should be empowered equally – in practice, this might not be possible. Again, false hopes have been created. Argyris also suggests that internal commitment that has been as one of the core factors in empowerment has limits. It cannot be thought of as cure for all. It also seems that there is a tendency to presume that all workers would be innately empowered if only provided the chance to demonstrate it. (Argyris 1998.)

Antikainen (2005) has discussed work-related stress in the context of growth orientation of the workers. A number of stress factors that she discusses are very similar to conditions that are present in contexts where empowerment programs are implemented. Changes and challenges can contribute to growth. However, if change and challenge are constantly present, the employee may not be able to detect their relevance to the daily operations. If this is the case, then changes and challenges become an added burden to an already overwhelming workload. The expectations that the organization has towards an employee and his or her personal expectations towards the work and

organization might be in conflict. Demands on knowledge, skills, independence, and social interaction may empower or disempower. They may trigger a growth process that leads to improved sense of control, inner satisfaction, and well-being. On the other hand, if such demands and opportunities are not balanced, they may trigger destructive feelings of stress and over-burdening. If such feelings prolong, they will have a negative effect on self-image, lead to unconstructive behavioral patterns, and deteriorate physical health. (Antikainen 2005, 86–89.)

Eklund, who drew the empirical material for her dissertation from a community empowerment effort, has suggested a number of factors that inhibited the programme's empowerment efforts. In line with Kuokkanen (2003), she sees that in order for an empowerment effort to succeed, sufficient time is needed (Eklund 1999, 155). Since empowerment is linked to autonomy and independence, there is a temptation to hand over the project or program to community at an immature stage. Adams (1996) warned against too encompassing role of professionals in a community intervention. However, Eklund points out that an early withdrawal of external personnel might be harmful (1999, 155). She has also suggested that an empowering community intervention may fail if it does not secure support from the political environment. Those who hold political power in the community should commit to the processes and aims of the community intervention. Otherwise, it will flicker and be put out eventually. (Eklund 1999, 155–156.)

Mason and others (2001, 20) have put forth a list of possible empowerment inhibitors at a community level and their perceived consequences. The inhibitors relate especially to restricted participation. Restricted participation, in turn, leads to low degree of ownership. Low degree of ownership leads to low degree of empowerment. This causality is depicted in the table below.

Table 9. Causes and consequences of low community participation in relation to empowerment.
Source: Derived from Mason et al. 2001, 20.

CAUSES OF LOW COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	CONSEQUENCES OF LOW COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
Limited time for participation	
Power conflicts	Inability to sustain project activity or impact
Political and religious diversity	
Donor limitations	Inappropriately planned projects
Donor imposed project	
Lack of political support	Failure to have an impact on needs of people
Community has different aspirations	
Lack of trust among community or with outsiders	Project inefficiencies
Failure to involve the population in all stages of the project	
Social context	Failure to maximize local resources
Illiteracy when the approach used requires literacy	
Attitudes and behaviours of leaders, sub-groups	Community not committed to the project
Domineering or authoritarian development agent	

Mason and others (2001) suggest that the empowerment inhibitors in a community context range from personal time management to indifference in political sphere and domineering external agents. To summarize their view, empowerment inhibitors can be of personal, communal, organizational, institutional, or political in nature.

2.5 An Integrative Working Definition of Empowerment

In the previous discussions, the major theoretical understandings of empowerment, psychological aspects of empowerment, empowerment in relation to organizational set ups, community empowerment, and empowerment in practice have been considered. The current study relates primarily to community empowerment and empowerment in the context of organizations, more specifically Non-Governmental Organizations. A number of useful definitions of empowerment have been explored that could be justified as working definitions for this study. It seems that almost all of the reviewed definitions have important elements that could prove valuable for the study. On the other hand, most of the definitions discussed seem quite context specific. Based on

these observations it is deemed necessary to compose a working definition of empowerment that is a kind of integration of the theories and practices explored.

In the context of this study empowerment relates to: ***the deliberate nurturing and facilitation of individual or collective efforts that aim at increasing the feeling of influence and responsibility in managing and controlling lives in pursuit of enhancing personal and collective wellbeing***.

The definition begins with the idea that empowerment has to do with deliberate actions. Deliberate actions can refer to, for example, formulating a vision. An organization may have a vision to empower or empowerment may be to a degree be triggered through a vision (Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Koberg et al. 1999; Nokelainen & Ruohotie 2003) The current study is interested in NGOs empowering and getting empowered. There seems to be enough scholarly support to presume that at least facilitation and triggering of empowerment is possible and that such efforts can produce tangible results (e.g., Antikainen 2005; Argyris 1998; Avolio et al. 2004; Dewettnick et al. 2003; Eklund 1999; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Koberg et al. 1999). However, the deliberate activities to empower are further described as facilitative and nurturing. Facilitation refers to the role of individuals and/or organizations that are aiming to bring about empowerment. It is presumed that external factors cannot solely bring about empowerment but that they can enable, nurture, and catalyze it in some ways (Adams 1996; Fetterman et al. 1996; Nayaran 2002; Ruohotie 2001; Siitonen 1999; Strachan & Peters 1997).

The definition endeavours to avoid the tendency to understand empowerment simply as an individual intrinsic/psychological process (e.g., Siitonen 1999). Although it seems that empowerment is to a high degree an intrinsic feeling of power, it can be debated whether empowerment can exist or be discussed in any real sense at an individual level only. Therefore, both aspects, the social and the individual, have been included in the definition (Antikainen 2005; Argyris 1998; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999). The social aspect is also important in that empowerment can be researched in relation to organizations and other collectives such as self-help groups, associations, organizations, movements, and institutions.

The definition also implies a dynamic view of empowerment. Empowerment is not viewed as a static state, but as something that has to do with conations and affections to achieve something. It can, for example, relate to the pursuit of increased individual or collective wellbeing or increased effectiveness or productivity at the work place. In both cases, empowerment implies a desire and a belief to influence the current and future circumstances in some meaningful way (Bandura 1988 & 1993; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Kincheloe 2003; Pintrich & Ruohotie 2000). In addition, empowerment is not static in a sense that it its degree seems to vary (e.g., Siitonen 1999).

Individual and collective wellbeing is, in this context, a broad concept. It can, for example, refer to an individual's aim to develop professionally or acquire an overall sense of control and management over personal life (Koberg et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Nayaran 2002; Siitonen 1999; Strachan & Peters 1997). In the social domain, it can refer to a collective wellbeing. Collective wellbeing can be thought of in terms of social justice, equal rights, ability to influence beyond individual and immediate spheres, access to crucial services, and so on (Adams 1996; Eklund 1999; Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutiérrez et al. 1998).

The definition also employs the word *responsibility*. It seems that accepting individual and collective responsibility for the pursuit of wellbeing is pertinent to the concept of empowerment. Responsibility can be thought of as an ethical concept manifesting itself in practical behaviour (Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999) or as a concept of accepting responsibility that comes to an individual when an organization invests powers in him or her (Ruohotie 2001). The sense of responsibility can also be evoked by realizing one's authority and role in pursuing common goals (Ruohotie 2001).

3 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

3.1 Overall Research Design

In scientific inquiries, one of the most important choices that a researcher has to make is the choice between quantitative and qualitative research orientations, or to put it in another way, the positivist and hermeneutic traditions. The positivist tradition is usually seen as aiming to find causalities, improve predictability, and aim at generalizations and control in test arrangements (Alasuutari 1999; Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Metsämuuronen 2002). On the other hand, qualitative research tradition is characterized by contextuality, interpretation, understanding, and interest in a particular case or phenomenon that cannot be generalized or tested due to its or their uniqueness (Alasuutari 1999; Metsämuuronen 2002). It is important to note that although qualitative inquiry does not rule out the need and possibilities to make generalizations, exceptions are to be taken seriously since they indicate that the phenomenon is more complex than generalizations and they may offer valuable hints for new ways to approach the phenomenon (Alasuutari 1999).

The basic orientation in this study is qualitative. Qualitative inquiry has been seen to suit contexts where there ability to control variables is minimal, organized and controlled test cannot be carried out (Metsämuuronen 2002). In other words, in most cases qualitative research is carried out in natural environments and aims at understanding phenomena through individuals and their descriptions of reality (Norman & Lincoln 1994). The current research was carried out in environments that can be described natural or at least such that they do not yield to controlled test arrangements. In addition, one of the basic ideas of the study was to generate views of the development cooperation practitioners on empowerment. This could be described, in line with Norman and Lincoln, as an attempt to further understand a phenomenon through their descriptions of reality.

The overarching method of the study is that of Action Research (AR). AR does not limit itself to a specific data collection strategy. Nor is there any specific mould for data analysis. Here, AR is seen as the overall framework for carrying out the research.

Within the overall AR framework, data is collected from experts through the Delphi method as well as through AR Seminars. The more specific depiction of how AR and Delphi methods were applied in this research process will be discussed in connection to the exposition of the methods (3.2.6, 3.3.7).

QUALITATIVE PARADIGM

ACTION RESEARCH

AR SEMINARS
- Essays
- Video taped discussions
- Group discussions
- Written notes
- Written assignments

DELPHI METHOD
- Essays
- Group discussion
- Written notes
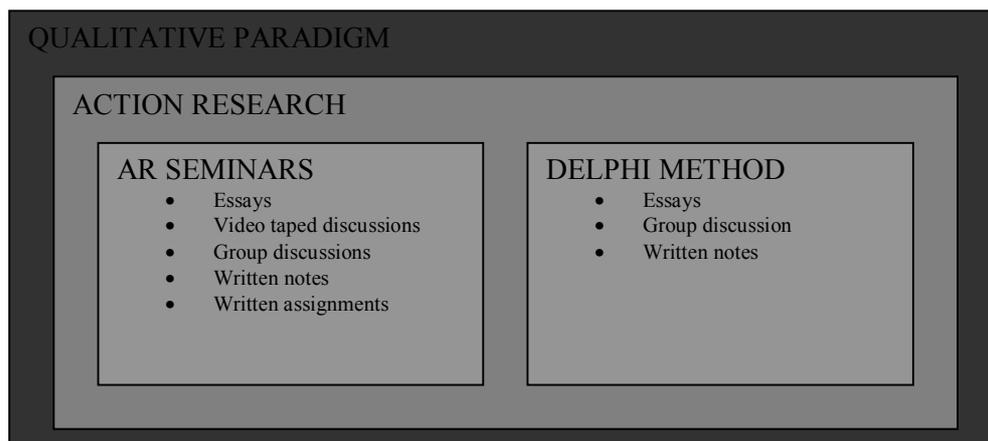
Figure 9. Hierarchic description of methodology

As discussed above, figure no. 9 portrays how the basic methodological choices relate to one another in a hierarchic way. The basic scientific paradigm is that of qualitative research. Inside the qualitative paradigm, AR is the overarching method. Within the overall AR framework data is gathered through AR seminars and the Delphi method. More specifically data is collected through essays, video taped discussions, group discussions, written assignments, and written notes.

The AR process was implemented through a considerable span of time during the period 2002–2006. Yet, the background of the research reaches even further to the experiences gathered during 1996–2001 in development collaboration. The following is a depiction of the research process followed by a methodological discussion on Action Research and Delphi methods[33].

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[33] Delphi method is here used in a restricted sense where the word method could be used interchangeably with strategy or study. The connotation is that, here, Delphi method is not the overall research method here but rather a strategy to gather data.

Phase one of the research process can be considered as the background for the study. The researcher worked in relief and development assignments in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, where he encountered a host of practical problems in implementing projects. He conducted a related internal study for Fida International, familiarized himself with existing literature on development cooperation and theories of empowerment. Eventually, a research proposal was formed.

In the second phase, the researcher formed, in collaboration with some practitioners of development collaboration, the supervising Professor and other senior researchers a Delphi questionnaire that was tested in pilot Action Research Seminars (ARSs).

During the third phase, the final Delphi questionnaire was formed, Delphi experts selected, and the first and second Delphi iterations were conducted as well as AR Seminars. The results were presented to a final seminar of experts and practitioners for final comments.

The fourth and final phase of the research process included the reporting of the results, suggestions and recommendations for practical applications. In addition, suggestions for further research were given.
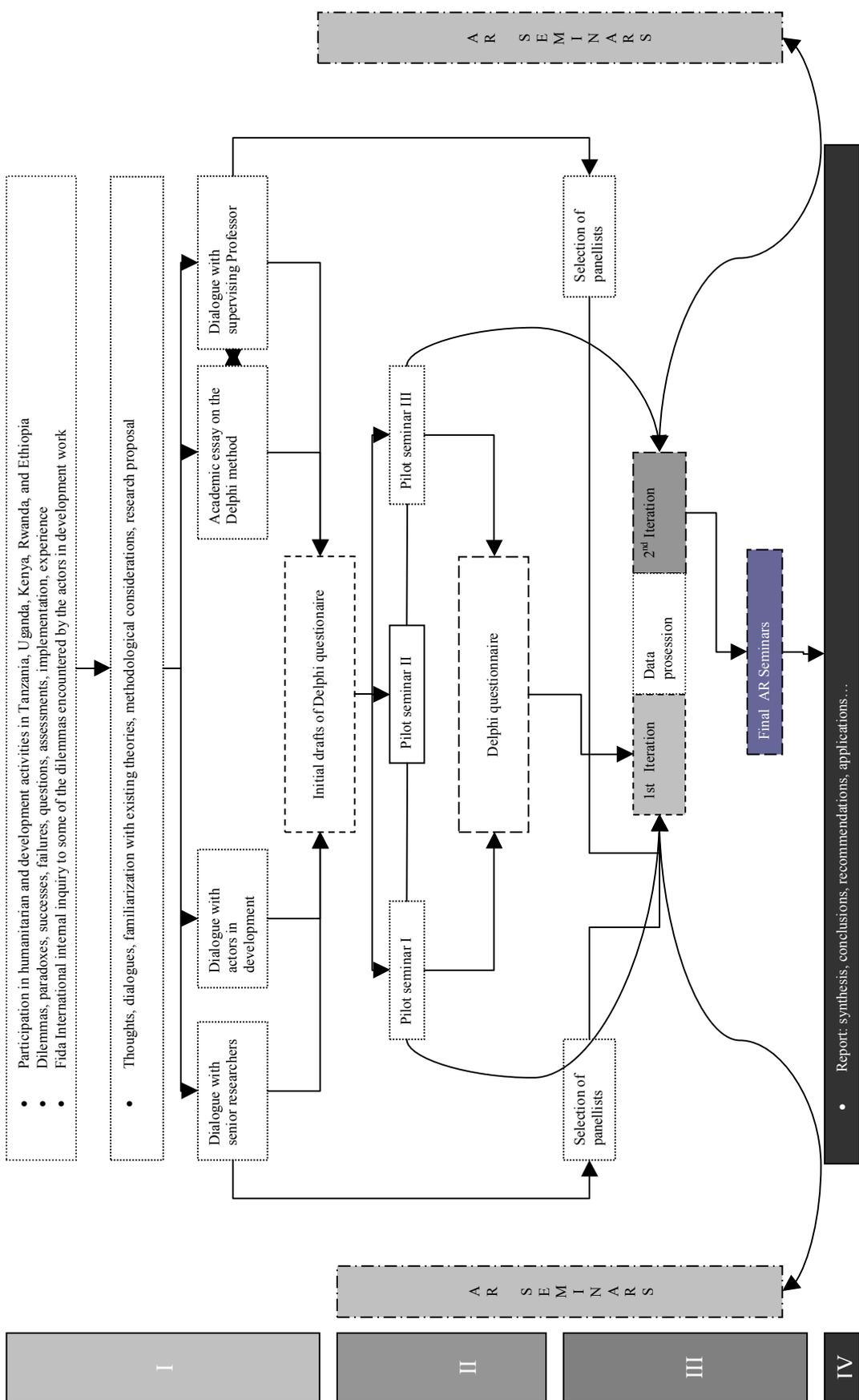
Figure 10. Description of the research process.

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The figure is divided into approximate phases on the far left. The research phases and processes overlap to an extent and therefore the phases are approximations. The grey boxes marked AR seminars have been drawn to extend from the pilot testing seminars of the Delphi questionnaire to the final AR seminar. This and the way in which they have been placed on both sides of the Delphi process is an attempt to convey that the Delphi method is implemented within the general framework of AR. The AR Seminars and the Delphi process have been depicted as interactive, both influencing the other. For a more detailed description of the participants of the study and chronology of the data collection process see the chapter on Data Analysis.

3.2 Action Research

As described above, Action Research was the overarching method of in this study. The following is paragraphs offer a brief general introduction to the method, a few examples of previously used Action Research processes, discussion on the reasons for choosing the method here, comments on reliability and validity, and description of the application and participants of Action Research Seminars in this study.

3.2.1 Introduction to Action Research

The methodological development of AR is often traced back to Kurt Lewin (Argyris et al. 1985; Metsämuuronen 2002; Suojanen 1999).[34] However, Heikkinen and Jyrkämä (1999) point out that John Dewey had already in 1929 presented practices and discussed ideas that are still pertinent to AR. Yet, there seems to be a considerable consensus among scholars that the pioneers who have laid the methodological foundation and praxis to AR are Kurt Lewin and Chris Argyris (Carr & Kemmins 1986; Pasmore 2001, 38-47; Suojanen 1999).

From its inception the method has been emphasizing the close connection between theory and practice. For this reason, some scholars see a strong link between Action Research and Deweyan pragmatism. Dewey (1929) criticized the tendency to separate

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[34] Heikkinen & Jyrkämä (1999, 26) note that it seems that the term "Action Research" was first used by John Collier. However, researchers agree that Kurt Lewin is the "father" of Action Research as a research orientation and method.

praxis and theory in scientific research. Action Research attempts to unite action, theory and research. While most authors emphasize the integration of action and research, the formation and/or moulding of scientific theories is also a crucial facet of AR (Dick 2002; Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999, 26–30). Although, Heikkinen and Jyrkämä (1999, 27) note that AR has been heavily criticized for its inability to conceive scientific theory, they also point out that the emphasis in the Australian Action Research school is especially on knowledge creation. Therefore, it cannot be legitimately argued that AR does not contribute to scientific theory building.

Action Research is carried out on the field. In traditional scientific settings, research projects are often initiated, planned and conducted by researchers either as outsiders or literally outside the research context. Even if research takes place on the field, researchers are, in one way or another, observers of "objects" and thus create a more or less artificial setting for the research. In an ideal AR, the doer becomes the researcher and vice versa (Dick 2002; Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999; Suojanen 1999). By assuming and integrating the roles of researcher and practitioner, the action researcher contributes to science and may aim at, for example, bringing about social change at the same time (Carr & Kemmis 1983). AR has various applications and can be conducted in multiple settings. Some of them are: teacher education, vocational education, organizational development, community development projects, quality research, and sociological research (Hart & Bond 1995; Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999; Metsämuuronen 2002; Suojanen 1999).

As mentioned above, AR aims at combining action and research in a meaningful way. Depending on the research context and research problem, different phases or elements of the method may be emphasized. Metsämuuronen cites Syrjälä (2002, 192-193, also Järvinen & Järvinen 2000, 129-137) and classifies Action Research into three different orientations: technical, practical, and emancipating. Technical AR project is often initiated by an outsider(s) and may involve training or an attempt at implementing a new working philosophy. Practical AR may be prompted by an outsider or it may emanate from the actual work context and workers. It pursues to help the actors at the workplace to reflect on and to be more aware of their working practices and to redirect

or mould them. Emancipating AR relates to a situation where the actor deliberately wants to develop his or her working environment.

Carr and Kemmis (1983) see that there are two main goals in AR. On one hand, AR aims at developing an activity or a process. In such cases, Action Research may be initiated from outside and comes close to an organizational training programme aiming at bringing about deliberate change in an organization or a given work phase (e.g., Argyris et al. 1985; Järvinen & Järvinen 2000, 132–136). On the other hand, it may seek to influence a problematic working context or an environment. This happens through developing practices, creating a deeper understanding and awareness among the participants of the practices they are involved in, and developing or influencing the working context.

Suojanen (1999) sees that in Action Research one of the following is often emphasized: the educational process of participants, development process, action, or research. She sees that educational and training aspects of AR are highlighted when, for example, teachers interact with their students or colleagues form groups for "peer-coaching". Such typical features of Action Research as active participation, cooperation, and problem solving enable the AR process to be an effective educational process at the same time. The development oriented features of AR are highlighted when the process pursues to develop activities, products, or organizations. Action is emphasized in a research process that does not necessarily seek to produce an excessive research report, but to address practical issues, for example, in a classroom setting. Research oriented AR attempts to derive and develop scientific theories from practice.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000, 567–605) describe the various orientations among the practitioners of Action Research and the context that may influence or even dictate the nuances of a given research process. In short, they suggest that Action Research can be applied in various research environments such as universities, classrooms, factories, organizations, and communities. It can be carried out by academics, students, professionals, consultants, managers, and change agents. The purpose of AR may relate to formation of scientific theories, professional growth, social change, quality

improvement, product or service development, and enhancement of critical reflection of workers or teams.

Coghlan and Brannick (2001, 10–15) have discussed a variety of ways how Action Research has been applied in organizational contexts. The following short descriptions are derived from their discussion.

Traditional Action Research
Traditional Action Research could be seen as collaborative problem-solving between the researcher and the client. It is characterized by collaborative cycles of planning, action and evaluation. This approach relates closely to the theory and practice of organization development.

Participatory Action Research
Participatory Action Research is concerned with community. Especially, it aims at involving the ones who are considered powerless in decision making processes and transformation of prevailing situations and structures. The idea of empowering people to construct and use their own knowledge is pertinent to the approach.

Action Learning
Action Learning is associated with learning as the process to solve problems at work and in organizational contexts. Learning groups select issues, examine them, make plans, take action, and reflect on the action. This could be seen as Action Research without prominent focus on research, creating theory, or generating usable knowledge.

Action Science
In Action Science emphasis is put on the cognitive processes of individuals, especially, in reference to their strategies of control, self-protection, defensiveness, and covering up embarrassment. These are important windows to the study of organizational learning.

Developmental Action Inquiry
In Developmental Action Inquiry, the focus is on scientific inquiry that takes place in everyday life and intrinsic ego development. The idea is that as the individual advances in stages of self-development by reflecting on his/her behaviour-in-action, he/she can finally engage in collaborative inquiry as well. This invites others to do so as well. Finally, communities of inquiry are created.

Cooperative Inquiry
Cooperative inquiry is a process where research is done with people rather than on people. People are co-researchers in exploring issues that concern them. Crucial to the Cooperative Inquiry are the critical awareness, quality of reflection, and informed judgments of the participants.

Clinical Inquiry
The Clinical Inquiry refers to the work of experts that work professionally with human systems (organizations). They emphasize in depth observation of learning and change processes, draw attention to effects of interventions, sketch models of healthy organizations, point out malfunctions in organizations, and build or refine organizational theories.

Appreciative Inquiry
A form of substantial system change based on what is currently working well in a given system. Focus is on the well-functioning spheres of an organization and not on the malfunctioning ones.

Learning History
Learning History is an approach where crucial episodes in organizational life are recorded as the organization in question is going through a change for development. The narrative of the changes is made available to stakeholders to facilitate learning. The presented narrative is commented on by significant stakeholders. After the comments, the narrative is discussed further in the organization.

Reflective Practice
Reflective Practice refers to critical reflection on one's actions. It usually refers to the reflective practice of an individual while neglecting the organizational dynamics and outcomes of the actions.

Evaluative Inquiry
In traditional evaluation, the process of learning is not emphasized. In Evaluative Inquiry, the process of evaluation is not seen as the only outcome but it is expected to facilitate learning as well.

The novice that plunges into Action Research literature may find of the terminology that was used above confusing. However, as Coghlan and Brannick (2001, 14–15) note, the distinctions are to be seen as accenting a certain function of AR rather than clear cut dogmatic lines that cannot be crossed. They should help the Action Researcher to detect the kind of AR accent that should be spoken in his or her research environment.

The classifications and comments on various nuances or accents within the Action Research tradition by Kemmis and McTaggart, and Coghlan and Brannick paint a rather comprehensive picture on Action Research and the terminology used within that tradition. However, to clarify some of the terms used in relation to Action Research type of activities, it is in order to expose, perhaps, the three most often occurring terms

within the field of AR: Action Research, Participatory Action Research, and Action Science.

Whyte (1991, 97) helps us to define Participatory Action Research (PAR) by comparing it with Action Science (AS). He argues that AS and PAR are closely related. Yet, to him, Action Science focuses more on the interpersonal relations and intrapsychic processes. The role of the researcher in AS is more detached and in control of the research process than in PAR. To Whyte, PAR is more focused on social structures and processes than AS. Furthermore, it is more likely to depend more on ideas that arise *ad hoc* during the intervention process. Whyte, Greenwood, and Lazes (1991, 20–21) call attention to similar issues when they attempt to define PAR. They argue that at the core of PAR is the participation of the people from the organization that is studied throughout the research process. They are involved all the way from research design to the presentation of results and subsequent debate over them.

In their book *Action Science*, Argyris, Putnam and McLain Smith (1985, x) note that when in a social science inquiry practice and science are combined, the process is called Action Research. The researchers do not feel the term to be appropriate for their own inquiry. They point out that too often the term AR is associated with problem solving without a significant or conscious contribution to theory building and testing (Argyris et al. 1985, x). In addition, they note that action researchers conduct their research by the prevailing ideas about standard scientific research. The dilemma arises when the criteria for scientific rigour distances science from the reality it is supposed to understand to the extent that it is no longer useful. Argyris and Schön (1991, 85–87) argue that AR is confined to a given research context and bears the double burden of testing hypotheses and effecting change in that particular context at the same. In summary, Argyris and others (1985) prefer the term Action Science in their own work over Action Research for the following reasons. First, they like to emphasize the importance of theory building and testing. Secondly, they emphasize that traditional scientific efforts may be self-limiting in their pursuit of scientific rigour. Argyris and his associates see that some AR practitioners have fallen for this trap as well. In addition, Argyris and Schön (1991, 86–87) argue that Action Science pays attention to

the tacit theories-in-use that PAR and AR fail to take into account in their research designs.

In summary, the terminology in the field of Action Research might be confusing at a first glimpse. For example, in their article where PAR and AS is compared, Argyris and Schön (1991, 86) define AR, PAR and AS. Yet, immediately after presenting their definitions, they write (1991, 87):

> We want to emphasize, however, that we see action science and Participatory Action Research (PAR) as members of the same Action Research family. In the broader world of social science, PAR and action science are aligned in a basic and consequential conflict with normal social science. What they have in common far outweighs their differences. Nevertheless, as we shall try to show, an understanding of their differences illuminates both the potentials and the limits of PAR and the future development of Action Research as a whole.

For the purposes of this study, it is enough to note that the researcher sees AR as the family name for a variety of research orientations and applications that have been christened in numerous different ways. Though the research contexts, applications and purposes vary, some features emerge in the methodological literature, which are common to the members of the AR family.

First and foremost, there is a desire not to detach science from action and natural contexts of everyday life. In the same vain, researchers should not be too detached from the "subjects" of the research. AR also aims at producing information that is practical and applicable. Therefore, AR propagates the involvement of the people concerned throughout the research process. Furthermore, there is a shared sense among the practitioners of AR that blindly adhering to the rigour and ideas of standard scientific efforts may distort science from its very task. The task being, as Argyris and Schön (1991) have noted, to describe reality as accurately as it is possible. Blind rigour and adherence to standards might hinder the researcher and scientific efforts from doing just that.

3.2.2 Components of Action Research Process

The Action Research process has been usually described as a cyclical process where certain phases are seen as recurring in a continuous flow (Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999; Järvinen & Järvinen 2000; Metsämuuronen 2002, 192; Suojanen 1999).[35]   The components or phases of Action Research process cycle have been designated differently by the authorities on the method. Metsämuuronen (2002, 194) has modeled the description of Cohen and Manion (1994) of Action Research as depicted in the figure below.[36]
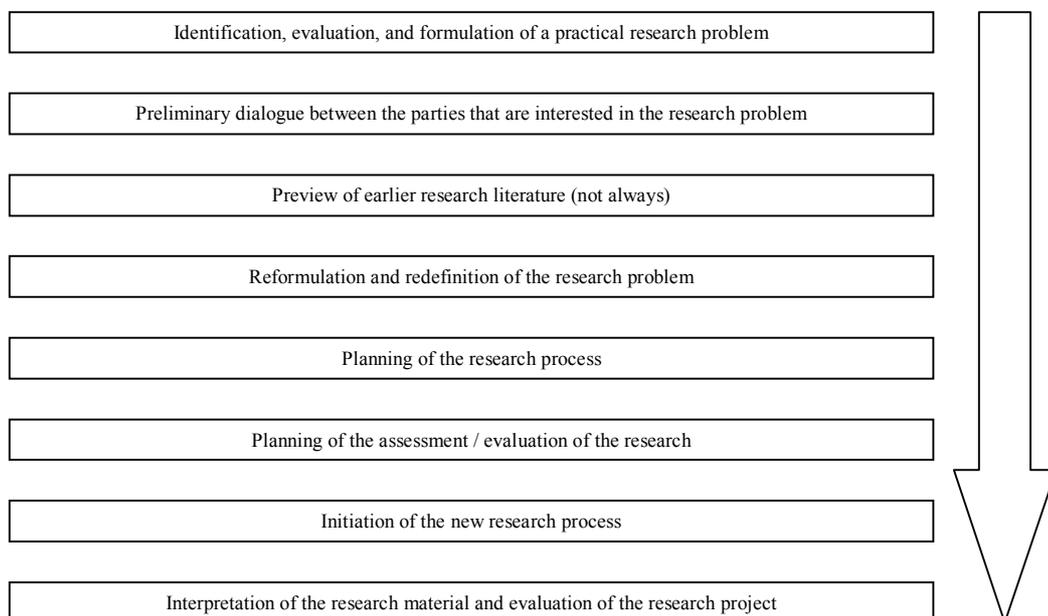
Figure 11. Linear depiction of Action Research process.
Source: Metsämuuronen 2002, 194.

Metsämuuronen's presentation does not emphasize the cyclic nature of the research process but depicts it as linear process. However, he has cited Carr and Kemmis who emphasize its cyclical nature.

Järvinen & Järvinen (2000, 129–137) have drawn from Susman and Evered (1978) and described an applied Action Research process in their work on scientific methods and

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[35] When research is emphasized in connection to Action Research process the method has also been called Research Action (Heller) or Action Science (Argyris)
[36] Adopted from Metsämuuronen (2002, 194)

see in it five phases that are parts of the research cycle: diagnosis, planning, implementation, evaluation, and learning.

The five phases can be depicted as a cycle:

Diagnosis

Identification & definition of the problem

Learning

Identification of key findings

Planning

Consideration of options to solve the problem

Evaluation

E.g. follow-up of the consequences of activities

Implementation

Implementation of one of the options to solve the problem
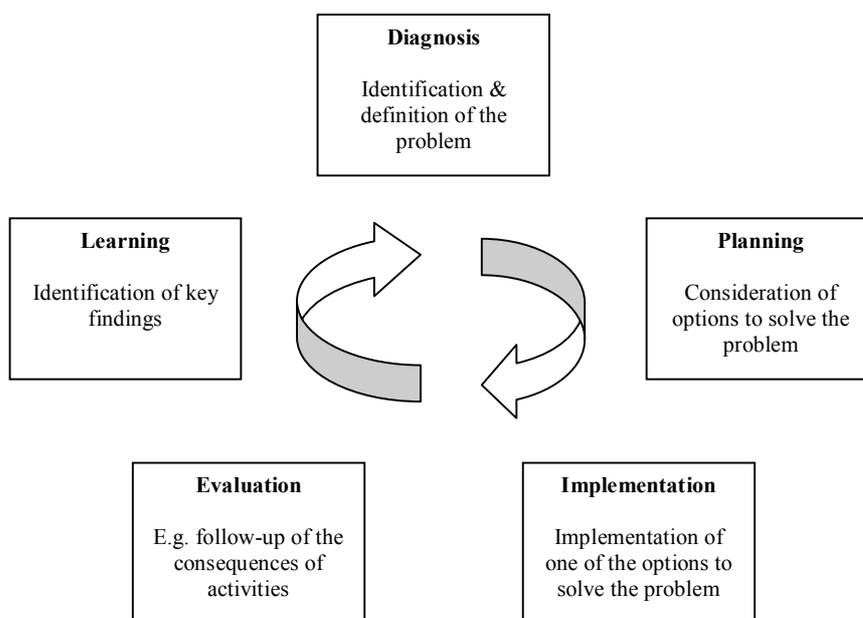
Figure 12. A cyclical depiction of Action Research process.
Source: Adopted from Järvinen & Järvinen 2000, 130.

The model of Järvinen and Järvinen differs slightly from models presented by Heikkinen and Jyrkämä (1999, 37), and Suojanen (1999). Their model depicts a single cycle. Therefore, the continuum of repeated cycles does not come out clearly.

Heikkinen and Jyrkämä (1999) along with Suojanen (1999) emphasize that the Action Research process involves repeated cycles of planning, implementation/action, observation, reflection, and improved plan. This model has been called "spiral-model" of AR. The designations Heikkinen and Jyrkämä as well as Suojanen give to the phases of the research process are slightly different from those of Järvinen and Järvinen. Where Järvinen and Järvinen talk about a learning phase, Suojanen and Heikkinen together with Jyrkämä talk about an improved plan. However, based on their discussions, it seems that the contents are not substantially different. The "evaluation"

phase of Järvinen and Järvinen seems to contain the observation and reflection phases of Suojanen along with Heikkinen and Jyrkämä.

The depiction of Suojanen (1999), as well as that of Heikkinen and Jyrkämä's (1999, 37) of the Action Research spiral could be synthesized as follows:

I Initiation

> Mapping of present situation
> Diagnosis and identification of problems
> Summoning of parties involved in the research process

II Implementation

> Initial plan
> Implementation / activities
> Observation
> Reflection
> Improved plan

III Improved or Improving State (e.g. improved working community, improved product, improved quality)
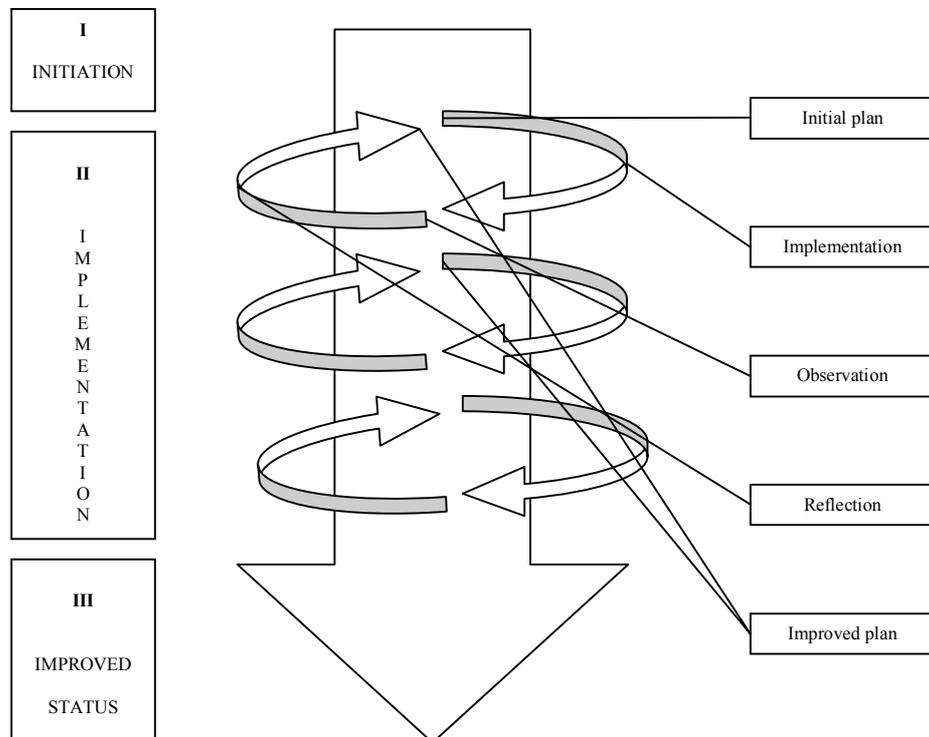
Figure 13. Action Research spiral.
Source: Constructed from Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999, 37; Suojanen 1999.

In the synthesized model presented in figure 13., the three major phases and the related sub-phases of Action Research may include one or more steps or activities. Suojanen (1999) has described the steps of the AR process in detail and those interested in a more detailed discussion will find her ideas useful.

3.2.3 Selection of Action Research Method

The following discussion sets forth the reasons for choosing Action Research as the overarching research method in the current study. However, it is good to note that the scientific value of Action Research has been fiercely debated. A number of standard academic works on AR begin with, or somewhere along the line present, a defence of it as scientific effort that should be taken seriously (e.g., Argyris et al. 1985; Whyte 1991). In the methodological discussions, AR is often described as challenging the traditional or conventional ways and standards of scientific efforts (e.g., Argyris et al. 1985, ix–xiii; Whyte, Greenwood & Lazes 1991, 19–21). Kuula (1999, 173-174) suggests that the necessity or justification of AR is usually embedded in a tacit or explicit claim that science has failed in its task and AR is the remedy. The following discussion will offer some comments on the arguments against AR and draws attention to the positive aspects of the methods that have led to its selection here.

The Practical Needs for Action Research Approach

As described in the previous discussion, AR is an attempt to do science with the people that are being studied. In addition, AR is often an effort to solve a practical problem. Since AR is seen as dealing with real problems, it appeals to businesses, industries and other players of the public sector as one way to solve their dilemmas. Professionals such as teachers, social workers, and civil servants face a mountain of unpredictable problems brought about by modern society. The academic studies they have undertaken, may not have prepared them to face these problems. Yet, as professionals and those concerned, they are expected to find solutions to them. AR can be one of the tools a professional may make use of in solving problems related to their work. (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000; Stringer 1999, 1–9.)

Here the research problems arise from practical development cooperation contexts. What an empowered partner looks like, how empowerment can be brought about, and

what inhibits empowerment are in essence practical issues. Although current empowerment theories relate strongly to the present inquiry, here, their practical applications are sought for. Especially, the questions how to empower a partner and what factors inhibit it, are to the core practical issues calling for solutions. In addition, the issues related to the effects of culture on the understanding of empowerment and empowerment processes demand concrete and practical perspectives. Therefore, from this point of view, the method suits the current context well.

The Academic Needs for Action Research Approach

Argyris and others (1985) call attention to what they then felt was an urgent need within the social science inquiry – need for knowledge that can produce action and contribute to the theory of action at the same time. Such knowledge should be useful, descriptive of the world, and informative as to how one can change the world (Argyris et al.,1985, x). They argue in line with the original Levinian thought that one cannot only understand the world by describing it as it is but also by trying to change it (Argyris et al.,1985, xii). In short, there is a need for practical knowledge that can be argued to be scientific at the same time.

As mentioned earlier, an AR inquiry is often justified by contrasting it with traditional or conventional science. More specifically, it is seen to challenge positivist-quantitative approaches to inquiry in certain contexts (Greenwood & Levin 2000, 92–93). Greenwood and Levin (2000, 92–93) suggest that such key concepts as objectivity, distance, and control are convenient in a sterile academic setting. However, adherence to those principles may distance science from the realities of, for example, bureaucracy, authoritarianism, and inequality that are real forces in the contexts where the theories are tested or applied.

Greenwood and Levin do not spare qualitative scientific efforts from criticism either. Although the qualitative research tradition addresses many weaknesses of the positivist-quantitative research, they argue that qualitative research has also failed to reconnect social research and social praxis (2000, 93). Along with other researchers (e.g., Carr & Kemmis 1986; Coghlan & Brannick 2001; Pasmore 2001) Greenwood and Levin

propose that AR is a way to reconnect research and praxis. Yet, it needs constant development and improvement as a scientific method.

In the present inquiry empowerment is studied in practical, real life contexts. These contexts have a number of factors that cannot be generated in controlled environments typical of the positivist-quantitative inquiries. Some of these real life factors include, nepotism, multiculturalism, bureaucracy, authoritarian leadership, traditional beliefs, poverty, gender inequalities, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and so on. Yet, if empowerment theories are to bear any practical significance in these kinds of contexts, they are to be tested in them and prove their claims in such circumstances as well. Therefore, the usage of AR method that is carried out in real life circumstances can be justified from a methodological/academic point of view as well.

Methodological Justification

The methodological justification for choosing Action Research can be attributed to multiple factors. One of the tasks of the study is to test and discuss existing empowerment theories in practical contexts and at the same time to gather new data for development cooperation actors. AR attempts to marry theory and action. In other words, the researcher becomes the actor and the actor becomes the researcher. Further, existing theoretical insights can be debated in practice. Such a practice is viable in inquiries where a controlled test set up is not justifiable and may be even impossible altogether.

Metsämuuronen (2002; also Järvinen & Järvinen 2000) suggested that there are three orientations in Action Research: technical, practical, and emancipating. The present study has traces of interest in all of the orientations. To an extent, the current study is technical in a sense that the organization the researcher serves, has defined its strategy in terms of "empowering the development partners to be positive and powerful influences in their communities". This strategy or working philosophy is supposed to be integrated into the thinking and actions of the partners – in a sense, the research is

carried out in a process where Fida International seeks to implement a new working philosophy in its own activities and in its efforts with its partners.[37]

Secondly, practical Action Research aims at making workers more aware of their practices, and subsequently redirecting and moulding them. The research takes place within such a process. In the process there is a conscious effort to empower the partners. That is to enable and challenge them to assume the overall responsibility over their own development.

Thirdly, as the Regional Coordinator for Fida International in East Africa, the researcher has emancipatory research motives. He is interested in developing himself as a leader changing the working environment at the same time.

We suggested earlier that when AR inquiry aims at developing an activity or a process, it comes close to the concept of organizational development or training program (see Argyris et al. 1985; Carr & Kemmis 1983; Järvinen & Järvinen 2000). The current research is carried out within a development programme that aims at training the partners of Fida International to carry out their activities more independently and effectively. The bulk of the empirical data is collected in training seminars that target the key persons in Fida International's partner organizations.

Suojanen (1999) has identified active participation, cooperation, problem solving as the key elements that make Action Research educational. Those elements are present in the Action Research Seminars where a part of the empirical data is collected. The seminars are deliberately designed to be educational in various ways. First of all they are designed to enable the partners to acquire relevant knowledge and problem solving skills. Secondly, the seminars are supposed to facilitate the same with Fida International expatriate staff. Finally, through reporting and solid research, they should contribute to the body of knowledge that may be transferred to other actors and organizations interested in development work. The last goal comes close to Suojanen's

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[37] The process is supposed to be participatory. However, in practise, Fida International's department for development cooperation has independent of its partners formed its strategy and goals as an organization.

notion of AR as a tool to build scientific theories from practise. This is, of course, one of the core objectives of this study.

Yet another methodological argument for using Action Research as the overall methodological framework is its flexibility. The nuances of AR may vary to a great extent depending, for example, on the research context, purpose of the study, and the role of the researcher (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000). Since a significant portion of the current research is carried out in situations that are natural and difficult to control (vs. controlled experiment), a degree of flexibility in what comes to research method is both justified and required.

Finally, the interest of knowledge of the present study includes elements of three research paradigms: positivist, interpretive, and critical. The study seeks to an extent to expose causal relations, and apply theories in practise that are typical of positivist research orientation. On the other hand, the study seeks to understand phenomena and determine if practice suggests modification or expansion of existing theories on empowerment. Such notions are characteristic of the interpretive paradigm. Finally, the study is also critical in that it seeks to improve practice, explore the interaction of theory and practice, and accept the role of the researcher as an insider participant rather than an outsider observer.[38]

Contextual Justification

There are a number of factors in present research context that call for a usage of method similar to AR. A significant part of the research is carried out in workshops that are part of empowerment efforts. In a real sense, problems that can be associated with and researched in the light of existing scientific understanding of empowerment (e.g., Beairsto et al. 2003, 115–176; Siitonen 1999) have been countered in the processes of implementing a number of development cooperation projects in Eastern Africa. Identification of real-life problems and seeking solutions to them in actual working contexts are at the core of AR (e.g., Carr & Kemmis 1983; Järvinen & Järvinen 2000; Suojanen 1999).

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[38] For further details on the elements of the three research paradigms see Suojanen 1999 and discussion of this study on the epistemology of AR.

AR also employs concepts and has been traditionally applied in contexts that are very similar to those found in development cooperation. For example, development cooperation aims at social transformation. In this process of transformation, the involvement of the communities being transformed is becoming increasingly crucial. Both of these ideas are pertinent to AR (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000).

3.2.4 Reliability of Action Research

Reliability can be understood as dependability, predictability, accuracy or consistency of the research results (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Niiniluoto 1997; Silverman 2005). Other persons using the same data and the same instruments as the author of a scientific study should be able to arrive at the same conclusion (Gray 2004; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Silverman 2005). All measurements include a margin of error. Therefore, the reliability discussion should aim at depicting to the reader how the possibility of error is minimized (Niiniluoto 1997). It is the task of the researcher to convince the audience that his or her *interpretation* of the data is as accurate as possible and does justice to it (Silverman 2005).

The ways to increase reliability include, for example, repetition (Niiniluoto 1997) and proper documentation of the research procedure, discussion on possible intervening variables, detailed description of research setting, multidisciplinary approach, having second opinions about coding, triangulation, describing the role and status of researcher, and colleague reviews (Miles & Huberman1994; Silverman 2005).

The issue of reliability has been considered in the present study from the start. First of all, the research questions have been repeated in different contexts, to different people, and in different ways. For example, the Delphi questions were administered to the experts in two different ways. During the first round the experts remained anonymous and answered the questions privately in writing. During the second round, the experts met and worked in groups. During the second round there were also invited experts from the fields of methodology and development cooperation to secure that the expert opinions do not represent opinions of a single organization. The same applied to the Action Research Seminars as well. The research setting, methodology, and analysis

process have been exhaustively described in the study and should give the reader enough information on those facets of the research.

Triangulation has been exercised in multiple ways. Data triangulation has been conducted by gathering data from expert and practitioner levels. Investigator triangulation has been implemented by involving external observers and commentators during the second Delphi round and two Action Research Seminars. "Within-method" triangulation has been applied by using multiple ways of gathering data: seminars, essays, interviews, and questionnaires. (Gray 2004.) The data has been analyzed and then discussed in light of existing theories to compare and contrast the findings with the results obtained by authorities on empowerment.

Colleagues and established researchers have been consulted from time to time during different phases of the research process. The research questions were tested in pilot seminars and discussed with an external researcher and the supervising Professor. The coding system has been reviewed by the supervising Professor, an external researcher, the Delphi panellists, and an informal group representing a number of disciplines. Colleagues have commented on the findings and interpretation of data throughout the analysis process.

3.2.5 *Validity of Action Research*

Traditionally, action researchers and authors on the methodological aspects of Action Research have been on the defence as to its scientific justifications (Argyris et al. 1985; Kuula 1999; Whyte 1991). The debate has not ended. However, volumes on AR have been written to argue for the scientific validity of the method. Validity is often divided into internal and external validity. Internal validity has to do with the probability of the causal relationship of two variables (Lincoln & Guba 1985, 290). External validity relates to the probability that the causal relationships established can be generalized and applied across different persons, settings, and times (Lincoln & Guba 1985, 291). In what comes to the validity of Action Research, it has been argued that some of the ideas of validity borrowed from qualitative and positivist research traditions may not be applicable when discussing the validity of AR (Gray 2004). In fact, it has been

suggested that in relation to Action Research it would be more proper to talk about the credibility of the research than validity (Gray 2004, 388).

Argyris and others (1985) suggest a number of reasons why Action Research is capable of producing valid research. First of all, a method that generates usable practical knowledge and is capable at the same time to contribute to scientific theory is needed. In the academic world there is a need for a method that allows the challenging of status quo and makes change possible at the same time producing knowledge that can be tested. They also see that one of the key tasks of science, to describe reality as accurately as possible, cannot be accomplished by applying the traditional scientific methods alone. These methods do not usually aim at challenging the status quo, which would be the only way to expose principles that maintain it. The researchers also see that the traditional tendency to separate action and science, theory and practice, thought and action, science and common sense may produce descriptions of reality that are distorted, valid only in laboratories not in real life situations.

In addition, AR employs (or at least is capable of) practices that characterize the epistemological foundations of mainstream science: hard data, explicit inferences, public testing, systematic theory, and scrutiny of scientific community (Argyris et al. 1985, 9-18).[39] Yet, while recognizing these scientifically significant principles, there is notable frustration, for example, among social scientists in attempting to apply principles that are derived from natural sciences to their work. Argyris and others (1985, 18–28), point out a number of reasons why the social science practitioners feel that traditional science is inadequate and unable to guarantee sufficient validity for their work:

- Traditional scientific theory does not take into account multiple, interdependent, and conflicting forces present in concrete situations
- In the social (human)[40] sciences, statistics are abstracted from action and therefore do not provide a reliable guide for action

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[39] The features pertain specifically to Action Science as Argyris et al. propose it. Some of the features do not come out as clearly in some other Action Research orientations.
[40] Argyris et al. use the terms social sciences and human sciences in their discussion. In general their discussion relates to the distinction of natural sciences and human sciences. However, some of the arguments are derived from and the examples refer to social sciences or literature from that specific field.

- The practical value of mainstream science and its theories depend on interpretation and judgment - the roles these skills play, are often neglected in the traditional scientific efforts
- Social phenomena are different by nature from the phenomena of natural sciences: the meaning of social phenomena is subjective whereas natural phenomena is independent from subjective meanings
- Human sciences build on the commonsense interpretations of social actors themselves, therefore, a methodology to construct scientifically plausible knowledge of it is needed and indeed possible
- Methodologies and principles that are pertinent to mainstream science are inadequate in dealing with "meanings" that are layered in the constructions of human actors

These are some of the scientific and epistemological problems that Argyris and others have attempted to answer in their work. In summary, they argue that AR (or in their work AS) aims at respecting generally accepted scientific criteria while recognizing their limitations. AR is an attempt to bring communities of inquiry and social practise together. In doing this, the Action Researcher is a part of scientific community and academically "responsible" to the same. This is in line with the understanding that science, by virtue, is a social endeavour (Argyris et al. 1985, 11). This social endeavour aims at distinguishing valid claims from the invalid.

Coghlan and Brannick (2001, 15) approach the validity of AR from a more general perspective. They suggest that any good research, irrespective of its epistemological or methodological foundations, has the following qualities: clear purpose, significant and clear goals, defendable methodological procedures, systematically analyzed data, and evident objectivity of the researcher. Though Coghlan and Brannick do not elaborate on how these qualities manifest themselves in AR efforts, they imply and presume this to be the case. They also refer to the Action Research cycle as indirect evidence that Action Research meet the criteria they have called attention to.

Suojanen (1992) suggests that the validity of Action Research should be looked at from a new angle. She draws attention to the attempts to scrutinize Action Research from the empirical-analytical and interpretive traditions. She concludes with Lahdes that these angles alone cannot capture the true nature of Action Research as valid scientific method or research strategy. For example, she holds the prevalent concept of validity to be too narrow in relation to Action Research. For example, in case of a researcher

teacher, validity as concept relating to representation and generalization may be totally irrelevant. What counts is practical validity in *a* classroom. Yet, when Suojanen builds up the credibility of AR, she constantly refers to concepts of validity that are derived from qualitative and quantitative research traditions. She suggests that AR can be scrutinized, for example, in light of the following factors that are pertinent to the validity of qualitative[41] research in general (Suojanen 1992, 49):

- Time factor: it is argued that the more time the researcher spends with the participants of the research project the more valid it is

- Place / context: the physical distance of the researcher and the participants is minimal in AR. It may be argued that if there is too big a distance between researcher and participants, this affects the validity of research negatively.

- Social environment / context: the researcher meets with the participants in a number of social contexts. It can be presumed that this enables the researcher to gain valid information and enhances significantly the process of interpretation of the data and results.

- Speaking the same language: if the researcher is part and parcel of the working community, it can be presumed that it is easier for him/her to connect with the other participants.

- Common understanding / intimacy: one of the core features of AR is to take into account the opinions of the other participants. Paying attention to the opinions of the others and critical self-reflection are supposed to help the researcher to attach his/her own experience to the environment of the participants.

- Professionalism: AR strategy assumes that the researcher has significant professional experience on the issues to be researched. In addition he/she should have a command of research methods. A combination of professionalism and command of research methods can be thought to lay a good foundation for valid and reliable research.

In short, Suojanen has aimed to show that criteria derived from canons of evaluating the validity of quantitative and qualitative methodologies can be, to an extent, applied to AR. In addition, AR has features that can, if not explicitly, at least implicitly validate the results in certain contexts beyond what other methods are capable of.

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[41] It is important to point out that though the question of validity here is looked here against the backdrop of qualitative research, Suojanen does not see Action Research as being strictly qualitative research. Depending on the reseach context, research design and interests of knowledge, AR can be placed in empirical-analytical, hermeneutical, or critical-emancipatory paradigms (Suojanen, 1999).

Though the debate on the validity of AR as science has taken many paths, at some point or another it seems to come back to the more or less sharp chasm between natural and human sciences. The different lines of arguments in the methodological discussion on AR are offshoots of this basic dilemma. Stringer (1999, 190–191) has put the basic issues as follows:

> Whether Action Research is accepted as scientific depends on the way in which *science* is defined. Certainly it is, in one sense, rigorously empirical, insofar as it requires people to define clearly and observe the phenomena under investigation. Evident also, however, is that Action Research does not follow the carefully prescribed procedures that have become inscribed as *scientific method.*

At the core of Stringer's exposition on the scientific nature of AR, is the different nature of natural world and the world of human behaviour. He suggests that since the natural world is quite stable and predictable, such a reality yields relatively easily to science that seeks laws that can be generalized, that are not subject to interpretations and that are replicable. However, this is not true in the social world that is far less stable and could be argued to be continuously changing. Although, as Stringer (1999, 191–192) suggests, even the physical universe is far less stable than was previously thought, the social world of human being exists in the interactions of people with each other and their environment. Since those interactions are difficult to predict and control, it is less likely that inquiries such as AR and others of its nature can be defined and evaluated in the light of criteria derived from and established primarily in the light of natural sciences. Other alternatives should be sought and accepted as scientific.

Suojanen (1999) discusses the same ideas. She notes[42] that the interest of knowledge of the Action Researcher is different from that of the positivist scientist. The Action Researcher is not satisfied with the function of knowledge to predict or establish causal relationships. He or she cannot subscribe to the notion of objectivity that is detached from the intentions of researchers and research community, value systems embedded in them, and the uncontrolled (vs. control in natural sciences) environment surrounding them. Neither is the AR inquirer content with the retrospective angle in understanding of phenomena that is characteristic of the hermeneutic tradition. Action Researcher

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[42] In this she draws from Carr, Kemmis, Lahdes, and Habermas.

aims at critical evaluation of action, change, and freedom from flawed beliefs and behavioural patterns.

In summary, it is not possible to exhaust the discussion on the scientific validity of AR here. Hopefully, the discussion above serves to provide a glimpse to the basic issues at the backdrop of the debate. To synthesize the arguments, the Action Researchers do not attempt at an inquiry that should be in line with all the canons of scientific inquiry as they are derived from or formulated primarily in the light of natural sciences. On the other hand, they do not shy away from subjecting AR to the scrutiny of the canons. However, they point out that AR cannot be evaluated in their light only, not because it is less scientific, but because it is carried out in environments that are substantially different from those of natural sciences. The definitions of science should be looked at openly and developed and qualified in light of the present understanding of the differences of physical and social worlds. This is not an easy task. In fact, it seems that human scientists have failed to define what Stringer (1999, 191) calls "…a science of humanity, social life, or individual behaviour." Meanwhile, the Action Researcher is, to an extent, at the mercies of canons of natural sciences and terminology derived from those inquiries. What an Action Researcher can do[43], is to scrutinize his or her research in the light of those principles of positivist science to the extent that they naturally apply to AR. Secondly, he or she can discuss the reasons why some of the canons of mainstream science cannot be applied to AR. Finally, the Action Researcher can put forward the unique characteristics of AR that can be logically argued to achieve something that the traditional scientific method cannot in terms of validity in real life research contexts.

What comes to the validity of this inquiry, it can be said that as far as the canons of validity of the positivist tradition apply here, they have been considered in the research design and research process. For example, AR is incapable of establishing explicit inferences since the research environment is not controllable like in traditional positivist research set ups. However the inferences have been presented to various audiences for comments. The commentators range from grass-root practitioners to development experts. In addition, at least some of the insights of the study and theoretical

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[43] Suojanen (1992) engages in similar effort when she discusses the validity and reliability of AR.

understandings have been tested in real-life contexts over an extensive period of time. Therefore, it could be argued that in relation to empowerment, AR approach can provide information that has more validity than information created and tested in more controlled environments. The methods used and the results have been scrutinized by a few representatives of scientific community, and, of course are being submitted for further review. The models or depictions of an empowered partner, ways of empowering, and empowerment inhibitors have been systematically drawn from research data and integrated into these models. The models have been commented on by lay practitioners of development cooperation and experts on the field. Some of the practitioners and experts have represented organizations that are not related to Fida International in an attempt to secure that the expressed views and created models would not represent the organizational life and personnel of Fida International only.

If the validity of the present inquiry is argued from a more positive point of view, a number of arguments for can be put forth. First of all, the researchers as well as most of the participants and informants of the inquiry have spent a considerable amount of time building up expertise in development cooperation and been practically involved in field work in various cultural and geographical contexts. The distance between the researcher and the participants has been minimal. Although some psychological neutrality may be in order to maintain a degree of objectivity in an inquiry, it can be argued that, for example, in an African setting it is difficult to get valid information unless trust is build and rapport is established. A strictly controlled setting cannot be thought of as an ideal way to establish rapport and build trust. Further, the researcher has met with a number of informants in various settings. At times they have met in formal seminar settings, sometimes at practical implementation settings, many a times in free-time settings, and during long travels to implementation environments. Without a doubt, such encounters have provided insights and enabled the informants to express themselves more freely than would have been the case if the inquiry was conducted in formal research settings only. It can also be argued that a researcher who has spent a significant amount of time with the informants, can be more assured that he or she understands more accurately the meaning that the informants aim at conveying than a neutral outsider who spends little time with the informant community. It has also been argued that in order to understand certain phenomena a degree of professionalism

should be gained and demonstrated. The researcher has been directly involved in various kinds of project implementations and in many different countries. However, it must be noted that all of these arguments presented above can be challenged. Yet, if these arguments are put together, one can be relatively confident that the research can produce relatively valid conclusions.

3.2.6 Action Research Application and Participants in This Study

As discussed above, Action Research was used in this study as the overarching research method. This is to say that the overall research process can be characterized as AR inquiry. Within the AR two principle ways were used to gather information: Action Research Seminars and Delphi rounds. The AR Seminars were a part of practical efforts of Fida International to empower its development cooperation partners. The participants were grass-root development practitioners from Fida's partner organizations. In the Seminars the same questions that were presented to the Delphi experts were discussed and pondered. The materials were gathered by videotaping the discussions that were transliterated, writing short essays, taking notes of group discussions, and other written assignments. At the conception of the inquiry three pilot AR Seminars were held to test the applicability of the principal questions and to find the best ways to record answers. Seven (7) other AR Seminars were then conducted in Dar es Salaam, Koru, Nairobi, and Naro Moru. As part of the overall Action Research Process two Delphi rounds were conducted. The participants were practitioners of development interventions selected by the partner organizations. The researcher did not have a say as to who were selected to participate in the seminars. In the Delphi study, the participants were current office holders of Fida International. However, during the second Delphi round external experts were invited to secure objectivity and contribute ideas from a wider perspective than a single organization (see also 3.2.4 and 3.2.5). The credentials and experience of the participants are portrayed in Appendix II. .

3.3 Delphi Method

In scientific inquiries, the Delphi method could be used as an independent method. However, here it is used within the Action Research framework as an information procession and gathering strategy. As one of the secondary research interests relates to Delphi application and to the scientific methodological discussion on it, it is discussed here rather extensively. The method is discussed below following the same logic as in the introduction of Action Research.

3.3.1 Introduction to Delphi Method

The Delphi method is mentioned in the methodological literature as early as 1948 (Churchman). Metsämuuronen (2002, 259) holds this to be, perhaps, the earliest reference to the method. Yet, he goes on to argue that the first significant application of the method was carried out by Gordon and Helmer in the 1950s in connection with a classified military research project. In accord, Turoff and Linstone (1977, 10) understand this as the birth of the Delphi method. The aim of the study was to obtain a consensus of a group of experts using a series of questionnaires and controlling the flow of opinions. Of the two researchers, Helmer published a critique on the method in 1963.

Later, Theodore Gordon and Olaf Helmer applied the method in their research on the impact of scientific and technological advances on the society in the future (Linstone & Turoff 1977, 10). The method is usually applied in the context of futures research, especially in technological forecasting (Linstone & Turoff 1977; Mannermaa 1999). However, the application of the method is by no means limited to the future research and forecasts on technological advancements. Olaf Helmer (1997, xix–xx), one of the developers of the method, lists the following areas as contexts for the application of the method: normative forecasts, ascertainment of values and preferences; estimates concerning the quality of life, simulated and real decision making; inventive planning that means identification and invention of potential measures to deal with a problem situation and the evaluation of the feasibility, desirability and effectiveness of them.

Linstone & Turoff (1977, 3–5) widen the areas of application of the method even more. They say that though the bulk of Delphi studies relate to forecasting, the method should not be limited to the sphere of futures studies. They list the application areas of Delphi as:

- Gathering current historical data not accurately known or available
- Examining the significance of historical events
- Evaluating possible budget allocations
- Exploring urban and regional planning options
- Planning university campuses and curriculum development
- Putting together structure of a model
- Delineating the pros and cons associated with potential policy options
- Developing causal relationships in complex economic or social phenomena
- Distinguishing and clarifying real and perceived human motivations
- Exposing priorities of personal values, social goals

The list of wide ranging applications has some common factors. It seems that all the applications demand in some ways a subjective judgment that is derived from a group of people. In addition, the subject areas lodge problems or questions that might have a number of potential solutions.

The name[44] of the method derives from the Oracles of the Antique city of Delphi. The Oracles, young females, fell into trance or were intoxicated by poisonous fumes. In this frantic state, they uttered messages from the Greek god Apollo, the son of Zeu and Leto. The messages were future oriented and interpreted by the priests (Kuusi 1993; Mannermaa 1991; Metsämuuronen 2002, 259; Pohjonen 1998, 139).

The Delphi method[45] is frequently applied in future oriented research tasks and contexts. Metsämuuronen (2002, 258; also Linstone & Turoff 1977) sees the method as

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[44] In the Finnish research context the following synonymous names have been used of the method or technique: delfi-tekniikka, delphi-tekniikka, delfoi-tekniikka (Metsämuuronen 2002; Pohjonen 1998).
[45] At times Delphi method is referred to as Delphi technique, e.g. Linstone and Turoff (1977, 3)

an expert-method[46] in a sense that is utilizes human resources considered as experts in their respective fields. The method draws research material from the experiences, intuitions, and observations of the experts. It relies heavily on the innovative abilities of the researcher(s) and the experts to observe and express in words phenomena that cannot be (yet) put into numeric form.[47] Therefore, it falls primarily into qualitative research tradition. However, it is not foreign to the method that it is used together with quantitative methods. Questionnaires, for example, can serve as empirical sources to produce material and aid in forming dispositions for the researcher. They can also be used to verify expert observations. In fact, Metsämuuronen (2002, 261) has noted that both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms may be connected to the Delphi method. He advocates this characteristic of the method as one of its assets.

Fontana and Frey treat the Delphi method within the framework of scientific interviews, to be more precise, they hold it to be a type of a group interview. They have (1994, 366) compared and contrasted different group interviews and their dimensions as portrayed in table no. 10.

Table 10. Various approaches to group interviews and their dimensions.

Type	Setting	Role of Interviewer	Question Format	Purpose
Focus Group	formal-preset	directive	structured	exploratory pretest
Brainstorming	formal or informal	nondirective	very unstructured	exploratory
Nominal/Delphi	formal	directive	structured	pretest exploratory
Field, natural	informal spontaneous	moderately nondirective	very unstructured	exploratory phenomenological
Field, formal	preset, but in field	somewhat directive	semistructured	phenomenological

Unfortunately, they do not discuss the unique traits of the Delphi method. They have addressed the group interview methods in depth, but the comments overlook those characteristics of the Delphi method that make it unique.

Kuusi (1993, 135) has depicted the essential elements of the Delphi research process below (the figure has been derived from the discussions of Kuusi 1993 and modified from the similar figure of Metsämuuronen 2002).

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[46] Other expert-methods are e.g.: Scenario-Method, Mega-trend analysis, Top Ten-listing, Foresight-method.

[47] It is to be noted that the comment applies to the method when it is applied in futuristic research. The method is not applied strictly in this way in the present research.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Definition of the research parameters and formulation of the questionnaire │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    ⇕
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Selection of the experts                                                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ 1st iteration                                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Collection of the data and synthesis of the expert opinions that is sent  │
│ to the participants for further reflection                                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ 2nd iteration                                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    ⇓
        ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │ 2nd collection of data, synthesis of the expert opinions   │
        │ and possible 3rd and consecutive iteration(s)              │
        └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

        ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │ Termination of data collection once the researcher is      │
        │ satisfied that new Delphi iterations will not produce      │
        │ added value to the research                                │
        └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 14. Elements of Delphi research process.

Linstone and Turoff (1997), Mannermaa (1992), and Pohjonen (1998, 144) among others, describe a number of ways to apply Delphi. For example, the first two steps of the Delphi method may be difficult to differentiate sharply. It would be logical that the researcher, after confronting a research problem, collects background information and familiarizes him- or herself with possible existing research on the subject. He or she then dwells on the subject matter and broadens his or her understanding of the phenomenon. The researcher defines the key concepts, identifies the experts on the subject matter, puts together a questionnaire and conducts a pilot collection of data.

On the other hand, it would be equally logical to have a very broad understanding of the research problem and identify experts to single out the key concepts and phenomena related to it (for similar thought see, Linstone & Turoff 1977, 5). In this case, the experts can be used to devise the questionnaire and advise in case of possible piloting. Such an approach may not have been explicitly described in the methodological

literature. However, Kuusi (1993, 135) has argued that the first iteration[48] can be based on questions that are quite open-ended. It might be advisable in some cases to first identify the experts on the subject at hand, collaborate with them in defining the research parameters and forming the questionnaire. In modelling the research progress, this could be called, for example, a preparatory phase instead of considering it as the first iteration (compare with the model presented by Metsämuuronen 2002, 260). The "two-way" arrow in the chart between the first and second elements attempts to elicit the close connection between the two.

After the research parameters are in place, the questionnaire formed, and the experts selected, the first iteration follows logically. The next step is to collect the data, analyze it and send the comments of the experts to all participants. The experts remain anonymous but access the comments of other participants in the research (Kuusi 1993; Metsämuuronen 2002). This cycle is repeated to the point when the researcher is satisfied that there is a genuine consensus or stability of opinions detectable in the answers of the experts.

In the early days of the method, the researcher aimed primarily to achieve a consensus of the experts, but recently it has been seen more important to aim at stability of opinion (Kuusi 1993; Mannermaa 1999; Metsämuuronen 2002; Mitroff & Turoff 1977, 23). In the context of futuristic research, the demand for absolute consensus has been abandoned since it might overlook subtle signals not detected by all but by some sensitive experts (Metsämuuronen 2002, 258). In other research contexts, a very high degree of consensus may overlook significant deviants or desired deviating views or potential solutions to a given problem (Mitroff & Turoff 1977, 22–23).

In his description of the Delphi research process Pohjonen (1998) has been somewhat more detailed than Metsämuuronen (2002), but there is nothing substantially different in it. He has paid more attention to the formulation of the questionnaire (accurate language) and added the writing of a research report as the last step of the process. Many details in his description will be covered under the following discussion on the critical elements of Delphi method. It can be pointed out that he has compiled his

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[48] The term "round" is also at times used of the Delphi, e.g. Goldstein (1977, 212-221)

description from a substantial amount of references[49] and it corresponds in general to the chart compiled by the researcher here.

Linstone and Turoff (1977) noted decades ago that "…in its design and use Delphi is more of an art than a science". Judged by the recent publications applying the method, this seems to be true even at present. Yet, the two researchers pointed out that all applications of the method have something in common. Based on the common features they attempted to define the method as follows:

> Delphi may be characterized as a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem. (Linstone & Turoff 1977, 3)

The unique traits of Delphi are hidden behind the generalizations made in the definitions. The method aims at combining group dynamics and individual virtues. Group dynamics at best can stimulate thinking process, facilitate alternative and innovative views, and combine resources efficiently. The Delphi method aims just at that making it clear that it is a group communication process. On the other hand, in a group it is easy to dominate and suppress others. As it will be later pointed out in detail, Delphi seeks to suppress such tendencies by insisting on a degree of confidentiality. Delphi communication is a process. It is not an interview but ideally a set of interviews. It is to some extent a structured interview but aims at the same time at providing the interviewees with a substantial amount of freedom and space to express themselves. By nature, the method takes into account the complexity of problems. It allows for differing views and assessments on situations.

3.3.2 Components of the Delphi Method

Delphi Monitor

The role of the monitor[50] is crucial in a Delphi study. Here, the role will be discussed from two angles. The first part of the discussion will briefly comment on the role of a

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[49] Coates 1996; Jarnila 1998; Kuusi 1999; Linstone 1978; Mannermaa 1999; Niemi 1990.

[50] The role of the monitor (at times referred to as the "manager") could be discussed from the point of view of a single researcher, a team of researchers, etc. For readability, singular will be used in this discussion. Unless otherwise noted, the comments apply to a researcher, a team of researchers or teams of researchers. The term "monitor" is derived from D.S. Scheele 1977 who uses it to describe the person or a group who conducts the Delphi inquiry.

researcher/interviewer working within the qualitative research tradition. The second part will more specifically focus on the role of a researcher/interviewer in a Delphi study.

Interviews vary to a great extent from a quite rigidly structured interview to an informal unstructured interview (e.g., Fontana & Frey 1994). The way the interview is set up and planned naturally affects the role of the interviewer. Since the interviewer plays an important role in the interview process using a more or less structured interview framework, interviewing can be described as an art. In fact, Fontana and Frey call interviewing "the art of science" (1994, 361). They also (1994) list some qualifications for a good interviewer that are featured in table no. 11.[51]

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[51] The table is derived from the lists and texts of Frey & Fontana 1994.

Table 11. Characteristics of a good interviewer.

Structured Interview	Unstructured Interview	Group Interview (Structured, semistructured or unstructured)
Avoids long explanations of the study		
Uses standard explanation		
Does not deviate from the introduction, sequence of questions, or the wording of the questions of the study		
Does not let any external person interrupt the study		
Does not let any other person (including himself/herself) answer for the respondent or offer his or her opinions on the question	Does not let any other person (including himself/herself) answer for the respondent or offer his or her opinions on the question	
Does not suggest, agree, or disagree with the answer		
Does not interpret the question		
Repeats and clarifies the questions if necessary		
Does not improvise (e.g. add or change words)	Has to improvise. Has to seek clarification and perhaps approach the same question from a different angle.	
Plays a neutral role	Does not let his/her feelings bear on the situation. Yet, he/she needs to imagine oneself in the situation of the	
Is casual and friendly	Needs to play special attention to establish trust with the respondents	
Is directive and impersonal	Is distant, cool and rational. Yet, in etnographies e.g. may need to carefully assess how to present oneself to the respondents since it may significantly affect the study. Must be careful not to loose his/her distance and objectivity.	
Is an interested and rewarding listener		Is a good, persuasive, emphatic listener
Does not evaluate responses (in a visible way, even if doing so subconsciously)		Is an objective listener
	Does not impose any a priori categorizations on the interviewee that might limit the inquiry in some way	
	Attempts to get in to the interviewees world to the extent possible (especially in etnographies)	
		Directs the interaction and inquiry in a very structured or unstructured manner depending on the purpose of the interview
		Does not allow a person or a small coalition of persons to dominate the group
		Encourages recalcitrant respondents to participate
		Need to obtain responses from the entire group to ensure the fullest coverage of the topic
		Considers the script of questions and is at the same time sensitive to the patterns of group interaction

A number of the qualifications listed do not bear on scientific interviews only but to scientific research in general. A certain neutrality, psychological distance, strife for objectivity, etc. are, of course, generally accepted requirements for all credible research. An exhaustive treatise on these principles is not necessary in this context. It is enough to note that such demands apply naturally to Delphi studies as well.

In relation to Delphi studies, it is important to focus especially on the qualifications of an interviewer as they are listed in the column concerning *Group Interviews* in table no. 11. These qualities relate to the management of group dynamics and interactions. A dominant group member or a coalition of persons may significantly affect the interview process and the data that can be gathered. This may significantly influence the end results and conclusions of the study. The Delphi method has an inbuilt safeguard that assists the Delphi monitor to manage group dynamics and interactions. It demands a degree of anonymity, at least during the first iteration(s)[52]. The group interacts through the Delphi monitor and the members do not necessarily meet one another physically. In addition, a degree of anonymity is one of the basic characteristics and demand of the method. This is supposed to reduce the possible harmful effects of strong personalities and/or statuses ascribed to some experts involved in a study.

In order to catalyze group interaction, the monitor should at times purposely introduce ambiguities into the discussion and challenge prevailing conceptions on realities (related to the problem) (Scheele 1997, 44). The Delphi method, especially in its original form, is supposed to generate convergence and consensus. However, during the Delphi interaction process, the monitor should ascertain that the consensus is not arrived at too lightly. By doing so, the monitor seeks to guarantee that the problem is understood and discussed on a level deep enough to be scientific, new ideas are generated, and other possible explanations and constructs are not overriden without serious consideration.

The Delphi monitor usually plans, facilitates, and synthesizes the Delphi study. Some generalizations of the challenge the monitor faces can be made as well as the best

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[52] See the paragraphs "General Introduction to the Delphi method" and the "Summary of the Delphi method" for specific comments on these characteristics of the Delphi methods. Linstone & Turoff 1997 talk about a degree of anonymity.

practices of the Delphi design and implementation. Scheele (1977, 64–71) has compiled the following comments and recommendations:

> The problems and questions of Delphi study should be as concrete as possible and tied to a context. This can be done, e.g., by using concrete examples and if necessary by using hypothetical constructs such as emergencies to stimulate thinking.

> A panel should ideally have at least three types of persons: 1) stakeholders, people who directly deal with or are affected by the subject matter; 2) experts, persons who are specialists in a relevant field or have a significant experience on the subject; 3) facilitators, persons who are capable to clarify problems, organize, stimulate, and synthesize.

> The monitor should keep in mind that people do not like questionnaires and engaging themselves into a Delphi process where the other panellists are anonymous may feel abstract and frustrating. To motivate the panellist, the monitor might look for a sponsor that would evoke interest in the study and seek publicity for the study. It is also helpful if the panellist know the audience that will make use of the results.

> Materials prepared for the study should not be dull but loaded with emotion to stimulate response and designed to discourage stereotypical remarks and obvious but unhelpful remarks.

> In the process of iterations, the monitor should highlight divergence and consensus, applaud at least one response from each panellist, direct thinking from immaterial trivialities to relationships (of the parcels of the problem) and constructive ideas, stipulate parameters on massive problem areas, and supply examples of tentative theoretical constructs when appropriate.

> The monitor points out nil findings, omissions, ignored items, and starts interpreting and summarizing responses from the very beginning for further interpretation and review by the panellists.

> Pay careful attention to the communication of the results. A Delphi inquiry is often made for practical purposes such as policy design or decision making; therefore, it is not enough to simply present the findings and conclusions alone. The findings should be also presented in a way that suggests ways and contexts of application.

Experts

One of the most difficult phases of the Delphi method is the recruitment of experts. The researcher(s) must carefully consider a number of questions. What constitutes expertise? Who is able to detect and define expertise? Is expertise multidimensional – vertical and

horizontal? Which one is more of an expert, the one who has some knowledge of a number of disciplines or the one who has an in depth knowledge of a narrow field (Kuusi 2002)? Are there not cases, in which a layperson is a more useful expert than the scholar or the professional? In this respect, Metsämuuronen (2000) has referred to the comments of Borg and pointed out that a taxi driver may have a better grasp on the factors causing traffic problems than the traffic engineer.

Kuusi (2001) has listed and briefly discussed some criteria to determine who can qualify as an expert in a Delphi study. The following criteria and comments on the qualities and quantities of expertise are derived and modified from his discussion:

- Usually a Delphi panel consists of experts on a given field or discipline
- In certain cases an "expert" panel can include or be formed of "laypersons"
- Generally speaking, an expert should be a recognized leader in his/her field
- The panel should preferably be interdisciplinary and represent the different areas of expertise that relate to the research problem.
- An expert is able to look at the research problem from unconventional angles
- An expert is able to process complex problems
- An expert is interested in other disciplines besides his/her own
- An expert has both academic qualifications and professional skills
- An expert is innovative and envisioning
- An expert is recognized by his/her colleagues as an authority in his/her discipline or profession

The qualifications presented are very general in nature. The role(s) of the researcher(s) in defining and electing the experts is significant for the success of the study and its scientific integrity. To ensure the integrity of the study, the selection process should be explained to the greatest extent feasible and the qualifications of the experts discussed openly. If it is possible to turn to other researcher(s) or academically established person(s) for their judgment and opinion on the composition of the expert panel, this should be done. As a rule of thumb, as much information as possible on the experts should be made available to the readers of the study.

Some of the expert qualifications listed by Kuusi are very difficult, if not impossible, to fulfill. In many established disciplines, the leading expertise is international and to

recruit internationally recognized experts for local studies might be an impossible task. This leaves room for the Delphi critic to argue that a different panel might have arrived at a different conclusion. Such a claim pertains to the reliability of a Delphi study and is not easy to refute. Metsämuuronen (2000, 56) characterizes the reliability of a Delphi study as vague. Yet, he goes on to point out that there are studies suggesting that different panels have arrived at considerably similar conclusions (Metsämuuronen 2000 & 2002). The studies he refers to, related to competencies that are required of health care personnel in the future. It might be that the reliability of a Delphi study varies significantly in relation to different research problems and contexts. The research problem that Metsämuuronen refers to is not very unique to the health sector but relates to a great extent to society in general. The reliability of a Delphi study would probably be more questionable if a more specific research problem would be in question. At the core of the vagueness of the reliability of a Delphi study is the fact that there is and, to me, cannot be a single methodology to analyze the material gathered in a study (see also Metsämuuronen 2000, 51).

The Delphi manager(s) will also have to decide on the number of experts. Metsämuuronen says that there have been Delphi studies with more than a thousand respondents. On the other hand, Kuusi (1993; also Mannermaa 1992, 130) has held a panel of 150 to be too extensive and suggests (2002, 217) that an ideal panel consists of 15–50 members. In general, no one can say how many members constitute a reliable panel (Metsämuuronen 2002) and in practice the number of panellists has varied significantly (Mannermaa 1992). Kuusi (2002, 217) emphasizes that it is more important to concentrate on the quality of the panellists than the quantity of them. It seems logical that different research problems and contexts play a significant part in determining the number of panellists to be recruited. If, for example, the Delphi method is applied in a future study or in a new scientific field, the research manager should, perhaps, strive to manage as large a panel as possible. If the study relates to an academic field where the expertise is broad and there are a number of closely related studies available, it would, possibly, be logical to trust a panel with fewer members.

Iterations, Consensus, and Stability

In the discussion on the *General Introduction to the Delphi method*, it was noted that there is no single way to apply the method. This is true of the iterations as well. In its

original form, the Delphi method aimed at a consensus of opinion among the experts. It seems that in its basic application the Delphi method has at least two iterations. There is no theoretical or methodological maximum set as to the number of the iterations. The earliest applications of the method repeated iterations till there was a feasible consensus or a considerable stability of opinion among the experts in regard to the research problem (Kuusi 2001, 2002; Mannermaa 1992; Metsämuuronen 2002).

In Delphi research projects, the number of iterations has varied. There are studies that have conducted only one iteration. The data gathered is then supplemented by seminars, interviews, and so on (Kuusi 2002, 207). Kuusi (2002, 210–211) also points out that the researchers can use the Delphi method not only to seek consensus or stable opinions but to gather a number of views on a research problem. In such a case, the emphasis is put on the arguments presented to support a view.[53]

In certain cases, Delphi is used to exhibit issues that the experts disagree the most on (Kuusi 2002, 212–216). This kind of an application of the Delphi has been called "Argument Delphi". To get at the issues, the researcher may use, for example, personal interviews or essays where a panellist or panellists present their views and arguments on a topic without any formal constraints. The researcher or a team of researchers work on the issues and arguments and present them to the expert panel. Ideally, the research manager(s) presents to the experts arguments that divide them into two opposing camps. The panellist will then present additional arguments for or against the proposition(s) at hand. In the context of future studies, the manager may present different scenarios of the future. The panellists then present additional arguments and data to support or to oppose a given scenario. The manager may choose to ask a person that is known to support a scenario to argue against it (Kuusi 2002). Therefore, it can be noted that the nature and number of the Delphi iterations varies from study to study. The Delphi iteration may be used to gather data and opinions for forming research questions, definitions, presenting arguments, and forecasting the future (Kuusi 2001).

The kind of desired data determines to a great extent the manner how the method is applied and the iterations are planned. It also affects the function of a single iteration.

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[53] The comment relates especially to the futures studies where different well argued views are possible but none can be established with certainty.

For example, if the researcher wants to paint a highly likely scenario of the future, the Delphi iterations aim at a reasonable consensus of the panel on a single scenario. In this case, the function of the Delphi iterations is to enable the panellists to arrive at a consensus.

Considering the random factors affecting the future, the researcher could aim at presenting a number of possible future scenarios and the arguments for and against them. In such a case, Delphi functions primarily as a data gathering method for the researcher.

The Delphi method could also be used as a supplementary research method in scientific triangulation. The researcher might, for example, have arrived at certain conclusion using questionnaires. After analyzing the data and forming a synthesis, he or she could use the Delphi method to gather expert opinions on his or her conclusions. In this case, the function of the iteration would be to evaluate the researcher's conclusions and point out issues to be reconsidered by the researcher.

If the Delphi iterations are looked at from the point of view of consensus and stability of expert opinion, their function also varies significantly. It has been already pointed out that there is no longer demand for a conclusive expert consensus as to the research question(s) at hand (Kuusi 2002; Mannermaa 1992; Metsämuuronen 2002). In fact, Mannermaa has noted that the success of the method is not necessarily measured by consensus but by the stability of expert opinion. It is acceptable that the opinions of the panellists are genuinely polarized (Kuusi 2002, 210; Mannermaa 1992, 134). The natural tendency of human beings is to strive towards certainty and simplicity (e.g., Kuusi 2002). If the consensus is aimed at uncritically, it might be that phenomena are oversimplified.

On the basis of the previous discussion, it is quite safe to conclude that:

- There are research contexts where the greatest possible consensus among the panellists is desirable and should be sought after. However, consensus should not be sought uncritically. It is easy to artificially simplify complex phenomena and overlook "exceptions".

- If the consensus is reached effortlessly, it might be a sign that the panellists have taken their task too lightly. It can also derive from the common background of the panellists. If all of the panellists represent expertise within a given academic discipline, profession, etc. it is no surprise if a consensus is quite easy to achieve. Therefore, it is advisable to establish an interdisciplinary panel, or supplement the Delphi method with others to enable scientific triangulation. Kuusi (2002) reminds us that if in the Soviet Union in the 1930s a group of panellist would have pondered how to industrialize the nation, their opinions would have been essentially the same as Stalin's.

- In some research contexts contradictory opinions among the panellist cannot be held as disturbing or surprising. In such cases, the stability of the different opinions should be emphasized as well as the weight of the related supporting arguments. It is quite difficult to determine what can be considered as a significant consensus. Mannermaa (1992), for example, cites Schelbe-Skutsch-Schofer and suggests that a change of opinions that is less than 15% between the iterations is substantial enough to conclude the iterations.

3.3.3 Result(s) of a Delphi Inquiry

In the previous discussion, it was noted that one of the results of a Delphi study may be a consensus of a panel(s) on a given issue. On a more philosophical level, one might say that the consensus is a negotiated reality (Scheele 1977, 37ff.). This negotiated reality is defined through the interaction of the panellists. Scheele (1977, 37) defines reality in this context as "…presumed agreements which give meaning to our thoughts and make reasonable our actions in each setting". It is crucial to note that realities can be asserted, modified, reconceptualized and even constructed. Such a view presumes, of course, that realities are not stable in their basic nature. Instead, realities can be viewed as products of our experience and in some sense bound to a certain context (Scheele 1977, 43).

To view reality as experiential, context bound, temporary and dynamic goes against the common-sense view that reality is a collection of observable things and occurrences. Reality can be seen by nature an interpretation. Delphi method is essentially a structured process to create a reality[54] drawing from the inputs of the panellists. In some way, the reality produced by the panellist is a kind of a synthesis of their existing realities concerning the subject of the study. Delphi can basically construct a reality through two

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[54] Possibly a plurality of realities, if, for example, the study aims at producing a number of options that are possible realities (e.g. courses of action to solve a problem).

main routes (Scheele 1977, 42). On one hand, the monitor can emphasize the similarities in the opinions of the panellists and move intentionally towards a consensus. On the other hand, the monitor can emphasize the differences of opinion in order to facilitate discussion, new ideas, and new options to shape reality and promote diversity.
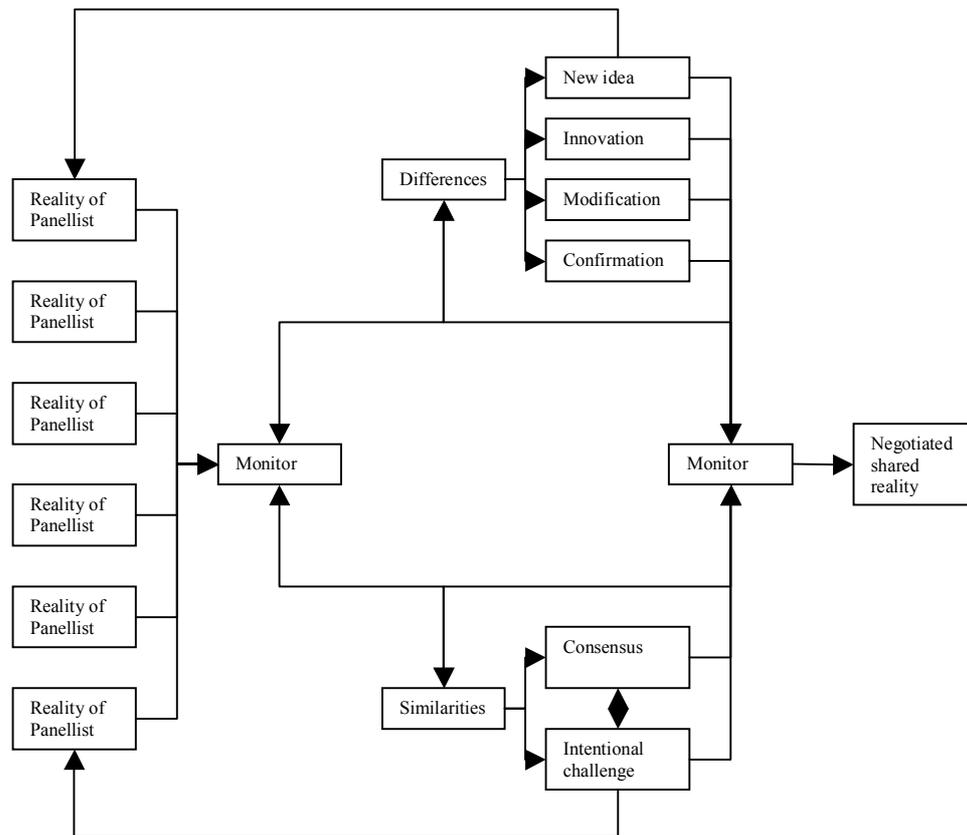
Figure 15. Visualization of creation of reality through Delphi process.

Figure 15 seeks to visualize how the Delphi modifies or creates reality. The panellists bring in their "realities" that are processed by the Delphi monitor. The monitor analyses, summarizes, juxtaposes, interprets, and re-conjectures[55] those realities into a "synthesized" reality. In this process, the monitor can emphasize the similarities in the opinions of the Delphi panellists or the possible differences. In fact, a Delphi Study may be intentionally designed to progress towards a consensus or to generate innovations, novel views, and new perspectives. At times, even these new ways to approach a problem will end up confirming existing realities after a closer look and careful consideration of them.

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[55] Terminology from Scheele (1977, 38).

Depending on the design of the study, the new views or the more harmonized views of the Delphi panellists are send back to the panellist for further consideration and comments. It is a basic tenet of the Delphi method that this should be done at least once. As soon as the monitor is satisfied that there is a considerable degree of consensus detectable in the answers, he or she can give form to the negotiated reality of the panellist. If the Delphi has been used intentionally to provoke of new ideas or new ways to look at old realities, the monitor decides when the panellist have no significant contributions to add into the process and reports the findings of the study. It must be kept in mind that it is not only the new reality that is produced but quite certainly the realities that the individual panellists started with have at least been modified. (Scheele 1977.)

The previous section suggests that in a philosophical sense, the end result of a Delphi study is a reality or realities. The essential nature of reality has been seen as dynamic. Reality is not carved on a stone but subject to modification, reinterpretation, and redefinition. It is only logical, then, to ascribe the same qualities to the reality or realities produced by the Delphi process. A negotiated Delphi reality can be challenged from other philosophical perspectives and by other interpretations (Mitroff & Turoff 1977, 17-20; Scheele 1977, 44). Philosophically, the Delphi reality is in some sense arbitrary since it is the decision of the monitor to terminate the negotiation. What if an additional iteration had been conducted? Would that have affected the "shape" of the Delphi reality?

The Delphi reality could be seen as a collective interpretation of a given problem subject to further negotiation. It cannot be viewed as "the answer". This is, of course, true of other scientific realities arrived at by different methods. The dynamic nature of Delphi results is emphasized since the dynamic view and definition of reality is inbuilt in the method itself.

3.3.4 Selection of the Delphi Method

What are some of the traits inbuilt in the Delphi method that make it suit the context of this study? A few of the Delphi applications exhibiting it in action were briefly discussed in the paragraphs on the *Introduction to Delphi Method* (3.3.1). Some of those applications provide hints as to the aptitude of the Method. The list of Delphi

applications provided by Linstone and Turoff (1977, 4) depict some of the functions it can have. A Delphi study can: gather data; examine the significance of phenomena; evaluate options; aid planning; help to structure a model; explore causal relationships of complex phenomena; distinguish and clarify. The list is not meant to be an exhaustive one but to provide a hint as to the nature and capacity of the method.

A number of the functions are relevant to the current study. It seeks, among other things, gather data for actors in the field of development cooperation, examine and expose some phenomena in the area of development cooperation, propose and evaluate various courses of action, and explore causal relationships of phenomena. All of the aims fall into the range of Delphi applications previously used in scientific inquiries.

Linstone and Turoff (1977, 4) hold that Delphi is an appropriate method in a situation that can benefit from subjective judgments. Subjectivity is subject to collective evaluation and must be presented in the form of factual arguments (Kuusi 2002, 216). Factual arguments are propositions that can be refuted by counter arguments.

Why can the present inquiry benefit from subjective judgments? Empowerment by definition has to do with people – their motivation, beliefs (about their ability and the context they act), aspirations, and emotions among a host of other things (Siitonen 1999, 110-115). To inquire on people brings subjectivity into play by default. The person scrutinized uses subjective expressions, symbols and concepts to express his or her thoughts and experiences. To understand them and make use of them interpretation is needed. Interpretation, in turn, is to an extent subjective activity.

The Delphi process employs subjective processes, yet, at the same time aiming at as objective and managed inquiry as possible (e.g., Linstone & Turoff 1977, 3–12). In the opinion of the researcher, healthy liberalization from overvalued and many times an illusionary objectivity may create a fertile soil for new ideas, innovation and better understanding. One of the assets of the Delphi method is that it seeks to minimize such group dynamics that may suppress an insecure person from expressing his or her hunch that might seem insignificant or even ridiculous (Kuusi 2002). In a field, where there is a long tradition, predominant theories and trends, political and economical pressure, a

method that may offer a channel to express radically deviant views in a safe way, may prove to be valuable in searching for new insights.

Linstone and Turoff (1977, 4) suggest a host of reasons to utilize the Delphi method that arise from the circumstances where a study is conducted. The method is suitable in contexts where one or more of the following conditions exist:[56]

- The problem is difficult to analyze or define
- The problem may be solved or clarified by the help of persons who are either experts or experienced in a field related to it and who may have diverse professional and educational backgrounds
- More people are needed that can effectively interact in a face-to-face situation [A group of people who may wished to stay anonymous, could also be ask to comment a problem commented by others in a more open setting for comparative purposes or for scientific triangulation.]
- Time and cost make frequent group meetings infeasible
- Disagreements may exists or arise among the participants that call for refereeing the process or assuring the anonymity of them [In a multicultural research setting, a particular culture may promote indirect ways in dealing with persons and issues especially if they are controversial or there is for some other reason a danger for someone to "lose face".]
- The heterogeneity of the participants must be maintained to assure the validity of the results. For example, to minimize the effects of personalities or majority. [E.g., when working with cultures where the power distance is great, holders of higher rank or status tend to intimidate the persons on an officially lower rank or possessing a perceivably lower status in the organization or in the society. Such issues can easily endanger the scientific credibility of research results.]

The majority of the reasons apply to the present study. The problems or problematic areas that relate to empowering NGOs are complex. For example, volumes have been written to guide project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Best practices and lessons learned from the past and present have been recorded. Project management and staff are becoming more and more professional and they come from multiple backgrounds. Expertise and theories have been established. Nevertheless, projects and NGOs do not always – some would say very seldom – succeed in what they are doing. Such a state of affairs suggests that the problem might be difficult to analyze or of such complex nature that it can benefit from judgment by experts and experienced actors in the field of development cooperation.

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[56] Adopted from Linstone and Turoff (1977, 4). Author's comments in [ ].

To gain a deep and broad enough understanding of the research problem, a number of experts and experienced professionals need to be consulted. To meet scientific criteria and to record the interactions with the experts and professionals, a suitable structure is needed. The Delphi method can serve as the structure. It does not presume face-to-face meetings that might not be feasible for a number of reasons. Yet, it is able to facilitate discussion and exchange of opinions in a structured and verifiable manner.

The field of development cooperation accommodates a host of diverse and even dialectically opposing views. There are those who hold the whole exercise of development cooperation to be futile as a whole. Others see it as a way to at least buffer the effects of globalization on the developing countries. Still there are those who say that the most effective way to deliver aid is to integrate it to the budget of the recipient country. The government of the recipient country is responsible for using the money in the most effective and needed way. On the other side are those, who view governments as distant, bureaucratic, and untrustworthy. They would see the bulk of the resources allocated for development cooperation delivered through the civil society. These are but a few examples of the controversial issues in the discussion on the development activities. Having in mind the cultural aspects described in the previous paragraph and the potentially hazardous group dynamics that are present in face-to-face interactions, Delphi offers a feasible way to avoid some obvious pitfalls.

3.3.5 Reliability of the Delphi Method

The Delphi method has been severely critiqued in regard to its reliability. Some of the factors that bear on the issue have been commented on in the discussion on the philosophy of the method. Much of the critique on the method relates to its use as a predictive vehicle in futures studies (e.g. Mannermaa 1992, 133–138). Therefore, a great deal of the critique is irrelevant in the present context where it is not used to project on the future but as a method to manage group dynamics and generate ideas. At the core of the reliability issue is the fact that a Delphi study, among many other scientific efforts, is not usually carried out in a laboratory-like conditions but in real-life contexts that by nature are dynamic difficult to control. Hence, the reliability of the method should primarily be considered in light of the nature of the findings and conclusions not the method as such. As Mannermaa notes (1992, 139–140), a Delphi

study is usually carried out in a context where there are no valid scientific models or theories.

In the study at hand, Delphi is applied in a context where the issues and phenomena are so complex that it might be impractical to attempt at a comprehensive theory. In addition, in the field of development cooperation continuous research is carried out and best practices are recorded; yet, more than often, the results of development interventions are vague at best. Such a situation calls for a method that is genuinely able to detect and is sensitive to weak signals and fresh looks (Kuusi 2002; Mannermaa 1992; Metsämuuronen 2000). The aim here, is not primarily to produce a consensus and a theoretical model (the possibility of which is not excluded) but to manage a group interaction among the actors in the field of development cooperation that would facilitate a hopefully fruitful and fresh debate on how to empower people and organizations. The conclusions and recommendations are, of course, are subject to reliability debate. However, this should be carried out primarily in light of the results gained, and not the method as such.

As discussed earlier. Reliability deals with as dependability, predictability, accuracy or consistency of the research results (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Niiniluoto 1997; Silverman 2005). One of the core traits of the Delphi method is to seek stability of opinion among the experts. The idea of the Delphi rounds is repetition till the opinions are reasonably stable. In other words the rounds are terminated once there is predictability, accuracy, and consistency as to the expert opinions of the study. This can be seen as a sign of reliability. In the present study reliability has been increased by subjecting the results of one group of experts to other audiences consisting of experts and commoners. The research process reached a point where the substance of the findings was agreed on by these diverse audiences and during different occasions. In addition to the subjection of the results to various audiences, external experts were invited to the second Delphi round to increase the reliability of the Delphi process. (Flick 2002; Payne & Payne 2004.)

3.3.6 Validity of the Delphi Method

Validity refers to the ability of the method(s) used to capture the true nature and characteristics of the phenomenon under study (Patton & Patton 2004). In terms of the

Delphi study, the question relates to a great extent to the experts participating in the rounds. Metsämuuronen (2000, 55-57) has collected and commented, among other things, on the issue. The difficulties in choosing and defining what constitutes expertise and who can be considered an expert has been addressed in brief earlier in the methodological discussion. A common polarization to clarify the point is made between the common man on the street and a highly trained specialist. Which one is the real expert? If one would argue that it depends on the context, he/she would not be more or less right than the person who would say that it is impossible to know. Yet, is this not, to a degree, true of any scientific inquiry. Would not the results of a more quantitative research be different if it had been designed and carried out by a more qualified or in some other way different person than the one who did? In both cases, in terms of validity, there is a danger that experts are somehow blind to the nature of the phenomenon since they have a long exposure to it and possibly training to handle and approach it from a certain perspective.

There are two basic ways to try to ascertain that substantial expertise is available in a Delphi study. One is to involve as many persons who could qualify as experts as possible. Such a decision is critiqued as impractical by some researchers, for example by Kuusi (2002) who argues that it is not the number but the quality of the experts that ascertains the validity of the research. Both arguments have their strengths and weaknesses. The other way is to try to include people from as many walks of life as possible, to create a successful mix of panellists as Scheele has put it (1977, 68). In the present overall research design, two strategies are used to gather information. The Delphi method is used to gather information from experts. In addition, Action Research Seminars are held to gather information from practitioners. The results will be then compared and contrasted to safeguard against too obvious explanations and allow for the possibility of subtle signals that may add to the understanding of the phenomenon (Eskola & Suoranta 1998; Metsämuuronen 2002).

The poor preparation of the first set of Delphi questions, especially in relation to the earliest Delphi studies, has been set forth as one factor that may decrease the internal validity of the study (Kuusi 1993; 2002; Metsämuuronen 2002). Such a critique may be constructive in relation to a specific study. At the same time, it is quite a vague comment and a very broad generalization concerning a method. To a certain extent, this

point has been addressed in the discussion on the Delphi monitor and his or her role. In addition, since the range of Delphi designs, research problems and research contexts is wide, it is at times plausible to start with open ended questions and let the tone of the study be set by group dynamics (Scheele 1977). If the topic of the study and the research context demand, it is recommendable that the researcher spent a significant amount of time to prepare and hone the questions before the first iteration. It is recommended that in preparing the questions, the researcher seeks advice from experts (Kuusi 1993). Such a practice has been applied in the designing of the Delphi application here.

The questionnaire used in the present study has been planned carefully. Before attempting to put together a questionnaire the researcher acquired an understanding of the theoretical framework of the study, wrote an academic essay on the Delphi method, and discussed with the supervising Professor and other researchers before putting together the first draft. The first draft was again discussed with other researchers. The questions included in the questionnaire were tested in pilot seminars before the version of the questionnaire used in the first iteration was finalized.

Another difficult decision that is essentially left to the Delphi monitor to make is the number of iterations that should be carried out. Metsämuuronen (2000, 56) points to two factors that come into play when such a decision is made: if the Delphi iterations exceed three, the study may take too much time and money; it has also been argued that the opinions of the experts tend to be quite stable after the third iteration. In certain type of futures research and Delphi designs architected to help in decision making, one of the main factors that helps the monitor to decide when to terminate the iterations is the consensus among the experts (Kuusi 2002, 206; Linstone & Turoff 1977, 10). Yet, there is no single way to determine what should be considered a significant consensus. In the field of health sciences, some have simply proposed "a sufficient consensus" to be the decisive measure (Metsämuuronen 2000). Yet, even if the monitor is satisfied that additional Delphi rounds would not add anything substantial to the understanding of the phenomenon, a quantitative analysis cannot claim for an absolute understanding of the phenomenon (Flick 2002). In the end, in terms of qualitative inquiry, the claim of validity is an attempt to assure the external observer that the results presented mirror the constructions of those under study, and that the results are transparent (Flick 2002, 222).

To secure the representation and transparency of the results here, they have been subjected to other audiences and people who come from other organizations and work contexts. In addition, the raw material for the categorization and the process have been shown to the experts (and other readers), and the Delphi design and data analysis process have been presented to external commentators for comments in order to secure the soundness of the data analysis process.

The iterations can also be terminated once the monitor is satisfied that the panellists have no significant contribution to make. However, there are also Delphi designs that aim deliberately to generate of a number of different well based arguments concerning an issue (Kuusi 2002). In such a case, the nature of the research problem will significantly bear on the decision. The current study employed components that were quite open ended. For example, the number of Action Research seminars was not predetermined. This left the researcher with room for interpretation, reconsideration and subjective decision making. On the other hand, the proper Delphi iterations were limited to two. This was to keep the study manageable and to help the expert panellists to concentrate their efforts. Yet, their opinions and comments were further analyzed in more restricted sub-panels and subsequent Action Research seminars.

In terms of external validity, the transferability and limits of generalization of the study (Patton & Patton 2004; Silverman 1995), the following comments can be made. From the inception of the study, the researcher was aware that the subject under study is in many ways personal and his experience has been gathered from a single NGO and from partners who have been working with the NGO for a number of years. In a way, the research setting was a classic case where the researcher is studying his "own baby" so to speak. To guarantee that the explanations and conclusions are not too obvious and naïve, it must be noted that a number of the experts had experience from other organizations and cultures. In addition, substantial theoretical study on the concept of empowerment was done by the researcher to form a picture of empowerment in contexts other than development cooperation. The results, in turn, were discussed with people from different walks of life and from different organizations, and who represent different cultures. If the results were communicable to them, then there is reason to believe that to a substantial degree the results are transferable to other contexts as well. (Flick 2002; Patton & Patton 2004; Silverman 1995.)

3.3.7 Delphi Application in This Study

As discussed above, within the Delphi methodology there is room for modifications depending on the context. In this study, the first Delphi round was conducted as an email questionnaire entailing four (4) questions related to empowerment (APPENDIX IV). The questions were accompanied by a covering letter (APPENDIX III) orienting the respondents to the concept of empowerment. Fida International had allowed the participants to use their working time to answer the questions and the University of Tampere had agreed to provide a certificate of participation into a Delphi study as an expert for those respondents who participated in both Delphi rounds. These two factors were thought to motivate the participants to take the questionnaire seriously. Retrospectively, it can be said that the arrangement worked well since responses were received from nine out of ten (9/10) of the prospective respondents. The answers were then analysed by the researcher (for details see data analysis section) and tentative depictions of an empowered partner, means of empowerment and empowerment inhibitors were formed.

The tentative depictions were then presented to the experts for comments during the second Delphi round organized in Helsinki during an annual Regional Coordinator's meeting of Fida International. In the meeting, the issue of culture in relation to empowerment in development cooperation interventions was also discussed. The major difference in terms of traditional Delphi processes was the way the second Delphi round was conducted. Instead of conducting another email questionnaire round anonymously, the experts met in a meeting and discussed the material derived from the first Delphi round in small groups and then all together as a group of experts. In terms of conventional Delphi inquiry, this arrangement could be seen as compromising two core tenets of Delphi studies: anonymity and the possibility to control the communication of a group of experts so that strong or more established members cannot override the opinions of others or block them altogether. On the other hand, it can be argued that the traditional Delphi arrangement may lose something of group dynamics by not allowing immediate feedback and real-time dialogue. To provide an opportunity for real dialogue and immediate testing of generated ideas justifies was at the core of the present design.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Profile of Informants and Data Collection Procedures

The informants that participated in the study were actors in development cooperation activities. On the part of Fida they were employees of Fida International that could be considered experts in development cooperation (for qualities of experts see the related discussion on experts under the Delphi method (3.3.1-3.3.2). The informants were either in senior positions at Fida headquarters or serving as Regional Coordinators for Fida. Fida Regional Coordinators have been appointed by the organization to serve in a supervisory and senior role. Therefore, they can be assumed to have recognized and sufficient expertise for the position. Here, expertise in development cooperation was considered to be comprised of experience and training. There were considerable variations of the length of experience and formal academic training among the informants. However, without exception, all had what could be characterized as sufficient experience or substantial formal training. In addition to the Fida personnel, three external experts were invited to participate in the second Delphi round. One of them was a methodological expert with some development cooperation experience. The two others had significant development cooperation expertise from bilateral development cooperation and organizations outside Fida. They were invited to secure the scientific integrity of the Delphi application used and guard against too homogenous views that might have resulted if only the personnel of one organization would have been involved in the Delphi rounds. The academic qualifications and relevant experience of the experts are spelled out in Appendix II.

The participants in the Action Research Seminars were either employed project personnel, people with some experience on development work in an African context, officers of the partnership organizations, or members of voluntary local committees. From the research perspective, they represented the grass-root practitioners of the partner organizations among whom empowerment should take place or who have been involved in empowerment activities in practice.   Most of them were Africans from Kenya and Tanzania representing various tribes, geographical environments, and social backgrounds. Some of them were well versed in development jargon and concepts.

Others were very common men and women with limited ability to express their ideas in writing and "generally accepted" development language. They offered what could be described a healthy balance of practical development cooperation expertise and common sense grass-root observations.

As described earlier, Action Research was the overarching method in the present study. It employed two primary ways to collect data Action Research Seminars and Delphi rounds. The processes were carried out simultaneously, each influencing the other. However, it can be said that in building the initial categorizations to depict an empowered partner, means of empowerment, and empowerment inhibitors, the results of the first Delphi round were used as building blocks. These results were then reflected against the data gathered from the AR Seminars where the same or similar questions were considered. In this way, a dialogue between the expert data and data gathered from a more grass-root perspective was established each serving as a tester for interpretations generated by the other.

In short, the data gathering process took place as follows:

- Late 2002 and early 2003 questions that would be presented to the Delphi experts were tested in seminars conducted by the East Africa Empowerment Programme in Mwanza, Kampala, and Nairobi. In the depiction of the overall research process (figure 10.) these seminars are indicated as Pilot seminars. The final form of the questions of the Delphi questionnaire was tested and data collected in seminars in October 2003 in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi and further in 2004 in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Naro Moru, and Koru.

- On the basis of the experiences a Delphi questionnaire (Appendix IV) was put together and sent to the Delphi experts by email at the end of October 2004. The participants were asked to answer in an essay form. The answers were analyzed and initial categories were put together during the spring 2005.

- The second Delphi round took place in Helsinki June 2005 where the categories formed were presented to the experts for discussion and comments. The experts formed groups to discuss the initial categories and submitted their views in a notebook form. Each group presented their findings and they were commented on by the other participants. A secretary submitted a memo on the discussions.

- The researcher analyzed the material produced during the second Delphi round and made some adjustments to the categories and depictions. These modified descriptions were then discussed in an Action Research Seminar in Nairobi in May 2006.

4.2 Data procession and findings

The data gathered consisted of the Delphi answers derived from the first Delphi round in an essay form, notes of the participants of the second Delphi round and a memo from the secretary who recorded key issues in the public discussion, videotaped data from AR Seminars that was transcribed, and written responses of the AR Seminar participants. The challenge of the data analysis process was to develop analysis steps that would apply both to the data gathered through the Delphi rounds and the Action Research Seminars. A glimpse into the relevant studies applying Action Research and Delphi methods and the methodological literature related to them, did not propose any standard method for analysing the data – in fact, in the methodological literature the analysis process is often addressed very lightly (Hakulinen, T. & Savela, A. 2000, 20; Järvinen P & Järvinen, A. 2000, 129–137; Kyrö 2004; Metsämuuronen 2000, 57–59; Munhall, P. L. 2001; Savela, A & Hakulinen, T. 2001, 17; Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. 1998, 87–100).

Therefore, a data analysis process had to be created. The process came to involve the following steps:

1) Familiarization with the texts
2) Definition of the analysis unit
3) Identification of the analysis units in the data
4) Grouping of the analysis units
5) Categorization of the analysis units
6) Preliminary critique of the categorization
7) External examination of the categorization
8) Final analysis and categorization

The steps are derived from general principles governing the analysis of qualitative data. It should be emphasized that the data analysis is not a clearly defined separate step in the research process. Rather, it is an ongoing interactive process in relation to the data from the first steps of the gathering of it to the final analysis (Kyrö 2004, 112). The steps presented here are a sort of synthesis from the methodological literature reviewed on qualitative analysis. This is in line with the argument of Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 162) that the cases where a single analysis method can be applied to the data are rare. In addition, of course, the data was analysed in the light of the theoretical understanding of empowerment and the research questions (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 80-83; Kyrö 2004). However, the researcher has attempted to avoid a situation where theory would dominate the empiric data and overrule the original nuances and experiences of the participants in the research process (Perttula 1995, 8–9).

The first step in the analysis was extensive familiarization with the data (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 207–209; Payne & Payne 2004, 36–41; Perttula 1995, 69). The aim was to get an overview of the data as a whole and to determine if crucial information is missing and needs to be filled in (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997). This particular stage does not call for extensive explanation and exposition. However, it is good to note that the researcher, while familiarizing himself with the data, aimed at being neutral, attempted to get into the experience of the respondents, and reflected critically on the personal dispositions on the phenomena that he had based on theoretical reviews and previous experience (Perttula 1995, 69–72).

The second step was to define the analysis unit. The analysis unit (as called, e.g., by Hakulinen, T. & Savela S. 2001) could also be called a meaning unit (e.g. Perttula 1995). Perttula (1995, 72-74) does not specify what qualifies as a meaning unit in any detail. He merely points out that a meaning unit is a unit that expresses a substantial and understandable meaning (1995, 72). Hakulinen and Savela (2001, 19) have chosen a thought construct as an analysis unit. Coffey and Atkinson (1996, 32–52) have used even single words as the basic units for organizing the data. Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 186–187) talk about observation and classification units. Metsämuuronen (2000, 58–59) has used arguments as the basic analysis unit in his Delphi study on changing world and the social and health sectors. Strauss and Corbin (1998, 92–93) have suggested that for analysis purposes a word, phrase, or a sentence can be interesting. In addition, it

should be kept in mind that whatever the basic unit of analysis for organizing the data is, the context determines the meaning. In analysing a basic unit, it is important to keep in mind such issues as who said, why it was said, and in which context it was said. (Strauss & Corbin 1998, 93)   In this study, the basic analysis unit is a word, thought, sentence or argument that is meaningful in relation to the Delphi or Action Research question and underlying the theoretical understanding of empowerment.   The reasons for using a word, sentence, argument, and thought as the basic unit can be found above. These units were used in light of the theoretical framework and in relation to thematic questions (e.g., Eskola & Suoranta 1998; Flick 2002; Kyrö 2004; Patton 1990).

Identification of the units in the text was done on the basis of the definition of the basic analysis units.   The words, sentences, arguments and thoughts that related to and contributed to the understanding of the phenomenon through the thematic questions were detected in the texts.   These words were then grouped according to their similarity. At this stage, the groups were not named in any way.   The number of occurrences of the same idea was also recorded.   Although the analysis here cannot be considered as content analysis as it occurs in some of the methodological works, it was thought that establishing the occurrences might point to areas of importance and emphasis (Eskola & Suoranta 1997, 186).   If the respondent referred to a single idea using two different arguments, these were considered as a single occurrence.

The grouping of the basic units began in some way as they were identified in the text. The key words, phrases, arguments and thoughts that were deemed to relate to one another in some way were loosely grouped.   These loose groups were then named, categorized.   At this stage, all categories were considered as independent and equal in their value (Järvinen & Järvinen 2000, 88 call this horizontal categorization).   The process was then continued by identifying those categories that seemed to relate to each other.   These categories were again named to form a category on a higher level of abstraction (similar process is described, e.g., by Flick 2002, 190–191).   The process of categorization could be described as follows:

| Basic unit | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

| Level 1 category | | | xxx | xxx | xx | xxx |

| Level 2 category | | | X X X X |

| Answer/description | | | | X |
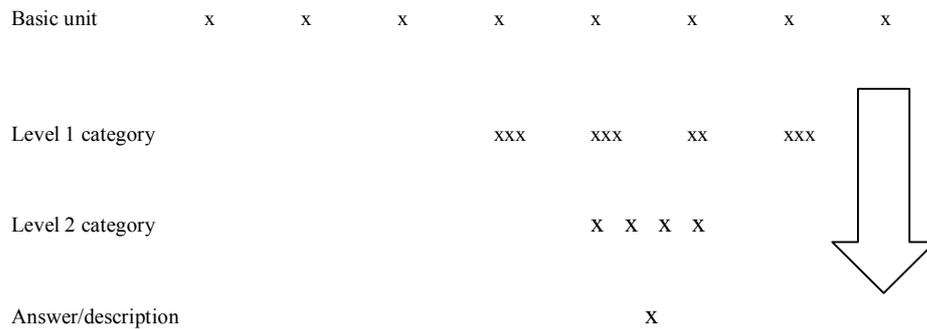
An example of formation of level 2 category designated as "significant". The category "significant" is among six other categories that formed to answer the question: What is an empowered partner like?

| Basic units | Does things that will be desired by others | Influences the working context positively |
| | Demonstrates success that triggers others to do the same | Aims at empowering others |

| Level 1 category | Multiplier | Influential |

| Level 2 category | | Significant |

| Answer/description | | Empowered |
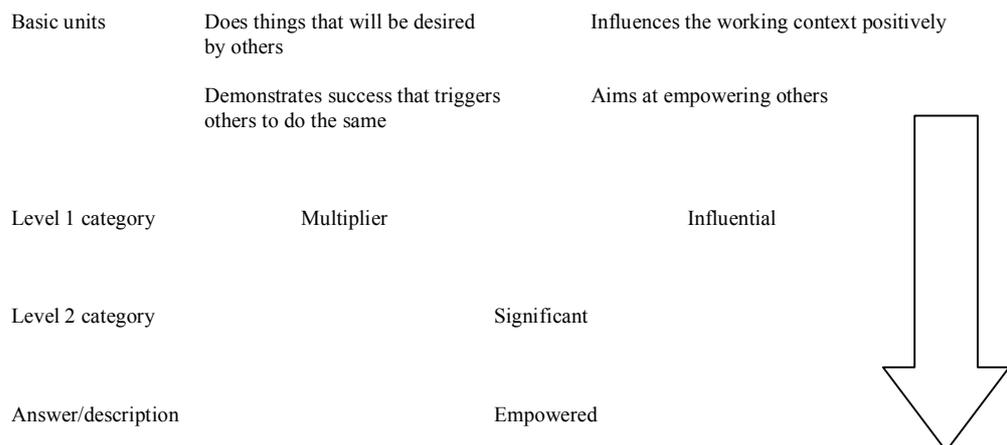
Figure 16. Data categorization process.

The formed categories where then reviewed by an external researcher (see a reference to similar practice in Järvinen & Järvinen 2000, 88).[57] His suggestions were considered, and as a result some minor errors and illogical category level designations were corrected and changed. In addition, to the list of basic units some explanatory notes were added in parentheses in order to make the lists easier for an external commentator to read and comprehend. This was later appreciated by the Delphi participants during the second round. The second Delphi round comprised of the critical examination of the categorization process and the categories. In addition, a team comprising of senior

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[57] Markku Luoma, Ph.D. The review was conducted in April – May 2005.

consultants and an accomplished methodologist reviewed the results from methodological, technical, and substance point of views. On the basis of the second Delphi round and the comments of the consultants, the categorizations and the diagrams were slightly modified. This process corresponds to stages six and seven in the analysis process description above.

During the final stage of the analysis process the modified categorizations were submitted to two seminars for comments, evaluation and critique. These were again considered and the final version of categorization and diagramming prepared.

A comment on the roles of Delphi rounds and Action Research Seminars is in order here to clarify the research process and presentation of the findings. Although the findings refer, for the most part, to results derived from the Delphi experts, Action Research Seminar participants have not been excluded from the overall process. As explained in 3.1, the AR Seminars served in piloting the Delphi questions. In addition, once the models based on the Delphi answers was subjected to AR Seminars for comments and assessment. In general there were no substantial differences between the data that emerged from Delphi rounds and AR Seminars. The biggest difference was, perhaps, the emphasis. The Action Research seminarians tended to emphasize the roles of resources and education in empowerment or other similar tangible issues. On the other hand, the Delphi experts, while not excluding these factors in their answers, concentrated on a wider array of issues that contribute to empowerment and the reasons why these factors are crucial. A number of factors may explain this tendency. First of all, the questions submitted to Delphi experts emphasised that reasons behind their answers be explained. Secondly, the experts were people that have had to ponder the logic of development interventions in their duties for a number of years. They have also been exposed to formal training and literature on the subject. Third, some of the Action Research seminarians had not been exposed to quality formal education. In all, the Action Research seminars did not provide materials that could not be accommodated in the models presented in 4.2.1, 4.2.2, and 4.2.3.

4.2.1 Characteristics of an Empowered Partner

To present and discuss the findings in a coherent, clear, and compressed manner, we begin the exposition from level-two categories which is a decision to present the findings and does not relate to the ontology of the categories. When these categories are discussed, reference to level-one categories and basic meaning units are made. The presentation below aims at providing the reader a clear picture of the original answers as provided by the respondents. Therefore, the theoretical discussion and analysis is done at the end of the section on each level two category.

4.2.1.1 Autonomous

An empowered partner was held to be autonomous. What, then, makes a partner autonomous? The data suggested that autonomy is composed of purpose consciousness, responsibility, independency and ability to take and manage risk. Autonomy generates strong images of independency, however, autonomy does not mean isolation as will be pointed out in 4.2.1.3.

Purpose-Driven

Purpose-Drivennes refers to a number of factors. It presumes a leadership and a workforce that has the ability to envision about the future. In addition, leadership and workforce are able to translate its visions into concrete actions and communicate it to the workforce. Once the partner has a vision, it has to have the required discipline to stick to the vision. Consequently, the partner uses the vision as the basis of decision making and does not expand its activities and involvement into areas that are not relevant to it. Vision ensures that decisions are made bearing in mind the impact they are going to have in the future. Local leadership is important in ensuring that the vision grows from local needs and has continuity. The following excerpts help to capture some of the connotations that were attached to purpose consciousness.

> *An empowered partner must have a clear understanding of the purpose of the project/program in a long-term perspective. Leadership must develop from within the organization that is totally committed to the goals and work toward achieving them within their particular context. At the same time, there must be flexibility on the part of the donor group in order to*

adapt to the reality of the culture in which the project/program in being implemented. (D1Q1)[58]

An empowered partner? Based on the little experience I have, I would understand an empowered partner to be able to independently carry out – in this case, development cooperation. Ability, here, refers to both institutional capacity and knowledge of substance… The partner has a clear vision of its role as a development actor and how the role integrates with the other activities it has. The partner has capacity and is willing to seek possible external funding for its development activities. (D4Q1)[59]

Responsible

Autonomy relates also to responsibility. Responsibility could be seen to begin from the willingness to face the surrounding challenges. Responsibility for successes and failures is not attributed to others. On an institutional level, an empowered partner has assumed full responsibility for the administrative functions of the organization.

As the target group assumes more responsibility for the day-to-day administrative functions, the donor group must begin to relinquish control over the decision-making process. What is an empowered partner like? As long as it is a "partner", it may never be totally empowered. Nevertheless, one can observe the way by which Jesus trained his disciples. First he "did it"; then, he "did it while they watched"; next, he "let them do it while he watched"; and finally, he "left". It took them a while to grasp Jesus' purposes, but once they did, they were totally committed to achieving them. (D1Q1)

The issue of responsibility in the context of partnership seems to be somewhat paradoxical. As one of the respondents puts it above, the very idea of partnership may inhibit a total assumption of responsibility by one or both members of the partnership. In partnership, there is a fine line between positive independency and dependency on external sources. Responsibility was also seen to relate to commitment to sustainable action and mobilization of necessary resources.

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[58] Note, the spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and other mistakes in the expert answers have not been corrected.

[59] Translated by the researcher: Voimaantunut kumppani? Sen pienen kokemuksen perusteella, joka minulla asiasta on, ymmärtäisin voimaantuneen kumppanin siten, että kumppani on itsenäisesti kykenevä tekemään – tässä tapauksessa – kehitysyhteistyötä. Tässä kykenevällä tarkoitan sekä institutionaalista että substanssikykyä… Kumppanilla on itsellään selkeä visio siitä, mikä on heidän roolinsa kehitysyhteistyötoimijana ja miten se sopii yhteen kumppanin muun toiminnan kanssa. Kumppanilla itsellään on kykyä ja halua hakea mahdollista ulkopuolista rahoitusta kehitysyhteistyötoiminnalleen…

Only an empowered partner will take responsibility to face challenges and make needed intentional decisions, commit resources, and implement actions to resolve them. (D5Q1)

Risk Taker

Risk taking occurred only once explicitly in the data of the first Delphi round. However, the idea was implicit in a number of answers. When asked to give an example of an empowered partner, one of the respondents referred to a person who needed to take risks in order to succeed in a community intervention that he initiated.[60] The fact that risk taking did not occur explicitly in data, could be interpreted to mean that it is not an important feature of an empowered partner or that it is indeed a characteristic that is essential, but seldom thought of by the experts who attended the analysis meetings. Or it might be that risk taking in an organizational setting is a feature hard to recognize and describe. Whatever the conclusion on the significance of risk taking, it seems to fit in and supplement the category of autonomy. In a research drawing material primarily from Non-Governmental Organizations and Faith Based Organizations, the topic may seem irrelevant since risk is often related to businesses not to social serviced provided by the NGOs and FBOs.

Independent

Independency or a similar thought was expressed in eight out of nine answers (8/9). It could even be the designation of the entire category that was labelled autonomy. However, in the analysis independency is considered as a somewhat narrower concept than autonomy. Independency was seen to relate to decision making, financial capacity, ownership, planning within available resources, self-confidence, problem solving, capacity to initiate, and clear identity. Independency was also described as the opposite of dependency on external factors such as funds and instructions.

An empowered partner demonstrates self confidence. He is aware and perceptive of challenges in his context which he and can influence positively. He is able and willing to take the responsibility and initiate to organize, manage and motivate members to action, and commit available human and economic resources to reach objectives. He is also willing and able to evaluate impacts and change direction if needed. (D5Q1)

In my mind, an empowered partner is a person or an organization that is in a process of change, sufficiently independent and self-confident person

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[60] D5Q3

> *or organization. Through empowerment they are capable of effecting real development both for themselves and to pass the same on to others. Empowerment presumes change. Without change, there is no empowerment. Growing independent and independency is a good sign of the empowerment of the partner to implement things themselves. Empowerment leads to right kind of = reasonable planning and activities that bring about real development. (D7Q1)[61]*

One of the respondents[62] characterized an empowered partner to be a community that opts to implement activities that match their level of abilities and resources. It has defined a strategy independently, knows its context and resources that will enable them to make informed and independent decisions. It looks beyond its own organization and seeks to influence others. To achieve this, it has to have clear principles to guide its activities. An empowered organization has the capacity to evaluate its activities and the needed humility and transparency to be evaluated by external assessors.

Theoretical Reflections on Autonomy

In the data, autonomy was seen to consist of purpose consciousness, responsibility, independency, and ability to take and manage risk. These factors occur frequently in empowerment theories. Independency and responsibility have close links to theories that relate empowerment to an ability to manage and control one's own life (e.g., Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Rappaport 1981; Zimmerman 1995). Although, these factors are quite often discussed on an individual level, it seems that they can be expanded to characterize an empowered collective as well.

The empowerment literature also touches the area of self-determination that may be held to embrace the areas of purpose consciousness, responsibility and independency (Kuokkanen 2003; Spreitzer et al. 1999; Thomas & Velthouse 1990). In an organizational setting, empowerment has been related to increased authority of a person to influence his or her work and set personal goals in line with the goals of organization (e.g., Argyris 1998; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Heikkilä-Laakso & Heikkilä 1997;

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[61] Translated by the researcher: Mielestäni voimaantunut kumppani on muutosprosessissa oleva riittävään itsenäisyyteen päässyt itseenä luottava yksilö tai organisaatio. Voimaantumisen kautta he ovat kykeneviä saamaan aikaan oikeaa kehitystä itse itselleen ja vaikuttamaan myös samaa muutosta muihin.
Voimaantuminen vaatii muutosta ja ilman sitä ei voimaatumista tapahdu.
Itsenäistyminen/riippumattomuus on hyvä merkki siitä, että kumppani on voimautunut tekemään asioita itse. Voimautuminen johtaa oikeanlaiseen=järkevään suunnitteluun ja työhön joka on todellsiat kehetystä.
[62] D8Q1

Koberg et al. 1999). In addition, Herrenkohl (1999) has written on the importance of understanding individual responsibility and authority in an organization that may result in a feeling of empowerment.

Ideas that are similar to the factor "ability to take and manage risk" are also found in empowerment theories. Kuokkanen (2003), for example, describes an empowered nurse as one who is innovative, creative, and promotes new ideas. Innovative solutions and new ideas, naturally, involve a component of risk. Heikkilä and Heikkilä (2005) hold innovation and an organizational environment that allows for new ideas and does not punish for error to characterize an empowered working community. Beairsto (2000) has suggested that ability to permit ambiguity, acknowledge paradox and initiate change characterize an empowered person. Such abilities can also be linked to risk taking and managing risk.

4.2.1.2 Relevant

An empowered partner is relevant. Relevancy consists of community consciousness, openness for local participation, and contextualization. It could be conceived as the opposite of an intervention that is offered to communities and stakeholders on a "take it or leave it" basis.

Contextual

Contextualization in reference to relevancy is a rather broad concept. It encompasses the common connotation of contextualization, that is, cultural awareness and adaptation of interventions to fit the surrounding cultural setting. This comprises the idea of utilizing culturally sound and acceptable techniques. In addition, contextualization was considered to encompass the usage of available resources. The idea is close to the idea related to independency in that the interventions are planned at a level that can be sustained by the community. In short, a contextualized partner considers local realities and plans interventions to in line with these realities.

Community Conscious

Community consciousness refers to the ability to see beyond a small segment of a society, organization, or a group. It suggests that an empowered partner is present in the life of a community in a real, integrated, way. An empowered partner does not hide

behind paper work and in offices but senses the heart-beat of the community it works with. Being present in the community enables the partner to detect real needs in it and to respond in a relevant manner. A respondent wrote:

> *Mainly, our partners consist of small communities that normally think of reaching out to small groups or a narrow sector. It is a totally new idea to reach out to the community starting from its leaders and then working down to the community as a whole. In what comes to working with the officials, to go away from papers to a practical level is, in a similar way, revolutionary.* (D3Q1)[63]

Participation Friendly

Participation was also seen pertinent to an empowered partner. To be more specific, an empowered partner welcomes the participation of the target groups and stakeholders. To welcome participation, was also seen as willingness to be advised and to learn from the beneficiaries and stakeholders. Interestingly, the idea of welcoming participation occurred only once in the responses collected during the first Delphi round. This could suggest that the element of participation was not deemed as a crucial factor in empowerment. On the other hand, participation is one of the most common ideas and themes in development practice. Therefore, it might be that the idea of participation was taken for granted. Also, it could be that the respondents think of it as a separate entity or a technique that is not normally thought of in the context of empowerment.

Holistic

During the second Delphi round the experts suggested that a fourth factor be added to contribute to relevancy – holistic world view. This suggestion probably arises from the research context. The bulk of empirical data was collected from Fida International's partners that are Faith Based Organizations. Recently, the meaning of holism to FBOs and mission organizations such as Fida International has been revisited by for example by Arto Hämäläinen, the Executive Director of Fida International, in his dissertation (2005). Hämäläinen reminds his readers of the importance of holistic mission work. By this he means that Christian mission organizations have the duty to go beyond mere preaching and teaching to address the needs of the whole person. Hämäläinen suggests

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[63] Translated by the researcher: Kumppanit ovat pääasiassa pieniä yhteisöjä, joiden ajattelumalli lähtee usein pienen ryhmän tavoittamisesta tai jonkun sektorin kohtaamisesta. Koko yhteisön kohtaaminen lähtien yhteisön johtajista on uusi näkökulma. Viranomaisyhteistyössä käytännön tasolle meno pois papereista on samalla tavalla mullistava.

that mission organizations should address the following aspects of human existence: spiritual, physical, emotional, economical, social, and societal (2005, 310). Therefore, the experts of the second Delphi round are probably justified in their remark. If Faith Based Organizations concentrate on the spiritual at the expense of the emotional, intellectual, and social needs of humanity, they are in danger to become irrelevant to the operational environment. In addition, if Faith Based Organizations engage in too naïve mercy missions, more harm than good might be done. Faith based development work, to be relevant and sound, should be based on careful theological and philosophical reflection.

Theoretical Reflections on Relevancy

Community consciousness, openness to local participation, contextualization, and holism that constitute relevancy are themes that occur frequently in empowerment literature. Contextualization, in this case, refers to cultural awareness, and adaptation of development interventions to cultural environment. In addition, it encompasses the idea of utilizing available resources. The latter idea of utilizing available resources as constituting an aspect of empowerment has been explicitly addressed by a number of researchers (e.g., Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Nayaran 2002). It means that empowered entities actively seek ways and means to multiply what is available to them. Therefore, the human and material resources are sustainable from the start. When experience is gathered and a level of confidence has developed, empowered entities can make effective use of the external resources as well.

The linkage between empowerment theories and the ideas of cultural awareness and adapting implementation to the cultural context may be concepts that are not that easy to link to existing empowerment theories. However, for example, Zimmerman (1995) proposes that for individuals, it is very important to understand how systems work in order to empower them. The suggestion is made in a larger context of institutions and societal systems. Yet, the idea is the same on a more local level. If interventions do not appreciate the cultural context and apply acceptable techniques, the beneficiaries are less likely to understand and adopt them. If something is not understood, it may affect self-efficacy beliefs negatively and reduce motivation (Bandura 1997; Koberg et al. 1999).

There are also theoretical antecedents to suggest that openness to participation can be justified as an ingredient of an empowered organization. A number of empowerment theorists suggest that a substantial part of empowerment is that individuals can participate in decisions affecting them (e.g., Argyris 1998; Kuokkanen 2003; Rappaport 1981; Spreitzer et al. 1999; Thomas & Velthouse 1990; Zimmerman 1995). Participation increases understanding and consequently psychological ownership. Heikkilä and Heikkilä (2005) propose that an empowered organization is never established. It is open to change and as a result ever changing. It changes to serve its purpose. An organization draws its justification for it existence from the community around. It can and will change in line with the changes in its environment.

Community consciousness can also be linked to empowerment theories. Kuokkanen (2003) sees an empowered nurse as actively involved in his or her work place – working community. She also speaks of social responsibility and the ability to be a constructive member at the work place. In accord with her suggestions, an organization should be an active member of the community and be concerned about the affairs of the community. In fact, a significant number of treatises have been written on the communal aspects of empowerment. The texts relate to oppression, poverty, and lack of influence that should be addressed collectively as communities or groups (Adams 1996; Eklund 1999; Gutiérrez et al. 1998). Such treatises assume that communities have needs. A need can be an empowerment trigger. Empowerment can take place when a community seeks a solution to a genuine problem or injustice (e.g., Freire 1970).

How the idea of being holistic contributes to empowerment might be quite difficult to grasp. By holism in this context, we mean the approach of Faith Based Organizations to development. Being holistic and understanding holism can boost empowerment through having the right information, understanding the underlying principles of the organization and practices, and increase the sense of competency. In other words, FBOs must understand their theological foundations for development work properly, otherwise they engage in the work half-heartedly. Deep self-understanding and the consequent sense of purpose and feeling of competence have been judged by researchers as being elements of empowerment (e.g., Beairsto 2000; Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Fetterman 2001; Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutierréz et al. 1998; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999). In the organizational context of FBOs, proper

understanding of holism may increase the level of empowerment also by enabling such organizations to be more relevant. If they evolve around the more spiritual aspects of their operations at the expense of the mundane, they are in danger of becoming irrelevant.

4.2.1.3 Networked

The idea of networking offers a healthy balancing factor to the idea of autonomy and independency that were used to characterize an empowered entity. Yet, networking is not just a light and naïve word that is "in" in the development circles. It means a positive interdependency as individuals and organizations on other players. To be able to be genuinely interdependent demands a developed identity.

Interdependent

In relation to autonomy, a reference was made to positive notions of independency that characterize an empowered partner. However, only qualified independency is possible and constructive. An empowerment partner is positively dependent on a network of individuals and organizations. In eight out of nine (8/9) responses of the Delphi experts, interdependency was mentioned. The frequency is the same as that of independency. Interdependency was suggested to mean that an entity in a partnership, whether an individual, organization, or community, both benefits from the other partner and benefits the same. Interdependency can be understood as a quality to work in partnerships without creating negative dependency on the other. In such cases, external resources are seen as additional assets that are not essential to carry out the core functions. Each of the partners can take independent decisions and actions. On the other hand, they can also negotiate as equals. In an interdependent partnership, it is crucial that the partners form a collaborative relationship based on mutual values and common goals. Neither of the partners can impose these on the other. One of the respondents put it as follows: *"The community has deliberately determined its own strategy. It knows its identity, resources, and context. Based on these factors, it can make independent decisions related to its activities. The community can also determine with whom it cooperates and on which principles the cooperation is based"*.[64] Clarified

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[64] D8Q1. Translated by the researcher: Yhteisö on itse määrittänyt oman strategiansa, tuntee oman identiteettiinsä ja voimavaransa ja toimintaympäristönsä ja niiden pohjalta tekee itsenäisesti päätöksensä

identity, goal orientation, and values seem to be the building blocks of a healthy interdependence. Another respondent helps to understand the substance of positive interdependency further.

> *An empowered partner is able to make independent decisions in relation to its work, make plans, and implement its activities so that is not dependent on external help in its core functions. This applies to an ideal situation where the partner is fully empowered. This, by no means, means that the partner could not receive external support. However, the purpose of external help, such as training etc., is not to "sustain" the partner but to expand the scope of work of the partner strategically without creating dependency. Therefore, instead of using the term "empowered partner", I could use the term "independent partner". In other words, the core functions are not dependent on external assistance. I base my arguments on some partners of Fida that do not need Fida to carry out their core functions but to expand their scope of operations into new territories. In principle, Fida is independent, but with the help of external assistance and training, it is able to expand and strengthen its operations. (D9Q1)[65]*

Developed Identity

The experts of the second Delphi round suggested that in relation to relevance, the factor of a developed identity should be added. To the researcher, the addition could be made to the category of autonomy as well. However, in relation to autonomy, strong identity will make little or no contribution since autonomy could be presumed to include the idea of an established identity inherently. But, if considered in the context of interdependency, the concept of strong identity would make a more significant contribution. A partner with an underdeveloped identity will be quite easily subordinated to the stronger partner and therefore less capable to form meaningful partnerships as described, for example, in answers D9Q1 and D8Q1 mentioned above.

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omasta toiminnastaan. Yhteisö myös osaa tehdä omista lähtökohdistaan päätökset siitä kenen kanssa se tekee yhteistyötä ja millä periaatteilla.

[65] Translated by the researcher: Voimaantunut kumppani on kykenevä itsenäisesti tekemään omaa työtään koskevia päätöksiä, suunnitelmia ja toteuttamaan työtänsä niin ettei se ole perustoiminnassaan riippuvainen ulkoa tulevasta avusta. Tämä siis ideaalitilanteessa eli kun voimaantuminen on täydellistä. Tämä si suinkaan tarkoita sitä etteikö se voisi ottaa vastaan tukea ulkoa. Ulkoa tulevan tuen, koulutuksen jne. tarkoitus ei kuitenkaan voi olla kumppanin "ylläpitäminen" vaan kumppanin työn laajentaminen suunnitellusti luomatta riippuvaisuutta. Voisin jopa käyttää "voimaantunut kumppani" sijasta termiä "itsenäinen kumppani". Eli kumppanin perustoiminnot eivät riipu ulkoa tulevasta panoksesta. Perustelen tämän joillakin Fidan kumppaneille jotka eivät tarvitse Fidaa perustehtäväänsä vaan laajentamaan toimintaansa uusille alueille. Periaatteessa Fidakin on itsenäinen, mutta ulkoa tulevan rahoituksen ja koulutuksen avulla se pystyy laajentamaan ja vahvistamaan toimintaansa.

Therefore, to add developed identity as an ingredient contributing to interdependency can be justified.

Theoretical Reflections on Networking

In light of current empowerment theories, the factor of networking could be reflected upon from a number of points of views. For example, one of the ideas that came out in the data analysis is that institutions, organizations, legislation, and other such instruments may become or be conceived as oppressive rather than emancipative (Adams 1996; Freire 1970). In this case the organization or an individual is a part of wider network that creates harmful dependency, not interdependency. This happens if the poor or any other groups or individuals become too dependent on external factors such as social services. The representative of power, capital, or any other instrument of influence may exercise inhibiting control over the other, rather than to serve the other.

Networking assumes the maintenance of such a degree of equality and identity that a mutual relationship that benefits all parties can exist. This could be addressed as positive interdependency. Such ideas have been implicitly, if not explicitly, attached to empowerment by a number of authorities on the field (Freire 1970; Parsons 1998; Rappaport 1981; Zimmerman 1995). Interdependency in a network relates to values as well. If a person can work in a context or an organization that cooperates with others in such circumstances and under such conditions that they are able to maintain their values, feelings of empowerment are more likely to be generated than in circumstances where this is not the case (Kuokkanen 2003; Thomas & Velthouse 1990).

Networking, as defined in this study, has also links to the social dimensions of empowerment. Networking presumes abilities of collaboration, understanding one's role in the whole, ability to draw from others and contribute to the community, ability to stand criticism and to deliver constructive criticism, and social accountability. Networking, therefore, sees empowerment in its social dimension. In line with these ideas, Siitonen (1999) characterizes empowerment as a social process. Similarly, other researchers relate empowerment to abilities to act constructively in a social context, use it in a positive way, contribute to it, and beliefs of how one can operate in it (Argyris 1998; Fetterman et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Zimmerman 1995).

Another component of networking was suggested to be a developed identity. In this research context, a developed or strong identity refers to the ability to make independent decisions and not to be suppressed by others in terms of initiating or controlling action. Such a definition and its relevance to empowerment have been established in the paragraphs above. However, although it is not the task of this study to establish the meaning or definition of identity, it is in order to point out some processes that have been suggested to contribute to empowerment and can be related to identity and its development. Part of identity is how one perceives oneself in relation to the environment and how one perceives the environment to influence oneself/itself. To an extent, this applies both to an individual and a collective (organization, institution, community, etc.). Beliefs about one's ability and opportunity in a given relationship or an organizational context relate to motivation, self-efficacy beliefs, self-authorization, and other such areas of academic inquiry. Therefore, there is justification to apply the findings of such inquiries to the understanding of factors contributing to empowerment. Such attempts have been made by, for example, Beairsto (2000), Beairsto and Ruohotie (2000), Parsons (1998), Ruohotie (2000), Siitonen (1999), and Zimmerman (1995). The present data confirms that such inquiries are indeed relevant to the understanding of the concept of empowerment.

4.2.1.4 Capable

An empowered organization is also recognized by its capacity. Capacity in this context was related to equipping, information, and resources. Some of these factors could be justifiably tossed over to another category without doing any injustice to the data. However, it is enough to note that, for example, resources could be treated under the categories of autonomy or interdependency quite plausibly.

Equipped

An equipped partner in the context of empowerment is one that has adequate training in terms of the core skills needed for implementation of activities in question. Training and relevant knowledge results in ability to plan and implement, in this case, development activities. This feature has been recognized, for example, by Fida as a crucial aspect of its operations. However, seldom, if ever, such activities are consciously inbuilt in development intervention plans.

Informed

Information, in turn, was seen as a means to sustain a partnership. The partner can access relevant information that is needed in carrying out the common task. Sharing relevant information and networking seems to have a connotation of transparency attached to it. Technical knowledge, in terms of conditions of partnership, grant applications, reporting systems, Ministry for Foreign Affairs policies, Fida policies, and so on also fall into this category. Sharing of such knowledge can contribute to the equality of the partners and thus enhance partnerships. The partners called for an increased transparency in this regard.

Resourced

An empowered partner has human and financial resources available for what it can and will bring to the partnership. An empowered partner is also able to assess these resources and make plans considering the amount of resources available. A respondent depicted a resourced partner as: "*He is able and willing to take the responsibility and initiate to organize, manage and motivate members to action, and commit available human and economic resources to reach objectives.*"[66] In the Action Research Seminars these notions were frequently presented in opposition to planning in light of the capacity of the financially or otherwise more resourceful partner.

Theoretical Reflections on Capability

The components of capacity or capability that were judged by the experts to relate to empowerment were being equipped, informed, and resourced. Being equipped has to do with sufficient training in core skills related to implementation of interventions. As pointed our above, context beliefs, self-efficacy beliefs, ability beliefs, and perceived competence are all ingredients associated with empowerment (e.g., Alsop et al. 2006; Bandura 1997; Beairsto 2000; Parsons 1998; Siitonen 1999). In the context of this study, it seems that the partner's perceived level of being equipped for a task has significant bearing on whether empowerment takes place.

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[66] D5Q1

Having relevant information and being able to use it to enhance a partnership relates to capacity as well. To feel empowered, it seems important to feel informed (Parsons 1998, 215). It has also been suggested in the theoretical discussion of this study that organizational learning can enhance and enable empowerment, for learning organizations receiving, making use of, and sharing relevant information is a core trait (Argyris & Schön 1978; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Senge 1993).

It is relatively difficult to connect the ideas related to human and material resources that characterize an empowered partner to empowerment theories. The idea in the data is that an empowered partner has human and material resources that can be allocated to the work. To be exact, in the data, there was an underlying thought of the scarce resources that is often the reality with the partners among whom the data collection was carried out. In this regard, there are theories that refer to the ability to make the best use of available resources and possibilities in a given context (Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutierréz et al. 1998; Nayaran 2002). Scarce resources test such traits as perseverance and challenge self-efficacy beliefs that have been considered by scholars to be crucial to empowerment (Bandura 1988; Eklund 1999; Siitonen 1999). It seems that empowered persons and organizations can maintain self-efficacy beliefs and resolve under difficult circumstances where resources are scarce.

4.2.1.5 Reflective

Reflectivity as the quality of an empowered partner emanates from two concepts. An empowered partner is capable of continuous self-assessment and evaluation in terms of its performance. On the other hand, it is also capable of reflecting on the basic values and assumptions that bear on its organizational life.

Self-reflection

An empowered partner was seen as capable of monitoring, continuous evaluation, and changing of course on the basis of these assessments. Proper self-reflection takes place in the light of clear indicators. Self-reflection aims at development and improved quality of work. During the second Delphi rounds the experts suggested that this category should be renamed as internal and external evaluation. However, the data gathered suggests that reflection is more than evaluation. It has philosophical nuances to it. In addition, reflection may take place in more informal ways than what is usually

assumed when internal and external evaluation is referred to. Self-reflection may take the forms of systematic internal and external evaluation, but is by no means limited to those. Finally, it seems that self-reflection comes close to ideas that are familiarized by theories on learning organizations. Self-reflection, as it is expressed in the data, does not end with self-awareness, but facilitates learning and change.

Philosophical Reflection

Philosophical reflection, in this context, refers to a deep level of self-reflection. It refers to understanding assumptions, purposes, values and principles underlying actions and activities. It is not satisfied, for example, with mere improvement in work processes but why a given suggestion is better. In the AR Seminars a notion that local partners quite often work mechanically to implement the project plan or satisfy the donor, was frequently expressed. This notion poses a challenge to seek means and ways to provide room for philosophical reflections and teach skills to produce them.

Theoretical Reflections on Reflectivity

Self- and philosophical reflection has been clearly seen as contributing to empowerment by empowerment theorists. The scholars who have written on the intrinsic aspects of empowerment emphasize self-reflective abilities in what comes to personal empowerment (Bandura 1997; Beairsto 2000; Koberg et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Parsons 1998; Siitonen 1999). The same is true of organizational researchers who also see the importance of monitoring, evaluation, adjustment in organizational practices and assumptions, and critical reflection for empowerment in corporate contexts and professional growth (Argyris & Schön 1996; Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Kincheloe 2003; Koberg et al. 1999).

This idea comes close to the concept of double-loop learning that Argyris and Schön have popularized in the context of organizational inquiries (1978; 1996). It seems that learning which can be described as empowering, does not relate to the internalization of information. It has to do with frameworks, mental models. Learning that empowers is not satisfied with what to do and how to do. A reflective person or organization asks deeper questions. Why are we doing this? Why should we do this? Are there any other ways of doing this? In fact, Beairsto and Ruohotie (2003) would probably associate the last question to what they have termed as triple-loop learning. This refers to learning

that does not only modify existing mental models and frameworks to think, but actively seeks to create new ones.

4.2.1.6 Significant

Influential and Multiplier

Significance is related to two key concepts: influence, and multiplication. Influence relates to the changes in the working context that the partner is able to bring about. An influential partner aims to empower others as well. In this way its sphere of influence is expanded gradually. On the other hand, if the activities of the partner are truly influential, others will desire the same. To put it in another way, if the partner is able to demonstrate success, it probably triggers others to pursue the same. As a result, the activities of an empowered partner are multiplied. "*If the work is participatory, the whole community and holistic health is the target, and the work is carried out by means of funds that can be raised locally, a multiplying project is a reality. In such a case, positive results will expand and others will desire the same. This, perhaps, is the best sign of an empowered partner.*"[67]

Theoretical Reflections on Significance

The ideas of influence and multiplication have been related to empowerment by others as well. For example, the ability of a leader to influence his or her environment has been seen to boost feelings of empowerment (e.g., Eklund 1999; Koberg et al. 1999). It seems that if one is a part of the group that is successful in a sense of being able to influence the surrounding realities, it breeds further expectations of success (e.g., Argyris 1998; Herrenkohl et al. 1999). In addition, as mentioned earlier, being a part of a group that has strong self-efficacy beliefs can raise the level of success expectations, reduce the threshold of embarking on a course of action, and boost perseverance amidst adverse circumstances. Therefore, the data suggests that being able to influence operational environment and the realization that others appreciate what a person or an organization is doing increases individual and collective self-confidence. This, again, catalyzes even further the individual and collective feelings of empowerment.

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[67] D3Q1 Translated by the researcher: Jos työ on osallistavaa, tavoitteena koko yhteisö ja kokonaisvaltainen terveys ja se tehdään varoin, jotka on koottavissa myös paikallisista lähteistä, on monistuva projekti valmis. Tällöin hyvät tulokset leviävät ja muut haluavat samaa. Tämä on voimaantuneen kumppanin ehkä paras tunnusmerkki.

The chart below depicts how the level 2 categories of autonomy, relevancy, networking, capacity, reflection and significance integrate to form a depiction of an empowered partner.
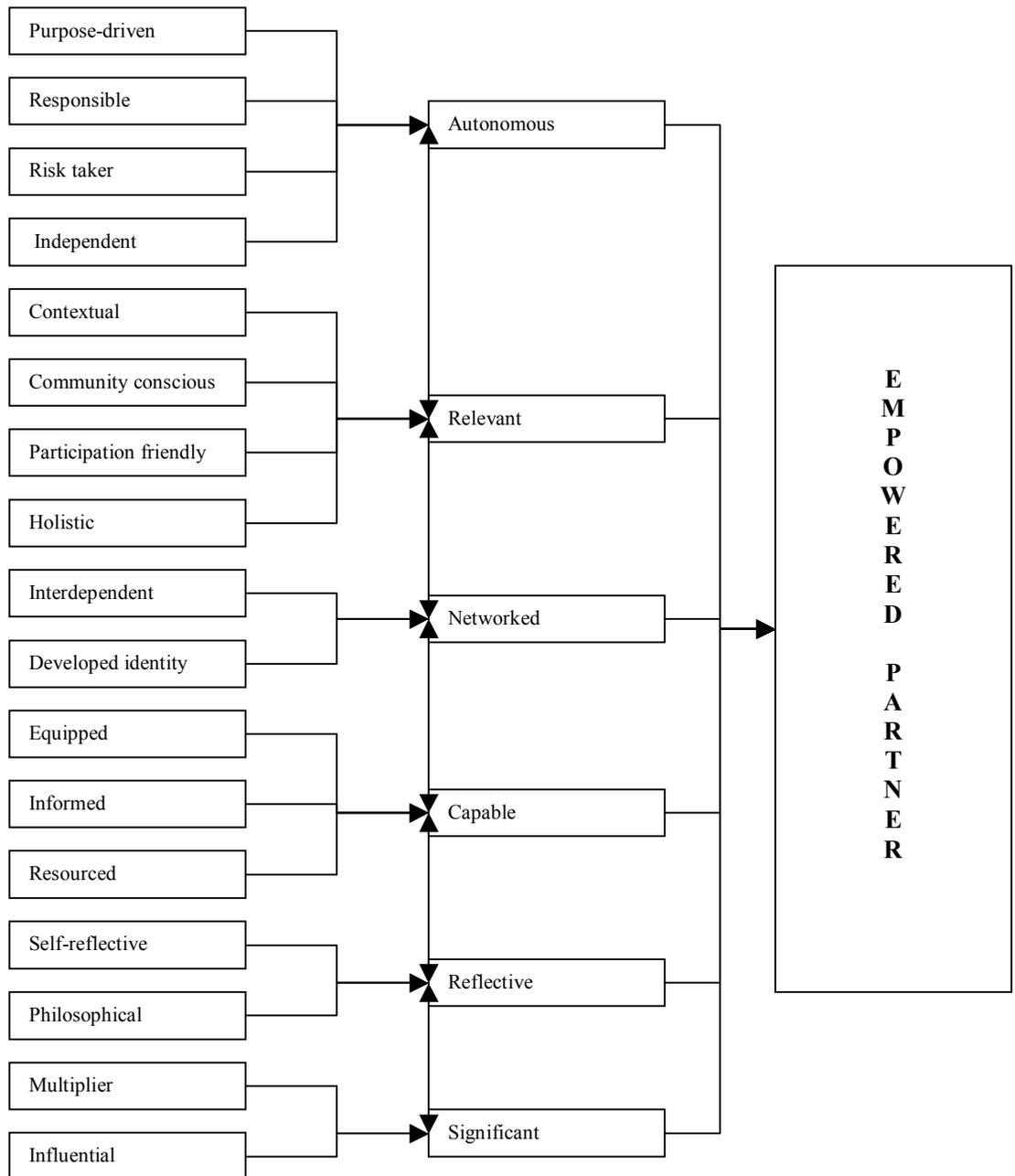
Figure 17. Characteristics of an empowered partner.

4.2.2 *Means of Empowerment*

Whereas the first research question sought to define an empowered partner, the second aimed at defining ways to facilitate empowerment. This section is concerned with the perceptions of experts and development actors as to how one should operate in partnership in order to empower. Of course, empowering the other can be thought of presuming that the other partner is more powerful and therefore is in a position to empower. Whether such a relationship can be considered a partnership or not, should be seriously considered. This discussion will be conducted in the summary of research results.

4.2.2.1 Invest in People

The factors forming the category designated as investing in people were, in the analysis of the first Delphi round, organized into three level 2 categories: invest in people, build character, and reinforce self-image. However, the expert group that examined the analysis of first Delphi round, suggested that the contents of the three level-two categories should be reorganized under one heading – invest in people. Investing in people consists of careful recruitment, capacity building, promoting values, moulding attitudes, role modeling, creating theological awareness, reinforcing self-image, and celebrating success.

Recruit Carefully

Careful recruitment was associated strongly with cultural leadership patterns. It was noted that personal relationships and kinship may override substance in recruitment. This has resulted in personal ownership of the intervention rather than community or collective ownership. Such practices may be convenient in the short-run, but might cause serious problems in the long-run. The following excerpt may, unfortunately, describe recruitment in some organizational settings.

> *As mentioned in the previous section, empowerment is a process. Careful selection of key personnel is critical to the on-going success of the project/program. I have observed situations where strong leaders have assumed, directly or indirectly, personal ownership of the project/program. They have placed in the organization persons that are related, or with close ties of some sort. Leaders often value loyalty more than ability and in developing nations, where finances suddenly become available, often at a higher level than that to which they may be accustomed, the available positions become "jobs" that in a deeper sense*

may not be accompanied by the vision intended by the donor group. (D1Q2)

Such a situation is not easy from implementation and partnership point of views. If the culture is hospitable to such practices, the expatriate might soon become an unwanted person by the national partners. Although the previous description was recognized in the seminars, there were virtually no tools offered by the informants as to how to deal with the issue. The phenomenon was seen as deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the countries where the informants came from.

Build Capacity

The role of capacity building was seen as crucial in six Delphi answers out of nine (6/9). The substance of capacity building was seen quite wide in scope. It was perceived to encompass creating awareness, utilization of resources, training in project management and initiation, providing tools for self-learning, systematic learning from experience, and on the job learning. Capacity building was also seen as moulding attitudes to be hospitable to the idea of life-long learning. It was emphasized that capacity building should not be limited to transferring of static knowledge, but it should be seen as a broader concept of developing attitudes and mental capacities to utilize resources and knowledge that is present in the environment where partners work. An expert said:

> *The partner is empowered by helping it to find its own resources, use them, and trust them. On the background, there is a strong feeling that each individual and community has their own resources. Quite often they are merely budding. Therefore, quite often, they are not even realized. When there is another partner alongside that has visible resources, one does not even look for one's own resources. On the other hand, it is not enough to be aware of one's own resources. There is also a need to learn to utilize them.* (D6Q2)

The more resourced partner needs to have a clear vision of how to use its resources so that they become empowering rather than inhibiting catalysts.

As noted, capacity building comes close to the idea of life-long learning. It may encompass teaching task-oriented and specific skills. However, it should not be limited to this. In addition to transfer of know-how, capacity building should emphasize the teaching of abilities, skills, and attitudes that enable life-long learning and problem

solving. One respondent summarized the idea of capacity building in the context of empowering: "*Empowerment takes place both by teaching the partner and giving the partner aptitudes to learn*".[68]

Promote Values

Only one of the respondents emphasized the importance of values in the empowerment process in explicit terms. Yet, the success of empowerment process may be tied to the presence and consistent practicing of sound ethical values. However, for the most part, ideas that relate to ethics and values were quite implicit in the data. Given the emphasis that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has put on ethics and fight against corruption, such subtleness and implicit references were, perhaps, quite surprising. This leaves significant room for the interpretation of the role of ethics in empowerment. It might be that the Northern or more resourced partner is unaware of the role of ethics in the building up of welfare societies in, for example, the Nordic countries. On the other hand, it may be a subconscious thought that if "western" administrative practices are taught, the ethical principles that make them work, come automatically along. Yet, judged by the data, this seems not to be the case. The transferal of organizational and best practices applied successfully in some other parts of the world does not necessarily effect change in attitudes, behaviour, and culture. Therefore, some noble efforts result in failure.

Mould Attitudes

Moulding attitudes was discussed especially in the contexts where a negative dependency has been developed over time or which have strong cultural practices that might hinder development. Therefore, it is important to see, as one of the experts suggested, empowerment as a changing process of attitudes. "*Empowering a partner means a drastic change of attitudes. Rejecting old ways of doing things is always difficult. It is especially difficult in a community with traditions developed over a long time. It is easier to move forward in a community that is rather young or otherwise going trough significant changes.*"[69] As mentioned in relation to promoting values,

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[68] D8Q2

[69] D3Q2, Translated by the researcher: Kumppanin voimaannuttaminen tarkoittaa yleensä asennetasolla suurta muutosta. Vanhojen toimintatapojen hylkääminen on aina vaikeaa, ja erityisen vaikeaa se on yhteisössä, jossa on pitkät perinteet. Helpommin päästään eteenpäin yhteisössä, joka on uusi tai muuten voimakkaassa muutoksessa.

values and attitudes are, to a great extent, held to be generated by the surrounding culture. To mould existing attitudes, especially among the adult population, running a development intervention, is often a challenging and long-term task. Furthermore, if the prevailing macro-societal culture is not simultaneously changing towards the same assumptions and values that the development interventions promote, they are in danger of remaining a drop in the sea or, at best, an island living its own macro-scale development life. Yet, again, the seminars offered practically no constructive ideas as to how to tackle the issue.

Role Model

Role modelling was also seen as an important tool to bring about change and empowerment. Role modelling, here, is not limited to personal example, but refers to a broader concept of organizational success and best practices. Positive results motivate others to attempt the same. In addition, they lower the resistance to change since positive results have been evident elsewhere. An expert gave a practical example:

> *The best way to advocate change is a positive model. An idea presented in theory is concretized when its results can be seen in practice. In Thailand, we had no-one that wanted to implement a CHE-project in their work. It was evident that people held their own practices superior and did not feel comfortable with the new model. When one of the missionaries and the associated team began to implement it, they were closely monitored. Now, after five years, there are visible results. Entire communities have been changed and new churches have been established. Although there are still doubts to apply the method on a larger scale, the resistance has been reduced significantly...* (D3Q2)[70]

Create Theological Awareness

Investing in people was also seen in light of increasing their theological understanding. This proposition should be seen against the background that the bulk of the data was gathered from organizations and individuals that work with Faith Based Organizations.

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[70] D3Q2, Translated by the researcher: Tärkein tapa viedä muutosta eteenpäin on positiivinen malli. Teoriassa esitetty asia saa konkretian, kun sen tulokset näkyvät käytännössä. Thaimaassa ei alkuun ollut ketään halukasta ottamaan CHE-projektia omaan työhönsä. Ajatukset oman toimintamallin hyvyydestä ja uuden mallin vierastaminen olivat vahvasti esillä. Kun yksi lähetti tiimeineen aloitti työn, sitä seurattiin tarkasti. Nyt viiden vuoden jälkeen tulokset ovat selvästi näkyvillä. Kokonaisia kyläyhteisöjä on muuttunut ja uusia seurakuntia syntynyt. Vaikka vieläkin epäröidään mallin laajaan käyttöönottoon, on alun vastustus selvästi vähentynyt…

The implementers of small-scale projects and programmess are often volunteers from churches and those who assume key positions in decision making processes are the church leaders. The way such persons conceptualize church related projects and programmes is coloured by theology. If the activities that the persons engage in, cannot be articulated in theological terms and based on sound theological understanding, commitment might remain rather superficial. The reason, at least in the case of Fida International, why theological reflection in terms of development and relief activities has not been emphasized in the past, most probably stems from formal relationship with the main donor, the Government of Finland. Since the policies regulating the usage of development funds explicitly notes that the funds should not be used for proselytism, the theological issues have not been transparently discussed in an open manner. However, as one of the experts stated during the second Delphi round, the theological issues should be seriously considered and addressed. Fida and its partners usually employ theological language in their operations and communication with its partners and supporters. If development issues can be presented in theological terms and language, they are more easily adopted and more meaningful to the stakeholders.

Reinforce Self-image

One way to invest in people is to reinforce the self-image of the partner. The distinction between the concepts of self-image and identity could not be established clearly from the data. Reinforcing self-image can take place through processes that are similar to those discussed in relation to capacity building of the partner. It was suggested that facilitating the development of vision, teaching skills necessary for development interventions, being transparent in sharing information, and evoking the partner to trust its own resources reinforce self-image. In fact, one of the respondents used the development of a child into an adult as a metaphor for the empowerment process. Part of that process is the formation of self-image.

> *"The process of empowering a partner is a similar process to rearing up children. The partner needs care, advice, training, and a safe environment. It is also very important that it can try the limits of its capacity… When rearing up is no longer needed, the other partner can withdraw to the background, and at a right time we must also realize to proceed to empower others."*[71]

[71] D8Q2, Translated by the researcher: Kumppanin voimauttaminen on siis samankaltainen prosessi kuin lastenkasvattaminen. Kumppani tarvitsee hoitoa, neuvontaa, koulutusta, turvallista kasvuympäristöä ja

The handing over of the work or exit plan from a development intervention is by no means a novel idea. However, during the ten years of experience, in numerous seminars with expatriate and local project personnel, and in the AR Seminars, the idea that the localized organization is truly empowered when they empower others has never come up. It seems that the partner engaging in empowerment efforts is satisfied if the national partner can somehow run activities. However they seldom leave the local partner with a challenge to grow beyond that. It seems that, if the national (or the Northern partner) organization does not have this challenge, it will stagnate and begin a reversing process.

Celebrate Success

Finally, in what comes to investing in people, an important ingredient is to celebrate success. Celebration is a public recognition and appreciation of achieved results. An expert emphasized that the celebration should involve the whole community and not only the partners.[72]

Theoretical Reflections on Investing in People

The level 2 category of investing in people includes the components of reinforcing self-image, celebrating success, creating theological awareness, modelling roles, moulding attitudes, promoting values, building capacity, and recruiting carefully. Reinforcing self-image and celebrating success can be linked to empowerment theories that highlight the importance of motivational components in empowerment. Motivation is linked to self-efficacy and context beliefs as well as ability perceptions that govern a person's or an organization's judgment whether to engage in or maintain a given course of action. Therefore, efforts to boost self-image, motivate and celebrate success can be justified from a theoretical perspective as proposed means to empower (Antikainen 2005; Bandura 1997; Fetterman 2001; Kincheloe 2000; Koberg et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Parsons 1998; Pintrich & Ruohotie 2000; Siitonen 1999; Zimmerman 1995). In addition, building the capacity of the individuals can be seen as a way to reinforce self-

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erittäin tärkeää on, että kumppani saa ja voi kokeilla omien valmiuksiensa riittävyyttä… Kun ei enää tarvita holhoamista niin voidaan vetäytyä taka-alalle ja oikealla hetkellä on myös tajuttava lähteä voimauttamaan muita kumppaneita.

[72] D5Q2

image and thus the beliefs that relate to competence and efficacy (e.g., Alsop et al. 2006; Koberg et al. 1999).

Creating theological awareness, moulding attitudes, and promoting values are activities that relate to mental processes and touch the deep levels of cognition and values. Such issues can be linked to empowerment theories, at least, implicitly. The importance of values to empowerment process has been discussed, for example, by Kuokkanen (2003) and Siitonen (1999). If a person feels that the environment does not support his/her values, he or she is less likely to feel empowered (Siitonen 1999, 128-129). Creating theological awareness and moulding attitudes can be linked to empowerment in a number of ways. For example, it has been argued that an empowered person wants to know the principles that underlie a given course of action or practise and that he or she has a deep desire to understand the processes and the environment around him/her (Alsop et al. 2006; Antikainen 2005; Beairsto 2000; Siitonen 1999; Zimmerman 1995). An empowered person is aware of what to do and why to do it. He or she understands why it is good to engage in a given course of action in terms of its value and why it is beneficial in terms of achieving a goal.

4.2.2.2 Focus on Local Assets

Focus on local assets emerged as another level-two category from the data. In the discussion of the experts during the second Delphi round, the category was deemed very essential to the empowerment process. In the data, focus on local assets consisted of three level-one categories: building on local leadership, building on local resources, and contextualization.

Build on Local Leadership

Building on local leadership was seen to be crucial since local culture and local ways are endemic in a local leader. It was also suggested that a local leader can react more effectively to emerging crisis situations. In a development collaboration context, the issue is also important in terms of sustainability. Examples were mentioned about interventions where locals were quickly recruited to menial and routine tasks but not to management and leadership positions. When the expatriates leave, they try to put in local leadership as the last thing. In such cases, it easily happens that there is no sufficient time to train and prepare people for this transition. The local people have not

necessarily been consulted in leadership selection nor have they had enough time to get used to the local leaders as authorities instead of the expatriates. Quite often the result is a rocky time of transition that may in the worst case jeopardize the achievements of the intervention.

Build on Local Resources

In one sense, building on local resources could include building on local leadership as well. However, here the emphasis is more on material resources and specific skills. The empowerment process was perceived as a process to promote the use of local material resources and skill. Materially resourced partner was seen as a threat to empowerment since it can distract the other partner from tapping into its own resources. In addition, if a more resourceful partner is proximate, it is easily perceived as an easy way out of problems and an avenue for quick gain. If interventions are based on local resources, then it is less likely that a harmful dependency will develop over time.

Contextualize

Contextualization was referred to in a sense of adapting to new environments. A good idea is not always transferable from one context to another without substantial adaptations. The core principles of a successful intervention might be applicable, but they should wear local clothes. Such an adaptation process demands time and the ready concept may seem a quick route forward. However, too hastily planned and applied intervention jeopardizes internalization of the project principles and consequently affects ownership negatively. Insufficient ownership, in turn, will later on manifest itself in poor motivation of stakeholders once the going gets tough.

Theoretical Reflections on Focusing on Local Assets

To focus on local assets has to do with contextualization, building on local resources and leadership. Contextualization, in this context, comprises the ability to innovate and apply knowledge to a given context. It is the opposite of blind copying. Kuokkanen (2003, 33–36) has pointed out that, to her, an empowered nurse is innovative and finds creative solutions to problems at the work place. Heikkilä and Heikkilä (2005) hold the same characteristic as an essential part of an empowered work community. It could also be thought that a person who can contextualize must have a significant level of self-confidence and believe in his or her abilities. This trait is emphasized especially in

situations where resources are scarce. Self-confidence and ability beliefs have been attached to empowerment by a host of researchers, Beairsto 2000, Parsons 1998, Siitonen 1999, and Spreitzer and others 1999 to name but a few.

For the focus this study, building on local resources and leadership are ingredients of crucial importance. The development discussion evolves to a great extent around the two aspects. In the developing countries, the material and human resources are often scarce. Such a condition is often referred to as the core hindrance of development. From the perspective of empowerment theory, it could be argued that an empowered person identifies resources, formulates goals and plans actions, and persists in pursuing a goal, even if the context is not that supportive (Fetterman 2001). Such traits echo notions of entrepreneurship.

Siitonen (1999, 142–143, 153–156) points out that contextual beliefs and an ability to maintain a state of hope is crucial for empowerment. It is important to note that although he emphasises the importance of a supportive environment for empowerment, the crucial element is the perception of a person. Further, as mentioned, an ability to maintain a state of hope as a key factor in empowerment. It could be suggested that an empowered person sees a given context from a more hopeful perspective than a disempowered person. Such an orientation is imperative in an environment where resources are scarce and opportunities few.

Much has been written on empowerment in relation to groups and communities. At the heart of such treatises is the notion that with the help of certain facilitation a group of people can tap into available resources, control the phenomena in a given environment, and have a sense of influence to a greater extent than alone (Adams 1996; Bandura 1997; Eklund 1999; Fetterman 2001; Nayaran 2002). Marginalized groups, for example, the handicapped and HIV positive in developing countries, may find themselves in an extremely unsupportive environment where feelings of disempowerment may easily take a hold of a person. In such circumstances a group that brings people of similar fate together may enhance feelings of empowerment significantly (Gutiérrez et al. 1998). The experts who contributed to the current study seemed to identify similar notions in empowering development partners. In empowering attempts partners are brought together and taught to identify resources and

make use of them no matter how scarce they are. Being able to utilize the resources available generates feelings of success. Such feelings are suggested by Siitonen as contributing to further empowerment (1999, 154–155).

4.2.2.3 Challenge for Growth

The level 2 category of challenging the partner comprised the following factors: challenging in terms of external impulses to change or grow, setting defined goals for empowerment, and assessing the partner in regard to its empowerment progress, and networking. Although it seems not to be fashionable to talk about empowerment and external pressure, the data indicated that external challenges, whether planned or not, may trigger empowerment. In addition, at times, clear goals and strict demands may open a venue for empowerment.

Challenge the Partner

Although in the current academic debate on learning and motivation, the importance of intrinsic processes are emphasized instead of the external, the data suggested that external factors can play a role in empowerment. As one of the respondents put it: "*External pressure to change often leads to a desire to learn. Often, an external opportunity or threat is a significant factor in triggering the empowerment process.*"[73] Some of the experts associated empowerment with the external challenges in the operational environment. An expert saw that the way to empower partners is to point out the challenges in their contexts and charge them to face them.[74]

Set a Defined Goal for Empowerment

The setting of goals was also seen as an instrument of empowerment. It was suggested that although a desire to be empowered is the starting point, indicators and constant monitoring of the progress should be used to keep the process in check. Although the essence of empowerment is very intrinsic, the intrinsic processes should have external and visible manifestations. Setting goals helps to concretize empowerment and make the process more meaningful.

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[73] D8Q2 Translated by the researcher: Ulkoinen muutospaine johtaa usein haluun oppia ja usein ulkoinen mahdollisuus tai uhka onkin merkittävä tekijä voimautumisprosessin laukaisijana.
[74] D5Q2

Assess

Closely related to setting goals for empowerment is assessment. The experts underlined that empowerment must be concretized. In one way or the other, the level of empowerment should be assessed and made expicit. Then, on the basis of the assessment the empowerment goals should be articulated in a concrete and understandable manner. Otherwise, the respondents suspected, the efforts may be too abstact and foreign to those involved in the process. If this happens, the effort may cause unwanted frustration and ambiguity as to the progress and aim of the process.

Network

Networking, in the data, comprised sharing information, dialoguing, excursions to successful projects, and learning from others. In some way, the idea comes close to challenging. However, the difference is that the idea of networking challenges from a positive perspective whereas the challenging brought about by external pressure and challenging based on goal setting may have more negative connotations to them. Networking exposes partners to success stories and alternative ways of doing things. In the face of positive examples, feelings of empowerment are generated by positive challenges. On the other hand, external examples may create a pressure and challenge that causes dissatisfaction as to the current state of affairs of the organization or the individual. In this case, it may trigger a feeling of need for empowerment. Although, paradoxically, the feeling generated by the more negative ideas of "we are not empowered enough and we need to be more empowered", the end result may turn positive.

Theoretical Reflection on Challenging for Growth

Some of means of empowerment discussed in related literature include: motivating, democratic and participatory leadership, increasing freedom, training, assertion, distribution of authority, allowing for failure, trusting employers and their capacity, etc. (Adams 1996; Dewettinck et al. 2003; Järvelä & Kuokkanen 2003; Laukkanen 2000; Parsons 1998; Okazawa-Rey 1998). It could be argued that, for example, distribution of authority or an increase of freedom at work can be seen as challenges or challenging. However, the prevalent idea of challenging found in the data, was simply to point out external challenges in environments where the partners operate and apply external pressure to meet the same or to change in some other way. It did not have the

sophisticated nuances of emancipation and self-determination, nor the assumption that every person wants to, can be, and should be empowered that are often present in the literature on the subject. On the contrary, challenging, in the research data, had the notion of charging those that for some reason are reluctant to rise up to the surrounding challenges. Not many researchers have addressed the dilemma. Argyris (1998) has pointed out that there are tasks that do not need empowerment and if empowerment is attempted at all levels of organization, the exercise may turn against itself. However, even Argyris' discussion does not fully comprise the notion found in the research data here.

Perhaps, the closest one can analyse how challenging may be an ingredient of empowering process is to see it as a chain reaction. It may be that some individuals, who are more responsive to empowerment and empowerment efforts than the average, see challenges as opportunities enabling them to discharge their intrinsic feelings of empowerment. This response breeds something positive and as a result, they feel more empowered.

Challenging was also related to networking. Networking might contribute to empowerment in various ways. First of all, the other participants in the network(s) may offer moral support and a chance to unite for a common cause. Such notions of empowering have been addressed by a number of authorities on empowerment (e.g., Eklund 1999; Fetterman 2001; Parsons 1998; Siitonen 1999).

The idea of assessing the level of empowerment and setting goals based on the assessment are well in line with the current theoretical understanding of empowerment. The theorists suggest that empowered persons are capable of evaluating their performance realistically, set goals and persevere in pursuing the same (Beairsto 2000; Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Fetterman 2001; Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutiérrez et al. 1998, Senge 1993; Spreitzer et al. 1999; Thomas & Velthouse 1990). An expert pointed out the importance of assessing the level of empowerment before embarking on a deliberate process of empowerment:

> *The starting point is the motivation of the partner to "become empowered". If there is no desire, empowerment cannot occur. After this, the "one who empowers" and the "empowered" should have a clear*

consensus as to the broad direction of the empowerment process. If this is not sketched out, real empowerment cannot take place (perhaps a little). Rather, all courses of action are compromises on the part of the one being empowered towards the one empowering that are made since the one being empowered is dependent on the one who empowers. Thus, it cannot be described as a real desire "to be empowered". If these pieces of the puzzle are in place, one must make a proper base line study to determine the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the partner. On this foundation, one must build a plan that should be agreed on together. The plan depends completely on the base line of the partner. Therefore, no standards can be set but each partner must be evaluated on a case by case basis. (D9Q2)[75]

There is strong evidence, then, that empowerment relates to motivational and self-regulatory cognitive constructs. The data also suggests that empowerment can be assessed and measured to a degree. An assessment of empowerment level and subsequent goal setting for empowerment, pose a challenge in terms of reliable measurements. One of the key areas of future research that arises from the data analysis is development of a feasible empowerment measure for individuals and organizations.

4.2.2.4 Commit to Empowerment Process

In the expert responses to the question on how to empower, it was strongly emphasized that empowering is a process, not an event. Empowerment does not take place in an instant. Empowerment process is characterized by dialogue, mentoring, taking time, commitment, building trust, defining roles, creating a supportive atmosphere, and welcoming participation in decision making.

Dialogue

Dialogue was understood to consist of exchange of ideas, sharing of vision, participatory monitoring, and discussion related to application of intervention plans. Dialogue, therefore, is a tool of implementation. In some sense, it is the bridge that connects the intervention plan and the practice. It is through dialogue that the partners

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[75] Translated by the reseacher: Lähtökohta on kumppanin motivaatiossa "tulla voimautetuksi". Ilman halua ei voimaatumista voi tapahtua. Tämän jälkeen "voimauttajan" ja "voimautettavan" välillä tulee olla selkeä konsensus voimauttamisprosessin suuntaviivoista. Jos tätä ei ole hahmoteltu niin aitoa voimauttamista ei voi tapahtua (ehkä vähän) vaan kaikki toimenpiteet ovat voimautettavan riippuvaisuudesta voimauttajaan riippuvia myönnytyksiä, ei siis aitoa halua "tulla voimautetuksi". Jos nämä palikat ovat paikallaan, on tehtävä kunnollinen peruskartoitus missä määritetään kumppanin vahvuudet ja heikkoudet sekä mahdollisuudet. Tämän päälle on rakennettava suunnitelma joka on yhteisesti sovittu. Suunnitelma riippuu täysin kumppanin lähtötasosta eikä sille voi tehdä standardia vaan jokainen kumppani on arvioitava erikseen.

align their visions. It is also the means to translate the lessons learnt in monitoring exercises and day-to-day implementation into action. If empowerment is to occur in an organization, there needs to be a conscious effort to create space for dialogue on the progress of the intervention.

Mentor and Take Time

Mentoring and taking time enhances empowerment through creating a relationship that allows for exchange of information, giving moral support, and a counterpart to test ideas and plans with. Mentoring was described by a respondent by drawing a comparison to a coach. The following excerpt is an answer to a question: What kind of thoughts underlie the activities you have suggested to empower others?

> *Giving the ball back to them, but staying close enough to cheer them on, give them a back rub, cool water, and emergency aid if they get hurt. Encouraging them to do the same for others (coaches raise self-confidence).* (D5Q2)

The element of taking sufficient time in the empowerment process was highlighted in reference to mentoring. In addition, it was emphasized that a mentoring relationship assumes that both parties are seriously committed to the process. The whole discussion of taking time and mentoring should be seen against the backdrop that usually development interventions are focused on activities and fulfilling goals. These easily override the human factors in the development process. This applies both to the implementers and final beneficiaries.

Commit Long-Term

The factor of commitment was linked to the procedural nature of empowerment. The respondents emphasized that empowerment is not an event, it is essentially a process. A process demands long-term commitment. One of the respondents wrote:

> *Empowerment is not a project but a process. A process in which by means of a long-term influencing one aims at creating preconditions for the partner to assume full responsibility for their development work and, of course, other activities. The responsibility contains a number of duties. Since empowerment is not a small issue, but quite a paradigm shift, the process requires both time and commitment from both partners. Quite often, it also demands presence since the best way to influence is through*

a personal example. Have we, the project officers, been empowered to do our own work? (D4Q2)[76]

At the first glimpse, the issue might seem obvious. However, the long-term commitment factor seems to be in some sort of a tension with the ideals of project implementation that emphasize the temporary nature of the intervention. Of course, the development cooperation actors are consciously avoiding creating a negative dependency and therefore are keen to repeat the mantra of temporary investment of resources in a given project. However, it seems that a healthy balance between the temporary nature of development interventions and the fact that to succeed, they need time and long-term consistent influencing among the beneficiaries.

Build Trust

Commitment is also needed in building trust. Building trust takes place through relationships. Building trust and relationships takes time, requires patience, and calls for repetition and ability to endure disappointments. The road to success in a different culture might be quite different from what the empowerment agents have been accustomed to in their native cultures.

> *The work takes time, requires patience, calls for repetition and ability to endure disappointments. At least in Asia, everything occurs in a long time line where personal relationships are all in all. Usually, written agreements are made to please the western partners and when signed, will not be revisited. What really matters are relationships and trust. (D3Q2)*[77]

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[76] Translated by the researcher: Voimaannuttaminen ei ole projekti vaan prosessi, jossa pitkäaikaisella vaikuttamisella pyritään luomaan edellytykset sille, että kumppanilla on täysi vastuu omasta kehitysyhteistyöstään ja luonnollisesti muustakin toiminnastaan. Tähän vastuuseen sisältyy tietysti myös velvollisuudet.

Koska kyseessä ei ole mikään pikkujuttu vaan melkoinen paradigman muutos, tämä prosessi vaatii sekä aikaa että sitoutumista molemmilta osapuolilta. Usein se myös edellyttää paikallaoloa, sillä edelleenkin paras vaikuttamisen malli on oma esimerkki. Olemmeko me projektityöntekijät voimaantuneet tekemään omaa työtämme?

[77] Translated by the researcher: Työ vaatii aikaa, kärsivällisyyttä, kertausta ja turhautumisen kestoa. Ainakin Aasiassa kaikki asiat tapahtuvat pitkässä aikajatkumossa, jossa henkilökohtaiset suhteet ovat kaikki kaikessa. Yleensä kirjalliset sopimukset tehdään vain länsimaisten mieliksi, ja tekemisen jälkeen niitä ei katsota. Asian ratkaisee ihmisten väliset suhteet ja luottamus.

Define Roles

Partnership is a relationship that has a purpose. In order to work effectively toward the purpose of partnership, the respondents deemed it necessary to define the roles of the partners very clearly. Especially, it was emphasized that the person or organization that endeavours to empower should be very role conscious. It has been noted earlier that empowerment has to do with independence, assuming responsibility, and local initiative. If the partner who aims at empowering the other, gets too much involved in these areas, its presence may become disempowering. Proper assessment of each partner was also seen as crucial to the empowerment process. In assessment, the empowerment level of the partner is mapped out, and activities aiming at empowerment will be designed on this basis. It was emphasized that each partner is very different and one should not assume that there is a proper way to empower.

Create an Atmosphere

Another ingredient in commitment to empowerment process is creating a supportive atmosphere. In the analysis of the data that was presented to the experts of the second Delphi round, it was seen as an independent category. However, the experts suggested that it should be integrated into the category of commitment to empowerment process, which was considered justifiable by the researcher. It seems that empowerment takes place best in an atmosphere that tolerates mistakes, allows for new initiatives and experiments, provides encouragement, gives moral/ideological/economical support to the decisions of the partner, and challenges the partners to grow. An expert described the role of the supportive atmosphere in an empowering process:

> *An enabling environment and infrastructure is present that gives freedom for the partner to take control of their own lives and make good decisions about the way forward. It is a change from a position of powerlessness to one of influence. This can be facilitated by: participation by all members (or their trusted representatives) at all levels of decision making, theological teaching of the churches social responsibility (grassroots to national level), encourage self-empowerment, taking initiatives, motivating members to action, etc. Increase confidence through vision development, skills training, sharing of knowledge, support the partners decision for action morally, ideologically, and economically. Arrange information exchanges with other like minded organizations (networking). Motivate partners by incentives, challenge partners to rise to the challenges in their contexts.* (D5Q2)

Ideally, long-term commitment creates such a working environment and atmosphere. Both partners have engaged in a mutual learning process where perfection is not demanded and, yet, both parties strive for improvement. In the discussion with the experts, the issue of commitment to an empowerment process was seen as a crosscutting issue. In other words, the attitudes and activities that can be summarized as the commitment to the empowerment process permeate all other categories that are thought of forming it.

Theoretical Reflections on Commitment to Empowerment Process

In summary, in development partnerships, long-term commitment was seen crucial for empowerment. Commitment consists of dialogue, allowing for participation, building trust, defining roles, mentoring, creating an atmosphere, and commitment to an agreed empowerment process. Democratic leadership that allows for and promotes participation, dialogue, mentors and trusts the labour force has been suggested as vital for empowering by a host of researchers (Antikainen 2005; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Järvelä & Laukkanen 2000; Nokelainen & Ruohotie 2003; Okazawa-Rey 1998; Parsons 1998; Senge 1993; Siitonen 1999). In addition, the importance of creating conducive atmosphere for empowerment at the work place has been elaborated on by, for example, Antikainen (2005), Nokelainen & Ruohotie (2003), Heikkilä & Heikkilä (2005), Ruohotie and Nokelainen (2000), and Siitonen (1999). It seems that a long-term commitment eases the tension in the partnership relationship and allows for the development of the traits listed above. However, partnerships should be assessed and common goals set. Otherwise, there is a danger that they become unproductive and irrelevant. Long-term commitment can also reverse the positive impact of empowerment efforts.

The chart below attempts to visualize the factors deemed crucial to empowerment process in development cooperation partnerships. It is different from the previous chart in that it depicts an empowered partner in such a way that one of the level 2 categories is considered to crosscut the categories of investing in people, challenging for growth, and focusing on local assets. The experts of the second Delphi round saw that the three categories all demand significant commitment. Therefore, it is pictured as a crosscutting issue.

Recruit carefully

Build capacity

Promote values

Mould attitudes

Role model → Invest in people

Create theological awareness

Reinforce self-image

Celebrate success

Build on local leadership

Build on local resources → Focus on local assets

Contextualize

Challenge partner → Challenge for growth

Set a defined goal for empowerment

Assess the partner as to empowerment

Network

EMPOWER

Commit to empowerment process

Define roles

Dialogue

Create conducive atmosphere

Merntor and take time

Allow participation

Commit long-term

Build trust

Figure 18. The means of empowering.

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4.2.3 Empowerment Inhibitors

The third research question of the current study related to the factors and processes that were conceived as empowerment inhibitors. In the original questionnaire, the experts were asked about factors that they considered interfering in the empowerment process. In the final analysis, five level 2 factors were identified and three factors were deemed as crosscutting factors.

4.2.3.1 Power Factors

Power factors that may inhibit the empowerment process were: unsuccessful power transfers, politico-cultural tensions, and leadership. Originally, the leadership factor was presented to the expert as a separate category. However, leadership was viewed by most participants to relate to influence that, by nature, presumes power. Therefore, it was decided that power factors form the level 2 category and leadership issues remain a level 1 category.

Unsuccessful Power Transfers

Unsuccessful power transfers relate to situations where a project that has been to a great extent managed by the expatriate partner is handed over to the local counterpart. It is good to note that in current development thinking such a process should not be necessary if the intervention is locally owned from the beginning. However, in the research context, there are still interventions that can be viewed as the initiatives of the foreign partner. In most cases, such interventions have been commenced a number of years ago. On the other hand, it seems to the researcher that a number of new projects having been or being initiated are somewhere on the continuum between a total foreign initiative and a genuine local initiative. In a situation where there is a need to transfer more power to the local partner from the foreign counterpart, a classic danger of transferring responsibility without the necessary authority to go with it is real. A particular problem relates to cases where full planning and implementation powers have been transferred, but the local partner's financial capacity is limited. In such cases, a state of dependency prevails. To what extent the dependency is harmful or positive, seems to depend upon the quality of partnership. Financial dependency and the weakening of local authority often connected to it, is harmful when it becomes a factor

that limits the assumption of responsibility and autonomy of the financially weaker partner. However, if the partnership is developed enough, with proper mutual agreements and understanding of the purpose of foreign assets, the dependency can be facilitative and positive.

Politico-cultural Tensions

Politico-cultural tensions refer to tensions that include governmental stability that can affect the overall development climate in a country, tribal clashes, and politically motivated power struggles within partner organizations. As was noted a number of times earlier, environment is crucial to empowerment. Governmental policies, instability, and politics may inhibit empowerment by creating more or less true feelings of hopelessness and inability to influence. Whether those feelings are true or not, they may inhibit empowerment (Adams 1996; Alinsky 1971; Argyris 1998; Koberg et al. 1999; Rappaport 1981; Siitonen 1999). In such cases where the development NGO is closely church related, there is a danger that an intervention is implemented and managed by professionals, but, in practice, final decision making powers rest in clergy or other religious leaders. Such a situation contains a host of potentially positive and negative prospects. If the clergy has a positive feeling of ownership of the development intervention, it can mobilize human and financial resources from the church and play a genuinely supportive role. This is the greatest potential asset that church-related development interventions have. On the other hand, if the clergy is insecure and not sufficiently informed as to the nature and purpose of the development interventions, the feeling of ownership may result in negative effects. In addition, if the pastors do not have a holistic theological understanding of development interventions in a church context, conflicts are likely. Writes a respondent: "*As to the projects that are implemented on a local church level, one of the weaknesses related to the recipe is the fact that power is concentrated on Pastors and the decisions are often made in a small group. Professional arguments often collide with the spiritual priorities of the Pastor.*"[78] Again, in the interpretation of the researcher, it is the quality of partnership that, to a great extent, determines whether church-related development interventions succeed or fail. Some of the respondents noted that there are governments that have put

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[78] D1Q4 Traslated by the researcher: Seurakuntatasolla toimivien hankkeiden yksi reseptiin liittyvä heikkous on se, että pastoreiden valta on hyvin keskitetty, ja päätökset tehdään usein hyvin suppeassa ryhmässä. Ammatilliset argumentit joutuvat usein vastatusten pastorin hengellisten ensisijaisuuksien kanssa.

policies in place that emphasize the monetary value of interventions rather than the results obtained.

Cultural issues can relate to power factors in at least two ways. Cultural understanding of leadership may vary to a great extent. In addition, the cultural understanding of leadership is mirrored in and shapes the national politics. Political and organizational systems seem to be culturally shaped. Cultures may differ within a country, not to mention the variance on a south-north axis. What makes it difficult to understand and implement interventions in a culturally sound way is often the fact that culture is by nature implicit, subtle. It is not articulated and thought of on a conscious level. This creates tensions in implementation. The tensions are difficult to deal with since, as pointed out, they emanate from such deep levels of psychological make-up that the parties are incapable to deal with them.

Leadership

The leadership issues that may inhibit empowerment overlap to some extent with political matters. However, it was explicitly pointed out in four answers out of nine (4/9) as a significant inhibiting factor. Therefore, its treatment as a separate entity can be justified. Interestingly, both an over-exercise of leadership and the lack of it can inhibit empowerment. The respondents saw that strong leadership poses a threat for development interventions since it can overrule the principle of participation. Participation is supposed to guarantee relevancy of activities and local ownership. In development circles, the leaders may form a closed circle of people that are conversant with development issues. This results in thin leadership arsenal in organizations. A respondent wrote:

> *No matter how much one attempts to consider all factors, organizations are always vulnerable. I mean that when we use the term empowered partner, it may well be that only a few persons in our partner organization are on the ball. If these persons leave the organization, it can collapse psychologically, even if it continues its operations. This relates especially to organizations that are small, their leaders are few or their implementing organ is undersized. This issue seems to be a constant problem. When the resources are scarce to empower only a limited*

number of persons, we create tiny elite that is fully immersed in implementation and grasp the principles of our operations. (D9Q4)[79]

So, when there is leadership, the over-exercise of leadership position, lack of succession plan, selfishness, and the limited number of capable persons may turn the impact of leadership against empowerment. On the other hand, if there are no champions that lead the way, empowerment may not occur. A successful intervention may, in some cases, result from the willingness of an individual or a group of only a few persons to see change. Finally, it is good to remind the readers that in terms of leadership, skills in interpersonal relationships were seen as a very important success factor. Both the more western expert panel and the African Action Research Seminar participants held that in order to succeed as a leader in an African context, one must possess strong relationship skills in addition to the technical expertise. In the west such a leadership-style might be considered vulnerable to corruption and therefore its benefits are easily overlooked.

The data also suggested that management is emphasized more in the development intervention planning than leadership. Manuals, courses, and discussions on planning and implementing interventions discuss project management but rarely, if at all, leadership. If interventions fail, it is often suggested that the reason was inadequate planning, poor management, or an external reason. Seldom does one hear suggestions that an intervention failed because of leadership. The emphasis is often put on Logical Framework Approach and project cycle management. These are, of course, important factors. However, the notion in the various environments where data was collected was that even well planned and managed efforts may collapse because of leadership. Leaders apply principles and plans, motivate, set standards, develop relationships and give direction. As a whole, leadership was seen, by nature, difficult. It was judged especially difficult in cross-cultural contexts. It was also frequently highlighted that leadership is primarily about character, not about qualifications and position. Could it be that the importance of character in a leader is an issue that is not addressed as seriously as it should be in relation to development interventions? The participants told

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[79] Translated by the researcher: Organisaatioiden haavoittuvaisuus on aina riski vaikka edellä mainitut seikat otettaiisin kuinka huomioon. Tarkoitan tällä sitä, että vaikka puhuisimme voimaantuneesta kumppanista voi tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että vain muutamat kumppanin henkilöt ovat sisällä hommassa. Jos he lähtevät, organisaatio voi kaatua henkisesti vaikka käytännössä se jatkaisi toimintaansa. Tämä ongelma tulee esille erityisesti NGO hankkeissa joissa järjestöt ovat pieniä tai ainakin niiden johto tai toteuttava elin on pieni. Tämä ongelma lienee ikuisuuskysymys, kun resurssit riittävät terävimmän pään voimauttamiseen niin luomme pienen "eliitin" joka on mukana hommassa ja ymmärtää toiminnan periaatteet.

numerous stories about how corrupt leadership has discouraged organizations, communities, and nations. A leader should trust, recognize, create opportunities for growth, and challenge the followers even in an African context. If leaders do not create room for people to put their abilities in use, they may disempower rather than empower.

Further, in terms of leadership, it seems that empowerment theorists propagate a style that is democratic, dialoguing, team oriented, non-hierarchic, mentoring, and low-key as empowering (Antikainen 2005; Koberg et al. 1999; Ruohotie 2004; Senge 1993). However, is such a claim valid unconditionally? Although the Delphi experts suggested similar traits as important for empowerment, there were opposing views as well. These views came up especially in the Action Research Seminars.[80] The participants insisted that in an African system there is usually a strict chain of command and each person has a strictly defined place in the hierarchy. It seems that in the modern intervention set ups, Africans are suddenly supposed to exercise team leadership. If the culture is not there in the society, the issue becomes problematic. In addition, they pointed out that there are cases where an expatriate manages the intervention quite independently although it is implemented in partnership. When he or she returns back to the home country, a system of team leadership is put in place. The project personnel have had no time to adopt the new system. To put it shortly, it seems that empowering leadership cannot be unconditionally defined in western terms. It might be that the key to empowering leadership is not found in the specific qualities depicted in empowerment theories. The data hints that some persons respond more readily to authoritative leadership than to democratic leadership. Therefore, it is the preconditioning of the follower that seems to determine the type of leadership that is empowering, not necessarily the style per se.

4.2.3.2 Psycho- / Volitional Factors

Dependency

Psycho- / volitional factors relate to dependency, commitment, and the roles of individuals in a collective. Dependency on foreign funding brings along psychological or mental effects. It brings a sense of outward control that can inhibit internal motivation and suppress local innovation and initiative. It can subtly form a situation

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[80] Dar Es Salaam, 29 10 2003, N=16

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where everything is right in a technical sense. The issues of participation, local input, local knowledge, ownership, and so on have been duly considered. Yet, the tacit assumption is that if things really go wrong, the foreign partner is to rescue the situation. This creates a situation where a dependent state of mind or a more concrete financial or technical tie between two or more stakeholders develops that instead of fostering development becomes an obstacle of it – an overall dependency is created. Dependency can relate to information, know-how, hardware, or financial assistance. These issues are in themselves neutral and may have a positive or negative effect on empowerment.

The following example helps to paint a picture of the dynamics of dependency syndrome. The participants of an Action Research Seminar[81] (n=16) were divided into two groups. One of the groups was given a task to support the following proposition: "It would be best for the developing countries that financial assistance would be halted. This would force them to assume real responsibility for their own development." The other group, on the other hand, was assigned a task to defend the proposition: "It is good that more financial resources are allocated to development work. In this way, professionalism in development work is ensured and sufficient material resources are availed to the development actors." The argumentation proved interesting. Those in favour of halting the development assistance in order to bring about real development suggested that:

- Halting assistance is the only measure to heal dependency syndrome
- Halting development assistance will result in creation of home-made policies and interventions
- Ceasing the assistance forces the developing countries to plan within the limits of their own resources
- When assistance is halted, the locals need to tap into their own resources
- Poverty is the best raw material for innovation
- Assistance does not result in development unless moral standards are in place
- Assistance has affected work morals negatively, reversed natural growth, and stolen our creativity and discouraged people from thinking for themselves
- The attitude should be that of giving rather than receiving, to receive is to be at the wrong end

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[81] Nairobi, 22 10 2003.

Those who were to defend that it is feasible to continue development cooperation argued that:

- Poverty does not necessarily breed innovation
- Technological assistance makes it possible to adopt new ideas without reinventing the wheel which results in more rapid development
- There is positive evidence that lives have been dramatically changed as a result of development interventions
- The problem is not the financial assistance itself, if weaknesses related to it can be rectified, then continuous financial assistance is to be supported
- Failure is often related to the scope of assistance, people who have hard time managing small amounts of money are manning huge projects
- If money is properly channelled to the right kind of ends, it will be beneficial
- Poverty is not always a state of mind, other issues may be involved
- The whole idea of development is sharing what you have for the benefit of the other

What do the arguments suggest? An interpretation is that information, know-how, money, and material or human assistance do not create a state of dependency as such. On the other hand, it could be that the administration and management of the same issues can create it. Good intentions can turn bad if they are not implemented carefully. Information, human and monetary assets, innovations, training, networking, cooperation, etc. are neutral instruments in themselves. It is the motives and ways how they are used that determine their impact on individuals and communities.

Superficial Commitment

Superficial commitment is a twin to dependency. The respondents held that it is not that difficult to portray the image of a committed partner. However, commitment is really measured when things get difficult. In addition, in an intervention, there are often three parties that need to be committed: the foreign partner, the local partner, and the community of final beneficiaries. The experts suggested that with some effort, it is possible to ensure that the foreign and local partner organizations are committed. However, to measure and ensure the commitment of the community is to a great extent outside the control of the partners, and a much more difficult task. Yet, their commitment is crucial to the success of the intervention. An expert writes:

It is possible to aim genuinely at something and to fail. For example, the partner may seem genuinely committed in order to fulfill the prerequisites of the cooperation. However, the real final commitment might not be there. In the background, there is often a previously learned model where, in the end, one expects the assets to be brought from abroad.[82]

As mentioned earlier, a development dialogue easily evolves around the mismanaged and failed initiatives. Failed initiatives and the related negative dialogue are among motivational killers. On the other hand, as the Action Research Seminar participants noted, it seems that the example of even a small scale success can prove empowering. Success stories create an atmosphere of hope, break mental barriers, give the consultants and facilitators the authority to speak, challenge, and motivate. Success stories bring along hope that is based on something concrete. Wishful thinking does not motivate in the long run. There must be something concrete and tangible to keep hope alive.

Another issue that relates to commitment is finances. Finances could be treated as a separate issue altogether. However, here the issue was addressed in relation to motivation and commitment. Whereas none of the Finnish experts proposed that insufficient financial issues would be a source of disempowerment, the African leaders and managers did. At times, financial constraints may create a sense of hopelessness and mental barriers that suppress initiative and innovation. It is quite difficult, for example, for the Scandinavian expatriates to take into consideration such issues as, poor or non-existent social security, the cost of training for the personnel involved in interventions, retirement benefits, and other such issues that are taken for granted in the societies they come from. A demand for generous benefit baggage may be easily interpreted in a way that the person is selfish and motivated for the job for the wrong reasons. In fact, the person may be more concerned of other family members than themselves. Financial constraints may create frustration also in such cases where the personnel are supposed to develop the work and do a quality job. If the financial resources are scarce, motivation may suffer. Therefore, it seems that empowerment, in organizational contexts, presumes both internal and external motivational factors. In certain situations inner motivation alone does not fuel action in the long run. On the

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[82] D6Q4 Translated by the researcher: On mahdollista aidosti pyrkiä johonkin ja kuitenkin epäonnistua siinä. Esimerkiksi kumppani voi näyttää aidosti sitoutuneelta, jotta täyttäisi yhteistyön ehdot, mutta todellinen ratkaiseva sitoutuminen kuitenkin puuttuu. Taustalla vaikuttaa usein aiemmin opittu malli, jossa odotetaan resurssien lopulta kuitenkin tulevan ulkoa.

other hand, if the internal motivation is weak, mere outward factors will not be sufficient for true empowerment either.

Dependency may also lead to a situation where the desire to satisfy the partner becomes the driving force and not the genuine vision or mission of the local partner. Dependency refers to a state of mind that leans on outward solutions and means rather than tapping to personal or corporate resources that are available.

Individual vs. Collective

The experts recognized an issue that has been pointed out to be at the core of the academic discussion on empowerment. Some of them pondered whether it is possible to empower an individual or an organization in the first place. Partnerships are often formed between two or more organizations. Yet, organizations are formed by individuals. Is it meaningful to talk about partner or organizational empowerment at all? If bringing about empowerment is possible in theory, does it not take place through individuals? Some experts suggested that it is possible to influence some among an organization that then move the masses in the right direction and serve as the catalysts for empowerment. Yet, the experts could not put forth any conclusive opinions on the issue. However, to say the least, one should be cautious when using the terms community or partner empowerment. If the terms are used too casually, the individual aspect of empowerment may blur and the complexity of the concept of empowerment can fade to the point that the term becomes meaningless.

Theoretical Reflections on Psycho-/Volitional Factors

The substance of dependency can be analysed, for example, in the light of those aspects of empowerment theories that refer to hope, motivation, ability and self-efficacy beliefs, and contextual beliefs. Siitonen (1999), for example, has addressed explicitly all of the aspects listed here. To him:

- Self-efficacy (ability) beliefs relate to the degree that an individual is able to strive for set goals (129–130, 139–141),
- Contextual beliefs relate to the interpretation of an individual as to how supportive the environment is to his /her intentions (142–151),
- Hope relates to a belief in one's ability to reach his or her goals that feel important even amidst of circumstances that seem to work on the contrary providing a temptation to give up (151–156),

- Motivation relates to an understanding what to want, ability to set goals, perseverance to pursue the set goal(s), and being able to determine the same freely and personally (119–129).

Similar thoughts have been expressed, for example, by Alsop and others 2006, Bandura 1997, Kuokkanen 2003, Herrenkohl and others 1999, Argyris 1998, and Zimmerman 1995.

Superficial commitment could relate to motivational constructs and theories. It seems that if a person is oriented by outward influences rather than inward ones, the commitment remains superficial and wavering (Argyris 1998; Thomas & Velthouse 1993; Spreitzer et al. 1999). Superficial commitment causes individuals and groups to retire from pursuing development goals in the face of obstacles. The experts that provided the research data frequently pointed out that when planning and embarking on interventions, it may be almost impossible to determine the motivational levels of the implementing partners and beneficiaries. Quite interestingly, leadership was held to be one of the most important catalysers of motivation. In one of the Action Research Seminars[83] the participants were given a task to think about motivation and identify motivational experiences in their lives. Leadership emerged as the number one factor. Leaders can have a tremendous positive impact on motivation if they encourage, provide challenges and opportunities, and recognize the potential in those they lead. On the other hand, if the leaders are motivated by personal benefit, it hinders a person from reaching his or her full potential, behave unethically. If they do not listen to the voice of the work force, make arbitrary decisions, and force personnel to act against their values, they will have a negative impact on the motivation of the people they have influence on.

The personal and the collective aspects of empowerment relate to one another in a complex and dynamic way. It seems that the empowerment efforts should primarily focus on "champions" that serve as models of empowerment rather than on collectives. Such a position is also echoed in the research of Spreitzer and his associates. They argue that once a leader is able to influence, for example, their superiors, it breeds hope in his or her followers that they can have a say as well (Spreitzer et al. 1999). Yet, such a notion does not erase the tension between outward influences that may trigger or inhibit empowerment and the intrinsic personal processes pertinent to empowerment

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[83] Naro Moru, 24-27 08 2004, N=7

(Siitonen 1999). It must be kept in mind that Bandura (1997, 477ff.) has suggested that a well functioning group can boost the efficacy and consequently the empowerment feelings of an individual. Therefore, group empowerment cannot be simplistically approached from the angle of individual empowerment alone.

4.2.3.3 Relationship Factors

The factors that pertain to relationship were: shallow foundation, superficial partnership, historical factors, poor communication, and distrust. Again, some of the contents of the factors overlapped. In short, the relational factors may play a greater role in empowerment than the academic treatises on the issue might propose. Empowerment takes place in a setting where one operates in a complex network of social interactions.

Shallow Foundation

Shallow foundation relates to the basic principles of work in a partnership. The experts suggested that in some cases the principles on which the intervention implementation is based are not explained, they are assumed. Even if they are exposed and explained, they might be understood in a substantially different way between the partners. Special reference was made to holism that was seen as the guiding principle of development intervention in church related contexts. Hämäläinen (2005, 310–312) explains that biblical holism is ministering to all aspects of human existence: spiritual, physical, emotional, economical, social, and societal. He sees that Christian faith comprises both the horizontal and vertical dimensions. The vertical dimension refers to the part of the greatest commandment that refers to loving one's neighbour as oneself. The vertical and horizontal aspects cannot be seen in any subordinate relationship. Yet, in clerical circles, the experts held, the more "spiritual" vertical aspect has been emphasized and presented overriding the more "mundane" horizontal one. If the clergy and church staff do not fully appreciate the development interventions from the theological point of view, the operational foundation remains shallow. In addition to the theological principles, there are some commonly accepted principles that govern professional development interventions. Both partners should have a good grasp of the principles to share a common understanding of them. To address this issue, NGOs such as Fida International, have spelled out their particular principles of operation that should be shared with the partner(s) to the greatest extent possible. The challenge is to reach a common understanding of the implementation of the principles. In light of the data, the

closer the common understanding of the values and principles of the operation is, the better the cooperation and results.

Superficial Partnership

Superficial partnership comes close to the ideas expressed in relation to the factors of shallow foundation and superficial commitment. However, the emphasis is a bit different. In some cases, the foreign organization can merely work through the local partner to reach to the final beneficiaries. This may not qualify as proper partnership. In such a situation, the partnership aspect might not be developed. It is, on the surface, easier and faster to work through the partner to reach to the grassroots rather than to build up the partner to do the same. There might be unnecessary haste to reach the final beneficiaries and produce tangible results. The respondents also suggested that, quite often, there is not enough time allocated to know the partner well enough, map out the actual resources of the partner, and set common goals. Such a state of affairs results in superficial partnership.

Superficiality is also related to financial issues. In terms of partnerships, the African participants pointed out that no matter how idealistic one strives to be, the gap in terms of financial ability and expertise remains an issue. A significant difference in financial capacity results in the fact that money becomes a controlling factor in the partnership, not the common development goal.

Historical factors can significantly influence the relationships in development interventions. They may create expectations and thought patterns that govern actions in a subtle way. A respondent put it as follows:

> *The historical tradition of Bolivia, including the colonial looters, has given birth to a way of thinking that holds the success of many welfare nations to result from the riches of the nations in Latin America. In line with this thought pattern, now it is the time to get back at least the interest of that capital. Therefore, foreign financial assistance is more a duty rather than an expression of charity. Due to this attitude, the talk about self-financing is often a mere theoretical play.* (D1Q4)[84]

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[84] Translated by the researcher: -Bolivian historiallinen perinne kolonialististen rosvoajien myötä on tuonut mukanaan ajattelun, että useiden länsimaisten hyvinvointivaltioden taloudellisen menestyksen takana ovat lukuisten Latinalaisen Ameriikan maiden rikkaudet. Ajatuskuvion muakaan nyt on aika saada tuosta pääomasta takaisin ainakin "korot". Ulkomainen taloudellinen apu on siis enempi velvollisuus kuin laupeuden osoitus. Tämän asenteen vuoksi omarahoituksesta puhuminen on usein vain teoreettista leikkiä.

The respondents also referred to historical factors in relation to ways in which development interventions have been carried out. A certain unwritten pattern for "proper" development project may have formed over time. Such patterns may prove harmful for new interventions with different approaches.

Furthermore, in relationships, such as partnerships, little things count. The African leaders frequently emphasized that development interventions are about people. With people little things are important. It seems that in relation to planning, implementing, and evaluating interventions, it is easy to concentrate on big ideas and concepts at the expense of the little things that matter. The development "expert" should bear in mind that a little concrete thing done to an individual may mean more than "getting things right" in the project plans and reports. In relation to the people who are implementing the interventions, expressions, attitudes, and day-to-day issues are important.

Poor Communication

Poor communication referred in the data to problems in understanding the goals and objectives of the intervention. Originally, the factor was named misunderstanding. However, the participants in the second Delphi round noted that poor communication would expand the factor to include other aspects in interventions carried out in partnerships. Misunderstanding goals and objectives of the intervention is but a facet of a larger problem of communication. Special care in communication must be taken in cross- and multicultural contexts.

Distrust

The experts of the second Delphi round added distrust to the list of elements of the level 2 category relationship factors. On one hand, mistrust can be the result of poor communication. On the other hand, it can be a disposition that dictates communication and behaviour in partnerships. Distrust can also result from cultural factors. Cultural factors can become a source of distrust when not understood and taken into account. Local cultures vary and create in part the organizational culture in which partnerships are carried out. In addition, at the governmental level, local values have influenced legislation incorporating, for example, into labour laws or contracts emphasises that may from the western perspective seem awkward. For example, in Tanzania it is a common practice to include in the work contract a clause that the employee is entitled to

go for a leave at his "home" every second year. Home, in this case, may not refer to place where the employee lives or lived at the moment of the signing of the work contract. Rather, "home" is the place where the employee was born. In addition, the employer is to cover the expenses of a certain number of the immediate family to accompany the employer.[85] Such a clause can be seen as a reflection of cultural values. From the western perspective, such a practice may seem cheating and a demand harmful from a business perspective.

Theoretical Reflections on Relationship Factors

In light of empowerment theories, the suggestions of experts concerning relationship factors are relevant. Siitonen, though emphasizing the intrinsic nature of empowerment, also proposes that it is in essence a social process (1999, 117-118). To him, collegiality, collaboration, and interaction are vital for empowerment (1999, 150-151). These elements are elements of relationships.

The importance of shared goals and principles and the in-depth understanding of them, has been judged important for empowerment, for example, by Antikainen (2005), Beairsto (2000), Kuokkanen (2003), and Zimmerman (1995). It seems that empowered organizations and individuals are not satisfied with routinely performing tasks but need to understand the underlying principles and goals related to them. This applies to partnerships and relationships as well. The data suggests that the better common goals and principles of operations are understood by all stakeholders the deeper and more productive the relationship will be.

4.2.3.4 Organizational Factors

Organizational factors may become significant empowerment inhibitors. In the analysis, four level 1 categories that relate to organizational factors emerged: organizational rigidity, poor follow-up processes, inadequate participation, and unrealistic view of capacity. Organizations may feed the feeling of empowerment or suppress it. It seems that a healthy balance needs to be struck between freedom and control in organizations for empowerment to occur. If the workers have a sense that they cannot participate in crucial decisions or other issues related to their work, the

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[85] A practical case that the researcher faced working as the FPCT/Fida Youth Centre Advisor in Tanga during 1998-2000.

feeling of empowerment may fade. Furthermore, organizations can overestimate the level of empowerment to which the work force can arise, or underestimate the same. Both situations may inhibit empowerment.

Organizational Rigidity

Organizational rigidity refers to inability to realign project activities and plans to match with the realities of the implementation environment. Or, if such changes are made, they may be made too late. A respondent wrote: *"One of the reasons for failure could be that one holds on blindly to the project plan even though the project environment has significantly changed during the project span."*[86] A reason why realignment was conceived difficult was the assumption that any alteration to the original plan will be interpreted as failure or an attempt to embezzle funds. However, it seems that a relatively high degree of organizational agility is necessary for empowermunt to take place.

Poor Follow-up Processes

Poor follow-up processes can interfere with empowerment. The processes may be inadequate in a number of ways. They may be seen as ways to gather information rather than tools to steer and improve ongoing interventions. The experts suggested that the processes, when successful, should facilitate organizational learning. In addition, monitoring and evaluation processes should result in concrete learning and realignments in project activities. If monitoring and evaluation do not bring about concrete results into every day work, they are not motivational. Diminished motivation can, in turn, inhibit empowerment.

Inadequate Participation

Inadequate participation refers to mental or organizational barriers that might prevent the beneficiaries or stakeholders from participating in the planning and implementing phases of the project. Unless people are able to participate in an intervention, they are not that likely to see any value in it. This, again, reduces ownership and sacrifice towards the intervention. *"Empowerment can be initiated by others, e.g., government*

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[86] D4Q4 Translated by the reseacher: Yksi syys epäonnistumiseen voi olla se, että pidetään suunnitelmasta härkäpäisesti kiinne vaikka ympäristön olosuhteet onkin hankeen aika muuttunut ratkaisevasti.

policies, or it can be self-initiated, for example, people 'take empowerment' as a result of participation, and take full responsibility for their own development which they execute in a responsible and enlightened way."[87] The same respondent continues: "*Empowerment will be successful only if it achieves beneficial changes and the participants see it as valuable.*"[88] However, participation in the sense of having a mere say in things that affect people may fall short of full empowerment. "*Empowerment means that people have the power to influence the decisions that affect their lives. But the question remains: who pays the price when it involves investments?*"[89] Therefore, it is important to note when discussing participation that, at least, in the context of empowerment, the concept should not be limited to contribution in terms of ideas but also in terms of financial assets.

Unrealistic View of Capacities

Partners may also embark partnerships with quite unrealistic views of each other's organizational capacities. This point of view was brought up during the second Delphi round. The foreign partner may relate to persons on the national leadership level or local leadership level. Some of those persons may demonstrate substantial understanding of interventions and give an impression of sufficient human and financial capacity. However, the levels of competence at the implementation staff level and final beneficiary level may not have been sufficiently researched. Especially, the financial commitment that the partner or the final beneficiary group is expected to assume, is very easy to overestimate. The reasons why it is easy to fail in estimating organizational capacity relate partially to factors spelled out in relation to other empowerment inhibitors. Cultural factors, poor communication, relationship issues, and historical precedents may all play a part in misjudging organizational capacity.

Theoretical Reflections on Organizational Factors

The data suggested that the organization's rigidity, poor follow-up mechanisms, undemocratic structures, and unrealistic view of its capacity may taunt empowerment efforts. The empowerment theorists seem to agree that an empowering[90] organization

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[87] D5Q4
[88] D5Q4
[89] D5Q4
[90] Most of the discussion here is based on the assumption that learning, and learning organizations boost empowerment.

is flexible, stripped of unnecessary hierarchies, and democratic in its goal setting and decision making (Alsop et al. 2006; Antikainen 2005; Argyris & Schön 1978 & 1996; Enkenberg et al. 1996; Otala 1996). Organizational agility has been perpetuated as one of the core traits to survive in ever and more rapidly changing operational environments.

Undemocratic structures, in other words, an organizational set up that does not allow for participation, can inhibit empowerment. In a development project context, participation is thought to increase psychological ownership and thus commitment to a given intervention. The issue of participation has been addressed earlier. Here, it is sufficient to remind that the idea of participation in affairs that affect the workforce or beneficiaries enhances empowerment, has been discussed by a number of theorists (e.g., Adams 1996; Argyris 1998; Eklund 1999; Fetterman 2001; Nayaran 2002; Parsons 1998; Ruohotie 2001).

It was also suggested by the experts that for empowerment, it is important to have a realistic view of the resources and capacities at hand. The issue was highlighted during the second Delphi round. Unrealistic expectations can be looked at from the viewpoint of the one(s) being empowered or the one(s) pursuing to empower. Usually, the experts claimed, the resources and capacities of both parties are estimated to be more than they are in reality. It seems that a correlation to this factor can be found in those empowerment theories that refer to abilities of self-evaluation or self-reflection. In a sense, an individual or a collective to be empowered should have an ample meta-skill for self-evaluation or self-reflection. Beairsto (2000, 50–56) sees the ability of accurate self-evaluation as a prerequisite for life-long learning that he holds to be a vehicle of empowerment. Similarly, Argyris and Schön (1996) point out self-reflection as a key for learning in an organizational setting. Learning, in turn, has been recognized as an avenue for empowerment. Fetterman and his colleagues (Fetterman et al. 1996; Fetterman 2001) have pointed out that evaluation can be used as a tool for empowerment, not only to determine levels of empowerment.

Perhaps, the most interesting ingredient of organizational factors that might hinder empowerment is a suggestion that poor follow-up processes or mechanisms might stall empowerment to a degree. As noted earlier, the concept of empowerment is often associated with freedom, choice, authority, emancipation, and self-determination (Alsop

et al. 2006; Beairsto et al. 2003; Fetterman 2001; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Ruohotie 2001; Siitonen 1999). How does this notion marry with notions of monitoring and related concept accountability?

At the surface, they seem to be at odds. It may seem impossible to conduct an evaluation that often is perceived as a confining and inconvenient event, in a way that it becomes an empowering experience (Fetterman et al. 1996; Fetterman 2001). On the other hand, it seems that empowered individuals do not consider self-reflection, self-evaluation, and evaluation in general as a threat but, rather, it is an opportunity for them to develop further (Beairsto 2000; Beairsto & Ruohotie 2000; Kincheloe 2003; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999;). It could be that monitoring and evaluation can boost empowerment since individuals (or collectives) that are prone to empowerment have, perhaps, a stronger sense of ethics, responsibility, and accountability than on average.

Responsibility and ethics as integral parts of empowerment have been pointed out, for example, by Beairsto (2000), Kuokkanen (2003), Koberg and others (1999), and Herrenkohl and others (1999). Herrenkohl with his associates (1999), have suggested that an individual's understanding of his or her responsibility and authority in an organization, may breed a feeling of empowerment. Therefore, the data suggests that there is a delicate relationship between external controls and individual or collective freedom in relation to empowerment. The concepts are not mutually exclusive as one might assume.

4.2.3.5 Planning Factors

Although, to an extent, the planning factors could have been dealt with under the relationship factors or organizational factors, they quite clearly emerged as a cluster of issues that can be judged to form an independent level 2 category. The factors that may inhibit empowerment in this category include contextual issues, approach, and planning.

Contextual Factors

Contextual factors affect planning. Context is seen here as a broad concept accommodating the implementation environment and cultural factors that may bear on the relevance of the intervention. The experts had detected that often when new interventions are planned, other actors in the same field are not consulted and mapped

out, the public sector policies are not taken into account, and in general the dynamics, such as infrastructure and economical factors of the implementation environment are not considered carefully enough. In fact, some of the participants noted that NGOs can, at times, carry out interventions that are in direct opposition to prevailing government development policies. A respondent wrote:

> *Another significant factor is the insufficient mapping out of the development goals of other stakeholders and the public sector. If the other stakeholders have competing or opposing interventions, or the public sector is not willing to support but rather opposes the intervention, even a well-planned intervention is in danger to fail...In addition, insufficient implementation analyses can lead to unsuccessful interventions.* D8Q4[91]

Unsuitable Approach

Unsuitable approach refers to the technical design of the intervention. At best, taking into account the other actors in the same field and collaborating with them may prove fruitful. On the other hand, although there are generally accepted principles for development cooperation and room for collaboration, each intervention is unique. The experts held that there is a danger to copy existing successful interventions. Worse yet, the approach may have not been thought through from the perspective of feasibility in a given context. It was also pointed out that all interventions require a degree of innovation and creativity. One of the experts put it: "*In each intervention creativity is necessary. If, for example, one will attempt to follow the example of a successful intervention, it may not necessarily work in another environment*".[92]

Inadequate Planning

Inadequate planning refers to the planning process as a whole. In this respect, the experts drew attention to the time and financial resources that are demanded if interventions are to be properly planned. NGOs are often limited in terms of their financial capacity. If experts are used to plan an intervention, their time is often limited and the financial implications they present to the NGOs may be unbearable. A

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[91] Translated by the researcher: Toinen suuri tekijä on muiden asianosaisten ja julkisen sektorin tavoitteiden selvittämisen puutteellisuus. Jos muilla asianomaisilla on kilpailevia tai vastustavia interventioita tai julkisella sektorilla ei ole halukkuutta tukea tai se suorastaan vastustaa interventiota, on hyvin suunniteltu interventiokin vaarassa epäonnistua…Myös puutteelliset toimintaympäristöanalyysit voivat johtaa epäonnistuneisiin interventioihin.

[92] D8Q4 Translated by the researcher: Jokainen interventio tarvitsee luovuutta. Jos pyritään ottamaan mallia onnistuneesta interventiosta, ei se välttämättä toimi toisessa ympäristössä.

respondent wrote: *"In addition, the planning process of the intervention is often too hasty. The reason, most likely, is the high cost of foreign experts and their time-orientation".*[93] Some of the respondents also pointed out that the theoretical orientation of project planning that may not match the reality. The simple questions – who, what, when, where, with what resources – that are crucial throughout the implementation process are not answered and agreed on at the start. Even if they are agreed on, they may not be properly followed up, evaluated and realigned.[94]

Theoretical Reflection on Planning Factors

The issues of overlooking important contextual factors and choosing unsuitable approaches could be avoided by increasing collaboration with other players in the same field. Collaboration is also important for other reasons. From the theoretical point of view, individuals and groups with similar interests may network which may boost the feeling of empowerment and give practical support (Adams 1996; Eklund 1999; Erben et al. 1999). The empowered organization is wise enough to collaborate with other organizations. Collaboration helps to avoid duplication, choose the best approaches and practices, and to give a deeper sense of influence.

At times, inadequate attention is given to the approach of an intervention at the planning stage. The approach may be outright unsuitable or it might be a duplicate of a similar intervention without sufficient adjustments to fit a new context. Innovation, new solutions and new ways of carrying out interventions were seen as imperative by the Delphi experts if empowerment is expected to occur. In terms of empowerment theory, creativity and innovation have been recognized as significant factors defining the concept (Argyris 1998; Beairsto 2000; Kuokkanen 2003; Spreitzer et al. 1999). In addition, if the intervention is not planned in consultation with the beneficiaries, it is not user lead and it might reduce their commitment and thus inhibit empowerment (e.g., Adams 1996; Alsop et al. 2006).

In general, concerns were expressed about inadequacies in the planning processes of development interventions in the data. Planning can be virtually non-existent,

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[93] D6Q8 Translated by the reaseacher: Myös intervention suunnitteluprosessi on usein liian kiireellinen. Syynä lähinnä ulkomaisten asinatuntijoiden kalleus ja aikaorientoituneisuus.

[94] D5Q4

qualitatively inadequate, or too theoretical to be practical. Although, the empowerment theorists refer usually to individual abilities of goal setting, it is not illogical to apply the same phenomenon to collective contexts. An empowered organization, or a person for that matter, is able to assess the environment, personal capacities, device a plan and carry it out even if it needs to be modified to an extent while pursuing it (e.g., Antikainen 2005; Bandura 1997; Beairsto 2000; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999; Spreitzer et al. 1999; Thomas & Velthouse 1990).

4.2.3.6 Ethical Factors

At first, ethical factors emerged as a level 2 category. After a careful consideration, the ethical factors are depicted in the visualization of the empowerment inhibitors as crosscutting issues. This attempts to portray that ethical issues permeate the factors of power, psycho-/volition, human, relationship, organization, and planning. Ethical issues consist of work ethics, nepotism, motives, and corruption.

Nepotism

Work ethics and nepotism were added to the list of ethical factors during the second Delphi round. The participants did not have sufficient time to elaborate on them. However, nepotism is a quite self-explanatory concept. It refers to favouring family members. Based on the discussions during the Action Research Seminars, the concept should be extended to include the tribal issues as well. A factor related to this is the favouring of people of the same organization or mind.

Work Ethics

Work ethics is also to a large extent self-explanatory concept. It refers to personal and organizational values in relation to work. In fact, the values and related orientation towards work are on such a deep level of psychological make-up that they could be held to be assumptions if cultural terminology was to be used. Work ethics relate to practical issues at a work place such as punctuality, loyalty to colleagues and organization, personal responsibility, and commitment to work for common vision. If one or more of these factors is consistently compromised, empowerment will be affected.

Selfish Motives

Selfish motives relate to personal benefits. Quite often the "What do I get out of this?" mentality is displayed at the work place or when initiating a new intervention. A given intervention may not be considered attractive if there are no immediate benefits to be seen and enjoyed. If immediate benefits drive the intervention, there is a temptation to go where the money is available the easiest possible way and not to implement the project employing the principles of sustainability.[95] Yet, even in such cases where sustainability may have been considered thoroughly in the project documents, selfish motives may compromise the intervention in the long run.

Corruption

Corruption was considered to refer to middlemen, officials, and even communities that ask for bribes in one form or the other. In the Delphi panel discussion, it was also frequently noted that some institutions and organizations seek partnerships while having dubious motives. Corruption was held to be a major factor that affects motivation in a negative way. And, as noted, motivation is a key factor in empowerment. Some participants expressed notions of hopelessness in fight against corruption. An expert exclaimed:

> *The influence of politics and corruption cannot be underestimated when evaluating the hindrances that make the recipe not to work. The middlemen that seek to benefit from the intervention are too many and the fight against them is often impossible. Political benefit goes often ahead of the good of the people. The general economic realities in the country have led to a situation where foreign funding is seen as a safe source of income, and one cannot control those who seek cooperation.* (D1Q4)[96]

To put it in other words, the African managers and leaders who participated in the Action Research Seminars had a very deep understanding of the cultural, economic, societal, and human factors that contribute to poverty in particular and disempowerment in general. Yet, one ponders, if there is such a substantial understanding of the causes and effects of poverty, why so little of it seems to translate into action? If a satisfactory

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[95] D5Q4

[96] Translated by the researcher: -Korruption ja politiikan vaikutusta ei voi aliarvioida reseptin toimivuuden esteitä arvioitaessa. Hankkeista hyötymään pyrkiviä välikäsiä on edellenkin liikaa, ja taistelu niitä vastaan on usein mahdoton. Poliittinen etu on usein jopa yksilöiden etua merkittävämpi. Maan yleinen taloudellinen tilanne on johtanut siihen, että ulkomainen rahoitus koetaan turvallisena toimeentulon lähteenä, ja yhteistyöhön pyrkivien kontrolointi ei ole helppoa.

answer to that question were found, then one would probably come very close to understanding the essence of empowerment. The feeling of development workers was that unethical leadership, unwillingness to sacrifice for the common good, corrupt institutions and relationships, and scarce exemplary leadership characters create a condition in individuals and the larger society, where passivity rather than entrepreneurship is more rewarding. In this sense, empowerment seems to be a context issue. However, a question remained unanswered in the seminars. Why such conditions develop in some areas and not in others? Technical assistance and investments seem to bring along little improvement if the importance of ethics and character is overlooked.

Development interventions are about money. Where there is money, an opportunity for corruption lurks around. It was pointed out that one of the problems with donor funding is the way it is granted. Once the donor is satisfied with the project plan, the money is allocated and often taken for granted unless there is significant mismanagement of funds. Mismanagement relates partially to the fact that the donor funds are not stewarded in the same way as personal funds generated through hard work and competition. One of the reasons for this might be that a real personal ownership of the project does not develop since the intervention is supposed to benefit a community of people that is a nice but often very ambiguous concept. In this regard, the African participants saw, for example, the micro-credit schemes valuable tools since there is excessive training involved and the benefit is more individual oriented than community oriented. It seems that, for example, in the case of Fida International, quite a few interventions have been implemented with idealistic views of community participation. On the other hand, small scale pilot initiatives in the field of micro-credit have been promising and support the proposition that in an intervention there must be an element of personal benefit for it to be run properly and be sustained in the long run. Where individual responsibility with a prospect of individual benefit is an expectation, the results seem to be relatively good.

The lack of positive examples, majoring on the failures of development initiatives instead of success stories, and negative examples of mismanagement of funds bearing no real consequences to the persons responsible have interfered with empowerment. Positive examples of integrity and success, on the other hand, set standards and break mental barriers. Corruption and the behaviour associated to it can be viewed as

negative examples of behaviour that in time becomes the standard instead of an exception. Where corruption is not dealt with, and where corrupt activities are exposed but the persons involved bear little or no consequences, a negative culture is reinforced. Finally, corruption becomes a way of life, a prevailing culture.

To summarize, the data suggests that even if planning is done properly and organizational factors are in place but a solid ethical foundation is missing, empowerment may not occur. In fact, good interventions may add to disempowerment due to bad ethics. Bad ethics feed feelings of distrust, disappointment and hopelessness.

Theoretical Reflection on Ethical Factors

A number of empowerment theorists have noted the importance of ethics and unselfish orientation to the concept empowerment. Kuokkanen (2003) suggests that an empowered nurse is characterized by social responsibility, working for a common goal, justice, honesty, and respect for others. The traits presume an unselfish orientation. Beairsto and Ruohotie (2003) propose that empowering management is just and reliable by nature. Siitonen (1999), though putting considerable value of individual's right to choose, set goals, and control his or her actions, notes that collaboration, collegiality, transparency, responsibility, and equality are prerequisites for empowerment. Similar traits have been noted by Fetterman (2001), Fetterman and others (1996), Gutiérrez and others (1998). Heikkilä and Heikkilä (2005, 255–257) suggest that a leader that can bring about empowerment must be characterized by honesty, justice, uncompromising morals, truthfulness, consistency, fairness, philanthropy, and moral boldness.

4.2.3.7 Cultural Factors

During the second Delphi round, the participants suggested that a level 2 category of culture be added among the factors inhibiting empowerment. Culture is a very broad concept and affects the implementation of development interventions in a subtle way. It is often hard to pinpoint what attitudes, orientations, habits, point of views, and decisions derive from cultural dispositions. However, the experts agreed that culture can be both a positive and a negative force in an intervention.

The Delphi experts and the Action Research Seminar participants discussed cultural factors usually from a practical point of view. Witchcraft and related beliefs are still

commonplace and may inhibit development. However naïve and primitive such beliefs can sound, they are still very much a reality for many in the developing countries, especially for those living in the rural areas. In addition, cultural practices such as having concubines and wife inheritance were cited as practical examples that bear on development issues such as HIV and AIDS. However, perhaps, the most significant contribution that was made in the Action Research Seminars was the recognition of the need to reconsider the importance of women in development. It seems that in church related development organizations, it is relatively easy to overlook the role of women. To an extent, this can be attributed to the theological implications that the empowerment of women might bear. Therefore, it is of importance that the partners are provided with enough information and tools to think through their theology of gender.

Although cultural issues were noted as possible empowerment inhibitors, it is very difficult to point out what it is exactly in a given culture that causes problems in cross- and multi-cultural interventions. The present data suggests that at the core of wrestling with culture is difference, that is, difference of expression. The same virtue, value, or principle can be expressed in different ways in different cultures. The following example demonstrates how the expression of love and care might be culture conditioned.

My father had passed away spring 2004. In a meeting for the Fida International partners in East Africa, I met a person I had worked with in Uganda. We greeted and took a long time to talk about personal well-being, family, and work. I told him that my father had passed away. After heartfelt condolences, we drifted into a discussion of how funerals are conducted in my culture and in his.

He told me how he had gone to a funeral travelling hundreds of kilometres just to show up and prove that he had no part in the death of the person. He had to assure the community that there were no personal crutches, no evil-eyes cast, and no spells uttered on the deceased by him. In addition, he told me how everyone in the village must contribute financially to the burial costs to show their love. If you do not contribute, it is interpreted as a sign that you had something against the deceased.

I shocked him totally as I told that to me a forced obligation to give towards a burial could be taken very badly in my culture. In Africa, to show love, care, and respect, is to contribute to the family of the deceased and the funeral arrangements. I told my friend that my father expressed

*his love, care, and respect towards us in that he had insured himself so
that we could arrange for the funeral and it would not impose too heavy a
burden on us who were left to grief.*

After a long discussion with a lot of shaking heads, questions, and bewilderment, we
came to a conclusion that at the heart of both practices are love, care, and respect.
However, the expressions of those virtues are conditioned by our cultures.

Culture bears on the issues that we identify as familiar, secure, acceptable, and what is
worth pursuing for. Therefore, an empowering agent is faced with a dilemma with a
number of givens in the western culture. For example, in the western understanding of
leadership, democracy, dialogue, and team-work are valued as virtues. The cultures in
developing countries may have values that represent the utter opposite. A visionary,
charismatic, opinionated, and authoritative leader is followed to date by the masses.
Such a characterization of leadership is in direct opposition to what has been suggested
to catalyse empowerment by the theorists quoted in this study. If western type of
leadership is applied blindly in empowerment efforts in, for example Africa, the results
might be disempowering. This may relate to the fact that people may be conditioned to
respond to a different kind of leadership than the Western leadership studies promote. It
may be that dialoguing, democratic, and participatory leadership is in theory more
empowering than charismatic and more authoritative leadership, however, if it evokes
no response in, for example an African follower, its effectiveness and the degree of
empowerment it can bring about remaining at a low level. The empowerment agent
needs to learn to navigate in a setting like this.

Theoretical Reflections on Culture
There is little academic discussion available on how culture bears on empowerment.
Therefore any analysis is by implication as seen above. It is clear that the understanding
of culture is becoming more dynamic than what was suggested in the past (Bohannan
1963; Hampden-Turner & Hompenaars 2000; Spradley & McCurdy 1980; Säntti 2001).
It seems that somehow the surface level of culture can change to an extent more or less
permanently and yet the level of essence or deep-level may remain largely unaffected
(Lévi-Strauss 1963; Koivisto 1998). This is evident in development interventions. As
noted, development interventions are easily based on Western assumptions. Those
national partners that are the closest to the expatriate or foreign influence may adopt the

surface level manifested cultural traits to fit in the culture that is prevalent in the intervention. However, once the expatriate or foreign influence ceases, the surface level bounces back near to the original state. The effect is illustrated in figure no. 19.
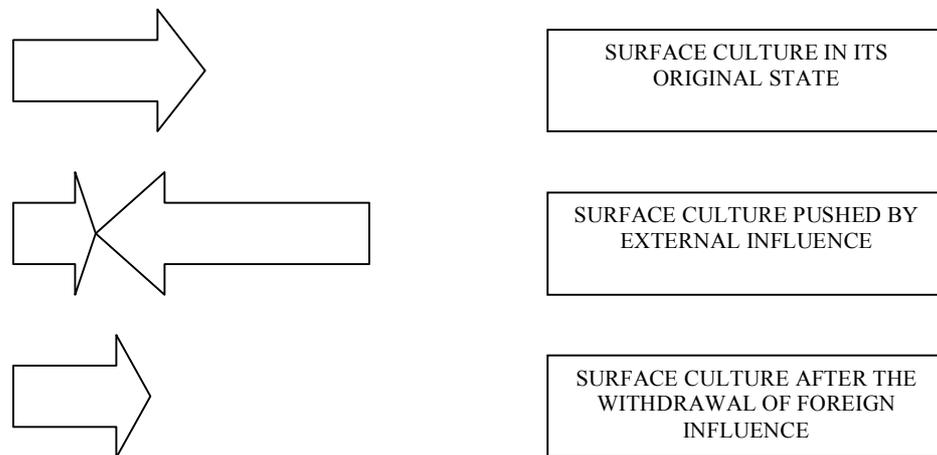
Figure 19. External influence on surface-level of culture.

The figure points out how a given surface level cultural trait is pushed by an external influence that could be a person or a policy that is different from the original culture. The original culture may change or adapt to new ideas to an extent due to external pressure. However, once the pressure is withdrawn, the original culture stretches back towards its original state. Most probably it may not fully be restored to the original state.

In what comes to multicultural ideology in organizational management, it is an overwhelmingly complex issue.   Juuti (2005) has suggested that, in practice, multiculturalism and cultural diversity is positive if it adds value and increases profit. Multiculturalism is not a value in and of itself. Multicultural ideology may be compromised and pushed to the periphery for pragmatic reasons. In practice, it seems that it is too expensive and time consuming to plan such interventions that are genuinely multicultural and culture sensitive.   In addition, at times, from a development perspective, some cultural practices are clearly empowerment inhibitors (Alsop et al.

2006). In such cases, the empowerment agent must make a value judgment to respect existing cultural values or to make an attempt to change them.

In practice, what happens in interventions that involve people with various cultural backgrounds is something similar to what happens in such kind of multicultural societies that recognize cultural diversity and gives them the right to exist. In the end, the tacit wish is to create a binding national culture (Joppke & Lukes 1999). In development interventions, it seems that the representatives of different cultures recognize in theory cultural diversity, but in practice the organization where they work together seeks to form a temporary meta-culture that does not fully represent any culture. Once the organization is dissolved, the representatives revert back to their original cultures.

In any case, empowerment theorists recognize the importance of organizational culture (Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005). Heikkilä and Heikkilä have suggested than empowering organizational culture sees the work force as individuals with their multifaceted backgrounds and not as mere parts of a complex organizational machinery (2005, 55). Interestingly they also suggest that an empowering organizational culture does not presume uniformity or conformity but allows for diversity. As noted, since culture includes a deep level hard to penetrate and surface for cognitive evaluation, it is quite difficult to give any concrete instructions as to how cultures could be channelled to boost empowerment. However, Heikkilä and Heikkilä's summary on empowering organizational culture may prove a helpful tool to those who take seriously the part cultures play in empowerment (2005, 58-59, adopted by the researcher):

- Respect towards each individual
- Allowing each individual space
- Trust in an individual's capacity to act
- Promotion of enthusiasm
- Trust in the ability of the work force to envision, strife, understand challenges of both present and future
- Trust in the power of unity
- Understanding interdependency

- Welcoming participation of each individual and making it an asset
- Trust in the ability of individuals to learn.

Once the organizational culture reflects these characteristics, cultural dilemmas can be overcome and culture can be channelled to bring about development. Of course, as noted before, each individual possesses varying quantities of these characteristics, but each possesses all of them to an extent. No matter how little it is, it can be made use of.

4.2.3.8 Human Factors

Human factors were also cited as empowerment inhibitors. As well as cultural and ethical factors, human factors crosscut the level 2 categories. Human factors simply refer to the basic human condition. No matter how well interventions are planned and the work force led, there is always room for error. Furthermore, human beings are complex in what comes to their psychological make-up. Therefore, it is quite self-evident that such a condition will bear on issues of leadership and related issues of power, motivation, human interactions, organizational life, and planning.

The factors discussed above that inhibit empowerment are depicted in the figure below. The level 2 factors of power, Psycho- /volition, relationships, organization, and planning are described as interacting. Cultural, human, and ethical factors crosscut all other factors.
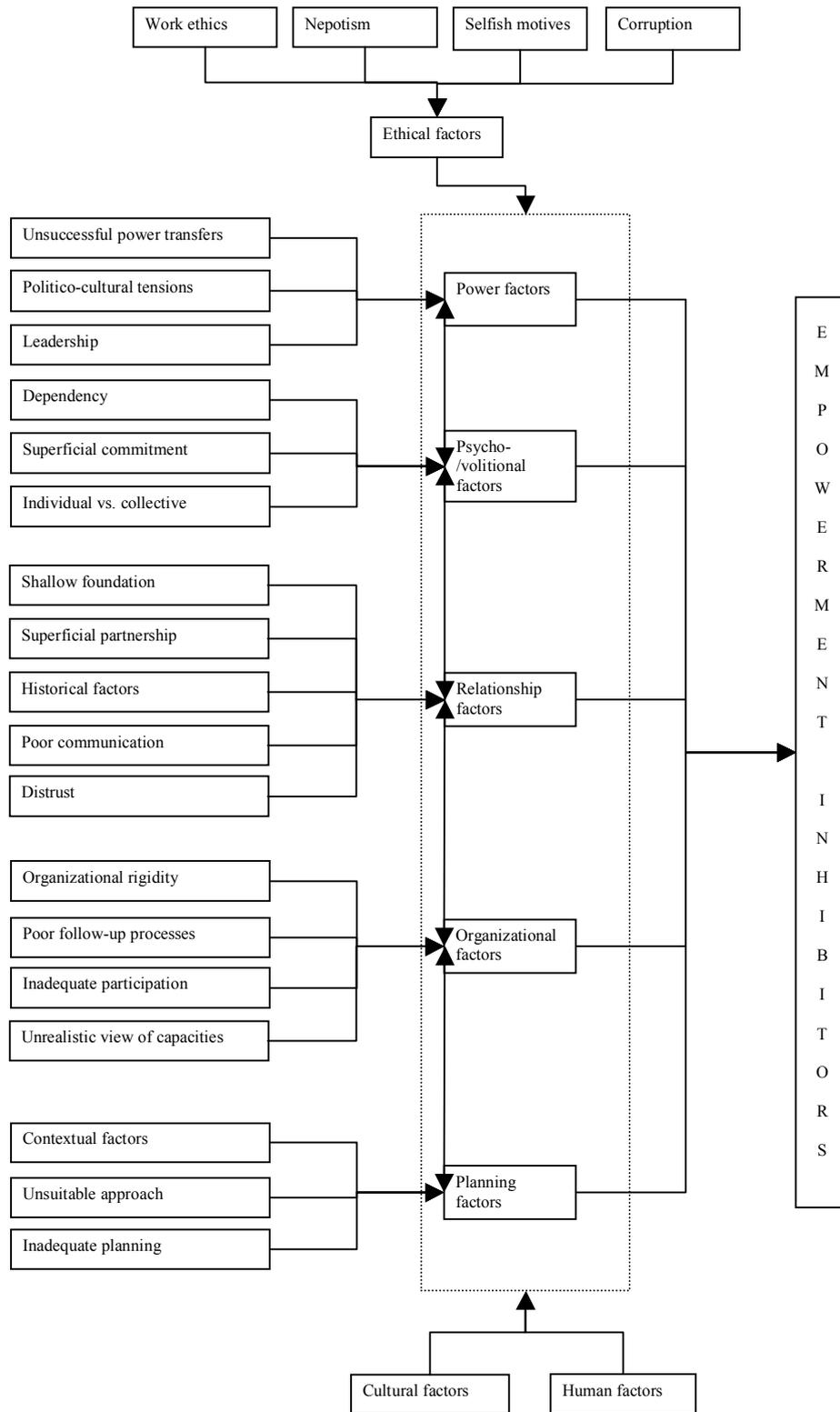
Figure 20. Empowerment inhibitors.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS

5.1 Empowered Partner or an Organization

An empowerment organization or a development partner was depicted in the empirical data analysis as autonomous, relevant, interdependent, capable, reflective, and significant/powerful. An autonomous organization or partner has a defined purpose, demonstrates a sense of responsibility, is independent, and can take and manage risks. Such traits have also been recognized by researchers as crucial factors in empowerment (Gutiérrez et al. 1998; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Rappaport 1981; Zimmerman 1995). In light of the general understanding of development cooperation, this category is significant. Usually, a planning process aims at mapping out and minimizing all possible risks. This, of course, is legitimate and logical from, for example, the financial point of view. However, it seems that in light of empowerment, it is more crucial to be able to take risks, permit ambiguity, and acknowledge paradox than to identify all possible killer factors and capitalize in minimizing them (also, e.g., Bandura 1997; Beairsto 2000; Kuokkanen 2003). An organization that is able to permit ambiguity and take risk can initiate change. Change, of course, is at the heart of development.

An empowered organization is relevant. It is aware of the cultural factors in its operational environment. It can adapt its intervention design to match available resources and capacities of the people and communities it works with. (Fetterman et al. 1996; Nayaran 2002.) It is crucial that an organization that has some capacity in terms of substance and financial resources, does not assume that these factors alone can effect change. Change happens in a cultural context that determines the operational environment to a large extent. No matter how effective and honed the management practices and technologies might be, if they are not relevant in the operational environment, the community is not likely to adapt the new ideas, technologies, and ways to "do things" (Koberg et al. 1999; Zimmerman 1995). It seems that to feel empowered, one has to understand how systems work (Zimmerman 1995). One way to create this understanding is to open the organization for participation. Participation maybe viewed to increase sense of empowerment by increasing understanding and increasing a sense of influence (Alsop et al. 2006; Argyris 1998; Eklund 1999; Kuokkanen 2003; Rappaport 1981).

An empowered organization is not an isolated entity but it exists in a complex network of interdependency. It networks and, especially in the context of development interventions, understands that its basic reason for existence is philanthropy and service (Adams 1996; Freire 1970; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005). The networks are meaningful only if they serve this purpose. An empowered organization works in such a way that it can build partnerships that are so equal that they do not change the identity of the other and force the other partner merely to adjust to the ideas of the other. An empowered organization has clear values and seeks partnerships with organizations that share similar values. In addition, it seeks employees that share the values of the organizations and aims to systematically promote its core values. Yet, these values are not imposed on people and partners (Kuokkanen 2003; Parsons 1998; Rappaport 1981; Thomas & Velthouse 1990; Zimmerman 1995). These ideas emerging from the empirical data have serious implications on development collaboration. The Northern partners usually put emphasis on written agreements where principles of action are agreed upon. However, if the underlying values of parties agreeing differ significantly, the exercise is mere lip service. One of the key findings of the study may well be the importance of values to empowerment. As Professor Anyang' Nyong'o, the Minister for Planning and National Development of Kenya at the time of writing, has put it (Kibuga & Tongoi 2005, vi):

> The argument made by this book is that to achieve development and eradication of poverty, we require more that the availability and access to capital, technology and skilled labour. We need value change as well, accompanied by transformed mindsets and attitudes. This is what the biblical worldview offers, a bringing together of values, transformed mindsets, and attitudes, together with capital technology, and skilled labour as the foundations of transformed prosperous, and equitable society.

Further, in order for an organization to have meaningful partnerships, it and its partner must have clear identities. An empowered organization has the ability to make independent decisions emanating from its identity. Identity, as used here, has to do with the perception of how one influences the environment and how the environment is perceived to influence the life of the organization. It also touches the collective ideas and beliefs as to how capacitated an organization is at present, how effective an organization can be, what ventures it can embark on, and how autonomous it can be in

relation to its purpose (similar nuances in relation to individuals suggested, e.g., by Bandura 1997; Beairsto 2000; Beairsto & Ruohotie 2000; Parsons 1998; Siitonen 1999; Zimmerman 1995).

An empowered organization is capacitated, or believes as a collective to have enough capacity to perform a task. Capacity relates to being equipped, informed, and resourced. An organization, in order to consider itself to be ready for a task, must perceive itself sufficient in relation to these components of capacity. Having relevant information, conceiving to be equipped enough, and having substantial (in a sense of valuable and sufficient) resources contributes to a feeling of empowerment which catalyzes action (Bandura 1997; Beairsto 2000; Parsons 1998; Siitonen 1999). In a partnership, there should be conscious efforts to address the issues of training, information sharing, and aiming to form a realistic view of the resources a partner has or partners have. The data suggested that the Northern partners have a tendency to over-estimate the capacity of the Southern partner at the initiation of the intervention. On the other hand, the discussions in the AR Seminars propose that generally the Southern partners tend to belittle their capacities. When discussions evolved around failures in development ventures, poor education was cited as the most common factors to explain failures. Whether this is a perception or a reality, in order to empower, the perception needs to be changed. Over-estimation and belittlement of capacities are both harmful to empowerment. Yet, it is crucial to bear in mind that the end of capacity building is not the capacity to run existing interventions. Rather, a true sign of an empowered partner or organization is its ability to expand operations, teach others the lessons learned, and device new ventures.

An empowered partner has an ability to tap into resources no matter how scarce. Along with the perception of the Southern partners that they do not have enough education to bring about development, the idea that they cannot succeed because of the scarcity of the resources was frequently brought up. None of the Southern participants suggested that eradicating poverty would primarily need innovation, hard work, integrity, discipline or other such traits rather than more resources, new technologies, or external advice. Of course, public policies and corruption have their part to play. However, even in these adverse circumstances, there are individuals and corporations that "make it". The data strongly supports the idea that empowerment does not rise or fall with the

scarcity of resources or adverse conditions, an empowered person or a collective makes the best use of available resources and opportunities (also, Fetterman et al. 1996; Gutierréz et al. 1998; Nayaran 2002). A sign of empowerment is to work with what is available.

Empowered entities are also capable of independent reflection. Reflection refers to introspective self-reflection as well as the ability to reflect on the philosophical foundations for the actions of individuals or the activities of an organization (also, e.g., Beairsto 2000, Koberg et al. 1999; Kuokkanen 2003). An empowered individual and collective can reflect on the motives, assumptions, purposes, consequences, and principles that underlie actions and operations (also Argyris & Schön 1996; Siitonen 1999).

An empowered organization is influential. That is, capable of changing the environment rather than adapting to it. It performs on such a level that it is being imitated and thus its effects are multiplied and influence through best practices is transferred to new contexts (also Eklund 1999; Siitonen 1999; Spreitzer et al. 1999 among others.) In development contexts, such an influence comes close to the ideas of advocacy and lobbying.

What are the practical implications of the description of an empowered partner? Undoubtedly, the implications are many and vary from one context to another. However, some broad generalizations and suggestions can be made. Based on the data, there is a fine line between failure and success in development cooperation. It seems that the importance of values has been overlooked. Development is not a question of transferred management practices and technologies. Proper management and proper use of improved technologies depend to a great extent on the values that go with them.

A twin to the issue of values is the issue of identity. The development partners should have stable and developed identities. Of course, all partners change in time, but if the identity of one of the partners is formed or changes over time substantially due to conforming to and adapting the identity of the other, a genuine partnership is compromised. Identity is sold. In the discussions during the Action Research Seminars, the issue was frequently referred to. In most cases, the financially weaker

and the less technically equipped and less educated partner will compromise. It is to be noted, that the compromise is not always forced by the stronger or more resourced partner. It must be kept in mind that identity is strongly related to values and, at the end of the day, values dictate decisions to a great extent. Of course, if one of the partners is much more resourced than the other, the selling of identity and compromise of values becomes all the more attractive.

Further, the planning process, from the grass-root perspective, seems to emphasize the mapping of risks, logical planning, and planning meticulously ahead. Undoubtedly, from the perspective of the donor countries, their concerns and culture, these qualities are to be considered in a proper plan. However, the data suggests that the essence of empowerment is not controlling risks and planning every detail. Rather, the essence of empowerment comes closer to managing risks, innovation, and adjusting to situations where plans go wrong. It is quite possible, to have the plans right, and go very wrong with the implementation. The challenge in development collaboration is how to bring about and encourage such traits.

The data raises many questions as to the idea of channelling more and more funds to eradicate poverty and cure social evils. The Northern development rhetoric evolves to a great extent around raising the levels of development assistance. However, in light of the data, such claims, are quite naïve. The effect of increasing funding without changes in economic policies and, especially, the implementation of them, transformed value systems, and real, not rhetorical, accountability will be a tiny harvest.

It may be that the description and the chart of an empowered partner are most useful as an ideal to strife for. It depicts components of empowerment. Depending on an individual, organization and context, there are areas that might need more attention may vary.

5.2 Means of Empowerment

The results as to the ways and means of empowerment were not that radical. Clearly, the key to empowerment is investment in people. Recently, this has been interpreted to mean that development cooperation should do away from "hardware" and concentrate on the "software" of the people so to speak. However, to think that we should merely train people and expect favourable outcomes is to oversimplify a complex issue. It seems that the best way to train is to provide a successful example that people can see, touch, understand, and adopt. The imported Northern best practices, management theories, project planning frameworks, and advisors are mere abstractions until there is concrete evidence to support them.

The issue of capacity building of people was referred to in relation to description of an empowered partner. The researcher has been involved in a number of capacity building efforts. As a general rule it can be said that the more specific the efforts are the better the tangible and measurable results. However, general training and exchange of ideas have been noted to boost the self-image and therefore, logically, the feeling of empowerment among the partners (Kunguru 2004).[97] In addition, efforts to invest in people and their capacities do not qualify as empowerment automatically. These investments may become empowering if they are conducted in a way that they are anchored to a larger vision and effort to bring about empowerment. Empowerment cannot be facilitated by a single act. Rather the bringing about of empowerment consists of a number of simultaneous processes.

Empowerment relates closely to motivation. Traditionally, motivation is divided into internal and external spheres of motivation. In light of empowerment, the internal motivation is more crucial but the outward aspect cannot be forgotten and overlooked either (Spreitzer et al. 1999; Thomas & Velthouse 1990). In light of the data, empowerment is not a stable phenomenon. The levels of empowerment vary. As Siitonen (1999), among others, has noted, individual empowerment is related to a

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[97] Kunguru has not used the term nor researched capacity building in relation to empowerment in this context. However, in Fida Intl. Programming, the goal of capacity building is to empower partners to conduct development interventions. Evident in Kunguru's findings is, however, the notion that those who had participated in capacity building seminars and other related activities, had an enhanced perception of their capacities and abilities to perform.

feeling of inner power or strength. Yet, it seems that the external factors that may trigger or contribute to the feeling of power may vary in different contexts. It can be assumed that true empowerment is more related to intrinsic motivation that is more stable than motivation fuelled by external factors. However, during the Action Research Seminar discussions, it was frequently pointed out that if a person is biased more towards external motivation, it is very difficult to change that disposition. This poses a theoretical dilemma. If empowerment proper is associated with intrinsic motivation, is it meaningful to use the term in connection with external motivational factors and people who are biased towards external motivation? If the answer is no, the empowerment applications and discussions will be substantially limited. Secondly, is it possible in any feasible way to change a person's motivational constructs towards intrinsic motivation, especially at an adult age? In practice, the realities in organizations, and also in relation to people, seem to be a dynamic continuum rather than a clear-cut yes or no in terms of intrinsic motivation. In other words, a person may be intrinsically motivated to practise sports – little or no external incentives are needed. Yet, the same person might need external incentives to practice for exam in mathematics. If that motivation is evoked by external incentives, is it wrong to describe the phenomenon in terms of empowerment? The point is that intrinsic motivation helps us to understand empowerment. However, in practice, the organizations cannot live in a utopia where all workers would be intrinsically motivated at all times. In a similar vein, Argyris (1998) has pointed out that the leadership and management should distinguish between jobs that require internal commitment and those which do not. If attemts are made to increase empowerment in relation to routine jobs, it may lead to cynicism, disillusionment, and inefficiencies rather than improvement.

Related to the comment above is the notion that came up during the data analysis that empowerment has limits. Such views have been expressed also, for example, by Argyris (1998). Therefore, a danger lurks in the empowerment rhetoric of the donors, governments, NGOs, and politicians if empowerment ideology is portrayed as the cure of all evil and the key into the earthly paradise, a good concept is undermined and people are disillusioned. The consequences of such rhetoric might be adverse to real empowerment.

If empowerment is to take place, mental processes are important. Leaders should influence and organizations should be set up in ways that enable and encourage reflection, molding attitudes, and promoting values. The more people understand the goal of their work in terms of the larger vision, the more they feel that the values exhibited in their organization match their own, the more likely it is that feelings of empowerment are evoked (also Antikainen 2005; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999; Zimmerman 1995). In relation to the Faith Based Organizations, it is to be emphasized that if the reasons for engaging in development cooperation can be communicated through theological or religious terms, the more likely they are to feel empowered to carry out the work. This should be noted by the governments that collaborate with FBOs. Theologizing development collaboration is not something to be viewed with skepticism but encouraged to ensure that religious entities that have networks covering most villages and townships in the rural areas of developing countries are involved in development activities. These networks are too valuable a tool for development to be overruled by the increasing inability of the secular governments to handle religious and spiritual issues in an objective and fair manner. It may be that the influence of religion is decreasing in those parts of the world that fund the bulk of development related activities. However, the exact opposite is true of, for example, Africa that receive most of the funding. The issue calls for a continuous, deep, and professional debate.

For empowerment, in the context of development work, it is most crucial that individuals and collectives who are to be empowered are taught to recognize the available resources and make use of them. This is connected to the concepts of responsibility, innovation, problem solving, and context beliefs that have been recognized as crucial to empowerment by a number of scholars (e.g., Adams 1996; Fetterman 2001; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999). Feelings of empowerment can be boosted if a person joins a group that has similar goals and aspirations. The boost results from a greater sense of influence and realization that one is not alone with a problem. On the other hand, if a person leans on the group too much, the same may turn disempowering (Adams 1996; Fetterman 2001).

An important way to invest in people is to challenge them. Challenging is an art. Based on the data, it presumes that the one who challenges must know the one to be challenged in a comprehensive way. The challenge must be demanding enough to

demand extra effort, but realistically achievable. Challenging for empowerment is an interesting concept since as described in the data it comes close to external motivation, or better yet, external pressure. Theoretically, empowerment has been more linked to freedom, emancipation, participation, democratic decision making, and trust than to external pressure (Adams 1996; Dewettinck et al. 2003; Okazawa-Rey 1998; Siitonen 1999). However, it seems that external pressure in terms of conditions to meet or challenges to rise up to, and to solve the problems in operational contexts may indeed trigger empowerment. Perhaps, the most plausible explanation for this is that an external challenge, when successfully tackled, will boost feelings of competence and ability beliefs. These in turn will feed feelings of empowerment.

One of the key concepts in current empowerment theories seem to be the idea that control, especially strict control should be abolished if empowerment is to occur in any real sense. An ideal member of the empowered organization has been depicted as a person who is capable of self-leadership and is influential and responsible in the working community (e.g., Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003, 116–118; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005). Although some experts on empowerment might qualify such claims by saying that at times control and direction is needed but the environment where they are provided should be psychologically secure (Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005).   The data of this study suggests that the idea of strict control automatically demolishes empowerment should be revisited. It seems that the amount of control in empowerment efforts is context bound. For example, the tendency to control people organizationally and socially can be considered considerably higher for example in Germany and Finland than in Tanzania and Kenya. This means that rigid organization and control may suffocate innovation and be considered as contriving for the democratic ideas work force may have. However, in Tanzania or Kenya, traditionally the way of life, at least in terms of organizations, may be quite loosely controlled. Or, if controls and policies are in place, they are not implemented and followed through. In environments like this, too loose and uncontrolled an environment may inhibit empowerment. In addition, if the general representative of work force is not as trained as the Western counterpart and is more used to authoritative leadership, providing him or her with more options to choose and democratic leadership results in loosing direction and security that have been perceived as crucial to empowerment (e.g., Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Siitonen 1999). Therefore, it seems, again, that the type of leadership and the amount of freedom

that empowers are more contextually bound than the Western empowerment theories suggest.

An idea related to control and organization is the setting of goals. Empowerment efforts should be tied to clearly expressed goals. Otherwise there is a real danger that the efforts remain ambiguous and too abstract for those involved in the empowerment process. Active monitoring and evaluation must be put in place for following-up the achievements. If these elements are omitted or they are poorly organized, the empowerment efforts may turn against themselves. People will get frustrated and the meaning and purpose of changes and efforts will dim.

The experts also emphasized the role of a leader in the empowerment process. It was noted that the project planning, monitoring, and implementation prodedures tend to emphasize managerial issues and put relatively little emphasis on leadership. The role of leadership is crucial in securing a suitable application of the plans and proper responses in practical dilemmas related to the implementation of the activities. The respondents felt that management can guarantee a status quo but leadership is needed to break new ground and cater for new ideas and plans to guarantee long-term development and success.

5.3 Empowerment Inhibitors

The empowerment inhibitors were noted to be composed of power, psycho-/volitional, relationship, organizational, and planning factors. In addition, these factors are cross-cut by ethical, cultural, and human factors. It seems that in terms of realization of the empowerment, power issues need to be carefully considered from the start. The intervention should be planned in a way that power issues are clear and need to be changed only minimally over the course of the intervention. That is to say, if the expatriates assume a leading role at the inception of the intervention which is then assumed to be gradually transferred to the local partners, difficulties may be expected along the road. This is not to say that such transfers cannot succeed. Rather the point is that in general the more and the longer the intervention is controlled by personnel that are supposed to withdraw from the intervention, the more difficult the transfer will be.

If powers are held by the foreign personnel for too long, it is likely that they establish organizational and leadership cultures that are foreign to the masses the interventions are to benefit and who should run it in the future. Further, it can be said that psychological ownership is weakened should the local partners not assume leadership positions. Local leadership boosts a sense of influence that has been considered crucial to the feeling of empowerment and a psychological sense of ownership (Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Siitonen 1999). Empowerment efforts do not take place in a vacuum. The politico-cultural climate and the basic infrastructures that government institutions are able to create for organizations and individuals to develop, determine to a great extent the degree that empowerment can take place. Theoretically this can be linked to enabling factors that relate to organizational climate and the climate a government is able to create for development (e.g., Alsop et al. 2006; Antikainen 2005). Specifically, in relation to FBOs, empowerment can be inhibited if development cooperation is seen by the powers that are somehow subordinate to the core mission of the organization. This is a danger that lurks at the door of FBOs especially. The metaphysical can be emphasized at the expense of the more mundane. It was also detected in line of a number of empowerment theorists that leadership is in crucial position in bringing about empowerment (Antikainen 2005; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Koberg et al. 1999; Ruohotie 2004; Senge 1993; Siitonen 1999). Over-exercised leadership or the absence of it may interfere with empowerment. As mentioned earlier, the study gave grounds to challenge the prevalent views of empowerment theorists that the only kind of truly empowering leadership corresponds to the Western ideal of democratic and soft leadership. It seems that empowering leadership is much more culture and personality bound than often suggested. Empowering leadership does not necessarily depend on the *kind of leadership* that is exercised but rather on the *kind of feelings* and processes it creates in a person. In other words, if authoritarian leadership creates feelings of motivation, sense of purpose, security and so on, it can be more empowering than a more democratic type of leadership.

The findings in regard to the psycho-/volitional factors were not that novel. From a development cooperation perspective they linked negative dependency on external human and financial assets with motivational theories that have been made use of in explaining the nature of empowerment. Those individuals or organizations that are in a negative sense dependent on external factors have not arrived at a stage of intrinsic

motivation (Herrenkohl et al. 1999; Siitonen 1999; Zimmermann 1995). Perhaps, a new aspect in terms of motivational and empowerment theories was the notion that motivation is to an extent culturally conditioned. Cultural assumptions create a sense of security and coherence that may affect motivation positively. If the empowerment agents do not understand or have at least a sense of cultural assumptions in terms of, for example, leadership or relationships, they are likely to create confusion and uncertainty that is counterproductive to empowerment. Democratic leadership and professional relationships may not be factors that boost motivation in a given culture. Rather, it may be that in a certain culture or context strong leadership and more family-type relationships at the work place will be conceived more motivational and secure thus boosting the feeling of empowerment. Commitment was another factor that was linked to motivation. If commitment to the development cooperation intervention is too much conditioned by external factors, it remains superficial and wavering (Thomas & Velthouse 1993; Spreitzer et al. 1999). An important psycho-/volitional factor in relation to development efforts that relates usually to communities, is the relationship between communal and individual empowerment. From the point of view of the empowerment agent, the key question is whether to concentrate on individuals in empowerment efforts or on organizations and other collectives. The data did not yield a conclusive answer. What can be said is that in a certain sense, empowerment is always an individual phenomenon. However, the collective dynamics of, for example a community or an organization, can enable, boost or inhibit intrinsic individual empowerment (Bandura 1997). Or, on the other hand, individuals can boost or interfere with the collective sense of empowerment. The informants suggested that one of the best ways to boost a collective sense of empowerment is a positive model that creates a sense of hope and belief in success (also Spreitzer et al. 1999).

Relationships are in a key role when attempting at empowerment. The issues that affect relationships are the common foundation laid for the cooperation, depth and quality of the partnership, historical factors, communication, and trust. A clear weakness in the partnerships that were explored in this study is the shallow organizational foundation on which they rest. The dynamics of the problem result partly from the fact that the personnel of Fida, or rather its predecessors, have been in key roles in establishing the denominations and organizations that it currently partners with. Therefore, at the start and even currently, the partnerships have been formed on strong personal relationships

but not necessarily on strong organizational relationships. From the empowerment point of view, two interesting things have resulted from this state of affairs. First, the work has a strong local taste to it and the emphasis has been and is on local churches and their work. Local churches may not be rich in terms of their financial capacities. Yet, they are to a great extent empowered in that they run on local human and financial resources, propagate their work, and exist amidst the direst circumstances. It can be argued that the local church emphasis has been crucial in bringing about a sense of ownership and participation that have been suggested to facilitate empowerment (e.g, Argyris 1998). Secondly, since the personal relationships are intimate and close, it has been assumed that the persons representing different cultures develop and share the same basic assumptions. The feeling is boosted further by the fact that both parties confess to accept and share the same Christian basic truths. However, practice and the data analyzed seem to suggest something different. Close relationships and sharing the same basic ideology do not by default change the basic assumptions and principles that are propagated by culture and abide deep in the psychological make-up of persons. Further, as discussed in the section on culture, it seems that the common perception that a close partnership between two organizations breed a new working culture that somehow represents an integration of two (or more) cultures is not a valid one. The parties can temporarily yield into a common way of doing things but the deep level assumptions remain relatively unchanged in the long run. Cultural differences and differing national histories are also factors that can bear on partnerships. To put it briefly, different ways and approaches to life and the common task easily creates mixed feelings and distrust. Most of the differences emanate from cultural issues and national history. Formal partnership agreements and putting common operational principles on the paper do not iron out these differences over night. However, the formalization of the partnerships can be *a* step in a long journey to establish mature and solid organizational partnerships. They offer a check-point on a long journey.

Development cooperation partnerships are always organized in one way or another. At times the organizations are weak and viewed only as a mere necessity to operate legally. Sometimes, there are conscious and concerted efforts to strengthen and develop organizations to secure optimal performance and planned results. A clear weakness in development cooperation partnerships (at least in an African context) is the tendency to assess the capacities of the partnering organizations unrealistically. A reason for this is

the way organizations access funds. It is common that the donor is to be assured of sufficient organizational capacities to implement the planned intervention. Of course, this is common sense and absolutely acceptable. However, it breeds exaggerations on the capacities of the partner organizations. On the other hand, the local partners may not have been transparently informed as to how, for example, an organization such as Fida raises funds back home. This has created an image for the partner(s) that Fida has a reservoir of untapped resources distributed arbitrarily. From an empowerment perspective such an exaggerated view of capacity is a killer factor. Siitonen (1999), to name but one, has noted that for empowerment it is important to have realistic ability beliefs and to have access to conduct realistic self-assessments. Another related organizational issue is the measure and type of participation. The development jargon overflows with references to participation. It is assumed that having a say in decision making and planning stages of intervention will guarantee ownership and sustainability of the effort. Such views are in agreement with a number of empowerment theorists (e.g., Adams 1996; Argyris 1998; Eklund 1999; Mason et al. 2001; Nayaran 2002; Ruohotie 2001; Siitonen 1999). However, it seems that just any kind of participation in planning and decision making will not boost empowerment. Having a say may not be substantially anything more than a mere opinion. The data suggests that the invitation to participate in decision making will translate into sustainable empowerment only if it is accompanied by a demand to accept responsibility and make a commitment in line of the uttered opinions (also Beairsto 2000; Kuokkanen 2003; Koberg et al. 1999).

In the opinion of the researcher, these two issues are not emphasized in the manuals and other writings on the importance of participatory approaches in development interventions. In terms of follow-up, most of the experts found inadequacies. Somehow the general feeling in the answers was that organizations fail to communicate the core purpose of follow-up processes – to ensure success and improve on performance. The follow-up processes are considered to be the famous monkey on the backs of the staff. When follow-up processes do not lead to realignments and concrete learning processes in the implementation of the intervention, they turn disempowering. The contribution of the study of the empowerment theory in this regard is that the core issue is not the debate on the non-hierarchic or hierarchic organization but the perception a given organization generates in the personnel. In other words, at times a hierarchic organization clarifies issues, creates a sense of security and purpose that fuels

empowerment. At times, and depending on the personalities of the staff, such an organization may be conceived utterly disempowering. This issue is related to another organizational factor that may inhibit empowerment - organizational rigidity. The organization established for the development intervention becomes more important than the desired results. It lacks the agility to adapt to the changes that are inevitable in the implementation environment. Yet, one must again remind that a higher degree of organizational rigidity may be necessary in different contexts than others. And, at times, a stern organization creates a secure feeling in the beginning of an intervention that may create the foundation for a more loose set up and increased freedom to explore new ideas and innovations in the future. In a way, the organization may offer a backbone and basic direction to the intervention, but leave room for the legs and hands to explore and test ideas in a little wider perspective.

The data is in agreement with the empowerment theorists that propagate freedom and innovation as crucial elements of empowerment (e.g., Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Siitonen 1999). However, a development intervention cannot be based on pure freedom and innovation alone. Rather, it seems that innovation and certain freedom can become elements of empowerment in a sustainable way only if they are anchored to an organization and a clear purpose.

Planning factors may also inhibit empowerment. A number of forces are present in any development intervention context that can either work for empowerment or against it. For example, if the role of the other development actors has been overlooked or, especially in case of small NGOs, the public sector policies and strategies are not considered, the effort may find itself fighting in the air. At worst, the NGOs may design interventions that are categorically in opposition to governmental policies. In such cases, sustainability will be a problem since the overall macro-economy and national macro-development will not support such actions. At times, the intervention approaches and systems are simply unsuitable. They may use unsuitable technology or be in other ways culturally unacceptable. However, perhaps, the biggest problem is that due to restricted financial resources, the planning process is not allotted sufficient time.

One of the most interesting issues that rose from the data was the role of ethics as an empowerment inhibitor. It was finally interpreted to cross-cut all the other inhibiting

factors. It could be said that noble and genuine efforts to improve on planning, organizational issues, relationships, boost motivation and facilitate commitment, and build on local resources and leadership are in vain if the ethical foundation is not supportive of the efforts. A contribution of the study on the role of ethics in development cooperation could be, not the idea of importance of ethics, but the way in which ethics influence empowerment. Any common man who reads newspapers knows that corruption is in the spotlight of the current development debate. The debate is, at least in practice, charged with value judgments, the implication being that African ethics is inferior to the Western ethics. However, it could rather be said that the African societies have worked from different ethical bases and created institutions and societies where a certain ethical disposition works. When the Western world began to influence the African continent, institutions, legislation, and work culture was introduced that supposed a Western ethical foundation. Legislation, a certain kind of organization, or a school system of a kind works in the West because people there share a common ethical foundation and these organizations, institutions, and legislation are the visible manifestations of this foundation. However, trouble lies ahead, when the manifestations are transported to different contexts. Then, it is assumed that they automatically change the ethical base as well. This is possible, of course. However, in practice, it will take decades, or even hundreds of years. The data here suggested that the equation works better the other way around. When ethics will change, the manifestations will change too. All development efforts are fish in the sea. If one is to catch the fish and make something useful out of them, they have to be caught into the net of ethics.

5.4 Empowerment and Culture

Cultural issues have been referred to in relation to a number of empowerment factors. Culture was seen as one of the cross-cutting empowerment inhibitors. It is discussed here in a separate section since the role of culture in empowerment efforts was considered to be one of the secondary research questions.

The research material suggests that culture affects empowerment efforts significantly. Yet, it is very difficult to say precisely how culture bears on empowerment and through which mechanisms it does this. However, some very broad generalizations can be

made. First of all, cultural differences could be seen as different manifestations of similar virtues, principles, or values. Love, respect, enthusiasm, and sorrow, for example, can be manifested in different ways in different cultures. These manifestations are culture-bound. When people behave, for example, in a leadership position or an organizational setting contrary to cultural defaults, insecurity and confusion is created. Such feelings work contrary to empowerment efforts.

Culture molds to an extent the ideals that are pursued for. Culture can affect one's perception of work, schooling, proper management, acceptable leadership, goals, ambitions and so forth. Yet, at the same time, culture is something very elusive. It breeds new culture, and individuals adhere to general cultural values and ideals with significantly differing rigor. It is far less static than the early anthropologists led us to believe. Yet, no matter how elusive and dynamic the nature of culture, the general tendency is to underestimate its power. Culture's power is partially derived from its subtle nature. Its effects are difficult to discuss and express. There were strong indications in the Action Research Seminars that the more formal education and practical exposure to cultures a person has had the easier it is to discuss the implications of cultural differences in practical work situations.

In current manuals for planning for development interventions, cultural issues have been paid attention to. Yet, the planning processes themselves are based on Western cultural background and related views on management, leadership, and life. This is yet another indication of the power of culture. One can recognize the importance to plan in a culturally sensitive way and take into account its implications to the intervention ahead, yet, the next moment the same person can resort subconsciously back to his or her own cultural patterns of doing things.

The powers of culture pose heavy demands on people working across cultures, especially leaders. In the orientation and training programmes designed for persons entering into a new culture, the unspoken message is often that one can somehow master a new culture – learn and command it. However, the data suggests that this is to gravely underestimate the complexity and dynamics of any culture. Perhaps, the best would be to encourage the cross-cultural staff to develop what could be called a cultural intuition. Cultural intuition could be seen as ability to sense cultural powers without

necessarily understanding them in depth. It will help, for example, a leader to discern when certain practices in organizational life will demand attention and when not. Which basic assumptions are necessary to be transformed and which are not, if a development process is to be successful.

A mature cross-cultural actor will recognize that a host of issues are to a great extent culture-bound or at least culturally coloured: motivational factors, reward systems, value systems, leadership systems, communication systems, to name but a few. In short-term development interventions, it is impossible to assume that one can understand and design an intervention that can take into consideration all relevant cultural factors. The need for organizations, work force, and leadership that can accommodate cultural variations and, at the same time, to create a sense of coherence and common direction will increase in the future.

Contrary to the popular idea that postmodern phenomena, such as globalization, will eventually create a sort of uniform meta-culture is not supported by the findings. Cultural variations will exist also in the future. In fact, they maybe even strengthened as individuals seek to anchor their identities in the global sea of cultural waves. In terms of empowerment efforts and culture, the data implies that most probably the original cultural identity of the expatriate is, in practice, strengthened while working abroad. The cultural awareness might be broadened, but the increased understanding is by no means automatically translated into action.

In terms of cultural effects on development in a project context, a bi- or multicultural project will create a *temporary* and culturally artificial work environment that may in some cases work reasonably well, since it involves a limited number of personnel. The personnel may be more like-minded and share same educational backgrounds that people in real development contexts at the grass-root level. However, once the project is terminated, generally speaking, the personnel will return to their old ways of running things. The effect can be softened by directing as much effort as possible to processes that are independent of the project.

5.5 Empowerment Theories and Current Findings

In the data analysis and in the previous sections of the conclusive chapter, constant reference has been made to the implications of the study on empowerment theory, and findings have been interpreted and cross-checked in light of them. However, it might be helpful to include a summary of the findings of the study in light of related empowerment theories.

First of all, the findings support a number of key propositions of the current empowerment theories. The current study reinforces the views of empowerment theorists that attach motivational and volitional constructs to empowerment (e.g., Bandura 1997; Koberg et al. 1999; Siitonen 1999; Spreitzer et al. 1999; Thomas & Velthouse 1990). Empowerment is to a great extent a motivational and volitional construct. Empowerment has to do also with a general orientation of life-long learning. An ever inquiring and learning mind, disposition to challenge existing ways of doing things and the related assumptions, and continuous self-reflection are qualities of a life-long learner and may be applied to learning organizations as well (Argyris & Schön 1996; Beairsto 2000; Beairsto & Ruohotie 2000; Kincheloe 2003; Kuokkanen 2003; Otala 1996; Senge 1993). Learning itself does not constitute empowerment but may support it and serve as an avenue in pursuing empowerment. The findings also support the view that other individuals and organizations can boost or inhibit empowerment (Antikainen 2005; Argyris 1998; Bandura 1997; Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Siitonen 1999). Yet, empowerment is a process that is at the core very individual (Siitonen 1999). The data also supported the notion that participation and a sense of being able to have a say in organizational affairs boosts empowerment, however, with certain qualifications that will be discussed later (Argyris 1998; Ruohotie 2001).

The findings also challenged or qualified some aspects of the current empowerment theories. First of all, almost without exception, the empowerment theories propose that democratic and "soft" leadership and low hierarchy organizations are key prerequisites for empowerment (Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Ruohotie 2001; Otala 1996). This view is challenged by the data suggesting that empowered persons are able to override restricting organizational structure or make use of them

although to others they are an inhibiting factor. In addition, in certain contexts it seems that the loose, low or at times nearly non-existing organization is one of the biggest reasons for disempowerment. In such circumstances, a more rigid and clear organization is called for. To an extent, the same applies to leadership. The findings seem to indicate that at times mentoring, coaching, and facilitative leadership approaches are not empowering. A more stern and directive approach may be needed. The findings may be interpreted to link to personality and contextual differences. If we agree that individual empowerment is in essence a certain holistic ability, self-efficacy perception or a feeling (Bandura 1997; Koberg et al. 1999; Siitonen 1999), then we must admit that those perceptions or feelings can be evoked by different means depending on the context and the individual. In addition, participation and influence in an organization may not boost empowerment automatically. They may do so if the participation is accompanied by a readiness to sacrifice for the opinion. A mere expression of opinion may have little or no effect in terms of empowerment.

The findings also supported the view that certain technical adjustments and interventions can boost empowerment. However, delegation or power, changes in organizational set ups, creation of facilitative organizational climate, provision of resources, and rewarding desirable performance, for example, do not automatically result in empowerment, in fact they may turn against empowerment. They have to be put into a larger context of an empowerment process. It is very difficult to articulate when and in which circumstances they work for empowerment and why. What comes to empowerment in the context of development cooperation, it seems that for any attempt to boost empowerment presumes a solid ethical foundation, verifiable (practical) commitment, and a clear sense of purpose in order to produce results.

In terms of ethics, its role seems to be emphasized in empowerment efforts in development contexts and developing countries. A number of empowerment efforts are value based and supposed to serve common good. They could be compared and contrasted to, for example, businesses. Whereas businesses are designed to maximize profit and safeguard the interests of the possible share- or stakeholders, development interventions are supposed to safeguard the interests of and serve the community around. Such efforts presuppose strong ethics. The material analyzed in the study paint a picture that more often than not, the project personnel fail to maintain the strong

ethical ethos and philanthropic motive in the long run. However, the researcher has witnessed at least three interventions that have managed to integrate sound business principles and the goal to serve the community. In two of the interventions the staff managed to adopt a new way to look at a community project. Yes, it is a value to serve the community, but in order to do so, the staff started to think the intervention in terms of business that can secure both a decent job for them and a much needed service to the community. Such an approach automatically results in new fervour in terms of accountability, planning, entrepreneurial attitudes, and a new sense of responsibility. The third intervention is a micro-credit scheme. The success of micro-credit schemes, in light of this study, is based on two facts, it appeals to persons who are capable of long-term planning and submit themselves to follow principles agreed on and imposed by a group of people – in other words, submit to certain ethical principles. Secondly, the benefits are direct and immediate. A lot could be said on ethics. But, by way of summary, ethics permeates all aspects of development interventions. In current empowerment theories its role has not been recognized sufficiently. Ethics is either the heart of a development intervention pumping life-giving blood to the effort or the ever spreading cancer that will eventually kill the effort.

The material of the study also challenges the way most empowerment theories discuss and depict empowerment. Of course, the author is aware that theoretical models are descriptions of realities and not the realities. A number of theorists have recognized that empowerment is by nature not static but evolving (e.g., Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005; Siitonen 1999). However, the theoretical research done in the context of the study and the data analysis left the researcher with the impression that the nature of empowerment is not depicted realistically enough. That is to say that in practice no-one or nothing can ever reach a state of empowerment. It is a long-distance race that has no finish line. Each round is a new challenge and the completion of the previous round does not guarantee a successful completion of the next. Although, experience is gained, skills are honed, and strategies are put in place, a new challenge cannot be met with old merits. Further, empowerment is at times depicted in mutually exclusive terms. For example, Heikkilä and Heikkilä (2005, 44) emphasize in line of the findings of the current study that empowerment is always a process not climbing from one ladder to another. They see the empowerment process as involving an enthusiastic, depressive, uncontrollable, unpredictable, and ever-searching experience. Yet, contradicting this

view, on the following pages they talk of levels, stages, and compartments of empowerment (2005, 47–50). This is not to criticize their work but to pay attention to the fact that the human concepts are very deprived in describing empowerment. The process is understood as dynamic, ongoing, and not easy to define, but to communicate anything about it is difficult without categorizations that will not put forth the true nature of the phenomenon.

Therefore, to serve the practical needs of individuals and organizations, a new way to look at and discuss empowerment might be needed. The new concept, or rather emphasis, could be called qualified or context-bound empowerment. The idea is to change the perspective from having an established model of empowerment and imposing it on various contexts to starting with the existing contextual realities. This is to define what empowerment may mean in a particular context. The crucial difference is that empowerment is defined and looked at from the perspective of the existing reality and theoretical models are not at the centre of empowerment efforts but the context and its problems. The various theories serve as guidelines or beacons in the process and not as stern standards. In terms of organizations and individuals, empowerment has to be defined sensitively, individually, and personally. That is to say, that the empowerment goal in an organization cannot be stated in a very coherent and simple statement. For example, the development aims in a "Tumaini Yangu - AIDS Project" cannot be stated in a way that reflects the overall ideal of empowered person. To say that Tumaini Yangu – AIDS project must become autonomous, networked, capable, reflective, significant, and relevant in the next twelve months, makes relatively little sense. The meaning and the measure of each quality must be determined in a context. In addition, empowerment must be determined in relation to each member of the personnel in a meaningful and realistic way. For example, being purpose conscious, responsible, risk taker, and independent mean very different things to the secretary and the project leader. Heikkilä and Heikkilä (2005, 48) have modified the clock model of Wilson that was originally devised to aid in measuring the empowerment level of leaders so that it can be applied to all individuals in an organization. The model can be helpful in determining personal empowerment areas to be addressed and goals to be set.

Another defect in most of the empowerment theories and discussion is the insufficient room dedicated to the issues in empowerment processes that are not controllable. Yet,

these factors that cannot be controlled determine to a great extent the success of empowerment. Hogan (2000) has discussed more than 60 areas of human existence that bear on empowerment. Family issues, material concerns, relationship issues, cultural issues, societal changes, personal growth processes, etc. are but a few of the issues and experiences that, based on the data of this study, play a far greater role in empowerment than the current theories and research are willing to admit or have managed to accommodate in their models. Of course, it is understood that theories and models are depictions that seek to communicate something of the essence of reality and phenomena in it, not the whole reality itself. However, there is a void to be filled by theories that will explore the uncontrollable dynamics of empowerment and integrate them with the existing theories.

5.6 Delphi Application

A secondary research interest is related to the usage of the Delphi method in development cooperation contexts and especially the testing of a modified Delphi application. First of all, the Delphi method can be recommended for research, decision making, and generating new ideas in development collaboration. The experience of the present study was that the seminar participants demonstrated a surprising expertise level despite the fact that many of them came from rural areas. This is probably due to the fact that in developing countries development issues are often addressed in newspapers and other media. Development is also the key issue in political rallies and vote fishing. In addition, without exception all seminar participants had personal experience in development efforts, if not direct, then indirect. Furthermore, the Delphi application that deviated from the standard Delphi studies served the purpose of this inquiry well. As discussed earlier, the major difference from the standard Delphi studies was the fact that the experts met physically during the second Delphi round. In other words, the traditional demand for absolute anonymity of the experts was waived. The decision to conduct the second round added spice and group dynamics to the study, since the experts were able to respond to comments and propositions in real time. To safeguard against the phenomenon where strong personalities may control the group discussion and override opinions, the experts were still given a chance to write to the researcher via email if they felt that they did not have the chance to contribute something significant.

Therefore, there is no hesitation to recommend a similar usage of the Delphi method. The application is especially useful in situations where the second round can be conducted as a part of a regular business or training gathering. In such a case, the experts are present as a part of their duty and feel the discussion that relates to their area of expertise and is based on their responses during the first round interesting and refreshing.

5.7 Applications of the Findings

The results yielded three descriptions: characteristics of an empowered partner, means of empowerment, and empowerment inhibitors. In addition, the study provided insights as to how culture influences the empowerment process and how a modified Delphi method can be applied in development cooperation contexts. The characteristics of an empowerment partner can be seen as an ideal depiction to strive towards. It may not exhaust all factors that construe an empowered partner but at least a substantial amount of them. The model can serve to generate discussion as to the status of the different factors in a given partnership organization. In addition it can provide an overall picture of an empowered partner that can be further developed considering the demands of a given situation. The depiction can also serve as a starting point for forming a development assessment instrument.

The depictions of the means of empowerment and its inhibitors may be used in a similar way. They may be used in planning for an intervention that would take into consideration the empowerment aspects from the start or in evaluations to map out how empowerment issues have been taken into consideration and if there are areas that should be improved on. The depictions can also be used in devising an empowerment assessment instrument. The characterizations of the empowerment inhibitors provide a valuable list of pitfalls to avoid in programming and intervention planning.

The cultural findings are hopefully helpful to the cross-cultural team-member and leader of an empowerment intervention in broadening his or her perspective as to how cultural issues influence development interventions, especially from an empowerment perspective. They will hopefully challenge the empowerment theorists to devise models

that integrate cultural issues as a factor that significantly bears on and influences empowerment, especially in bi- and multicultural settings.

In terms of the interests of empowerment theories and theorists, the findings may be applied in creating empowerment models and theories that will consider and bring out the role or varying contexts, individual characters and capacities, and uncontrollable external factors to a greater extent than presently. In addition, the findings that challenge some of the assumptions of present empowerment scholars, such as the superiority of agile and low-hierarchic organizations over the sterner and clearly defined ones and the images painted of an ideal Western leader over the more traditional type, may help in honing the current empowerment theories and models.

5.8 Validity and Reliability

The following is a brief summary on how the researcher, respondents, methods used, and the research context may have affected the results. The discussion on Action Research (esp., 3.2.4 and 3.2.5) and the Delphi method (esp., 3.3.5 and 3.3.6) include more specific discussions on their validity and reliability. Therefore, the details are not repeated here.

Eskola and Suoranta (1998) claim that in qualitative inquiry, the researcher determines the scientific value of the findings to a great extent. Qualitative research is openly subjective in that the role of the researcher is at the centre of the process. Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 212–213) suggest some criteria that must be checked in relation to the researcher to guarantee the scientific rigor of the inquiry:

- Do the conceptualizations and interpretations of the researcher correlate with those of the informants?
- To what extent are the results transferable bearing in mind the complexity of social reality?
- Have unpredictable factors been taken into account?
- Have other researchers gained similar results?

The researcher has been from the start aware that the subject under study is very personal and therefore prone to subjective conclusions and interpretations. Therefore, there has been a conscious attempt to question and re-evaluate all deductions and conclusions made during the research process (Eskola & Suoranta 1998). The conclusions have also been subjected to review to the original informants to double check whether they represent the realities proposed by the informants. In this process, it has been kept in mind that the informants might be blind to their own experience and condition (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 212). The researcher has also been careful to note that the results might be very context bound and applying only to that particular environment since the informants have come mainly from the partner organizations of Fida International and the organization itself. The informants also represent similar cultural backgrounds and have been exposed to similar development debate in the media. To secure that these factors do not colour the results, the researcher has submitted the results for comments to researchers and common men and women who have had little or no exposure to the African realities and development jargon. The researcher considers himself to fulfil reasonably well the criteria put forth by Suojanen for a quantitative inquirer (Suojanen 1992). The researcher has spent a considerable amount of time with informants in all kinds of social contexts. There has been minimal distance with the researcher and the informants since a number of them work with interventions where the researcher was or had been involved in at the time of data collection. The researcher can be judged to speak the same language with the informants and considered to possess sufficient professional expertise on the issues researched. Finally, other empowerment researchers have reached similar conclusions as the researcher here. Of course, there are new angles and conclusions that challenge some of the previous views on empowerment. However, it can be said that the obtained results confirm some of the existing ideas on empowerment and challenge others.

The scientific value of the results of an inquiry, depend to a great extent on the methods used. The key terms used to evaluate the value of the results have traditionally been reliability and validity. As it is well known, there is considerable debate as to how these concepts can be applied to qualitative inquiry (e.g., Eskola & Suoranta 1998; Flick 2002; Payne & Payne 2004). Payne and Payne (2004, 198) suggest that reliability could be replaced in quantitative research by dependability. However, whatever the term used, the basic issue is the consistency of the phenomena and the consistency of the

method to produce the same results irrespective of who applies the measurements. Of course, this is a difficult question in terms of any qualitative inquiry, where a degree of subjectivity cannot be overruled in relation to the researcher and the data gathering environment is semi-controlled at best. Therefore, what can be done is to ask the question whether similar results as in the present inquiry are likely to occur again (Payne & Payne 2004, 198). The data collection was conducted during a considerable period of time. During the data collection analysis was done simultaneously. This enabled the researcher to compare and contrast data that was derived in different environments, with different methods, from people with diverse cultural backgrounds, different educational qualifications, and with differing development cooperation expertise. It can be said that the results were consistently similar. For example, only minor additions, rearrangements, and modifications were necessary when the depictions of an empowered partner, means of empowerment, and empowerment inhibitors were presented to and commented on by various audiences. This suggests a relatively high reliability as to the interpretation and description of results.

Validity refers to the capacity of the used method(s) to capture the nature and characteristics of the phenomenon under inquiry (Patton & Patton 2004). Quite often, the concept of validity is divided into internal and external validities. Internal validity refers to the ability of the research approach, design, and methods to achieve the purpose of the study. External validity, in turn, refers to the limits of generalization imposed by the operationalization of the study. (Patton & Patton 2004; Silverman 1995.) A number of ways were employed to secure the internal and external validity of the research. First of all, a number of ways to triangulate and to secure respondent validation were used (Silverman 1995, 156). Triangulation was done by using two different methods, that is Action Research and Delphi methods to gather data. Although, here, the Delphi method can be seen as a method within a method, it could have been used totally independently. Within the overall Action Research framework, data was collected through various means such as video-taped discussion, interviews, essays, group work, and so on. This could be seen as data triangulation. Data was also gathered in different local and temporal settings. Some of the data was gathered on the field and some in more formal seminars. The data was gathered over a time-span of about four years (Flick 2002, 226). In addition, data was gathered from different informants scaling from development experts to common villagers. Such practices have been

argued to increase validity (Flick 2002, 226). The data was also subjected to what Silverman (1995, 156) calls respondent validation. In other words, the findings are taken back to the informants for comments and verification. This took place in two ways. First, the Delphi method makes use of this kind of practice by design. The experts give anonymous responses during the first Delphi round. The researcher then analysed the responses and put together the initial depictions of an empowered partner, means of empowerment, and empowerment inhibitors. This summary was then subjected to the same experts and a few additional external experts for group discussions and comments. In addition, the conclusions derived from experts were subjected to discussion by two different groups. One of the groups consisted of expatriates with little or no development cooperation experience. The other group consisted of local development actors and commoners. Although, Eskola and Suoranta (1998), for example, have challenged respondent validation, we suggest that in the context of this study it has boosted validity. In general terms, it may be noted that the researcher has discussed the whole research design and methods used with a methodological expert, other researchers and, of course, the supervising Professor. The methodological choices proved to be applicable throughout the research.

Although there are voices to shout that generalization is not the primary goal of quantitative inquiry (e.g. Eskola & Suoranta 1998; Munhall 2001; Payne & Payne 2004), the aim of the present inquiry was definitely to draw conclusions and descriptions that might be applied in other contexts. Even if generalization of results could be dealt with in relation to external validity (Payne & Payne 2004, 236), it is dealt here separately. It is quite easy to agree with Eskola and Suoranta (1998) that the greatest challenge in generalizing quantitative inquiries is the complexity of social phenomena. However, to the researcher, this does not rule out the fact that social phenomena also contain dynamics that are more or less the same across cultures and geographical areas. For example, the depictions of what is an empowered partner is, were, to an amazing degree, similar across geographical and cultural boundaries. Flick (2002) has discussed the problem of generalization at length. He suggests, among other things that the degree of generalization depends on the rigor and soundness of how the results have been derived (coding, methods used, categorization, etc.). However, after all, the degree of transferability seems to be an elusive concept. Yet, if it is logical to say that since the difficulty of generalization arises from the uniqueness of the

circumstances where the research was carried out and the informants (Flick 2002, 230), then, the more circumstances and people are alike in the new context where the results are transferred and applied, the higher the degree of generalization. For example, in East Africa the countries and organizations where the data was collected are similar. And, it seems, that in developing countries as a general rule the circumstances are quite similar.[98] Therefore, it can be argued that the results can be transferred to a high degree into the contexts of developing countries and organizational lives of NGOs working in them. On the other hand, the author presented the findings at the annual meeting of the European Pentecostal Theological Association (EPTA).[99] The participants, for the most part, were engaged in theological education in European institutes. The findings were welcomed and the subsequent discussions proved that the challenges of empowerment are similar in European organizations. The emphases may be different. For example, the core empowerment issue in a developing country may be ethics. In Europe, the key issue may be innovation to secure a market advance. Therefore, the research process itself pointed to the direction that the core findings are transferable to NGOs and similar organizations across cultures and various contexts. However, it must be kept in mind that the prevailing context determines the degree to which each the traits of an empowered organization, means of empowerment, and empowerment inhibitors bear on empowerment.

5.9 Suggestions for Further Research

The results of the research confirmed some of the existing theories and views on empowerment and how to bring it about. However, the results also suggested that some of the current propositions on empowerment need to be looked at afresh. It seems that the effect of, for example, culture has not been given sufficient attention in empowerment studies.

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[98] Some similarities: relatively low degree of education of the masses, poor infrastructure, gender inbalance, rampant corruption, prevalence of old technologies, little or no product innovation, etc.
[99] Iso Kirja College, July 17–20, 2006.

5.9.1 Motivation and Culture

Motivation and related concepts such as (perceived) self-efficacy were confirmed to be crucial to empowerment by the current inquiry. However, the findings and a gap in current research literature suggest that the role culture and personality plays in motivation calls for further examinations. The data implied that, for example, leadership and organizational arrangements affect empowerment through the feelings, attributions, and perceptions they create. The feelings, attributions, and perceptions seem to be to an extent culture and personality bound. If this can be attested, then empowerment efforts must be much more context and personality bound than what current theories suggest.

5.9.2 Ethics, Values and Empowerment

One of the key findings of the study was the importance of ethics to empowerment. Although references to ethics and related concepts have been made in relation to empowerment studies (e.g., Beairsto & Ruohotie 2003; Fetterman 2001; Kuokkanen 2003; Siitonen 1999), the researcher was left with the impression that the way in which ethics bears on empowerment is discussed relatively little and when discussed its role is underestimated. Of course, it might be that the role of ethics was emphasized in the context of the current study since the material was gathered and most of the experts worked in countries where corruption is rampant. Therefore, to say the least, ethics is more crucial to empowerment efforts in countries that are high up in corruption listings than implied in academic or otherwise serious discussions on the topic. In addition, it is probable that since most empowerment theories and models spring forth from countries with relatively low corruption, the effect of ethics on the process might have gone unnoticed or called far less attention that it deserves.

5.9.3 Empowerment Assessment

The findings provide a substantial amount of material for devising empowerment assessment tools. For example, a questionnaire using a Likert scale could be created based on the factors that emerged from the data. Such an application of the study could be especially useful for development cooperation interventions. It could be used in all phases, planning, monitoring, and evaluation. In addition, since the findings suggested that empowerment efforts need to be sensitive to individuals, organizations, and contexts, more research is needed to figure our how this can be done in practise.

5.9.4 Sense of Calling as an Empowerment Factor in FBO Work

One of the surprises of the current inquiry was the absence of discussion on the idea of a sense of calling in development cooperation work. Since the major bulk of the data was collected from among workers of church related organizations, one would have expected frequent references to a sense of calling as a motivational factor. However, those references were practically not made. Yet, Salmi (2001) suggests that church organizations differ by default from other organizations. He refers to studies made about applicants of theological faculties and church office bearers. It seems that one of the predominant reasons to enrol for theological studies is a sense of divine calling (Salmi 2001, 12–13). The same could be expected of those who choose to engage in development collaboration in a Faith Based Organization. An interesting research could be made by comparing and contrasting work forces of FBOs and other NGOs. Would there be any difference in results, motivation, accountability, and so on?

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APPENDIX I

Empirical Data Collection Table

Research Method	Place / Date	N	Description of Participants
Action Research	Dar Es Salaam October 2003	16	Free Pentecostal Churches of Tanzania: Project Officers HQ, Directors/Managers/Committee Members from existing projects
Action Research	Nairobi October 2003	16	Full Gospel Churches of Kenya: Project Officers HQ, Directors/Managers/Committee Members from existing projects
Action Research	Nairobi June–July 2004	22	Full Gospel Churches of Kenya: Project Officers HQ, Directors/Managers/Committee Members from existing projects
Action Research	Dar Es Salaam June 2004	25	Free Pentecostal Churches of Tanzania: Project Officers HQ, Directors/Managers/Committee Members from existing projects
Action Research	Naro Moru September 2004	7 (Participants were more but only the responses written on paper are included here)	Full Gospel Churches of Kenya: Leaders, Committee Members, Volunteers of FGCK projects that deal with Street Children, National Projects Coordinator
Action Research	Koru September 2004	6	BA Students
Delphi Round 1	Email questionnaire October 2004	9	Fida International Regional Coordinators, Director of Development Cooperation, HQ Project Coordinator, EA Training Advisor
Delphi Round 2	Helsinki June 2005	15	Those who gave their answers and arguments as experts during the 1st round and some external experts on methodology and international development interventions
Action Research	Nairobi May 2006	10	Project Coordinators, Project Officers, Missionaries

APPENDIX II

Delphi Experts

NAME	POSITION / TASKS	EXPERIENCE SR. POSIT.	1ST ROUND	2ND ROUND	COMMENTS
Hakola, Harri, Mr.	Project Coordinator in Kenya, Projects Director, Director of Development Cooperation Fida	15 years	X	X	
Harjula, Jukka, Mr.	Kenya: missionary doctor and Project coordinator 1977–1985, Ethiopia Medical Coordinator 1989–1995, China Lecturer at Kunming Medical College 1998–2001, Regional Coordinator for Fida International Development Cooperation (South East Asia) and Medical Ambassadors International (Continental South East Asia), 1999–2001, Programme Planning Director, Fida International 2001–	28 years		X	
Horstia, Eero, Mr.	Project Manager Zambia 3 years, Senior Specialist and Head of Sector FTP International 3,5 years, Advisor for Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2 years, Independent Senior Consultant 3 years	11 ½ years		X	Member of Fida Development Cooperarion Advisory Board
Joensuu, Ari, Mr.	Chairperson Mision Suala Liberty from 1997, Fida Regional Coordinator from 2003–	8 years	X	X	Mr. Joensuu has also an extensive experience on project work prior to engaging in official dev co.op.
Jokivuori, Mika, Mr.	Project Controller 2000–2002, Project Coordinator 2002–2003, Regional Coordinator from 2004– Fida	4 ½ years	X	X	
Karras, Anneli, Mrs.	Hum. Aid Director at Fida HQ	22 years		X	
Kuosmanen, Tomi, Mr.	Project Coordinator and Regional Coordinator from 2002– Fida	2 ½ years	X	X	

NAME	POSITION / TASKS	EXPERIENCE SR. POSIT.	1ST ROUND	2ND ROUND	COMMENTS
Lehto, Juha, Mr.	Project Coordinator 1998–2003, East Africa Training Adviser and Assistant Regional Coordinator from 2003– Fida	6 ½ years	X	X	
Metsämuuronen, Jari, Mr.	Senior Researcher, Ministry of Education			X	Dr. Metsämuuronen participated in the 2nd round as an expert on research methods, he has also experience of development interventions
Pitkänen, Olli, Mr.	Development Cooperation Coordinator Fida	9 years on the field, 3 years at the HQ	X	X	Mr. Pitkänen has also served in bilateral projects in addition to NGO experience
Prakash, Lal, Mr.				X	
Raassina, Arto, Mr.	Regional Coordinator South-East Asia Fida	1 ½ years	X	X	Served as a Chief Medical Officer in Turku since 2003-
Sorila, Lauri, Mr.	Project Manager 1982–1987, Relief and Development Project Coordinator 1987–1995, Country Coordinator Kenya 1995–1997, 1997–2001 Project Coordinator, 2001–2004 Regional Coordinator for East Africa, 2005– Regional Coordinator for Tsunami Rehabilitation	23 ½ years	X	X	
Toukola, Tauno, Mr.	Project Coordinator, Regional Coordinator from 2004– Fida	1 ½ years		X	Prior to the appointment to the position of Regional Coordinator, Mr. Toukola has served in educational development project as a coordinator in the 90's
Voipio, Timo, Mr.	Adviser (Social Development) for Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland	General experience related to development issues 25 years, Tanzania 3 years, Ministry for Foreign Affairs 7 years		**X**	Mr. Voipio participated in the 2nd Delphi round to critique the analysis of the 1st Delphi round from the perspective of MFA

APPENDIX III

Covering Letters

Nairobi 27 08 2004

Hyvä kollega,

olen Tomi Järvinen ja valmistelen prof. Pekka Ruohotien ohjauksessa väitöskirjaa aiheesta *Empowerment – The Challenge of NGO*s. Monet teistä olittekin kesäkuussa 2004 keuruulla Fida:n aluekoordinaattoripäivillä, jossa kehitysyhteistyöpäällikkö Harri Hakola mainitsi muutamalla sanalla tutkimuksestani.

Useissa projekteissamme ja kehitysyhteistyöstrategiassamme mainitaan *empowerment* – käsite. *Empowerment* – on joko projektin kehitystavoite (development objective) tai sitten se on muutoin liitetty projektin toimintoihin osatavoitteena. Koko toimintamme tavoitteeksi on asetettu:

> Voimauttaa kumppanimme olemaan voimakkaita positiivisia vaikuttajia yhteisöissään

> *To empower the local partners to be positive powerful influences in their communities*

Mitä *empowerment* sitten tarkoittaa kansalaisjärjestötyössä? Miten se tapahtuu? Miten voimaantuminen mahdollistuu? Millaisia käytännön toimenpiteitä se edellyttää? Miten kokemuksemme *empowerment* – toiminnoista suhtautuu olemassa oleviin teorioihin? Nämä kysymykset ovat varmaan sinullekin arkipäivää työssäsi.

Englannin kielistä sanaa *empowerment* on käytetty ja käännetty usealla tavalla suomalaisessa aihetta koskevassa kirjallisuudessa. Joitakin esimerkkejä *empowerment* - sanan ja sen johdosten suomennoksista: voimaantua, voimaannuttaa, voimaantunut, voimistaa, voimistuminen, vahvistua, vahvistaa, voimistaa, voimavarojen vapauttaminen, vallan antaminen, kykeneväksi tekeminen, valtuuttaa, valtauttaa, sisäisen voimantunteen kokeminen, väkevöityminen, väkevöittäminen, jne. Yksimielisyyttä sanan suomennoksesta ei tutkijoiden keskuudessa vielä tätä kirjoitettaessa ole.

Tutkimukseni keskeisiä tavoitteita on jäsentää *empowerment* - käsitettä kehitysyhteistyökontekstissa ja tuottaa kansalaisjärjestötoimijoille käyttökelpoista tietoa aiheesta. Tässä prosessissa toivoisin Sinun apuasi ja ponnistuksiasi. Pyydän, että vastaisit ohessa oleviin neljään kysymykseen kiinnittäen erityistä huomiota vastaustesi perusteluihin. Toivoisin, että vastauksesi ovat esseen muodossa. Fida:n suostumuksella voit käyttää vastaamiseen työaikaa. Vastaukset puretaan vuoden 2005 aluekoordinaattoripäivillä. Mikäli vastaat kysymyksiin ja olet mukana purkutilaisuudessa, Tampereen yliopisto myöntää todistuksen toiminnastasi asiantuntijana *empowerment* – tutkimuksessa. Vastaukset tulisi antaa lokakuun loppuun mennessä.

Voimia työhösi,

Tomi Järvinen

Nairobi
August 27, 2004

Dear Colleague,

My name is Tomi Järvinen and I am preparing a Ph.D. dissertation on *Empowerment – The Challenge of NGOs*. A number of you participated in Fida's training session for Regional Coordinators in Keuruu, Finland this year. Our Director for Development Cooperation, Harri Hakola introduced my research with a few words.

The concept of empowerment is mentioned in many of our project documents and in our strategy for development cooperation. In some cases, empowerment is the development or immediate objective of the project, or it is otherwise integrated in the project activities. The set goal of our activities as Fida International is:

> *To empower local partners to be positive and powerful influences in their communities.*

What does "empowerment" mean in NGO activities? How does it happen? How does one facilitate it? What kind of practical measures does it presume? What is our experience of empowerment in relation to the existing theories? I am convinced that these are routine questions in your work.

The English term "empowerment" has been used and translated in a number of ways in the Finnish literature on the subject. Some examples of the translations of the word "empowerment" and its derivatives are: being empowered, to empower, empowered, strengthen, strengthening, to be strengthened, release power (resources), delegate authority / power, to enable, authorize, inner sense of power, concentrate (in the sense of making an extract more concentrated), etc. At present, among researchers, there is no consensus as to the proper translation.

One of the key objectives of my current study is to analyze the concept of empowerment in a development cooperation context and produce useable materials for those who work in the NGO sector. In this process, I need Your help and input. I kindly ask you to answer the four attached questions. Please, pay special attention to your supporting arguments. I request that you would answer in essay form. With the consent of Fida International, you are free to use your working hours to answer the questionnaire. The answers will be discussed in the coming Project Coordinators' consultation in 2005. If you submit the questionnaire and attend the discussion at the Project Coordinator's consultation, the University of Tampere will issue a certificate recognizing that you have contributed to the study as an expert. The answers should be submitted by October.

Wishing you strength in your work,

Tomi Järvinen

Delphi Questionnaire for Regional Coordinators

Delfi - kysely aluekoordinaattoreille
Delphi questionnaire for Regional Coordinators

Kysymys / Question # 1

Millainen on voimaantunut kumppani? Miten perustelisit väitteesi?

What is an empowered partner like? What kind of arguments would you present to support your position?

Kysymys / Question # 2

Miten kumppani voimautetaan? Millaisia ajatuksia on esittämiesi toimenpiteitten taustalla.

How is the partner empowered? What thoughts underlie the activities you have suggested?

Kysymys / Question # 3

Mainitse esimerkki henkilön tai organisaation voimaantumisesta. Mikä kyseisessä esimerkissä vaikutti voimaantumiseen?

Give an example of an empowered person or organization. What kind of factors contributed to the empowerment in your example?

Kysymys / Question # 4

Kumppani-lehdessä (1/2003) esitettiin hyvän kehitysyhteistyön resepti. Alan ammattilaiset esittivät, että kehitysyhteistyö onnistuu kun:

> kehitystä jarruttavat tekijät määritellään yhdessä
> interventiot suunnitellaan yhdessä
> kumppanit sitoutuvat aidosti interventioon
> kumppanit voimautetaan / voimaannutetaan
> tuetaan olemassa olevia prosesseja
> uusia rakennelmia (institutionaalisia) ei pystytetä
> hallinnollisten järjestelmien toiminnallisuus varmennetaan

Lienee projekteja, joissa edellä mainitut seikat on pyritty aidosti huomioimaan ja silti ne eivät ole saavuttaneet toivottuja tuloksia. Millaiset tekijät ovat mielestäsi voineet vaikuttaa kielteisesti näissä tapauksissa?

An article in *Kumppani* (1/2003) provides a recipe for good development cooperation. Professionals in the field of development cooperation suggest that development cooperation will be successful if:

> the factors hindering development cooperation are identified together
> interventions are planned together
> partners genuinely commit themselves to the intervention
> partners are empowered
> existing processes are supported
> new structures are not put in place
> and the proper functioning of the managerial structures is ensured

There are probably projects that have genuinely strived to consider all the issues mentioned. Yet, the results have not been those desired. In your opinion, what kind of factors may have had interfered the process in such cases?

APPENDIX V

Fida International Indicators for 2004-2007 Program Performance
(PM May 2005, 38–39)

Indicators

The local partners' capacity and ability to operate
Initiatives and operations done in order to empower the civil society. Visibility as a social influence
Quality and quantity of the social projects; the level of projects' planning, implementation and follow up; level and transparency of the project administration and financial management
Increase in the amount of heard voices of minority groups
Quantity of cooperation between different churches, NGOs and the State

Final beneficiaries
Impact of the strengthened local partners in the surrounding communities
Level of improvement in living conditions and life management
Strengthening of the atmosphere of hope

International goals
Uniformity of the operations with the guidelines of the development country policy of the Finnish Government
Uniformity with the goals of UN's Millennium Declaration
Uniformity with the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) of the cooperation countries in local projects/programmes
Uniformity in operations with the "DAC Guidelines on Poverty Reduction" – document

Partnership operation and network
Quality and quantity of the international and national network
Quality, quantity, and practical application of the partnership agreements
Quality of the partnership operation: partnership versus financial power – receiver
Exploitation of expertise between the projects/programmes and the countries

Good management
Quality of the local partners' management system: method of selection in leadership, committees, and staff; democracy and especially the leaders' changeability
Organisations' clarity in the method of decision-making
Members' possibility to influence
Quantity and spread of corruption cases

Equality and minority groups
Gender and age distribution in the cooperation networks' decision-making bodies, committees, and projects' staff, especially the quantity of participating women

Development of the position of women, children, HIV/AIDS bearers, and people weaker positions
Mainstreaming of gender issues in practical operations
Mainstreaming of the issues of disabled people in practical operations
Mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS pandemia in practical operations
Mainstreaming of the equality of ethnic minorities in practical operations
The significance of the Child Sponsorship Programme for the orphans and their communities

Evaluation system
Application of project monitoring in projects/programmes
Implementation of the internal and external evaluations in the project operations and the application of their results in the developing and planning of the projects/programmes
Development of project operations: planning, implementation, and reporting

Role in supporting civil societies and in activities concerning development policies
Activation of the Finnish cooperation sections and their motivation to development cooperation and global responsibility
Influence of the project operations on the empowering of the civil societies in the cooperation countries
Development and stability of fund raising

APPENDIX VI

Fida International Code of Conduct for Development Cooperation Unit

(PM May 2005, 21–22)

The Development Cooperation Programme of Fida International adheres to the following Code of Conduct in its operations:

Partnership: "We do not work for them; they do not work for us. We work together as equals"

> Partnership means real cooperation between equal partners in all areas of the work.
> In each country, our primary partner is generally a national Pentecostal church.
> Long-term programmes are developed based upon core values shared by the partners. These programmes are then implemented through short-term projects.

Community-based approach: "Entire communities are transformed through working together with our local partners"

> We encourage our partners to work with the whole community, rather than just individual members of the community. This is the foundation for effective community-based development.

Shared responsibility: "Participation is not "them" participating in "our" work, but a completely new attitude in DOING together."

> All work begins with an extensive participatory planning process together with our local partner. Ample time and resources are allocated to this critical phase.
> We encourage our partners in turn to use participatory approach and tools when working with any community. The goal is to work WITH, rather than FOR the community.
> This process enables sensitive adaptation of the programme to local circumstances.

Ownership: "We have done it ourselves!"

> We, as outsiders, play only a supportive and facilitating role, not the role of an owner. Our attitude is to help the partner to do THEIR work.
> Our partners are encouraged to adopt this same attitude when working with communities. Whenever possible, the local community - not the partner - needs to have ownership of the work.

Comprehensive approach to health: "You are only healthy, when your whole being is healthy"

Physical health is only one aspect of a healthy person. A Christian holistic, comprehensive approach includes health in all aspects of human life, the physical, mental, social and spiritual.

Sustainability: "The work goes on and on…"

Sustainability means that the development impact of a project continues once the project itself has come to a close.
Local ownership and effective participation are conducive to sustainable development and should be established from the very beginning.

Multiplication and dissemination: "Training to train to train...addition just cannot do it!"

Educational methods and content should be reproducible in local contexts.
We encourage local community projects to be planned in a way that enables them to be easily multiplied in other communities.

APPENDIX VII

Key concepts, their frequencies and meaning units derived from 1st Delphi round

Questions:

DQ 1   What is an empowered partner like? What kind of arguments would you present to support   your position?

DQ 2   How is the partner empowered? What kind of thoughts underlie the activities you   have suggested?

DQ 4   An article in *Kumppani* (1/2003) provides a recipe for good development cooperation. Professionals in the field of development cooperation suggest that development cooperation will be successful if:

> the factors hindering development cooperation are identified together
> interventions are planned together
> partners genuinely commit themselves to the intervention
> partners are empowered
> existing processes are supported
> new structures are not put in place
> and the proper functioning of the managerial structures is ensured

There are probably projects that have genuinely strived to consider all the issues mentioned. Yet, the results have not been those desired. In your opinion, what kind of factors may have had interfered the process in such cases?

DQ1

KEY CONCEPT   MEANING UNITS

(No of occurrences)

Independent (8)
        decision making (is independent in), finances (does not depend on foreign funds for existence and core operations), ownership(has a sense of ownership of the activities and mission), opposite of dependency (the opposite of an dependent organization), (independency is) hindered by prs benefits, fits to local resources (in terms of the activities), fits to local ways of doing things, does not seek the biggest amount of money possible (from donors) but (adjusts activities to) what is reasonable in terms of sustainability, capable institutionally, has substance (there is added value in its activities and expertise in the substance of the activities) , self-confident, able to solve problems independently, (has) ability to execute (plans and activities), able to take initiatives, determines desired activities and goals itself in relation to its capacities, has a clear identity, adult – not a child (metaphorical expression of maturity), able to make decisions, plans (autonomously), implements, not dependent on external assistance in basic functions

Interdependent (8)
        can benefit from a partner but also benefit the partner, can contribute to partnership, works in partnership – able to work as an equal partner, an empowered partner can determine itself with whom to work with, can determine its values (in a partnership context),   ability to cooperate without creating negative dependency, external resources are an additional asset not the source to carry out core functions, takes independent action, in contact with partners and communities, does not need to act on outside pressure since it is dependent on its own resources

Purpose conscious (5)
        (has a) long-term perspective, committed to goals, (has) home-grown leadership, can envision about the future, does not expand its activities outside its mission/purpose, makes decisions based on vision and does not divert from it

Contextualized (2)
        considers local realities, (has) cultural awareness, (uses) culturally sound techniques and resources

Responsible (2)
        (is responsible in its) administrative functions, does being a "partner" hinder total empowerment? (this is a question implicating that wrong kind of partnerships may hinder the partner from assuming a full responsibility), owning the goals (that are agreed on together), (is) responsible over successes / failures, (has the volition) to face challenges and make decisions

Equipped (2)
        trained (in core skills needed for implementation), applies training, skilled, able to carry out shared assignment, ability to plan, ability to implement

Informed (1)
        information to sustain a partnership, has technical knowledge (the skills needed in a particular intervention)

Resourced (3)
        (has) human and financial resources that can be allocated to work, calculates the resources available

Risk taker (1)
        dares (to take risks), explores new waters

Community conscious (2)
        does not focus on a small group or a sector but on community as a whole, is present (in thecommunity) in a practical manner vs hiding behind papers, responds to needs of target group

Participation friendly (1)
        does not prepare ready made plans but involves other stakeholders and the target group in planning, learns from those it serves, is not afraid to be advised

Philosophically reflective (2)
        (has internalized a) holistic view of man – (and) this view is truly shared with partners, does not seek profit,

Multiplies itself (1)
        does things that will be desired by others, demonstrates successes that trigger others to do the same

Influential (3)
        influences the working context positively, aims at empowering others, expands its sphere of influence

Self-reflective (3)
        monitors, evaluates, changes course if needed, continuous evaluation, continuous improvement, is able to set indicators to evaluate the work both through internal mechanisms and external mechanisms, aims at improving quality

DQ2

Commit to a process (3)

(empowerment) it is not a project but a process, (it is and takes) long-term influencing, empowering takes time and project is not (necessarily) the best way to empower

Set a defined goal for empowerment (3)
> partners need to agree where to aim at, constant re-evaluation of goals, setting indicators, starting point is the desire to be empowered only then the framework (of how to do it) can be agreed on

Assess (2)
> know where the partner is in its empowerment process, know yourself (in order) to know if you can function as the empowering agent, after a desire to be empowered is detected a plan can be put in place

Contextualize (1)
> one model does not apply to all circumstances

Recruit carefully (1)
> (look for) substance (as opposed to e.g. friendships), (try detect people with) right motives, avoid strong leadership in terms of personal ownership (strong leader may take personal ownership instead of e.g. community ownership

Build on local leadership (1)
> (local leaders) possess the knowledge of "local ways", (local leaders are at times) quicker (in) decision making than the donors

Build on local resources (3)
> project should not be perceived as an avenue for quick gain, knowledge how to use local resources, training (how) to find local resources, a resourceful partner might hinder the other to see its own resources

Network (3)
> shared information, dialogue, visits, knowing the expectations of the partner, learning from others, information exchange with like-minded actors

Build capacity (6)
> (teach) how to utilize resources / how to write proposals / how to manage the project cycle, (give) seminars, it is not enough to find ones own resources but one needs (to be taught) the skills to use them as well, empowering can be seen as a learning process to know oneself and the environment where it (intervention) functions, (training should aim at) learning to make the right things at the right time, (training is) not only transferring information but providing the tools for self learning, (to grow and be empowered) the partner should not be protected from pain that relates to growth, empowerment is related to a desire to learn more, (empowerment) comes through learning and experience, (training) should be more on the job than seminars, whatever the model (of training is chosen, it) should be based on a plan

Define roles (2)
> understanding the role (of each party) in relation to partnerships (is crucial to empowerment), have a common vision of the roles, the one who empowers should be especially conscious of its role

Dialogue (2)
> continued exchange of ideas, sharing of vision, monitoring (together), (partners should) review together, no model (of intervention) works without proper dialogue

Mentor (2) (take time) (2)
> sharing of time / information / training (between the partners is crucial to the empowerment process), give moral support, mentoring and giving time presume that both parties are committed to the process, give the ball back to them, stay close enough to cheer/ give cold water, encourage like a coach to do the same to others

Build trust (1)
> emphasize relationships rather than bureaucracy

Promote values (1)
> right kind of ethical values need to be in place for development (to take place), good morals enable success

Mould attitudes (2)
> (moulding attitudes is) easier in new communities than in old with long-lived traditions

Role model (3)
> the best way to bring about change is still role modelling, positive results bring change, positive results lower resistance, pilot projects, the best way to influence is personal presence and positive modelling,

Create an atmosphere (4)
> (give) room for mistakes / room for trying out new things, provide a "safe" atmosphere, motivate, (encourage) local initiatives, give moral/ideological/economical support for the partners decision, encouragement, sojourning, (create) environment to fail safely, (challenge to) stretch ones own abilities,

Allow for Participation in decision making (2)
> (allow for participation at) all levels of decision making, (participation should be there) from planning to implementation to evaluation, the partner should consciously desire to be empowered (in a sense of willingly participate in the process),

Create theological awareness (1)
> theological perspectives for social responsibility (should be thought through and internalized)

Reinforce self-image (2)

> (includes) helping in developing a vision, imparting skills (related to dev interventions), sharing knowledge openly, teaching to trust on one's own resources

Challenge partner (2)

> (challenge partners to) meet the challenges in their environment, external threat (i.e. external challenge) or opportunity often triggers empowerment

Celebrate (1)

> recognize the achievements of the partners

DQ4

Unsuccessful power transfers (1)

> (in localization process) only responsibility has been given over but not the authority to go with it, the partner does not have financial authority (because of lack of own resources or other form of dependency from outside?), for expatriates to cling on to power has been based on mistrust

Politico- / cultural tensions (4)

> (as to failure,) reasons maybe external in a way that political or tribal tensions hinder progress, in terms of church politics – the power is often concentrated on the pastors (this statement is in relation to having professionals run projects as opposed to prominent church leaders), professionalism is buried under spiritualism, (it is thought that) projects should bring personal benefit rather than benefit the primary target group, governments pay more attention to the amount of money donated than to results obtained (so principles and long term impacts are not the focus), there might be (government) policies that require to make investments that will not be sustainable, cultural issues are not always acknowledged but they steer behavior

Dependency (4)

> foreign money leaves the door open for foreign control, desire to secure foreign assistance brings along distorted motives, partners sing the song of the donors, goals and objectives forced from abroad, there is "a culture of assistance" that expects at the end the resources to be brought from outside

Superficial commitment (2)

> when problems arise then commitment is measured, it is not enough that the implementation partner is committed (to the intervention) but the target group should also be committed (the ownership cannot lie on the intervention personnel alone but also on the beneficiaries)

Corruption (2)

> too many middlemen to please, fight against corruption seems hopeless, difficult to assess the motives and purposes of the institutions and persons who seek cooperation, at times it is not only the officials that demand bribes but the community as well

Historical factors (1)

> colonialism-people have the idea that west got rich by looting the developing countries and now the have the right to get back assistance with interest, western assistance is seen (by the recipients) as a right not as something to appreciate, (the demand for) self-financing is just a game that is promised but not taken seriously

Misunderstanding (1)

> the objectives and goals of intervention are poorly understood

Poor follow-up processes (2)

> monitoring and evaluation is not given proper attention in the process

Leadership (4)

> one person can have too much control, strong leader does not allow others to be a part of the process, selfish missions and goals, there are no champions who would lead the process, competent leaders may be very few, empowerment activities might create an "elite" that is a few competent people, power is held by a few at a time, no continuity if key leaders leave

Inadequate participation (2)

> limited participation of the stakeholders in the project, planning is not done well enough (in a sense of involving the stakeholders)

Unsuitable approach (2)

> the chosen approach might not be feasible, an intervention should not be a copy of an existing one, innovation is a must in a successful project

Shallow foundation (3)

> failure to understand holism (this is used in a religious context where development interventions are seen as something secondary to more traditional church ministries), failure to understand the principles underlying the project, there is a temptation to go where money is the easiest to get (one can have the right paperwork for the wrong reasons)

Superficial partnership (2)

      should we focus on results at the grassroots or with the partner as a whole (the contexts implies that it is easier to concentrate on the projects immediate beneficiaries since results are quicker in that way rather than focusing on building up the partner to impact the grassroots), Fida's know-how is at the grassroots (therefore) often there is a failure to empower the partner as a whole, partners do not know one another well enough, the resources and abilities are not mapped well enough, the goals are not known well enough

Organizational rigidity (2)

      at times we have failed to adapt the project plan in line with the changes in the working context, no realignments are made in time

Contextual factors (3)

      unawareness of other actors on the same field, at times other actors have goals that are at odds with the project in question, the goals of the public sector might be the opposite of the ones with the NGO intervention, competitive interventions might be in place, the intervention context is not analyzed well enough

Selfish motives (2)

      what do I get out of this (motive), not motivating unless immediate benefits are seen, it is easy to act and talk as if one is committed to the process while in the end expecting the resources to be brought from outside

Individual vs. collective (3)

      organizations are made up of people that form a collective which might be impossible to empower, individual commitment may vary (therefore you might be able to impact individuals but not collectives or organizations), organizations are inevitable and should be clarified, it should be noted that they (organizations) should be of such calibre that they are self-sustained, organizations are always vulnerable no matter how thorough the preparation, only a few among an organization might be empowered (yet they cannot move the masses to the right direction), organizations may fall psychologically if key persons leave

Inadequate planning (2)

      poor planning, no planning, planning can be too theoretical to be practical, planning process often too time oriented due to high salaries of experts

Human condition (2)

      to err is human, to strife for something and not achieve is human