

**FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE  
APL-LO NORWAY PARTNERSHIP  
(*NFIL3: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – APL*)  
PROGRAM IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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**by**

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## I. SUMMARY WITH MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Main Achievements of the APL Project

The APL project has shown encouraging results especially in terms of its efforts to promote the rights of the labor movement. It also works for the empowerment of the workers – not only in their workplace, but also in the Philippine society as a whole. For a relatively young labor center established only last 1996, it has achieved parity with some of its more established labor center counterpart through the adoption of a more unconventional trade union strategy called the *Social Movement Unionism (SMU)*.

According to the APL, SMU is a strategy directed at recognizing, organizing and mobilizing all types of workers and unions for engagements in different arenas of struggle. This strategy is not limited to 'trade union' organizing and has been developed precisely to respond to new work arrangements where employee-employer relationships do not exist or are not clear.

These findings may be attributed to the implementation of SMU strategy nurtured by the following factors:

- 1) *Strategic partnership* with groups or entities that has been instrumental in supporting APL's goals such as the LO-Norway and Akbayan. As part of the Norwegian civil society groups being supported by the NORAD, the LO-Norway has always supported APL, based on the principle of solidarity and on the NORAD *principle of "recipient responsibility."* While Akbayan—one of the labor-oriented partylist group in the Philippine Congress, has supported the political and policy agenda of the APL.
- 2) A *strong education program* aimed at inculcating the values of alternative trade unionism even among hard to reach informal sectors
- 3) A *core of leadership and staff* that are not only committed to the cause of labor but are likewise competent enough to lead a national center like the APL.
- 4) A growing *membership base among the informal sector*. This is the singular factor that provides the APL with a competitive advantage relative to its competitor in the labor movement especially in the area of political and industrial action.

### Main Challenges and Recommendations

Notwithstanding the above achievements, there are many challenges and constraints which need to be addressed for the successful continuation of the program.

The main challenge is associated with the design of the current LO-Norway supported project especially in the area of *effectiveness and efficiency*. Unless these challenges

are addressed, the APL might find it difficult to sustain its momentum as an alternative and viable labor center in the next decade. These challenges or weaknesses are enumerated below:

- 1) First, there is the issue of **project objectives**. The indicated project objectives of the original 4 year-project proposal do not reflect measurable indicators or benchmarks that can be used to track its performance over time. (Please make a cursory survey of the statement of objectives located in Part III of this paper.) For example, the written objectives do not clearly state what the desired end-result should be after 4 years.
- 2) It is likewise not clear in the project design how the APL leadership and project managers will track and measure the 8 project objectives that they have identified. To measure these objectives would require the institution of appropriate or relevant performance indicators per objective. Unfortunately, these **indicators are not present in the design** of the 4-year project.
- 3) Because of the weak construction of the project objectives and indicators, the whole 4-year project proposal and the subsequent revised annual proposal became **too activity-oriented**. There are no indicative factors that can state whether these objectives are coherently connected to the project objectives that they have established beforehand. Even the quantitative targets associated with the accomplishment of some of these activities have been revised on annual basis – so much so that it has become a set of **“moving targets.”** Determining whether the targets were indeed reached or the objectives were met would not be viable given the arbitrariness of the “moving targets.”
- 4) There are certain activities that have been mentioned in the 4-year proposal and the revised APL annual proposal that has not been achieved because it was either **de-emphasized or scrapped all together in favor of other activities** (e.g. mobilizations) in the last 4 years. An example of this is the item on “Advance Educators’ Training” and the companion activity calling for the publication of an “educational manual”.
- 5) In the 2-page APL - LO legal agreement, there is an important provision in section 4 about **“gender equality being mainstreamed.”** However, the reports have not stated how the “mainstreaming of gender equality” is achieved and how this is reflected in the project implementation.
- 6) Consequently, because the objectives and performance indicators are not clearly spelled out, there is **no indication on the part of the leadership and project management on what kind of data** are to be collected through time in order to keep track of the progress of the APL and its project – apart from the usual data that tracks membership size and growth.
- 7) In order to sustain their interest and loyalty, APL would need to acquire new methods of work and strategy when addressing the concrete or practical needs of the informal sector. Often these needs are different from the expressed needs of those in the formal sector, and may be beyond the purview of SMU as it is

presently defined. In particular, the APL might need to **develop mutual aid and benefit programs** for its members over and above its emphasis on political action.

- 8) After reviewing the 2010-2013 proposal of APL, we found that the crafting of the **project objectives including indicators have somewhat improved**, compared to the last project cycle of 2006-2009. Still, the way the goals and indicators have been crafted in this latest proposal needs some further improvement.
- 9) At this point the APL is not systematically keeping track of its costs (e.g. direct costs & indirect costs). These data could have been useful for a real cost-effectiveness study. Hence, it would be a good idea if the program and finance staff of the APL starts **tracking these types of costs** in the future. Knowledge of their costs would come a long way in terms of making wise decisions regarding cost-effectiveness, in defining strategies and in making realistic budget proposals for the APL leadership and Trade Union Solidarity Support Organizations (TUSSO) and the like.
- 10) One concern that needs to be addressed by the APL leadership and project management is how to **upgrade the technical skills** of their frontline staff so that they can assist their affiliates not only in terms of political and traditional trade union work, but also in terms of assisting (if necessary) in providing socio-economic services and other forms of mutual aid and benefit programs.
- 11) But a collateral concern is that, some staff feels that they are **overburdened by a lot of work** and that their areas of operation are too large for individual capacity. The staff also mentioned the existence of overlaps (some say this is multi-tasking) between the work of the national and local staff. These factors might already be affecting staff efficiency.
- 12) The APL needs to have a healthy and democratic way of rotating its leadership in order to address the issue of potential **low leadership bench** and to avoid the issue of creating a **gerontocratic class** that has marked many of the old standing labor centers. **Leadership rotation** will ensure that the APL will always have a stable pool of leadership from which to draw its visionary and competent leadership.
- 13) In the course of the evaluation, we have established that one of the major weaknesses of APL today is **financial sustainability**. The local and national leadership that we have interviewed is one in saying that APL urgently needs to improve its internal financial generation capability starting with its dues collection.
- 14) There may be a need to clarify the roles, functions and scope of operations of APL and LEARN. While they are admittedly fraternal entities whose partnership is based on working class solidarity, socialist ideology and personal ties, there is a need to delineate functions to avoid **overlap** and **blurring of roles** between the two entities. This could potentially raise **ethical issues** regarding conflict of interest, duplication of work and funding, even the issue of inter-locking directorates between APL and LEARN.
- 15) Finally, there may be a need for APL to **re-examine its project management style** over the LO-Norway supported project. As it stands, the evaluators get the

impression that the only management staff intimately knowledgeable about the project is the APL Secretary-General, Mr. Josua Mata. We would recommend that in the interest of better project and contingency management, the APL should *create a project management committee* that will be in-charge of managing the project both on the operational and financial side of the project. This committee will be directly answerable to the Executive Committee of the APL. Hopefully, with the creation of this committee the General Secretary will be deloaded of the day-to-day monitoring of the project and at the same time increase the number of people who can run the project even in his absence.

## II. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF REVIEW

### Background and Objectives

As part of the continuing effort to improve the performance of the APL Project “NFIL 3: Organisational Development – APL,” LO Norway – APL’s main TUSO partner proposed the conduct of a formative external evaluation; the process of which, was agreed to by APL and LO-Norway. This evaluation will form part of the usual process of APL’s project renewal for the third project cycle covering the period 2010-2013.

The team commissioned by LO-Norway who undertook this external evaluation consists of Profs. Rainier V. Almazan and Herman S. Kraft of the University of the Philippines. They were assisted by Ms. Joe-Anna Marie V. Casidsid—a Masteral student from the said university.

The evaluation mission included a nine day-study visit in 3 project sites, namely: National Capital region (NCR), Cebu and Davao. The mission commenced on August 15 and ended on October 30, 2010. The area visits were synchronized with the conduct of major APL education activities held during this period, in order to maximize the presence and participation of the local unions, territorial and national leaders of the APL, and for the evaluators to actually observe the ongoing activities directly supported by the LO Norway project. These activities are as follows:

**Table 1: Study Visits of Evaluation Team (September 3 – 19, 2010)**

Area	Activity	Date	Evaluator
National Capital Region (NCR)	Basic Educator’s Training	September 3-5, 2010	Almazan, Kraft
Davao	Political Education	September 11-13, 2010	Almazan, Kraft
Cebu	Basic Educator’s Training	September 17-19, 2010	Kraft, Casidsid

This does not include the series of preparatory and other follow up meetings conducted by the evaluation team with Bro. Floro Francisco. These meetings were conducted to lay down the plan for the evaluation. The evaluation enjoyed substantial support from the APL senior & local staff and leaders under the leadership of Bros.

Daniel Edralin and Josua Mata, the National Chairperson and Secretary-General, respectively.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) states that the main focus of the study is to conduct a formative evaluation with the following aims in mind:

1. To assess the results of the support provided to APL and the affiliated national & local unions by LO-Norway to strengthen the capacity of the APL; and
2. To assess the modality of cooperation with the APL and provide recommendations on areas for improvement with particular relations to monitoring and reporting on the performance of the APL.

### **Methodology**

As mentioned in the TOR, the study was conducted using the following methods: key informant interviews, focus group discussions, site visit and direct observation and use of secondary data from APL reports.

The Mission has interviewed a total of 17 key informants. 8 FGDs were conducted and attended by around 58 participants from the ranks of the mass leaders and staff of the APL (see Table 2). We have observed 3 major training activities in three areas as shown in Table 1 in the previous section.

**Table 2: No. of interviews and FGDs conducted**

Area	Interview	FGD	
		Number	Participant
NCR		3	25
Cebu	7	3	17
Davao	6	2	16
National	4	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>58</b>

### **III. OVERVIEW OF APL PROJECT:**

#### **Brief Background of the Program**

The *NFIL3: Organisational Development -- APL* project is being implemented in the Philippines since January 2006 through the collaborative initiative of the Alliance for Progressive Labor (APL) and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO-Norway).

According to APL project documents, the main focus of this project is the “*strengthening of social movement unionism by increasing the APL’s capacity to campaign for workers’ political, economic and cultural rights.*”

Essentially, this project intends to strengthen the APL by enhancing the Labor Center’s capability to increase workers’ participation in shaping policies in the industry, national and international levels through advocacy campaigns and workers’ education.

Specifically, the project aims to achieve the following **objectives** in four years:

1. Strengthen the APL campaign machinery, both at the national and territorial levels;
2. Upgrade the APL registered and actual mass membership's awareness on various concerns affecting the working people;
3. Increase the APL registered and actual mass membership's participation in all major mass actions;
4. Improve the Labor Center's media exposure;
5. Help facilitate the consolidation and expansion of APL affiliates;
6. Improve the organizational capacities of the Territorial Chapters; and,
7. Deepen relations between APL and LO Norway.

The project's duration is 4 years, commencing from 2006 to 2009. It was implemented in cities where *there are* APL Territorial Chapters<sup>1</sup> such as the National Capital Region (NCR), Cebu, Bacolod and Davao, and in areas where the APL *intends to build* Territorial Chapters like Cagayan de Oro, General Santos, Zamboanga, Cotabato, Bicol, Iloilo and Iligan during the start of the project in 2006.

### **Project Activities:**

To ensure the realization of the objectives mentioned above, it is expected that after four years, the project would have implemented the following activities:

- 1) Four (4) National Conferences on Worker's Issues
- 2) Four (4) National Workshops on Campaign Evaluation and Planning;
- 3) Twelve (12) Island-Wide Trainings or Conferences;
- 4) Forty-eight (48) Symposia on Issues Affecting the Working People;
- 5) Sixteen (16) nationally coordinated mobilizations;
- 6) One hundred and seventy (170) pickets and other mass actions on issues affecting the working people: thirty (30) for the first year; forty (40) for the second year; and, fifty (50) for every year thereafter;
- 7) Four (4) National-Level Advanced Educators' Trainings;
- 8) Twenty-five (25) Courses on Social Movement Unionism per year, or a total of one hundred (100) SMU Courses;
- 9) Ten (10) Political Education seminars per year, or a total of Forty (40) seminars;
- 10) Twelve (12) press conferences per year, or a total of Forty-eight (48);
- 11) Released at least twenty-four (24), or a total of ninety-six (96) press statements;
- 12) Printed and distributed posters, leaflets and other campaign paraphernalia;
- 13) Published education and campaign manuals; and,
- 14) Conducted exchange visit programs between APL and LO Norway leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> A Territorial Chapter (TC) is essentially an area-based coordinating mechanism for industrial & political action of all APL affiliates in the formal and informal sectors in a given geographical area. The main criteria for the setting up of a TC are the presence of at least 2 sectoral organizations in a given area. The main determinant of whether to set up a TC or not is the sectoral organization rather than the traditional trade unions.



## Description of Project Activities

1. **National Conference on Worker's Issues.** These are one-day high-level annual conferences on specific worker's concerns that will serve as a venue for the APL national leadership to discuss and take positions on issues affecting the working class, as well to dialogue with policy makers.
2. **National Workshop on Campaign Evaluation and Planning.** These are two-day annual workshops on campaign evaluation and planning. These will provide a venue for the National and Territorial Campaign Committees to assess the APL's campaigns, draw out lessons learned, and refine the Labor Center's annual campaign plans.
3. **Island-wide Trainings and Conferences.** To ensure the continued development of the knowledge and skills of the members of Territorial Campaign Committees, three (3) island-wide campaign trainings and conferences shall be held every year or a total of twelve (12) activities in four years' time. This ensures cost-effectiveness in providing skills trainings for grassroots leaders. Trainings would include basic and advanced campaign management skills.
4. **Symposia.** Each Territorial Chapter would hold symposia as part of its build-up activity for major campaigns and mobilizations. It shall serve as a venue for the mass memberships to participate in shaping the APL's positions on various issues affecting the working people.
5. **Nationally Coordinated Mobilizations.** These mobilizations would include APL's mass actions on the International Women's Day (March 8), International Labor Day (May 1), Bonifacio Day (November 30) and other designated days of action. Each mobilization would focus on the issues around which the APL is campaigning.
6. **Pickets/Small Mass Actions.** To help sustain the APL's campaigns, there shall be increasing frequency of pickets and other forms of small but dramatic mass actions. The escalating number of actions reflects increased capacities of APL Territorial Chapters to launch actions.
7. **National Level Advanced Educators' Training/Conference.** These trainings are intended to fine-tune the skills, knowledge and attitudes of educators from the various Territorial Chapters, especially in implementing the Courses on Social Movement Unionism and other education activities in their respective locals.
8. **Courses on Social Movement Unionism.** This basic course was designed to provide participants with deeper understanding of the Labor Center's analyses of the workers' situation and its strategy of social movement unionism.
9. **Political Education Seminars.** These seminars are aimed at deepening the APL grassroots leadership's understanding of the systemic problems confronting the working class and the need to struggle for a better world.
10. **Press Conferences.** These activities are aimed improving the APL's media work,

These press briefings may be held in any of the APL's Territorial Chapters.

11. **Press Statements.** Press statements are aimed at elaborating the APL's positions on various issues affecting the working people.
12. **Printed Campaign Paraphernalia.** To effectively disseminate the APL's position on various issues to its mass membership and to the general public, the APL shall produce and distribute posters, leaflets and other campaign paraphernalia.
13. **Published an education material.** These are reference materials for the APL education program.
14. **Exchange Visit Program.** These are aimed at strengthening relations between APL and LO Norway. It is believed that these exchanges will not only help promote sharing of ideas but would go a long way in building cross-border solidarity.

#### **Budget Requirement:**

The three-year project will require a total budget of PHP 23,686,987.00 of which PHP 21,781,379.00 is requested from LO Norway while the APL, as its counterpart, would generate PHP 1,905,608.00 or 8% of the total cost.

## **IV. EVALUATION OF PROGRAM PERFORMANCE**

This section of the paper will concentrate on evaluating the performance of the APL program using the following criteria.

- Relevance
- Outreach & Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Resources & Capabilities
- Governance & Management

### **1. PROGRAM RELEVANCE**

Relevance is the extent to which the objectives and design of the APL are consistent with current global, national and local challenges, concerns and priorities.

Shortcomings in relevance occurs when the supply or demand side for the program is not well founded on society's challenges, concerns, policies and priorities concerning labor in general. Furthermore, in this era of limited resources, programs should not compete with one another or duplicate each other's efforts to avoid wastage of valuable resources.

The existence of a network of policymakers and union service providers on the global, national and local levels focused on addressing the needs of labor including the prevailing authorizing policy environment is what is referred to as the "*supply side*" of the program. The "*demand side*" refers to the network of beneficiaries or users of

these policies, programs, services for labor. The degree to which the alignment of a program such as APL to both sides of the equation makes it highly relevant for the needs of everyone.

By this definition, the APL project as it is designed is aimed at strengthening APL's strategy of *Social Movement Unionism*<sup>2</sup> (SMU). As a strategy, the SMU is considered by many labor studies literature as one of the most innovative strategy today to address union decline and revitalization in the context of ever widening globalization in the world. The theoretical gist of many of this literature points to the need for trade unions to move beyond the enterprise and link with other movements. In a study made by Aganon et. al (2008) trade unions using the SMU strategy can relate to other social movements in three ways. First they can use these movements as a *leverage* to allow organized labor to meet their strategic objectives. Second, unions can *expand their objectives* to embrace social and non-work issues, and share the aims and purposes of movements that are concerned primarily with questions of community, gender, agrarian reform and environment. Finally, unions can seek to learn from other social movements and improve their organizing theory and methods to organize labor in return.

In this context, we can say that present LO-Norway supported APL project may be considered as a major contribution to the attainment of the goals and concerns of the Philippine labor movement in particular and of the working people in general.

The support being extended by the LO-Norway to this project is supportive of the overall effort of the international community to pursue the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* particularly MDG Nos. 1 and 8, which refers to eradicating extreme poverty and global partnerships for development, respectively.

SMU strengthens various forms of people's organizations from trade unions to the organizations of informals in the urban and rural setting. As such it promotes poverty reduction at the policy level and in practice through its *Socialist Agenda* underpinned by human rights, social protection, and democratic participation as embodied in social dialogue.

In addition to the project's relevance to MDG#1, the APL project likewise contributes to MDG#8 by promoting decent work as a global goal in fair globalization and strengthening solidarity between and among the working people of the world particularly between the working people of Norway and the Philippines.

In the Philippine context, the APL project is likewise a major contributor to the realization of the intention of coming up with pro-labor policies. For instance, the APL was basically instrumental for amending the present Philippine Labor Code to strengthen the labor organizing efforts of workers which was embodied in R.A.9481.

As a project that supports the institutional and socio-political development of the Philippine labor movement, the APL project also falls well within the policy and

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<sup>2</sup> SMU according to the APL is a strategy directed at recognizing, organizing and mobilizing all types of workers and unions for engagements in different arenas of struggle. This strategy is not limited to 'trade union' organizing and has been developed precisely to respond to new work arrangements where employee-employer relationships do not exist or are not clear.

priorities of Norwegian development assistance in general. A Norwegian document entitled *Report on Norwegian Development Assistance* in 2000 for example spelled out its priority areas and its position vis-à-vis civil society in general.

First, the policy document emphasized that Norway’s priority areas for development assistance are the following: children’s rights and welfare, combating HIV-AIDS, fighting tuberculosis, access to energy, peace-building and democracy-building measures. In 2006, these priority areas are redirected to attain the UN initiated MDGs (NORAD 2006). Given the nature and objectives of the APL project it is obvious that the project is addressing at least one of the priority concerns of Norway and that is democracy-building measures. For a country with a dysfunctional democracy, the strengthening of the trade union movement through SMU is a modest contribution to the maturation process of Philippine democracy.

Secondly, the same NORAD (2000) document stressed Norway’s priority of “strengthening civil society” and using them as channels for development assistance. The NORAD (2006) believes that civil society which includes trade unions can be relied upon to support the priorities of Norway especially in the field of human rights, peace-building and humanitarian assistance. Although the 2000 & 2006 NORAD reports emphasized that there might be a need to strengthen coordination and reporting capability of NGOs.

The 2006 report in particular suggested that NORAD might need to review the “open criteria” policy for funding including encouraging the NORAD and the NGOs to put emphasis on acquiring information about target performance and actual results to serve as basis for improved development evaluation of Norwegian funded projects in the South.

Given these priorities and contribution it is not surprising therefore that the NORAD and LO-Norway has continued supporting the APL project for the last 5 years since 2006.<sup>3</sup> This attention to the concerns of APL can be gleaned at the amount of investment poured by the LO-Norway and the NORAD into the combined APL project series and since 2006 (See Table 3).

**Table 3: Total investments of the LO-Norway-NORAD (2006-2009)**

Project	Period Covered	Amount Received by APL		
		NOK	US\$	Phil. Peso
Project 1	2006	644,472.00*	100,541.66	5,097,023.00
Project 2	2007	789,305.31*	134,693.74	6,269,224.00
Project 3	2008	746,000.00	165,452.35**	6,948,999.03
Project 4	2009	813,800.00	144,767.50	7,539,679.00
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>2,993,577.31</b>	<b>545,455.25</b>	<b>25,854,925.03</b>

Source: Various APL narrative & financial reports on APL project (2006-2009)

Note: Those with asterisks were estimated by the evaluators based on average exchange rate during the period covered because they are not available in any APL documents.

\*NOK-US\$ (6.41-\$1; 2006); (5.86 - \$1; 2007); \*\*PHP-US\$ (42 - \$1; 2008).

<sup>3</sup> This does not include the support provided by the LO in the first project cycle which preceded the 2006-2009 funding support.

So for the period 2006 to 2009, the LO-Norway & NORAD has committed a substantial amount of development funding totaling to Php25,854,925 or approximately US\$545,455 to support the efforts of the APL to address the needs of labor under the APL project series. This total amount is 15.7% higher than the originally approved fund requested by the APL in its original 4-Year Project Proposal submitted in 2006. This does not include the contribution of other groups which extended funding support for APL's other activities. The Aker group of Norway for example, extended an approximate total of NOK100,000 as an augmentation fund to the APL (APL 2009). These various support outside of the LO-Norway including those that emanated from the FES and Swedish trade unions is a testimony to the continuing relevance of the APL project.

On the "demand side", it has been established by the series of FGDs and interviews conducted among the mass members and local leaders of APL that there is a *real* need for this kind of program putting emphasis on SMU promotion through education and advocacy.

First, most local and national unions affiliated with the APL have articulated appreciation for the various education program being conducted by APL. They feel that through these education programs, workers have become more aware of their rights under the law. For others who have undergone higher forms of education such as SMU and political education, this is what they have to say:

*"That we should learn to act as collective and not as individual groups concerned only with our own welfare. Right now I'm thinking of organizing our island to ask the government to allow us the right to institute political structures in the community..."*  
(Resort worker, 35yo, male)

*"I was inspired especially when I realized that as workers of Pepsi, we also experience several problems....I want to organize a union for Pepsi workers."* (Gil, male, youth sector)

*"I was the vice-president of our organization when I attended the seminar. Through that I've realized that most young people are ignorant of the realities around us...and APL could help young people in building awareness towards several issues."* (Gina, female, youth sector)

*"I've developed the courage to talk to "big people" like our barangay<sup>4</sup> chairman [village chief]... We are now starting to organize an APL chapter in our barangay."*  
(Mely, female, youth sector)

*"The level of thinking of our members has changed...and the perspectives as well. We have also developed confidence in being educated... We are encouraged to assert our point of views and address all kinds of people.."* (Jeepney driver, male, 45yo)

*"I've learned how to organize the urban poor in our community. The urban poor face so many problems such as housing insecurity... We must prepare for what could*

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<sup>4</sup> Barangay--the basic political geographical unit of the Philippines.

*happen in the future...If we're organized, we'd know how to bargain and they could not just evict us...*" (urban poor leader, female)

*"That capitalism and capitalists are bad..."* (Jeepney driver, 40yo)

From a cursory survey of these statements one can feel the impact of the education program on the psychological make-up and attitude of the participants. It was a transition from a feeling of being enveloped in a culture of silence engendered by poverty and/or vulnerability to a feeling of the empowered self.

Secondly, the membership appreciation of APL's education program can be gleaned from the affiliates' willingness to provide funding counterpart for the conduct of these education activities.

## **Conclusion**

The APL project is *innovative* in so far as it was able to synthesize both the requirements of traditional trade unionism and "community unionism" through the use of the SMU approach. The project itself has demonstrated that it is consonant with global, national and sectoral policies related to issues of women, informals and the youth. Both the members of trade unions and constituencies of women, youth and the informal sectors have expressed an appreciation of the usefulness of the project especially in terms of the provision of education services for their members.

We can therefore conclude that there is a definite "demand" for this APL type of services. Consequently, we can likewise say that the LO-Norway supported APL project is still *highly relevant* from both the supply and demand side of the equation. In particular, APL is able to *address specific gaps* in the realization of sectoral policies on labor on the global, national & local levels and at the same time *garner support from its international and local partners, affiliates and members*.

## **2. PROGRAM OUTREACH AND EFFECTIVENESS**

Outreach and effectiveness basically refers to extent by which the development objectives have been achieved thus far taking into account their relative importance. It must be pointed out that *not all* objectives are of equal importance.

Performance gaps in the attainment of objectives have to do either with the number of objectives that have not been achieved or with the extent to which one or more objectives have not been achieved.

Positive unintended results may also be regarded as additional achievements if convincingly documented.

### **2.1) Issues about Project Design**

There is difficulty in assessing project outreach and effectiveness of the LO-Norway supported project because of several concerns related to project design (Confer also with Annex 1 when reading this section of the paper).

### ***On Ambiguously Crafted Project Objectives***

First, there is the ***issue of project objectives***. The indicated project objectives of the original 4-year project proposal are not clearly crafted to the extent that its attainment over time can be tracked and measured. One only has to make a cursory survey of the statement of objectives as shown in Part III of this paper. For example, the written objectives do not clearly state what the desired end-result should be after 4 years.

### ***Missing or Inadequate Performance Indicators***

It is likewise not clear in the project design how the APL leadership and project managers will track and measure the 7 project objectives. But measurement would require the institution of appropriate or relevant performance indicators per objective. But unfortunately these ***indicators are not present in the design of the 4-year project***.

There is a saying in management that ***“you cannot manage what you cannot measure.”*** This rule is not only applicable to business but is likewise applicable even in non-profit initiatives and even in an “activist” organization like the APL and is essential if we are to determine the effectiveness of the work of APL. Without these elements, it would be difficult for APL to focus its work in the most strategic and essential objectives even in the context of SMU.

An example of this is the difficulty of measuring the impact or efficacy of the media work of APL, considering that media exposure is one of the major objectives of the project. In particular, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness just on the basis of the APL reports and interviews on the various “press statements” and “leafleting” work done by APL in the last 4 years. Like have these activities really reached out to APL’s target audience? If so, how did it help in projecting APL’s position on national and labor issues? How did it educate the wider public about the issues APL is fighting for?

### ***Activity Oriented, Moving Targets, Inserted Activities & Gender Issues***

Because of the weak construction of the project objectives and indicators, the whole 4-year project proposal and the subsequent revised annual proposal became ***too activity-oriented***. There are no indicative factors that can state whether these objectives are coherently connected to the project objectives that they have established beforehand. Even the quantitative targets associated with the accomplishment of some of these activities have been revised on annual basis – so much so that it has become a set of ***“moving targets.”*** Determining whether the targets were indeed reached or the objectives were met would not be viable given the arbitrariness of the “moving targets.”

There are certain activities that have been mentioned in the 4-year proposal and the revised APL annual proposal that has not been achieved because it was either ***de-emphasized or scrapped*** all together in favor of other activities (e.g. mobilizations) in the last 4 years. An example of this is the item on “Advance Educators Training” and the companion activity calling for the publication of an “educational manual”. If education is one of the important works of the APL, then these activities should be deemed as important as the other tasks such as advocacy and mass campaigns. After

all, mass campaigns and advocacy will not be possible without member education. Member education cannot be successfully accomplished without the help of competent union educators armed with the required training materials such as a manual.

There are also activity items such as gender sensitivity, leadership formation & APL-CIU conference that were not part of the original 4-year proposal but were ***inserted in the course of the implementation*** of the program in the succeeding years. The evaluators' impression is that apart from the APL-CIU conference, the gender seminars and leadership formation were corrective measures undertaken by the APL leadership and project management to address these missing features in the original proposal.

In the 2 page-APL - LO legal agreement, there is an important provision there in section 4 about ***"gender equality being mainstreamed,"*** it is not clear in the reports how this is done inside APL and how is this reflected in the project implementation. We do believe that the project management is addressing this concern since 2007. This is evidenced by our interviews of the appreciative women members of the APL and the APL annual reports. But the project management must ***guard against the mechanical understanding of gender mainstreaming*** as simply understood as inviting members and leaders to join gender sensitivity seminars and organizing community women. It must go beyond that. The APL has not really articulated its position on gender equality with greater clarity as compared for example to SMU and the relationship of SMU to gender issues and equality. Up to what extent has the APL translated this position if ever there is any, into practical internal organizational policies and programs?

The APL must also address the stereotyping of jobs according to gender. For example, in one interview with a jeepney driver-leader, we were discussing the benefits of the association for their members. When asked about the nature of business loans, the driver said that these are "primarily for the wives" so that they can have their own livelihood. When asked about the possibility that a wife might borrow funds to buy her own jeepney to become a jeepney driver, the leader insisted that the work of a jeepney driver is difficult for women. We can also surmise that some feminists might raise the possibility of the "double burden issue" for benefit package like livelihood lending for women.

Finally, matters about gender mainstreaming are not adequately highlighted and coherently presented in the annual reports of the APL apart from the disaggregated data on gender, the conduct of a few gender sensitivity seminars and short reference to the organization of women committees and community-based women's organizations and other women-only activities.

### ***Inadequate Data Base***

Consequently, because the objectives and performance indicators are not clearly spelled out, there is no indication on the part of the leadership and project management on ***what kind of data are to be collected through time*** in order to keep track of the progress of the APL and its project – apart from usual data that tracks membership size and growth. More often than not, this membership data is highly



connected with the need to forecast dues collection. But even in this indicator, various APL documents reports conflicting size of membership per union.

At present however, the leadership and project management are currently implementing a sort of membership survey to determine once and for all the membership size of its local affiliates especially those in the informal sector. But as previously mentioned, the main motivation behind this is to help the leadership forecast the total dues collection from each affiliate.

Despite this, we can make some general assessment using the data indicated in an undated APL document entitled “*Initial Baseline Data*” and the APL annual report series from 2006-2009, to create a general profile of the APL membership and therefore estimate the reach of the APL and its implication to the future strategies and/or programs of the APL.

But in the overall scheme of things, APL is not alone when it comes to some weakness in project designing and management. As previously mentioned, even the NORAD (2006) report on NGOs, recommended that NORAD and their partner Norwegian NGOs must take time to gather information about project performance of their partners in the South in order to enhance the success rate of their projects without overriding one of the basic principles of Norwegian development cooperation---the *principle of recipient responsibility*.

## **2.2) The Membership & Some Implication for APL**

### ***General Profile***

The APL project succeeded in establishing 7 territories, namely: NCR, Batangas, Bicol, Cebu, Davao, Cotabato and General Santos with a total membership of 139 trade union and informal sector groups with a worker base of 40,840 (APL 2009) or an average individual membership of 294 per union. But the General Secretary explained that the individual membership of APL is actually classified into registered and mass members. ***Registered members*** are those who are actually the dues-paying members of unions, while the ***mass members*** are non-dues paying members and may be considered as nominal in that sense. From another angle, they may be considered as the mobilizable force of the APL in times of political and industrial action. According to the latest APL *Dues Matrix Report* (2010), the registered members are only around 15% of the total membership. If we are to be stringent with our membership criteria, then the registered members are the actual members of the APL. Majority of these unions both in the union and informal sectors are located in the NCR. Majority of these individual members are still men comprising around 78% of the total membership.

At this point, the main bulk of the individual membership of APL (77%) is from the informal sector (transport, community groups and youth) which is the logical result of the SMU thrust of the APL. The main bulk of the informal sector (66%) is composed of the self-employed transport groups like the jeepney and tricycle drivers and operators.

In the traditional trade union sector which is only 23% of the APL's membership, the biggest sub-grouping is the independent unions which are around 46% of the whole trade union sector. However, in terms of political maturity and experience and a nationwide reach, it is the NUWHRAIN that leads the pack despite being only 28% of the trade union sector and only 6% of the total APL membership. Hence, it is not surprising that some of the APL's top or regional leadership and senior staff positions (and even in its partner NGO—the LEARN<sup>5</sup>) are occupied by unionists coming from NUWHRAIN's ranks as verified by the evaluators' interviews and FGDs.

### ***Some Implication for APL***

This membership profile definitely gives APL a competitive edge vis-à-vis the other trade union centers in terms of political and industrial action primarily because of its large informal sector base in general and in the transport sector in particular—one of the fundamental mark of the SMU strategy. However, this also means that the APL would need to acquire new methods of work and strategy when addressing the concrete or practical needs of the informal sector which is may be different from the needs of formal labor in order to sustain their interest and loyalty and may be beyond the purview of SMU as it is presently defined.

For example, in many of our interviews and FGDs, we have found that due to the diversity of the informal sector (from jeepney drivers to informal settlers, women and the youth), their needs are likewise too diverse. And the challenge for APL is how to address the more practical concerns of these sectors (e.g. livelihood, social protection, educational scholarship) apart from doing mass campaigns and other advocacy work. After all one of the tasks of trade unionism apart from political unionism is mutual aid and benefit. This is what some of the APL members says about this concern:

*“Maybe the APL could help us organize a cooperative. Our foremost problem is starting capital... We couldn't even start a fund raising project because we don't have seed capital.”* (Youth leader)

*“These [urban poor] residents came from different provinces—Mindanao, Leyte, Negros, in search of livelihood opportunities. Most of them are stevedores, laborers, porters, vendors—and those most desperate make both ends meet through prostitution [karton girls]. Aside from that, the community is faced with the challenge of increasing number of abandoned and neglected children. These children scrape and steal in order to live and support themselves.”* (Urban poor leader, female)

*“I hope APL could help us design and improve our social service for our members. I for one am not too skilled in these kinds of things.”* (Jeepney driver leader)

*“We evidently lack the financial capacity to start livelihood and housing projects. The main aim of our organization is actually to facilitate low-cost housing projects for the community.”* (Urban poor leader)

Even Aganon et. al (2009) felt that perhaps political unionism should be combined or balanced with some form of mutual aid and benefit program in order to secure the

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<sup>5</sup> LEARN—An NGO specializing in labor studies and training.

continuing support of its mass members in the long term. But the problem at the moment is that APL is not yet competent and experienced in this line of work.

In one interview with Bro. Josua Mata, APL Secretary General he clarified that the task of responding to the traditional union services such as CBA and social welfare services are the tasks of the local affiliates. But the problem is that apart from the more technically sophisticated unions like NUWHRAIN, it seems many of the APL affiliates, especially in the informal sector would need some form of technical assistance and a certain level of managerial maturity to address the practical needs of their members. This is another area where the APL can possibly contribute to their affiliates' organizational development. But first APL might need to hire technical people or specialists as part of the staff or as external collaborators to do this for them. Otherwise, they may have to train extensively some of their staff with expressed interest and passion for social welfare and/or livelihood services.

### ***Epilogue***

After reviewing the 2010-2013 proposal of APL, we found that the crafting of the project objectives including indicators have been improved somewhat compared to the last project cycle of 2006-2009. Still, the way the goals and indicators have been crafted in this latest proposal needs some further improvement. For example:

- 1) Indicator 1.2 on membership must be harmonized with the membership targets indicated in the Sustainability Projection paper.
- 2) There is need to clarify further some of the statements that described the performance indicators. For instance, in Indicators 1.3 & 1.4 which refers to organizational structures of women and youth respectively. There's a need to clarify further the statement "...ability to sustain campaigns for working women's rights." For Indicator 1.4 there is need to clarify the statement "operational structures" and "...conduct its own campaign for quality education and full employment."
- 3) We would also recommend that there should be a separate goal for "gender mainstreaming" which is a major demand of the APL-LO-Norway contract in order to ensure that this particular matter is given due attention.
- 4) Finally, we recommend that the project management add additional performance indicators for Goal #3 on Financial Sustainability apart from the usual target of increasing the dues collection. An indicator about collection systems both on the local and national levels must be included as part of good organizational performance.

### **3. PROGRAM EFFICIENCY & COST EFFECTIVENESS**

#### **What is Efficiency?**

The extent to which the project or program has *converted or is expected to convert its resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) economically into results in order to achieve the maximum possible outputs, outcomes & impacts with minimum possible inputs*. Or put another way, it has something to do with being cost-effective. Cost-effective in this sense means "*changing lives as much as possible for as little money as possible.*"

To determine the efficiency or cost-effectiveness of a particular program or activity it would be good to show Peso to Beneficiary cost ratio on a per territory basis or on an activity basis. However, at this point the APL is not systematically keeping track of its costs (e.g. direct costs & indirect costs) that are useful for a real cost-effectiveness study. Hence it would be a good idea if the program and finance staff of the APL should start tracking these types of costs in the future. Knowledge of their costs would come a long way in terms of making wise decisions regarding cost-effectiveness, in defining strategies and in making realistic budget proposals for the APL leadership and TUSSOs and the like.

#### **4. RESOURCES & CAPABILITIES**

##### ***People & Professional Know how***

There are 21 full-time staff in the APL. The frontline staffs are the most numerous staff category which is a good indicator that most of the staff are in field operations and is in direct contact with the main beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Generally young and passionate with their work, some staff are even children of labor leaders who perform excellent job in their respective areas of work.

In short, the people are basically where they are supposed to be—serving the workers. Individually, the staff knows their craft and is adequately committed to the cause of the APL. There is evident teamwork behavior exhibited by the staff.

One concern that needs to be addressed by the APL leadership and project management is how to upgrade the technical skills of their frontline staff so that they can assist their affiliates not only in terms of political and traditional trade union work but also in terms of assisting if necessary in providing socio-economic services and other forms of mutual aid and benefit programs.

Training or refreshing the staff with regard to data collection, data processing, presentation and interpretation should be made part of staff development. Improving and standardizing instruments, tools for qualitative and quantitative data and training the staff on its proper use should also be done. Skills like this would come in handy in making project management more effective.

But a collateral concern is that there is a feeling by some staff that they are already overburdened by a lot work and that their areas of operation is too large and that there are some overlaps (some say this is multi-tasking) between the work of the national and local staff which to the mind of the evaluators might already be affecting staff efficiency. To illustrate, one staff says that he does almost everything on the local level.

*“I move around a lot to the different field areas, I call meetings. I am in-charge of issue documentation. I produce researches; do the education; and plan and request budget for my area. I also facilitate the GPOA. I do organizing and mobilizing work. ...I lobby for ordinances in the municipal level. ...While Nice is in charge of the youth sector or Jaime is in charge of the NCTU I also get to monitor the groups that they*

*are working with simply because I'm nearer. Apart from this I also have official duties in [one national union.]*

*“Even if we are assisted by a group of committed volunteers, it's different when we have paid staff with a set of official duties. And in truth we could not really say that our work in creating and developing leaders is sufficient enough to concretely address the needs that they have identified and the situations that they have been taught to analyze...” The youth leaders they come and go. While we still have contacts with them, we could not really expect a deep sense of commitment that would go beyond their identification and understanding of APL's political education.”*

### ***A Few Comments about the Leadership Pool***

In our interviews of national and local APL leaders, we noticed that the estimated average age of the leadership pool is around 45 years old. Barring any unforeseen circumstances many of them will still be able to serve as part of APL's leadership pool for at least a decade more. Some of them especially those in the most senior positions are already nearing the sixties mark.

We do hope that the APL has a healthy and democratic way of rotating its leadership in order to avoid the issue of creating a ***gerentocratic class*** that marked many of the old standing labor centers. Leadership rotation will likewise ensure that the APL will always have a stable pool of leadership from which to draw its top leadership.

### ***Some Comments about Financial Sustainability***

In the course of the evaluation, we have established that one of the major weaknesses of APL today is financial sustainability. The local and national leadership that we have interviewed is one in saying that APL urgently needs to improve its internal financial generation capability starting with its dues collection.

As it is now, the average annual dues collection for the last three years is only 0.49% of the total annual revenue. The General Secretary explained that the APL leadership is now trying to address the issue of dues collection by tying dues payment with certain forms of social protection and the issuance of membership ID cards. The theory behind this is that people would easily part with their money if they get something tangible in return. This supports the argument that there is a need to balance political unionism with mutual aid and benefit programs to respond to members' needs.

The APL leadership felt that regardless of whether a union belongs to the formal or informal sectors membership dues is a fundamental mark of a real workers' organization. Furthermore, the evaluators believe that the leadership is distinctly aware that the support of the LO-Norway will not last forever. Hence, they see the need to address financial sustainability as one of the pressing concerns of APL.

One of the first steps that the APL did was to make a rough 11 year projection (2010 – 2020) of the amount of dues they will collect based on several assumptions. These assumptions are as follows: 1) membership composition, 2) annual dues at P24, and

3) whether or not there will be dues increases. This projection is entitled the “Sustainability Projection” paper (See Annex 2).

In a best case scenario where APL will impose a gradual increase in annual membership dues from P24 to P29 in 11 years time coupled with a membership growth rate of 5% per annum, the Center expects to collect a gross earnings of around P7.6M by 2020. Assuming this amount is attainable and that there is no undue increase in the average annual expenditure of the APL in the next 11 years, P7.6M gross dues earning by 2020 is only around 56% of the average annual expenditure of P13.7M.

The problem with projections such as this is that it is prone to the usual traps confronting any type of financial projections. These traps normally revolve around the following points:

- **Ignoring historical trends** or performances at organizational, sectoral, regional and national levels.
- **Underestimating or overestimating costs**, delays and other hindrances likely to be encountered.
- Making **unduly optimistic (or pessimistic) assumptions** about certain factors like membership growth rate per sector (TU, community, transport, etc), membership drop-out rate (this has not been considered in the projection) and the willingness of members to pay dues without considering the “demand” for certain value-added products and services required by the APL’s membership.
- The longer the time horizon in any financial projection, the more difficult it is to forecast with some precision.

With this said it is recommended that the APL leadership subject the projection to further review and analysis to make it more realistic and perhaps reduce the projection from 11 to 5 years. We also recommend that after the necessary review; integrate the assumptions of this projection as part of the performance indicators for the next project cycle of 2010-2013.

Regardless of the outcome of this review and using the average annual expenditures the evaluators estimate that the **full cost** monthly membership dues rate of APL should be around P27 to P178 depending on whether the APL will only charge the “registered” members exclusively or in combination with the “mass” members.

Assuming that there will be no substantial increase in administrative and program expenditures and there will be 100% collection rate, the full cost dues rate is expected to meet the **break-even point** of APL. That is why early on we are recommending that the APL leadership and project management keep track of their unit cost on a per activity and per program levels because data like this are important inputs for making decisions regarding dues rate and/or program fees.

The second point that we would like to raise is that determining the appropriate dues rate and having it approved by the leadership and membership is part of the first hurdle in the road to sustainability. The second hurdle is an **efficient and culturally attuned dues collection system** especially more so if the APL is dealing with the informal sector. When setting up collection systems for the informal sector it would

be instructive to draw lessons from the experiences of jeepney drivers associations, market vendor's associations, the microfinance institutions, the "bumbays"<sup>6</sup> and the like.

What do these informal associations have in common in terms of collecting dues or loan payments from their constituencies?

- The use of the term "micro" as in microfinance refers to the ability of a program to handle small cash flows (by way of both incomes and expenses) of the poor and not really to the size of the scheme. This concept is premised on the idea that the *poor has funds that can be used for providential and other welfare purposes, although in small amounts and sometimes in irregular frequency.*
- It is neither the size of interest rate nor the dues rate that is important. It is a secondary issue for them. Primary issue is *accessibility* of services. But this presumes that the services that APL offers are fundamental to the informals' daily economic activity. E.g. for vendors its easy access to loans; for the drivers its guaranteed full passenger load for every trip at the least cost through their common terminal or protection from police harassment, etc.

The question now confronting APL is: What kind of service can it offer (apart from its "political services") its informal base that it will consider as fundamental that they will be willing to part with their hard earned money to be paid to the APL in the form of dues or other forms of service fees? And how will the APL propose to collect this considering that the funds flow of the informal sector are seasonal depending on the nature of their livelihood?

If the APL leadership and project management can provide an innovative solution to these questions then the APL will be able to *substantially* answer their sustainability issues in the soonest possible time.

## 5. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governance and management is an important aspect of any program evaluation. Dysfunctional governance and management structures, functions and processes can spell the difference between success and failure in any human endeavor. But before we evaluate the current governance and management systems of the APL it might be good to review the definition of governance and management to serve as a term of reference for the assessment part of this section.

### *What is governance?*

Governance concerns the structures, functions, processes & organizational traditions that have been put in place within the context of a program's authorizing environment to ensure that a program is implemented in such a way that it achieves the objectives in an effective and transparent manner. In the case of APL, this includes the Congress,

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<sup>6</sup> Bumbay—is a colloquial Filipino term for Indian nationals or Fil-Indians residing in the Philippines engaged in local businesses such as trading and informal credit.

Council of Leaders and most especially the Executive Committee which is presided over by Bro. Daniel Edralin as the APL Chairperson.

***What is management?***

On the other hand, management is concerned with the day-to-day operation of the program within the context of the strategies, policies, processes and procedures that have been established by the governing body. In the case of the APL, this is the National Secretariat headed by Bro. Josua Mata as the APL Secretary-General.

***But what is difference between governance and management?*** There is no hard and fast rule in differentiating the two. But essentially, management is concerned with ***“doing things right”*** while governance is concerned with ***“doing the right things.”***

In particular, both the ***maturity and size of the program will influence the dividing line and degree of separation*** between the program’s governance and management structures. For example, less mature programs may take time to establish formal governance mechanisms. Smaller programs with limited staffing and financial resources tend to blend responsibilities between those who govern and those who manage and to call on governing body members to be more involved in specific day-to-day management decisions. Given the size of the LO-Norway-APL project, it requires no less than a separation of structures between governance and management which at the moment is a given fact.

In any case, the ***extent of governance should be proportionate to the size of the program*** in order not to result in an over-governed and under-performing program.

***What is the function of governance?*** There are several that come to mind.

- 1) **Strategic direction**—exercising effective leadership that optimizes inputs.
- 2) **Management oversight**-monitoring managerial performance & program implementation
- 3) **Stakeholder participation**—Inclusion of stakeholders (members, partners, employees, etc.) in consultation & programmatic activities
- 4) **Risk management**—political, economic & financial risks that might affect the program
- 5) **Conflict management**—monitoring & managing potential and actual conflicts of interests among principals, partners & beneficiaries.
- 6) **Audit & evaluation**—Ensuring integrity of financial reporting & independent financial/operational audits

On the other hand, ***what is the function of management?***

- 1) **Program implementation**—Managing financial, material, human resources, partners & time to achieve objectives & targets.
- 2) **Regulatory compliance**—Ensuring compliance with applicable laws & regulations of the country, host organization & TUSSO.
- 3) **Reviewing & reporting**—Taking stock of program performance in relation to objectives & strategies. Reporting progress & strategic issues to governing body & TUSSOs.



- 4) **Administrative efficiency**—Maintaining lean administrative structure while at the same increasing operational efficiency
- 5) **Stakeholder involvement**—Maintaining board approved policies for stakeholder inclusion in programmatic activities
- 6) **Learning**—Distilling & discerning lessons from practice & field implementation
- 7) **Performance assessment**—Reviewing the performance of operational staff on regular basis using appropriate method & procedures. Rewarding good performance and rectifying errors.

### **A Few Comments about the APL Governance & Management Viz. Project**

In general the management of the LO-Norway supported project is run in a relatively transparent and professional manner. The various narrative and financial reports are testament to the capacity of the national leadership and the project management to manage a *multi-year, multi-million peso and nationwide project* such as the one supported by LO-Norway. This has been demonstrated consistently through the years since the partnership between the LO and APL began in the late 1990s.

But the evaluators believe that the interest of the APL and of the LO-Norway will be better served if a separate project management committee will be created to manage the day-to-day operation of the project that is directly answerable to the Executive Committee of the APL. As it stands, the evaluators get the impression that despite the presence of a Secretariat the only management personnel intimately knowledgeable about the project is the APL Secretary-General, Josua Mata. We would recommend that in the interest of better project and contingency management, the APL should *create a project management committee* that will be in-charge of managing the project both on the operational and financial side of the project. This committee will be directly answerable to the Executive Committee of the APL. Hopefully, with the creation of this committee the General Secretary will be deloaded of the day-to-day monitoring of the project and at the same time increase the number of people who can run the project even in his absence.

Finally, there may be a need to clarify the roles, functions and scope of operations of APL and LEARN. While they are admittedly fraternal entities whose partnership is based on working class solidarity, socialist ideology and personal ties somehow there seem to be an *overlap* and sometimes a *blurring of roles* between the two entities. This could potentially raise *ethical issues* regarding conflict of interest, duplication of work and funding, even the issue of inter-locking directorates between APL and LEARN.

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