

AS DROPS BECOME WAVES: A CASE STUDY OF EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION
THROUGH THE SISTEMA APRENDIZAJE TUTORIAL (SAT) IN RURAL COLOMBIA

A Thesis

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of

The University of Guelph

by

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ABSTRACT

AS DROPS BECOME WAVES: A CASE STUDY OF EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE SISTEMA APRENDIZAJE TUTORIAL (SAT) IN RURAL COLOMBIA

Michael Robert Leggett
University of Guelph, 2006

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This thesis takes the form of a single case study focussed on the SAT programme, a capacity building approach to community development offered through an alternative secondary educational programme in Colombia. The thesis is an investigation into the conceptions and experiences around personal and social transformation of graduates of SAT in the department of Risaralda. These experiences are analysed in relation to current theoretical approaches in education, rural development and capacity building, in order to address knowledge gaps in these literatures with the insights learnt from the SAT programme in Risaralda.

In-depth interviews, participant observation and review of secondary literature were employed as data collection methods, and qualitative coding of interviews served as the primary mode of data analysis

Findings highlight the value of service as a practical and motivational bridge between the personal and the social, and the role of spirituality in reconfiguring concepts of the self and the community as fluid elements that blend into each other.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the SAT graduates interviewed in this study, who, out of a passion for learning and a sincere love for others, and through incredible hardship, have dedicated their lives, their talents, and their tears to an enduring vision of human prosperity and rural well-being.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

“Never underestimate that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world, indeed it's the only thing that ever has.” (Margaret Mead, n.d.)

Background

It has almost become self-evident to most of those working in the related areas of rural development, that education, formal and non-formal, must play a vital role in empowering rural communities to fully participate in their own paths of development. If the field of education is to contribute in the ways anticipated, then a rigorous search beyond this polarised theoretical debate for a viable alternative approach to education is critical.

Even a cursory review of the extensive literature in the field of education presents two general and rather opposing approaches to learning: one set of theories (referred to hereafter as the Transformative School) emphasize the individual's actualization and development as the primary goal of the learning process, often with the implication that social change and development is either an outcome of or a subsequent step in this process (as argued by Mezirow *et al.*). On the other hand are a set of theories (following the Freirean school of thought) that identify social transformation as the goal of the learning process, arguing that as individuals are essentially products of social forces, that only when new social structures are in place can individuals truly find agency and actualization (as argued by Freire *et al.*). Both theories thus hold a consequential view of one or the other type of transformation, promising it to be the logical result of the other. While both of these educational approaches offer

considerable insight into the potential of the changes required by individuals and society, respectively, in improving the human condition, yet alone each poses serious limitations when applied to the challenges of rural development.

In this context, the SAT programme, created by the Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanzas de las Ciencias (FUNDAEC), has been evolving over the past thirty years and has become a catalyst in the building of the capacities of rural people to simultaneously take charge of their own personal, intellectual, and spiritual growth as well as to contribute meaningfully to the transformation of rural society.

SAT can be defined as a formal, six year programme of secondary education, which has been approved by the Colombian Ministry of Education, and which has expanded rapidly to most regions of the country, and now involves, through a network of over forty partner NGOs in the country, over 40,000 students. The SAT programme has also been adapted and implemented in eight other countries in Central and South America and in Africa. The programme is only slowly and of recent beginning to gain international attention, in part, through awards such as the European Expo 2000 Jury Verdict, and Club of Budapest Change the World – Best Practice Award, 2002. The Honduran government has also recently announced that it has chosen SAT as the country's principal programme of secondary education for its rural areas.

Despite this emerging recognition of the success of the SAT programme, very little research has been done to learn about the changes taking place and the potential of this learning process. Recent studies on the SAT programme in Colombia and Honduras have been carried out by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) (2000), the International Development Research Centre of Canada (IDRC) (2003), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) (2001).

Catherine Honeyman (2004) also conducted a comparative analysis of the impact of SAT on students in the programme alongside their peers in the conventional curriculum, as part of an undergraduate thesis. Her study shows clearly that students in the SAT programme developed significantly greater orientations towards community service and social responsibility. Another important study was carried out by Manigeh Roosta (1999). Roosta's dissertation provided a descriptive case study of FUNDAEC and its University Center for Rural Well-Being, the centre that trains the tutors of the SAT programme. Another study was carried out by Erin Murphy-Graham (2003) which examined the role of teacher professional development with the introduction of the SAT programme in Honduras.

Goal and Objectives of the Study

Testimonials of the SAT tutors interviewed by Roosta (1999) seem to tell of an experience of transformation that does not fit within the current debate offered by the Freirean and Mezirownian schools of thought on adult education. For the SAT tutors, commitment to social change was not a final step resulting from individual actualization (following Mezirow), nor did their perception of their own agency and self-development seem conditional upon or instrumentally directed towards some future change of social structures (following Freire). The stories Roosta (1999) recounts tell of deeply rooted changes in the self-conception and self-worth of SAT tutors, simultaneous to or even synergistic with the anecdotes about tireless dedication to and participation in community development initiatives aimed at agricultural innovation, community decision-making,

cultural identity, health promotion and community education. These testimonials included several examples of tutors engaging in social action in the absence of the satisfaction of their own basic needs of remuneration and adequate food, in contrast with a supposed hierarchy of needs which serves as the theoretical basis of the humanist approach to transformation.

Roosta (1999) concludes by putting forward the recommendation that further research on the nature of the transformative experiences of the tutors is needed. With the increasing interest of government ministries and non-governmental organizations alike from numerous countries around the world in the SAT programme, in order to avoid superficial transplant approaches to its introduction in other countries, more in-depth research on the unique transformative experiences of SAT students and their communities is needed. While a comprehensive impact assessment is vital in order to accurately learn about the scope and degree of change taking place across individuals and communities involved with SAT, conventional development indicators do not often allow for the inclusion of transformative experiences. Furthermore, without prior exploratory research, such an assessment runs the risk of missing what might be unique to the transformative experiences that appear to distinguish the SAT programme. This study, then, responds to the call from Roosta (1999) for further research into the SAT model. While future research would do well to carry out an analysis of how communities have changed over time and in interaction with the changes that individual learners go through as they proceed through the programme. That being beyond the constraints of research at the master's level, the study is limited to an analysis of the conceptions about individual and social transformation that individual learners hold.

Reflection on the students' testimonials provided in Roosta's dissertation raises a number of important questions pertinent to any further research on the SAT programme:

what *are* the experiences of transformation that the SAT programme is reported to have accomplished? Are these changes operating only at the level of “meaning perspectives” as Mezirow discusses “transformation”? If not, what are all the dimensions that these experiences occur on (skills, knowledge, attitudes, spiritual qualities and values, and metaphysical orientations)? What is the interaction between these two types of transformation (namely personal and social transformation)? Are there specific supports that have nurtured and fostered these changes? While these questions have helped give impetus to the present study and while it attempts to discuss these questions, it lies beyond the scope of a master’s thesis to respond with supporting data to all of these questions; future research will need to take up further some of these questions.

Goal

The goal of this study was to investigate the conceptions and the experiences of SAT graduates around themes relating to personal and social transformation, and to relate this to contemporary theories in education, rural development, and capacity building, in order to address knowledge gaps about transformation in these literatures.

Objectives

1. To identify and describe the conceptions and learning experiences of the SAT graduates in relation to the individual and the community.
2. To analyse the interactions and possible connections between individual and social transformation as discussed by SAT graduates.

3. To examine critically the conceptual links and intersections between the experiences of personal and social transformation of SAT graduates and contemporary theories in education, rural development, and capacity building.

Research Design

This study employs a 'mixed methods' approach, as the conceptual framework elaborated below does not lend itself entirely or exclusively to any conventional methodology, despite the affinities it may have with several. In this context, it is important to make explicit some of the knowledge claims of the approach taken. The researcher takes the generation of knowledge and meaning to be individually and socially constructed, and accepts that theory is best approached as insights into reality, rather than as actual descriptions of reality itself (Bohm, 1976). It also accepts that there are a multiplicity of knowledges and "insights" into any given phenomenon, and that such diversity of perspectives contributes to richer and more multi-faceted understandings and potentially greater appreciation of the 'truths' of the realities that we socially construct and those that transcend and embrace us, rather than as necessarily setting up conflicts and dialectical tensions. Multiple voices and ways of knowing were sought out and included. It also acknowledges that the *process* of inquiry is an explicit and integral component of the research, and not merely a preparatory stage.

The single case study method seemed the most appropriate methodological choice for this particular study in the absence of substantive research on the SAT programme and the transformative experiences of its graduates, which appear inconsistent with conventional models of education and transformative learning. The case study methodology is well-suited

and consistent with the goal of the study in that it allows for rich descriptions of a new phenomenon and for an appreciation of processes and the historicity of phenomena, particularly for complex phenomena (Yin, 2003). The case study method, however, does not allow for nor intends to make generalizable analyses of the phenomena. This method is suited for this study, as the aim of the study is not to evaluate SAT, but rather to be able to describe some of the characteristics of a particular model of transformation, for which no previous literature or indicators for evaluation exist.

This study takes on the character of an exploratory approach. Babbie (1999) points out that an exploratory approach is appropriate for three primary purposes: (1) to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding, (2) to test the feasibility of pursuing a more exhaustive study, and (3) to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study. He argues that the exploratory approach is best fitted whenever a researcher is examining new theoretical ground (1999).

Significance of the Study

The accounts and reflections of the SAT graduates interviewed in this study offer valuable insights into a way forward beyond the polarisation of the theoretical debate around personal and social transformation found in the current literature, toward the exploration of a conceptual framework of integral development (of the individual and the community). The study has approached this case through a qualitative and exploratory approach as much of the

current literature and the conventional sets of development indicators do not lend themselves to properly understanding what has been taking place within the SAT programme.

The insights offered this study hold important implications for work around transference of the SAT programme to other countries as well as for programming in international education, capacity building and rural development domains, more broadly speaking. The findings of the study highlight important aspects of how, within the SAT experience, emphasis on personal and social transformation can be brought together in more synergistic ways. They also raise reflections and questions on the nature of capacity building, the protagonists of development, and the role of spirituality in outlining an integral vision of development and fostering the corresponding volition to sustain efforts at realizing that vision.

The present study also offers important contributions to an area of research that hopefully will continue to advance systematically in learning about the SAT programme, and may provide a basic conceptual groundwork for more extensive and evaluatory studies on the SAT programme.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to this study that are important to identify and discuss. One of the most obvious limitations of the study is the fact that, lending to the nature of a qualitative study, the findings will always be open to further or alternative interpretations. In this respect, the personal worldview, and the cultural and ideological background that the researcher brings to the research has played an important role in shaping and limiting what was learnt and described in this study. This dynamic produces a

permanent struggle for the researcher through the entire process of research design, data collection, and data analysis. Because this study intends to examine the multiple case experiences of a single educational model, while the findings will be strengthened by comparison across cases, it will be limited in its generalizability insofar as research was not gathered from similar educational experiences in the area in order to be able to make broad generalizations and comparisons.

Again, because the study took a qualitative approach and because case studies, furthermore, demand a considerable amount of time for multiple visits and broad data gathering from many sources, time has been one of the biggest limitations to the effectiveness of the research. Most authors agree that both the research process and the findings are often much stronger when a researcher is able to remain in/with a community for long periods of time (Creswell, 2003: 196). That possibility was not a viable one in large part because of the serious security risks associated with Colombia and with travelling into and between rural areas of the country as a foreigner. For this reason, and as discussed above, the research was limited to a single case study; a case study with a range of communities across Risaralda and other departments would have produced a different study that would have offered further and more generalized insights about the SAT programme.

Grounded Theory often encourages the use of member-checking in the form of focus groups to discuss research findings. The initial research design included a plan to conduct multiple focus groups with graduates of the SAT programme, tutors and SAT administrators respectively. However, while in Risaralda, a number of sources advised against holding focus groups due to the heightened security risks it would place on participants and the researcher. After making the decision to remove that component of the research, meetings

were held instead with staff, tutors, and individuals involved with SAT, to discuss some of the initial themes and ideas that were emerging in the first layers of data analysis.

While a greater amount of time in the field might have allowed for another opportunity to emerge when it would have been safer to hold focus groups, a longer period of time in the field would have also allowed the researcher to spend more time with interviewees in their daily lives. Again due to the security situation while I was in Colombia, it was never advisable to travel to and spend much time with individual families in small villages, nor to remain at interview locations more than a few days at a time.

As foreseen, another limitation of the study was the use of translators as communication intermediaries between the researcher and the interviewees. Although translators were carefully interviewed in consultation with FUNDAEC and the SAT Secretariat of Risaralda, it was a challenge to find a translator willing and competent enough to undergo the many hours of translation necessary for the interviews. Additionally, it was a large challenge finding a translator who did carry any prejudice or ill-feelings towards rural communities, since most of the translators interviewed were from urban communities and did not have any experience working in rural communities.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis proceeds by moving from theoretical to methodological considerations and then to an analytical discussion of the findings of the research, closed by a broader reflection on the implications of the findings to the literature. It begins with a review of the dominant theoretical trends in the education and adult education literatures; it then moves into a description of the methodology utilized to carry out the study. Following this, rural

Colombia (and specifically Risaralda) and agricultural training in Colombia are described by way of a contextualization for the research. FUNDAEC and the SAT Programme are then introduced, followed by a presentation of the main themes found in the research. Finally, implications for the literature are discussed and the thesis concludes with a final summary and recommendations.

More specifically, the thesis is broken-down into the following sections:

Chapter Two sets the conceptual context out of which this study emerges by articulating a historical perspective on education and rural development, describing the evolution and conceptual underpinnings of individual and social change-oriented educational approaches respectively, with special attention given to current literature gaps and emerging alternative discourses. The chapter concludes by describing the movement towards an alternative conceptual framework of education and development.

Chapter Three focuses on the research design and data collection methods for the study. Special attention is given to issues associated with language, interpretation, research assistance, and transcription. Methods of data analysis and ensuring internal and external validity are additionally outlined. The chapter elaborates the basis for designing the research as a case study, in relation to the gaps highlighted in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four brings to light the research setting and the context for the study (namely, rural Colombia, and, more specifically, the administrative department of Risaralda), paying special attention to demographics and statistics on this region.

Chapter Five introduces FUNDAEC, delving into its inception, emergence and evolution and finally highlighting FUNDAEC's approach to the learning process and

conceptual framework for social action. The SAT programme is subsequently introduced, including its purpose and philosophy, administration, and curriculum, as well as its process of action and reflection.

Chapter Six begins by describing the findings of the study, as well as a profile of the interviewees. Elements and themes of the programme are then highlighted, including personal transformation, social transformation, capacity building, service, and communication.

Chapter Seven primarily focuses on the implications of the study for the fields of education and rural development.

Chapter Eight offers a final summary of the study, with implications for similar educational programmes, suggests ways the limitations of the study could be addressed in future research and recommendations for agricultural education and rural development policy in Colombia, programming for FUNDAEC and other organizations, and areas of possible research in adult education and rural development.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides a critical analysis of relevant literature from across various domains of education as they relate to concepts of transformation. It would be most illuminating if the history of educational theory could be viewed as an ongoing conversation through which “a combination of insights into human cognition and development and an advancing theory of knowledge lead to a range of ever more effective educational methods” (FUNDAEC, 2000a: 162). Unfortunately, the field falls painfully short of this ideal and resembles more the pursuit of fads and fashions than a systematic learning process. In this respect, the current literature review, is in no way an attempt to exhaustively or authoritatively present the history of educational thought. The intention here is to weave together a number of the salient insights afforded by these theoretical approaches. A conceptual diagram (Appendix 1) seeks to synthesize the discussion that follows.

Creating Context for the Literature

One of the trends that seems illustrative of the point above is the treatment of the question of ‘transformation’ across a number of emerging specialized fields such as Transformative Learning, Adult Education, Education for Social Change, Service-Oriented Education, Experiential Learning, Adult Education and Spirituality, Holistic Learning, International Education, Rural Extension, and Capacity Building. Far from a healthy dialogue across these disciplines, what the past few decades present is rather a highly

disconnected array of specializations that result in new sets of technical terms unique to each and alien to these other fields, and a narrow scope that leads to a fragmentation of thought about individuals and communities. The conclusions that seem rather implicit in the literature of these fields raise a number of troubling questions: Are adults the only learners that can really take charge of their learning? Are youth and adolescents to be assigned a banking education model in which they are incapable of enhancing their learning through application of ideas in practice or to their own experiences? What are we passing as appropriate education if only specialized groups of learners are encouraged to transform learners' attitudes towards themselves and the world? Is transformation only an educational concern for underdeveloped or oppressed societies? Is it possible to imagine the fulfilment of individual growth and transformation without consideration of the learner's social environment? Is the learning of skills and attitudes simultaneous to learning theory only possible within programmes designated 'capacity building'? Unfortunately, the important insights that have been learned over the past few decades about the nature of education have often done so in specialized areas branching out entirely independent of the field of education, such that the literature on education has remained locked in long-outworn conceptions of education. In turn, many of these new fields have established themselves with little input from the long and dynamic history of insights gained in the field of education over the past several centuries.

An attempt to cut across a number of these disciplines to draw upon the insights that have been learned in relation to education for transformation is required. Perhaps one of the most useful insights that can help critically examine the extensive literature around education is the understanding that every theoretical approach, whether in education or capacity

building, rests upon a set of profound and often implicit ontological, epistemological and axiological convictions which must be made explicit if a rigorous discussion of its corresponding pedagogy and educational approach are to made possible (F. Arbab, 1987).

Within the various fields of education, and for many decades, questions about the purpose of the learning process have challenged and divided scholars. Even a cursory review of the literature on education presents two generally opposing (and seemingly irreconcilable) approaches to learning (F. Arbab, 1987; FUNDAEC, 2000a; Roosta, 1999; Torres, 1990).

On the one hand are a set of theories that emphasize the primacy of the individual's experience in the learning process, and focus educational activity around individual development through the change of personal behaviour (Holland & Skinner, 1961; Skinner, 1974), by becoming self-directed in the learning process (Candy, 1991; Knowles, 1980), through the association of learning content to personal experience (Kolb, 1984), or through participation in an emancipatory learning process intended to reconfigure and transform meaning perspectives (Fals-Borda & International Labour Office, 1988; Mezirow, 1981; Mezirow, 1991). Social change, where addressed at all, is, for the most part, treated consequentially, as the assumed outcome of the upgrading or improvement of the individual.

On the other hand are another set of related theories arguing that society is not merely a sum of its individuals that rather, on the contrary, individuals are essentially the product of social forces, which must first be changed or overthrown--as the case may be--before any lasting individual change can occur. These theories posit, then, that the learning process should direct its attention (or that of its learners) primarily towards social and structural transformation (Fals-Borda & International Labour Office, 1988; Freire, 1970; Shor & Pari,

2000; Torres, 1990), confident that individual change will occur as a natural antecedent, if not a consequence, to structural change.

Each of these broadly defined paradigms brings with it a conceptual framework, albeit with variation among related theories, and an approach entirely different from the other (Roosta, 229). It can be argued, however, as contemporary as the debate between these paradigms may seem, that in fact it can be understood as a part of a larger pattern of a pendulum effect that reaches many over the past two centuries. What is often forgotten in the debate, however, is how far back historically such questions go. The shifting of the pendulum between developmentalism and environmentalism has for long found expression in countless educational models and theoretical perspectives, and their corresponding programmes.

Historical Context

It is a common assumption to regard the field of Adult Education as a rather recent development emerging more or less simultaneous to the emergence of International Development after the Second World War. Likewise, it is sometimes suggested that the various theorists of adult education (in the non-specific sense) have all streamed, in one way or another, from the field of Adult Education that had existed prior to World War II in Europe. While there are no doubt influences of that legacy with *Educación Popular*, for example, it is important to point out that the emergence of various adult education theories have not been as linearly derived as is often assumed. Without such a clarification, we run the risk of relegating ‘other’ theoretical perspectives as tangential or deviant to an assumed tradition of Adult Education.

Adult Education, pre-World War II, was, by and large, an enterprise for the continuation of training and education of postgraduate individuals, and had rather little relation to theories of social change or development. The field had been more the discourse of various European and a few non-European academic societies (UNESCO, 1972). Its agenda had rather little to do with social change or improvement, or with 'popularizing' education and training for the masses. In its 1972 conference report, UNESCO indicates that prior to 1949 which marked the first UNESCO-sponsored international conference on adult education in Elsinore, Denmark, only one other international gathering on the topic had taken place.

It was largely through the plethora of UNESCO conferences that sprung up after the war that began to open up a new direction in adult education (1972). The conferences sought to bring the field of Adult Education to the crying demands of an international reconstruction enterprise just incepted through other United Nations and related international agencies. The new international consortium of thinkers and diplomats looked to Adult Education in Europe for much of the conceptual and political shape of the goals and programmes it began to formulate. However, unlike its European precedent, this international adult education sought to employ adult education as a means of extending vocational training, and life skills programmes to the masses both in war-torn parts and in what was being subsumed in the description of the "Third World".

Individual-Oriented Education

Behaviourist Theories

A number of scholars and scientists, particularly those in psychology, sought through extensive observation and experimentation on animal behaviour to improve behavioural change in adults through techniques of sequencing or programming (Holland & Skinner, 1961). The key researchers in this field were Ivan Petrovish Pavlov, John B. Watson, and B. F. Skinner. Pavlov is most famous for his experiments with conditioned reflexes in dogs (FUNDAEC, 2000a). Behaviourist theories thus viewed learning as the modification of behaviour through a series of external reinforcement such as prompting or conditioning (Kidd, 1973; Skinner, 1968; Skinner, 1974). It was primarily Watson, however, who was responsible for extending Pavlov's principles into the realm of human psychology, arguing for an educative process focussed on controlled learning environments that condition behaviour with external responses. Watson went so far to suggest that irrespective of "talents, penchants, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors", that his approach to behavioural change could determine and shape human behaviour (Watson in Crain, 2000: 23). Skinner, who advanced the field of behaviourism further through the introduction of operant conditioning, argued that, "psychology should dispense with any references to intangible mental states (such as goals, desires, or purposes); instead, it should confine itself to the study of overt behaviour"(2000: 23).

Humanistic Psychology

A number of psychologists, most notably in the United States, felt serious misgivings towards the overly-mechanistic ideas of Behaviourism. Scholars such as Carl Rodgers, Abraham Maslow, among others, renewed a focus on inner experience with reality, and the uniqueness of individual sentiment, values, and attitudes, as they shape the interpretation of

experience. This position aligned humanistic psychologists with phenomenologists, who together “pointed to the need to suspend our ordinary ways of classifying people from the outside”. Instead they argued, “we should try to understand how the world feels to people from the inside” (Crain, 2000: 43).

Maslow (1954), in developing a humanistic psychology, formulated a new theory of motivation that argued that six fundamental needs are intrinsic to all human beings: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness needs, love needs, self-esteem needs, and, at the highest level, self-actualization needs. These needs were arranged in a hierarchical order such that only when lower needs are realized are individuals able or motivated to pursue higher needs (Crain, 2000). In his personal work, however, it was attention to this highest need, the need for self-actualization, that most intrigued Maslow.

By way of his study of many creative and “successful” individuals, Maslow’s theory of motivation (1954) argued that self-actualizers maintain a certain independence from their society:

Most people are so strongly motivated by needs such as belongingness, love, and respect that they are afraid to entertain any thought that others might disapprove of. Self-actualizers, in contrast, are less conforming. They seem less moulded and flattened by the social environment and are more spontaneous, free, and natural. Although they rarely behave in unconventional ways, they typically regard conventions with a good-natured shrug of the shoulders. Instead, they are primarily motivated by their own inner growth, the development of their potentials, and their personal mission in life” (Crain, 2000: 52).

The contribution that humanistic psychology has made to educational thought is by far one of the most significant. Its influence continues to inform many educational philosophies, institutions and curricula today, and has provided foundational thinking to the

many of the educational theories that followed, such as Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1973; Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986), Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1981; Mezirow, 1990; Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow, 2003), Organizational Learning (Kolb & Osland, 1991), and many domains of Holistic Education, including feminist perspectives of adult learning (Belenky, 1997; Tisdell, 2002), spirituality in the context of adult learning (Belenky, 1997; Lauzon, 1998; Palmer, 1983; Sinnott, 2001b; Tisdell, 2002). Its influence, no doubt, corresponds in large part to the popularity that Constructivist thinking has held during the past three decades.

Experiential Learning

Reinforced by the victories claimed by humanistic psychology, a number of scholars began to critically re-examine education with a new focus on the inner experiences of individual learners (Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1973; Kolb, 1984), and an attention to pedagogy that would enable them to realize their highest needs of self-actualization. One of the earliest contributors to Experiential Learning theory was Dewey, who began to consider and draw attention to the primary role of the learner's personal experiences; his ideas first emerged in his book, "Experience and Education" (1928). In contrast to the behaviourism and empiricism of the 1950s and 1960s (Pratt, 1993), wherein the world existed independent from the learner and learning was understood to be an objective perception of the world (Roosta, 1999), Knowles (1973; , 1984) and others implicitly proposed that learning is not a discovery of an independent pre-existing world outside but rather a subjective process through which the learners' experiences allow for the construction of meaning. Proposing a model he captioned "androgogy" (1980), Knowles' model suggests that learning is an

interactive process of interpretation, leading to the ongoing transformation of learners' experiential worlds; "underlying Knowles is a faith that the adult self has the opportunity to improve itself on its own initiative and that pursuing individual needs and interests through adult education will ultimately lead to a better society" (Podeschi in Roosta, 1999: 231). Androgogy acknowledged social structures superficially through the consideration of the individual learner's life experiences, however, "it does not acknowledge the vast influence of these structures on the formation of the person's identity and ways of interpreting the world, much of which is received and accepted without conscious consideration or reflection" (Pratt, 1993: 87).

Transformative Learning

Building on the ideas of Experiential Learning, Mezirow (1991), in outlining the tenets of a transformative model of adult learning, suggests that while through experiential learning "we use our established expectations to explicate and construe what we perceive to be the nature of a facet of experience that hitherto has lacked clarity or has been misinterpreted. In transformative learning, however, we reinterpret an old experience (or a new one) from a new set of expectations, thus giving a new meaning and perspective to the old experience" (1991: 11). "Perspective transformation", Mezirow explains, "can happen when adult learners become critically aware of "how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world" (Mezirow, 1990: 14).

In Mezirow's model of perspective transformation society is seen as the sum of autonomous, responsible individuals who, having chosen to change their meaning

perspectives, can in turn act to change their world (Clark, 1993). Since the goal of perspective transformation is to gain autonomy and agency over oneself and one's life, change is envisaged as instrumental and reformist (Roosta, 1999) and power is understood in these terms rather than in terms of structural relationships (Clark, 1993).

For Mezirow, transformation is an individual experience; it is the change of meaning schemes internal to each individual. In this arrangement, social transformation, better understood perhaps as social improvement, is seen as consequential to individual transformation: "we must begin with individual perspective transformation before social transformation can succeed" (1991: 52). Drawing on the work of Habermas (Mezirow, 2003; Tennant, 2005), Mezirow discusses social engagement in terms of dialogue and "communicative action", which he sees as having the purpose of "allow[ing] us to relate to the world around us, to other people, and to our own intentions, feelings, and desires" (1991: 65). In commenting upon the work of social action educator Tom Lovett, Mezirow suggests that even if structural change is a necessary element of societal change (which he indicates he is not convinced of), that "transformation theory—and adult educators—can promise only to help in the first step of political change, emancipatory education that leads to personal transformation, and to share the belief that viable strategies for public change will evolve out of this" (Mezirow, 1991: 210). Mezirow clearly establishes that individual transformation should be regarded as the goal of the adult learning process and that social change, at best, can be seen as a natural consequence of this process.

The approach subscribes to a humanist analysis which analyzes society only in terms of the psychological make-up, skills, and behaviour of the individual, and assumes that social structures somehow will change by themselves once the individual is redeemed through self-

actualization. Endorsing this point, Mair explains, "We are not bound by our conditioning or our family dynamics, or delineated completely by our heredity, unless we choose so to be... We can be different if we go out and do differently, we can become different by acting differently" (in Candy, 1991: 267).

In Transformative Learning, as in a number of the other areas of Adult Education discussed above, strong emphasis is placed on the *process* of learning, with the explicit conviction, that, outcomes, in terms of changes in the external realities of the individual and their social environment around them, are secondary, at best, and almost irrelevant, at worst (Kolb, 1984). In the case of the former, the logic is consistent with the work and writing of Maslow and his hierarchy of needs, where individuals move gradually away from needs relating to external reality and ascend on higher planes towards inner experience. In Maslow's configuration, and its application in Transformative Learning as is evident above, only after passing beyond lower stages of physical needs and satisfying the need for self-actualization can individuals, then, begin to think altruistically of reaching out to and assisting with the needs of others (Maslow, 1954).

Educational approaches, such as Experiential Learning and Transformative Learning, which posit social change as a mere outcome of the improvement or actualization of the individual are not unlike the legacy of religious philosophies that seek social change through individual salvation and conversion. As Leslie Stevenson (1974) points out, the humanistic religious tradition holds that "Each individual needs to accept this divine forgiveness, and can then begin to live a new regenerated life in the Christian church. Human society will not be truly redeemed until individuals are thus transformed" (73).

History is replete, however, with all too many examples where such theories have been instrumental in legitimizing the maintenance of structural oppression and injustice: "In practice, of course, it is not difficult to find the righteous fully participating in oppressive social structures without even noticing the slightest contradiction. It is interesting to note that this type of ideological stance is so prevalent in the internationally supported development plans of the governments of many countries, plans that hope to overcome poverty with minimum structural change, by upgrading the skills of individuals through elaborate training programmes and by offering them some means for improving their conditions, usually jobs or credit" (F. Arbab, 1987: 1).

Holistic Education

Transformative Learning and Experiential Learning, more broadly, have been instrumental in allowing for the emergence of an array of 'alternative' educational theories to find voice. The emphasis on transformation of meaning perspectives and the search for alternative meanings to life and learning have encouraged emergent and marginalized conceptions of education and human nature to be brought into the fore. A number of theories have emerged relating to the search for more holistic values, such as Feminist education and ways of knowing (Belenky, 1997; Miles, 2002; Tisdell, 2002), Spirituality in education (Cartwright, 2001; Groen, 2004; Lauzon, 1998; Palmer, 1983; Reason, 2004; Sinnott, 2001a; Sinnott, 2001b; Tisdell, 2002), and Indigenous Knowledge and learning models (Wane, 2002; Wangoola & Youngman, 1996).

Despite the reception accorded these alternative educational theories, it can be argued that within the framework of Adult Education theories that prioritize the individual learner

there is a deceptive inclusion of such alternatives so long as the values they introduce do not challenge the status quo or seek radical social change. Thus, one finds a growing openness to discussions of spirituality in Adult Education literature, where spirituality is largely defined as the personal, inner experience and value sets of individual learners.

Spirituality in this regard is not an expression of alternative patterns of social organization or community life. However, “a thousand objections are raised..., the moment the word *religion* is introduced” (F. Arbab, 2000: 13). Goulet (1980) argues that within a capitalist system there is no objection to the ‘instrumental’ use of religious beliefs. These are “viewed *primarily* as mere means— aids or obstacles—to the achievement of goals derived from sources outside the value systems in question” (484). It is hard to understand how a field that so confidently claims “inclusivity” can continue to stubbornly dismiss a knowledge system (religion) that has and continues to generate the values and provide the deeply-rooted inspiration that moves and gives meaning to the world’s masses whom those in adult education regard as its main participants. The unwillingness to move beyond superficial and instrumental considerations of spirituality to engage with religion (in its universal sense and experience) as a viable system of knowledge with any level of seriousness is reinforced by an intractable and outdated intellectual heritage that stubbornly clings to a fragmented view in which spirituality is relegated “to the private and isolated world of the individual” (F. Arbab, 2000: 2) and religion dismissed as an outworn and dogmatic apparatus of institutions.

Writers who do speak about the “social” aspect of spirituality in education (Dei, 2002; Miller, 2002; Miller, Cassie, & Drake, 1990; O’Sullivan, 2002), often speak about social engagement or involvement in general terms such as community participation, service learning, or some infusion of meditation (Miller, 2002), contemplation (Dallaire, 2001) and

simple living into social life. While all of these perspectives are critical to the integration of spirituality into an educational approach they all seem to stop short of providing an adequate social analysis that includes the structures, institutions and cultural elements as constituting part of the 'social'. The assumption, here again, is that by changing the individual, albeit through the awakening of the spirit and a change in personal values social structures, with their established patterns, behaviours, conventions and processes, will somehow naturally change as a consequence.

Social Change-Oriented Education

Another school of thought, however, suggests that the goal of education should be focussed on change in the structures of society. The thinking and practice of Paulo Freire have been foundational to the development of this school of thought. Freire put forward a model of "popular education" (1970) which intended to empower groups to identify oppressive forces that prevent them from developing their full potential and which encourages them to collectively take action to bring about social change. Pratt describes social structures as "those institutions and systems in society that produce and reproduce rules and resources that influence the communication of meaning, the exercise of power, and the legitimization and judgement of conduct, for example, the family, religious institutions, political parties, economic policies, systems of education, cultural traditions, and historical periods" (1993: 87).

The primary goal of the transformational learning approach advanced by Paulo Freire, most notably, is one of social and structural change. Torres explains, "Adult education, from the perspective of this philosophy, is more closely linked to the needs of communities..."

(1990: 9). This approach to adult education emerged largely out of Latin America with the work and writing of Freire, and arguably reflects in large part the historical socio-political circumstances of Latin America (FUNDAEC, 2000a; Torres, 1990). For Freire, learning should be emancipatory, in enabling individuals to become ever more aware of the structures of oppression, injustice, and exploitation in their social environment (conscientization), and to engage in a dialectical process of “reflection and action upon the world to transform it” which he described as *praxis* (Freire, 1970: 36). Freire suggested that it was through a dialogical process between individuals and their world that people develop a sense of history, one based on ‘true causality explanations’ rather than ‘magical and superficial explanations’ (1970). He writes, “Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education” (1970: 92-93); education thus becomes the “practice of freedom”, and a process of liberation (1970: 93).

Social transformation, in a Freirean sense, is understood as being a process propelled by a synergistic “praxis” of acting and reflecting upon one’s reality. Freire explained how a dialogical educational programme would pave the path to the awakening of critical awareness (conscientization) of relationships of human beings and nature, human beings and society, and the creation of culture. In this model, the oppressed move through phases of critical consciousness, culminating in a “critical transitive” stage characterised by the capacity to analyse problems in depth using causal principles rather than magical and superficial explanations, by a readiness to dialogue, and by a rejection of passive positions (Roosta, 1999). In his early writings, Freire seemed to suggest that the socio-cultural forces that operate at the community level and among individuals will be transformed automatically as the result of structural changes.

In contrast to the theories of Knowles, Kolb, and Mezirow, Freire suggests that in the lowest level of consciousness, semi-intransitivity, individuals that are oppressed assimilate and internalize the oppression, and do not engage with the problem of oppression outside of themselves and their own biological sphere of needs. As individuals move toward higher states of “critical consciousness” they become capable of causality understanding, relating their circumstances to structures of oppression. In his early writings Freire seemed to assume that as a result of changing the external oppressive structures of society, the internal forces would also change (Roosta, 1999). This, of course, resonates strongly with Marxist interpretations of society and social change (Torres, 1990). The fundamental educational unit is thus the collective or the community, and not the individual, even though individuals are encouraged to engage in critical reflection and action.

Influence of Gramsci

Another important contribution to the evolution of thinking about social change-oriented education came from the writing of Antonio Gramsci (Armstrong, 1988; Mayo, 1995; Torres, 1990). Gramsci dedicated a considerable amount of his writing to the subject of education. For Gramsci education held the possibility of playing two contrasting roles. On the one hand, education can, and indeed has, in his historical interpretation of the rise of nation-states, played a critical role as the instrumentality of the capitalist system. Taken as public policy, educational practice, or hidden curriculum, it served in the reproduction of an oppressive division of social labour and capital, and in the socialization of norms, values and roles. At the same time, Gramsci saw great possibility in the role of education for creating critical consciousness among the popular sectors, and thereby generating advances in

democratic processes in society (Torres, 1990). Writers who locate themselves in this school of thought "see potential in Gramsci's writings and actions primarily because the Italian theorist himself regarded forms of adult education as having an important role to play in a 'war of position' intended to confront, surround and eventually supersede the bourgeois state" (Mayo, 1995: 1). Based on his views of social change, education, and communication, Gramsci would have looked to radical adult education agencies as capable of exercising a critical role in the process of challenging by way of an alternative, capitalist social organization and relations of production (1995).

One of the earliest writers who sought to apply Gramsci's ideas about the possibilities of adult education for social change was Tom Lovett (1978) who argued that adult education should be fostered in the context of workers' social movements (Mayo, 1995).

Very few writers have explored a possible nexus where these two processes of transformation might unfold simultaneously and synergistically. One writer who has addressed this possibility is Ira Shor. Shor proposes (Shor, 1992) an "empowering education" as a "a critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change.... It approaches individual growth as an active, cooperative, and social process, because the self and society create each other. Human beings do not invent themselves in a vacuum, and society cannot be made unless people create it together." (1992: 15) The goals of Shor's pedagogy are to relate personal growth to social transformation (1992: 16).

Shor's work, however, deals with this linkage in very abstract terms and leaves a number of questions unanswered. In the absence of a significant body of literature speaking to and about the possible interrelationships and simultaneity of personal and social transformation, very little also exists in the way of empirical studies in this area. The field

research that has been done looking at the linkages between personal and social change, and which will be an important starting and comparative point for this study include the work of Manigeh Roosta (1999), who examined other programmes in operation by FUNDAEC. Roosta's findings suggest that indeed a linkage exists between personal and social transformation, and that, in the case of FUNDAEC's Rural University for Integral Development, an orientation towards and organized participation in service to the community was a pivot around which empowering personal and social transformation were harmonized.

Gaps in the Literature

While the analysis of social reality differs dramatically between these two broad sets of approaches to adult education, they nonetheless share many common conceptions about the nature of the individual and society. While these opposing views on adult education both agree on the potentialities of the learning process and of the need for an empowering education that challenges and transforms, neither does accept that individual and collective changes could be simultaneous and complementary. Each side of the debate tends to view transformation as almost linear: exclusive individual or collective transformation leads to the other one.

Dialectic between Individual and Society

Both approaches rest upon an image of the individual as being constantly bound and constrained by the vices and oppression of social structures and institutions, and forever struggling for greater and greater freedom from the state. By the same token, institutions and social structures are forever enforcing greater and greater control and domination over

individuals and their contested freedom. Social structures and institutions are most often narrowly defined to include only political and economic forces that exercise power as *power over* others. Indeed the experience of “power” as *power over* is assumed to be universal and inherent to reality (Leggett, 2001; Leggett, Hambly Odame, & Cardey, 2003), whether expressed in Freire’s Marxist analysis of the inevitability of class struggle between oppressors and oppressed, or in Mezirow’s endorsement of the Foucaultian sense of “power” as the “multiplicity of force relations” (Foucault, 1978: 92) and regulations. Mezirow articulates this endorsement in his description of culture as the “tacit regulatory principles that establish power relationships and the nature of appropriate discourse” (Mezirow, 1991: 57).

While some of the proponents of either side of the debate do acknowledge the importance of the other, it is most often explained instrumentally, or relegated to being a consequence of the primary goal. Certainly there have also been very notable attempts to integrate the two views. The work of Vygotskii (Vygotskii, Rieber, & Carton, 1987) and later the work of Bruner (1996) and others in his Psycho-Cultural approach made efforts to reconcile these views.

An Emerging Alternative Conceptual Framework

It has become almost self-evident to those writing and engaging with theories on both sides of this debate that education has the possibility to play a critical role in responding to the disparities, demoralization, and oppression that characterize much of the global context. Yet what remains disputed between these theories are the goals to be set for education.

Against this backdrop, however, it is encouraging to see that a new discourse is slowly emerging which is rigorously searching beyond this polarised theoretical debate for viable alternative educational approaches. This discourse focuses on new conceptualizations of the nature of the individual and of society, and of the need for an educational approach that upholds a two-fold purpose in which individual transformation and social transformation are integrated synergistically and unfold through an iterative and conversive praxis. In this respect, neither transformation is an assumed consequence or outcome of the other. What is being explored is a far more complex, if historically necessary, conception of education which recognizes the multiple, inherent interactions between the individual and society.

Interestingly, however, this discourse is emerging not merely as an offshoot of or a simple compromise between the existing streams of the educational debate. Rather, its contributors draw from a broad range of disciplines. In large part, many of the relevant insights that have been learnt thus far in this area are coming from what has come to be coined Science, Religion and Development (SRD).

The Jesuit priest, Father William Ryan, whose interviews with thinkers and practitioners from around the world launched the IDRC-funded policy research project, Science, Religion and Development (SRD), generated some conclusions that seriously call into question the usefulness of some of the humanistic assumptions embedded in theories such as Maslow's theory of motivation. Whereas in Maslow's studies, his "successful" individuals moved towards altruism only as an end when all personal needs including self-actualization had been realized, Ryan's findings show the following conclusions:

Yet—and it is a big yet—beyond a basic level of survival and security, for most people in most parts of the world, innermost attitudes and behaviour towards change - individual or societal - are not motivated by economic or political

interests. Many people in most cultures start at the other end of Maslow's scale: at the most personal level, they are moved by deep underlying moral and spiritual assumptions that reflect and explain reality and that support the values that guide their decisions about whether to change or not to change. (SRD Ryan, 1995: Foreword).

For a large number of people around the world, and across cultures and millennia, such inner stirrings and promptings of the human soul have been articulated in acts of service to the community and the welfare of others, and towards the creation of the structures of society, not as a more advanced stage following the full satisfaction of personal needs and interests, but often in the absence of their own needs. History is replete with examples where the needs of others and of community building are exalted above the immediate and the personal, whether in the form of sublime architectural edifices, or in the establishment of important institutions of learning, law, and solidarity. More important, however, to this emerging discourse is its understanding of the intersections between personal and social well-being. Contrasted with Maslow's description of "actualized learners" who tended to be commentators standing *outside* society, with passive indifference towards it, learning in this new discourse is beginning to explore an alternative conception of motivation where the altruistic act is not something that held in opposition to one's own satisfaction. The adage thus is not 'do I do what will benefit others or what will benefit myself'; rather there is awareness that 'what will benefit others in turn will benefit me'.

Summary

This chapter was primarily devoted to providing a critical analysis of relevant literature from across various domains of education as they relate to concepts of

transformation. It began by creating a context for the literature review by offering an historical perspective on education and development. It outlined the differences and similarities between the components of individual and social change-oriented educational approaches. Attention was also given to current literature gaps and an emerging alternative conceptual framework drawn broadly from recent insights and contributions in a number of fields. The chapter also described the movement towards a conceptual framework of education and development that is currently taking place.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is organised broadly into two sections: methodological approach, and research design. Firstly, the different methodological lenses that this study employed are described in detail, including general characteristics of qualitative studies, and more specifically case study methodology and grounded theory methodology. The second section of the chapter discusses the strategies used in selecting the single case and the units of analysis defined for the study. This section also goes into detail about the distinct methods of data collection that were used including semi-structured interviews, participant observation reinforced by a reflective learning journal, and review of secondary literature. It then elaborates on the dimensions of language and research assistance as they affected the study and then describes the methods used in analyzing the data collected in the study.

Methodological Approach

Methodological Elements

This study is essentially qualitative in nature. Qualitative studies are often described as necessarily “multi-method” in focus (Creswell, 1998). The study has been informed primarily by two closely related methodological approaches, namely Constructivist methodology and Grounded Theory methodology. Both of these methodologies share the common goal of generating learning and theory out of the research process and the local context rather than using research as a means of testing formalized theory.

Flick (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 4), points out that,

Rapid social change and the resulting diversification of life worlds are increasingly confronting social researchers with new social contexts and perspectives.... Traditional deductive methodologies are failing... thus research is increasingly forced to make use of inductive strategies instead of starting from theories and testing them... knowledge and practice are studied as local knowledge and practice.

Babbie also points out that a qualitative study is often most appropriate with any of three research purposes: (1) to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding, (2) to test the feasibility of pursuing a more exhaustive study, and (3) to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study (Babbie, 1999). This study seeks to develop the theoretical framework and the indicators that might be used in a more exhaustive future study, as the current theoretical models do not seem able to account for the case under discussion.

The study draws from Constructivist methodology in acknowledging that all research is interpretive and guided by one or another set of beliefs and assumptions about the world; "Some beliefs may be taken for granted, invisible, only assumed, whereas others are highly problematic and controversial" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 19). Each interpretive paradigm necessarily informs the focus of the research, questions asked by the researcher and their interpretation. A constructivist paradigm tends to be one that shares with and brings together multiple perspectives. Guba (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) further points out that "the constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures" (98).

Case studies often tend to include elements of the Grounded Theory methodology since they generally seek to learn the uniqueness of the specific case and to learn new knowledge that may help advance alternative theoretical perspectives. According to Creswell (1998), a Grounded Theory methodological approach encourages the use of a scientific and objective language and posture, a research process that is systematic and repeatable, and which generates theory inductively, out of the research context. The Grounded Theory approach tends to regard theory as an approximation or insight into a complex reality rather than as a description of reality *as it is*. It acknowledges a multiplicity of sources of knowledge, as well as theoretical perspectives. Strauss and Corbin further clarify that 'theory' can be understood in the context of Grounded Theory methodology as a plausible relationship among concepts and sets of concepts (in Creswell, 1998).

For two reasons, however, this study departs from being appropriately described as Grounded Theory in approach; first, the length of time and the scope of the study do not allow for the extensive theory-building process that Grounded Theory involves, with so short a period of time in the field (approximately three months). A Grounded Theory study would generally include longer and repeated visits to the field, and include data gathering from a wider range of sources. Second, the assertion that all research is interpretive suggests that it is not possible for the researcher to enter the field as an 'empty slate' entirely unbiased by personal views and beliefs and untainted by exposure to prior theoretical perspectives.

Case Study Approach

The Case Study approach seemed the most appropriate methodological design as it allows for a thorough understanding of the evolution and historicity of phenomena,

particularly for an understanding of complex processes (Yin, 2003). Studies such as this encourage attention toward the inclusion of invisible experiences and peoples by bringing them into the map of social life and discussion (Reinharz in Roosta, 1999). While a case study does not tell the whole story of a phenomenon, it does attempt to deal with the “wholeness” or totality (Roosta, 1999) of the case in relation to specific criteria or particular interests (Stake, 1994). Because the Case Study approach involves an exhaustive investment of time to carry out befittingly a study of a single case, this study was designed as a single case study. Sjoberg *et al.* (1991: 53) further explain that, in contrast to survey-based studies that tend to dismiss anomalies and marginal views, case studies are designed in order to give attention to and seek out these exceptions; “how can people respond consistently in a complex social order that is itself rent by contradictory expectations?... So committed are some survey researchers to the principle of consistency that they often assume that the inconsistent responses undermine the “validity” of respondents’ replies”. Cooley (in Orum, Feagin, & Sjoberg, 1991) points out that the statistical approach, despite its many merits, does not take us very far in understanding human beings in some degree of wholeness; Orum *et al.* explain that, “[w]hereas a random-sample survey can permit some understanding of how respondents relate to one another, the typical survey assesses people as though they lived, acted, and believed in isolation from one another” (1991: 9).

Even though the researcher is committed to seek out and re-present multiple realities, it is the researcher who ultimately decides what is the actual story told in the case study, or better, what of the whole case he or she will choose to report. Yin (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 93); confesses, “[m]ore will be pursued than was volunteered. Less will be reported than was learned.... This is not to dismiss the aim of finding the story that best represents

the case, but to remind that the criteria of representation ultimately are decided by the researcher."

Case study researchers, however, are not without tools and methods that can reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation. Redundancy of data gathering, procedural challenges to explanations, member checking, and triangulation are some of the ways that researchers can strive to minimize misinterpretation. Triangulation, in the context of case studies, often means verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation, and inclusion of multiple perceptions to clarify meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Personal Worldview

A description of the methodological approach taken in this study would be incomplete without making clear some of the elements of my own personal worldview. My views and commitments are influenced considerably by my beliefs and practice as a Bahá'í. One of the challenges rarely acknowledged, let alone discussed openly and critically, with prevailing research methodologies are the silent barriers that researchers working from a perspective cognizant of the spiritual nature of reality often face. While various qualitative methodologies espouse an openness to consider and include the perspectives and orientations of marginalized voices, yet some of the core assumptions of these same methodologies remain unchallenged and at odds with a spiritually-based ontology.

The point seems all the more pertinent to highlight in light of the fact that a large majority of the people among whom this study intended to learn critically from and with, are highly religious and maintain worldviews that are very much embedded in the spiritual. That such methodologies should remain at odds with the majority of the world's peoples for whom

reality is deeply spiritual is baffling, not to say inconsistent with the praise of *participation* and *inclusivity* so often ascribed to these methodologies.

One of the elements of my own belief system that has informed this study was a belief in the common spiritual nature of the human being. An implication of this belief was that rather than subscribing to the dichotomy that sets up researchers as outsiders, forever incapable of experiencing and understanding every culture except a narrow subculture defined by political, cultural, economic, or national affiliation, by contrast, I intended to position myself among interviewees, first, as a friend, as a fellow human being capable of the possibility of transcending language and other barriers (while acknowledging their presence) to be able to engage with one another on more fundamental levels. This meant an approach of establishing bonds of trust and fellowship with interviewees before conducting interviews, and a quality of listening in interviews with genuine interest in their stories and lives, and empathizing with their challenges, sorrows and joys. This also involved participating with interviewees in their farming tasks, family events, and sharing in their challenges and sorrows. I also tried to emphasize the use of multiple modes of learning and engagement including verbal, non-verbal listening, intuition, experiential learning and observation.

It is hoped that the emphasis on these aspects of the research methods have led to richer and more authentic narratives, that seem, in turn, to have allowed for greater insight into the lives and insights of the experiences of the interviewees. More importantly perhaps, such an approach has the possibility of being mutually empowering to both researcher and interviewee, in bridging links across cultures and languages, and validating their lived experiences.

In the emphasis on learning and research being socially constructed, I preferred to describe the research process as a process of “reflection” insofar as the researcher is positioned in a way as to both “reflect” in the research oneself (one’s views, assumptions, sympathies, etc.), the social reality being studied, and possibly other layers and depths of reality.

It has also meant that there are a multiplicity of knowledges and ‘insights’ into any given phenomenon, and that such a diversity of perspectives contributes to richer and more multi-faceted understandings and potentially greater appreciation of the ‘truths’ of both the realities that we socially construct and those that transcend and embrace us.

Research Design

The research design in a qualitative study cannot merely be regarded as a “work plan that outlines simply *how* and *how long*. It is a complete blueprint to the research. As Yin (1989) points out, it deals with the logical problem not the logistical problem. The research design of this study begins with a brief note about the background behind the choice of the sample and the guiding questions of the study, encompasses the methods of data collection and analysis, and discusses challenges posed by the study.

Research Sample and Strategies of Selection

My introduction to the Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanzas de las Ciencias (FUNDAEC) first took place in 1998 when I was working in Guyana with a remedial literacy programme. A close Guyanese friend traveled from Guyana to Colombia and there learnt a great deal about FUNDAEC and its approach to development. When he returned, we spent

many nights talking intensely about development and what he had learnt. Those long nights talking set the course of a personal investigation that would unfold slowly over the next seven years. This set the course of the next few years as I slowly found exposure to more information about FUNDAEC and its programmes. A few years later I was very fortunate to have been asked to participate with a pilot group that was to spend the next three years going through various modules of a graduate-level curriculum that FUNDAEC was at that time developing. The experience of reading through countless texts and writing weekly reflections with my colleagues in this study group stands out as by far the most transformative period of my life, and has consequently set the direction that I have been pursuing both personally and professionally ever since. I have had the opportunity of studying on two subsequent occasions with other groups the various modules of what was later named the Education for Development specialization programme.

While exposure to the modules of this programme convinced me of the many insights that they contain, it was coming into contact with Manigeh Roosta and reading her dissertation on SAT tutors being trained by the University Center for Rural Wellbeing in Risaralda, Colombia that inspired a number of questions that later crystallized into research questions for this study. Roosta's dissertation (1999) includes testimonials of the SAT tutors in the region, whose lives seemed to tell of an experience of transformation that did not fit within the current debate in the education literature. The testimonials provided numerous examples of tutors consecrating themselves to their students and their community work in the absence of the satisfaction of their own basic needs of remuneration and adequate food. These heroic examples affected me very deeply and personally and compelled me to reflect

more deeply on the nature of the programme and the experience that had fostered such dedication to the welfare of others. They led me to ask:

- Are these experiences of transformation unique only to SAT tutors or are students also having similar experiences?
- What *are* these experiences of transformation?
- Are these changes operating only at the level of “meaning perspectives” as Mezirow discusses “transformation”?
- If not, what are all the dimensions that these experiences occur on (skills, knowledge, attitudes, spiritual qualities and values, and metaphysical orientations)?
- What is the interaction between these two types of transformations (personal and social transformation)?
- Are there specific supports that have nurtured and fostered these changes? This study then responds to the call from Roosta (1999) for further research into the SAT model.

Due to the time frame available and appropriate for masters-level research, and particularly in light of the on-going security risks in the rural areas of Colombia, this study had to work around a number of time and geographic constraints in defining the research sample.

During the preparatory stages of this study, considerable research was done to assess the security situation in Colombia with its 40-year conflict. Staff at FUNDAEC were consulted extensively, as well as professionals working with other organizations in and in affiliation with Colombia, and governmental agencies such as Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, to evaluate the situation in each department of the

country, and the most appropriate strategies to be employed in planning and carrying out the research. In the final analysis, the consensus of those consulted was that it would be extremely dangerous to be travelling into rural communities in almost any part of the country. The department of Risaralda, however, I was told, would be a safer choice for visiting certain rural areas.

In addition to security considerations, other factors also pointed to Risaralda being a good choice as the single case to be studied. In comparison with other departments in Colombia where the SAT programme is also being run, Risaralda has had the longest and most dynamic history in offering the SAT programme, outside of Norte del Cauca where the programme was first introduced. Risaralda was also a good choice since Roosta's research, carried out between 1995 to 1997, was carried out in some of the same rural areas I visited, thus making it possible to look for similar patterns and themes in the SAT graduates (as Roosta found in students of other FUNDAEC programmes).

Unit of Analysis

The primary unit of analysis in this study is the individual, and as such, 15 individuals were purposefully selected from a number of "verderas" (villages) in four municipalities of the department of Risaralda: Dos Quebradas, Pereira, Apia, and La Virginia (see figure 2 for a map of Risaralda which highlights these respective municipalities). Individuals were purposefully selected based on selection criteria, and modified by certain constraints relating to security (for both the researcher and the interviewees). The criteria for selecting interviewees was as follows: participants who had completed all three levels of the SAT programme, had been residents of a rural community while studying SAT, and were known

to either community and family members, SAT tutors, or to FUNDAEC staff in Risaralda for having become active in their communities during and/or following completion of the programme, or who had demonstrably undergone some type of change after having gone through the programme. I also sampled interviewees purposefully so that the sample would include a wide range of ages and number of years since graduation. While the type of selection method chosen limits the ability of the research to generalize its findings, it seems most appropriate insofar as being able to provide the richest insights into the experiences of the SAT programme. The sample also purposively tried to include as equal a distribution as possible of women and men.

Data Collection

One of the strengths of case study research is that it encourages the use of a wide range of methods of data collection. However, case study research tends to lack a general "catalogue" of research designs for case studies to look to and follow, for unlike other quantitative research traditions and many qualitative ones, there are no common designs. Qualitative research, generally speaking, emphasizes triangulation in the methods of data collection as a way to ensure reliability of the data gathered. The study thus drew upon three distinct data collection methods: i) interviews; ii) participant observation and field visits; iii) content analysis of secondary literature.

Interviews

The primary method of data collection in this study was in-depth interviews which were conducted in a semi-structured format through the use of open-ended questions.

Participation in the study involved graduates of the SAT programme, SAT and FUNDAEC administrators, tutors and graduates of SAT (who are now studying or have studied other higher-level programmes offered by FUNDAEC), administrators and tutors, and key informants who had other associations with the programme (Table 1 summarizes the respective interview sample groups).

Table 1. Interview Schedule

Sample Sub-Group	Respondents	Total No. of Interviews	Male	Female
A	SAT Graduates	15	9	6
B	Administrators	2	1	1
C	Tutors & Graduates of other programmes	5	3	2
D	Key Informants associated with SAT	3	1	2

The research questions used in the interviews were developed through an iterative process of consultation with staff at FUNDAEC and pre-testing with SAT staff, students, and non-participating graduates of the programme. The interview guides for each of the interview groups are appended to the study (see Appendices 1 through 3). A number of authors encourage this form of more inductive research design by checking research questions and themes with community members, in order to ensure that the research is consistent with local language and perceptions (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Palys, 1997).

Different sets of open-ended questions were developed respectively for graduates, administrators, tutors and graduates of other programmes, and key informants. The open-ended format of the interviews allowed for the interview questions to function primarily as prompts for interviewees to participate in leading the direction of the interview. The

interview was essentially a combination of standardized questions and probing questions intended to explore themes, stories and examples shared.

As required by the University of Guelph Board of Ethics, participants were told they were in control of the interviews and that at any time they could take charge of or stop the direction of the interview, skip or deviate from questions, and interject with stories, memories and personal feelings. Participants in the study were then introduced to and asked to sign an informed consent form prior to conducting the interview. An additional consent (verbal) was also requested from participants in order in order to use an audio recorder to record the interviews.

Participants were assured of their confidentiality for participating in the study and, at the end of the interview, were offered compensation for their travel. Surprisingly, however, not a single participant was willing to accept this compensation, as they each felt that accepting even a small reimbursement for their bus fare would take away from the voluntary motive by which they all felt inclined to share their stories.

To respect the confidentiality of the interviewees, each of the graduates interviewed was assigned a generic and fictitious name, such that all female respondents are identified as Andrea_01, Andrea_02 and so on, while all male respondents are referred to as Jose_01, Jose_02, etc., where the name corresponds with the gender of the interviewee, and the number refers to the interview number within the overall interview set. Similarly, and to avoid confusion, tutors of the programme whose contributions also shape the discussion below, have been assigned the generic names Diego and Roberta respectively for male and female tutors. In addition to the substitutions of names, all other referential information such as village or residence and origin, and places of employment have also been dropped to add

to the confidentiality of each interview. Notwithstanding these measures, it was quite a testimony to the confidence of the interviewees that almost every one of them voluntarily expressed their wish for their statements to be shared widely and with personal reference.

The length of time for each interview ranged from 1.5 hours to 2.5 hrs. The interviews were all carried out in the department of Risaralda during two visits during the months of December 2005 and January 2006. The location for each interview also varied; for most interviews the SAT Director for Risaralda was in touch with the individual and scheduled the date and time of the interview. I had asked him to ensure that interviews would be scheduled around participants' schedules and in a location that was as accessible, safe and convenient as possible. In some cases this meant conducting interviews in the homes of participants, and in other cases this meant holding interviews at a neutral location such as the local training facility of the Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA), which provided a safe alternative to travelling to homes where both the security of the researcher and of the interviewees would have been seriously at risk. In other cases, I deemed it more appropriate to interview individuals at their place of work or in village centres. For many of the later interviews, I stayed at a very modest, yet safe facility of the SENA training centre in Apia.

For each of the interviews I felt it important to establish a closeness and a trust with participants, as the topics that would be discussed in the interviews would require the safety of feeling trust with the interviewer and with the interview process. For this reason, the interviews usually began with some amount of informal time together becoming acquainted and comfortable with each other. This usually took the form of a lunch shared together.

Participant Observation

Participant observation, structured conjointly around a reflective learning journal and personal visits to work environments, community events and activities, and classes of SAT groups, was a second method of data collection used in the study. Participant observation is described by Yin (2003: 92) as a “special mode of observation in which the investigator is not merely a passive observer. Instead, the investigator may take a variety of roles within a case study situation and may actually participate in the events being studied”. In this case, participant-observation involved a variety of activities, including visits to the homes of interviewees and participation in their daily tasks such as farming, picking and drying coffee beans, feeding livestock; field visits, and attendance at several SAT classes in various rural communities (See Table 2 below).

Participation observation includes a wide range of forms from static observation of events and people to active participation in events and processes. This study included several forms of participant observation, including simple observations of participants interacting with family members, and, on the other hand, activities in which I was actually interacting with and participating in several of the SAT classes and events. By way of example, one very purposeful intervention that I took was to try and foster communication between various SAT groups by photographing each group in its natural setting and activities and then to show these photos with each SAT group. Most of these groups had never met other groups, nor had much of a sense of the existence of other groups outside of their own village. I would tell stories of the activities and projects of other groups, their successes and struggles, and then would take photographs of that group to take back and show the other groups. SAT students also had the chance to take pictures of them.

In keeping with my understanding of the 'reflective' nature of research, I supported participant observation with the use of a reflective learning journal. From the earliest questions and ideas that emerged in developing the proposal, to post-interview insights, the use of a learning journal became a space in which all these reflections could be recorded. Constructivist researchers strongly emphasize that critical reflection on the part of the researcher during the phase of research design can raise valuable insights into the researcher's role and hermeneutical lens through which both the questions and the responses of the research are defined.

Though the idea of learning journals as a specific method of data collection has become more popular recently (Creswell, 1998), nonetheless, it is generally not given considerable attention in the literature on case study research. It proved an invaluable reinforcement to participant observation in this study to ensure a critical examination of observations, feelings, intuitions, dreams, insights, and events. Further, having studied the fine arts for many years previously, I also made the learning journal to extend beyond the written accounts. The learning journal thus included both written and visual interpretations, such as including photos, memorabilia, poems and drawings. The journaling process extended through all stages of the research. In the data analysis stage, the accounts of the journal read through thoroughly after having transcribed, coded and analysed the interviews. These accounts were then cross-examined in relation to the themes emergent from the interview transcriptions. In some instances, the accounts of the journal served to point out connections between themes that may not have been obvious initially with the interviews. In other instances they helped to provide contextual details and elements of non-verbal communication to supplant the text of the interviews.

Table 2. Typology of Participant-Observation for the Study

Category	Context	Activities Involved
Home/Farm Visits	Participants' homes and places of work (11)	Interview sites included participants' homes, and places of work such as offices, farms, local businesses, municipal council chambers, and village centres. Activities surrounding interviews included dining with interviewees, assisting with household activities and festivities, assisting with farming tasks such as feeding livestock, picking coffee, and drying and bagging coffee.
	Village/Regional Orientations (3)	Visits to surrounding ecological and cultural sites and places in and around rural areas where interviews were conducted.
	Farm Visits (7)	Tours of farms, participatory learning by doing, observation of planting techniques, visited a number of farms, visited a site for growing coffee seedlings, visited homes and ate together
	SAT Farm Visits (3)	Visits to SAT experimental farms, livestock projects, and on-site informal interviews on cropping techniques
SAT Experiences	SAT classes and farm visits (4)	Visits to current SAT classes in various rural communities,
	SAT special events (3)	Attended and took part in a regional exhibition of SAT groups' service projects; attended various graduation events of different SAT groups; attended a special municipal meeting honouring a SAT group for its winning proposal in a competition for development of the region.
FUNDAEC Activities	Internal Meetings (3)	Staff meetings and annual meeting, annual staff festivities

	Visits to other FUNDAEC facilities (4)	Visited FUNDAEC's University Centre for Rural Well-being (CUBR), FUNDAEC's library, SAT schools in Peligro Negro, Bahá'í Schools implementing SAT curricula; attended CUBR classes;
Category	Context	Activities Involved
	Office Interaction	Worked in FUNDAEC's Cali office, observing the functioning of the organization, associating with its staff, and assisting the organization with research-related tasks and activities
	Attendance at Training of CUBR Staff	Attended several days of a special training and evaluation project for CUBR staff and instructors.
Other	Meetings with other Colombian organizations and professionals	Met with staff of various other international agencies including staff from CIAT.
	Meetings with other professionals and public service officials	Met with and discussed research objectives and initial findings with professionals in various disciplines in and around Risaralda, and individuals of various levels of government in Risaralda.

Content Analysis of Secondary Literature on FUNDAEC, SAT and Rural Education

A content analysis of secondary literature was the third method of data collection used in this study. This component of data analysis involved an extensive and layered review of two primary bodies of literature: first, literature by and related to FUNDAEC and the SAT programme, and second, literature relating to adult and rural education in Latin America. Combined with the other methods discussed above, reviewing the secondary literature, particularly when defined broadly enough to include examination of a wide range of texts that often remain peripheral to conventional studies, has been another and on-going dimension of critical reflection on the research, the research questions and the data collected.

Language, Research Assistance and Institutional Support

One of the constraints that I experienced in heading to the field to carry out the research was my lack of fluency in Spanish, the exclusive language spoken by the interviewees of the study. While my enrolment in several Spanish university courses was an invaluable asset and strengthened the intimacy and trust established in the interviews, nonetheless I felt that in order to be fair to the research and to maintain the sort of objectivity I was striving for that it was essential to conduct all the interviews with students, tutors, administrative staff, family and community members, with the aid of an interpreter/research assistant. Conversations were often held directly between interviewees and me in Spanish before the actual interview began, as a way of building trust and comfort, and while I was comfortable with my comprehension from these conversations, it was important to be sure that nothing was missed or compromised from the interviews.

During the first few weeks after arriving in Cali I recruited and screened a number of candidates to work with me as an interpreter. In the end, however, I was not satisfied with the language capabilities of any of the candidates interviewed in doing simultaneous interpretation. Furthermore, all of the candidates had only lived in large urban areas of Colombia and had very limited, if any, experience with Colombia's rural people, a requisite of the research assistant that I was not willing to compromise. Roosta's research in the same rural context showed that sharp prejudices were perceived by rural participants in dwellers of urban areas, and thus that this was often an important barrier to other research. In light of the unavailability of an interpreter that fit these requirements, FUNDAEC made it possible for one of their staff to accompany me as a contracted interpreter/research assistant, for the first

round of interviews in Risaralda. This individual's competence with simultaneous translation between Spanish and English was impeccable, and he had worked extensively with rural communities with the SAT programme in other departments of the country.

The translator/research assistant was carefully selected in consultation with FUNDAEC and the Director of the SAT programme for Risaralda. The decision was based on a number of other important criteria, including the individual's strong sense of maturity and understanding of the complexities of Colombia's security issues and in the specific rural area where the research was being carried out, a strong sense of appreciation and respect for rural communities, and a competence in understanding the subtleties of the regional dialect and local expressions.

Several steps were taken to ensure that security—both that of the researcher and that of the respondents—was given primary consideration in the research design. Measures taken included careful attention to the news briefings of several authorities including Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs which provides an up-to-date travel advisory on the security status, communication with the University of Guelph's Centre for International Programs (CIP), and careful consultation and planning with FUNDAEC's staff.

Data Analysis

Consistent with the methodologies guiding the research design, the study also drew upon qualitative methods in the analysis of the data collected. The data analysis was structured as a process that was carried out in layers or stages. The first layer of data analysis was done in the field, following each interview. The reflective learning journal took the role of enabling this first layer of analysis, which focused on the stories and details of each

individual interview. After all the interviews were completed, another layer of analysis was done looking across the interviews for common themes and broader insights. After returning from the field a more thorough layer of data analysis was done by transcribing interviews into a spreadsheet software (Microsoft Excel), and then filtering the transcriptions several times to generate categories.

Transcription

Qualitative researchers point out the importance of researchers having a strong familiarity and intimacy with their data as a way of ensuring the reliability of data analysis. To this end, most of the work of transcribing interviews was done by the researcher. Some of the interviews were done with the aid of a second interpreter whose translation differed from the first and who had difficulty with some of the words and expressions used by the interviewees. I felt it necessary therefore to clean up the data by contracting another translator, after returning to Canada, to transcribe those interviews and check and correct the interpretation done in the interview.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodological considerations, design and activities that have shaped and guided this study from the stages of planning to data collection in the field through to data analysis. The chapter detailed the methodological approach taken, including the way that Constructivist, Grounded Theory, and Case Study Approach methodologies have shaped and guided the research. The chapter continued by discussing how research design was a broad construct that functioned as the entire blueprint

of the research, responding to the logical problem rather than merely the logistical one. Qualitative research encourages rich descriptions of the methods used and the steps taken in order to make the methodology as repeatable as possible. Further, in this study the research design has been regarded as an integral aspect of the learning process in the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

Introduction

It is important to contextualize SAT and FUNDAEC by describing some of the geographic, social, economic, cultural and political characteristics of the region. This situates the study and introduces the reader to the relevant issues regarding employment, education and agricultural development. The chapter then looks at the history of rural and agricultural development broadly, and the farming systems approach more specifically, as a backdrop against which to consider the evolution of thinking that led to the creation of the SAT programme.

Colombia

Colombia covers an overall territory of 1,138,914 sq. km. in the north-western region of South America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Panama and Venezuela, and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Ecuador and Panama (see Figure 1).

Colombia includes a wide range of climates and ecological zones from tropical zones along the coastal lowland areas to dense jungle regions high in the Andes Mountains. Colombia's elevation varies between sea level and 5,775m (Pico Cristobal Colon), though the bulk of the country lies in high, mountainous regions. Only two per cent of the country's land is arable, and just over half of this is used for the cultivation of permanent crops.

Colombia today is the second largest country in Latin America in terms of its population (42,954,279), and third largest with respect to its GDP. Rural communities across Colombia's 32 regional departments make up 23 per cent of the country's overall population.

In 2004, Colombia ranked 73rd of the 177 countries included in the UN Human Development Index (Fukuda-Parr, 2004). This index is a comparative measure of poverty, literacy, education, life expectancy, childbirth, and other factors for countries worldwide. Colombia also ranks 59th of the 144 countries that are assessed in the Gender-related Development Index (GDI). The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) is a composite index using the same variables as the human development index (HDI). The difference is that the GDI adjusts the average achievement of each country in life expectancy, educational attainment and income to account for inequalities between men and women (Fukuda-Parr, 2004).

Both urban and rural regions of Colombia have borne witness to the violence and interruption that the country's 40-year old armed conflict between insurgent and counter-insurgent groups has perpetuated. Arguably, however, it is the rural communities of Colombia that have been most affected by the conflict, and have had to live with the fear, if not the effects, of the terror, brutality, and forced drug production that both sides of the conflict have imposed on rural communities in many departments of the country.

Figure 1: Map of Colombia

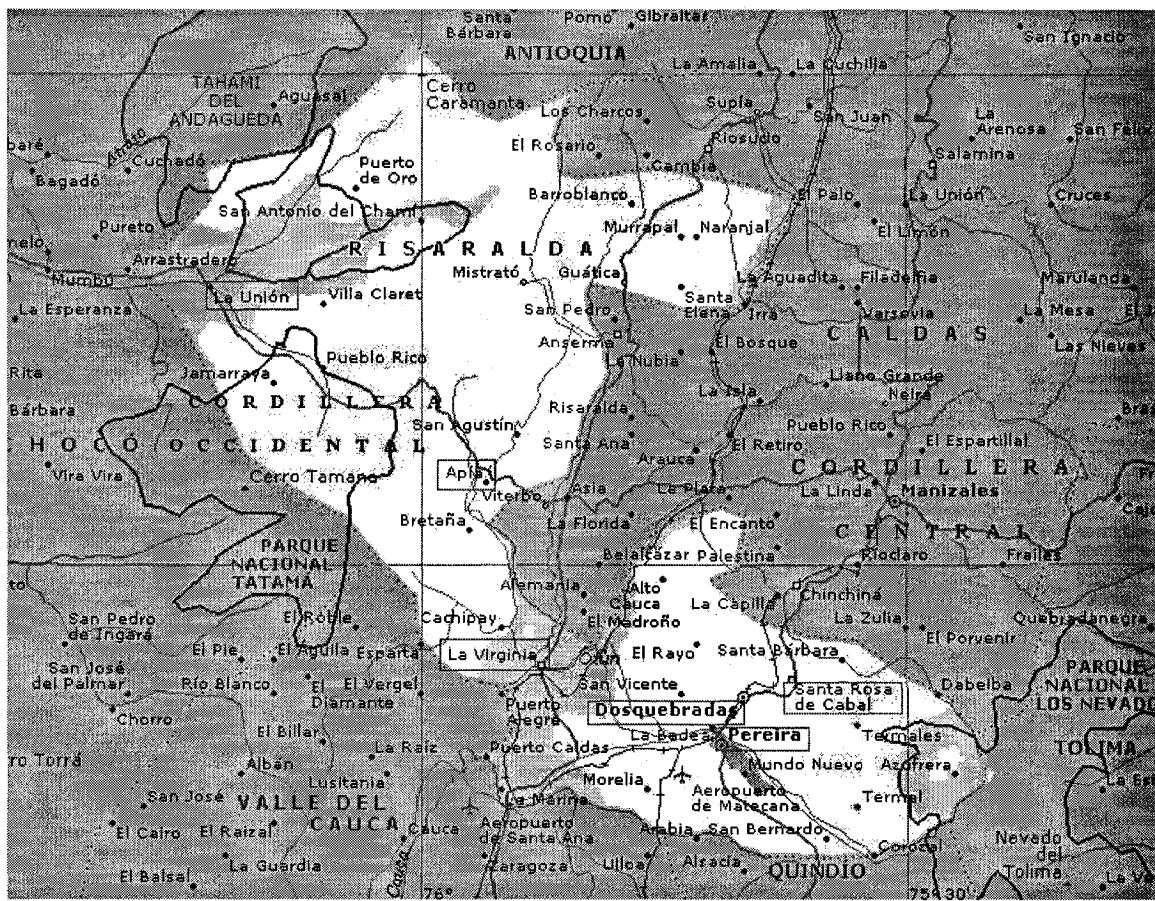


The Department of Risaralda

Situated to the western side of Colombia, the department of Risaralda borders Antioquia and Caldas to the north, and Quindío and Cauca Valley in the South. Risaralda composes 0.3 per cent of the national territory, occupying 4.140 square kilometres of land. While Risaralda includes a wide range of climates and elevations, most of the department is tucked deep in cool, mountainous regions which have provided the ideal growing conditions that allowed Risaralda to become one of the foremost departments in coffee production over the past decades. The three neighbouring departments of Caldas, Quindío, and Risaralda together became well-known as the 'coffee states'. In addition to coffee, its primary crops have been sugar cane, plantain, yuka, cocoa, pineapple, potato and corn. Risaralda's principal industries are agriculture and livestock (dairy production and cattle raising).

Risaralda was legally registered as an independent department in 1966 as a result of Law 70. The department is composed of 14 municipalities (*veredas*) and 11 rural sub-municipalities (*corregimientos*). Under colonial rule and during the first years of the Republic of Colombia, the department was subsumed in the department of Popayán. It later became annexed by the department of Cauca in 1821, and subsequently formed part of the federal state of Cauca in 1857. In 1905 the region became annexed by the department of Caldas, and then in 1966 gained the legal status of becoming an independent department within the Republic of Colombia. Risaralda was initially registered with thirteen municipalities and only in recent years the municipality of Dosquebradas was added as the 14th municipality.

Figure 2: Map of Risaralda



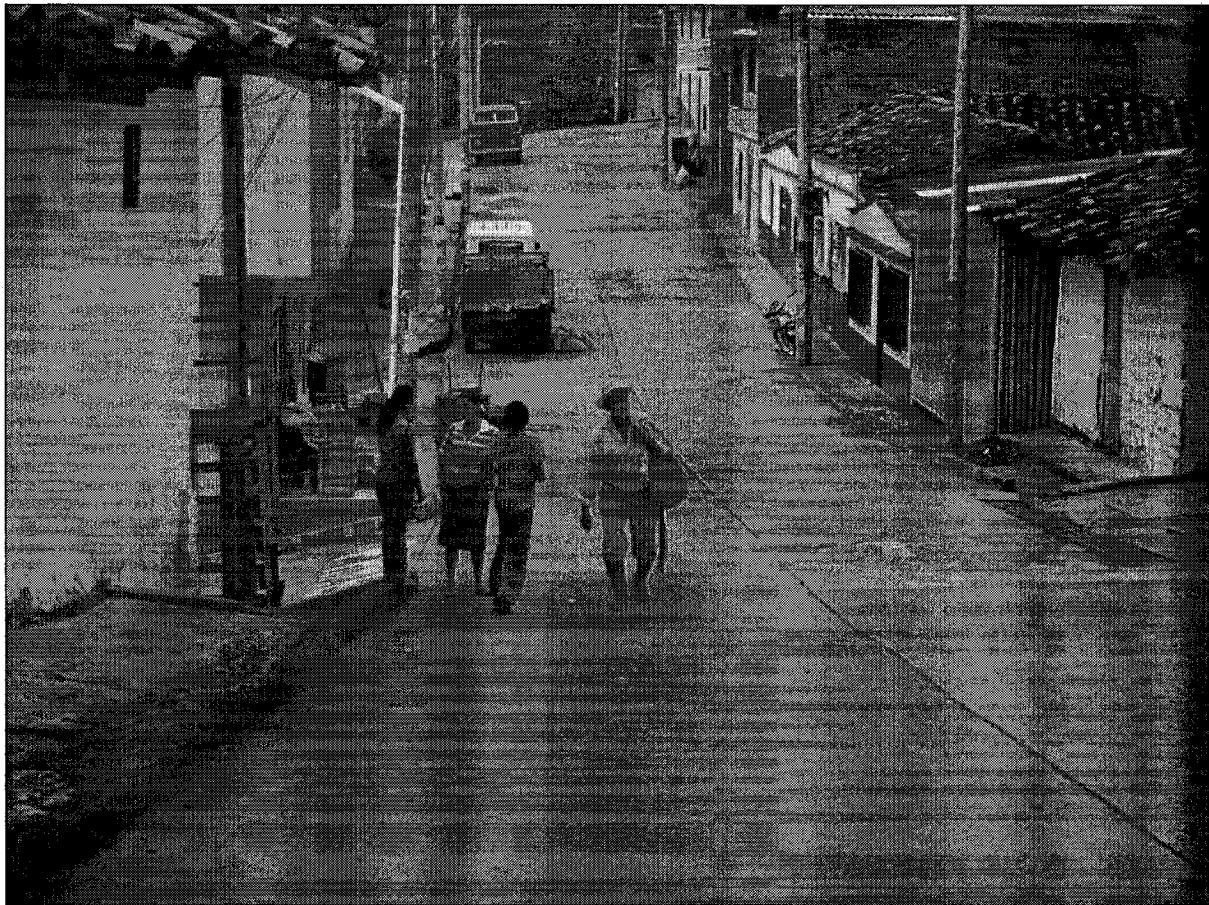
Source: Adapted from Government of Colombia's Human Rights website (2006).

Ethnic and Cultural Composition

The indigenous groups that inhabited the territory that now makes up the department of Risaralda include the Quimbayas, Ansermas, Quinchías, Chancos, Chamíes, and the Panches (Gobernación de Risaralda 2005). Unlike Cauca whose ethnic composition includes a predominate presence of black-Colombians, Risaralda's ethnic composition tends to be largely Spanish-descendent. The presence of black Colombians in the region, however, dates back to the 16th century, when they were first brought to the region by the Spanish to work the region's mines as slaves (Gobernación de Risaralda 2005). Risaralda's rural municipalities unlike other parts of Colombia share with other coffee-growing regions of

Colombia in being marked by an entire cultural tradition that surrounds coffee production, with small-scale farm lands, and family structures in which the entire family is involved in one way or another in the family farm. Many of the rural towns like Apia have urban designs that centre around a central town square where farmers would often come together to socialize and interact. Today, these towns remain, for the most part, centred still largely around agricultural production, and more than anything coffee production. Most of these towns and the smaller satellite villages that surround them are marked by supply stores run by the Coffee Growers' Federation, which also function as a portal where farmers interact, share news, and socialize. Figure 3 below shows a typical town in Risaralda where the meeting of urban and rural lives and livelihoods interact.

Figure 3: Photo of Apia



Source: Michael Leggett, copyright 2006.

Employment

While providing data for formal and informal employment sectors in urban and rural areas of Risaralda and the country as a whole, the 2000 Colombian census does not provide any criteria by which work is defined. There are, of course, various models common for establishing employment statistics, many of which are based on defining those capable of gainful employment. In the absence of such data, the figures provided in Table 3 below have been determined by calculating the number of employed against the entire population. The

limit of this approach is that the variance between figures appear less significant given the largeness of the population size being used.

On a departmental level, Risaralda is quite consistent with the overall national levels of employment, both in terms of rural and urban rates of employment. The difference between departmental and national employment rates is insignificant: Risaralda has 0.7 per cent more people employed than Colombia as a whole. Risaralda's rural areas show a slightly greater difference with 1.6 per cent more of the rural population in Risaralda employed than the country as a whole. Indeed, the employment rates, both nationally and departmentally in Risaralda, are higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

Interestingly, however, the rate of employment is marginally higher in the rural areas of Risaralda than in the urban areas. Here again, this information needs to be flagged for further examination in relation to other variables such as demography, economic and industrial development and geographical environment. Even a cursory review of population trends, for example, suggests that large proportions of the rural population have been migrating to urban areas over the past decade. The data, of course, do not provide any indication of the existence or role of social welfare apparatus in rural areas for the unemployed, quality of life, nor many other important factors. By way of example, in a rural community where agricultural production has been hit by significant falls in market prices, and the introduction of crop diseases, standardized employment criteria in most countries would nonetheless include farmers with any amount of income from farm production as "employed". Likewise is the case for seasonal and migrant workers, which is considerable in this area. The data on employment are instructive in pointing out how, taken in isolation of

other variables, the data can be misleading and allow for inaccurate interpretations of socio-economic situations and status.

Table 3. Employment Rates: Urban vs. Rural (percentages)

	Total (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
National	47.5	47.7	48.0
Risaralda	48.2	47.9	49.6

Source: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2000.

Rural Education in Risaralda

Official and Non-Official Educational Systems

Colombia's educational system is devolved to the ministerial level of each of the country's 34 departments. Under the aegis of the Secretary of Education for each department, the educational system serves both urban and rural populations. Colombia's National Ministry of Education (DANE) distinguishes between what is described as an 'official' system of education and a 'non-official system'. While the DANE does not provide explicit criteria defining how the demarcation between official and non-official education is being made for the data, the official system is defined in terms of educational models that are financially supported by the Ministry of Education. This includes the standardized national programme of education established and extended by the Ministry of Education as well as several alternative systems that have emerged over the past three decades, especially in and in response to the needs of rural areas. The non-official system then pertains to all forms of private education in which full educational fees are paid directly and exclusively by students.

Unfortunately the data available only provide a demarcation in terms of urban and rural (see Tables 4, 5 and 6 respectively), and official and non-official education. However,

the impacts of the range of alternative official educational programmes in comparison with the standardized system would be most instructive in appreciating and interpreting the data. This is particularly so in rural areas where some of the organizations that are currently offering alternative educational models claim numbers of enrolments that would suggest up to 90 per cent of the total rural enrolments in official education. The most widespread of these alternatives include the *Nueva Escuela*, *Post-Primaria*, and *Sistema Aprendizaje Tutorial* (SAT). The SAT programme, from the late 1980's until recently had been the only option available for rural communities for which commuting to urban centres was not an option (de Arenas, 2005).

Table 4. Educational Enrolment: Primary School

	TOTAL			OFFICIAL			NON-OFFICIAL		
	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	TOTAL	Urban	Rural
RISARALDA	98,452	67,463	30,989	87,597	59,099	28,498	10,855	8,364	2,491
Grade 1	26,263	16,319	9,944	23,571	14,173	9,398	2,692	2,146	546
Grade 2	20,206	13,703	6,503	17,895	11,882	6,013	2,311	1,821	490
Grade 3	18,760	13,129	5,631	16,705	11,565	5,140	2,055	1,564	491
Grade 4	17,249	12,484	4,765	15,269	11,025	4,244	1,980	1,459	521
Grade 5	15,974	11,828	4,146	14,157	10,454	3,703	1,817	1,374	443

Source: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2000.

Of the total 16,319 students in urban areas that start out in grade one (both official and non-official systems) 73 per cent of this same group continue on to enrol in grade 5. In rural areas, by contrast, of the 9,944 students that begin grade 1 only 42 per cent of these will continue on to study in grade 5, a difference of 30 per cent. Comparing students exclusively in terms of the official system, whereas in urban areas 74 per cent of those who begin grade 1 make it to grade 5, only 39 per cent of rural children make it from grade 1 through to grade 5, almost half as many as in urban schools. This indicates that retention levels in rural schools

is far more of a problem than in urban areas. The difference in these two groups is very significant and merits further examination as to the reasons for the sharp fallout of enrolments in later primary grades.

Table 5. Educational Enrolment: Secondary School

	TOTAL			OFFICIAL			NON-OFFICIAL		
	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	TOTAL	Urban	Rural
RISARALDA	70,586	60,891	9,695	58,876	51,531	7,345	11,710	9,360	2,350
Grade 6	16,061	13,342	2,719	13,801	11,564	2,237	2,260	1,778	482
Grade 7	12,887	10,989	1,898	10,766	9,261	1,505	2,121	1,728	393
Grade 8	11,704	10,185	1,519	9,855	8,685	1,170	1,849	1,500	349
Grade 9	11,142	9,721	1,421	9,268	8,219	1,049	1,874	1,502	372
Grade 10	9,845	8,738	1,107	7,954	7,228	726	1,891	1,510	381
Grade 11	8,947	7,916	1,031	7,232	6,574	658	1,715	1,342	373

Source: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2000.

Table 6. Decline in Enrolment: Primary School (Percentage from Previous Grade)

	Official		Non-Official	
	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Grade 1	174.1	394.7	100.3	95.1
Grade 2	83.8	64.0	84.9	89.7
Grade 3	97.3	85.5	85.9	100.2
Grade 4	95.3	82.6	93.3	106.1
Grade 5	94.8	87.3	94.2	85.0

Source: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2000.

Table 7. Decline in Enrolment: Secondary School (Percentage from Previous Grade)

	Official		Non-Official	
	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Grade 6	110.6	60.4	129.4	108.8
Grade 7	80.1	67.3	97.2	81.5
Grade 8	93.8	77.7	86.8	88.8
Grade 9	94.6	89.7	100.1	106.6
Grade 10	87.9	69.2	100.5	102.4
Grade 11	91.0	90.6	88.9	97.9

Source: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2000.

For both rural and urban students the greatest drop in enrolments takes place between the first and second grades of primary school. In terms of the official system, in urban areas, 84 per cent of those enrolled in grade continue on to grade 2; in rural areas comparatively only 64 per cent of students continue on to grade 2, resulting in a difference of just over 20 per cent. From second grade to fifth grade for urban areas, the decline of students each year levels off in relative terms, with an average decrease of the student population by 4 per cent per year. The same data for rural areas indicate an average decline in student enrolment of 15 per cent per year. The decline in rural areas thus is almost three times as high as that of urban areas.

The most significant decline in student enrolment for rural students in the official system is seen with the transition from primary school to secondary school. Rural areas see a decline of student enrolment of 40 per cent. In sharp contrast, urban schools actually see an increase in their enrolments of 111 per cent, with the transition from grade five to six. While the absence of further and supporting data limit the conclusions that can be made from this point, but the increase in urban enrolments should prompt important questions for further research about the number of rural students that crossover to urban school systems during

this transition. That rural students are enrolling in urban schools would also have to raise questions about geographic accessibility and quality of education. Further, that the most significant fallouts in rural enrolments occur after the first and fifth grades respectively should also be flagged for further examination, bringing into consideration socio-economic factors such as the time and schedule conflicts between the demands of rural farm life and the conventional school system, subject matter and relevance for rural communities, perceptions about the economic and other benefits of conventional schooling, among other factors.

Based on these statistics, in comparison with the 9,944 students in rural areas that begin grade 1 only 10 per cent of that group graduated from high school. In comparison, of the 16,319 students from urban areas that entered the first grade 4 per cent of that group completed high school. This is a significant difference. This figure points to the large disparity in the number of students who complete high school between rural and urban areas. The data alone, however, do not indicate the reasons for this difference.

It is noteworthy to point out that the current data for the official system include both students enrolled in the conventional educational system and those enrolled in the various alternative educational models (as identified above). By way of illustration, the SAT programme in Risaralda, as one of these alternative models of secondary education, had 63,300 students enrolled in its programme in 1997. By the 1997 statistics for Risaralda, this would account for 34 per cent of all students in the department. Although SAT is most heavily concentrated in rural areas, it also includes many groups in urban areas. While comprehensive data are not available through the Secretariat of Education in Risaralda for the numbers of students in rural and urban areas and retention levels, reports of other years suggest that retention among rural populations in the SAT programme are significantly

higher than those provided above. While a more careful analysis of the statistics is thus not possible, what is certainly clear is that the prospects for completing high school for a young person of a rural community are dramatically less than for a young person growing up in urban areas. What is troubling indeed is that if the reports about SAT are correct then the situation for rural students attending schools other than SAT is even bleak.

Rural Agriculture and Farming Systems in Colombia

Rural Agriculture

Risaralda combines with five other departments¹ in Colombia to form what is known as the Coffee Belt (from the Spanish “Eje Cafetero”), due to the high level of coffee production associated with these departments. Coffee has been grown in Colombia since at least 1787 and has been commercially exported since 1835 (Bentley & Baker, 2000). With its steep and mountainous regions, high altitude (between 1,000 and 2,000m above sea level), and fertile soil Colombia in general, and the departments of the Central Range or coffee belt in particular, proved to be ideal for the production of coffee, particularly for the production of the *Arabica* coffee bean, which generally grows best in altitudes between 1,200m and 1,800m. As of 2000, these six departments that make up the Central Coffee Belt, had a combined population of 12 million people and 250,000 coffee farms.

Most of the departments of the Coffee Belt have a vast array of roads and transportation routes built conjointly by the national government and to a lesser extent by the Coffee Growers’ Federation. The latter has tended to build smaller in-roads where the

¹ These include Antioquia, Caldas, Quíndo, Tolima, and Valle.

nationally-funded main roads end. This access to quick and deep transportation routes by much of the rural population growing coffee has been instrumental in the large output of coffee production that these departments experienced in the last few decades.

Table 8. Coffee Farms and Production Capacity in Colombia

	Department	No. of farms	Area under coffee production (ha)
Central Coffee Belt	Antioquia	96,484	125,212
	Caldas	47,320	91,421
	Quindío	7,600	51,484
	Risaralda	25,355	62,052
	Tolima	51,977	106,131
	Valle	26,703	89,569
	Subtotal	255,439 (46%)	525,869 (61%)
Rest of Colombia's Coffee Belt	Boyacá	14,939	12,012
	Cauca	83,508	61,604
	Cesar	4,915	21,226
	Cundinamarca	48,727	61,121
	Huila	52,801	76,123
	Guajira	1,495	4,348
	Magdalena	2,294	16,535
	Nariño	34,613	20,490
	Norte Santander	18,507	31,947
	Santander	34,242	37,881
	National Total	551,480 (100%)	869,158 (100%)

Source: Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia, 1997

If Risaralda and other departments have had ideal climates for the production of coffee, the rural populations growing coffee in these regions have similarly been apt for the introduction of various efforts at developing the region and increasing both revenue and productivity with coffee growing.

Colombian Coffee Growers' Federation

Relatively early in its history with coffee production, coffee growers in Colombia realized the value of organising themselves, and led the way among Latin American nations in establishing what has become one of the most successful federation of growers. The Colombian Coffee Growers' Federation, first inaugurated in 1927, is representative of, and is entirely funded and driven by the many thousands of smallholder farmers associated with it. The Federation was founded originally with the aim of protecting and defending coffee for the welfare of the country and to promote the economic and social well-being of growers. One of the Federation's most significant strengths in this regard was to safeguard the country from "private (especially foreign) exporters from colluding to drive down prices paid to farmers" (Bentley & Baker, 2000: 3). Since its inception, the Federation has grown to include an extensive number of important subsidiary institutions within its scope, including a National Coffee Fund (Fondo Nacional del Café), a vast storage network (Almacenes Generales de Depósito del Café), and a National Coffee Research Centre (Cenicafé or Centro Nacional de Investigaciones de Café).

The latter has served as an agronomic centre for scientific research on coffee production through the use of experimental farms and the distribution of a regular publication for farmer members. Cenicafé has ensured from its onset that farmers participate in the research, as the Federation's statutes ensure that every member of the Federation has the right to inspect the Federation's experimental farms.

Farming Systems Research and Extension

If the early decades in international development were characterized by unfulfilled development promises, inappropriate research for improved agricultural production, and alienated farmers removed from grand development plans, the era that emerged, through what was termed a Farming Systems approach, saw a far more holistic and integrated response to the growing disparity between the reality of smallholder farmers and that of large landowners and agrobusinesses. The influence of the shift towards a Farming Systems Research and Extension (FSR&E) approach was very much taken up in Colombia. Cenicafé's involvement in, what might be described as, early participatory farming research certainly made for considerable receptivity to the work with farming systems that began to emerge in the mid-1970s and onwards. Despite the achievements of both Cenicafé and the Federation itself, Cenicafé's researchers maintain an ethos of being committed to the farmers and have avoided publishing in international journals in favour of publishing, instead, for its farmer members.

In Latin America and elsewhere, the previous era of intensification and industrialisation had approached farming in a fragmentary way, focusing narrowly on individual crops in isolation from other crops, and on individual farms in isolation of the overall farming system of a given community or region. There was very little, if any, collaboration between or learning from the disconnected sectors of farmers, natural and social scientists, and extension workers. For all its strengths in carrying out research and extension that was intended to be inclusive of farmers, to an extent, however, even the Cenicafé has essentially supported an agenda of intensification and monocultivation for many decades since its inception in 1938 (Bentley & Baker, 2000). Farmers' involvement in

research with Cenicafé is largely facilitated through extension workers who administer questionnaires amongst member farmers asking them to identify their farming needs.

One of the important insights that the FSR&E approach brought to the fore was the emphasis that farms are dynamic and complex systems that include interacting crops and often various modes of production, and which are exposed to the interplay of many forces and factors such as disease, human resources, market determinants, and social and political forces. A renewed appreciation of the small farm emerged in which the farm became viewed not as a simplistic output mechanism, but rather as a dynamic and complex systems involving numerous interactions at micro and macro levels, from the interactions of local organisms to the workings of market and political forces shaping the organization of the farm and the distribution and diminution of farm land (Norman, 2002). A corollary of this appreciation was a shift in focus to multicropping, the introduction of small subsystems, and the supplementation of cash crops with subsistence crops.

More important perhaps, the approach also highlighted the importance of integrating experts from various fields to work collaboratively in experimenting and improving agricultural production. Norman (2002: 4) describes “its holistic perspective, the fact that scientists involved in the process should represent both technical and social scientists, and that the process was by nature iterative” as the most salient characteristics of the Farming Systems Research and Extension approach. The FSR&E approach encouraged a new type of partnership in agricultural research and extension, one that involved farmers, and social and natural scientists.

To a considerable extent, the approach to training associated with FSR&E has looked to the fields of Adult Education and Rural Extension for its methods, techniques and

educational concepts. Not surprising then, FSR&E has tended to remain concerned exclusively with adult farmers and almost entirely ignored the importance of training youth and young adults.

Farming Systems Research and Extension in Colombia

While many efforts were made in Colombia's rural areas to pioneer these new types of partnerships through on-farm experimentation, inclusive research and participatory methods of extension work, one of the most instructive examples was introduced by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). CIAT has long been engaged with agricultural research in Colombia with FSR&E techniques such as on-farm trials, experimental plots, and farmer groups such as the Local Agricultural Research Committees (Comités de Investigación Agricola Local) or CIALs. Unlike most FSR&E projects in which farmers, at best, participate as adjuncts to scientific research experiments for which they often have very little input into. Their involvement, in the worst case, is often to be taught a simplistic set of technical skills to carry out the legwork of experiments for expert scientists; “In this relationship farmers are routinely excluded from the planning process and are instead relegated to validating technologies. Alternatively, their land is used in on-farm research though the farmers themselves are frequently sidelined altogether” (Humphries, Gonzales, Jimenez, & Sierra, 2000: 2). The CIALs, on the other hand, are an approach to farmer participatory research in which farmers take the lead role as researchers. With the CIALs the expert scientist was replaced by a facilitator, albeit an individual with the same scientific expertise, but with the aim of building local farmers' self-help and innovation skills.

Committee members are taught how to use controlled comparison to be able to carry out simple tests.

CIAT's work with the CIALs has earned considerable recognition within and outside Colombia. What is noteworthy here is that the CIALs emerged out of the same theoretical context that SAT emerged out of, and consequently there are a number of commonalities between the two models that will hopefully become evident in the discussion about the latter which follows in the next chapter. It is of interest to note as well that, according to Correa, Director of FUNDAEC, that the idea of the CIALs was initially presented to CIAT by FUNDAEC, though CIAT decided to go ahead alone with the CIALs.

Speaking in reference to the implementation of the CIALs in Honduras and the scepticism among many in the field of FSR&E, Humphries *et al.* (2000: 2) explain that,

[t]here is a good deal of debate about the wisdom of teaching farmers scientific methods of research. The critics charge that such formality suppresses local experimentation, contributing to the devaluation of local knowledge systems. In particular, they argue that power relations make it difficult for researchers to enter the very different worlds in which farmers' ideas and conceptions exist, effectively excluding them from the scientific realm" (2000: 2).

The CIALs have challenged these criticisms by training farmers in formal research skills and involving them in planning and executing research and conducting trials. Despite its many achievements and efforts at centering farmers, the CIALs nevertheless seem to be aligned to a model in which the ultimate end of research is to advance the knowledge of expert research centres and scientific journals. Speaking about the overall benefits to farmers and researchers, Humphries *et al.* explain that, "from the researchers' point of view, benefits lie in the continual feedback on technology that is afforded them by farmers who are

acquainted with more positivist research methods. Farmers, for their part, get to interact with and – more importantly – influence the research establishment" (2000: 3).

Summary

While the SAT programme finds affinities with the CIALs and other similar farmer-training approaches, yet its aim is not to involve the farmer only marginally more in a research design that ultimately feeds back in service of externally postured research centres. It makes a departure from the domain of Farming Systems Research and Extension in that the SAT programme aims to build the capacity of rural people and simultaneously rural communities to become the main protagonists in the initiative and execution of research by and for their communities. The purpose of agricultural research is fundamentally for the advancement of that rural community. Furthermore, the capacity to innovate and carry out experiments is understood in the SAT programme as only one among many capacities that individuals need to develop to become full agents of rural well-being.

CHAPTER FIVE

FUNDAEC AND THE SAT PROGRAMME

Introduction

This chapter outlines the emergence and evolution of FUNDAEC, as well as the development and implementation of the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT) programme in Colombia. The chapter begins by describing the history of FUNDAEC and the founding principles on which it established itself. The chapter then continues to describe its activities and programmes. From this stems an introduction to the SAT programme, with a brief account of its evolution and programme components.

Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanzas de las Ciencias (FUNDAEC)

Emergence and Evolution

From its inception in the early 1970s, the FUNDAEC has been working in Colombia and other countries of Latin America to evolve an approach to rural development that focuses on building the capacity of individuals, institutions and communities to take ownership of their own paths of development. What FUNDAEC has come to describe as 'Education for Development' (FUNDAEC, 2000b) has been a combination of formal and non-formal educational components focussed around an explicit two-fold aim of personal and social transformation. FUNDAEC has defined its role in this process as that of a catalyst helping to build up and strengthen local institutions and programmes of learning.

The structure conceived as the means of integrating and coordinating the learning amongst the many organizations and institutions in a given region of the country is the

University for Integral Development (UDI). The UDI is more appropriately viewed as a “social space in which two systems of knowledge, a modern one (in all its sophistication) and a traditional one, pertaining to the people of the region, would interact in a healthy way” (F. Arbab, Correa, & Valcárcel, 1988: 6). Within the framework of the UDI, FUNDAEC has developed two main programs: the *Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial* (SAT), an innovative educational system for both adult and youth learners, and FUNDAEC’s university training centre--the *Centro Universitario de Bienestar Rural* (CUBR). SAT and CUBR combined have trained over 50,000 graduates through the decades since they have been in place, and together the two programmes include about 40,000 students currently enrolled in the programmes in Colombia. These programmes have been introduced, albeit with many modifications, in other countries in Latin America and elsewhere.

Beginnings

Founded in 1974 by a group of professors from the University of Valle (Cali, Colombia) and other professionals, FUNDAEC was brought into being around the common aim of seeking to find strategies for developing, within rural peoples and communities, many inter-related capacities that would allow communities to eventually take charge of their own learning processes along the path of its own endogenous development. The individuals who were among the core founders of the original FUNDAEC group were Alberto Alzate, Farzam Arbab, Gustavo Correa, Edmundo Gutierrez, Martin Prager, and Francia de Valcárcel.

FUNDAEC initially focused its efforts on a small rural region of the department of Norte del Cauca, in Colombia, but later extended its research activities and educational programmes to other departments in Colombia and, much later, to other countries of Central

and South America, and in East Africa. FUNDAEC was incorporated as a non-profit organization by Resolution 2424 of the Colombian government, October 27, 1974.

Unlike conventional development organizations, FUNDAEC's beginnings grew out of the experiences of a small group of founding members and the optimism that those early experiences afforded about what they perceived as the unlocked potential of rural populations to become the real protagonists of their own development. The founders of FUNDAEC were not development experts, nor did they come together to apply sophisticated development theories. The group decided, contrary to conventional development practice, to allow its conceptual framework and corresponding approach to development to evolve more organically over time and through reflection on experiences. Nonetheless, the group of founders of FUNDAEC were guided by a number of foundational principles and concepts which were explored and clarified in the context of their early activities. One of these convictions was the understanding that the knowledge that would need to be sought and integrated into its programmes would have to look to both scientific and religious knowledge systems, as the group believed the challenges of development both practical and social and that the insights gleaned from these two knowledge systems of humanity's collective heritage would need to be brought to shed insight into the many aspects of human well-being and social advancement. Just as FUNDAEC believed that its exploration of science would need to go beyond narrow positivistic domains of science to include the scientific truths afforded by traditional and indigenous knowledge, so too it looked broadly beyond the particular dogma of sectarian religion to examine the fundamental concepts and insights enshrined in all of the world's religious systems. In this regard, while a number of the first founders of FUNDAEC were Bahá'ís and thus the Bahá'í Faith was regarded as one of the sources of

knowledge to which it would turn, several of its founding members were affiliated personally with Catholic and other religious orientations. FUNDAEC, in this way, defined itself as non-sectarian insofar as it unapologetically looked to Religion (in the plural and general sense), without associating itself with any particular religious or political, for that matter, commitments.

After a few decades of experience working with education and development with rural communities, FUNDAEC came to define its long-term aim in the following terms:

What [FUNDAEC] has set for itself to accomplish is to help one or more rural populations to take the necessary first steps and begin their search for new options, by carefully examining the diverse processes of life in the region, looking for alternative technological and organizational practices, learning from these activities, and in doing so, educating new generations who rather than simple objects of oppression can become effective actors in an unavoidable process of profound social change (F. Arbab, Correa, & Valcárcel, 1988: 19).

A few of the professors who helped found FUNDAEC had previously participated in an interdisciplinary action-research group of the University of Valle, Colombia. Farzam Arbab, who was among this group at the University of Valle has written the following account based on his personal experience with that group and how it led him and others to the creation of FUNDAEC:

Our project was part of an intensive effort by the Rockefeller Foundation to improve higher education in several universities around the world and turn them into efficient instruments of modernization.

To contribute to the formation of a generation of scientists who would lay a firm foundation for progress in their country was an exciting prospect and one which indeed had drawn me to Colombia. Yet, I was uncomfortable with the distance that separated our formal academic endeavour from the lives of the millions of people whose needs and aspirations demanded immediate attention. Participation in the deliberations of the interdisciplinary group at the University was a welcome opportunity to pursue my search for a more direct use of science

in systems and processes relevant to the social reality of the masses of humanity....

At the time I had joined the group, my colleagues had already decided on a series of definitions about development and were committed to the construction of a model to guide their future activities. According to this model, well-being resulted from the convergence of several factors such as health, housing, education, employment, family life, community organization and others that could be grouped together under the general heading of "culture." Integrated development implied simultaneous and united action by various governmental organizations in order to improve these factors. The role of the University was to coordinate and to provide the theoretical framework for these interventions.... (F. Arbab, 2000: 151-152).

Fostering Rural Institutions and Processes

The FUNDAEC group, including Arbab and his other professorial colleagues and students from the University of Valle, then embarked on a process of questioning this elaborate development model as they began conducting simple, non-formal educational activities with groups of rural youth. Through an ongoing process of action and reflection, FUNDAEC explored the core principles the group felt would need to frame their endeavours as they advanced.

Table 9. FUNDAEC's Guiding Principles

<i>Development of human resources:</i>	Participants of FUNDAEC, regardless of social status, are irreplaceable resources in a self-sustaining process of change;
<i>Education as a means of releasing potential:</i>	Every human being possesses great potentialities that an appropriate education process can develop and channel towards service to the community and to society at large;

<i>Commitment to understanding problems of poverty and social disintegration:</i>	FUNDAEC would always be committed to analysing the problems of poverty and social disintegration, and would develop its programs as contributions to a far more exalted vision of the human being;
<i>Education as a means of fostering spiritual development:</i>	In spite of all the manifestations of cruelty and injustice in the world, through a proper educational process, the spiritual nature of every human being can flower and a prosperous and advanced civilization can come into existence;
<i>Modernization within the context of addressing the needs of the integral nature of man:</i>	The development programs of FUNDAEC would have to evolve in the context of a search for a scientifically and technologically modern society, which, however, would base its educational, economic, administrative, political, and cultural structures on the concept of the integral nature of man rather than his mere material needs. Under such conditions, the relations between urban and rural life would also develop in a far more balanced way than the patterns that have evolved within the present world system;

<p><i>Enabling rural people to contend with their own challenges using the tools of research and education:</i></p>	<p>Research and education, the two main components of the activities of the rural university, would be carried out precisely in the context of a delicately balanced interaction of science and the development of the capacity of rural people to participate in the generation and application of knowledge that responds to their exigencies;</p>
<p><i>Search and learning:</i></p>	<p>The element of search and of learning would always have to be present to some degree within the plan of action for FUNDAEC;</p>
<p><i>Development of structures that will truly serve the needs of rural populations:</i></p>	<p>Rural needs are much more than usual interventions, since old structures and organizations of rural people have been destroyed by the forces of modernization, with no new structures taking their place. Hence, the processes of rural life, production, simple construction and repair, marketing, the development of human resources, socialization, the flow of information, adaptation and the improvement of technologies, health care and sanitation, and decision making are in need of structures that will truly serve the needs of rural populations.</p>

Source: Arbab, Correa, & Valcárcel, 1988.

One of the core insights that FUNDAEC became quickly aware of and concerned about was the abyss that was slowly consolidating itself between an emerging modern sector, being patterned by the lifestyle and interests of industrialized nations, and a traditional sector, bound as it was, by the exigencies of meeting basic needs and migrating to the slums of the modern sector (F. Arbab, 1984). FUNDAEC was also cognizant that all-too-often development has played its part in exacerbating this trend. A corollary to this was the observation that one of the most devastating situations of past decades has been the deliberate weakening, if not the complete erosion, of the social, cultural and political structures and institutions of rural societies (F. Arbab, 1984).

Even from its inception in the 1970s, FUNDAEC felt that participation would have to be understood at a far deeper level than simply involving people in plans designed ultimately from outside the population. This understanding largely emerged from the recognition that there was clear neglect of the enhancement of institutional capacity among rural populations and the inhabitants of poor city neighbourhoods. This was because the focus of many economists in the 1970s was on the movement of communities from traditional to modern societies, with concentrated efforts made on the creation and strengthening of institutions in the so-called modern sector, since the traditional sectors were becoming extinct. Reinforced by the above observations, the founders of FUNDAEC came to understand participation, first, in terms of the gradual development of the institutional capacities of a population and the organization of their common learning.

Table 10. Essential Elements for Participation in Development

<i>Structural/Institutional Capacity-Building</i>	The organization of institutions and structures that belong to the population that is to choose and walk its own path of development.
<i>Generation and Application of Knowledge</i>	More than gaining access to information, communities and individuals need to be able to build the capacities of participating in the generation of new knowledge and in the application of knowledge in their lives and livelihoods.
<i>Systematic Learning</i>	People are only in charge of their own development if they are learning systematically about the changes that have and are occurring in their society, and are consciously engaged in learning about these changes and the changes their own involvement in social action are contributing to.

Source: Adapted from Arbab, Correa, & Valcárcel, 1988.

For FUNDAEC's founders, however, a second element of participation, that of knowledge generation, would be needed if institutional development was to avoid falling into political manipulation and narrow attention only to those structures to do with group production. In Arbab's words,

How could a rural people claim to be in charge of their own development if they had no access to knowledge so easily available to other sectors, if they did not learn systematically from their own experiences, and if they did not participate in the generation, as well as the application, of knowledge accumulated at a global level? They perceived their first task, then, as the organization of learning and the first institution as one that provided education - an education almost equivalent to development itself. In fact, FUNDAEC was created to be such an institution, to become more than a school or university in the traditional sense and to involve itself in all aspects of community life, in an effort to bring knowledge to bear on the problems of rural development, examining them always from the point of view of the inhabitants of the regions it served (F. Arbab, 1984: 5)

This realization has led FUNDAEC to the conviction that participation would need to emphasize the creation and strengthening of endogenous institutions and structures within a population, and to prioritize those structures and processes that allow populations to advance along their own development path through the generation and application of knowledge, knowledge both local and global, traditional and modern, scientific and religious. Towards this end, FUNDAEC decided to dedicate itself to setting in motion, originally in the region of Norte del Cauca, learning processes that would allow the inhabitants to take charge of systematically learning about its path of development.

Significant participation necessarily implies the existence of institutions and structures that in a real sense belong to the population that is to choose and walk its own path of development. Moreover, the creation of new institutions, or the strengthening of existing ones, by themselves do not bring about participation. A second essential element, undoubtedly as important as organization, is knowledge. It could be claimed that a people were in charge of their own development only if they were learning systematically about the changes that occurred in their society, and were consciously incorporating in their continuous learning process appropriate elements from the universe of knowledge: their own, the modern knowledge system, as well as the experiences of other people and groups in the world who are facing similar challenges. The original group of FUNDAEC became convinced that only when both of these elements, appropriate structures and a systematic learning process

with access to global knowledge, were in place, could rural populations throughout the world interact in equal terms with others and cease to be the objects of the plans (beneficent or harmful) of other individuals and institutions (F. Arbab, Correa, & Valcárcel, 1988: 5).

FUNDAEC has come to regard itself as being one among the many organizations and institutions that need to participate within a population in moving these processes forward (F. Arbab, Correa, & Valcárcel, 1988). It helped nurture the formation of the Centro Latinoamericano de Tecnología y Educación Rural (CELATER), which was established in order to accompany an increasing number of organizations “in their efforts to generate knowledge, train and educate various levels of workers in the field, and influence policy whenever possible. It assumed the responsibility of catalyzing a systematic process of search for alternative approaches to rural development” (F. Arbab, 1988: 31). Brought into being as a result of discussions between a number of Latin American organizations in the early 1980s, CELATER was established to coordinate and exchange knowledge on topics relating to technology, education and rural development among a broad array of organisations all working broadly in agricultural development and rural education.

The Rural University

From among the many social, economic, agricultural and cultural structures that the people of a given population would need to direct the path of its own development, FUNDAEC decided to dedicate its first efforts towards the establishment of an institution that eventually became known as the Rural University, later to be expanded to take on the University for Integral Development. The Rural University was regarded as more of a ‘social space’ than a physical one, where rural people could systematically learn about the

path of its own development. Around this pivotal commitment and the knowledge that the first decade of the Rural University's systematic learning generated FUNDAEC organized this learning into the course of its training programmes.

The Rural University provided a context within which various knowledge systems, traditional and modern, scientific and spiritual, could freely interact in the search for responses to the challenges of rural development. Having placed at the heart of development the generation, acquisition, and application of knowledge, the Rural University took on the role of 'accompanying' a group of participants as it moved along the path of learning about and systematizing its learning about development.

Learning Process and Theoretical Framework

FUNDAEC has approached development from a perspective of not coming in with established theories and models, but has sought to bring to light a number of foundational principles and through a thorough process of applying and reflecting on those principles to slowly evolve a conceptual framework for its efforts in development, which advances and is modified in the light of new and further experiences from professors and participants alike.

For FUNDAEC, it is essential that action and reflection take place within the context of an evolving conceptual framework on education and development. It seeks to continually make explicit and advance this conceptual framework, which is based on an ongoing exploration of two knowledge systems, namely science and religion, both understood in their broadest sense to include indigenous and traditional knowledge and the insights offered by the natural and social sciences.

Foundational Principles

The originators of FUNDAEC had initiated their work not with elaborate theories of development or long lists of objectives and goals, but with a set of deeply rooted ideals and convictions. Among these were i) the firm belief in the potential of rural youth and ii) the expectation that human resources for bringing about change would be found primarily among rural populations themselves.

FUNDAEC asserts that humanity has evolved through stages in a collective evolution paralleling the successive stages of growth in the life of an individual, and that it now stands at the critical turning point of shifting from the stage of adolescence to maturity or adulthood. As such, it understands the profound transformations in all aspects of social organisation as the growing pains of that transition to maturity, when old habits, attitudes, and models of social organization are, through an iterative process, slowly giving way to those necessary for the collective maturation of the planet.

In this light, FUNDAEC describes its approach as being based on the view that the true nature of the human being is fundamentally spiritual, and that the purpose of life is essentially two-fold: to take responsibility for one's own personal growth and development, including the development of those capacities that characterize the human soul, and to contribute to the transformation and progress of society. This approach rests upon a careful analysis of the fact that "these aspects of the sense of twofold purpose are fundamentally inseparable, for a person's standards and behaviour shape the environment, and is itself also deeply affected by it" (FUNDAEC in F. Arbab, 2000: 233) The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of the individual is the result of these mutual reactions. FUNDAEC's exploration of transformative learning, then, acknowledges a far more complex

set of interactions between the transformation of the individual, and the deliberate creation of the structures of a new society.

FUNDAEC sought to avoid, on the one hand, a form of participation in which communities are mobilized against whatever social ill its leaders (farmers groups, community leaders or the state) deem important at the time, and on the other hand, another type of participation that often convinces individuals of their absolute autonomy as they participate in exploitative and unjust structures of society. FUNDAEC aims to foster a continuous interaction, between the parallel processes of the spiritualization of the individual and the establishment of new social structures, and sees this interaction as related elements along a path of social change, that, in the face of despairing social conditions, avoids both complacency and apathy, on the one hand, and violence and expedient activism, on the other, and does not perpetuate the cycles of oppression and illusory freedom that often characterize social life.

Just as FUNDAEC does not view the human being as a mere product of interactions with nature and society, it does not identify structural change narrowly with political and economic processes only. Rather, it sees the necessity for change in all structures of society—mental, cultural, scientific and technological, educational, economic and social. Together with the need for structural change is the need for a complete change in the very concepts of political leadership and power (F. Arbab, 1987; FUNDAEC, 2000a). FUNDAEC posits that it focuses simultaneously on the necessary changes at both levels. Its training of individuals intends that individual learners take on the posture of directing their efforts at effecting change on both the personal and the social levels. In this context,

FUNDAEC suggests that the creation of new social structures and institutions in turn allow an increasing number of individuals to advance in the development of their capabilities.

FUNDAEC asserts out that its “educational activities seek to channel the powers of the human soul into humble service to humanity; indeed, service is the axis around which we design curricula and integrate knowledge from the different fields of human endeavour” (FUNDAEC, 2000a: 182). Far from the usual interpretation of the concept of ‘service’ as either a sort of persistent missionary paternalism or a passive form of maintenance of the status quo, or, on the other hand, its reduction to a mere economic deliverable devoid of meaningful connection with others, FUNDAEC’s programmes conceive of service as the primary space within which personal growth and social change can be integrated. Arbab explains, “in this way, helping others and helping oneself become two aspects of one process; service unites the fulfilment of individual potential with the advancement of society and ensures the integrity of one’s sense of moral purpose” (1993: 6). The identification of service as the nexus that brings together individual and social transformation is regarded not merely as a convenient educational strategy, but as being consistent with the conception of the individual and society that, FUNDAEC points out, Religions throughout centuries, and indeed, millennia, have upheld, and through which the deepest impulses of peoples and civilizations have found their finest fruits of expression in the great processes of civilization building and social development that mark the highest watermarks in human history. Roldan (2000: 5) explains, “the development of the capacity to serve the community, a capacity that makes possible participation, democracy, values, an understanding of gender, concern for the environment and local production, constitutes the permanent commitment of SAT groups and the students that participate in these groups”.

FUNDAEC's programmes seek to apply these concepts in its programmes by combining formal learning and personal study with increasingly more complex acts of service in the community. This service component, more than providing a mere temporal space for the personal practice of newly acquired skills, is viewed as conjointly benefiting the individual and the community.

Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT)

The Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT), or Tutorial Learning System, first introduced in 1974 as a modest educational project with a handful of rural youth, can be seen to be "the most important result of the work carried out by FUNDAEC during the twenty years of its existence" (Valcárcel & Correa, 1995, translation by researcher: 3). The SAT programme has evolved to its current status as the most extensive programme of rural education in Colombia, and as a strong rural educational alternative in many other Latin American and Central American countries including Brazil, Nicaragua, Panama, Ecuador, Guatemala, as well as a number of countries in Africa including Rwanda and Zambia (Bayan Association for Indigenous Social and Economic Development, 2002; El-Camino-Fund, 1997). SAT has over 50,000 graduates and about 40,000 students who are currently enrolled in the programme in Colombia alone.

With a small group of eager youth from the rural region of Norte del Cauca, the founders of FUNDAEC began their efforts to train these youth to be active promoters of rural well-being. The term "engineer of rural well-being" was used to describe the goal for which the youth were being trained. For the next seven years, FUNDAEC worked with this group assisting them to go through an extensive process of training and to participate in a series of

action research activities in the community. The intensive research generated out of these learning processes that the students became involved in have provided much of the basis of the concepts and topics for investigation in the SAT texts. As this research was not carried out simply to fill the pages of high school textbooks, FUNDAEC regards this research as the fruit of extensive learning processes in the communities of the region, and while it has been integrated into the texts of the SAT, it is also used in other programmes, even at the post-secondary level, as well as in other training activities (Correa, 2004).

As early as 1982, the SAT programme began to be expanded and introduced in other rural regions of Colombia. Through a joint project, Colombia's Ministry of Education supported in the early 1990s expansion of the SAT programme to other rural departments of country (F. Arbab, Correa, & Valcárcel, 1988). The ministry was very supportive of the SAT programme, in the early years, and provided accreditation for all three of the levels of the programme, making the SAT thus equivalent to completion of the entire secondary component of formal high school. The programme has now been introduced in each of the 18 departments of the country, however, in keeping with FUNDAEC's commitment to building institutional capacity, in each department the administration, structure, and character of the SAT programme have taken on unique features. In some departments, consequently, SAT has become modified to the needs and culture of self-governing indigenous groups, and in other departments, such as Risaralda, is governed by an administrative branch of the departmental secretary of education. As a result of this approach to the decentralized extension of SAT in Colombia, some 40 different institutions and organizations now have been growing to respond to the opportunity of extending the SAT to rural areas of their

respective departments. In many cases as well, the SAT has been introduced in urban settings and has found similar receptivity and success.

Purpose

As FUNDAEC did not have either economic resources nor the political power to create the structures of rural regions that it felt needed to come into being to guide the path of development in a region, the founders felt that one of the most indispensable factors “for generating positive social forces... is knowledge. Under ideal conditions of social justice, the progress of a society depends substantially on the existence of a process of systematic learning and organization on its own path of development” (F. Arbab, Gutiérrez, & Valcárcel, 1992translation of the researcher: 2-3). In this regard FUNDAEC envisioned that at the very heart of a number of related processes of development that would need to be in place in a region would be an educational process. For long, the field of development, however, has been mindful of the importance of primary education. The provision of ‘primary education for all’ has for several decades now been central to the United Nations decade-long campaigns, including being the second in the set of Millennium Development Goals. What FUNDAEC imagined was not primary education but a system of capacity building among rural youth and young adults who could become the protagonists of development in the region. It has become so commonplace in the development literature, however, to speak of primary education in the appeals for the provision of education for rural areas that primary education has almost become synonymous with ‘rural education’. Between the extremes of Western-based curricula for the basic education of children and the non-formal vocational and project-specific training of adults, very little existed in the way of

programmes around the world that provided long-term and more formal than informal education aimed at building the capacities of young adults in villages around the world. FUNDAEC asked,

How much has the expansion of primary education actually changed rural areas for the better? [...] Would it not be more reasonable to redefine basic education in terms of a first set of capacities that would enable a young man or woman to contribute effectively both to the work of the family and to the processes of change that are to be set in motion in the village, and treat the present content of primary education simply as an important but not complete requirement of a program for the development of a set of enabling intellectual and spiritual capacities and attitudes in rural youth who can become the most valuable human resources for social change? (F. Arbab, Correa, & Valcárcel, 1988: 12)

FUNDAEC articulated a number of related capabilities they felt needed to be developed in rural youth in order to enable them to participate in the social and agricultural development of the region. In this regard, it defined the essential elements of its approach to capacity building as summarized in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Essential Characteristics of the SAT Programme

Integrating material and spiritual development, through curricula that brings together the insights of scientific knowledge and spiritual concepts and principles. It finds expression in the simultaneous emphasis on the practical application of learning as well as on developing the moral and spiritual convictions to develop oneself and participate in a spirit of service in the development of the community. Capacity building in this regard, becomes defined as the development of practical skills together with spiritual qualities, and attitudes and in understanding certain concepts.

Developing the capabilities of understanding ever-more complex ideas and processes, from scientific interactions of organisms to the processes of the local and regional markets, and the social patterns of oppression and injustice. Contrasted with a conventional educational model, most particularly for young adults and youth, wherein

emphasis is placed on the assimilation of information, the SAT programme emphasizes the capacity to apply knowledge and to generate new insights and ideas from learnt knowledge.

Integrating action and reflection, learning theory and practicing, learning existing knowledge, and building the scientific, analytic. It is often assumed that an education that is reflective and experiential should be for adults, with the often confusing assumption that for children and youth banking education focussed on instilling information and formulae into learners. For this reason, FUNDAEC does not assume this distinction, but sees its pedagogical commitment to building capacity, learning through reflection on action, and constructing a conceptual framework to be characteristics of an educational approach common to both.

Integrating formal and non-formal education.

Placing an emphasis on capacity building.

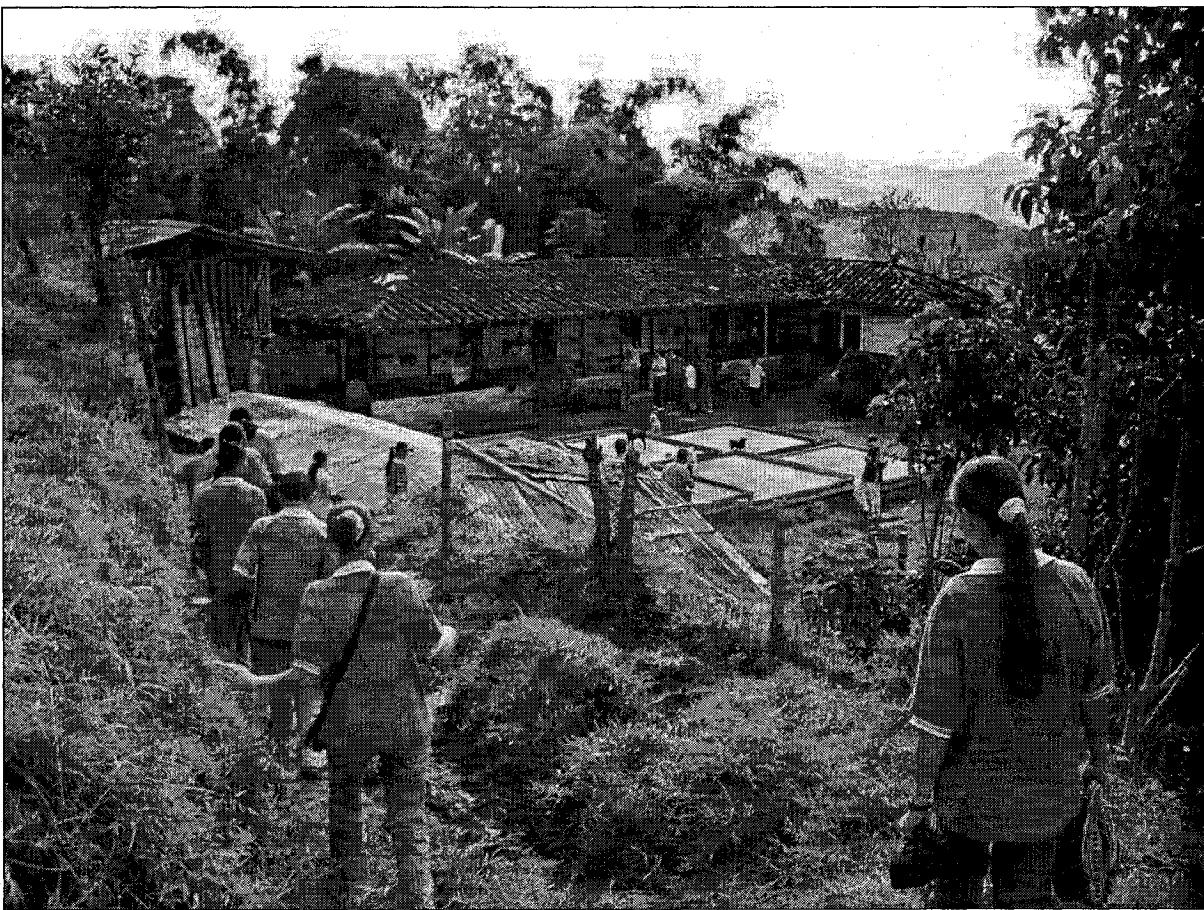
Structure and Components of the System

The SAT programme is a complete departure from the conventional curriculum of the Colombian high school system. While the programme has gained accreditation, and is regarded as equivalent to the six years of regular high school, it is structured into three levels. Each level recognizes the development of practical and academic abilities, and certain qualities and attitudes. At the end of the first level (years 1 and 2 respectively of conventional high school), the student is recognized as a Promoter of Rural Well-being. The second year prepares the students as Technicians for Rural Well-being. The third and final year recognizes the completion of the high school curriculum with the degree of Baccalaureate for Rural Well-being.

In total, 28 textbooks have been developed by FUNDAEC on an on-going basis over the past three decades. Unlike a conventional approach to education, the SAT texts integrate subject areas by drawing insights and concepts from a wide range of fields such as health, agricultural and animal production, education, mathematics, science, and philosophy and organizing these concepts around a set of capabilities associated with personal development, the ability to participate in and create meaningful livelihoods in the rural community, and the ability to engage in social action (see Appendices 2 through 4 for a organizational chart of the SAT syllabus for each of the three levels of the SAT programme).

SAT is delivered through an informal meeting structure, often in an available space in the community (see Figures 4 and 5 below). The places of learning, according to Roldan (2000: 8) "are open, breaking thus the rigidity of the convention of the closed classroom where the professor has total control of the processes [of learning]. These spaces can be the community market space, family plot, and all other spaces that favour the experience of learning and that make each village an educational setting". While the pace of study is entirely decided by each group, in order to complete the programme in approximately six years, the programme requires about 10 hours a week of time dedicated by student. Each group is guided by a tutor from the same or a nearby village, trained by the rural university.

Figure 4: SAT Group Visiting a Local Farm for a Lesson on Coffee Drying Techniques.



Source: Michael Leggett, copyright 2006

Tutors

The SAT tutors are men and women who have at least a high school diploma (not necessarily through SAT) or some equivalency, and who have completed the Licenciatura in Education offered by FUNDAEC, which parallels the similar teacher training Licenciatura programmes offered by Colombia's universities. Prospective tutors also undergo an additional six-week long training seminar specific to teaching the SAT programme. The seminars focus on the philosophy of SAT, the methodology and pedagogy embedded in the programme, and a study of each one of the text books. The seminars also cover basic concepts of development, rural economy and community organization. Upon completion of

these seminars individuals are then certified by FUNDAEC for teaching the first level of the SAT programme. Additional seminars are required for tutors to be certified to teach the subsequent two levels of the programmes

The concept of the 'tutor' differs quite dramatically from that of the traditional 'teacher' in the conventional school system. The role of the tutor is more similar to that of a 'facilitators' insofar as they are guiding learning processes, rather than controlling a group of less-educated people and ensuring they receive and can reproduce the knowledge possessed by the teacher. They do not wield arbitrary authority that can usurp the learning process; tutors guide the students through the textbooks, raise questions and help find answers, clarify obscure matters, encourage reflection on real-life experience and supervise experiments and social action. They do not lecture or dictate, but nor are they simply relegated to the role of mere facilitators of group discussion. More than facilitators, tutors have also gained important experience with the material and the guiding methodology, though do not necessarily better or the only understandings of the material being studied.

Figure 5: SAT Group and Tutor Visiting Experimental Plots



Curriculum

The first level, Promoter of Rural Well-being, includes six topic areas divided into a total of 27 units. The topic areas do not follow those of the traditional secondary curriculum and are well adapted to the rural environment and student involvement in different aspects of the community life. The units include readings in language and communication, environment, food and nutrition, housing, waterways, and demographics (Zambrano & González, 1982). Each unit is a textbook and is developed in its totality before moving on to the next unit. Students can purchase the textbooks as they need them so that the cost is spread out over the duration of the course.

The basic method used for the group meetings which are directed by the tutor include an initial group discussion of the topic followed by a formal presentation given by the tutor. If there are differences in the level of members of the group, two, or maximum three subgroups can be organized. At the beginning of the Promoter level, there are generally big differences in student abilities. By subsequent levels the groups should be more homogeneous. The group discussion is generally initiated by a student who reads the reading from the lesson for the group. Small groups of three to five students each are then organized to discuss the lesson. Finally, after the group discussion, and before the presentation of the tutor, each student rereads the lesson silently.

An important aspect of the program are the community projects required in some of the textbooks. These projects provide students with the opportunity to put into practice and adapt what is learned to the local conditions. These activities also create an important institutional role for the SAT programme in the community in stimulating community development.

In order to ensure that the students have mastered each unit and assure that the objective of the program are being fulfilled students are evaluated at the completion of each unit. The results are used to aid the tutor in improving their techniques and pedagogical approach. Trained evaluators from an external team administer periodic evaluations that cover the topics of each unit of study. The evaluator is independent from the tutor and the community in order to assure impartiality. In order to prove mastery in each unit the student must have a minimum score of 70 per cent on the evaluation, a positive report from the tutor that appraises motivation, understanding, participation, and fulfillment of other requirements, and finally a grade that assesses the required exercises and community practices which is

determined by both the tutor and the evaluator. When the student is considered to have mastered a unit, the final grade is then sent to the SAT field coordinator who registers the grade in the student's file.

The SAT Programme in Risaralda

"If you don't want to be forgotten, do something worth being remembered"²

SAT is known as the Bachillerato en Bienestar Rural, or simply, Bachillerato Rural (FUNDAEC, 1997) in the Department of Risaralda. One key individual is often regarded by many students and tutors involved in SAT as having been the impetus behind first bringing SAT to the department, he is Don Francisco Alzate, or Don Francisco, as many refer to him. Having completed a master's degree in education and returning to the rural areas in Apia, Risaralda, Don Francisco was deeply concerned about the lack of educational opportunities for the rural communities. Having discussed what he saw as a crisis with many of these rural communities, a group representing many of the parents and council members of these villages banded together under the name of the Comité Municipal (Municipal Committee), and, having identified SAT as a viable option among the few educational options being introduced in various parts of the country, the Committee approached FUNDAEC asking that it extend the SAT programme to Risaralda (de Arenas, 2005). Prior to their request FUNDAEC had only been offering the SAT programme to communities in Norte del Cauca, the department where it first was began and grew up. Following this lead, every department

² Translation from a sign beside a meeting place where one SAT group meets in Risaralda, see Figure 4.

in the country that now runs the SAT programme has also approached FUNDAEC, rather than the inverse. This pattern has come to define the way the SAT programme is extended in Colombia (H. Arbab, 2005).

The first SAT groups began in Risaralda in 1987 with the training of 25 tutors. It was in 1993, however, that the SAT programme was officially accepted by the department and accredited as an alternative system of education. The administrative institution in Risaralda that gradually was built up to take responsibility for the oversight and management of the programme in the department was the Centro Educativo Bachillerato en Bienestar Rural (CEBBR). The CEBBR is a governmental institution which operates under the Secretary of Education in the department of Risaralda. SAT presently has 100 per cent coverage in the 14 municipalities of Risaralda, and is run in more than 20 per cent of all the department's villages (*veredas*) and communities (FUNDAEC, 1997).

Figure 6: SAT meeting place



Source: Michael Leggett, copyright 2006.

Summary

This chapter began by introducing FUNDAEC, the organization responsible for SAT. This was primarily accomplished by delving into its inception, emergence and evolution, offering insights into its guiding principles and methodologies, its approach to the learning process, as well as its conceptual framework for social action. The SAT programme was subsequently introduced, including its purpose and philosophy, structure and function, the role of its tutors, as well as its curriculum. The SAT programme in Risaralda was then described, including its administrative structure, as well as its challenges and constraints in this region of Colombia.

CHAPTER SIX

FIELD-LEVEL FINDINGS: EDUCATION, TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present interviewees' descriptions and conceptions of their personal growth and the development of their communities in terms of a number of emerging themes across the data. The data reported here are drawn from the 15 in-depth interviews with SAT graduates and supported by the data gathered through participant observation and through interviews with SAT tutors, key informants and SAT administrative staff. In keeping with the guiding research questions of the study and with the nature of a case study design, this chapter avoids both an evaluative approach, which tends to reduce the data in support of or against the programme in question, as it likewise avoids an approach towards generalization in which data are often subsumed to advance a single overarching variable while minimizing the multiplicity of themes and variables that might have otherwise emerged. Thus, and contrary to the usual tendency of quoting short fragments to bolster support for an argument, I have chosen to quote at length from the interviews so as to introduce ideas in the complexity and integration with other themes as they appeared in the raw data. Maintaining and conveying the unity and integrity of the conceptual framework of interviewees seemed as important to present as the individual themes and ideas themselves. I believe this approach will also allow the reader to discern more thoroughly the voice within and the context around interviewees' own words and conceptions. What follows, then, is a more circular description that tries to outline various aspects of personal and social

transformation. To the extent possible, I have also tried to maintain a narrative sense to the interviewees' accounts in deciding upon the arrangement of the following themes.

Profile of SAT Graduates

All the graduates interviewed identified themselves very proudly as being *campesino* or 'country people', which meant that they were raised in and maintain both an identity with and connections to the rural areas. The graduates included in the study come from ten different villages or *veredas* across four municipalities of Risaralda (see figure 2 in Chapter Four for a map that displays these municipalities geographically). Each of these municipalities is quite unique, yet there is a strong over-arching consistency in the economic status, and social and cultural characteristics among them. Three of the graduates, though having lived the majority of their lives in the rural area, now work in urban areas. All interviewees participated in SAT groups which were held in rural areas. The mean age of the interviewees was 29, with the youngest being 17, and the oldest being 45 years old. A majority of the interviewees began the SAT programme over the age of 18, with 12 being the youngest age that one of the interviewees joined the programme. The mean age of the interviewees at the time of joining the SAT programme was 23. All of the interviewees completed all three levels of the SAT programme, with the mean number of years taken to do so being six years. The majority of the interviewees (approximately 70 per cent) began the SAT programme following completion of grade five of elementary³. Interestingly, the

³ The Colombian elementary systems goes up to grade six.

median last grade completed by interviewees' mothers was grade four, and grade three for their fathers, respectively.

As the distance from the closest high school had previously been the biggest barrier to receiving any amount of high school education, many of the graduates explained that they initially joined the programme because it offered the only option to complete high school. In most of the rural communities of the department, attending high school other than through SAT would have meant that rural youth would either have had to reside in the respective urban centre, which would have meant significant financial resources far beyond what any typical farming family would have access to, or commuting a distance for which no public transportation usually existed. Further to this, the costs associated with attending any public high school were again much too expensive for any rural family. Costs such as uniforms, textbooks, school supplies, lab supplies, special event and graduation, let alone any supplementary tuition costs, made it extremely difficult for a rural family to afford even one child to attend. The SAT programme aimed at reducing all of these costs to make it accessible for families. With its one cost being that of the modest photocopy-quality textbooks that students study with, the SAT programme was an attractive option for individuals in the rural areas who had hitherto not been able to enter high school. All three levels of the SAT (spanned over six years) require students to purchase a total of 40 textbooks, with the price of each textbook being between 3,000 and 5,000 Colombian Pesos (the equivalent of about two Canadian dollars). Notwithstanding this reduction in the overall cost of the SAT programme contrasted with the costs of a conventional high school, for many students, however, even the cost of the texts is still too much of a burden for the family to afford and, as Jose_05 pointed out, many students in his group, as a result, had to

withdraw from the programme. Andrea_15, an older woman who joined SAT as a mature student, pointed out that of the 40 students who began with her in her SAT group only five graduated in the end, due to the financial constraints on the families during the years she was studying, due to the financial strains on the family for losing a worker on the family enterprise combined with the added cost of paying for an education.

Along these lines, SAT also posed a great challenge for students in that SAT groups often studied in whatever community building or school that was available to it to get access to but often without access to sophisticated laboratories and libraries. As a result, many interviewees spoke about the challenge they faced from within their own rural communities and families when their SAT groups first started out, and also from their own families who may have doubted the credibility of the programme. Andrea_01 mentioned,

Many times there would be people who would be reactionaries or be opposed to it, or people would say bad things about the programme, but they didn't really affect the Bachillerato [SAT] programme. Because, we as students, we made sure that the programme would grow, or that it wouldn't become weakened; no we wouldn't allow it.

The view likewise, and often emanating from those in the urban areas--as Jose_05 explained--was that students in SAT were not *really* learning anything serious and surely would not have the same academic qualifications. Almost all of the interviewees also spoke of having experienced sharp prejudice for being from the rural area, and particularly for having studied a tutorial-based high school programme that encouraged them to continue living and working in the rural areas. One young adult, Diego_03, who continues to work in his rural community as a tutor after having finished the SAT programme and the Licenciatura

in Education (an administrative requirement for individuals to work in the department as tutors) explained:

The most common way for people of the urban areas to view the *campesino* is to look at them very much below [themselves].... In a few words, they don't value the countryside nor the country people who live there; even still today, this is the case! They think that, just because one is a teacher one should be in the city and that the more degrees that one has you should go to the cities, and they don't understand that one has a function, a social role, that one receives a training with the specific goal of serving these communities and so, for this reason, one would rather be in these areas. And so they see me today picking or harvesting coffee on the farm, and some of them wonder why: 'you have studied so much and you're still picking coffee, working on the farm!?' Those educational systems [of the urban areas] don't have the purpose of helping one carry out one's functions in one's environment, and instead they teach one to abandon that place.

More than half of the graduates said that they primarily viewed the urban areas as providing "opportunities to go ahead in life, there are better schools, better friends, better opportunities to relate with other people", as Andrea_03 explained. Several interviewees explained that for many rural youth, one often dreams of getting ahead in life and realizing oneself by moving to the bigger city centres. Some of the graduates confessed that when they first heard about the SAT programme being offered in their areas they initially wanted to join the programme to fulfill this desire to advance themselves. Yet, many graduates indicated that the change that took place within them also changed their motives for studying (and continuing) in the SAT programme.

In describing what life was like before joining the SAT programme some of the interviewees explained that they did not have much thought of themselves, or their life goals. Jose_11 asserted, "How did I feel about myself? No, (pause) no, no. I didn't feel, (pause) how

should I say this? (pause) No, no, I did not think about that at all". Andrea_06 explained how she felt about herself: "I did not worry about the future, because I'd look at the countryside and I'd say nah, 'I'm going to stay here and I'm not going to progress much', but now I see that in the country there is everything. Everything is there".

Many others, such as Andrea_15, added that they felt anxious and/or a sense of loss and inferiority for not having been able to study further than the elementary level. She explains, "I viewed myself with a lot of anxiety to educate myself, because it was very difficult because of [my job] and the place where I lived which was very far away. I had the desire to improve myself."

Almost all of the graduates, including both younger and older interviewees, explained that they did not have much of a relationship to the community at all prior to joining SAT, and did not consider, to any real extent, the needs of the members of the community. Jose_11, who began the programme as a young adult, pointed out, "No, there was not much relationship. Generally, when you were young you would go from school back home, and you would study and work". Andrea_01 joined SAT at the age of 12, yet explained what the community meant for her before joining the SAT programme: "Well, I thought it was the society that surrounded one. It didn't have any much meaning to me". Jose_12 who joined the programme at the age of 20 also spoke about his relationship to the community before joining SAT in this way: "It was a (pause) cold, normal relationship. Yes, how I was saying before, there wasn't much interaction between us".

SAT also proved a viable option for young people given the flexibility of its place of study and its approach to scheduling. Each group would define the pattern, pace and schedule of the group's study. Most groups chose to study on weekends so that their

commitment to their family farms during the week would not be compromised by their studies. While many in the community and in urban areas would consequently disregard the programme for what seemed like a casual approach to study, most graduates spoke of the immense burden that rested on them to put in numerous hours of reading and study each night after having already carried out a full day's work on the farm. This seemed necessary if they were going to complete their studies without compromising family commitments. The pace of study ultimately was determined by each group and more so, by each student, as the evaluation of SAT is based on the completion of work, and as such, a student essentially cannot 'fail', since he or she can always return to the group and pick up where they left off, if they need to remove themselves from study due to personal circumstances.

Despite the many challenges posed by prejudice and speculation from the community, the graduates recounted those challenges as having been positive aspects of their learning process. The hardships of prejudice and of an arduous schedule of study and farm work actually reinforced the philosophy of SAT towards a self-directed learning posture, as interviewees faced the question of why they were persevering to complete their studies under such circumstances. Andrea_01, a young woman who struggled through very poor health that left her bed-ridden for many months of the programme explained it this way:

I had an experience studying one year in a normal high school. And the time that I was in that school, I don't think I liked it very much. Maybe, I would say I was feeling lazy, you would go there, you would just study and that was it... But in the SAT you think! You have to *really* use your brain! With the SAT I would take one hour walking to get to where I would study. I was never one to like the easy things! I have always liked to have to sweat, to really make an effort to do things, to really appreciate things in life. Yes, so with the Bachillerato I had to sweat a lot, a lot, a lot! It was a lot of work, such as the transportation, how to get my hands on the other texts, and all the effort I had to do at home. Because at home they would tell me, no, don't study anymore that's it!

Emerging Themes

Agency and Self-Sufficiency

One of the strongest themes that emerged repeatedly in the interviews and in field notes from participant observation was what might be described as self-sufficiency. Almost every one of the graduates spoke about the overall goal of the SAT programme as well as their own visions of a prosperous community in terms of a sense of empowering individuals and the community to be able to take charge of their lives and the development of the community. Interestingly, they tended to speak about this self-sufficiency within individuals and the community in a rather fluid way that spoke interchangeably about the importance of this self-sufficiency for the individual as much as for the community.

Several graduates spoke to this theme by explaining their commitment to lifelong learning that came as a result of studying in SAT. Jose_13 is a graduate of the programme for whom this sense of self-sufficiency has led him and a few of his colleagues from the programme to initiate their agricultural businesses and thereby become independently employed:

I have been increasing [my use of the skills and abilities learnt in SAT]. In fact after leaving SAT, I did a course in accounting, another in the technology of plantain production. We have also done courses in the area of trading and commercialization. All this I have done after SAT. We have been working with SENA in lots of aspects; we have not been stuck; we have always been able to remain here [in the rural area].... The other students have all done the same. We were a little group, but in general with the ones that I still have contact with, we are all anxiously thinking about what we can do. There is one individual who is working as a car mechanic, another is a beekeeper, and some have started bakeries... Almost all of us who have graduated from SAT, we are working independently."

Jose_10 is another individual who participated in SAT as a mature student in his 40s. He participated in the SAT programme in the absence of alternative options to the rural population at the time. For him, the programme's emphasis on fostering self-sufficiency within individuals and communities was pivotal to the development of the region:

When one studies, one has the idea of working for some company; you always have to work for somebody, but with SAT, you have this thing where you can work self-sufficiently... When we were all studying, everybody left looking for jobs, and this creates a lot of unemployment, but I had the idea of creating my own business. 'I am not going to go looking for work; I'm going to generate work'. And in a certain way the SAT texts guide us in that way. Currently we have had a business running since 1997... We produce the SAT texts; the only thing we try to do is to provide a service, so we produce the texts [at an affordable cost].... There was a great difficulty back then because we had to either buy the texts from Antioquia or Cali. So it was a little costly and in making sure they arrive on time for distribution to the students. We had the idea, 'why not produce the texts ourselves in Risaralda?' So we did a feasibility study to see if it was possible and it was. And so at the same time we were able to create four jobs.

For Andrea_07 self-sufficiency also had to do with maintaining a commitment to taking charge of her own lifelong learning and growth. For her this also meant redefining the role she anticipated with a future marriage partner, as that of an equal rather than as an inferior or a dependent:

"I do hope to have the opportunity to prepare myself in order to progress in life and not to have to depend on anybody else in the future. Maybe I will be able to continue studying or not, but my goal is not to have to depend on anybody. Whether I find a husband, I can still progress by myself, or maybe together with him, we can help the family move ahead".

For many like Andrea_07 this self-sufficiency had more to do with taking charge and responsibility for oneself and one's learning and personal development, more so than being independent of and unable to work together with and benefit from others (as she explains in terms of progressing 'with' a husband). A number of other interviewees spoke about it in

terms of being an individual that thinks independently and is able to take charge of their personal development. Diego_02 explained,

SAT is practical; its human; its human development. It's totally different in SAT. The SAT graduate has the vision; he/she is a visionary. The very fact that he can develop capabilities by him or herself makes this person very different because as a result, or through this means, it makes him able to overcome many obstacles, and they don't face obstacles with fear. That's where you see the difference. He or she learns to be independent, but not independent in a selfish way, but with propriety, to have one's own set of criteria when judging things, and not to be manipulated by other peoples, and thus, this is a person who isn't manipulatable.

Initiative and Innovation

Several interviewees explained this self-sufficiency in terms of 'initiative', in terms of not waiting on others—whether community members, outsider experts or government agencies—to do things for them and to provide resources and services. Instead, they would endeavour to take steps to bring about the services missing in their lives or in the community, or to search for solutions to agricultural problems. In describing the characteristics of an ideal community leader, Jose_05 explained,

It wouldn't be the person who would not wait around for other people to solve the problems or to solve his own problems, but really he would take initiative in order to improve things, and its a person who is convinced that whatever thing he or she may do or will be able to do will be something that will be of benefit for everybody. I think that a person, in order to be that way, or to have those qualities, we aren't born with these things. One learns them; one develops them according to the kind of education that one has. That is, education is essential in the training and development of the human being, and above all for learning to be a leader.

Interestingly, when individuals spoke about the value of being able to initiate change they spoke about this in terms of the community in a way that indirectly defined the role for their involvement and talents. They spoke about a spirit of initiative that comes from

wanting to be of service, and to help others, whether on a micro level within the SAT group itself, or, on a larger level with the community. Jose_13 spoke of how the programme made him 'wake up' in terms of his curiosity to experiment and learn new things: "like I said before, you stay curious, anxious. Your inquisitiveness wakes up, to do very different things, new things, to try out." One example of this is in how Andrea_12 explained that in her SAT group the students would always bring whatever they had for lunch, often grown from their I visited a farm that Jose_13 and some of his colleagues from SAT began, after graduating, where they have been experimenting and coming up with their own low-cost and organic fertilizers, and breeding techniques for plantain and banana.

Jose_05 expressed this ability to innovate in his approach to problem-solving and in his perseverance, after graduating from SAT, to find a job that would allow him to serve as many people as possible. He explained:

SAT gave me, I would say, a very important idea, that every problem has a solution, EVERY problem! I don't agree with the person that says, 'well, there's nothing else that can be done,... we can't do anything with that'. That knowledge and that great idea that I learnt in the SAT, I use it EVERY day in my work place. People sometimes tell me, they tell me 'look I requested such and such a service and [the health authorities] told me, no, we can't do that'.... So what did I do? I would try to find out or ask about this individual's problems, and then I would see that there is always something to be done, there is another way to resolve that problem.

In relation to his dealings with government agencies that were failing to follow through in the provision of services, Jose_05 also pointed out his determination with such shortfalls in the system. His account is interesting as it points to the way this ability to be innovative and determined led, not to defiance and aggression towards the state, but to a creativity combined with determination to discover alternative options. Andrea_01 spoke

about the ability to innovate having sprung from a desire to help the community and surrounding wildlife against hazardous chemicals. With her group, she became involved with experiments on fungicides and pesticides in the search for non-chemical alternatives to the hazardous chemical fertilizers used on most farms and sold at the local store of the Federation of Coffee Grower's:

Well, we were a group that liked to experiment... We worked really well, and more than anything else, we experimented more with fungicides and the pesticides, we didn't want to use chemical pesticides. So we would use the same weeds and things like that to make fungicides to spray the cabbage and things like that. And we did, by ourselves, investigations to find out things that would help our crops, or to take care of our animals. And ever since we started we always had that intention to do that investigation.

A number of interviewees spoke similarly about how SAT taught them a sense of appreciation for the possibilities of the rural area, which resulted not in complacency and a romanticized vision of the past, but in a determination to find solutions from the resources (human, environmental, or other) available in the area. Jose_08 spoke about the ability to innovate in terms of making do with what is available and finding more creative ways of using more efficiently those resources. This contrasts with the more Western-driven emphasis in development practice producing and having more (fields, money, resources). The attention was not then so much on what was lacking in the community, in terms of opportunities, resources, technology and inputs, but rather on what resources within the community and local environment had been overlooked or gone undeveloped. He explained:

Sometimes people want to have a lot of land and they think by having more land they will have more money but really if you just have a little and you know how to really cultivate things well you will be able to have a higher income. Even in having a smaller size of land you can have a better life than having a large one. You have to diversify your crops and plant them at different times of the year, so that you will have crops for sale all year-round, *and* for consumption at home. So there are people in the country, people who buy all

their food outside [the rural community] and have to bring it home. People buy their tomatoes, cilantro, onions, plantain and yuka... I grow most of them, and the food is fresh. Yeah, one is healthier this way too. They have taught us to use the minimal amount of insecticides... all those poisons and things that kill us.

I visited Jose_08's farm and he showed me many of the innovative techniques he has introduced into his farming practice, including further experimentation with multicropping with different crops (further to what the SAT texts had introduced him to), a variety of organic pesticide practices such as using decaying plantain husks around the base of plantain trees to deter one particularly harmful insect, known as "pucudos" from attacking young plantain trees. Jose_12 and Jose_13, both young and enthusiastic graduates in their early 30's also showed me an exciting investment they have recently started together using various multicropping techniques that they too are experimenting with, such as avocado. They have also been experimenting with various planting techniques they have come up with such as breeding more productive seedlings from having planted two plantain trees in the same hole. Like Jose_08, they are also carrying out pesticide techniques but by making small dissections into the side of the plantain tree and then cutting small incisions into the side of the trees and visiting the trees and removing the insects that cluster there. They also explained the joy that it brings them to share the insights from their experiments with current SAT groups that often come to visit and learn on their farm (see Appendix 5 for a summary of other innovations).

Similar accounts were told by several other interviewees of how individuals diversified their crops, as well as their livelihoods, to increase yields and augment incomes; others spoke of systematically experimenting with simple techniques that took advantage of local materials to substitute for harmful chemical pesticides. In Apia, some of the graduates of the SAT had created very effective and simple techniques for pest control and had shared

these techniques with other SAT groups and with other farmers, thereby helping reduce the amount of fertilizer inputs used in the region.

Interestingly, this tendency towards initiative and innovation did not direct the graduates towards a heightened sense of working alone and vying with their peers in their studies and practices. Almost all of the interviewees, in fact, spoke of the contrary, where the level of comradery and collaboration among the members of their SAT group was reinforced and encouraged initiative. Jose_10 points out,

Even though I lived on a farm and we carried out the different farm activities, we went in a group to prepare the soil, to turn it over in order to plant; it was different, because there was so much excitement in the group, so we carried out these activities, of practices. The relationship was one of friends, a relationship that was generated out of companionship, of comradery. There wasn't the same sense of competition in the regular schools, like a desire to be better than the other. Between all of us we tried to help each other and make sure we would all learn that we would all progress.

Nor was the sense of self-sufficiency that interviewees spoke about a desire to be independent and isolated, nor to focus exclusively or firstly on self-improvement. Jose_10 explained that his desire to take initiative and discover solutions came, not from a desire to simply take care of oneself, but from working in the first instance towards establishing unity in the community: "a united community will progress much faster than people working in an isolated fashion.... Each one of us became a leader to help bring the communities together; it's the opportunity for the society overall to become organized and to progress".

The interviewees almost unanimously defined the purpose of SAT as being about helping make rural communities self-sufficient and not dependent on urban areas. What emerges in their accounts is not a romantic image of the isolated village cut-off from the world around it, but one where youth no longer are compelled to leave the rural areas to

study or find work in factories, where farmers also grow their own produce through home gardening to avoid paying high costs for food staples in the urban supermarkets, and where the community had determine the path of its development. Jose_04 who now works as a councillor for the municipality of Perreira described the purpose of SAT in this way:

"As I have always said, wherever I am, wherever I'll go, I will always recognize that the SAT experience is what really marked my life and my future directive in what I was going to do, it was a very big experience and strengthened my community leadership skills, my feeling of belonging, and especially in terms of staying in the place where I have always belonged, which is in the countryside, because the program offered those options, and that the country people should be self-sufficient and stay in that region, there shouldn't be that migration from the country to the city. And so one can strengthen oneself with knowledge and contribute to the strengthening of the farming regions of the rural areas.

A few other graduates spoke about this sense of self-sufficiency in terms of a resolve and a capacity to seek out what is needed in one's community, and then to be able to help the community to obtain or realize those needs. Jose_05 explained that this sense of being anxiously concerned for the needs of others stems from a sort of authenticity, wherein a person responds out of compassion and empathy for having felt what it is that the community is suffering from, as opposed to knowing a need from outside a community in need. Others describe this capacity within individuals as an ability to draw upon inner resources and bring out the innate potential of the individual, rather than posture oneself as an empty vessel in need of the rescue of experts and to rely on handouts.

Jose_10's endeavour to also start a coffee-roasting enterprise is another example of his and others' efforts at creating less community dependency on the dictates of market forces outside the community. What is fascinating about this example is that not a single farmer I spoke with in all of Risaralda knew how to roast their own coffee beans, nor have

there ever been roasteries in Colombia. All growers in Risaralda, and elsewhere in the coffee growing regions of Colombia, are thus forced to sell their beans to the Coffee Growers' Federation at prices, in large part, set by multinational corporations and the Federation. Not surprisingly then, the price their coffee beans will sell for in North American and European Markets is marked up by over 200 per cent. More shocking is that Colombians, in turn, buy their coffee back from corporations like Nescafe at these inflated prices. Jose_10 was one individual for whom the SAT helped develop the capacity to see injustice in at the level of structural and social inequalities and to be able to respond by searching for alternatives. Andrea_01 spoke to this theme in this way:

A prosperous community, well let's see. Well in the village, that maybe that you wouldn't have to leave the countryside in order to be able to get what they need. So that everything would be there, not *everything*, but so that they wouldn't have to travel so much, and change their habits in the countryside for other things. That's what I see that would be very good for the people.

Another interesting example of the emphasis on self-sufficiency that students demonstrated was evidenced by a proposal put forward by a SAT group in response to a regional contest. In one of the rural regions of Risaralda, an NGO put out a call to high schools across the region for formal proposals addressing one of the problems in the region and a student-inspired response to the problem. In contrast to proposals put forward by other groups dealing with issues common to youth, such as drug abuse and violence, the proposal put forward by a SAT group was unlike any of the other proposals in that it did not deal with the usual issues relating to young people. Their proposal analysed and put forward a solution to one of the most complex and significant problems facing rural communities where, in the absence of appropriate structures, small farmers often have no choice but to sell to 'middle

men' to transport their agricultural goods, at prices they would dictate. The proposal put forward a plan for the creation of local co-operatives run and controlled by the farmers in the rural communities, in order to help control otherwise-inflated costs dictated by intermediaries. Their proposal included specific steps in how the cooperatives were to be initially developed and organized and a feasibility study indicating the economic and other benefits for rural farmers. The SAT group won the prize with its proposal, and the money from the prize is now being allocated towards implementing this plan in Risaralda.

Confidence and Determination

The common experience of discrimination and prejudice leaves many unconsciously internalizing the inferiority and lack of self-worth they are stigmatized with. All the interviewees demonstrated and their accounts seem to affirm their sense of self-confidence and comfort with themselves after having studied in the SAT programme. Andrea_15 said it this way: "We have always been country people. Even though we have worked in the city, at heart we are country people".

This sense of pride about being from the rural area was found across all the interviews. It was often with great joy that each interviewee would assert that they were *campesino*. Most of the interviewees began their respective interview by identifying themselves as being proudly from the rural areas, and would refer back to their love for the rural area several times throughout the interview. Jose_04, a SAT graduate who is now working as a Councilor with the Municipal Council of Perreira, felt very strongly about his sense of rural identity, which he indicated was developed through the SAT programme:

Look, as I have always said, wherever I am, wherever I'll go, I will always recognize that the SAT experience is what really marked my life and my future directive in what I was going to do. It was a very big experience and it strengthened my community leadership skills, my feeling of belonging, and especially in terms of staying in the place where I have always belonged, which is in the countryside, because the programme offered those options, so that the country people should be self-sufficient and stay in that region.

Roberta_04 is a young woman who was raised and continues to live in the rural area, working as a community leader and a tutor of the SAT programme:

The most common way for people of the urban areas to view the campesino is to look at them very much below [themselves].... In a few words, they don't value the countryside or the country people who live there; even still today this is the case! They think that, just because one is a teacher one should be in the city and that the more studies one has you should go to the cities, and they don't understand that one has a function, a social role, that one receives a training with the specific goal of serving these communities and so one would rather be in these areas. And so they see me today picking or harvesting coffee on the farm, and some of them wonder why, 'you have studied so much and you're still picking coffee, working on the farm!?' Those educational systems [of the urban areas] don't have the purpose of helping one carry out one's functions in one's environment, and instead they teach one to abandon that place.

Spirituality and Human Development

Another broad theme weaving through all of the interviews was that of spirituality and the development of the 'whole' person. Interviewees all addressed this theme, and did so in very non-partisan terms. They highlighted the integrated nature of the SAT programme in combining practical training with an emphasis on the development of attitudes, spiritual qualities and moral commitments. They also often spoke about it in terms of their vision of community development. Andrea_02 discussed her understanding of the value of education in this way: "the SAT programme is like a good, hmm, its like a better teaching, its like the best teaching that one, as a human being, could have, or expect to have; and it really helps

one to grow as a person and to value oneself, and to learn about and to have greater knowledge about what is going on in the world around us".

Jose_13 spoke about spirituality further and related it to the transformation in his own personal life which led to finding meaning and purpose. What is interesting is that in discovering a deeper sense of his own value and purpose in life, he saw value and commonality in others:

Spirituality? Yes, sure! It's something fundamental! If you are not strong spiritually you will not get anywhere--at least nowhere good. Even though spirituality was not related to religion in the programme..., you see it in every lesson, in every text, you find it implied in every system. It is there very strong! I will speak about myself. When I started the programme I felt that I wasn't doing anything in life, that life didn't have much meaning. I couldn't find why it was that I was here. And during the process I realized that every human being is important, and every human is necessary; every human being has something to contribute. And nowadays I see life in a different color.

Andrea_02 similarly related her experience of spirituality in the context of her valuation of and ability to relate to other people:

Spirituality influences a lot one's personal growth because it helps one value oneself more and to value other people too, and to grow as a person. In the same way that one starts to value oneself more, and to have a greater sense of self-worth, likewise one sees the same in other people, and it helps one in the interchange of ideas, and it also helps one understand better the spiritual part of things. Spiritual is also the qualities that each person has, like respect, conversation, love between all of us, and responsibility; and these really drove us into responsibility.

In a similar way, Andrea_06 also described spirituality not as an isolated domain of the self but as a relational act. She discussed spirituality as the things given to and done for others, as well as the values and principles that govern our lives, whereas, Andrea_07 explained spirituality more in motivational terms, in "want[ing] to participate in activities, in

helping the community progress. And everything that's related to the progress of the community". She continued by explaining that spirituality has to do with seeing "the spiritual part of each one, the intellect of each person, the relationship between people, how they get along, and the value we assign ourselves in relationship to other people". Jose_05 summed up the emphasis on the valuation of others in SAT in these words, "SAT taught me to how to value people; nursing taught me skills". Jose_11 spoke further on the two of these aspects of spirituality that many interviewees addressed, namely that of spiritual qualities and principles and of motivations around participation in the community:

Spirituality has to do with the principles, with respect and tolerance; those things are part of a spiritual being. So, if you take spirituality into account, it will help you do things better in terms of the well-being of the community and not just of your own. I am going to give you an example. I like to participate a lot in the activities of the community, I am currently the treasurer of the Committee of Communal Action. I am the treasurer and I like to be part of those things. For me if they do an activity I will go, collaborating, collaborating, collaborating. So how does spirituality fit in there? I collaborate not with the intention to wait to be thanked, nor to be outstanding, but rather to feel happy that other people are happy.

Many interviewees related spirituality to the idea of developing the whole human being, through education, and, more broadly, as an approach to developing oneself throughout life. Jose_11 recounts what this attention to the whole meant in the SAT programme:

For me 'integratedness' is that many things are linked. In the Post Primaria⁴ they teach different [subject areas] and these are separated from each other,

⁴ Post-Primaria is another recent educational programme available in rural areas as an alternative primary schooling option.

while in the SAT programme, in one course, you will also learn about a different course, they complement each other! (pause) Another thing about the SAT programme is that the vision and its main approach are about principles and the human part of the person. Looking at how the education of this country is, I think that this is the most important thing. It is very important, because the essential thing is not that a person is trained by only gaining knowledge, but that one is taught how, hmm, how would I say that (pause), for example that both things complement. It is important that the human part is above the other. That is important. For example if they teach you a course and fill you with knowledge, but if you only study just to study, when you have the chance to approach the community you will not be with that community to really help, but will be there only for personal satisfaction.

When interviewees spoke about their understanding of 'human development' they often qualified their statements by comparing a developmental model of 'filling up' the individual to that of bringing out the potential of the individual. Jose_13 described it this way: "For me the purpose of the SAT program is not to take a human being and fill him or her up, like a boat, with knowledge, it is to train human beings. And that it should be useful first of all for yourself and to serve the community". Diego_01 explained, "everything that we learnt there, whether about love or justice, and the values, that was what really inspired us, it gave a greater sense of purpose to what we were doing. For me the spiritual part is something that was very present, very much there".

Creating New Identities

Several interviewees spoke of not having thought much of themselves before joining the SAT programme, nor had much sense of their own goals and hopes. Interestingly, however, interviewees often found a sense of themselves and a sense of their purpose as they began participating in the community. Rather than the experience of one who 'loses'

themselves in the community or in social movements, these individuals speak of a heightened sense of knowing themselves, but in relation often, to others and their social purpose.

While questions in the interview guide did not address themes around gender and culture specifically, nonetheless, there are a number of important insights that arise indirectly in the data in these areas. One of the more obvious points that appeared was that comfort and openness with which many male respondents in the study spoke about the importance of relating to and caring for others and the community. There was also considerable emphasis made by male respondents as well on the value of family and strengthening family as part of bringing about community development. This contrasts significantly with the conventions of a strongly machissimo culture where men have little, if anything, to do with family and community needs. It is also telling that the most common activities that SAT groups began were those relating to the education of children and community health, activities about which male respondents spoke enthusiastically. Several male interviewees also continued on, after graduating from SAT, to work professionally in areas such as health promotion and education, again, which contrast sharply with Colombian cultural norms which tend to assign such positions to women. By way of example, Jose_05 studied to become a nurse and continues, after ten years of work in this area, to feel a strong sense of 'calling' in this line of work. Jose_11 and Jose_12 after their experience with SAT have continued on in their communities to become very involved in the education of children. Likewise, Jose_14 who received a governor's scholarship after graduating from SAT to study music spoke to me about his efforts at beginning a music school for children in his village. In a similar way, several female respondents, including Andrea_03, Andrea_06 and Andrea_07, spoke about

their involvement as elected members of village councils, which traditionally tends to be reserved for men.

Integration and Holistic Thinking

For many, such as Jose_05, the integration of traditional subjects such as science and philosophy, or community health and language skills helped develop the ability to think more holistically about community development and individual development. Jose_05 explained how this ability helped me also approach problems more holistically in his practice as healthcare professional: “in healthcare one has to think not just of a patient but of the entire family, since a sick person is affecting their family as well in many ways, and may infect others; one has to treat the whole”. Others spoke about integration and wholeness in terms of connecting different parts of human wellbeing and development such as physical wellbeing and spiritual growth. Jose_13 discussed integration in terms of how he saw spirituality within the SAT programme: “In the program you see it in every lesson, in every text, you find it implied in every system. It is there very strong”.

This ability to think holistically seemed to reinforce a vision of integrated development that all interviewees spoke of in one way or another. Diego_01 pointed out, “we were learning to learn; we learnt that development is much more than physical things; it is about integral development of all parts of the individual and the community. This contact with the spiritual, we felt that one had to be a person before anything else in life, and that is what the SAT gave, it integrated the physical part and the human part of society. And that was the direction we were going, to educate ourselves about both of these things. And this is not what I read, but what I felt in the programme”. Similarly, Diego_02 explained:

SAT promotes integrated development..... I learnt that life is much more than material things, and that development is much more than just certain projects, more than physical things like bridges or houses. More than that, I learnt how to understand the world around me in which I live. For example when I work with students now, I think of them more as people who are worth a whole lot, who can be much better if one can do the best one can as an educator. We have to think much more than just what grade they will get. One has to help them develop their capacities, to help them learn *to learn!* These are the things SAT has taught me. So SAT allows one to acquire a critical mentality which helps you to see and understand all the social problems that exist in the world, and so one begins to ask oneself what can one do to contribute to better the existing conditions. And so it is from there that integratedness has a lot of meaning, not to see everything as fragments, but to see things holistically.

A Nucleus for Social Engagement & Transformation

The accounts included above about the nature of the transformative process that graduates experienced in SAT would be misleading without also addressing the context within which their stories took place, namely in the context of the SAT group. Here again, the interviewees were unanimous in their assertions that their SAT groups had been extremely instrumental to the changes they experienced. Indeed, several interviewees, both male and female respondents, became very emotional and shared their tears when recounting their memories of the love and strong ties of companionship they remembered from their six or so years of growing and learning together within their SAT group. Diego_01 described the SAT group he participated in this way:

“We were like a family, we were very happy; a group like that one will never be again! We all missed each other very much, we loved each other, and we served one another, or rather, serving one another is what kept us happy. When somebody wouldn't bring their lunch, every one of the other students would share a small portion of their own to the person who didn't bring theirs. And the person who didn't bring lunch would end up eating more than everybody else! It was a great group for real.

The role of the tutor, far from the traditional model of the teacher that knows more and wields arbitrary power over students, was instrumental in fostering this learning environment that the interviewees described. Andrea_07 described her SAT group in this way:

The relationship between the tutors and students was very good; there was a lot of trust, a lot of respect and friendship. And because all of us have always lived here and the teachers have always lived around here there has always been a friend [in the tutor]. Maybe during class we look at him as a teacher, but outside, we always look at him as more than a teacher. With him, we will always find a friend, and if you need to talk to somebody you can always talk to him, because he isn't just limited to just carrying out his teaching duties. He accepts us as friends, as classmates, as people. So in that sense he is much more than a teacher.

Jose_05 also spoke strongly about the positive force that the tutor provided in encouraging self-directed learning and empowering the students:

We had a tutor who is definitely excellent, a tutor who showed that he understood the programme... He let one, let us, think about or analyse a text, that we should share our ideas of what we thought the text meant. He never told us, 'no that's wrong'; he would listen to the students and if one said one idea and another [student said] another idea, for him all those ideas were good. Unfortunately this tutor was sent to another place, but he left us with those foundations; he left us with those teachings as to how we could carry out this work.

Jose_12 went further to explain how the dynamics within the group and the learning approach in which everyone participated and sought to share insights into the material being studied encouraged a more circular form of study than a top-down teacher-student form:

The big difference is that in other programmes the teacher is just there, making you be afraid of him, while in the SAT no, you have there a friend, a partner, and they convey the idea that they too are also learning from you. It isn't like a box of information, from which you take. It is shared. The learning is shared. While in others, you notice that, no, the teacher is there, and has something to be said and so learn it.

It was within such learning environments where students were encouraged to question and to find answers by themselves and together with fellow students that trust and support came to characterize the space within which students could build new attitudes, concepts, commitments, skills and spiritual qualities. In such an environment new habits and patterns seemed to emerge. Andrea_06 explains how in the climate created in her group, service to and helping others became a very natural and joyous impulse: "Most of the practices we did because the text required them, but there were a number of activities that one carried out outside of the SAT programme, things that we came up with through creativity or a desire to help. In my group, we were all good at that. In our group we would think, 'how cool!?' to be able to help people"

Jose_10 also elaborated on the 'culture' that was beginning to emerge in his group and how unique an experience it seemed for him:

Well, what we had were different activities like the home gardens. The study was very dynamic; we studied; we did sports, carried out the practices with the different crops and the whole system... in the group, we went to prepare the soil, to turn it over in order to plant, it was different, because there was so much excitement in the group... The relationship was one of friends; a relationship was generated of companionship, of comradeship, there wasn't the same sense of competition in the regular schools, like a desire to be better than the other, but between all of us we tried to help each other and make sure we would all learn, that we would all progress and understand the themes. In both groups where I studied the Promoter and where I studied the Bachiller we really had a lot of comradeship.

When Jose_14 was asked how he would describe the changes in his SAT group and their involvement in the community over time he explained that the only thing that had changed was the degree of organization and planning of the activities and more importantly,

as the group evolved, its service to the community "wasn't just because the text gave us work to do, it was something that we really wanted to do. So, we didn't see it as academic work but as a social responsibility". Others similarly spoke about this change in the group as service and social engagement became the natural outcome of their learning and enthusiasm.

Engaging Community

The SAT group itself appears to have become an important, yet bourgeoning new institution in the community in bringing about important change. One of the first activities that most interviewees reported their SAT groups as having taken on were around trying to establish regular community meetings and strengthening or re-establishing the *juntas* or village councils in each community as Andrea_06 pointed out, in order to create a space where the entire community could participate in decision making about issues and search for appropriate responses. The evolution of the SAT groups' relationships with these village councils over the span of the programme was often such that the council would come to call upon the SAT group for its input into difficult matters or to offer help with a project it wished to carry out. Many students also became elected members of these village councils and helped infuse them with many of the skills and insights into community organization that they were learning.

Jose_13 explained that the initiatives the SAT group would carry out were not random activities nor pet projects of the group or the tutor, but rather that the group would begin by learning to truly listen to the needs, challenges and aspirations of the community:

You learn to listen, first of all to listen, in the SAT programme, and to value the different opinions. So the opinion of any human being is important; and so that translated to the community, and it would make us strong. So the first thing we did was to listen to everybody [in the community], listen to their ideas and chat with them, to search the way to get closer, and truly it was possible to reach out to a lot of people... The people slowly understood and today we don't see any problems in the community. It's something that satisfies you, working with the people. Working for oneself doesn't make much sense to me.

Diego_03 described how the primary aim of his group's service to the community was to empower the community through educating it and allowing it thereby to be able to take ownership of the community's development:

Those of us who have had the fortune to participate in this educational process understand that individual and community growth are connected. In an erroneous way many have been led to believe that personal growth is that which allows one to enrich oneself in a very individualistic way, but on the contrary, for us [in SAT] personal growth is that which happens when one is able to share knowledge, and that's where it is reflected in the community. Those of us who are committed to the SAT, we always try to promote in the communities the importance of sharing knowledge.

The 'listening' that Diego_03 spoke about was echoed by several others, and the place that groups would often begin was in community meetings where the needs of the community would be heard or with door-to-door visits to community members with a broad survey. Based on what they learnt from the community, SAT groups would often consult together to creatively find solutions that responded to the community's needs, and then extend outwards to seek the resources, involvement and/or support needed to bring about change. Jose_05 described how this ability to engage institutions such as the regional health board or the municipal council for funds, changes in policies, or requests for specific services was not out of frustration nor expressed in a spirit of adversarialism and protest, but out of diplomacy, creativity and determination. He found this ability also relevant in his work

place; speaking about the denial of services the patients he worked with sometimes experience he explained,

They have faced difficulties with the system as it is, because we work indirectly with a service that the government offers. We are a private entity but we work for the government and I have become aware that no one should be limited of those things. NO. One can help more or go beyond what the law says; that is, one can help someone or serve them in a way that goes beyond that which the law gives them. There are many ways of obtaining benefits or services, *without* the need to have to sort of go against or affect the system.

Jose_05 recounts one of the service projects that his SAT group initiated. The sequence of steps that the group naturally took to evolve the project is similar to those described by other interviewees:

In our case we were able to assist in that [community water] aqueduct. The other thing that we did was to protect the shores alongside the river, the protection or conservation of this, the river banks, because the river was drying up. We helped build the fences to protect those riverbanks from indiscriminate tree cutting, along the river bank, because that was our water source, that aqueduct was our water source, and because the trees help conserve the waters, they protect the river banks; if there are no trees, there is no water. When a community doesn't understand that then they do these things unconsciously. [The request] came from the mayor's office... We thought it was the best way to help out the community at that time, because it was something that would bring benefits not only to one person but to the whole community, and not only for the present time but also for the future... The leaders of the community at that time came to our group and asked if we could lend a hand to that project... They had seen that we were becoming trained to be able to serve our community, so they were aware of that. They had watched us in the process. They had become aware because in our community, in that kind of community, people share all kinds of information... They realized there was a programme that was promoting, teaching the community to work for itself. First, the community leaders asked the mayor's office for that help with the resources, and then they came to ask us to help out with that project.

Jose_09 is a youth who joined SAT when he was 12. His recollection of his group's inquiry into the needs of the community and the corresponding service initiative offer

valuable insight into the process of social engagement that his group followed in their activities:

We would visit communities in which we would ask them what they needed, what was missing, what their needs were. So we visited a number of communities and we realized that one of the problems was that there weren't vaccinations—these rounds of vaccinations—so through using a health-providing institution, we were able to carry out these vaccinations... The members of the group visited the communities to tell people that on such and such a day there would be vaccinations available, and as such that all the community [members] should go there. And so this is the way the community could all attend that day and have that opportunity to take advantage of vaccination rounds. We had good results: most of the community attended. Whatever was possible was achieved there. [The community] responded quite well because, due to the attendance that resulted from this, they were very grateful for us.

What Jose_09 went on to explain was that his group, made up of several other youth like himself, had to approach government institutions such as the regional health authority to inquire and request services. In this case, the group offered to organize the community and arrange for the venue if the health authority could provide a public health nurse to visit the community on a specific day to carry out the vaccinations. What is more insightful, perhaps, is that from the success of this initiative, the village council has since established a formalized programme of community vaccinations through a public health nurse that visits the community on a regular basis.

Other examples of projects started by interviewees include the building of bridges, community aqueducts; the restoration of schools and community centres; holding cultural enrichment activities and festivities; the creation of home and community gardens; and the introduction of educational and literacy programmes for children. One further initiative that stands out was Jose_04's role in establishing the first Association of Rural Communities in

Risaralda. After having consulted with many villages in the region he realized that the marginalization of rural communities was maintained due, in part, to the fact that an association for urban areas existed though no administrative structure for rural communities was in place.

Motivations, Service and Blending Wills

The concept of 'service' that Jose_05 speaks of is far from simplistic acts of menial labour; the projects that SAT groups often would initiate were intimately connected to the needs of their communities and would often grow with complexity over time and frequently contribute to permanent changes in the community. Furthermore, several interviewees spoke of 'service' not simply as non-remunerated work. When Jose_05 was asked how he served his community outside of his profession he explained, "my work *is* my full time service; I don't do much voluntarily, but this work is where I have an influence every day. For me, being involved and trying to help the community to progress is something that is something that is born in one". The accounts of the interviewees conveyed service more as a condition or an attitude of selflessly and joyfully endeavouring to benefit others. Diego_01's words describing his aspirations to serve his community are fitting: "The second thing is to be someone who is very transparent and that is something that SAT gives you. The truth is that I feel very proud for having participated in SAT, and for being in these rural communities and being able to serve them. And I really feel that what I am able to do is very little; and there is a lot to do!" Evident in both of the above excerpts is a humility and a blending of the personal and a collective will and joy. Indeed, one of the most challenging aspects of the

thesis has been the inadequacy of words to convey the expressions and emotions in the faces of each interviewee as they spoke glowingly about their involvement in the community.

Summary

This chapter sought to present and weave together a number of related themes that emerged in the data broadly around the categories of education, transformation and development. These accounts and the examples interviewees offer from their lived experiences speak of a conception of the individual and the society that is a single whole. The challenge which this chapter attempted to deal with is to treat the many themes and characteristics of this conceptual framework in a way that respects this 'whole' without fragmenting the ideas and forcing upon them a narrow scheme. A number of related themes emerged in the data which have been presented above. They include agency and self-sufficiency, initiative and innovation, confidence and determination, spirituality and human development, and an integrated vision of development.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

From the themes introduced in the previous chapter, a number of valuable insights can be drawn about personal and social transformation, alternative conceptions of development, and the actors involved in rural development. This chapter discusses and analyses some of these insights and their relation to the field, and examines them in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter Three of the thesis. The chapter proceeds by organizing many of the themes touched on in the previous chapter into broader themes. While this serves as the most appropriate way of synthesizing and presenting to the reader the findings of the research, these themes appear to be strongly related and connected with each other, and can be regarded as equally essential and significant for the research topic.

Insights into Transformation

Conceptions of Transformation

One of the most deceptively simple insights that became apparent through this research was that ideas can be revolutionary. Kant, among other writers throughout history, have similarly written about the power of ideas to change the direction of civilizations, arguing that history can be interpreted in terms of the evolution of certain concepts which found expression in attitudes, institutions, social structures, and patterns of social behaviour (Lample, 1999). An example of the power of a common conceptual framework or unity of thought has shown itself in scientific research as with the experiment carried out in 1993 in

which 4,000 people from around the world converged in Washington to carry out a collective meditation focussed on lowering crime rates in the city over a two-month period. The result of the experiment showed a significant decrease in crime rates.

What seems to lie at the heart of the transformation that SAT graduates described is the powerful influence that certain concepts and principles found in the SAT programme have had. A number of these concepts are taken up in the sections that follow in this chapter.

While every one of the interviewees spoke of profound changes they experienced over the many years of participating in the SAT programme, what are most insightful perhaps, are their descriptions about the nature of this process of change. Whereas for Mezirow (1991), who endorses Keane's model of a four-stage transformation, transformation is conceived of as a time-bound experience characterized primarily by conflict and resolution of that conflict, as individuals integrate and then reconcile the changes they experience. This model seems much akin to the conventional narrative structure in Western literary conventions which has often been criticized for its androcentric bias (Brill de Ramírez, 1999). What the SAT graduates of Risaralda described in terms of transformation is more appropriately described as a continual process of "becoming" and unfolding, which is not a time-bound experience.

Indeed, several interviewees, when asked about the changes they experienced, insisted that it was not so much about changing, as it was about 'becoming' and bringing out what was inherent and which had been hidden within themselves, or as developing seeds that were laying dormant within them. Two of the interviewees (both male respondents) described the changes they experienced through SAT with terms relating to 'birthing' to explain how certain commitments and convictions were 'born' out of them. Interviewees

explained that the SAT programme is guided by a firm belief in the inherent potentiality of the individual. One of the metaphors used in their textbooks that a few of the interviewees would use to describe their experience is that of the individual being akin to a mine full of valuable gems and resources, whose worth is often unknown and unsuspected, and which becomes apparent through an educational process that brings out these gems.

Nor did their experiences seem as succinctly time-bound with a neat beginning and ending as Keane's model would suggest. Many of them described themselves as having shifted from a state of being 'asleep' or unaware of their potential and their purpose, and, having discovered these things, continue to remain in a permanent posture of developing, discovering and 'becoming'.

Transformation among Youth and Junior Youth

While in the international development arena attention is almost exclusively given to the extension of primary education to children, on the one hand, and vocational and non-formal training for adults, very little attention is consequently paid to that group between children and adults, namely pre-youth or junior youth (ages 12 to 15) and youth (ages 15 to early 20's). Particularly is this the case for the pre-youth group, a group for which the terms and the parameters to describe it are not used with any consistency internationally. The United Nations Population Fund, for example, lumps these two groups together under the term "adolescent" (ages 10 to 19). Other UN agencies likewise often use a single descriptor to refer to the entire period of youth.

Adult Education likewise has sprung up as a separate field with pedagogies, content, and contexts of learning that are assumed to be uniquely specific to adults. Experiential and

self-directed approaches to learning are assumably only appropriate for adults, with the corollary assumption that banking approaches to education are still adequate for children. FUNDAEC, in speaking about this point, explained that the educational methodology and the content generated over decades of research in communities are not intended for adults or for youth per se. It regards its approach to education as being the same for both groups. It believes that the building of capacity should be the concern of education at all levels, albeit with special attention to the exigencies of specific periods of maturation. FUNDAEC asserts that pre-youth and youth have equally the capability to take charge of their own learning, and indeed, only a self-directed learning approach among this age group will allow concepts and attitudes to be fully integrated. While more extensive future evaluations will need to consider the question more thoroughly, the data from this research do not show any clear distinction between interviewees who entered the programme as pre-youth (12 to 15 years of age) compared to those who entered as young adults (between 21 and 30 years of age), in terms of the depth of change and transformation experienced.

Further, FUNDAEC points out that its programmes give particular attention to the junior youth and youth populations, so often ignored by most development agendas, because of the potentialities inherent in this group to learn and integrate new patterns of thought and action. What the data in this study suggests in this regard are the perhaps unsuspected possibilities of working with these populations whose ability to change and transform has been demonstrated in the study. What has often been undetected in the literatures around Transformative Learning is that junior youth and youth, unlike adult populations, are moving through periods of life and maturation that are highly transformative, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, where new attitudes, postures, worldviews and commitments are

being discovered and established. Why, then, the domain of Transformative Learning would ignore such a group in a narrow restriction to an adult population whose assumptions, worldviews and commitments are far more embedded and rigidly established. Whereas for adults, new concepts are often acquired through association with previous experience, junior youth and youth are often able to grasp entirely new concepts for which they have no prior experience much more readily. Transformative Learning, having largely grown out of Experiential Learning has assumed that transformation necessarily can only take place through a process of relating new ideas to past experiences and thereby making new meaning schemes (Mezirow, 1991). The type of transformation that is emerging within SAT groups, however, seems to not simply be about reconsidering past experiences. Indeed, that for this younger cohort, the introduction of every new idea does not bring to the fore every past experience in trying to struggle to make sense of the idea in question may actually be far more facilitative of transformation. SAT, then, seems to expose many young people to many new concepts and ideas during a time in their lives when they naturally are undergoing profound changes towards maturation.

Intersections of Transformation

In the literature reviewed in Chapter two what was evident was the polarisation of theoretical approaches taken by the Mezirownian and Freirean schools of thought respectively. That review tried to point out how each approach accordingly seemed to fragment social reality into hierarchical arrangements in which either individuals or social forces ultimately trump the other in being the final arbiter of change in society. Before entering the field my own understanding of this question was that for the SAT graduates

these two opposite entities were likely more interactive than the competition set up by the current theoretical approaches. What I had not suspected was that, for the SAT graduates, these two are in fact more appropriately described as extensions of one and the same reality; they are not two entirely opposing entities that they were able to somehow reconcile in their views. The accounts of the interviewees suggest that there is a far greater fluidity between the individual and society than the literature I reviewed had considered and than I had anticipated. The only analogy that could appropriately describe this fluidity was that of drops and waves⁵, which one of the interviewees spoke about. With drops of water, the demarcation between the behaviour and characteristics of a single drop and a structure of many drops, and further, an entire body of water or a wave is an extremely difficult one to make. Further, with the analogy of drops, there is a beautiful way that liquids 'merge' into and become new larger clusters that resemble simply a larger drop.

This insight about the fluidity of graduates' relation to and position in the community suggests that the Freirean and Mezirownian models which hold individuals and society as diametrically opposed, and forever contending entities find relevance for understanding the experience of the SAT graduates in Risaralda. Maslow's description of individuals in his highest bracket, self-actualizers, quoted in Chapter two, further reinforced this notion. He described them almost as having 'transcended' what are assumed to be the lower needs of belonging (to a community), and as having risen to such heights that are "less moulded by their social environment and are more spontaneous, free and natural" (2000: 52). The implication of course is that the social environment, along the Rousseau's line of thinking, is

⁵ The title of the thesis is a reference to this analogy

a sort of vice that inhibits the full expression and liberty of the individual, creating conformity, restriction and unnaturalness. The diametrical construct of the individual and society certainly still holds considerable currency in contemporary literature, particularly in the Transformative Learning literature. Tennant (2005) tries to distil the common conceptions about self and identity in relation to society in the literature of Transformative Learning. He summarizes the following five categories of self: the authentic self, which is define as an original “unique” self “which stands against an unauthentic self distorted by social forces”; a repressed self, in which one is “dependent on social life to fulfil our needs... On the other, ordered social life necessarily constrains our basic instinctual needs, which are essentially antisocial. In this way, our instinctual needs are repressed and the external conflict between the person and society becomes internalised as psychological conflict”; an autonomous self, which is characterized by agency and “stands in contrast to the automation who simply acts out prescribed behaviours and social roles”; a storied self, which is defined as a self that chooses to construct and evolve itself over time; and an entangled self, that is “inextricably enmeshed in relationships with significant others”, and which thus takes on multiple identities (p. 3-6). What runs across all of the identities that Tennant summarizes is a set of fundamental assumptions about the relationship between the individual and society. As Tennant confesses a certain conflict is assumed to be inevitable, and the instinctual ‘nature’ of the individual is accepted as being antisocial.

For SAT graduates, however, such a model with its Eurocentric assumptions about the individual and society is not a useful construct to understand or measure their transformative experiences. The fluidity between the individual and the community operate can be understood in at least five ways, namely, at the level of identity; in terms of parallel

characteristics and qualities they perceived for the individual and the community; and in the relational nature of many conventional individual qualities.

One of the most immediate areas where this was apparent was in terms of the sense of identity embedded in the descriptions and language used by the interviewees. By way of example, the pronouns that conventionally distinguish the isolated self from 'others' and from the community seemed to blur often in their accounts. In one instance when one of the graduates was asked why he would voluntarily (and after having finished the SAT programme) go to a nearby camp for internally displaced persons and help out families in need several times each week, he replied immediately and almost confused by the question, "because it hurts us. When I see them I see myself". Others similarly spoke about the joy of the community as their own joy, and their own growth as part of the overall growth of their community, in the interchange of singular and plural pronouns.

The sense of fluidity between the self and others appears to be strengthened by a spiritual concept embedded in the SAT textbooks, in which the human soul is fundamentally a reflection of a Divine Being and as such, our own innermost reality is simply a glimmer of that same reality in others. This, of course, is a theme that finds its basis in every major religious system. In Hinduism, for example, there are numerous references that suggest that inner peace is associated with seeing Divinity in all beings, such as the following which describes a level of enlightenment that individuals should strive for: "He so vowed, so blended, sees the Life-Soul resident in all things living, and all living things In that Life-Soul contained. And whoso thus discerneth Me in all, and all in Me, I never let him go; nor looseneth he hold upon Me; but, dwell he where he may, whate'er his life, in Me he dwells and lives, because he knows and worships Me, who dwell in all which lives, and

cleaves to Me in all" (Arnold & NetLibrary Inc.: ch. 6). Similar expressions and references can be found in Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and the Bahá'í Faith. Jose_13 in a similar way had spoken about finding his own sense of purpose and spirituality had allowed me to learn to value and find this commonality in others.

Secondly, many of the characteristics that the SAT graduates also highlighted as being important in their own development they also stressed for the community's development, such as self-sufficiency, self-determination, holistic and integral development, unity, the ability to innovate, and joy and happiness. Whereas many of the characteristics that SAT graduates used to describe themselves and an ideal community participant were the same for how they described the community they are working to build, in Western models such as that of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, discussed above, the descriptions of the individual and the community are not synonymous at all. While individuals aspire to be free, natural, unaffected by others, and spontaneous, the community is described as restrictive, cultured, homogenizing, controlling and orderly.

A third way in which the fluidity between the individual and the society can be understood is in terms of the relational nature of traditionally individual characteristics and domains. Many of the capacities and characteristics that the SAT graduates sought to develop were relational in nature, insofar as they found expression through engagement with others or the community. It was not that graduates saw the SAT programme as helping to improve themselves and that after they had benefited they would then give back something in return to the community. The way they approached learning was as if many of the capacities and qualities they were developing could only be developed in relation to others and/or through engagement and service with others. For example, Diego_01 pointed out that the

first capacity that a SAT group develops is the capacity to consult openly in a group context. Consultation, a theme that the SAT textbooks give considerable attention to throughout the units, is understood as an essential and deceptively simple capacity that involves pursuing 'truth' within group discussion, the ability to put forward ideas and opinions without attachment or preference for personal opinion, and the ability to help foster agreement and consensus. Contrasted again against Maslownian and Mezirownian developmental models where individuals begin with personal improvement and then learn skills for relating to and working with others, the SAT groups begin, Diego_01 explains, because the ability to engage with others opens a door if you will, to that relational space within which the individual can begin to develop many other capacities and personal characteristics. More importantly, it helps to establish an attitude of truthfulness in students so that their focus is not on themselves and the advancement of their own opinions *per se*, but rather the pursuit of truth, which may be found in the most undetected places and voices. The ability for a SAT group to consult and come to agreement about ideas and projects also builds the capacities of both students and the group to foster unity.

A further example of this was the sense of confidence that seemed to imbue the interviewees. The confidence the graduates demonstrated seemed to stem from a confidence in their identity as *campesino* or villagers, and for being of their specific community. A sense of joy and pride came from knowing and being a part of the strengths and achievements they saw in their communities, as well as the strengths and potentialities found within themselves and their peers in the SAT programme.

As evident in the excerpts included in the section on spirituality in the previous chapter when most interviewees spoke about spirituality they described it in very relational

terms, as something experienced between individuals or within the community. This contrasts with the way spirituality is often described in adult education, transformative learning and development literatures respectively. Even where interconnectedness is acknowledged, such as by Miller (2002) and Palmer (1983), it is often done so still within a framework where individuals are separate and distinct entities from communities, even if the interrelatedness of their personal spiritual experiences is acknowledged. It is quite different to understand spirituality as being, by its nature, relational, as this almost necessitates another being to experience and/or grow spiritually with. Rahnema (1995), on the other hand, is one author who moves beyond general statements about interconnectedness and examines the relational aspects of spirituality. He speaks of spirituality in terms of the “art of listening to the world at large and within one, from the hegemony of a conditioned ‘me’ constantly interfering in the process; the ability to relate to others and to act, without any pre-defined plan or ulterior motives; and the perennial qualities of love, compassion and goodness which are under constant assault in economized societies” (130). For several other writers that discuss the topic, spirituality has to do with personal life stories, inner peace, contemplation, and personal values. By comparison, SAT graduates, when asked about spirituality described it in terms of motivation to help others, participation, social engagement, solutions to the issues of violence, as well as to contentment, and the development of spiritual qualities. However, when interviewees spoke about the development of spiritual qualities such as love, compassion, justice, truthfulness, kindness and humility, they often spoke about these, again, in very relational terms and in the context of service or working with others. They saw their involvement in the community as providing the context and selflessly helping others as the mode through which they could improve and develop themselves.

What is not addressed by Rahnema or others, however, is the role that the act of serving others plays in unifying the individual and the community. All of the interviewees unanimously spoke about the intense joy that they and their SAT groups derived from participating in service endeavours which had the aim of developing and advancing the community. The concept of “service”, in western discourse, unfortunately, has become associated with a form of economic activity, or as menial labour done out of correctional compulsion. The concept of service that SAT graduates speak about has more to do with the motivation behind social action, whether it takes place in non-remunerated or remunerated work. It is a spirit of “giving of oneself” as Diego_02 described it, of labouring with the interests and well-being of the community in mind. As noted in the previous chapter, some of the interviewees, such as Jose_05 regarded their remunerated work (in the health care sector) as service, since he sought it out as the work he thought would best benefit others.

It is in this context of service that the blending of wills and joys takes place, where individuals begin to regard the joy of smiling children involved in literacy groups (as recounted by Jose_03) as their own joy, and the feeling of empowerment of helping internally displaced single mothers obtaining access to services as their own empowerment. For many of the graduates it was through this form of service-oriented social action that they indicate they also discovered greater degrees of meaning and purpose in their lives. This is the seemingly paradoxical nature of service: that as individuals lay the needs and interests of others before them to take up in social action; they quite often find the deepest sense of their own fulfillment and discovery (as described by Jose_13's above).

A fourth perspective from which to consider the intersections between personal and social transformation in the SAT programme is in terms of the interactions between SAT

groups and the community through the service activities that group would initiate. Most interviewees explained that the experience of their SAT group when they first began an initiative in the community was caution, speculation and disinterest. Through perseverance and results from projects, SAT groups began to gain the respect, encouragement and enthusiasm of the community. What they then describe as unfolding was a very reciprocal engagement between their group and the community, in which the encouragement and appreciation of the community animated the group to endeavour to greater heights and to serve more ardently. In turn, the expansion and evolution of the group's activities, with heightened energy received even further appreciation and involvement from the community. All of the interviewees spoke about this dynamic between their group and the community. For most this relationship could almost be charted to show a sort of spiralling affect as the community's response went from disinterest and suspicion to wholehearted appreciation. In several instances interviewees spoke of how the village council would eventually begin approaching the SAT group requesting its help with difficult problems and issues.

A final way of discussing the nexus of personal and social transformation is to do so in terms of understanding interdependence and mutual reactions. This view is often one that is advanced by Ecosystems Health, Quantum Physics and other domains. Writers who do acknowledge some measure of interrelationship between the personal and the social in the literatures of Transformative Learning and development tend to do so from this perspective. Michael Dallaire (2001), for example, has written about interdependence in discussing the individual and the social: "Concurrent with the growing awareness of the need to free the inner person of internalized dualism there is also a growing awareness that our world is more interdependent than we ever imagined. As this consciousness grows we are coming to see

that 'the particular 'I' cannot have justice unless the other 'I' has justice'" (111). There are numerous insights from Quantum Physics that affirm this conception of oneness and interrelationality. A number of leading quantum physicists including David Bohm, Karl Pribram, Fritjof Capra, John Hagelin have contributed various insights in this respect.

Integrated Development

Capacity Building

The educational process that the SAT graduates seemed to describe was essentially a process of capacity building or capacity development; though many aspects of that process differ considerably from how capacity building is often discussed in the literature on the topic. Regrettably, like many themes in development, 'capacity building' has also become a catch phrase to describe almost any sort of development intervention. It is generally accepted, however, in the literature that the concept of a capacity refers to the practical development of sound inherent potential within individuals. More recently in the literature, capacity building has emphasized the capacities of institutions which may need to be strengthened. Capacity tends to refer to rather technical skill sets such as the capacity to carry out an experiment, the capacity to manage accounts related to a farm, or the capacity to work with others in a collaborative research enterprise. Within the SAT programme, however, capacity is something that is common to individuals, institutions and communities, and which is not limited to technical skill sets. FUNDAEC also speaks about the capacity to contribute to unity in a community, the capacity to participate selflessly in activities of the community, and the capacity to perceive and act against prejudice and social injustice. Thus, within the context of the SAT programme the range of capacities that participants are

expected to develop include a range of technical, moral, personal and social capacities. Furthermore, the concept of a capacity itself is understood as involving the development of skill sets, the comprehension of certain concepts, the acquisition of relevant attitudes and the fostering of certain spiritual qualities, whereas conventionally capacity building tends to highlight only skills, information and attitudes.

For the SAT graduates, 'capacity' seemed unmistakably inherent in people, and through training, they felt they had been able to crystallize those capacities in the form of particular capabilities. Several identified capacity with the immense wealth of potentialities of the human soul. Some of the analogies used by graduates to describe the process of capacity include the discovery and refinement of valuable minerals hidden within a mine, the experience of giving birth, and that of being asleep and waking up. Another analogy, though not used by the interviewees, but which finds resonance with the sacred texts of many religions including Islam, Hinduism and the Bahá'í Faith is that of the individual being akin to an atom, which when split (by the necessary means) can release immense and undetected powers. Long before the discovery of atomic energy, this analogy had been found within Islamic traditions and cited by many of its renowned poets. Similarly, in Islamic sacred traditions one also finds the following words, "Thinkest thyself a puny form when within thee the universe is folded?"⁶

This concept differs quite dramatically from conventional conceptions of the individual that tend to remain embedded in many development discourses. Among such conceptions is that of the individual as an empty slate or cup to be filled, often implicit in

⁶ From traditional accounts and attributed to Imam Ali, the cousin of Muhammad.

conventional banking education models of universal primary education that are being implemented wholesale around the world. Though less overtly, the conception underpins many development programmes which emphasize a narrow agenda of vocational upgrading, couched often in the language of 'information transfer' around skill sets exported from the North. Likewise, the concept of the individual somehow born in need of redemption and salvation, while socially discredited, all too often, can be found implicitly in methods and assumptions embedded in many development programmes which set up 'poor' farmers as suffering from the plight of poverty and in need of a sort of redemption from the blight of poverty and ignorance, without any attention to social forces and structural oppression.

By contrast, the concept of the individual as inherently full of immense potentiality, as being the real and primary resource of development seems to pervade the responses of the SAT graduates as well as the SAT textbooks; it is articulated within the SAT programme as a trust and confidence in the potential of rural individuals to learn far more than simplistic skills, and to become the owners of their own personal development and that of their communities.

Many of the interviewees spoke about their commitment to a lifelong process of learning and educating themselves. Some saw this learning as taking place through a posture of reflection on their activity and in their learning from other community members, while others, more specifically, expressed interest in and had already continued on to take advantage of further training in agricultural courses or other trainings made available from time to time. Interestingly, several also spoke of their firm conviction in the importance of education, and have dedicated themselves to continuing on in further educating the community, through the SAT programme and in non-formal methods. In their accounts, they

also seemed to hold to a conception of education in which they are in charge of their learning. Jose_09 explained, “SAT is practical; its human; its human development. It’s totally different in SAT. The SAT graduate has the vision; he or she is a visionary. The very fact that he can develop capabilities by him or herself makes this person very different because as a result, or through this means, it makes him able to overcome many obstacles, and they don’t face obstacles with fear. That’s where you see the difference. He or she learns to be independent, but not independent in a selfish way, but with propriety, to have one’s own set of criteria when judging things, and not to be manipulated by other peoples, and thus, this is a person who isn’t manipulatable...”.

Capacity building would also find greater resonance with peoples in many rural areas, and more importantly, tap into the deepest sources of motivation and potential if it were to be rooted in a conception of human nature as essentially spiritual and the human soul as the repository of great potential. In this context, capacity building thus becomes almost the very definition of development—the natural process of releasing this potential—rather than as a specialized model of development in vogue for the moment.

Participation

What seems implicit in the discussion above is that the concept of “participation” that holds currency in the literatures of rural development and capacity building seems inconsistent with the experience of SAT students. Far beyond mere involvement in the research experiments designed by researchers external to the community, for the interviewees participation in development meant taking ownership of the process of development in one’s community, and participating with the community in consulting on and deciding on the

direction of the development of the community. In this regard participation had much more to do with the relationship of the individual community member and the community, than with outsiders or experts and local individuals. For SAT students, participating in action meant engaging the community by listening to its needs and responding, with innovative projects and initiatives, to improve and advance the community.

Reconfiguring Roles in Rural Development

Three Protagonists of Rural Development

Up until recently, the fields of rural development and capacity building have tended to place considerable emphasis on the individual as the focus of its programmes, training and interventions. Little attention had traditionally been placed on the capacities of groups, institutions and communities. The individual farmer had long been singled out as the primary unit in such programmes. By comparison, what becomes evident by looking at the SAT programme, is that there is a re-conceiving of the primary protagonists of rural development as being three-fold: individuals, institutions, and communities. Each of these protagonists is regarded as equally important in terms of bringing about integral development and change, none are relegated to a secondary, consequential or subsequential place. In the graduates' accounts of what their SAT groups did and who was involved, it is clear that these three actors emerge equally and interactively in their descriptions of their projects and in terms of where they identify change as having taken place.

In reconsidering capacity building as being associated with the inherent nature of the individual, namely the process of releasing and training the inherent potentialities of individuals, institutions and communities, it becomes difficult to describe "development" as

something else, as something done to people, something that communities have once its individuals are improved; Jose_08 explained it thus, “SAT promotes integrated development... I learnt that life is much more than material things, and that development is much more than just certain projects, physical things like bridges or houses. More than that I learnt how to understand the world around me in which I live”.

Much of the literature on capacity building remains in the language of insiders and outsiders. There would therefore be an underlying assumption that the SAT facilitator's knowledge and view does not count. However, in a spiritually-based model of consultation, all views are given equal weight, whatever the knowledge system, the weakest to the strongest, so automatically the facilitator is involved, they are a “collaborator” in the process, the expert knowledge is acknowledged, albeit it is taken with the same openness as local knowledge.

The themes elaborated upon above all seem to point to a shift in terms of the roles to be played by different actors in rural development. What begins to emerge from the above accounts is not the image of the helpless farmer fated to forever being in need of aid and outside expertise (as early development theory conceived the farmer), nor likewise is it the image of the farmer who is only capable of (and content with) participating in plans and simple experiments of expert researchers from of formal research centres. Rather what emerges is the image of the rural person who is at once a whole human being, not reducible to or fragmented into farmer, villager, home maker, or associated simply with a sustainable livelihood. The person who emerges is one who participates in numerous aspects of the community and faces various challenges of rural life, who draws on many talents and potentialities both within themselves and from within their community to respond to these

challenges, one who participates in both remunerated and non-remunerated work towards the betterment of the community, and whose life, family, concerns, and aspirations are woven with those of the community. Furthermore, one begins to see this person not as peasant, poor, marginalized or traditional farmer, but as a main protagonist in the development of their community, who is capable of understanding the needs and directions of the community, to experiment and learn systematically, and to create and innovate in finding solutions, whether agricultural, social, cultural, or environmental, without the imposed stimulus from experts outside the region. Far from the romanticized accounts often associated with Marxist and liberation theology discourses, this image is rather one of the individual who is slowly walking a path of personal growth together with groups and clusters of others in the community development, but who together are clearly capable of defining and taking charge for the development of the community.

What also starts to become apparent in the accounts above is the interrelatedness of the characteristics of this new social actor. For example, the sense of self-sufficiency that interviewees spoke about in their personal lives related to a vision of self-sufficiency and self-determination in the rural community as a whole, as well as to a capacity to innovate. Interviewees' vision of a holistic education that integrates spirituality with practical and scientific training was closely associated with the importance of integrating action and service with learning, and to the sense that education should contribute to human development.

Many of these characteristics interestingly were articulated on very personal as well as community or cultural levels. For example, the sense of confidence that was evident in interviewees' accounts of their new skills and abilities, often showing itself in an enthusiasm

to innovate new technologies and agricultural techniques, was mirrored by their confidence and pride in their identity as rural people.

Social Engagement

Whereas for Freire, the world was understood to be split into two separate halves of oppressors and oppressed⁷, SAT students seem not to be trained to make such a simplistic and absolute division of their worlds. While in the interviews all the interviewees expressed surprising depths of understanding of social challenges and injustices, they tended to focus on problems and regard all actors as they viewed themselves, with all their humanity, and full of inherent potentiality and nobility. This seemed evident in countless stories where SAT groups would discuss with the community where they had been marginalized or denied a service, and despite this awareness the interviewees explain that they and their SAT group would engage with all institutions including the same government departments and agencies that might otherwise have seemed to have been the “oppressor” that had denied the service in question. What is telling about the accounts of these initiatives is that in each case, the governmental department or other agency in question responded in some way that won for the community a service that had been denied, funding for a project such as with community aqueducts or reforestation. In several cases as well, the approach taken by these SAT groups apparently helped to forge relations between the community and the government agency that continued to be more favourable in the future. In shifting problems from the actors involved

⁷ Freire, in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, also makes room for a third group of actors who rally in support of the Oppressed.

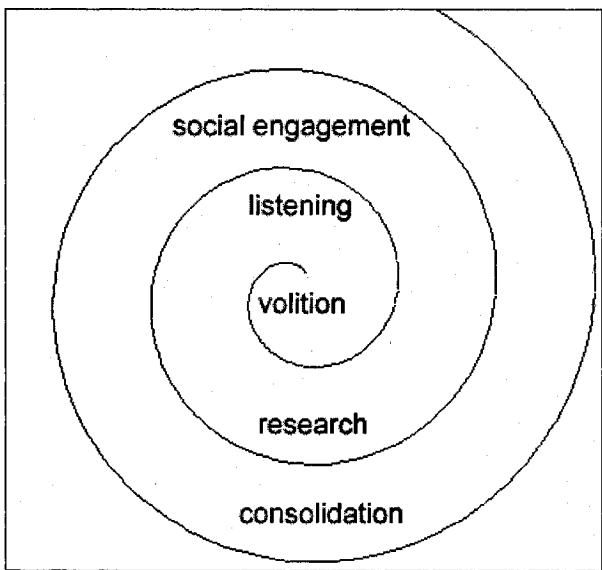
(dissimilar to the Freirean approach), SAT groups seemed to find the creativity, innovation and determination to find appropriate responses and eventual solutions. It would seem that SAT groups approached all institutions and agencies, whether of their own local community or of the municipal or departmental government with the same openness and optimism, due to their perception of these institutions as one of the essential protagonists of development.

For long in development discourse, however, little regard has traditionally been given to local and regional institutions. At best these institutions were rather irrelevant to rural development, and at worst, a hindrance or impediment to it. Indeed, no literature currently exists, as far as I could determine, which suggests a set of indicators that researchers might employ to evaluate the capacity of individuals and groups to engage institutions, nor the strength of those relationships between institutions. Yet, without a doubt, the capacity of local institutions--their strength and vitality, unity of thought, ability to consult thoroughly and to engage with other institutions--will likely outlive the individuals who played a part in those changes.

From the data introduced in the previous chapter an emergent model of social engagement can be seen. Figure 7 below attempts to illustrate the steps that several SAT groups described as their group initiatives evolved from inception to more sophisticated levels. As discussed earlier, groups often began with 'listening', which meant organizing community meetings to dialogue with the community about its needs or to visit each household and conduct surveys. Once needs had been identified with the community groups would often carry out extensive research, calling on the insights and research skills gained in their study of the SAT courses, on the area in question. Following this research, groups often

began to engage village councils, municipal offices and government agencies to seek support, funds and involvement.

Figure 7. Emergent Model of Social Engagement



A Spirit of Service

The aspect of community service was embedded throughout the programme. Mirroring the commitment to serving community shown and spoken about by the students, this element was also seen in the dedication showed to the students and their communities by tutors and SAT administrators, like Mr. Eduardo de Jesús Arenas, the Director of SAT for Risaralda. Eduardo, was imbued with a spirit of service. He himself had studied the SAT programme for many years, also serving as a tutor. As the Director of SAT in Risaralda, Eduardo would spend his days travelling mostly on foot in order to visit groups, and he

would tirelessly help each student as much as possible. Eduardo also expended a great deal of time and effort in assisting me while I was trying to do my research.

The SAT programme holds implications for new conceptions of 'power' as well. While for Freirean and other schools 'power' has traditionally and exclusively been understood as that force that institutions and structures yield in controlling, if not oppressing, individuals and individual freedom, the SAT interviewees seem to speak of 'power' in very different ways. They speak of the power they experienced as they participated in SAT, such as the power of being able to think creatively and innovatively to generate new initiatives and solutions for the community, and the power to respond to those needs identified in the meetings with the community which they would organize.

Summary

This chapter has synthesized the findings of the research into broader categories and related the insights drawn to the emerging conceptual framework introduced in Chapter Two and to the SAT programme as a whole. While the discussion raised here does not intend to make broad generalizations that can be applied to the entire SAT programme across Colombia, less so to other educational programmes, the insights learnt from the case of SAT graduates in Risaralda raise important questions about the models of transformative learning that are used in education, as well as current theoretical models in rural development and capacity building.

In this chapter I have examined the findings presented in Chapter Six more broadly with consideration of the findings from the data gathered through participant observation, interviews with administrative staff and tutors, and from a review of secondary literature.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the thesis and its key findings, puts forward a number of policy and programming recommendations to FUNDAEC and CEBBR as well as recommendations for further research, and closes with final conclusions about the research. The summary that follows seeks to place the analysis of the preceding chapter succinctly in the broader context of the purpose of the study and its guiding methodology, whereas the subsequent recommendations are an attempt to distil that analysis into concrete measures that can be taken.

Summary

Responding to the call for further research on the transformative experiences related to the SAT programme put forward by Roosta (1999), the goal of this study was to examine the conceptions and experiences of SAT graduates around themes relating to personal and social transformation, and to relate these findings to contemporary theories in education, rural development, and capacity building, in order address knowledge gaps about transformation in these respective fields.

With the increasing interest of governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations alike from several countries around the world in the SAT programme, in order to avoid superficial transplant approaches to its introduction in other countries, considerable research on the nature of the interactions of SAT students within groups, and SAT groups

and participants in turn with their communities is needed. While a comprehensive impact assessment is vital in order to accurately learn about the scope, degree and processes of change taking place within individuals and communities involved with SAT, conventional development and educational indicators have not been well suited for the evaluation of these experiences given their divergence from conventional educational and transformative models. This study aimed to lay groundwork of an exploratory investigation into the conceptual framework underpinning these experiences, on the basis of which further, more extensive, evaluation of the SAT programme in Colombia could be carried out.

The specific research objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To identify and describe the conceptions and learning experiences of the SAT graduates in relation to the individual and the community.
2. To analyse the interactions and possible connections between individual and social transformation as discussed by SAT graduates.
3. To examine critically the conceptual links and intersections between the experiences of personal and social transformation of SAT graduates and contemporary theories in education, rural development, and capacity building.

Informed by the guiding conceptual framework of the researcher, the study employed a 'mixed methods' approach rather than having been aligned to entirely or exclusively to any conventional methodology. The approach taken in the study drew from Constructivist and Grounded Theory methodologies. Both theoretical approaches shared a common emphasis on learning inductively and generating insights from the site rather than testing out pre-defined hypotheses. The Case Study seemed the most appropriate methodological design for the study as it allowed me to approach the site as a complex whole that necessarily needs to be considered through many methods and sources of inquiry, and whose complexity includes the evolution and historicity of phenomena. While a Case Study does not tell the whole story

of a phenomenon, it nonetheless attempts to deal with the “wholeness” or totality of the case. The use of the Case Study method, however, limited the study’s ability to generalize the findings to the entire SAT programme. Nonetheless, the insights that the data gathered from such a case study can certainly contribute to the shaping of new theoretical models.

A description of the methodological approach that guided and shaped the process of inquiry in the study would be incomplete without making clear some of the elements of my own personal worldview. My interests in the area of transformation were informed and inspired by my beliefs and practice as a Bahá'í. One of the challenges rarely acknowledged, let alone discussed openly and critically, with prevailing research methodologies are the silent barriers that researchers working from an explicitly-spiritual or religious perspective often face. While various qualitative methodologies profess an openness to consider and include the perspectives and orientations of marginalized voices, yet some of the core assumptions of these same methodologies remain unchallenged and at odds with a spiritually-based ontology. One of these barriers indeed is the long-standing dichotomies of thought that set academic discipline against religious and spiritual inclination, as if to say that against the objective posture and critical reflexivity of the former, the latter is a closed system a meta-narrative that discourages inquiry, objectivity and critical discipline. Indeed, such sweeping interpretations of religious association have in themselves become meta-narratives that attempt to subsume and define every attempt to work in an alternative way with religious inspiration. The references one finds, for example, in the Bahá'í sacred writings point to justice—the capacity of an individual to see objective and independent of the thoughts and prevailing views of others (both individuals and social conventions) as the highest hallmark of spiritual development. Indeed, the mind and its intellectual abilities to

probe and discover reality are regarded as the foremost expressions of what is described as the "rational soul". In such a context, the usual discredit of religion as a bias and impediment to academic objectivity becomes rather limiting, and an emphasis on truthfulness—a commitment to seeking out the accuracy of ideas and testimonials as well as the truths of a phenomena, and on sincerity—taken as an earnestness to persevere in understanding, and to learn and engage on multiple levels of understanding.

Summary of Findings

Objective 1

An analysis of SAT graduates' conceptions and experience brought to light a number of themes around personal and social transformation. One of the strongest themes that came up across all the interviews was that of self-sufficiency. Interviewees explained that the SAT programme had helped them both conceptually and technically take charge of their own growth and development and their livelihoods. Several spoke about this concept in terms of no longer needing to feel the need to leave their community to find work in urban centres, or to feel dependent in the sense of waiting on government agencies to provide services. Interviewees spoke about a newly acquired sense of being able to create livelihoods rather than seek out employment with large companies that would draw them away from the rural community.

In a rather fluid way interviewees also identified rural self-sufficiency as having been the primary purpose of the SAT programme. By this, they explained that the aim of the programme and that which animated their group activities had to do with enabling the community to become self-sufficient so that it could provide for its own basic needs such as

education, health care, and food, rather than continually have to go into town and strengthen urban economies for goods and services that could be produced and provided within the community.

A number of interviewees further explained that this sense of self-sufficiency did not lead them to wanting to be independent of and in competition with their classmates and of the community, but rather it encouraged them to want to help others also become self-sufficient and capable of taking charge of their development. The interviews included numerous examples of how SAT students would endeavour strenuously to help each other's learning and growth, even outside of the educational context, and to creatively finding solutions to better the community. This ability to initiate in responding to needs of the community rather than wait for handouts or the provision of those services by government or development agencies has regarded by graduates as the hallmark of self-sufficiency.

A third theme that emerged had to do with the ability to innovate. Several interviewees explained that SAT had taught them to be satisfied with the resources available to them, whether within themselves or their community, and by extension, to focus on searching for more creative and innovative ways of using their resources rather than to constantly seeking after more (money, resources, field size). What was apparent then among many interviewees was an ability to innovate and find solutions to difficult problems. Service to the community had to do with listening carefully to the needs and challenges of the community, carrying out research in those areas and then consulting thoroughly as to alternative and appropriate solutions. This ability to innovate was demonstrable in interviewees' places of work (such as nursing, food processing, and village stores) as well as

in the fields, expressed in an ability not only to carry out experiments but to search for alternatives for which to carry out experimentation.

Another characteristic of the SAT graduates that emerged across all the interviews was a sense of confidence and determination. These characteristics expressed themselves in terms of a deep-seated love for and identity with the rural areas, despite the common experience many faced of severe prejudice from dwellers of urban areas. This confidence was expressed in relational terms, insofar as their joy and confidence seemed to stem conjointly from their identity as rural inhabitants and the discovery of their own talents and potentialities. This confidence also seemed to be associated with a determination that clearly marked many interviewees in their conviction to discover solutions to difficult problems and to endeavour, often very creatively, to provide a way forward when no way forward seemed possible.

Another broad theme that swept through all of the interviews was that of spirituality and the development of the 'whole' person. Interviewees all addressed this theme, and did so in very non-partisan terms. They highlighted the integrated nature of the SAT programme in combining practical training with an emphasis on the development of attitudes, spiritual qualities and moral commitments. They also often spoke about it in terms of their vision of community development. Interestingly, this discovery of a deeper sense of one's own value and purpose in life, for several, led them to discovering this same value and commonality in others.

Objective 2

A number of findings emerged from the data that pointed to the way that personal and social transformation were connected for SAT graduates. Contrasted with the models of transformative learning current in the literature in which the individual and society are held up as two dichotomous and competing entities, the conceptual framework that begins to emerge with the SAT graduates holds the individual and society as far more fluid and related, and thus, do not fit within conventional models. For SAT graduates these two might, in fact, be more appropriately described as extensions of one and the same reality; they are not two entirely opposing entities that are reconciled ingeniously. The accounts of the interviewees suggest that there is a far greater fluidity between the individual and society than the literature I reviewed had considered. The analogy that seemed most appropriate to describe this fluidity was that of drops and waves, which one of the interviewees spoke about.

For SAT graduates, however, such a model with its Eurocentric assumptions about the individual and society, is not a useful construct to understand or measure their transformative experiences. The fluidity between the individual and the community operate can be understood in at least five ways, namely, at the level of identity; in terms of parallel characteristics and qualities they perceived for the individual and the community; and in the relational nature of many conventional individual qualities.

Objective 3

From an analysis of the findings of this study in relation to current theoretical concepts and models within the literatures of education, capacity building, a number of

important points have been made. The following is a summary of the major points made in this respect to the SAT programme:

1. Transformation is not best understood as an event, but rather as a lifelong process of becoming and releasing. Unlike Mezirow's four-stage model that follows a Western narrative structure of conflict-tension-resolution, for SAT graduates transformation is a continually evolving process more appropriately paralleling the growth of a seed or that of the process of birthing.
2. Personal and Social Transformation are not two diametrically opposing and conflicting experiences that are somehow reconciled. For SAT graduates these two are in fact, better described as two aspects of the same development. There is a far greater fluidity between them without a clear demarcation of what neatly pertains to the personal and to the social.
3. Personal and Social Transformation are not viewed together out of convenience or theoretical sophistication, but rather because, i) viewed from a spiritual perspective, a concept of 'oneness' intends that the innermost reality of the individual is a reflection of that same Divinity that is reflected in the realities of others, and thus, helping oneself and helping others are two aspects of the same aim; ii) for SAT graduates many of the elements of personal growth that seek to develop are understood as relational. Thus, spirituality is developed with and through relationships with others and in serving others. Confidence, likewise, was articulated by SAT graduates as a joy and pride in the accomplishments of

others and the community; iii) many of the characteristics that SAT graduates sought to acquire were paralleled in their aspirations for their community.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings I have described above, the following conclusions can be made:

1. What is often missing is the concept of service as a space within which individual and social transformation can find a more synergistic interaction, or rather, where the two begin to be seen as dimensions of one transformation.
2. Social engagement, within the context of the SAT programme, has less to do with radical change and adversarial opposition of current structures (according to a Freirian model of social change), and more so, seems to parallel the type of transformation that individuals similarly experience, namely, that of 'becoming' and releasing inherent potentialities. The phrase "growing culture" was used by one interviewee to connote this sense of consciously and organically creating culture and community.
3. The approach to transformation described by SAT graduates is one that makes it difficult to speak about transformation as something separate from the building of capacity. Transformation does not simply operate at the level of a reconfiguration of the meaning of things; it has very much to do with the changes in perspectives and commitments which are fused to the development of specific capacities. Given SAT's fusion of action and reflection,

theory and practice, it would be inadequate to attempt to define the graduates' transformation simply in conceptual terms only. The learning of concepts and attitudes was essentially acquired through intensive amounts of practice and the building of capabilities.

4. The SAT programme brings to light the point that when educational programming focuses on the development and strengthening of the individual, the community and its institutions and social structures simultaneously and synergistically, a holistic pattern of development can emerge in which the changes within individuals are affirmed and resonate within changes at the community level.

5. For SAT graduates there is a fluidity between their conceptions of themselves and their communities, and consequentially, there appears to be a sense that their own joys, growth and development are intimately woven with those of the community. Rather than presenting the case of an opposition between the interests of the individual and that of the community which SAT graduates strive to reconcile, what the data brought to light is that perhaps the very approach to resolving the polarisation in the literature on transformation needs to be rethought, such that attention is given to rethinking the very conceptions of the individual and society in ways that see a far greater affinity and fluidity between them. More than a convenient way of moving forward, however, a conception that would allow the individual and society to be regarded as more fundamentally tied and interrelated is difficult unless the more subdermal conceptions about the nature of the self are also not reconsidered. What the contributions from the emerging area of Science, Religion and Development has pointed out is that a spiritually-based conception of the individual, as found in the texts of most of the

world's Religions, in which the self is understood as being at once the unique agency of the individual, but as well as being a reflection of a higher, divine reality which is expressed within every individual. The data for this case study suggest through such a conception of the interconnected self, it becomes possible to regard the community as essentially an extension of oneself

6. An orientation of service, whether in remunerated work or in social action, can create the context within which transformative experiences can take place, in which greater levels of individual awareness, purpose and meaning can be developed.

7. Conceptions of spirituality that are relational in understanding the relationships between individuals and community, that highlight the motivation to help others, to love, to give, and to learn with others can be regarded as a cornerstone for synergistic development of individuals and communities.

8. For participation to be endogenous and authentic in rural development, consideration has to be given to the fostering of individual initiative in development and a sense of ownership and responsibility over the development of one's community.

Recommendations for Policy, Programming and Future Research

The recommendations that follow are organized broadly into two sets, one directed at the Centro Educativo Bachillerato en Bienestar Rural (CEBBR) and FUNDAEC, and the other for future research related to the SAT programme. The first set of recommendations

are primarily made to CEBBR, as it is charged with the management of the SAT programme in Risaralda and for the development of related policy, while FUNDAEC has assigned for itself the role of developing curricula and supporting departmental institutions.

Recommendations for CEBBR, FUNDAEC and Organizations Carrying out Similar Programming:

Based on the data gathered in this study, a number of recommendations can be made in helping to advance the SAT programme in Risaralda:

1. *Communication:* The communications aspect of SAT could be enhanced both 'vertically' and 'horizontally' so that the knowledge and experiences generated by SAT groups are being both exchanged and built upon. Vertically, SAT could benefit from 'banking' the learning that is generated between generations of SAT groups, and more broadly that would become part of a collective heritage of knowledge of the community, so that the innovations and insights gained by one group are not lost after the graduation of that group.

Horizontally, SAT in Risaralda could be strengthened by the introduction of various communications tools that would create a greater sense of a 'movement'⁸ among existing SAT groups in various villages. My observation was that many groups have little awareness of what other groups across the department are doing, what lessons are being learned, and

⁸ This recommendation is constrained, of course, by the sensitive political environment of the region, and the serious risks involved with speaking in terms such as 'movement' and 'social change', particularly would this be the case over community airwaves.

what projects have proven successful. At the simplest level, this might take the form of a department-wide newsletter, which each group could contribute to⁹.

Beyond this, however, the inclusion of some component of training in the use of, and development of programmes for, rural radio¹⁰ would be an invaluable enhancement to the SAT programme in Risaralda, particularly given that rural radio stations exist in many of the villages of the department. The introduction of rural radio would also strengthen the other aspect of communication which also could be nurtured, that of communicating, in a variety of ways, with the community. In the past, SAT groups have relied on community meetings and personal communications to share the insights of their experiments and projects. Rather than supplanting this important, yet deceptively simple, form of communication, the introduction of rural radio would serve as a complement and ensure that there is breadth to the communication in reaching even non-visible members of communities. Radio also holds the potential for fostering a change in the culture of the community through innovative programming such as dramatizations and the use of song.

2. *Augmented Training in Social Engagement:* Explore further training components to consolidate the emergent model of social engagement that SAT graduates in Risaralda described (see Chapter 7). Further training in this area may both enable more groups to

⁹ This was a recommendation that was discussed informally with the Director of CUBBR in Risaralda. He mentioned that they had been looking into the resources and funding to make a newsletter possible and was very eager to hear this recommendation as it strengthened awareness of this need.

elevate initiatives to the level of social engagement, thereby effecting a greater degree of sustainability in the community, as well as ensure that large numbers of SAT graduates develop the capabilities needed to create their own businesses, organizations, and projects after completing SAT.

Similar programming in Colombia and elsewhere such as CIAT's work with CIALS might also benefit from an exploration of the model of social engagement discussed in the previous chapter. CIALS which have the asset of a strong consultative framework for agricultural experimentation may find it useful to look at the way SAT groups at the way community is consulted and how institutions are engaged to bring about permanent change in areas relating to agriculture.

3. Strengthening of Initiatives: Some of the interviewees recounted incredible stories of small initiatives of their groups having gained governmental funding and endorsement and having crystallized into permanent changes and social structures. Yet, others also spoke of great initiatives that slowly fell to the wayside after their SAT group completed its studies and disbanded. CEBBR might examine what might be done to ensure that a greater number of these initiatives are sustained after SAT groups complete their studies, either by subsequent SAT groups or by their communities. The previous recommendation may certainly help in this regard. Where this has been happening, interviewees' described the evolution as organic and the initiative being formalized, endorsed or sustained naturally and as a result of the

¹⁰ At the time of writing this I received notification from FUNDAEC that they have already begun drafting materials for a training module in the use of community radio.

volition of the community. Careful analysis will have to go into designing ways of encouraging communities to become more involved in maintaining these initiatives without quenching individual initiative or co-opting projects. Given the degree to which projects being taken up by community members or village councils is a reflection of the strength and capacity of the community's institutions, one line of thinking might explore the possibility of parallel programming to the SAT, where community leaders participate in training to build this institutional capacity.

4. Strengthening & Introducing Further Supports: Continuing from the above point, a final recommendation that CEBBR might do well to consider is to examine what supports may be needed to be strengthened and what other supports may need to be introduced to help reinforce the work of SAT groups. A few of the graduates endeavour to begin their own projects and businesses to avoid having to work for large factories and corporations in urban areas, yet lack the financial support, credit, or other support mechanisms to realize their aspirations. Again, the fostering of stronger vertical links between past and present SAT graduates and groups may be one of the most valuable supports needed by new graduates as they face the many constraints of endeavour to create micro-enterprises and projects¹¹.

Further analysis would also need to look at what challenges students in the SAT programme face as they study and after studying when they endeavour to begin their own

¹¹ One interviewee, Jose_11 spoke about how his and many other groups in the municipality had begun to hold 'encounters' where all the SAT groups in the municipality would get together to share experiences and present cultural and artistic expressions such as dance and theatre.

businesses and projects. Two of the most noted factors affecting whether students remain in the programme are the degree of family support (to the extent that parents may simply bar the student from continuing), and the financial circumstances of the family to continue with the programme. One important support that could, in turn, respond to the need for supports in many other areas, would be the establishment of a committee or division within CEBBR that can take charge of facilitating the exchange of information between groups and communicating insights and experiences across SAT groups, and to appropriate governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations who may be positioned to assist more fully as a result.

Recommendations for Further Research:

1. The strongest recommendation I can put forward with respect to further research on the SAT programme is in terms of moving towards a more collaborative research arrangement between academic researchers and CEBBR and FUNDAEC that allows academic research to respond to the research needs identified by CEBBR and FUNDAEC, and for research to build on the emerging body of knowledge that has thus far been carried out on the SAT programme.

2. One of the most obvious areas that future research might begin with is an evaluation of the extent of the transformative experiences that the SAT programme has had for both individuals and communities. Such a study might be longitudinal in nature in order to appropriately evaluate such a complexity of data over time.

3. Finally, comparative studies analysing the experience of SAT in highly differing regions of the country (i.e., in indigenous self-governing departments and larger, more economically advanced departments) would also generate important insights about the overarching aspects of the SAT programme, in terms of personal and social change, and to consider the many questions relating to the transferrability of the SAT programme.

Concluding Remarks

As the existence of rural communities across Latin America and elsewhere becomes increasingly compromised by the urban-bias of countries responding to the rapid expansion of urban sprawls and as market forces continue to drive rural populations into these urban voids, the urgency and significance of a rigorous rethinking of holistic and integral approaches to rural development cannot be overemphasized. Shifts in approaches to rural development have occurred over the past few decades towards highlighting the importance of understanding the farm as a whole system in ensuring the small farmer's economic viability. Yet, far greater attention will need to be given to understanding the human being behind the 'farmer', and the complex web of aspirations, potentialities and challenges of the rural community behind the 'farm'. Such an effort will need to connect with the deepest sources of motivation and possibility inherent and too-often unsuspected in rural people, and strengthen their sense of identity as both a rural population and as a trust of the human race, and reconfigure the roles in rural development such that individuals, institutions and communities are regarded as fluid elements that weave through each other and which need to take charge of the community's own path of endogenous development.

The SAT programme stands out as one, and perhaps only one, programme among what will likely grow to become a global network of similar programmes that are systematically working towards the realization of an emerging vision of human prosperity and integral development, which this study has sought to outline some of the elements of.

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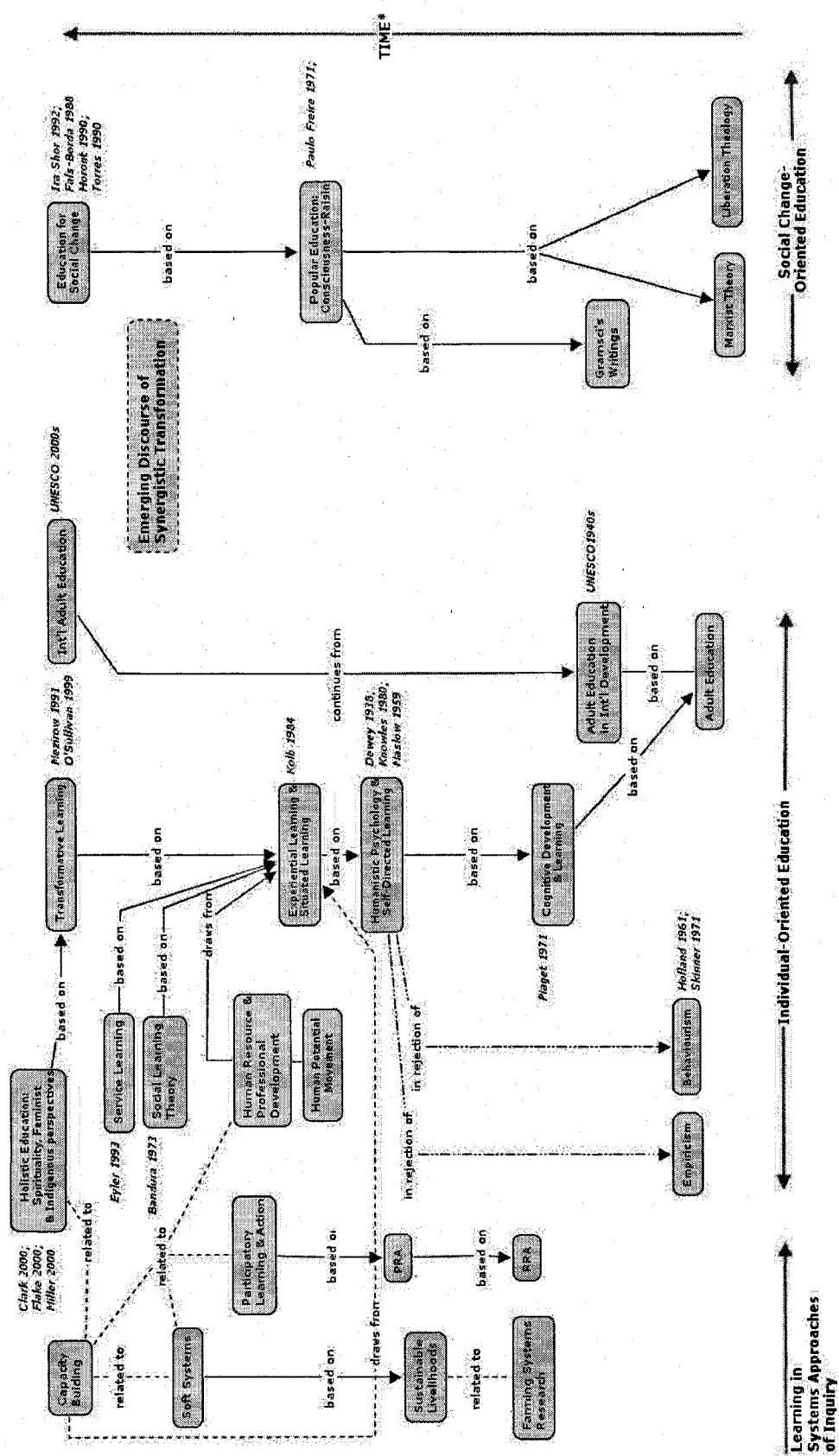
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APPENDIX 1. Conceptual Diagram of the Evolution and Intersections of Educational Theory

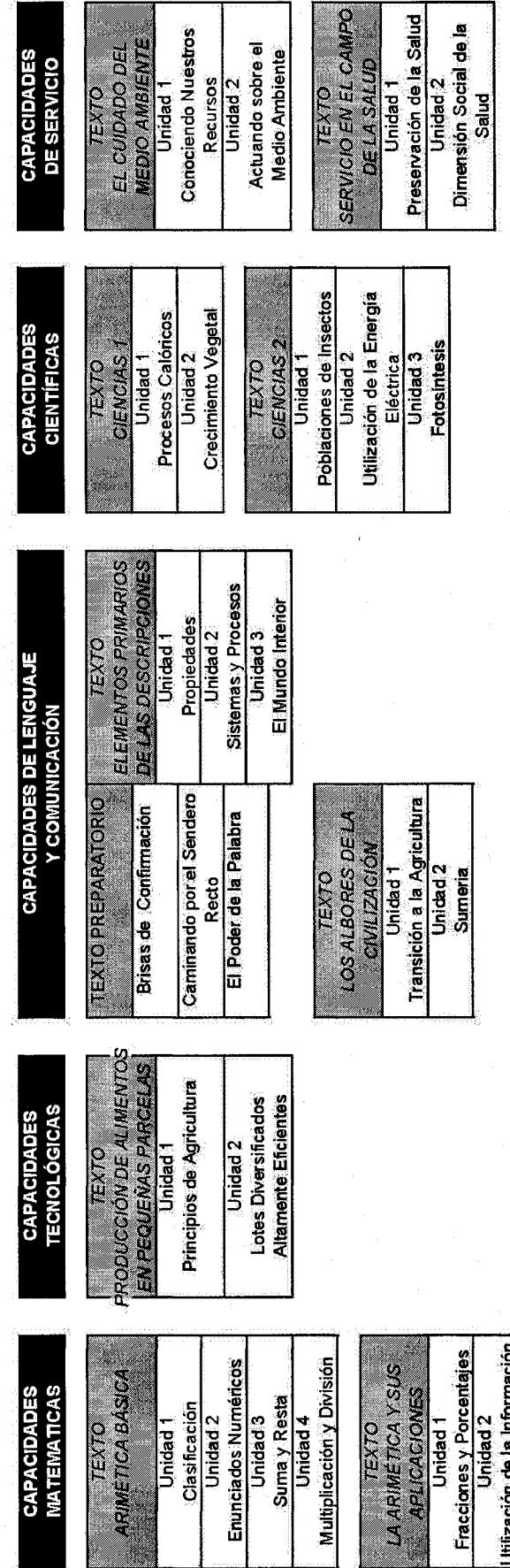


* This is intended as a general directional flow, rather than as a definitive demarcation of specific dates associated with these theories.

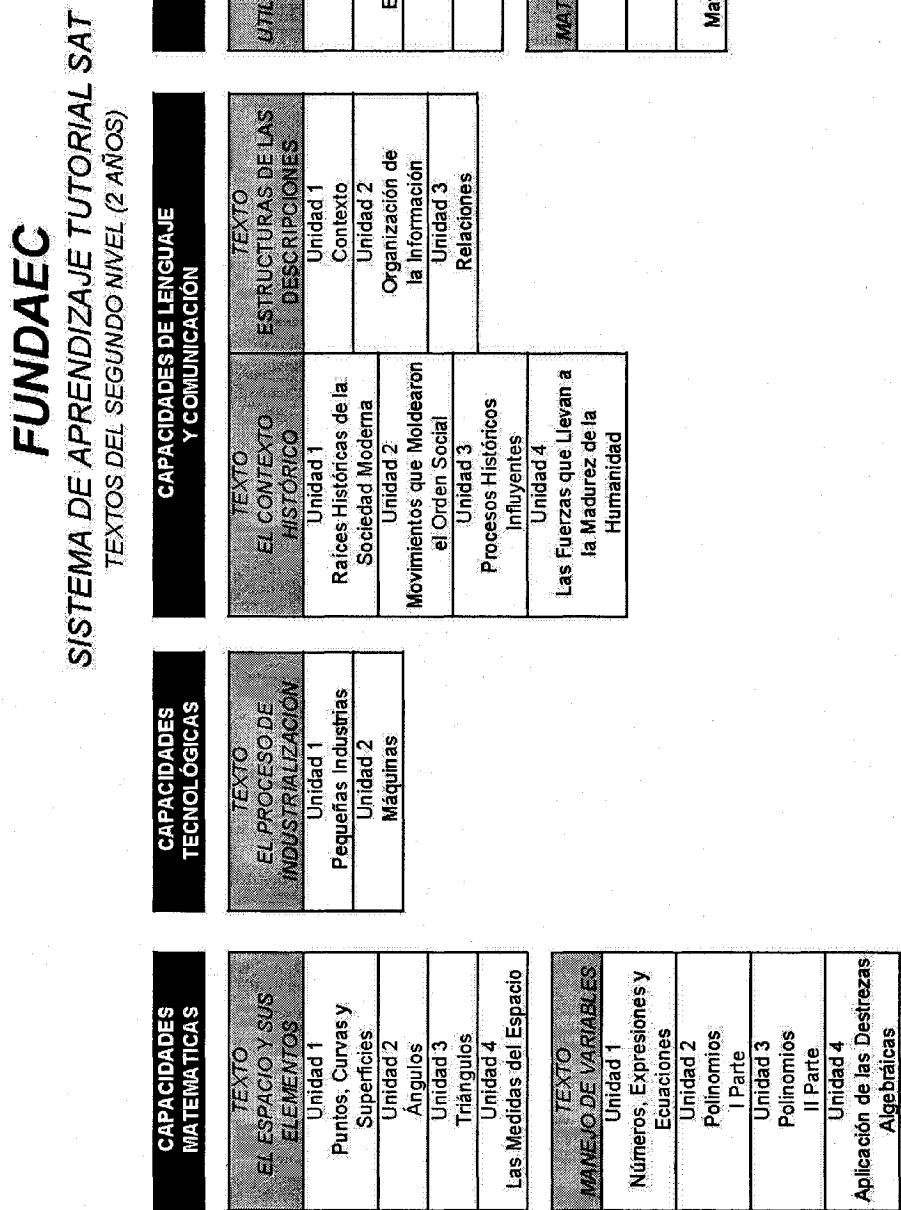
APPENDIX 2. Organizational Diagram of SAT Syllabus (Promoter Level)

FUNDAEC

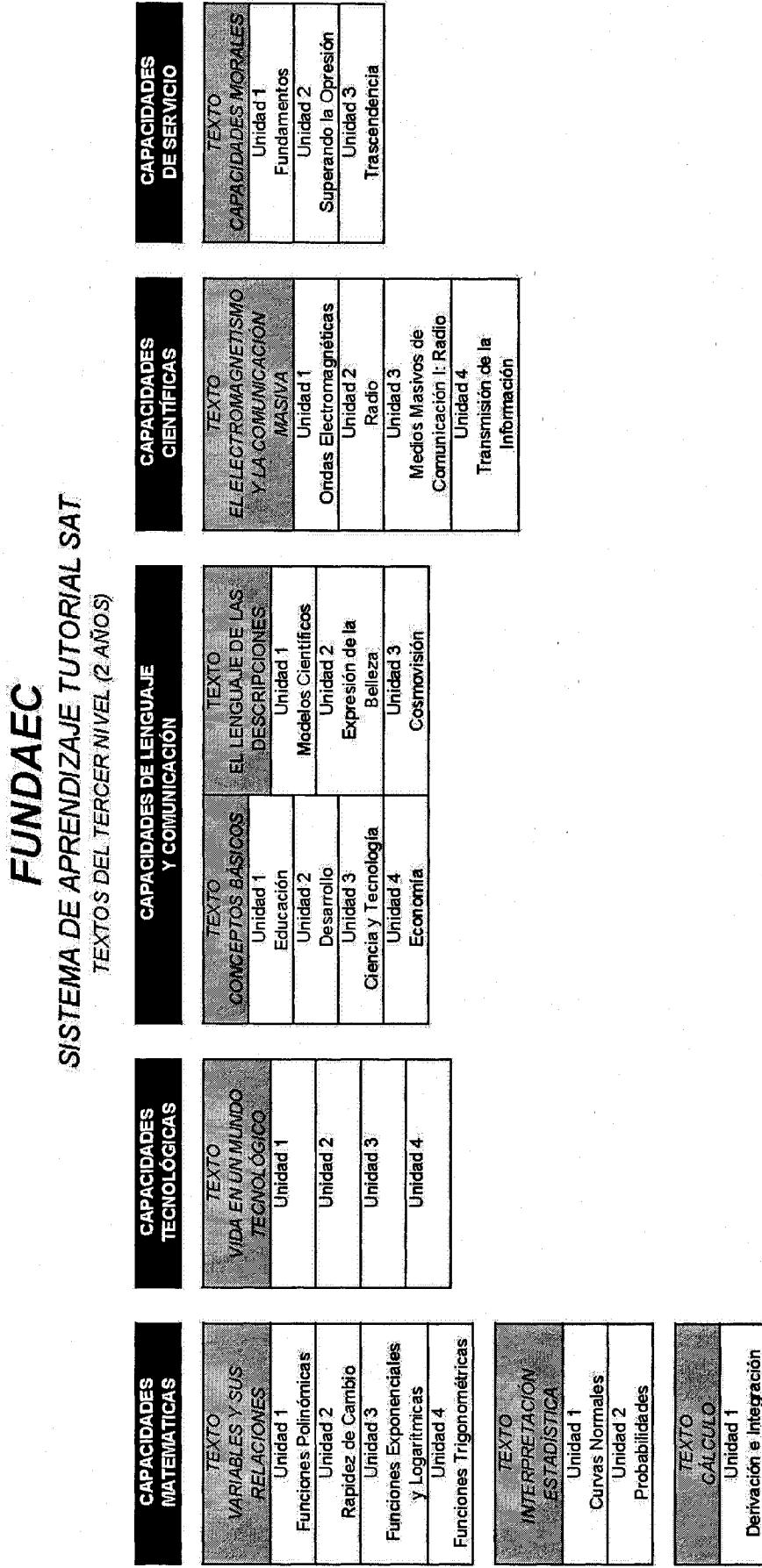
SISTEMA DE APRENDIZAJE TUTORIAL SAT
TEXTOS DEL PRIMER NIVEL (2 AÑOS)



APPENDIX 3. Organizational Diagram of SAT Syllabus (Practitioner Level)



APPENDIX 4. Organizational Diagram of SAT Syllabus (Bachiller Level)



APPENDIX 5. Semi-Structured Interview Guide: SAT Graduates

Background Information

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex:
- 4: If applicable to you, how many household dependents do you provide for in your home?
5. Community:

Educational Background

6. The year you first joined the SAT programme? (*what level did you start at?*)
7. The year you completed the SAT programme?
8. What was the last grade/level of formal education you completed prior to beginning SAT?
9. If applicable, how many years of formal education/training have you completed, after having completed the SAT programme?
10. Last completed grade/level of education of spouse/partner?
11. Last completed grade/level of education of mother?
12. Last completed grade/level of education of father?

Before Joining SAT

13. Before you joined the programme, how do you think you related to your community?
14. How did you feel about yourself?

SAT Experience

15. Why did you first join the programme?
16. How would you compare your experience with SAT to other educational experiences you have had before or after SAT?
17. What do you think the SAT programme is all about, what are its goals?
18. How do you think the SAT programme tried to achieve the goals or purpose that you mentioned?
19. Can you describe what took place in the programme? (*what would a typical session involve, where would you meet, what activities did you do, how did the students relate to each other, how did you relate to the tutor?*)
20. Were there activities that your SAT group carried out to help your community develop?
 - *what do you think were the impacts of these activities?*
 - *What was the response of the community to these activities?*
 - *How did your group feel towards the community's response in turn affect your group?*
 - *How did you feel as you participated in these activities?*
21. What are some of the social problems faced by your region/country that the SAT programme has helped you see and understand?

22. How did your SAT group try to address and respond to these issues?
23. Can you describe how you see the relationship between “personal growth” and “community development? (give examples, any metaphors, would you like to diagram, what was it about the programme that linked these two?)
24. Was “spirituality” something that was important to the programme? (how? what did it mean? how was it important to your experience with SAT?)

Self Perceptions

25. How do you see yourself now, after having participated in the SAT programme? (how do you feel about yourself? how do you see your life goals, and your life purpose; hopes for future?)
26. Are there specific aspects of the programme you feel have contributed to how you see yourself now?
27. At this point in your life, what does “personal growth” mean to you?
28. How would you describe an ideal community participant?

Family and Community Perceptions and Involvement

29. Can you describe what your relationship is to your family now? (how do you view your family? how do they see you?)
30. In addition to what you have already told me, how are you involved or participate in the community or region currently (professional work, community groups, organizations, projects?)
31. Why do you participate in the community? (how do you feel about participating in them?)
32. Can you describe what an ideal community that has well-being and prosperity would look like? (what would be some indicators to know it by?)

Agricultural innovation/Knowledge Production

33. What systems of production were introduced to you by SAT that you didn’t know before joining the programme? (what specific crops and cropping techniques; are there techniques or systems of production they were learnt more fully in the programme?)
34. In addition to applying the techniques described in the texts, did you or your group try experimenting with new techniques, ideas, or innovations to these systems of production?
35. Have you been able to continue to use and/or build on the knowledge, skills, attitudes or abilities you gained through participation in the SAT programme? (if so, which have been most prevalent or important in your life, and how and in what activities/spheres are they being used?)

Other:

36. Is there anything we haven’t talked about that is important to you about the SAT programme?

APPENDIX 6. Semi-Structured Interview Guide: SAT Tutors

Background Information

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex:
5. Community:

Before Working with SAT

6. What was the last grade/level of formal education you completed?
7. What professional or community work were you doing before becoming involved with the SAT programme as a tutor?
8. The year you became involved with the SAT programme?
9. How did you first become involved with the SAT programme?
10. Why do you continue to work with the SAT programme?
11. If applicable, how would you compare your experience working with SAT to other educational programmes you have taught?

SAT Experience

12. What do you think the SAT programme is all about, what are its goals?
13. How do you think the SAT programme tries to achieve the goals or purpose that you mentioned?
14. Can you describe what takes place in the programme? (*what would a typical session involve, where would you meet, what activities did you do, how did the students relate to each other, how did you relate to the tutor*)
15. Are there activities that your SAT group carried out to help your community develop?
 - *what do you think were the impacts of these activities?*
 - *What was the response of the community to these activities?*
 - *How did your group feel towards the community's response in turn affect your group?*
16. What changes do you see in the students as they go through the programme?
17. As your students participated in the programme, how do you think their views of their communities changed (*its importance, purpose*)?
18. As your students participated in the programme, how do you think their views of themselves change (*their life goals, purpose*)
19. What aspects or parts of the programme do you feel have contributed most to these changes in the students?
20. Can you describe *how* students learn in the SAT programme?
21. Are there any changes in the “way” students learn, from when they first enter the programme to when they finish?
22. What does “transformation” mean to you based on your experience with the programme?

23. Can you describe how you see the relationship between "personal growth" and "community development?"
24. Was "spirituality" something that is important to the programme? (*how? what did it mean?*)
25. How do the SAT groups interact with the community?
26. In addition to your work with the SAT programme, how are you involved or participate in the community or region currently (*professional work, community meetings, community groups, organizations, projects?*)
27. Why do you participate in the community?
28. How would you describe an ideal community participant?
29. Can you describe what an ideal community that has well-being and prosperity would look like?

Agricultural innovation/Knowledge Production

30. In addition to applying the techniques described in the texts, have your groups or your students tried learning about or experimenting with new techniques, ideas, or innovations to any systems of production (*agricultural, commercial, etc.*)?
31. Did your SAT group(s) make efforts to communicate the results and knowledge gained through your interaction with these systems of production?
32. Are you aware whether students have been able to continue to use and/or build on the knowledge, skills, attitudes or abilities gained through participation in the SAT programme?
33. Do you think you yourself have changed as a result of participating with the SAT programme as a tutor?

Other:

34. Is there anything we haven't talked about that is important to you about the SAT programme?

APPENDIX 7. Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Administrative Staff

Thematic Perspective

1. Please state your name and the organization that you are presently working for, and the capacity in which you are working with that organization
2. What year did you become involved with the SAT programme?
3. How did you first become involved with the SAT programme?
4. If I may ask, what motivates you to continue working with the SAT programme?
5. What do you think the SAT programme is all about; what are its goals?
6. How do you think the SAT programme tries to achieve the goals or purpose that you have mentioned?
7. Can you describe what typically takes place in the programme? (*what would a typical session involve, where do groups meet, what activities would groups carry out?*)
8. What changes do you see in the students as they go through the programme?
9. How do you think students' views of and relationships to their communities change as a result of participating in SAT?
10. How do you think students' views of themselves change as a result of participating in SAT?
11. What aspects or parts of the programme do you feel have contributed most to these changes in the students?
12. What role are SAT groups encouraged/envisioned as playing in their communities and micro-regions? (*what type of relationships do they develop in their communities and with institutions?*)
13. Can you describe how you see the relationship between "personal growth" and "community development" which the programme speaks about? (*give examples, any metaphors, would you like to diagram, what was it about the programme that linked these two?*)

Historical Perspective

14. Can you tell me about the history of SAT in the Department of Risaralda?
15. What are some of the changes that have been made/taken place in how SAT is run in Risaralda over the past ten years?
16. What is the relationship of your institution with tutors and with SAT groups (*are there follow-up trainings with tutors? is there any communication flow to or between groups? are there regional or micro-regional gatherings or activities?*)
17. How is the concept of "spirituality" integrated into the programme? (*how? what did it mean in the context of the SAT programme?*)

Other:

18. Is there anything we haven't talked about that is important to you about the SAT programme?

APPENDIX 8: Examples of Agricultural Innovations of SAT Graduates

<i>Organic Fertilizers</i>	composting, particularly with food wastes
<i>Organic Pesticides</i>	Use of certain fungi, pepper, Ortiga, and Salvia.
	Incision traps in live trees
	Use of decaying tree stock as traps near living plantain trees.
<i>Multi-cropping/Introducing new crops</i>	Corn & Broccoli, Cauliflower, Chua, plantain
<i>Other Innovations</i>	plant breeding technique involving planting two seedlings in a single hole to encourage competition between trees.
	Introduction of special tall-growing trees instead of fencing to cut costs and to allow for field markers that are more visible from afar
	Introduction of special grasses to help prevent erosion.
	use of special plant leaves as food for fish farming
<i>Supplementing Income Sources & Cutting Costs</i>	plant breeding of plantain trees for resale of seedlings simultaneous to growing plantain crops.
	Use of home gardens for personal/family consumption, including tomatoes, onions, carrots, green beans, and various other beans.
	Small-scale poultry and livestock production

EPILOGUE

As I was writing the last section of the thesis I met for the first time an older gentleman in my neighborhood who shared with me his experience of recovering from alcoholism over the past several years. Just before his life began to turn around he had been working on the railway loading train cars and had had a near-death experience during a train accident in which he lost his right arm. During our conversation the topic of my research in Colombia came up and so I shared briefly with him the focus and some of the themes of the research. When I told him about the analogy of drops of water becoming waves as the title of the thesis his eyes began to fill with tears. He went on to explain that he had not been able to speak about his near-death experience very openly with others, and that he could never find the words or the figurative language to describe the beauty and sanctity of that other-world experience. He was deeply touched as the only analogy that he had been able to use to describe the sense of unity and convergence of souls was in terms of the way drops of water merge into one another.