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Established in 1971, the *International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)* is a policy research institute linking environmental concerns with the development needs of resource-poor people in the South and with other global environment and development priorities.

The Institute's *Sustainable Agriculture Programme* promotes and supports the development of socially and environmentally aware agriculture through research, training, advocacy, networking and information dissemination. Emphasising close collaboration and consultation with a wide array of institutions in the South, research projects are aimed at identifying the constraints and potentials of the livelihood strategies of those in the Third World who are affected by ecological, economic and social change.

RAPID AND PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL

A growing awareness of the failures of conventional development approaches in meeting the needs of resource-poor people has led to the exploration of alternative methods of investigating resource management issues, and planning, implementing and evaluating development initiatives.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) offers a creative approach to information sharing, and a challenge to prevailing biases and preconceptions about rural people's knowledge. Advocates of this approach argue that the production of knowledge and the generation of potential solutions should be devolved onto those whose livelihood strategies form the subject for research.

PRA methods comprise a range of field-based visualisation, interviewing and group-work techniques which promote interactive learning, shared knowledge, and flexible yet structured analysis. These techniques have proven valuable for understanding local perceptions of the functional value of resources, processes of agricultural innovation and social and institutional relations. Furthermore, PRA can bridge the interface between agriculture, health and community development, broadening the scope of agricultural development to focus on livelihoods and well-being. PRA approaches, combining research and practice, also offer opportunities for mobilising local people for joint action.

The terms PRA and RRA encompass a wide range of approaches with strong conceptual and methodological similarities. These include Participatory Learning Methods (PALM), Agroecosystem Analysis (AEA), Farming Systems Research, Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Rapid Rural Systems Analysis (RRSA), Méthode Accélérée de Recherche Participative (MARP) and many others.

The refinement and application of Participatory Rural Appraisal for research and development is an area of special emphasis for IIED's Sustainable Agriculture Programme. More detailed information on PRA and related techniques and a publications catalogue are available from the Programme on request.

THE RRA NOTES SERIES

Established in 1988 by IIED's Sustainable Agriculture Programme, the principal aim of *RRA Notes* is to enable practitioners of RRA and PRA throughout the world to share their field experiences and methodological innovations. The series is informal and seeks to publish honest accounts, address issues of practical and immediate value, encourage innovation, and act as a 'voice from the field'. Topics are diverse, detailing field and training experiences with the rapidly evolving methods of Participatory Rural Appraisal.

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ADDRESSING THE GAPS OR DISPELLING THE MYTHS?: PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN LOW-INCOME URBAN COMMUNITIES

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Participatory Urban Appraisal?

Over the past 18 months, the Human Settlements and Sustainable Agriculture Programmes of IIED have been inundated with enquiries about the use of participatory research and development approaches in community development programmes in urban areas. In response to this interest, the two programmes have jointly compiled and edited this special issue of *RRA Notes* focusing on the use of participatory methodologies for research and project implementation in cities and towns, thus allowing us to consider this theme from both urban and rural perspectives. In this overview, we introduce readers to the 13 papers included in this collection and highlight some of the key issues

This paper is divided into a number of sections. The first section discusses the 'problem' of applying participatory approaches in urban communities and explains why we consider it a priority to produce a special issue of *RRA Notes* on this theme. The second section describes the complex characteristics of urban settings and how they differ from the type of rural contexts in which Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is commonly used. We ask, "*Can Participatory Rural Appraisal become Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA) simply by applying the approach in urban contexts -- or is there something more that we need to understand about the nature of low-income urban communities and urban community development interventions?*" This section also compares and contrasts participatory approaches in urban and rural areas. The third section introduces the papers included here and considers their range and scope. In the final section, we seek to draw together the lessons emerging from the contributions of both PRA practitioners and urban development agents included in this special issue.

The papers are more about raising crucial questions and identifying key issues than supplying answers. While they broadly demonstrate the value to be obtained from such methods and tools, many issues are not addressed. For example, it is clearly important to understand better the added contribution that participatory tools and methods might offer in urban areas. In addition to providing a cost-effective means of poverty analysis for the World Bank, do such methods make a significant addition to the range and quality of existing and planned urban community development initiatives? If, for example, the major challenge faced by urban communities is how to develop greater community strength in order to better negotiate improved services from local government, are participatory tools and methods among the first three resources required by communities, or among the first 20? And when used by the World Bank, have such tools and methods resulted in a real transfer of programme control to local people?

The papers have been drawn from organisations and individuals whose work we know to be interesting, with some emphasis on diversity of applications and orientations. Hence, this collection is not based on a comprehensive analysis of best practice and we would argue that such an analysis would not be possible at this stage without a much more thorough review of what has been done and is being done, and what is working and what is not. However, we hope this special issue is of assistance to the many people who have contacted IIED and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for encouraging us to explore this theme in more detail.

The Problem and Context of Participatory Enquiry

The interest in urban applications for participatory tools and methods is taking place within a specific context. At the level of national and international development planning and policy making, two particular trends can be identified:

1. Active participation of local 'stakeholders' is considered to be an important part of effective, efficient and equitable development projects and programmes. Experience has shown that participation cannot be imposed but must be developed through a process of joint analysis and constructive dialogue between the relevant actors (local people, external agents, etc.) and that there is a range of principles, concepts and techniques that can assist the adoption and application of effective participatory methodologies. Some participatory methodologies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal and related approaches increasingly are accepted as sound methodologies by development professionals and organisations (both governmental and non-governmental) (Scoones and Thompson, 1994).
2. Development professionals are recognising that urbanisation trends are continuing and are unlikely to be reversed in the foreseeable future. There is increasing interest on the part of many development agencies (including multilateral, bilateral and Northern non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to develop effective programmes to address the development needs of low-income urban communities (Arrossi et al., 1994)).

These two tendencies are reflected in the growing interest in the use of participatory approaches in urban areas. The 'problem', as it was first understood by us, was: *"How might we learn from the experiences of those using PRA in rural environments for improving participatory research and development practice in urban settings?"*

When people first asked us what we knew about the different methodologies used by organisations working in urban areas, we replied that we knew very little. In the last year, we have considered a number of important questions:

- What participatory approaches are urban organisations using?;
- What are the methods associated with those approaches?; and
- What impact has the use of these approaches and methods had on the lives of low-income urban people?

This brief, unrepresentative and informal survey has suggested that our initial problem statement was too simplistic. Some organisations actively working in urban places (eg. NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) and government agencies) are employing participatory approaches that rely on methods that are broadly similar to those used in rural areas. It is our own process of learning that is reflected in the title to this overview: *"Addressing the Gaps or Dispelling the Myths?"*. In a process analogous to the development of rural appraisal approaches (ie. rural people's knowledge and capacities were unseen and unrecognised because they were unrecorded or at least not recorded in ways that were accessible to outsiders), the introduction of *rural* appraisal approaches in urban areas was first required to fill a methodological 'gap'. It is now evident to us that such a 'gap' is a myth.

However, to date there has been very little documentation of this work by the urban organisations and hence, no real exchange of ideas. Some urban organisations are developing approaches that are similar to those used by their rural counterparts, but it may be that they are spending time and resources reinventing the participatory 'wheel' rather than learning from those experiences. At the same time, those familiar with PRA in a rural context are often using it in larger settlements with several thousand residents that could be considered to have urban characteristics.

This lack of documentation and inter-organisational sharing has also meant that these methodological innovations and experiences are rarely accessible to organisations outside the informal urban networks. This has encouraged such organisations to act as if no new innovations have been occurring elsewhere, rather than seeking to better understand what has taken place already and how they might contribute to it. Furthermore, where such participatory methodologies are identified, they tend to be treated as something distinct from the broader development strategies of the organisations that are developing and promoting them. We would argue that, in most cases, participatory research and development approaches cannot be isolated either from the broad organisational systems and structures within which they are situated or from the relations between the major organisations working in a particular location, be they CBO, NGO or government.

For these reasons, we have felt it necessary to redefine our problem statement to more accurately capture the complexity of promoting participatory development in urban environments: *What do we need to understand about the nature of urban life and the context and conditions of urban community development interventions to enable us to employ participatory approaches with local people in those places? OR How might we develop participatory tools and methods drawing on the experiences in both rural and urban areas?*

Is Urban Different?

A starting point for many of the papers in this special issue (and indeed for the compilation of a special issue) is the assumption that 'urban is different'. This section explores the accuracy of this conjecture and considers the scale and nature of some identified differences. We focus particularly on differences between the livelihood strategies and development challenges faced by urban and rural low-income communities, rather than on the differences between urban and rural in general, as these are the groups that the promoters of participatory approaches and methods seek to assist.

We believe that 'urban' may be different but it does not seem to be *very* different. Later in this section, we show that many of the proposed distinctions between the use of participatory approaches and methods in urban and rural areas may be otherwise explained. We start by reviewing some areas in which general distinctions seem to be most valid. Clearly, there is great diversity within urban and rural areas. However, it does appear to us that there a number of ways in which the nature of the urban context may differ from the rural context. A clear understanding of these may be helpful for consideration of the papers included here. For low-income communities such differences are primarily in the nature of work and of settlements.

Maybe It Is Different

- *Economy.* Agriculture, livestock and petty trading are the mainstays of the rural peasant economy. By contrast, livelihood opportunities in poor urban communities may also include manufacturing and service industries including public sector employment. For instance, members of low-income urban households may be engaged in formal or informal employment within any aspect of the public sector, or manufacturing or service industries, as well as urban agriculture and small scale trading.
- *Natural Resources.* There are generally fewer opportunities in urban areas for direct household exploitation of the natural resources which all low-income households require, including fuel, fresh water and food. Hence, with only limited access to natural resources and meeting basic nutritional needs through 'self-sufficiency', the diversity in employment strategies is as important for spreading risk and reducing uncertainty for low-income families in urban areas as diversity in agricultural practices is for their rural counterparts. This diversity also represents a challenge to urban development programmes, which must find ways to understand and respond to the complex range and changing conditions of urban employment options and opportunities.
- *Heterogeneity.* Communities may be more heterogeneous in urban areas than rural areas. Urban settlements may include residents with a great variety of different birthplaces. In regard to household composition, there is some evidence to suggest that a significant percentage of households in low-income urban settlements are primarily supported by women (Moser and Peake, 1987). However, a proportion of urban residents are single people, often men, who may retain links to a family in another area. Other households may contain either nuclear or extended families.
- *Tenure.* Not only is household composition varied but so are forms of tenure (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989). However, of remarkable consistency is that low-income urban households often lack legal tenure. It is common for between 30-60% of the population in

Third World cities to be living in houses and neighbourhoods that have been developed illegally. Such residence does not necessarily involve the illegal occupation of land; illegality may arise from contravention of building or zoning regulations (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989). Contravention of regulations is only one of many reasons municipalities and national governments give to justify evictions of poor urban residents, whom they refer to as 'squatters'. Many communities live at risk of evictions and tenure is, almost universally, a sensitive issue.

- *Local government.* Although generally weak, local government is often important within the local urban development process. Local governments may be important as land owners and therefore of immediate relevance to squatters on their land. In addition, they are often responsible for drafting and implementing building and zoning regulations. In many cases, they have responsibility for the provision of local services. They are also likely to be responsible for issuing licenses for enterprises and regulating their operation. In urban areas, the role and importance of local authorities may be more pronounced than in rural areas where the state's influence is relatively weak (as in parts of Africa).

But Maybe It's Not

However, beyond such broad distinctions are many similarities. We now turn to some distinctions between the experience of using participatory approaches and methods in urban and rural communities that are proposed within the papers included in this collection. In a number of cases, it appears to us that these distinctions cannot be simply (or completely) explained by differences between urban and rural areas and alternative explanations may be equally likely. In the paragraphs below, we suggest some alternatives.

- *Mapping* may be sensitive in an urban context where land tenure is unclear but this is also likely to be true in a similar situation in rural areas. Insecurity of tenure is a frequent feature in many low-income urban communities and gaining legal status a common component of assistance programmes. A first step of this process is securing agreement to existing plot size and to any adjustment required for the installation of basic services. It is likely that one major area of participatory urban appraisal will be methods for mapping areas (and for securing community agreement to the defined plots) and for re-blocking sites for improvement (including the provision of services, reducing densities and leaving 'safety areas' around hazards such as rivers and steep slopes.)
- *Newly formed communities* in urban areas may lack a sense of cohesion but this is also true of new communities in rural areas and refugees. While in some countries in the South, urban in-migration is still significant, in others most urban population growth is a result of natural population increase and there are relatively few new residents.
- *Scheduling* of participatory exercises may be important in urban settlements if many people are employed for long hours outside the settlement. But a similar problem is faced by PRA practitioners in rural communities if people are working in the fields for long hours.
- *Basic service provision* (such as education) may be greater in urban areas but low-income residents (particularly those with illegal tenure) may be denied access.
- *Willingness to talk* may be greater in urban communities, but it does not appear that this is a consistent finding. In some urban communities, there is suspicion of strangers and/or a cynicism with development professionals and improvement projects.
- *Definitions of communities may be ambiguous* in urban areas but the same may also be true in rural areas. Communities may be defined by any one of a number of different factors including employment or source of livelihood, residential area, lineage bonds, class affiliations and religion. This is the case in both rural and urban settlements. One problem

with PRA is that practitioners may assume that the village is a single community when it is made of several different communities.

When considering differences between urban and rural areas, it is also important to examine the size of those differences. Why should the use of participatory approaches and methods within an urban context be seen as being so dramatically different from their use in complex and diverse rural areas? From our review of the available material, it is not evident that the differences between urban and rural areas within one country are any greater than the differences found among various urban or rural areas in different countries or regions. In other words, the differences in the kinds of conditions and constraints faced by smallholder farmers in Pakistan and Zambia may be at least as great as differences faced by farmers and low-income urban dwellers in both of those countries.

Spanning the Rural-Urban Divide

Despite clear economic, social and environmental differences between low-income rural and urban communities, we would argue that they have many aspects in common. Given the nature of modern economic and social change, one could even say that rural and urban are inextricably linked, as the livelihoods of many low-income people depend on resources in both spheres. Those commonalities are rarely described, let alone understood, thus making it difficult for urban and rural development researchers and practitioners to learn from one another.

Perhaps the most significant obstacle to the introduction, understanding and application of participatory approaches and methods in urban areas is the compartmentalisation of the development profession into distinct 'urban' and 'rural' disciplines. Such a division, applied both spatially and sectorally, is a construct of development planners and researchers. It fails to represent the real world, particularly that inhabited by low-income communities. Though there are human activities or forms of enterprise that can be defined as either uniquely urban or rural, most take place in both rural and urban settings, and most depend on rural-urban connections. The livelihoods of most people are based on a combination of activities and resources from both settings. Poor rural people, for example, rarely make a living solely from agriculture, forestry or livestock, as they commonly rely on income from household members engaged in employment in both rural and urban areas or on goods developed specifically for urban markets. Low-income groups in urban areas also do not necessarily make a living only from the industrial or service sectors; they may cultivate food in cities or in small plots nearby, or obtain it from relatives in rural areas, with harvests critical to household food security. The exact nature of these interconnections and the interface between the rural and urban is rarely understood.

This rural-urban divide has inhibited the flow of ideas, information and even methodologies between rural and urban practitioners. This is due not to the differences in the actual context on the ground, but in the way in which the development profession and development institutions are structured. Learning and information exchanges usually take place within each discipline, i.e. for 'urban' or 'rural' specialists. For rural and urban specialists, there are more opportunities for meetings with others in their field - even from abroad - than there are for learning about work outside of their specific area. To date, there appear to have been few opportunities for those working in urban areas to learn from P/RRA experiences and few opportunities for P/RRA specialists to see what has been occurring within community development programmes in urban areas. It is such institutional rigidities and the inertia in addressing them that, we would argue, are the major reasons for the use of participatory methodologies in urban areas being seen by rural development professionals and agencies as such a significant 'step'. This special issue of *RRA Notes* is an attempt to overcome this divide.

Scope and Range of the Papers

Methodology matters. That is the first and most obvious point arising from papers featured in this collection. All the papers focus to one degree or another on how participatory approaches enable development organisations to work more effectively with urban communities. The methodologies

described here have two specific characteristics: first, they are participative, and second, they are all concerned with research and/or development work in low-income urban communities.

Beyond these aspects, the papers range broadly over a number of different dimensions:

- Geographic location - both North and South;
- From top-down to bottom-up; and
- Rural-originated and urban-originated.

Spanning the Globe

The Northern perspective is touched on in the two papers by Tony Gibson and David Wilcox, although the papers deal more with conceptual issues relating to participatory approaches and methods in general, than in specific case examples. It is evident that, in the urban context, there is an overlap of issues and strategies between North and South. Ellen Wratten's paper examines a pilot programme in 12 countries which draws from the 'Planning for Real' methodology developed for use in low-income public housing estates in the UK. Experiences reported in other papers use similar tools to those included within this methodology. For example, the Community Action Planning approach developed in Sri Lanka includes a similar prioritisation exercise to that used in Planning for Real. Surveys conducted by community members are used in both Planning for Real and the methodology described by Joel Bolnick and Sheela Patel and used in both South Africa and India. The experience in this collection, although brief, suggests that North and South have much to learn from each other that may be of direct relevance and fairly immediate application in seeking to improve the quality of community participation.

In addition to themes that link North and South, the papers include community development experiences from Africa, Asia and Latin America. In Asia and Latin America, there is a rich tradition of community-based urban development efforts, which is reflected in the contributions in this collection. In Asia in particular, participatory approaches have been integral to the work of some urban development programmes for the better part of a decade although we know far too little about this. In all three continents, RRA, PRA and related approaches are gaining greater currency in both NGO and government-supported urban programmes. Informal discussions with various practitioners in these places suggest that the examples included in this volume only scratch the surface of the many participatory methodologies and innovative applications that are being developed and applied in urban areas. For example,

- In Fortaleza, Brazilian NGOs have worked with community groups to collectively redesign houses and settlements;
- In Manila, the Philippines, women have been exploring critical events in the development of settlement through sharing life histories;
- In India, participatory methods have been used to assist in identifying appropriate responses to the earthquake in Maharashtra;
- In Chile, houses have been designed by non-specialists using house modelling exercises;
- In Pakistan, the Orangi Pilot Project makes rapid and low-cost surveys of areas that are to be provided with secondary drains by drawing on the community's expertise; and
- In Birmingham, England, participatory tools have helped to initiate discussions and development programmes with Bangladeshi immigrants.

A Range of Actors and Initiators

The organisations responsible for initiating the development and application of participatory approaches and methods described here are drawn from three main groups: (1) NGOs; (2) government agencies; and (3) official agencies (ie. multilateral and bilateral development organisations). Some of these institutional actors work independently, though the tendency is to collaborate with others on projects of mutual concern.

Several contributors examine programmes initiated by NGOs. For example, Gustavo Romero, Patricia Nava and Lilia Palacios look at the efforts of two programmes in Mexico City, the Calpulli del Valle Housing Cooperative and the Settlers Union of San Miguel Teotongo. Both cases illustrate how a participatory action research approach can influence and improve development planning in low-income urban communities. Joel Bolnick and Sheela Patel offer an important example of South-South sharing through their analysis of the partnership between the People's Dialogue in South Africa and three organisations in India: SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan*, a federation of women's collectives. That collaboration has resulted in a initiation of participatory process for community-based shelter training programmes, as well as a valuable intercontinental exchange of ideas. Michael Drinkwater discusses how PRA methodologies have been used in Zambia.

Governments are also involved in some ground-breaking efforts to apply participatory approaches in urban settings. In Sri Lanka, for example, the government recognised the need to involve communities in their neighbourhood development and also the need to develop new methodologies in order to achieve this. Through its Community Action Planning, the Sri Lankan Government's Urban Housing Division is attempting to directly address the need for community involvement with a form of urban development appropriate for the needs of low-income households.

René Reusen and Jan Johnson of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) describe how, in Guinea, the Office National pour la Promotion de la Pêche Artisanale en Guinée (Guinean National Office for the Promotion of Artisanal Fisheries), together with the regional West African Integrated Development of Artisanal Fisheries Programme (IDAF) of FAO, have established a national programme with a number of important elements: (1) adaptation of PRA to an urban artisanal fisheries environment; (2) use of participatory appraisal to prepare and publish baseline studies and problem identification for several artisanal ports; (3) training of government field agents as 'participatory' technical consultants; (4) organisation of a legally-recognised Port User's Committee around the priority problems; and (5) management of the fieldwork programmes of government field officers in different ports by a Coordinating Committee composed of field worker representatives. This initiative is important not only because it has strengthened the capacity of government officers and port users' groups to use participatory appraisal approaches and helped improve their relations, but also because it has directly influenced national policy on artisanal port development and management.

From Rural to Urban Appraisal

Some official development agencies, already familiar with using participatory approaches and methods in rural development activities, have shown a willingness to draw on such techniques to improve the quality of their work in urban areas. Sheela Francis draws on her extensive experience with Participatory Learning Methods (PALM) to assist the Slum Improvement Programme of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA-UK) in five cities in India. She describes how the use of PALM, developed for work in rural areas, helped increase local people's participation in the Programme. Michael Drinkwater discusses how CARE, a Northern NGO, has drawn in expertise in participatory methodologies in order to improve the effectiveness of a food-for-work programme. These two are probably the best examples in the collection of how a rural approach has been adapted and situated within an urban community development programme.

A related set of experiences discuss the adaptation of rapid and participatory rural appraisal approaches for training and research purposes, rather than as an integral component of a community development programme. Philip Amis outlines an action learning approach - a modified form of RRA

- which he and his colleagues at the Development Administration Group (DAG) at the University of Birmingham, have developed to public administration training. Over the past few years, Amis and his colleagues have used this approach to train government officials at the Town and Country Planning Organisation (TCPO) in the Ministry of Urban Development, New Delhi, India. The aim has been to enhance the problem-solving skills of the administrators, especially their ability to identify, diagnose and produce recommendations for a particular issue or problem. Hilary Cottam focuses on the strengths and limitations of applying P/RRA in an urban public health context. Cottam describes research she undertook using Participatory Urban Appraisal in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, in which she explored the links between urban women's perceptions of their multiple productive roles and their health. Her paper examines what methods worked and what did not for this purpose - and why.

One paper specifically describes a training process used to reorient urban project staff towards participatory approaches. Michael Drinkwater recounts how CARE Zambia is now using PRA, combined with Training for Transformation techniques, to reorient its strategy in several Lusaka compounds away from purely infrastructural improvements through food-for-work, towards stimulating low-income communities to take the initiative to better their own livelihoods. The emphasis was particularly on re-training project staff to enable them to move from a technically-oriented project to one which focused on social and livelihood analysis. However, the training course not only included the project staff, but also members of the community to allow all to understand the reality of livelihoods in the Zambian economic and political context.

Two papers illustrate the increasing use of rural appraisal approaches for rapid assessment of urban poverty issues. In his paper, Martin Leach discusses a European Community-supported programme's efforts to employ Rapid Urban Appraisal (RUA), the urban equivalent of RRA, to channel aid to very poor people in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Although the field team was still experimenting with the methodology to see how it would work in an urban setting, the approach proved successful because they remained open to new opportunities as they arose and had the confidence to modify their strategy as they went along, something most effective rural appraisal teams do. Andy Norton summarises some of the lessons he and his team learnt from preparing World Bank Country Poverty Assessments in Ghana and Zambia in which P/RRA methods were used. He points out that certain implicit assumptions about rural conditions and livelihoods - the mutual knowledge among neighbours, the homogeneity in local livelihood strategies and the definition of 'community' - have influenced the development of RRA and PRA. When those approaches are applied in urban situations, these tacit assumptions may not hold true. Norton urges researchers to recognise the distinct differences between urban and rural contexts and not treat them as being one and the same.

Expanding on this last division, a distinction can be made between those papers that draw directly from the rural research and development and P/RRA traditions and those that reflect a more spontaneous experimentation by groups working with low-income urban communities. Within rural areas, PRA/RRA was developed in order to ensure that the potential contribution of farmers was better understood by the development professionals supposedly assisting such communities. A second reason, identified as the methodological 'toolkit' or 'repertoire', began to develop was the strengthening of community decision making and management potential. Both traditions are evident in this collection of papers.

Silvina Arrossi of IIED/America Latina describes the use of focus groups in the Habitat and Health Project in Barrio San Jorge, Argentina, for identifying priority issues, mobilising local resources and building rapport between local people and external facilitators. In this work, she draws on another tradition, that of Rapid Assessment Procedure (RAP), used mainly in the health sector.

Top-Down, Bottom-Up: Meeting Halfway

For local level planning to be effective, there is a need for it to link with higher level planning structures. Without such a link, these higher level plans may diminish or destroy local activity. The articles in this special issue of *RRA Notes* highlight two ways of linking local-level development

planning with higher level planning structures through the use of participatory approaches:

1. Cooperative government authorities provide local groups space to manoeuvre, regularise land rights, fund local initiatives and employ participatory approaches as a way of better understanding local needs and priorities. Their emphasis is on establishing constructive dialogue and improving a sense of trust between parties. The process is driven, at least initially, by outsiders. Examples from this collection of papers include the Slum Improvement Programme, Community Action Planning and the Food and Agriculture Organization. These programmes recognise that community participation is not just needed for the efficient use of resources but also because effective improvements in urban areas cannot be realised without community involvement and commitment. The nature of many urban development programmes is such that considerable rearrangement of the settlement is required. Without a means to ensure the community's involvement in, and acceptance, of the plans, such re-blocking is likely to be divisive and discriminatory. In both these examples, essentially of top-down programmes, the government agencies recognise the value of using participatory tools and methods in order to ensure that the plans of the 'top' draw on the needs and expertise of the households to realise their broad objectives.
2. Community development groups employ participatory approaches as a way of creating local awareness and mobilising local resources for communal action. This is sometimes necessary where the state is seen as either uncooperative or inefficient. Their emphasis is on empowerment, developing sense of local ownership and cohesion, and gaining access to state resources. Participatory approaches, in this instance, can help local groups create room to manoeuvre and organise means of resistance to thwart or challenge negative government policies. The process, in this instance, is driven by insiders. Examples here include Planning for Real and the methodology developed by SPARC (Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres) and the People's Dialogue. The papers by Bolnick and Patel and by Gibson illustrate the contribution of such methodologies to increasing community awareness of their own skills and understanding. The use of participatory tools and methods is an integral part of a process to develop a confidence within the community about their ability to deal with professionals on equal terms *and* to enable collective planning to take place so that the community develops the wisdom and strength that it requires to be effective.

Both of these strategies can be seen within PRA approaches in a rural setting. While there has perhaps been an increase in the number of initiatives proposed by government authorities in the last ten years, this does not simply reflect a growing enthusiasm for participatory approaches and methods. Other reasons include new decentralisation policies and a reduction in public sector investment following the adoption of structural adjustment policies.

Participatory Approaches and Methods in Urban Areas; an Opportunity for Mutual Learning?

Reflecting the division of the development profession into its urban and rural components, the papers in this collection are drawn both from authors with a long experience of working in urban areas and by those more familiar with the rural tradition of participatory methodologies experimenting with their use in urban areas. What is the contribution of each and what do urban and rural development professionals have to learn from each other?

The papers originating within the urban community development traditions offer participatory methodologies rooted in a local context and development programme. Their strength appears to lie in their ability to identify the needs of the communities with which they are working and to draw in community resources, including knowledge. The effectiveness of many community development interventions in urban areas relies on the active involvement and participation of community members. In this work, there is evidence from the papers included here and from other projects with which we are familiar that tools and methods have been developed similar to those associated with PRA and other participatory approaches in rural areas. However, few urban groups have documented this aspect of their work and there have been few (if any) opportunities for exchanging information

through newsletters and meetings. This lack of documentation may have delayed the development of such approaches.

The papers authored by those familiar with rural traditions in participatory methodologies clearly come into the urban environment with something to share. In this collection, they describe very specific experimentation with particular tools and methods, in some cases adapted to make them more appropriate to the urban context. With an emphasis on methodology, they offer a challenge to the urban development community to meet with them in the sharing of participatory tools and methods. But these papers also reflect an early weakness of rapid rural appraisal. Located outside of development projects and programmes, they suffer from being one-off interventions rather than being part of an on-going development programme located within that community. As such, the learning processes are inevitably introductory, indicating further lines of enquiry rather than conclusions. Another potentially fruitful area of exchange for the development of urban participatory approaches might be a better understanding of the history of the spread of participatory approaches within the rural context over the last ten years.

The dual origins of this set of papers demonstrate how the institutional division between urban and rural has stultified and compartmentalised the development process within participatory methodologies. Within rural development, contexts and networks mean that it is relatively easy for professionals working in one area and wishing to extend into a new area (spatial or otherwise) to work together with a local institution. Across the rural urban 'divide' there are few such opportunities. The experiences recounted by Sheelu Francis and Michael Drinkwater offer the only examples within this collection of how people trained in PRA methodology have used that knowledge within long-established urban community development programmes. Equally, while some of those working in urban areas are increasingly aware of the development of participatory approaches within rural development including PRA, they often do not know the individuals and institutions to whom they can turn to for more information. We hope that this collection can be the beginning of a more formal process of information exchange; and that this exchange might be the start of a more constructive and creative relationship between those working in urban and rural areas.

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URBAN MANAGEMENT TRAINING, ACTION LEARNING AND RAPID ANALYSIS METHODS

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Background

This short note is an attempt to condense some of the experience gained at the Development Administration Group (DAG) in using Rapid Analysis Methods in an overall action learning approach to urban management training. This has primarily taken place in a series of courses run by DAG and the Town and Country Planning Organisation (TCPO) in the Ministry of Urban Development, New Delhi, India. These notes are only my observations as one of the team members; a considerable amount of the expertise has been built up collectively both by the members of the SPP teams and the course participants. Other members of the team might have different interpretations. The notes reflect on what we have been trying to achieve and the extent to which ideas about RRA can be transferred to the urban context and used in training programmes for government officials.

What is the Problem?

It may help at this stage if I outline the main concern of the various urban management training programmes that we are collaborating with. At the risk of over-simplification, a considerable number of the training programmes at DAG are attempts to overcome institutional inertia and create 'room for manoeuvre' for officers to employ new skills. Within DAG we have tried, in both the urban and rural spheres, to use an action learning approach to achieve this in public administration training. A critical aspect has been forming courses into teams to analyse a problem and produce a report in a 'consultancy' manner. (The term consultancy is not being used in a pejorative way, but to emphasise the importance and necessity of short and quick problem-solving and applied research often carried out in teams). Practically this takes the form of an applied field study. It is critically important to understand that this is not simply a 'look and see'. For officials, it involves them in actually analysing a particular problem in depth and producing practical and detailed policy recommendations.

In training terms the process is more important than the context. The aim of this methodology is to enhance problem-solving ability; namely the ability to identify, diagnose and produce recommendations for a particular issue or problem. For those familiar with an academic research tradition it is easy to underestimate the change in attitudes and behaviour this represents to the general milieu of a government bureaucracy. This weakness in problem analysis has recently been identified as a central concern in the need to strengthen indigenous policy making capacity. This is critically important as it allows policy to be set at the appropriate level rather than be externally set either by donors or, in the case of local government, by national institutions.

In the DAG training courses we have modified the approach of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) to help facilitate this training objective. The emphasis has been on the rapid and reasonably reliable aspects of RRA as a tool in data collection. Recognising the need to be roughly right rather than precise in management decisions has been a guiding theme. In this our approach has been more associated with the rapid nature of these techniques than the participatory emphasis. In the Indian context it has been necessary in order to move officials away from a dependence upon government statistics, large scale

surveys and formal methodology¹. Such information is often in fact not available and its absence serves as an excuse for inaction.

In a very real sense the training is an attempt to empower officers to go out and collect raw data, to analyse and to act on their analysis. It is also an attempt to facilitate a process through which government officers go and find out for themselves what is happening on the ground rather than rely on secondary sources and/or official stereotyping. This is of course entirely consistent with, and is the central objective of, an action learning approach to training. In summary it is this desire which has led us to borrow RRA methods, rather than any commitment to them *per se*.

Recent Experience with RRA in an Urban Context²

We have used RRA techniques explicitly in our Indian urban training programmes since 1989. These programmes have generally consisted of a two to three month course in the UK (at Birmingham) on Urban Management followed by a month long field study of a particular urban issue conducted with TCPO. Thus while the Birmingham-based component is intended to acquaint the participants with policy approaches, analytical skills and management methods derived from international experience, the month long Indian component is designed to enable participants to apply these approaches to practical problems in India.

During the UK component, we carry out a field study usually around some issue of local authorities' performance using similar techniques; recent field studies have been carried out in Newcastle, Sheffield and Bradford. This is important as it counters the popular notion that rapid methods are a 'second best' solution for the developing world.

The India component generally involves a two week field study of a particular urban problem in a specific setting. Since 1989 this has involved field studies in small towns in Gujarat, Karnataka and Rajasthan. To achieve this the group work towards mutually defined terms of reference, as would a consultancy team. This will involve interviewing, observation and data collection. Then the team returns to TCPO in New Delhi and prepares a report. At the end of the fourth week this is presented to a panel of senior officials and experts from the Ministry of Urban Development. It hardly needs mentioning that this is a hectic but ultimately rewarding process.

The two components of RRA that we have found the most relevant and appropriate, apart from the overall philosophy, are triangulation and the use of proxies.

Triangulation

Triangulation is really the most straightforward of ideas: one should endeavour to check facts from more than one source. In practice this often means checking with another source to verify the accuracy of some official statement. For example an official may state that the government is providing a certain facility. However, in reality it may only be doing so to a very limited extent. In a small town in Karnataka we were assured that informal traders whose sites would be removed/relocated would be compensated. A quick discussion in the field quickly cast considerable doubt on this. Triangulation is particularly important to counter the 'official view'. For government officials it may be considered improper and indeed counter-productive to bypass the official channels and structures. Hence the importance of exposing them to triangulation so as to supplement the official interpretation. For government officers on a government programme, it is simply impossible

¹At this stage it may be relevant to note that urban officials often come from technical (eg. engineering, planning and architecture) backgrounds, which professionally have a relied on large data sets and formal survey methods.

²Many of these methods have been documented in a manual entitled *RADIC: A Guide to the Rapid Analysis of Development in Cities*. (Blore, 1994), School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham. [Draft].

to become an outsider and escape the government label as much of the literature implies. We all come with our baggage; it is simply untrue and misleading to imagine otherwise.

Use of Proxies

The second tool we have borrowed from RRA is the use of proxies. A proxy is an indicator which can give you an idea about a variable which it is difficult, for whatever reason (money, time or privacy), to measure. These seem particularly useful in relation to poverty and processes of economic development.

Here we use the idea of a proxy as a key indicator to find our way through the enormous quantities of data which exist even for small towns in India! In our 1990 analysis of four small towns in Karnataka on the Bangalore/Mysore corridor, as part of the IDSMT programme (see below), we developed a whole series of proxies to try to understand the processes of local economic development and municipal efficiency. The idea was to find a single proxy which could give us a handle on the potential for local economic development. (In a short period of time it is not possible to assess the local economy, even if a common methodology could be agreed). Data was collected on a whole series of indicators related to the municipalities and the local economy. For example, on the economy we collected data on land prices, employment levels, number of shops, sales tax, number of bank deposits and loans, industry employment and turnover, wage levels, rents, markets and so on.

As can be seen, some of this was simply collecting official statistics at the local level; this often involved manually disaggregating and restructuring official data. This is a more useful and rapid technique than it often appears and officials think. In some cases the data collection involved direct observation. An important lesson was that it is only through doing the exercise and in conjunction with other observations of the small towns that it was possible to determine the robustness of the proxies and indicators. Thus for example the data on sales tax which seemed in theory to be a good indicator was simply too erratic and inconsistent with our common sense observations.

Through the research process the following were found to be key indicators and good *de facto* proxies for local economic development:

- Socio-economic data such as population, land values etc.
- Agricultural Produce Marketing (APMC) figures.
- Services: water supply, electricity and petrol stations.
- Management (municipal) efficiency: staffing, income, expenditure and tax ratios (Amis, 1991).

The ability to be able to use government statistics and to check them against common sense (triangulation again), is an underrated skill.

Future Work: Small Town Development in India (IDSMT)

The discussion below illustrates the sort of work that is being done with urban rapid analysis.

We are currently in the middle of a new Indian Urban Management Development Programme funded by ODA which intends to use such techniques to improve the performance of the Indian Government's Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT) programme. The IDSMT programme was started with the objective of slowing down the growth of metropolitan centres by providing a mechanism for increased investment in small and medium towns. The programme involves the selection of specific IDSMT towns which then qualify for investment in the form of projects in social and economic infrastructure.

IDSMT will provide capital finance for commercial development, roads, town service infrastructure, sites and services, slum improvement and employment generation schemes. The Indian Government is eager to see that these new funds are utilised. It is to this end that the ODA funded project seeks

to enhance the capacity of government officials in the implementation of the IDSMT project. Specifically it is intended that Rapid Analysis methods should be used for problem-solving to help identify suitable and viable projects at the local level. It is intended that the use of such techniques will help local officials to quickly gain insights into the processes of local economic development. The project also has a complementary aim to improve local competence and management skills.

In order to try to achieve these goals, the project has involved the development of a network (or 'think tank') of trainers associated with the programme. The intention is that programmes for training IDSMT officials will be developed at three core training centres: the Town and Country Planning Organisation (TCPO) in the Ministry of Urban Development in New Delhi; the Regional Centre for Urban Planning and Environmental (RCUES) in Hyderabad; and the School of Planning and Architecture, Ahmedabad (SPA). In addition there will be support from other local institutions. In order to facilitate this process the network has just been involved on a seven week Training of Trainers programme in Birmingham and this year will develop short courses in India for IDSMT staff.

This process is ongoing and as such it is clearly too early to make comments on its success. It is however an exciting challenge to be associated with. Programmes to strengthen small towns do seem to be an area where such methods are particularly appropriate; for example, GTZ and USAID are both developing ideas in Kenya and Nepal respectively (Garnett *et al.*, 1989).

Conclusion

In conclusion there is perhaps an irony here that is worth spelling out. We have found RRA a useful tool to improve our management training through an action learning approach. In this we have been almost completely instrumental. In many respects this represents an improved top-down approach. This is perhaps not the philosophy behind much of the enthusiasm for RRA/PRA. However what I think it does show is the fact that RRA codifies many statistical ideas behind reducing sampling error and reducing biases. It is not as new as it claims - indeed many recognise the ideas as being recycled from the fieldwork tradition of geography! In using proxies and triangulation we have sought to emphasise the similarity with other survey methods rather than the difference. What this seems to suggest is that the *skills* of listening, critical thinking and rigour (however defined), which we have tried to use RRA tools to improve, are more important than the *method*. As an outsider there seems to be a danger in the methodology dominating the purpose.

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**RAPID ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES IN URBAN COMMUNITIES:
THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HABITAT AND HEALTH PROJECT
IN BARRIO SAN JORGE, ARGENTINA**

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Introduction

San Jorge is a poor squatter settlement of about 2,300 inhabitants in the District of San Fernando (Metropolitan Region of Greater Buenos Aires) in an area of extremely degraded environmental conditions. The zone is liable to flooding, the *barrio* is bordered by a highly contaminated river (considered to be an open sewer), and two gullies into which flow sewer-water and all kinds of refuse. The quality of infrastructure is very poor and drainage services do not exist. More than two-fifths of the population are illegally connected to the public water supply; others obtain water through the intermittent distribution by municipal water tankers or through public standpipes installed in some streets of the *barrio* (Hardoy and Hardoy, 1991). In all cases however, the supply is not continuous, water being available only during some hours of the day.

The *barrio* is divided into two sections: the New Barrio and the Old Barrio. The latter lies on land belonging to eight private landlords while the newer section lies on public land. However, there have been no attempts to expel the inhabitants.

In September 1992, IIED-LA began the implementation of the Habitat and Health Project in Barrio San Jorge, with financial assistance from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The project integrated three kinds of activities:

1. A *participatory diagnosis* of the main habitat and health problems in the community. This diagnosis was the basis for deciding on:
2. A *community activity* (ie. specific project) on habitat, chosen jointly through participation between project team members and the inhabitants, to both illustrate the link between habitat and the population's health level and to promote improvements in living conditions related to these two factors.
3. An *evaluation* process of both the results achieved and the methods used, continued throughout the project.

This article describes how three preliminary focus groups were 'piloted', to test participatory methodologies on a small scale. The aim of the focus groups was to explore a method of working which would enable us to get to know the people's perspectives on the main health and habitat problems of the *barrio*, thus enabling joint progress in the design and implementation of social initiatives. The results of this initiative helped to restructure the use of participatory methodologies in the second stage of the project. There was some concern that the health-care system (local, provincial and national) did not reflect the community's priorities. Therefore the objective was to diagnose the main health and habitat problems of the *barrio* with the community, and outline and discuss with the inhabitants joint activities and new ways of working together. Another objective of the exercise was to identify local facilitators with whom to work to resolve these problems. The aim of this article is to show the main lessons emerging from the use of a focus group methodology in a low-income urban community.

The Focus Groups: Context

The design, implementation and organisation of the focus groups was made more difficult due to the high level of demotivation and lack of respect for local institutions (be they government, non-government, or private). The community has a history of non-participation, marked mainly by authoritarian control during the years of military dictatorship. For 20 years (1962-1982), San Jorge was controlled by an Antioch Church priest who introduced very strict controls; he decided who could enter or leave the *barrio*, at what times, and also laid down 'guidelines for acceptable behaviour'. During this period, any attempt at community organisation was rapidly stopped. When the priest left the *barrio*, the inhabitants believed that any activity or dialogue with neighbours was useless and even dangerous.

From 1983, the strengthening of the democratic movement in Argentina allowed the emergence of initiatives to improve conditions in the *barrio* supported by the Church, various NGOs, and local or provincial government. However, due to continuing difficulties these initiatives have only been introduced on a limited scale. The change of government, the difficulties in coordinating local participation, and the lack of continuity in project implementation are some of the factors which have limited the potential of these initiatives to motivate and support the local residents to get involved.

The experience of negotiation over land-ownership is very illustrative of the problems. Since 1988, IIED-LA has been working in Barrio San Jorge with various activities to promote community organisation. The joint work of the NGO and the residents achieved a new level of activity in 1992 when the people of the *barrio* established 'Our Land' Cooperative of Land and Housing with the aim of achieving legal tenure. For two years, the Cooperative, with the help of IIED-LA, has been negotiating with the local authorities for the transfer of the tenancy of the land. The negotiations have not yet been successful, causing the enthusiasm and involvement of the community to fall. This experience has reinforced a general feeling within the community that they are always at the bottom of the authorities' list of priorities and that projects bring only promises.

This is the general context within which the Habitat and Health project was implemented. The choice of a focus group methodology plus other methods of bringing people together were determined by the need to ensure high levels of participation within a demotivated community and to prevent the usual low level of attendance at group meetings. This in turn had consequences in the development of the work, as will be shown.

Criteria for the Choice of the Groups

It was decided that three focus groups would be formed, each made up of groups of participants with distinct characteristics. The choice of the participants and the place and time of the meetings were determined by the need to encourage participation in the activity and avoid poor attendance. It was hoped to use the setting up of the focus groups both as an exploratory activity to identify the limitations of the methodology and to identify any useful aspects for the second phase of the project. Three distinct groups were defined:

- *Focus Group A*: Ten young people of both sexes between 16 and 22 years old drawn from a weekly study-group associated with the local parish. There were three reasons for establishing a group with young people. First, young people are not usually integrated into the development activities of the *barrio*. Second, little is known about their perceptions of community problems (and, specifically in this case, of habitat and health). Finally, it was hoped that it would be possible to explore the perceptions of this age group as potential members and leaders of the activities to be implemented within the framework of the project.

This particular group of young people was selected because their meetings were already established and running. This reduced the problems of ensuring good attendance at the focus group discussions. However, it also offered the added benefit of including the perspectives of a group with interests in religious study plus a commitment which could be assumed to be greater than that of the majority of

the young people in the *barrio*. However, a disadvantage is that the group may not be representative of other young people in the *barrio*.

The group already included both men and women. It was considered inappropriate to interrupt existing group dynamics, and unlikely that discussion of the subjects covered in the initial meetings would be affected by the presence of participants of both sexes. However, it will be necessary at a later stage to work in single sex groups in order to include a discussion of sex-specific health problems.

- *Focus Group B*: Twelve mothers who bring their children to the Mother and Child Centre were invited to participate in the second focus group. The Mother and Child Centre caters for children six weeks old to five years. This group offered an opportunity to better understand the perceptions of women (in their role as mothers) about the community's habitat conditions and their relation to their children's health problems.

The discussions took place in the Mother and Child Centre prior to a pre-arranged talk by a nutritionist and doctor, in which mothers were informed of the results of a clinical analysis of each child at the Centre. Mothers had their own interest in participating in the meeting with the doctor and it was hoped that joining the two activities together would reduce the problem of non-attendance.

The meeting of mothers with children at the Centre was also interesting because it drew together children from families in both the Old and New Barrio with very different levels of participation and integration into the community activities of the *barrio*. This therefore enabled a discussion with a more representative range of visions and perceptions of different families in Barrio San Jorge. It is possible that mothers with children at the Centre may have been influenced by the attention children receive, the contact with the Centre doctor and the education work of the teachers. However, it was also felt that the group offered possibilities for an interesting discussion with good attendance.

- *Focus Group C*: Twelve mothers benefitting from the water and drainage works being carried out as a pilot project within the same programme of activities were invited to take part in the third focus group. The choice of this group was based on the expectation that the benefits received from the water and drainage works would be a motivating factor for participation. Furthermore, it was considered that the perceptions of the problems of habitat and health held by mothers in this group could be particularly important for better understanding how the development of infrastructure improvements was changing perceptions of the relationships between habitat and health.

The Process of the Focus Groups

Each focus group had two facilitators, one to coordinate participation and the second to take notes. In addition, a tape-recorder was used to record the meeting if all participants agreed. Various activities were planned to encourage participation, including the use of sub-groups, report-backs and brainstorming. These activities were felt to be necessary because of the previous difficulties encountered by the social workers in the *barrio* when trying to promote discussion with a high level of participation.

Calling the Meetings

Each of the three group meetings was called by a social worker belonging to the Barrio San Jorge team. Different methods were used to advise each group of the meeting. Group C (from the pilot project) was advised by a verbal invitation to each mother. The members of group B (from the Mother and Child Centre) were invited to both the focus group and the talk with the doctor. The youth group was called through a verbal invitation made to the leader of the group and without individual invitations to each participant.

Level of Participation

The level of participation varied between the focus groups. There was a low level of participation in Group B, with only five of the 12 participants attending. Seven young people came to group A. Only two mothers came to group C and therefore these discussions were not considered to be the outcome of a focus group. Instead, points made during the informal discussion were considered to be complementary to the information obtained from the other groups. Because of this, only the work carried out by groups A and B will be considered.

In both focus groups there was active participation by those attending, the conversation was very intense and very fluid. In each case, the meetings took on their own dynamic from the start, which the facilitators respected. The active participation of the people from the start, showed that enlivening techniques such as brainstorming were unnecessary, and would have been an interruption rather than an aid to the fluidity of the conversation.

Lessons Learned

The methodology of defining and calling focus group meetings had both positive and negative aspects which need to be further considered before these techniques are used in a second phase of the project.

Group Motivation

The method used for calling meetings must be revised. It is difficult to achieve high levels of participation and potential motivating factors need to be explored. The means used to help ensure high levels of participation had some negative consequences for the effectiveness of the technique.

In Group A, the invitation to each participant was made by the group leader who did not give each group-member a precise and individual invitation, due to the group's own ways of handling information. Consequently participants did not have a clear idea that they were going to take part in a research activity. The meeting was timed to immediately precede their regular weekly meeting and therefore members that turned up to the focus group were likely to stay (regardless of their motivation) because they had to wait for their own meeting to start.

The method used to call Group B had similar problems, being designed to immediately precede another meeting. The discussion took place on the premises of the Mother and Child Centre, the room was not sufficiently isolated from the day-to-day activities of the Centre and there were numerous interruptions by children and teachers.

It is necessary to find ways of guaranteeing participants' involvement by designing motivating elements which at the same time ensure that they come voluntarily. It is also necessary to ensure that enough time is allowed for the development of activities and suitable premises provided.

Despite these difficulties, the discussions were very wide-ranging. In the two focus groups which took place the participation was active, with a constant dialogue and exchange of information. Given this level of activity, the complementary methods that had been planned (use of boards, formation of sub-groups and brainstorming exercises) were not necessary.

Discussions on Habitat and Health

The focus groups enabled joint discussion to take place between the team and participants about habitat and health problems. In both cases there was a discussion of the role and responsibilities of the community and relations with different local authorities. Various suggestions to help ensure more active participation from the community in the second phase of the Habitat and Health Project emerged from the young people's group. They also considered how young people in general might

become more involved in the Community Cooperative. The group agreed that they would continue to hold meetings on these subjects in order to define a specific work proposal.

This experience shows that, in principle, if space is created for people's participation there is potential for joint work between the community and other agencies active in the *barrio*. This also demonstrates that participatory activities have the potential to foster greater community involvement in debate, new proposals for community development and for the emergence of community leaders.

Conclusion

Participative research is the basis for improved project sustainability in the medium and long term. Only the involvement of the population can ensure success of initiatives at community level and the techniques of participatory research are an important tool to secure this involvement.

At the same time, the effective implementation of these techniques is not straightforward and there are obstacles that must be overcome. In settlements with low levels of organisation and participation, only a long and slow process can reverse this situation. In this context, experience shows that in many communities people are reluctant to take part in research activities, partly because it is not always clear how it will benefit them, and partly because of previous research projects that have been implemented without clear aims or visible results.

In this first experience of the Habitat and Health Project, these problems were not fully overcome. Participation was active in the focus groups that took place and showed how the discussion could identify points of interest for the organisation of community work, but at the same time the method used to form the meetings affected the nature and content of discussions and the relation between facilitators and participants. An evaluation of this experience has been used to revise the working strategy for beginning the second phase of this project, in which the water and drainage works will be extended throughout the *barrio*.

It is important that there is a clear understanding of the meaning of participation and the stage at which supposed beneficiaries should be involved in community projects. From our perspective, participation is a process through which the community takes part in the design and implementation of a project, in order both to strengthen their ability to analyse problems and to propose solutions to the various agencies involved (state, NGOs, private sector). This must also incorporate a training programme to enable the community to handle the resources mobilised by the project. This definition of participation recognises the need to form strategies for work with low-income communities; rather than being about a process of participative research, it uses participative research as a tool within a general process of community strengthening and participation.

Participative research thus poses a challenge; it is a critical instrument to support a social development process at the community level; at the same time, its design must also promote participation by the population within the programmed activities. Such aspects will vary in each local case, and must be designed taking into account the specific community's level of participation and organisation.

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REGAINING KNOWLEDGE: AN APPEAL TO ABANDON ILLUSIONS

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Introduction

This article is extracted from a report¹ outlining the experiences of a partnership between the People's Dialogue in South Africa and a group of three organisations in India: SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan*, a federation of women's collectives.

The People's Dialogue is a national network linking representatives from illegal and informal settlements which emerged from a meeting of community leaders of 150 informal settlements in 1991 (Bolnick, 1993). SPARC² is an NGO working broadly in the area of housing and community development which has developed a close alliance with the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan* (D'Cruz and Patel, 1993).

As a result of this partnership People's Dialogue members were able to benefit from community-based shelter training programmes in India where the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan* have been engaged in such programmes for over eight years. They have since experimented with and developed the training process within communities in South Africa. This article explains why the training process is important to community development, describes several of the participatory methods and techniques involved in the process, and argues that such experiential learning is a more useful approach than those offered by conventional training.

The Training Process and Community Development

The experience-based learning of the training process has two separate but interrelated purposes. Firstly, it enables low-income people to evolve their own understanding of their social and economic environment, not just on a micro-level but via exchange in regional and global arenas. Secondly, it equips the participants, impoverished residents of informal settlements, with the ability to carry out and drive their own experiential learning programmes. Four particular benefits of the training process have been identified:

1. It teaches communities how to involve every resident in the process of making choices. This process of collective social development takes much time and needs to begin before physical redevelopment of the settlement can take place.
2. It trains the entire community to participate in the process of change, deepens community participation and educates the community through mass involvement in the process of training. This process also allows new leaders to emerge and sharpens community leadership.
3. It creates space for people to consider what they need, what choices are available and allows

¹Copies of this report are available from the authors; please send an International Money Order for \$10 to cover printing and distribution costs.

²See NGO Profile, *Environment and Urbanization*, 2(1).

communities to become fully prepared to discuss their aspirations with outsiders. Often the solutions of outsiders are accepted because the people see no alternative.

4. It demonstrates to the community how hard and long the process of development really is, thereby reducing the pressure on community leaders to deliver instant gratification.

Understanding that there are no immediate solutions for the needs of low-income households, the training process focuses on helping communities identify collectively their needs and aspirations. The second stage involves locating the skills, resources and strategies to which the community can immediately gain access and develop. The third stage is to identify potential resources that are currently unavailable.

This community level experiential learning process has several characteristics which are becoming more apparent with each successive training in both India and South Africa. These include:

- Trainers in the community who are not experts but 'grassroots' people. The people must decide their own hierarchy of needs and are best equipped to create their own priorities. All the training team require is to have been exposed to a similar community-driven training programme on at least one previous occasion. There is therefore a rapid transition from learners to teachers;
- Transformation occurs within the boundaries of the people's self-determined priorities and is driven by their own resources, initiatives and skills;
- The sustained replication of experience based learning processes generates an institutional basis for those people marginalised by conventional development processes;
- Experienced based learning has a dialectical rhythm of action/reflection/action. This enables the collectives to develop a theoretical understanding of their practice. This understanding in turn helps them to determine the purpose and direction of future practice;
- Women are central to the training process. No group is more adversely affected by landlessness and homelessness than women. Community based shelter training programmes are a mechanism through which the pivotal role of women in communities is recognised and supported.

In summary, an innovative shelter training programme is an all-encompassing, community-based effort aimed at retrieving knowledge about the living reality of the homeless poor and using the results to strengthen their position in an antagonistic social order. This process cannot take place in isolation but needs to draw on and contribute to its own development through linkage to other settlements that are a part of the training process. Replication strengthens the federation of the urban poor, and exchange programmes between settlements enable scattered grassroots organisations to support each other.

Shack Counting

Once the community leadership (civic, residents' association, church organisation etc.) are ready to undertake the training, a start date is arranged with the training team. Normally the training begins with the physical counting and mapping of all houses and other structures in the settlement and this shack counting exercise always starts with a huge celebration. Much depends on the skills and imagination of the community-based training team. Here are some examples of what has been done in the past:

- Inviting other homeless communities to visit the settlement that is hosting the training programme;

- Helping the community to organise a concert;
- Encouraging community-based drama teams to put on a performance that demonstrates the need for a training programme;
- Inviting dignitaries to attend the opening ceremony (particularly people who have influence in the sphere of land and shelter);
- Inviting leaders of other settlements who might be interested in initiating their own training programmes.

If the opening celebrations are held in the evening, then the shack count begins the following morning. The training team prepares for the activities of the next day by completing a few practical tasks. A rough map of the settlement, drawn a few days before, and a series of photographs of the settlement are displayed. The team has a meeting with the leadership of the community to explain the activities for the following day. The leadership and the training team decide how to divide the settlement into sections (either by zone or by block, or if they do not exist, by means of prominent landmarks).

Everybody should be ready at the start of the day to begin the counting. One member of the 'training team' is assigned to each section. They become the leaders of groups of people who will assist in counting all the structures in the sections. While counting the shacks with training team members these people receive a thorough experience-based training. People who are identified to be trained can include:

- Residents of the settlement holding the training programme. These people will sustain the training programme and other shelter activities once the training team and other guests have departed;
- Residents from other settlements who have expressed interest in setting up experience based training programs in their settlements;
- Trained members of the network/federation from other settlements;
- People in the broader society whose participation could benefit the community in its struggle for land and/or shelter.

Once the teams have been formed and assigned to their sections a standard settlement enumeration begins. The significant difference is that the information-gathering is done by homeless people themselves. This information is used to improve their chances of influencing housing development initiatives in their settlements. While the enumeration is taking place, members of each training and information gathering group engage the members of the community.

These informal exchanges are the very soul of the process. This simple process of dialogue and exchange only occurs when the people from communities do the counting. The informal discussions that accompany community driven enumerations are both an outstanding method of mobilisation and an exceptionally accurate way of identifying issues that people in the community regard as relevant. Community-driven enumerations, where they are backed up by a strong but loosely structured federation of informal settlements, achieve what professional enumerators are unable to do. The process helps identify and release the real feelings, frustrations and expectations of oppressed people. The way a squatter responds to the inquiries of a fellow squatter is very different from, and more relevant than, the way that same squatter responds to the social scientist or researcher. This is especially so if squatters know that the information they give can be used by a people's housing movement to strengthen the position of the country's millions of homeless people.

While the training groups talk to the people in the community, they share a few words about people-driven housing, a people's housing movement, community-controlled surveys and housing savings

schemes. In this way, the ground is prepared for what will follow. In tandem with the shack count and numbering, the training groups draw rough maps of the settlement.

Mapping

A big myth that keeps shack-dwellers dependent on professionals is that specialised skills are required to accomplish technical tasks. Members of the training team are equipped with the confidence and the knowledge to destroy these myths. They do so by enabling community members to accomplish technical tasks themselves. A good example of this is mapping.

As the groups progress through the settlement numbering and counting shacks, shops, creches, churches and so on, they draw a simple one dimensional drawing of the streets and structures. Key landmarks are included, as are drains, sewers, electric lights, rivers and other major features. Once the shack counting and mapping have been completed, the sections are combined into one by a community member who draws well. The result is that the community members have produced their own physical map of the settlement in which they live: a concrete example as to how the attainment of knowledge through practice generates energy and power. Once people have demarcated their settlement themselves, they go on to examine landownership and related matters in terms of their own needs and experience. When professionals undertake this exercise, it is often referred to as a cadestral survey. Such a survey may be necessary later when the redevelopment process has to begin but it is simply a sophisticated version of mapping. Once the mapping exercise has been completed, it is possible to learn to read the cadestral survey.

Surveys

Although this training programme does not follow any set formula, a survey usually follows a shack counting exercise. Once the information generated by the shack count has been reflected back to the community via a mass meeting accompanied by the graphical display of all the information gathered, the survey is started.

For at least half a day the members of the training team accompany the training groups, helping to fill in the questionnaires. The members of the training team step aside as soon as they are confident that the new trainees from the settlement are able and eager to complete the survey on their own. It will be the task of this newly trained team to continue with the survey until every family in the settlement has filled in a form. The training team does not usually remain in the settlement until all the questionnaires have been completed; after a few days they are ready to return to their daily lives in informal settlements throughout South Africa. It is not unusual for the people who are being trained to signal to the training team, before the trainers volunteer to step aside, that they are ready to conduct the surveys on their own.

When the training team returns home, its members continue to keep in touch with the new trainers in the settlement where the training is taking place - at least until the surveys have been completed. At that stage - which can be several weeks - the training team puts the information together and returns to the settlement to convey all the knowledge to the community. The new trainers from the settlement do this work together with the training team. This collated data becomes the basis for future analysis and action for the people of the settlement. The survey and analysed data become powerful tools for community organisation. By providing a realistic assessment of the capabilities and the weaknesses present in the community, the analysed data reduces the danger of undertaking unattainable or undesirable development activities.

House Models

Like everything else in the training, the house modelling exercise begins with a dream. Members of the host community are encouraged by the training team to imagine the house they would like to live

in, and to put that dream on paper. This expression of a desire is the starting point of a sustained system of concrete learning. By drawing the house of their dreams, people begin to visualise possibilities in terms of their abilities and their levels of affordability.

Invariably these dreams are extravagant. The houses of people's imaginings are usually too elaborate and costly for their meagre earnings or resources. In the steps that follow, aspirations are realigned by the participants themselves, by means of a process of criticism and exploration:

- Individual members of the settlement draw their dream house;
- Once the drawings have been completed, people come together in groups to explain the homes they have drawn and to provide details about the structure. This group dialogue brings people together and gives them the chance to adjust their dreams in response to insights and practicalities.
- People form groups to make cardboard model houses based on the discussion;
- People then cost the building materials for their model house and consider the affordability of the model house.
- A house modelling competition is held in the community. People get together to select the most appropriate model(s);
- The chosen design(s) is/are modelled using cloth or paper as material. People get together to officially open and view the model house(s).

This exercise is repeated and elaborated right up to the day the community is ready to start its own housing development. After the training team departs, women in the housing savings groups often keep the house modelling exercises going. Group dialogue is crucial to the house modelling exercise. It constantly brings people in the housing savings group together and it helps them develop practical insights into organising, planning, building technologies, materials, regulations and landownership.

Housing Savings Groups

Housing savings groups are the central energy point of the training process. They are loosely structured organisations that enable homeless people to develop financial systems that they control and manage themselves. It is impossible for homeless people to get money directly from formal financial institutions. Housing savings groups enable poor homeless people to save money that can then be used as leverage for obtaining financial support for their development plans.

Such groups allow the savers to benefit directly from their own savings. When poor people save in banks or post offices, their savings never entitle them to loans. They save their hard earned cents so that the banks can lend that money to the wealthy and middle classes. In housing savings groups, the savings of the people work for the people themselves. Members of these schemes can take loans for small business ventures or for crises in their families. A crucial element of these savings schemes is that the majority of members are women. This is important because it is women who are in charge of such things as keeping the house, controlling household expenses and deciding where things are kept in the home. Women are also less likely (but certainly not immune) to become involved in community power struggles. They are more likely to be comfortable with the need for low-income people to work collectively.

The shack counting and the start of the survey will have generated much discussion on the land and shelter needs of the community. Without fail, the discussions will focus on money. People will point out that they are homeless and landless because they cannot afford formal housing, they will start to think how they can harness resources so that formal housing is possible. One arrangement is housing savings groups. By actually starting these groups, the training process creates the momentum that

will help to drive a people's based housing movement in the 'trained' community.

In nine cases out of ten, it is the women who are interested in starting or joining housing savings groups. Housing savings groups become a locus for the organisation of women from informal settlements around shelter needs. A federation of housing savings groups can become the driving force in a people's housing movement. Women are mobilised and given the space to build organisational structures around the central issues of housing and savings. Housing savings groups also can become loose community-based affiliations to enable the members to pressurise formal institutions such as banks, donors, NGOs, political leaders and governments to participate with them in creating institutional arrangements that will facilitate social change.

Concluding Observations

This is our understanding of experiential learning. It differs significantly from the conventional kinds of housing or shelter training provided to students at universities and technical training colleges, and staff of government departments and housing parastatals. Similar approaches are used for housing and development by most South African NGOs and civic organisations. There are three premises that are central to these conventional kinds of training:

- Urban planning and housing development are very complicated affairs that need to be handled by experts;
- The skills, technologies and ideas from the mainstream are appropriate for solving the 'problem of informal housing';
- The homeless poor need to participate in their own development, but their participation is limited to collaboration in the plans produced by external experts.

These externally propagated strategies are not providing solutions. The result of these training programmes is the opposite of what they have been designed to achieve. They help to keep knowledge, power and resources out of the hands of the poor. The training systems ensure that knowledge production always happens elsewhere, that is, outside the community. This makes poor people dependent on the outside world and on social classes that are indifferent to their interests. They rely on professionals for a top down, often disempowering transfer of knowledge. The way out of the trap is to develop alternate, more appropriate systems of learning. This is the basis of the kind of experiential learning sketched.

Only by sharing and accumulating experiences in order to create sustainable alternatives will long-term aspirations for land and shelter stand a chance of being fulfilled. Each training is like tempering steel in the fire. The more the steel is tempered, the stronger it becomes. Community leaders become stronger as they give more of themselves to others. The more they teach, the better they become. The more people who become trainers, the larger the number of communities reached and the greater the mobilisation process. The more the leader gives, the stronger the faith of the community in their capacities and commitment. The more accountable the leader is, the stronger the support of the community. By locating the reproduction of the training within the organisations of the poor, the organisations of the poor become the owners of this process, and develop and evolve it as their demands emerge.

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**THE DEATH OF THE CLINIC?
PARTICIPATORY URBAN APPRAISAL (PUA) IN A DOMINICAN BARRIO**

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Introduction

This article describes the experience of participatory research in a *barrio*, La Cienaga, in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic. The research was undertaken as part of a larger study which aimed to explore the links between urban women's changing and multiple productive roles and their health. The central hypothesis of the research was that the way health is conceived in a Primary Health Care (PHC) clinic based model, measured by standardised health indicators, is not appropriate for women in an urban setting.

Participatory methods were chosen to allow the research team both to open up definitions of health and to challenge the quantitative systems of measurement through which current systems see and represent the world. The research thus concentrated on women's perceptions of health, providing the methods to look at causal linkages. The results of this qualitative research were then used to 'interrogate' a national, longitudinal quantitative database. The data was recategorised and analysed from an altered perspective, that of the urban women, with interesting results¹. This article summarises the qualitative, participatory research, concentrating on the implications of PUA, in terms of method (what worked and what did not) and, where appropriate, substance (the urban debates uncovered in the process).

Working with the Women of La Cienaga: a Participatory Research Process

The research team worked in La Cienaga for a week, during which time the author stayed in the *barrio*. Staying in the *barrio* proved to be important for uncovering the very different economic activities that were pursued by the women at different times of the day and different days of the week. A total of 43 women participated in the research; eight in semi-structured in-depth interviews and 28 in three groups organised according to work status. The research was carried out in four stages. The first stage was an attempt to map a section of the *barrio*. The following stages consisted of a set of three sequential exercises carried out with the different groups of women.

Mapping the Community: Space and Time

An attempt was made to initiate the qualitative research through mapping both the physical space and history of La Cienaga. A wall was used opposite a small corner shop (*colmado*), on the central 'road' in the area of the *barrio* chosen for the research during earlier transect walks. The limits of the research area (two drainage gullies to the east and west) and the shop were marked and passers-by were invited to draw their homes and those of their neighbours with chalk. On the facing wall three historic events were marked: hurricane Zenon (1960), hurricane David (1979) and the most recent mass eviction in the *barrio* (1990). It was hoped that a community history could be built around these

¹The analysis and findings of the wider study, including the results of the quantitative research are found in *The Death of the Clinic? Linkages between the changing and multiple production roles of urban women and their health status in the Dominican Republic*. (1993) M. Phil. Dissertation, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. The field research team consisted of the author and two colleagues, Lilian Bobea and Taracy Rosado. The author had previously received some training in the use of participatory methods, which were passed on to colleagues during the actual process of research.

three points which it had been established are important points in both individual and collective memory.

Large numbers of people passed by the chosen site. The common response was to express an interest but to be unwilling to participate. Some people did eventually draw on their homes but were either unable or unwilling to draw on those of their neighbours. The map remained on the wall during the week of the research; no attempts were made to rub it out or to add to the initial ten homes which had been depicted.

It is possible to attribute the poor participation in the mapping exercises to three principal causes; the choice of location and time, a genuine lack of community knowledge in what is a very mobile population and the influence of broader political factors in a *barrio* currently faced with a further threat of eviction. During the week, different social networks became evident which revealed the potential ability to plot other homes, although not necessarily those of neighbours. Levels of community knowledge appeared to be higher than might be deduced from this experience and had time permitted, it would have been interesting to reattempt the process in a different manner at the end of the week.

Group Exercises: Defining Health and Happiness in Working Lives

The objectives of the three sequential exercises and the methods used are summarised in Table 1. Selection of the three groups was a dynamic process. Initially, for the purposes of comparison, two groups were formed; a group of non-working women and a group of working women, ie. those who are engaged in either one or more remunerated activity. During the research, it became obvious that we had not captured those women who work full time on remunerated activities inside the home and thus a third group was formed.

Group exercises were carried out within the women's homes, 'safe' locations in which the women obviously felt free to express themselves. In the case of the group of women working outside their home, the group had to be convened late at night, when the women returned from other parts of the city. Despite their long days women were keen to participate and we were able to convene the same groups over several nights.

Table 1. Research Objectives and Methods

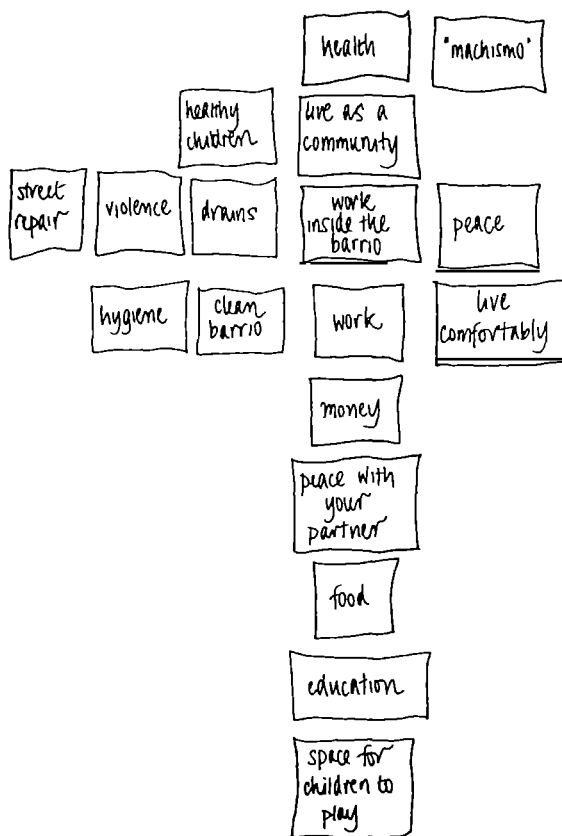
Exercise	Objective	Methods
1. Defining Happiness	Identify how women prioritise work and health in their lives in relation to other issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● naming of causal factors ● card sorting ● ranking
2. Productive Roles	Assess degree of role multiplicity (remunerated and non remunerated) & relative weight given to tasks. Evaluate changes over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● matrix of different roles ● scoring ● comparative ranking
3. Health Ranking	Assess relative importance of key illnesses and identify their relation to changing productive roles described above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ranking of disease ● linkage diagrams

Defining Happiness

In the first group exercise, performed with all three groups, women were asked what happiness meant for them and what factors would be important for their happiness. Figure 1 shows the results of the

exercise for the group of women not engaged in reproductive activities.

Figure 1. Defining Happiness



Key: cards are ranked in ascending order of importance

NB. "Machismo" is used to cover the problems of partners who are womenisers, violent or authoritarian.

It is important to note that with this exercise, as with all the others, the different groups emphasised different factors and conceptualised in different ways although broad outcomes were similar. For example health was seen by all three groups as the key to happiness.

A discussion over definitions and causes ensued, and the facilitator noted key words on cards. In a second stage of the exercise, women were asked to rank their ideas in order of importance and explain to the facilitator their reasons. Amongst all groups health was prioritised and defined in the broadest possible terms, which included stress and violence. Spontaneous discussions on violence, both at the community and domestic level took up a considerable proportion of the discussion. Widening the discussion in this way was a direct outcome of the fact that the women felt comfortable with the participatory methods, as were the offers to introduce the team to meet traditional healers and other 'alternative' health personnel, usually difficult to meet in the Dominican context.

Working Roles, Time and Pressure

In the second exercise, women were asked to list their daily activities into three pre-defined categories; remunerated work, unremunerated work and leisure. The wide range of activities, many of which had not been named in individual interviews, can be seen in the example shown in Figure 2. Women were then asked to show which tasks they considered to be the most burdensome (*pessado*). The definition encompassed both ideas of time and stress, thus a high score might not necessarily indicate an activity which absorbs the most time, but rather one which the women least like doing. Women placed beans on their diagrams in a scoring exercise; a high score shows a task considered to be a heavy burden.

Figure 2. Time Allocation and Scoring

RENUMERATED WORK

[present / 1993]

UNRENUMERATED WORK

washing P4	cleaning P2 A10	look after children P10 A5	general errands P3 A5	ironing P6 A3	take child to doctor P1 A1	take child to school P2	cooking (mangot) P2 A2	celebrations P10 A2	prepare teaching (EBM) P10	visit other family P5 A2	collect water P6 A5	[83]
A/X	A/X	A/X	A	P5 (dangerous)	P1	X	P2			X	P6	[84]

LEISURE

relax at home P3 A3	chat with neighbour P6 A5	watch T.V P1	[93]
P1	X	X	[94]

Key: P Activity performed by Participant
 A Activity performed by Daughter
 X Activity not done
 #'s. high score = "heaviest" activity

In a second stage of the exercise, using the riots of 1984 as a reference point, women were asked to show how their diagrams would have looked nine years ago. Some women added additional activities, but in the majority of cases the women's lives had changed to such an extent (different partner, different homes, younger/fewer children, in addition to different work roles), they could not be shown on the same diagram.

In terms of methodology, it is important to note that although the exercise did not produce successful maps/diagrams, the arguments and discussions between the women as they attempted to diagram were perhaps the most revealing and important aspect of the week's research. The results of this exercise were very important in illustrating the dynamic complexity of the women's lives and the difficulty of theories related to health, empowerment and other issues that assume a linear accumulation of roles. Women were also able to illustrate the effects of changing economic roles of other women within the household, pointing to the inadequacy of debates that focus on headship, at the expense of intra-household relationships.

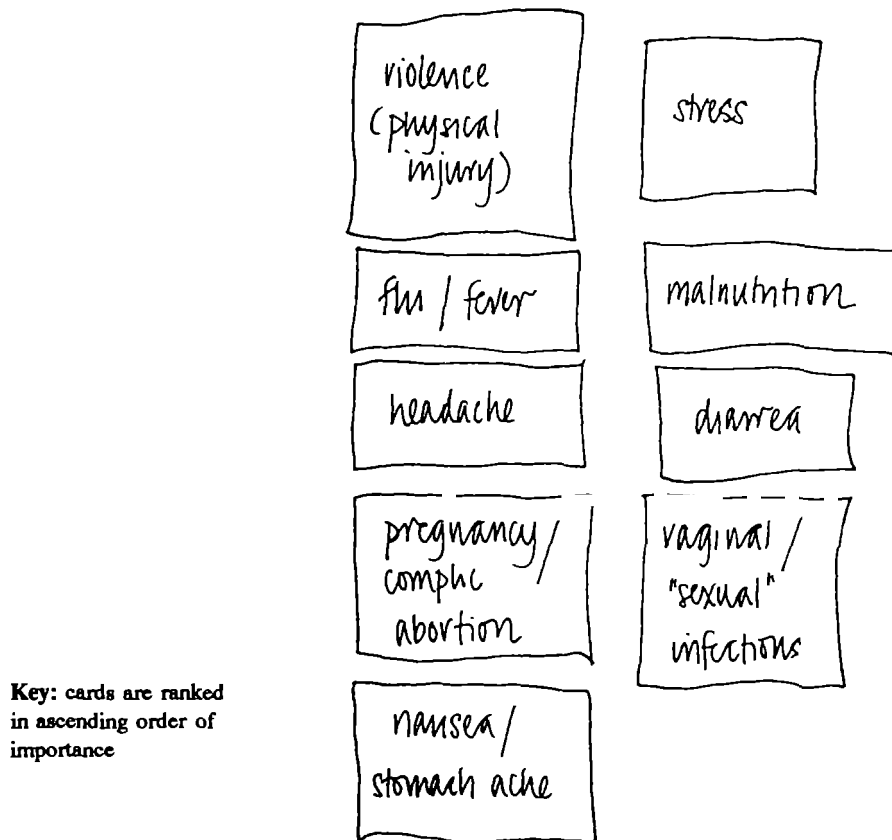
Linking Changing Health Profiles to Working Lives

In the third and final exercise women were asked to rank the ten most important health concerns that had emerged during previous discussions (Figure 3). The ranking exercise worked easily since women were now familiar with the idea.

Attempts to establish links between work and health were not successful. The majority of the women argued that the direction of causality was not from work to health (as assumed by the author), but rather in the opposite direction. The women's concern was that they might become too ill to work rather than that their work might cause severe health problems. Women were thus asked to depict the links between health and production, working from the opposite direction. Again, this exercise was not successful; much of the discussion was similar to earlier health discussions and no causal/linkage maps were drawn. It is hard to know whether this was because the women did not

see these linkages as important, or whether the inexperience of the author with PUA precluded the use of other methods which might have led to more interesting and conclusive results.

Figure 3. Health Ranking



Some Conclusions

- With the exception of mapping, all these methods could be successfully used in an urban setting. The experience with the mapping exercise perhaps points to the need to reconsider the definition of the urban 'community', beyond spatial mapping, and the need to work in a 'safe' place in the urban setting. Mapping is probably not the best introductory exercise in the *barrio*.
- The levels of information shared and the quality of discussion and self reflection (for example the discussions that arose on domestic violence) illustrate the potential of the methods for understanding complex urban realities.
- The usefulness of the methods for working with different social groups within urban areas (differentiating in this case women by productive roles, income/well-being and age) is particularly important in urban areas characterised by their socio-economic heterogeneity.
- The fact that the methods allow one to work without predefining terms or issues is particularly important in urban areas where there has been a tendency on the part of both development researchers and practitioners to import concepts and projects developed in rural settings (for example, the PHC model as in this case).
- The ability of the methods to challenge quantitative research is similarly of importance in an urban setting, where the poorer residents are frequently invisible to a questionnaire whose questions were designed with another situation in mind. The poor are inaccessible, living behind their wealthier neighbours and working hours that do not make them available to the average household interviewer.

PARTICIPATORY NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN THE PERI-URBAN AREAS OF LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

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Introduction

In 1989 a new structural adjustment programme began in Zambia. Since then most Zambians have been having a tough time. The purchasing power of most people has fallen dramatically; with the slump into poverty that has occurred - 50% of the urban population is estimated to be living below the poverty line in a just-published World Bank poverty assessment report for Zambia - the nutritional and health status of many urban households has suffered alarmingly.

Consequently the World Food Programme decided to make food available for a Food-for-Work (FFW) programme and in January 1992 CARE Zambia became one of the implementing NGOs. By early this year CARE had a total of 1,800 people, of whom only a few are not women, involved in infrastructure improvement programmes in three compounds in Lusaka and one in Livingstone. However, it was becoming increasingly clear that the programme was creating dependency as women were giving up marginal income earning activities for the relative security of the food-for-work gang.

As a result, in 1994 in a second phase of the Project Urban Self-Help (PUSH) programme, CARE has reoriented its strategy. FFW activities will be phased out and the women concerned will be assisted in developing more secure alternative income earning activities. A more holistic, livelihoods approach is being adopted, with the view that broader social and cultural issues will also be tackled through the project. There is little sense of community in these compounds and women are burdened by the physical, social and economic injustices¹. Fundamental to this approach is a shift from a physical development process - infrastructure improvement through FFW - to a human development process to build individual and institutional capacities.

The Participatory Appraisal and Needs Assessment (PANA) Training²

In planning the shift from FFW, two important initial strategy decisions had to be made:

1. How to reorient project staff, half of whom were technicians and half community development workers, but all of whom were used to a technical project; and
2. How to generate greater participation of the communities concerned in the project process.

¹Examples of these include the commonality of wife-beating, exacerbated by the frustration also experienced by men; property-grabbing practices which leave a wife and her children destitute following the death of a spouse; the unequal burdening of women with child care responsibilities on the breakup of a household through divorce or death; and the lack of access of women to economic resources, which means they generally engage in the most marginal of income activities.

² The facilitators for this training course were Sister Mary-Rose and Peter Henriot of the Archdiocese of Lusaka, and Rose Chimansa, Darren Hedley and myself from CARE.

It was conceived that a six months appraisal and planning process would be required before a full project implementation plan could be drawn up, but how to initiate and carry this out?

In order to tackle both the aspects of staff reorientation and community participation, it was decided that a very definite break had to be made with phase one of the project. This would be achieved by a training course which would address four areas - context, process, concepts and methods. The context was that of Zambia, its recent political and economic history and why people's lives were as they were; the process was that of focusing on people - promoting self-reliance as it were; the key concepts were those such as community (what was it in the compounds?), and livelihood; and the methods were those which could be used to generate an understanding of people's lives.

To achieve a training course of this breadth it was decided to combine two methodological approaches, Training for Transformation (TfT)³ and PRA, over a total period of about 10 days. Attending the training would be teams consisting of project staff and community members from each of the four peri-urban compounds in which CARE was working. Some of the latter were key members of the compound Residents Development Committees (RDCs), through whom CARE works, and others were pre-school or literacy teachers, who originally had been members of the food-for-work gangs but now ran pre-school and literacy classes for the benefit of their fellow members.

Combining the two training methodologies worked better than expected. The first week of the training was led primarily by a facilitator from the Archdiocese of Lusaka and during this week the context-, process- and concept-developing objectives of the workshop were largely achieved. Two clear strengths of the TfT methodology are the use of animation techniques - the various ways of presenting codes - and the emphasis on causal or depth analysis of issues. The complementary strength of PRA is its use of visually exciting, interactive techniques, which can facilitate and entice even the most passive and dominated to contribute her experience.

Day one of the training focused on eliciting and then comparing the various models of development to which the participants adhere, with the view of encouraging broader reflection. On the second day a social analysis was carried out into the array of factors contributing to the current state of people's lives. This sweeping but cogent analysis of Zambia's post-independence history allowed people to realise that they can only really expect their lives to improve if they make the effort themselves. On day three participants found a conceptual and methodological basis through which to plan.

Day three of the training brought Beatrice Chama, a widowed Bemba women with a son and young child living in a compound, to life in a series of six scenes. The scenes or codes successively showed Beatrice and her children waking up to a home without water and food, Beatrice sending her school age son to start a job with a marketeer, taking her sick child to the pre-school, and then after work seeking money for food unsuccessfully from her brother, encountering her landlady who demanded outstanding rent, going to a moneylender to procure this, and returning home to a house with hungry children and still no food and water and a discussion with a more educated neighbour on the woes that befell with the death or divorce of a spouse.

The analysis of this code took nearly an hour and by the end all the issues had been identified that the second phase of the PUSH project could possible hope to identify. Since then too, Beatrice Chama has become a metaphor for the concept of livelihood. Using the scenes as a text and a model

³Anne Hope and Sally Timmel. 1989. *Training for Transformation, Books 1, 2 and 3: A handbook for community workers*. Mambo Press, Gweru, Zimbabwe.

built around tangible and intangible assets, production, entitlements and consumption⁴, it has proved possible to train the workshop participants, even those who have never previously carried out any sort of interview, to carry out a basic livelihood interview. Beatrice herself has lived on too - the community member who acted her is now as often as not called Beatrice in report back meetings.

Once Beatrice Chama had introduced the concept of livelihood, the rest of the workshop focused on methods - carrying out a listening survey, analysing issues and preparing codes from the TtT lexicon, social mapping, Venn (institutional) diagrams, various calendars, matrix ranking, and interviews from PRA, and focus group discussion from both. At the end of the workshop, teams planned their participatory appraisal activities for the next few weeks and went out and started.

The PANA Process and Conclusion

The training workshop was held in late August 1994 and the PANA process is still continuing. There are some early trends and lessons. The first trend is that a process of 'cooperative inquiry' has been initiated. In a report back meeting held with the three Lusaka teams after the first three weeks of work, RDC members, especially in one of the teams, had an obvious overall leadership role, and in all the teams everyone was contributing - project staff, RDC members, and the women originating from the FFW gangs. Some of the teams had already coopted further people, a process which will be taken further with the training of a further group of combined people from each compound.

It is very different undertaking a participatory appraisal exercise in an urban compared to a rural area. In most rural areas communities are relatively easily defined as they exhibit geographical and social contiguity. This is not necessarily the case in urban areas where density and movement means that place does not necessarily easily lend itself to community. In Zambia, before the November 1991 elections most urban organisation was based on the party - local government, women's and youth organisations were all political party structures. Consequently when UNIP lost political power organisations collapsed, with church groups remaining virtually the only institutional base within the compounds. So community - interest group development - needs nurturing, a fact and process which the PANA exercise is bringing out. Choosing where and with whom to perform codes has been an initial issue - following church services, at markets, near a water point or clinic, with the FFW women or in a street, and how to advertise, by poster and if with people, which people?

These decisions will frame who participates in the second stage of the PANA process, when issue analysis and discussion becomes the focus (as a basis for option identification and strategy formulation). The RDCs are a partner in the process, but within the physical compound areas, target locales and groups for initial activities (apart from the FFW women) need to emerge given that the largest of the three Lusaka compounds concerned has a population of over 20,000 people. The whole can therefore be seen as an exploratory process which we are trying to guide, but at the same time to lose control over. There are specific outputs that are needed - an overall strategy, an implementation plan, sets of specific activities - and there will be clear roles that the project staff have to play, such as establishing training courses and credit. But the key determinant of the project's ability to stimulate self-reliance, will be in the ability of the PANA process to lead to individuals and groups taking initiatives for themselves.

⁴This model evolves in different circumstances. The rural version, adapted from an article by Jeremy Swift in a 1989 IDS Bulletin on Vulnerability, is known as the 'Swift model', but this latest urban version has undergone some metamorphosis partly due to Amartya Sen (entitlements) and Robert Chambers (intangible assets).

PALM¹ IN SLUM IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: A TRAINING EXPERIENCE FROM INDIA

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Background

Slum Improvement Projects (SIPs) are integrated urban development projects which incorporate physical improvements in water and sanitation, drainage, access, garbage collection and electricity, primary health care and community development programmes such as pre-school, non-formal education, adult literacy and economic development. The Overseas Development Administration (ODA) is currently funding SIPs in five Indian cities - Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam, Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Calcutta. A further two projects are planned in Cuttack (Orissa) and Cochin (Kerala). These projects are implemented either by government municipal corporations or development authorities.

SIPs promote community participation as a key to encouraging community self-reliance, usually through the formation of neighbourhood committees for the management of community assets and programmes. However, in practice community participation has been limited, and in common with other large scale government urban development projects of the 1980s, SIPs have had limited success in achieving this self reliance objective. Although with popular programmes such as the *balwadi* (pre-school) programme, parents take an active role, supporting teachers, raising financial resources for teachers' salaries and learning materials and generally managing the *balwadi* with little outside support, in other areas such as the maintenance of infrastructure improvements, it has been more difficult to sustain community interest. Some of the main reasons for this can be identified as follows:

- Failing to involve slum residents in programme planning and design;
- The existence of a government culture with a very different interpretation of participatory development to that of NGOs;
- Attitudes towards government as a provider of free services which have hindered the promotion of individual and community self reliance;
- Project scale: for example Hyderabad SIP covers 300 slums with a population of 450 000. This has made it difficult to establish close or intensive relationships with slum communities;
- Compartmentalisation of the project into community development, health and engineering works against the concept of integrated development from project planning to implementation;
- A tendency to focus on meeting targets which results in quantitative rather than qualitative achievements;
- Inadequate consideration of the diversity of interests and needs amongst the urban poor.

In view of this limited community participation in slum improvement projects I was approached by ODA early in 1993 to conduct a series of trainings in PALM for community development, health and

¹Through our experience with PRA in urban areas, we have decided to adopt the term 'PALM' (Participatory Learning Method) rather than PRA as a more accurate description of our use of the technique.

engineering project staff. The objective was to introduce project staff to the concept of participatory learning and to the range of PALM methods available.

Useful Methods for Slum Improvement Projects

The methods which I have found useful in Indian urban slums, and which I felt could be used by SIP staff are described below.

Resource Mapping

Resource maps can help to depict the relationships between households of different socio-economic groups and resources; facilitate community identification of problems and solutions on the basis of this visual presentation; and illustrate access to and control of resources within the community.

Approach

Firstly, the slum is mapped onto the ground, a wall or a chart. This is done separately with men's, women's and/or mixed groups in order to achieve different perspectives. Secondly, community resources are identified together with their access, management and control. Such resources may include *balwadis* (pre-schools), community centres, pipes, drainage, electricity, paved roads and health services. The location of other common resources is also highlighted as well as the residence of neighbourhood committee members.

Mapping can also be used to learn many other things about the community such as:

- The range of caste, religious and language groups within the settlement;
- Occupations of men and women, girls and boys;
- Links with villages ('umbilical cord not yet cut');
- Income levels;
- Education levels;
- Employment and skills;
- Health issues such as the use of permanent and temporary contraception;
- Women-headed households, widowed women, deserted wives;
- Violence against women;
- Access to income, resources and services.

In one area we even attempted to identify prostitutes, but found this too sensitive an issue to pursue. However, liquor brewing and selling emerged as important informal sector activities among women - a very good example of an activity normally invisible to community development staff but which can be identified using PALM techniques.

The resource map can lead to discussions on the lack of services, drainage, overcrowding, cramped living conditions, disposal of solid and liquid waste, or lack of safe and adequate water supply. Similarly it is an extremely useful tool for identifying and discussing issues which specifically affect women, such as pressures on women-headed households, women's enterprises, access to income resources, credit and services, and economic, social and cultural pressures on girls and women.

Seasonal Calendars and Activity Schedules

These can help to identify seasonally occurring events and constraints (eg. drinking water availability, drainage blocks, labour availability, income, food intake, illness etc.). They are also useful for learning about men and women's workloads in different seasons and relationships to factors such as income, food intake and sickness. The seasonal calendar can also be used to work out possible engineering, health and community development solutions.

Approach

The months of the year are marked on the ground using stones or other counters. Events are marked by using locally available seeds, stones, sticks, flowers and leaves. This can be done with single-sex, mixed or interest-specific groups.

A similar tool is the daily activity schedule which identifies household responsibilities on an hourly basis and can highlight gender divisions of labour. The seasonal calendar and daily activity schedule exercise can also reveal specific problems such as the provision of appropriately timed childcare facilities. However, as with all PALM techniques, much depends on the facilitator's ability to build on the information arising out of discussions.

Box 1. The Use of Seasonal Calendars: Some Examples

The health wing in Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority now uses these calendars to facilitate health discussions with mothers about the link between sickness and seasonally occurring events.

In one settlement in Vishakhapatnam, seasonal calendars helped the *dhobi* (laundryers) community to identify the age and gender divisions of labour in different seasons.

Focus Group Discussions

Small group discussions held with a facilitator can explore issues in further depth. Keeping groups small helps to ensure that everybody participates in the discussion. For example, meetings could be held with occupational groups such as potters, *dhobis*, *beedi* (tobacco) workers and rag pickers in order to provide each with the opportunity to express their specific occupational concerns in relation to particular issues such as space requirements, water supply and rubbish disposal. Similar group meetings can be arranged by gender, age group and language group.

Wealth and Well-being Ranking

Wealth ranking identifies the different socio-economic characteristics of households in a given slum area. There are a number of approaches. Using the resource map, household names can be listed on cards and community representatives encouraged to decide their own criteria for ranking households by wealth and well-being into four or five groups. Alternatively, all households in a given slum are ranked from first to last according to their relative wealth. Different colours could also be used on the resource map itself to mark different levels of well-being.

Criteria for assessing well-being may include the presence of able-bodied adult men (without 'vices'); presence of women providing supplementary household income; school attendance; debt; health problems.

Trend Analyses

Trend analyses highlight changes in a community over time. By talking to old people in the slum, changes in factors such as education, employment, income, access to credit, drinking water, drainage, infrastructure, housing, population, health practices and social customs can be marked on the ground using locally available materials. The period over which factors are discussed is normally 20-40 years depending on the age of the informants. We have found this very useful in many slum areas as a way of learning about pressure for space and resources.

Venn Diagrams

The aims of Venn diagramming techniques are to learn about the relationship between the community and government departments, or relationships between individuals within the community; to raise awareness amongst different informants about their access to resources and the presence of social restrictions and to illustrate the differing perceptions of different informants.

Circles of various sizes are cut out and given to participants, who first choose a circle to represent their community and then other circles to indicate the significance or scope of other important people and institutions. The size of the circles and the distance between circles show the perceived relationship between the community and the individuals/institutions.

The use of this technique has been particularly helpful for understanding how access to resources and preferences for services differ between informants. Venn diagramming also helps to identify the existing relationship between community development staff and various informants.

Matrix Ranking

Matrices have a wide variety of applications, but one use is to help evaluate various development programmes in terms of their success in addressing the practical and strategic needs of men and women.

The matrix is drawn on the ground using locally available materials. Two factors, for example disease and health practice, can be related together. The matrix can be used for discussion and planning purposes - for example in designing an appropriate income generation programme, discussing healthy food practices, ecologically sound fuel usage or sustainable health practices.

Using PALM in Urban Areas: Some Observations

PALM has proved to be an effective tool in urban areas, and I have experienced a similar sense of achievement in both my urban and rural experience. Some observations which apply specifically to urban areas are as follows:

- If the community is relatively 'new', say five to six years old, the 'we' feeling or sense of common identity or community will be lacking. The same is true where large numbers of tenants live in the area. If residents have migrated from the same village/*panchayat*/*taluka* or even district the 'we' feeling is greater. Occupational or caste groups also exhibit cohesiveness;
- Political influence is often greater than in rural communities. These loyalties are often apparent from Venn diagramming. A facilitator has to be extra sensitive to this issue in an urban settlement;
- The timing of the process is very important in an urban area. Many people are outside the slum for much of the day;
- Women seem to be less subordinate and more economically independent in urban areas;
- Although education levels tend to be higher than in rural areas the tools still helped significantly in involving all people in the community;

From Training to Practice: Some Insights

The PALM training conducted with SIP project staff was generally very popular. Trainees responded

well to having practical tools at their disposal for use in their work. However, a number of difficulties were encountered:

- Although project staff found PALM training useful, many questioned its potential for their programme given the constraint of working within a bureaucratic government framework. The concept of participation and equality is fundamentally at odds with the hierarchical structures of government bureaucracies.
- A second constraint to the effective use of PALM is the compartmentalisation of SIPs into engineering, health and community development programmes. Problems and solutions raised through use of PALM are cross-cutting and project staff need to be able to respond in a coordinated way. Secondly, and perhaps more fundamentally, is the need to recognise that compartmentalisation tends to perpetuate a service provision approach rather than to encourage a demand-driven response, which is at odds with the basic premise of participatory approaches.
- A third constraint has been that although as trainees, staff did not find it difficult to accept the basic PALM concept, once applied to their field of operation they found it difficult to acknowledge and value the knowledge of slum dwellers. In particular staff found it difficult to adopt a role change: from that of implementer to that of facilitator, from that of a prescriber to that of a partner and promoter of people's participation in the management of their own development. This demands an attitudinal and value change among government workers which is a radical expectation.
- Changing top-down approaches requires some fundamental changes amongst recipient governments and funding agencies alike. This also requires government agencies to adopt a new role of facilitator/partner in development, less prescriptive approaches, greater accountability to people and a firm commitment to people's participation in managing their own development.

Discussion

Over the last year we have seen PALM beginning to be used in a limited way in different SIP cities. More motivated project staff have found it a practical and rewarding tool for putting the rhetoric of community participation into practice. From this limited but important success we are convinced that this is the way forward, that attitudes towards the urban poor can only be changed through practical experience. PALM can therefore help to enhance the process of people's participation, but must be accompanied by attitudinal and organisational change to be really effective. The real challenge is to find practical and realistic ways of bringing about this change.

Without the support of senior management staff, project staff have little possibility of putting their newly acquired skills into practice. This we plan to do through senior management workshops.

Since the initiative for participatory approaches comes primarily from the ODA there is a need for clarity about what is really meant by community participation and a commitment to put policy into practice. With this in mind new projects are being developed in Cuttack and Cochin where PALM is being promoted by ODA right from the project planning stage. This new experience will help us to see how far PALM can help bring about participatory approaches to development within the context of government implemented programmes.

SHOWING WHAT YOU MEAN (NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT IT)

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This article is about a *set of community-building tools* which has been developed over the last 20 years, first in the UK, then in various parts of Europe and the US, currently on trial in parts of Africa, India, South-East Asia and Latin America. The tools and techniques have been used in rural as well as urban areas, but I shall deal here with their application in cities and on urban fringe estates. In particular, those places where people keep themselves to themselves for fear of each other; where they have lost, or perhaps have never had, the sense of community which turns an anonymous dwelling area into a neighbourhood that works.

Before I describe the tool-kit, let's look at the problems it is designed to tackle, and how they have arisen. Way back in the 1950s and 1960s, as Britain repaired the damage left by World War II, the housing experts were having a field day. Architects, planners and Housing Committees put everything they had into meeting the housing targets set by governments. Homes came off the production line, system-built, in a few standard sizes, ranging from maisonettes to tower blocks, beautifully equipped with kitchen units, picture windows and baths with showers. At first, everyone who climbed out of the housing queue was happy. Later on, things changed.

Estates with Problems

There weren't enough resources to keep the housing stock in good repair. It needed quite a lot of attention, because system-building tended to be a 'botcher's charter'. When some tower blocks began to fall apart, they revealed the rubbish which had been shovelled into the cavity walls in the rush to meet contractors' deadlines and make a fast buck. The people who had moved onto the new estates still retained the community spirit they had shown during the war, but during the 1970s and 1980s, something began to happen to that, too. Here's how things seemed on one stress estate in the north-east, where I have been working:

"I was born and bred on this estate. As a young child in the sixties, there was a great sense of community spirit. People came out into the streets and played with the children, and talked about their gardens - because we all had gardens then, and trees in the streets, and we had garden competitions... Then one day, we got up and there was the workmen pulling everything up, knocking down the fencing, and it was just all flattened out, nice and neat and open plan, so that the Council could just roll across with their lawnmowers."

Then the economy began to fall apart, and with it the people.

"I would say it was ten or maybe fifteen years ago that it started to deteriorate. The docks and the factories were closing down, I started seeing the rot set in amongst the kids. It happened gradually. They were good kids and they used to go on the street and play football, but then they were beginning to do odd things. Then the mentally ill were getting shoved out of the hospitals, the cuts started in the Social Security... People were using any means to be able to live to get their daily bread. There was nothing for the children."

And then it started. At one time, you could leave your door open, people wouldn't venture to go in and steal, but now whether your door's open or shut, they need money to survive, and it's the same with the children. Shoplifting, the aggression, the anger. I've never seen anything like it, how kids get depressed, they see ... no

future ahead, so they vandalise. But what people don't realise is that when kids put graffiti on the wall, they're giving you a message."

The experts in local and central government couldn't understand what the message meant. One of them told me, "*We are throwing housing solutions at criminal problems.*"

People at Odds with Each Other

All sorts of official intervention was taking place, but with less and less effect, as the authorities began to conclude that the people on the estate were just a load of rubbish. Even teachers thought so, and their attitudes rubbed off on the children.

Within the estate, there were factions, family quarrels, bitter feelings. The place seethed with fears and petty squabbles. In fact, most people had come onto the estate almost starry-eyed, saying goodbye to slum surroundings, full of hope for a good future. But as their physical surroundings suffered, and they lost control of their livelihoods with the encroaching recession, they became increasingly frustrated. They felt that the rest of society had let them down.

Given the opportunity, people moved out. For those who couldn't get out, drugs might be the answer - £100,000 a week is spent on drugs on one estate, according to the youth workers. Just how widespread, it was difficult to estimate. There were plenty of people who managed without and kept going because they remembered better days and wanted to do something positive. Because they remembered a long way back, they were better placed to see a long way ahead, how things *might* be.

The problem has been the yawning gap between the residents and the officials. Officials come and go, and are themselves baffled by the delays and uncertainties that official procedures impose on them. They set up training schemes which are often for non-existent jobs. Residents felt that the information they needed most was withheld.

A Communication Gap

Officials have been increasingly cautious about showing their faces on such stress estates. They were always having to apologise for delays and cutbacks, mostly imposed by central government. They had less and less knowledge of the capacities of the residents themselves, their local knowledge, their intuitive understanding of the way things actually work on the ground. They tended to stay in their offices, with occasional forays to a public meeting at which they said "*Leave it to us.*" The public meetings themselves were often a disaster. In the fog of words, everyone lost their way. People shouted, or mumbled - when they got a chance, which was comparatively rare, because the platform party, the fluent speakers, tended to hog the proceedings.

To sum it all up: central and local government are stuck with deteriorating estates, for which public resources are being steadily cut back. Residents who could make those resources stretch further by contributing their own knowledge, commitment and 'sweat equity' have become increasingly alienated. They distrust outsiders, and they are often at odds amongst themselves. There is a massive mutual ignorance. The authorities can't understand what the residents are at; the residents cannot penetrate the bureaucratic maze. In all this, words are an obstacle, not a through-route. Residents have lost confidence in themselves, and in the authorities; and they fail to inspire confidence from outside bodies, public and private. So the whole process is a downward spiral.

Untapped Resources

How to arrest the process?

We have to bring about situations in which each side in the 'Them and Us' equation begins to

discover what the other is about. For the residents, it's a question of learning the system, and perhaps altering it in the process. For the officials and the politicians, it has to be a recognition of the fact that they do not know what they do not know. They have all sorts of facts at their fingertips, but not the knowledge which the residents possess - the intuitive understanding of local relationships, and how things really work on the ground; the ability to see things whole, without departmental blinkers. Neither side is fully aware of the extent and depth of residents' potential contribution.

The Tool-kit

Planning for Real is the label people give nowadays to a cluster of techniques and materials which we have developed over the past 20 years¹. In one sense, they are simply a tool-kit that allows people to explore possibilities, sort out options, rank priorities, share out responsibilities, set out a Plan of Action - all without having to endure talking shops which drive everyone up the wall, and eventually out of the door. In another, they are a strategy designed to establish common ground between 'Us and Them' as a basis for a combined operation to create a working neighbourhood.

This common ground is the neighbourhood which everyone knows.

Stage I: The Model

The first step is to use this common knowledge to make a 3D model of the neighbourhood which shows it for what it is, here and now; reminds the old hands of what it used to be; and begins to tickle people's fancy about what it could become.

The model is made in sections each about a metre square, so that it can be taken around to attract attention. It's put together by a handful of people who haven't yet given up hope for their neighbourhood. They are the 'moving spirits' - not necessarily the committee-mongers or the orators, just people who have put down their roots long ago or quite recently, and don't intend to be uprooted. They are the 'natural good neighbours', to whom others sometimes turn - when there's a miscarriage, or the spouse flits with the housekeeping money, or you can't understand a government form.

They make quite a thing of making the model, using a kit of parts that the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation provides, but embellishing it with all sorts of additions of their own, some contributed by children joining in. The model is quite unlike the architect's pet exhibit, displayed under a Perspex dome in the foyer of the Town Hall, with a little notice saying '*Please do not touch*'. It's rough and ready, transportable to wherever people gather - outside the bus stop; in the school playground or the foyer when parents come to collect the infants; on trestles in the street market.

It's there to be interfered with. Because of its size - anything up to 60 one-metre squares - it's an eye-catcher. So plenty of curious people gather round. The first thing they do is get their bearings, spot landmarks: "*my front door*", or "*the window of my tenth floor flat*" "*the place where I work, or used to work until they closed it down*". Then the problems: "*Pity about that disused building, it's attracting vandals*", "*The traffic at that intersection, it's got really dangerous*", "*And this site where the cuts put paid to the building plans - it's just a no-man's land now, for junkies and muggers*". Finally - the opportunities: "*That building's still structurally sound, you could make something of it*", "*There ought to be a way of calming the traffic*", "*That open space, it's just waiting to be used*".

It need not wait long. Part of the tool-kit is a *range of suggestion cut-outs*, visual representations, roughly to scale, of what could be done sooner or later to turn this anonymous dwelling area into a working neighbourhood. Scores of possibilities for improvement - pedestrian crossings, play areas, workshops, trees, bus routes, improved housing. As many as you like; and if what you have in mind is not there in the kit, there is blank card, a pair of scissors and a pen for you to put in your very own idea along with the others. Anyone can put any item anywhere, so long as they move no-one

¹Details of the *Planning for Real* packs can be obtained from the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, The Poplars, Lightmoor, Telford TF4 3QN. Tel: 0952 590777; Fax: 0952 591771.

else's suggestion.

"The method is simple, and I think it gets over many of the barriers that people have, feeling threatened with having to write things down, feeling threatened with flip-charts and pieces of paper. They're able to pick up a cut-out and put it somewhere... And if they feel that it isn't quite right, then they pick it up again and put it somewhere else. The layout is so simple that you don't feel like you are destroying something that's already been pre-set. It's genuinely there for you to move around."

One of the great advantages is that youngsters are involved alongside their elders, with a sometimes unexpected shrewdness and staying power.

Once you've placed a cut-out on the model, it's no longer exclusively your idea. It could be anyone's, because unlike a verbal suggestion, it's *anonymous*. There's no name or face attached to it. Everyone is far too busy putting their own suggestions down to take much heed of anyone else's until it is time for everyone to stand back and take a bird's-eye view. Then, because the cut-outs are roughly classified in different colours, it is possible to see what are people's major preoccupations - how many red items show pedestrian crossings or traffic lights, how much greenery there is, how many yellow play facilities there are.

At first sight, it all looks pretty chaotic - but we are going to follow the good precedent of the Book of Genesis, and produce order from the universal flux, an order which everyone has helped to create, and for which everyone can take the credit.

Involving the Professionals

Residents are not the only people involved. At the very first *Planning for Real*, in Dalmarnock, east Glasgow, residents had at first decided that they were going to plan everything entirely on their own. Recent public meetings with officials and politicians had been punctuated by punch-ups. Neither side had anything good to say of the other. What would happen if any of 'Them' were invited along? At the very least, they would be cold-shouldered, and maybe get a bloody nose or two.

In the event, the residents decided to give officialdom one last chance. And officialdom was persuaded to accept. About fifteen visitors turned up - regional planners, district planners, housing officers, the police superintendent, the ward councillor, the secretary of the Citizens' Advice Bureau. On arrival, each was given a name and job label, and a cup of tea. And someone discreetly indicated that the rule of the house was that anyone wearing a label was requested to keep their mouth shut until spoken to.

So the visitors clustered near the doorway, and looked on, with thoughts of making a getaway before too long. No hope. Within five minutes, they were being sucked into the proceedings by residents seeking relevant advice. *"Suppose we wanted a toddlers' play area here on this derelict patch? ... You say there's a sewer running across there? Well, if we moved the playscheme to the other side of the site, how would that be?"* And so on. The professionals kindle to the situation, feeling almost for the first time that they are wanted and valued.

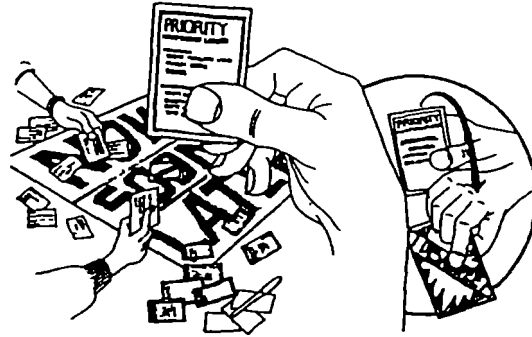
Two things are happening. Residents' proposals are being checked against official knowledge. How much would it cost? How long would it take? Who might provide money? materials? What are the legal or the technical constraints? Secondly, the process of consultation is being turned upside down. Instead of the professionals graciously presenting their own plans for residents' comment, the residents are consulting the professionals, to establish the range of options, the limitations, the possibilities - so that they can reach their own informed conclusions. *The experts are on tap, not on top.*

In the light of this pooling of advice and experience, residents can then begin to sort and sift the moveable cut-outs on the model; removing duplications (I once saw 16 adventure playground cut-outs

on the same model in the first 20 minutes); having second thoughts about proposals that on reflection don't look so good after all. The great thing about such reflections, of course, is that nobody else needs to know whose proposal it was that got dropped. So no-one feels humiliated.

Stage II: Priorities

The next step is to make out cards corresponding to all the items on the model. Each card has a note of the location and the subject. Everyone then transfers to another table where the cards are all laid out beside a giant chart separated into three horizontal sections, *NOW, SOON, LATER*.



With the same freedom of manoeuvre, and the same anonymity if they choose, people can then transfer the cards to what seem the most realistic priorities for action. Once someone has moved a card onto the chart, it stays in that position; but anyone disagreeing with the placing has only to turn the card face down to reveal the word 'Disagree' on the back. And that can also be done unobtrusively. Neither the proposer nor the opposer need know the other's identity. At once it becomes obvious, usually to people's considerable surprise, that there are comparatively few disagreements, and those there are can often be resolved by experiment on the model, an informal conversation which leads to an acceptable compromise. In practice, it seldom comes to the vote.

People's common sense, reinforced from what they've gleaned from the experts, makes it pretty obvious what is likely to be immediately practicable, what may need some time to gather further information, or to organise resources, and what is best left until later, but not left out of sight entirely. The *NOW SOON LATER* chart allows for long-term vision, without that getting in the way of what could and should be tackled here and now.

Stage III: Resource Surveys

The handful of residents who promoted the model go round, house-to-house, face-to-face, with a cartoon questionnaire (looking as unlike a government form as possible) to find out in each family who is good at what. Back they come, and even the first sample of 50 households reveals a treasure trove of talent - hobby skills and work skills - which no-one, outsiders or insiders, realised was there. So the 'moving spirits' reinforced perhaps by those they have contacted, embark on a talent survey of every other household on the estate. The results are displayed where everyone can see them, and perhaps circulated in a newsletter. This helps create a ripple effect showing the extent of the resources to hand. Officials notice a change in people's self-regard:

"I think it made people realise just how much they themselves have got to offer, and that nobody is actually ordinary."

In parallel with this, some of the 'moving spirits' amongst officials and politicians are digging out resource information from within the local authority and other outside bodies - tracking down people who could help with advice, materials and equipment which might become available, loans or grants that might grease the wheels of local effort.

Buried talent



Disused (or partly used) buildings



Under-used facilities



old lady with telephone who doesn't mind taking and passing on messages.



Wasted materials



Use of the model shows roughly *Where* innovations might take shape. The resource surveys begin to show *Who* might become involved. The giant *NOW SOON LATER* chart sets out the *When*. This knowledge fuels real decision-making to produce an immediately practicable *Action Plan*.

It's an incremental process. At first, there's just a ripple effect, as people see a few small things beginning to happen, discover the range and strength of the talent available, glimpse and begin to assess possibilities shown up on the model. It builds confidence within the community, and begins to earn respect from outside. The working relationships that gradually form make it easier for different interests and backgrounds to be understood. The experience of working things out together, non-committally at first, gets people used to each other, wise to each other's strengths and constraints, prepared for some give and take, so that conflicts, if they arise, can be contained, not evaded, whilst everyone concerned gets down to what they find they can agree on.

So the ripples begin to make waves. People not previously used to taking the initiative, suddenly become self-propelled.

"We are no longer in the baby-walker... We began to function well as a strong group..."

To some officials, this seemed at first a threat. The first *Planning for Real* in Nottingham attracted a memorandum sent from on-high to every department in the local authority, saying no-one should accept the residents' invitation to attend. In fact, a goodly selection sneaked out and came along. In the next year, however, when a neighbouring community decided to have a go, the authority was all smiles, and joined in, all smiles. The public success of the previous scheme made it no longer prudent to stay out.

In Sheffield, the Council backed the process from the start, and the Leader summed up the first of several *Planning for Real* schemes as *"an example of residents changing the Council's mind and thereby saving their area from demolition."* Up on North Tyneside, the success of the *Planning for Real* (in spite of riots), and the Community Development Trust which resulted, sparked off a satellite scheme, almost unnoticed, in a nearby fringe estate and the council official who had gingerly

introduced the idea reported "*The success has exceeded my wildest expectations. Not only are things happening in the village, the council departments are working together and producing what the community wants.*" Maybe not all that the community wants, but something to be going on with.

Working Relationships

The test of the process is that it brings 'Us and Them' together to explore their common ground in an atmosphere which is at first non-committal, and therefore non-threatening on either side.

Success depends on both sides gradually getting used to each other. Outside bodies have to be coaxed into explaining themselves, their procedures, and their resources with minimum humbug and in terms that everyone can understand. Insiders have to come clean about what they are prepared to do in order to make available outside resources stretch further. Cards on the table, face up. But this is not a game. It gradually becomes a decision-making process, setting targets, agreeing deadlines, sharing out responsibilities.

The great temptation, particularly for the professionals, is to hijack the process. The model brings together a wide cross-section of the community, with a rich mixture of ideas and objectives. The temptation is to cut things short at that point, so that the professionals can go away saying, "*Thank you so much for all the ideas you've contributed. Now we shall be able to sort things out for you.*" And on the strength of that, they claim a mandate from the community to do what they, the professionals, happen to think best. They may come out with a reasonable, even acceptable, prescription. But it is not one that residents feel they can own for themselves.

On one estate on Merseyside, the architects and planners produced their plan, based on a conventional 'public enquiry' and proudly presented it to a public meeting for approval. No way. It was shouted down. So, chagrined, the professionals started all over again, and this time they took the trouble to get residents, at first in small groups, to tease out how to achieve what was wanted, and finally to set it all down as an Action Plan which pleased everyone. When the site work was completed, the local contractor commented that it was the first time in his experience that there had been no pilfering of the construction materials.

The twist in the tale is that the first plan which was shot down in flames was almost identical with the one that the residents, tapping professional advice, had worked out for themselves. The difference was that they owned it. It was their creation, so they made sure that there was no sabotage.

In our experience, residents soon learn the tricks of the trade, and are able to add substantially to what the professionals can offer. Many of them have lived a long time in the place, and thought a lot about what needs to be done with it, and they can reach conclusions a good deal faster than traditional officialdom. For both sides, the interaction is an invigorating process. If either side tries to go it alone, the end-product will suffer. This requires an unexpected change of role, and a new kind of relationship. The point of *Planning for Real* and the strategies that underlie it, is that it allows people to test things out in practical terms, hands-on, without the big mouths getting in the way; and to enrich their own ideas by contact with the others. It involves people who would never come to conventional meetings, or if they came, would never take an active part. It creates publicity which helps to persuade the authorities to take heed. So in these respects, it attracts attention, and maintains it. *Seeing is believing.*

It's also an unobtrusive process. It lets people in as active participants, without exposing them if they choose to stay anonymous. That's particularly important for those in the community who get brushed aside because they're too young or too old, or the wrong colour, or the wrong gender. It allows people with different backgrounds and attitudes to size each other up, and discover common concerns without having to make a meal of the process, and leave everyone with the indigestion that comes of interminable talk.

So don't just take my word for it, try it.

TARGETING AID TO THE POOREST IN URBAN ETHIOPIA - IS IT POSSIBLE? RAPID URBAN APPRAISAL

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Background

Since the demise of the Marxist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1991, Ethiopia has embarked on a programme of economic reform. The country has adopted a number of measures such as currency devaluation, market liberalisation and the reorganisation of government enterprises. Many people are expected to be affected by these changes; some will gain, others will lose, but the urban poor are expected to suffer most in the short term. As a response the Government of Ethiopia planned various schemes, including targeted relief measures for the urban poor. One specific programme was a system of vouchers to be exchanged for food and kerosene with local traders - similar to food stamps programmes established in Sri Lanka, the USA, Jamaica and other countries.

A small team of local and international personnel were appointed to assist with the programme concept design and the planning of the monitoring and evaluation system¹. Initial ideas were framed after discussions with government, NGOs and other knowledgeable people, but it was clear that there were a number of issues and problems that would be best clarified with a proper discussion with the potential beneficiaries of the programme. Therefore it was decided to carry out a limited Rapid Urban Appraisal with the aim of gaining some specific information on the following issues:

- *Characteristics and indicators of poverty:* How would poorer urban dwellers define indicators of poverty? What were the characteristics of the non-poor?
- *Identification of the poor:* If a specified percentage of the people were to be the recipients, would it be possible to identify these people?
- *Income level:* If income level were a criterion for acceptance on the programme, would it be possible to measure income accurately?
- *Application procedure for the vouchers:* Would the potential beneficiaries receive the information that there was to be a programme for which they should apply?
- *Type of assistance:* If assistance is to be given to the poorest urban dwellers, what was the best type of aid?

A supplementary question that was of interest was whether Rapid Appraisal techniques could be usefully applied to help design such large scale programmes.

Organisation of the Rapid Urban Appraisal

The RUA team consisted of six people, three Ethiopians and three foreign personnel (two of whom had extensive experience in Addis Ababa). All members of the team had good background in surveys and interviewing, although not everyone was familiar with Rapid Appraisal techniques.

¹Other than the author, the members of the RUA team were: Debebe Haptewolde (Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Ethiopia), Kibru Mamusha, (Catholic Relief Services, Ethiopia), Tewodros Demisie (Ministry of Trade, Ethiopia), Simon Maxwell, (IDS, University of Sussex, UK), Neville Edirisinghe (IFPRI, Washington DC).

The area selected for the RUA was *Kebele* 13, in the Piazza area of Addis Ababa. A *kebele* is an administrative district with a variable geographical size and population. A *kebele* offers certain benefits to registered members such as rations of selected foods at subsidised prices, free medical treatment and education certificates for the poor, and access to various aid schemes. *Kebele* 13 was chosen because one of the team had previously had discussions with the Vice-Chairman of the *Kebele* committee, and had been invited back if further information was required.

Due to time constraints only one full day was allocated to the RUA. This was immediately recognised as a drawback, but it was expected that the allocated time could yield some answers to the questions, as well as revealing issues that needed further follow up. The evening before the RUA was scheduled, a planning meeting was held to discuss the objectives of the exercise and explore possible ways of gaining information. The objectives and possible techniques were typed up and given to each member of the team to act as a checklist to refer to during the RUA. This proved helpful to keep the team to its objectives during the day's activities.

Semi-structured Interview with the *Kebele* Vice-Chairman

First thing in the morning the team met together in the office of the Vice-Chairman of the *kebele*. This interview was held for two reasons: for the sake of protocol and good manners and because it was necessary for the team to obtain general information about the *kebele* to give a background to the more specific objectives of the RUA.

The total registered population of the *kebele* was given as 5,378, consisting of around 1,011 households. A very recent registration had taken place for an election so the population estimate was probably fairly accurate. However there was an unknown number of people living in the *kebele* who were not registered. Piazza area is an old 'inner city' part of Addis Ababa, built on the side of a hill with a reputation for overcrowding and prostitution. The Vice-Chairman indicated that he considered it one of the poorer districts of the city. This was backed up by observation and experience of other *kebeles*, and by the fact that the Christian Children's Fund, a child sponsorship agency which has a programme in the *kebele*, limits its work to the poorer areas of Addis Ababa.

A circle was drawn on a piece of paper to represent the total population of the *kebele*, and the Vice-Chairman was asked to divide the circle into types of occupational group. He indicated that a very small proportion, perhaps 5%, were government employees, a further 25-30% were engaged in trading or business and the remainder were described as having no income or job, relying mostly on petty trading such as selling tea, baking *injerra* (the traditional staple food of Ethiopia), washing clothes or prostitution. He indicated that the majority of households were women headed. This estimate was confirmed by discussions with local people and other *kebele* officials who went through their lists at the end of the day and calculated that 58% of the *kebele* households were women headed.

Most of the houses were owned by the *kebele* and were made of the traditional *chikka* construction - mud mixed with straw on a wooden frame. Many houses had tin roofs and an electricity connection. For a one roomed house about 3m x 3m a tenant might expect to pay about 5 to 10 Birr per month (Birr 5 ~ US\$ 1).

The Vice-Chairman was confident that the *kebele* officials knew all the residents of the *kebele*, and had an accurate idea of the occupation and income of each household. Therefore he had no doubt that the poorest people could be identified for an assistance programme.

Serendipity Helps the RUA

The team then had a piece of good fortune that assisted the progress and direction of the RUA. By chance the RUA began on the same day wheat was scheduled to be distributed by the European Community Structural Food Aid programme. The Vice-Chairman explained that the wheat was for families with a household income of less than Birr 100 per month. Each member of the household

up to a maximum of five members would be allocated 10kg of wheat. The wheat was sold to the *kebele* administration who then had to resell the wheat at Birr 0.80 per kg to the recipients. This compared to an open market value of wheat of around Birr 1.70 per kg.

This provided an opportunity for the team to assess the efficiency of the EC wheat programme and compare the targeting methodology with the one considered for the food and kerosene voucher programme. The team split into three pairs to maximise opportunities:

- Pair 1 went into the *kebele* shop where women (mostly) queued to receive their allocated grain;
- Pair 2 talked to women on the way out of the shop after receiving grain;
- Pair 3 went to the *kebele* Christian Children's Fund office to investigate the selection criteria for registering children on their programme.

Techniques Used During the RUA

Informal Interviews

A large number of informal interviews were held during the RUA and it was clear that this method was successful. In fact it appeared that urban people were very willing to talk and did not express any of the suspicion or hesitation sometimes found in rural areas. The majority of the interviews were with women, and although none of the team members were women, there appeared to be no reluctance to discuss issues with men. This may have been because many of the households were female-headed; these women may have become used to dealing with men. The presence of foreigners did not seem to be a disadvantage; sometimes it made people more curious and therefore easier to talk with.

Discussions were held with people in the grain line while waiting to receive or to take away their wheat. People were accompanied to their homes (sometimes helping to carry the heavy wheat sack) where a further interview was held. Traders in their shops or waiting in the street talked about grain prices and the supply and demand of other goods.

Wealth Ranking to Obtain Poverty Indicators

A small number of case studies were carried out using conventional wealth ranking techniques. Since the population of the *kebele* was very large it was impossible to undertake a wealth ranking of the entire community, which is sometimes possible in a rural village. However, the technique was used with small groups of people since houses were commonly set around a courtyard or enclosed area off the street. The objective here was not to obtain a view of the social structure of the community as is sometimes the case in RRA. Instead the aim was firstly to test the ability of people to judge relative wealth for inclusion or exclusion from an assistance programme, and secondly to try to understand what features (income, social or physical) would be used by people to determine relative wealth or poverty.

Some informants were a little reluctant to discuss income issues and found it hard to rank households. Sometimes this appeared to be a genuine problem because the information was not available to them and at other times it was because other people were standing around and the informant was embarrassed to make the decision. However in all cases the informant completed the ranking and explained the reasons for their choice.

Pie Charts

Pie charts were used to try to estimate the number of people in various income categories and to estimate the number of people receiving grain. One exercise was carried out in a shop with a group of young men and the shopkeeper. A pile of grain was subdivided by the informants into the various income categories. Their estimates of the percentage of people in five monthly income bands were:

Birr 400	2%
Birr 300	3%
Birr 200	20%
Birr 100	25%
Birr 50	50%

They thought that 50% living on Birr 50 per household might even be too low; many of these households would be women headed.

In a home, discarded pepper seeds left from a meal were gathered and used for dividing population into income groups. Informants immediately responded to the method and it always provoked an interesting discussion.

Transect Walks

Transect walks are not simple in the urban situation where houses are very crowded together and the area is congested. However it did prove possible to walk around the *kebele* following small paths and tracks. This proved useful for interviewing people who were on the roadside such as beggars, petty traders sitting in *gullits* (permanent, but informal markets, selling very small quantities of goods eg. a bottle top full of peanuts, or three onions) and one merchant waiting for transport with 15 sacks of wheat.

Case Studies

Interviews with Women During Wheat Distribution

Ten women were interviewed about the amount of grain they were receiving and what they planned to do with it:

Name	Household Size	Sex of Hh head	Kg wheat received	Kg wheat sold	% wheat sold
Gete B	7	F	40	40	100
Haragoin D.	4	F	30	20	66
Tsehay M.	5	M	40	20	50
Abonesh A.	6	F	40	20	50
Tsehay W.	7	M	40	20	50
Mamite J	3	F	30	30	100
Mulu A.	3	M	30	20	66
Medhin G	5	M	30	30	100
Tishir W.	7	F	40	40	100
Shewalem K	7	M	40	40	100

Out of these ten households five were women headed. All the women planned to sell a proportion of the grain, half saying they would sell all of it. The problem identified by the women was that their allotment had to be paid for all at once, therefore many said that they needed to borrow money to make the purchase. This meant that they had to sell the wheat immediately to the traders who were waiting outside the door of the distribution point. The open market purchase price for wheat was about Birr 1.70/kg (although this varied according to the quantity bought, and poorer people buy smaller quantities at higher prices), but the traders were giving the women only about Birr 1.00/kg, which implies a profit of Birr 0.20/kg rather than Birr 0.90/kg which would be the subsidy gain at the open market price. As one woman said, "*most of the benefit goes to the traders*". Another woman stressed that it was the poorest people who had to sell their grain.

On average 78% of the grain received was sold, although women headed households sold a greater proportion (83%) than male headed households (72%).

There is also some doubt about the targeting efficiency of the EC wheat programme. Although the large majority of people spoken to during the day were very satisfied with the targeting, there is some evidence that non-eligible people were also recipients. For example one young person taking grain said there were two income earners in his household - a teacher and a shop worker - which would almost certainly mean that the household came above the Birr 100 per month cut-off level.

On the positive side, the programme does make a substantial contribution to the incomes of the poorest households. On the calculations below, it permitted an increase in purchases of grain by one household of 28% in the month it was received. People are happy to have grain and in some cases prefer it to cash.

Box 1. Interview with Tsehay Wolde

Tsehay Wolde was born in Addis Ababa and now lives with her husband, five children aged between 11 and two and her sister in a single room approximately 4m x 3m. Tsehay's husband was a soldier, but was injured in the war and now receives a pension of Birr 85 per month which apparently is the family's only source of income. Birr 5 is given to the husband as pocket money. The room is one of five in a compound around a courtyard, served by a shared tap and latrine. It has mud walls, papered with newspaper and contains a large double bed, a single bed and a table and chairs. There is a charcoal stove under the bed. The room, which costs Birr 5 per month to rent (though this has not been paid for the past three years), has electricity. The majority of the income is spent on food, and the main meal of the day is lunch which is served without meat. The family receive 40kg of EC wheat and are happy with the targeting. They sell half to meet necessities, and the remaining 20 kg will last for 15 days. There were some contradictions observed by the team in the home as the children appeared reasonably well fed and dressed - perhaps other undeclared income sources existed.

A calculation of income: if available income is Birr 80, plus another Birr 4 profit from grain sales, this gives a total of Birr 84 per month. The remaining 20kg of EC wheat cost Birr 16, leaving Birr 68. If all of this were spent on grain at Birr 1.70, the total grain available would be 60kg per month (equivalent to 250gm per person per day), which is 62.5% of the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission's relief ration of 400gm per day. This approximates to about 1 000 calories per day, well below the Ethiopian Nutrition Institute's recommended daily intake of 2 100 calories. However, it is important to note the considerable contribution that the EC wheat is making to the family's total grain purchase; without it the maximum purchase would be 47kg.

Box 2. Interview with Negatwa - Widowed Tea Seller

Negatwa lives with her five young children and one relative in a *chikka* house of two rooms. She has electricity and shares a latrine and water tap with the six families that live in her compound. Although she received 40kg of grain from the EC grain scheme she is by no means destitute, since she intends to keep all the grain for home consumption; in addition there were several items of furniture in the house.

She makes her living as a tea seller. She brews the tea in her own home, puts it in two thermos jugs and carries it up the hill to the Ras Mekonnen Garage where she has an agreement to bring tea on a daily basis. She sells 50 cups per day at the price of 20 cents per cup, which totals Birr 10 per day or Birr 225 per month (assuming 22.5 working days per month). She indicated that her sales increased during the rains. However against that she has to offset her monthly production costs which are outlined below:

Sugar - Birr 6 /day	=	Birr 135
Tea	=	Birr 25
Water	=	Birr 5
Fuel	=	Birr 9
Total	=	Birr 174

This leaves her an income of Birr 51 per month. She described her monthly expenses as follows:

School	=	Birr 10
Food	=	Birr 40
Fuel	=	Birr 9
Electricity	=	Birr 10
Rent	=	Birr 18
Water	=	Birr 4
Total	=	Birr 91

If these figures are correct they suggest that Negatwa has a Birr 40 deficit each month. An apparent excess of expenditure over income was evident in most discussions held during the RUA, which implies that either informants were overestimating their expenditure, they had other sources of income which they did not declare, or they were using up assets.

Christian Children's Fund (CCF)

A total of 803 children from the *kebele* are registered with the CCF. Assuming that the age structure of *Kebele* 13 follows the urban norm of 46% of the population being 14 years of age and under², this represents about 32% of the *kebele's* children. Criteria for inclusion in the programme appeared to be somewhat subjective, although a monthly income of under Birr 150 or no permanent income source was a requirement. The benefits of registration are free school fees, some free food for children, help with savings schemes and soft loans for micro projects such as *injerra* baking or petty trading.

Conclusions

- The wealth ranking exercises carried out during the day showed that informants had the ability to discriminate between the people under discussion, and that they used their own criteria for judging relative wealth. However, the criteria were difficult to standardise. A few common measures were: regularity of employment, dependency ratio and women headed households. More work needed to be done on what the poor considered to be indicators of poverty and affluence.

²Ethiopian Central Statistical Authority, 1987

- Targeting was a major problem in the EC programme and would also be a problem in any programme that attempts to differentiate between the poor. Although there were no complaints about eligible people registered with the *kebele* being excluded, it seems that at least some of the people above the income cut-off were receiving wheat. In this *kebele*, a minimum of two thirds of the households were eligible for wheat and so the coverage was quite extensive. If targeting for the voucher programme was limited to the poorest 30%, it could be very difficult for the *kebele* to make the selection fairly. Residents of the *kebele* suggested that the committee to approve selection of beneficiaries should consist of three poor people of whom two could be elderly and at least one a woman. The remainder (maximum two) could come from the *kebele* committee. One team member suggested that it would be better for the *kebele* not to be involved at all, but that *"the potentially poor people should select their own representatives and take responsibility for the programme themselves."*
- Household income in the informal sector varies significantly over time. People will move in and out of income classes from one month to the next. The poorest on daily labour wages, which tend to be unreliable, will suffer most from these variations. This makes targeting by monthly income potentially unreliable. Targeting by total income may also be a risk because income per capita is a more important measure of poverty than total household income.

If targeting were to be carried out on an income criterion alone, there would be the danger of creating a poverty trap. If the cut off level for receipt of benefits was set, for example, at Birr 100 per month, and a voucher worth Birr 25 were given to any household below that figure, all households in the Birr 100 to Birr 125 per month income bracket would have an incentive to reduce earnings or to underdeclare them.

- Any programme that is only for registered *kebele* members will miss those people who are not part of the *kebele* system. The EC wheat scheme and the proposed Food and Kerosene voucher programme are both targeted at registered members. The reason for this is to discourage people from moving from their normal residence to receive aid, and to stop multiple applications in different centres. Several informants said that as many as 25% of the residents of the area were not registered, however there was no way independently to check these estimates. Non registered people would probably be either the rich who have no need for the facilities that the *kebele* can offer or poor, displaced people.
- Most of the people interviewed liked the wheat scheme, despite much of the benefit going to the merchants. When asked about a voucher programme respondents thought it sounded good, although it was only an abstract idea since they had had no experience of such a system before. Some informants suggested that the voucher should be obtainable as payment for work around the *kebele*. There was a strongly expressed need among people interviewed for help to earn income, as well as to receive charity.
- The presence of the EC wheat distribution was extremely helpful in allowing comparisons to be made with the proposed Food and Kerosene voucher programme. It was clear that people were aware of the wheat programme, and so informing potential recipients about an aid programme is not a problem. The message had even reached a blind, illiterate beggar.
- Traders will need time and orientation in order to understand and accept the principle of using vouchers in place of cash. They warned that discounting of vouchers was inevitable due to the extra cost of having to redeem them at the bank. An effective advertising and information campaign would be needed for the Programme for the benefit of all parties.

OBSERVATIONS ON URBAN APPLICATIONS OF PRA METHODS FROM GHANA AND ZAMBIA: PARTICIPATORY POVERTY ASSESSMENTS

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Rural Appraisal and Participatory Poverty Assessment

Over the last year exercises termed participatory poverty assessments have been carried out as part of the process of preparing World Bank Country Poverty Assessments in a number of countries. In Ghana, Zambia and Kenya such exercises have been carried out using methods based on the RRA/PRA 'family'. So far only the Zambia document is available in a reasonably 'final' form (*Zambia Participatory Poverty Assessment*, Norton, Owen & Milimo 1994).

To give some idea of the agenda for this work, the objectives of the Zambia study were to:

- Explore local conceptions of poverty, vulnerability and relative well-being in poor urban and rural communities in Zambia;
- Assess what the poor themselves see as the most effective actions for poverty reduction which can be taken by i) individuals or families, ii) communities, iii) government agencies, iv) other institutions;
- Discover what people in poor urban and rural communities see as the main concerns and problems in their lives at present and how these have changed over the last 5-10 years;
- Investigate local perceptions of key policy changes related to economic liberalisation.

As these exercises were designed to influence policy-making on a national level in both macro and sectoral terms, they had to attempt to deal with the above agenda in both rural and urban communities in a broadly comparable fashion. This undertaking led to a particularly interesting situation within which to compare the demands of undertaking this type of research in urban as against rural situations in Africa. The following observations are drawn from experiences in Ghana and Zambia. These are personal reflections, although they draw on the experience of the large Ghanaian and Zambian research teams that were involved in the research¹.

We were acutely aware of the fact that the PRA methods which were employed had their origins in traditions of rural research (RRA, PRA, agroecosystem analysis, farming systems research, PALM etc.). The teams generally concluded that there were no major areas where these methods or modes of working were inappropriate or seriously problematic in an urban context. There are even certain ways in which undertaking this kind of research can be easier in an urban area (for example, logistics and transportation are generally simpler).

There are nonetheless some areas where the assumptions behind much rural research have influenced the development of the RRA/PRA school of methods - and it is clear that in these cases researchers may need to be aware of differences which tend to characterise urban situations.

¹ It is difficult to reference everyone - key 'players' included the PRA trainers who participated (Meera Shah, Neela Mukherjee and Tony Dogbe in Ghana - Meera Shah in Zambia), the lead researchers in the two exercises (Dr Ellen Brotei-Dorku in Ghana and Dr John Milimo in Zambia), and in Zambia the coordinator and research manager from the Southern Africa Country Department of the World Bank, Dan Owen.

Rural Assumptions and Urban Realities

The Assumption of Mutual Knowledge

This applies only to some methods which rely on detailed knowledge of the situation of other community members, in particular wealth ranking. On occasions in both Zambia and Ghana urban families refused to rank their neighbours on the grounds of lack of sufficient knowledge. A participant in Ghana commented that it was only when one's neighbour was in a situation of serious difficulty (needing medical fees for a sick child, for example) that one could see the social resources in terms of networks of kin and friends which an individual could draw on. In rural areas these networks are coded in relatively 'public' form in the socially visible kinship and community links that unite different social groups - in urban areas this is much less the case. For the poor in Africa such resources in terms of social institutions and networks are a critical element of livelihood and survival.

The Assumption of Homogeneity in Patterns of Livelihood

Secondly there is the assumption of homogeneity in local livelihood strategies. This applies particularly to seasonality diagramming. Urban livelihoods and incomes may be just as subject to seasonal patterns as rural, but the patterns of seasonality are more varied within any given community in terms of how incomes are affected (the impact of the rainy season on building workers and market traders in various foodstuffs for example are marked, but very different). On the other hand, the impact of seasonality on health status may be subject to no more variation between households and individuals than in a rural area. Therefore there is a real need to think out the likely lines and patterns of seasonal change and how these will affect different social and livelihood groups. Urban seasonality appears a much underrated issue in Africa - but investigation in group contexts requires care.

The Assumption of Community

Finally, much PRA elicits an analysis of the problems facing poor rural people at the level of the *community* (eg. water supply, access to health facilities, management of common property resources). In many urban situations the understanding of what constitutes a community is more variable. The tendency for 'community' to be understood as a shifting category, the meaning of which changes according to the context of discussion, is greater in urban than rural contexts. Group discussions which rank needs or priorities on a community basis, or discuss issues which are of concern particularly at the community level (eg. personal safety in public areas, urban services etc.) therefore need particular care.

Aside from these assumptions, there are also issues of basic methodology which tend to be different in rural and urban situations. An obvious issue that is considerably more complex in urban situations than in small rural settlements is the question of the selection of participants. Generally a more complex set of decisions has to be taken by researchers to ensure that for the purposes of the research a representative group of participants has been found. This generally involves much greater reliance on key informants in the orientation phase of the research. Again, researchers need to examine carefully the reasons behind their own selection of key informants and others who facilitate contacts into a community. It is particularly important to document the process of decision-making involved, and to be aware of the early influence which this selection may have had on the whole process of the research.

None of these caveats implies that participatory research methods cannot be used to great effect in urban areas - it simply means that researchers have to be aware of the context and constantly examine the nature of their own assumptions; good practice under any circumstances.

LINKING GOVERNMENT AGENTS AND LOCAL USERS: PUA FOR ARTISANAL FISHING PORT DEVELOPMENT

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Overview

This paper considers the adaptation of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), previously used in rural settings, to an urban artisanal fisheries environment; thus making it 'PUA'. Specifically, we describe the use of PUA to prepare and publish a baseline study and problem identification for an artisanal port. The programme also involves the training of government field agents as 'participatory' technical consultants through preparation of the baseline study and subsequent mini-projects; the formation of a legally-recognised Port User's Committee around the priority problems identified in the baseline study of each port; and the setting up of a Coordinating Committee composed of representatives of the field workers themselves.

Background

There are an increasing number of urban-based fisheries where there is no longer a recognised and coherent village structure to analyse and react to changing conditions in the shoreside aspects of fish production. At the same time, structural adjustment programmes and global trends are obliging African governments to free themselves from many types of activities. However, governments are still best placed to plan, carry out and supervise certain important categories of activities, especially administrative ones. There are also certain activities, and certain physical areas, where public and private interests are necessarily and inextricably intertwined, and where government must be an active partner in planning, coordination, and supervision. Well-structured government collaboration with private sector users is essential, for example, for the development, maintenance, and operation of artisanal ports and landing sites, one of the main subjects of this article.

The traditional and probably necessarily enduring tasks of government in the artisanal fisheries sector are mainly administrative. Fisheries field officers traditionally deal with documents, production statistics, quarrels, licences, taxes etc., but they are now also being asked to do more to support local initiatives by:

- Initiating local development actions;
- Assisting local organisations;
- Stimulating local initiatives;
- Breaking down bureaucratic obstructions; and
- Giving incentives for private/community actions.

Despite being given these tasks, the fisheries officers are usually not provided with the training, technical knowledge, administrative structure, strategic plan, material means or authority needed to carry out the work. The field officers and their supervisors in national headquarters, though they have a general idea of the fisheries situation, do not usually have a truly detailed and systematic knowledge of the artisanal fisheries ports at the local level: how people work, what the economic producers see as their most important problems, and what they would like to do about them.

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Government officials also suffer from the fact that they are very often distrusted by the fishing communities since they are the ones responsible for taxes, licences, and fines. Finally, local government structures often simply do not have the internal organisation necessary to really discuss with users, in a participative fashion, the needs of small-scale fisheries, and to assist users in their own development actions.

In Guinea, the Ministry of Agricultural and Animal Resources (responsible for fisheries), artisanal fishing port users in Conakry, and the regional West African Integrated Development of Artisanal Fisheries Programme (IDAF) of the FAO have been collaborating to develop methods to help the fishing port users and the government fisheries officers work effectively together.

Artisanal Fisheries in Guinea

In mid-1991 the first 60 field officers were appointed to the new Guinean fisheries service 'OPPA' (Guinean National Office for the Promotion of Artisanal Fisheries). IDAF had just begun preparations for training some of these Guinean fisheries officers in rather routine methods of problem identification and mini-project planning, when two very interesting things happened.

1. *A nutritional RRA study as a catalyst.* An FAO nutrition team trained a half-dozen national fisheries officers in nutrition RRA methods as part of an attempt to increase the role of fish in the alleviation of under-nutrition. Their report-back seminar gave a lucid and clearly appreciated understanding of both the methods used and results obtained.

The RRA methods fitted the needs and interests of the members of the audience so well, that many of them asked the FAO RRA team to immediately give another training session for additional national staff. Although it was totally unforeseen, the FAO RRA team did manage to rearrange its regional travel programme so that, in association with IDAF, they were able to conduct an intensive two-day training workshop in RRA methods with 30 participants from the Conakry area.

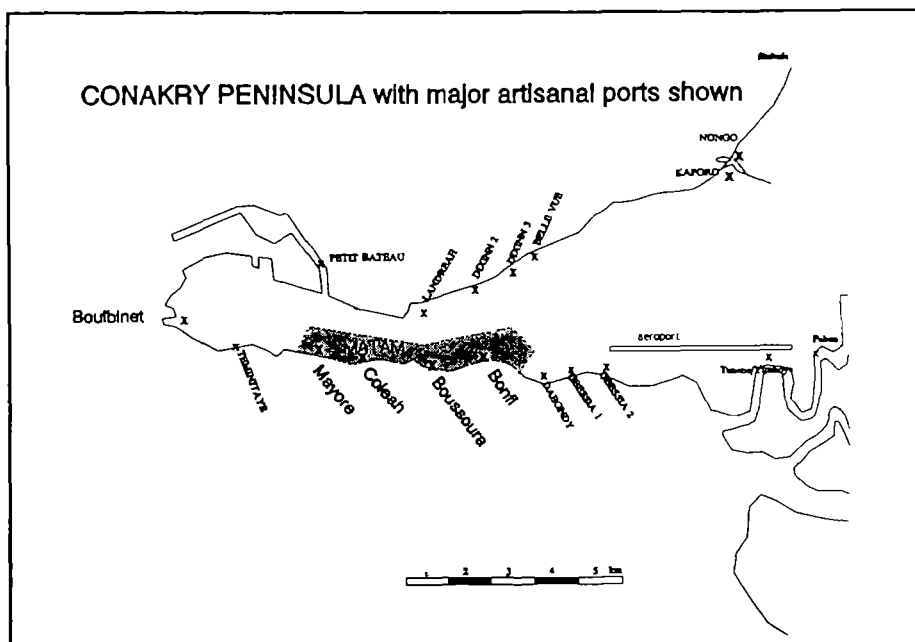
2. *Strong interest and support from local officials.* The second interesting event was a request from the newly elected Mayor of Matam-Conakry for suggestions on what she could do to help artisanal fisheries in her community. The Guinean fisheries department and IDAF suggested that the mayor's office could do a lot to support efforts to improve the infrastructure and working conditions at the artisanal landing sites in her commune. In this context, IDAF/OPPA offered to use the four artisanal ports of Matam as training grounds for fisheries officers undertaking training, action, and research in RRA baseline studies and problem identification. This clear and firm support from higher political levels was probably necessary for being able to carry out investigations at the beach level.

Baseline Studies: Getting to Know the Ports - And Making the Ports Known

IDAF started a Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA - it was no longer rural) training for 15 OPPA-agents on the four artisanal fishery ports of the Matam quarter in Conakry (Figure 1). Both OPPA field workers and national fisheries headquarters staff were among the trainees.

The *structure* of the training necessarily had to take into account the numerous constraints on all participants: the experimental and evolutionary nature of the PUA methods being used, the normal administrative tasks which the OPPA trainees had to continue carrying out during the week, the limited time each week which IDAF staff could commit to the training, and the strictly limited funds available. Under these circumstances a 'sandwich' approach was used, with Tuesdays and Thursdays allotted to the training. The morning session was classroom-based and allowed for discussion of the field results from the previous PUA day. The afternoon was spent in the ports trying to apply the lessons from that morning's session. Each team of three to five OPPA trainees took responsibility for the baseline study of one artisanal port.

Figure 1. Matam Artisanal Ports



The importance of the PUA baseline studies was seen not only as giving a good description of the fishing port, but more particularly as a first step in highlighting locally important problems in their context. The published report would then provide the foundation and the orientation for launching subsequent actions designed to deal with those problems judged most important by the port users. The published PUA Port Reports were given wide circulation among interested government services and development agencies.

Each field team started by putting together a set of hypotheses concerning the important problems they expected to find at the port they were going to study, based on the perceptions (or sometimes misconceptions) which they had at the beginning. The team was then expected to organise its field work in such a way that they could either substantiate ("yes, there is a real problem with bandits and drug addicts after dark") or discard ("no, there is not a real problem with getting fresh water because the motorisation centre supplies it unofficially") the initial hypotheses. Such an approach did not, of course, exclude the discovery of 'new' important problems during the field work, and many such new problems were found. Armed with their hypotheses (the reality they expected to find), the teams then proceeded to apply their new PUA tools at 'their' landing site, comparing the reality they found with their preconceptions.

Mobilisation Without Gifts

During this field work it was repeatedly emphasised with all participants that neither IDAF nor OPPA had any money to pay for any mini-projects. Thus, implementing any subsequent development actions would have to be done with the resources of the port users themselves, or with other partners. At first the port users tended not to believe this disclaimer, largely because expatriates were visibly associated with this first round of training. However, as time went on and the only development actions carried out were those paid for by the port users themselves, or by other outside partners, the port users came to understand and (necessarily if reluctantly) accept the 'empty handed' approach adopted by OPPA/IDAF.

The First Training Cycle: Some Problems and Some Real Successes

Evaluation of this first training cycle, which took over six months altogether, showed us that the techniques and approaches suffered from the following problems:

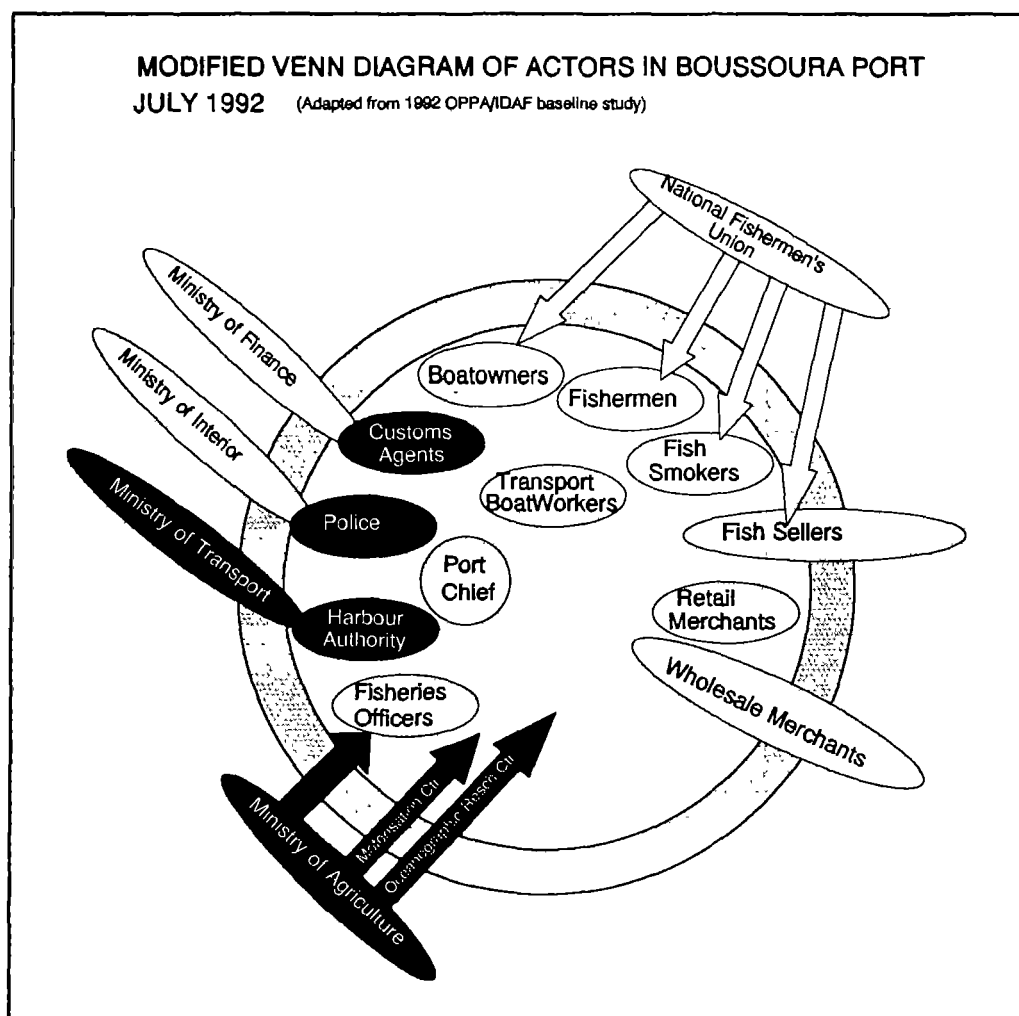
- *They were not rural.* The adjustment of agriculturally and rurally oriented RRA and PRA techniques to urban artisanal fisheries took a lot of effort and time.
- *They were not rapid.* Partly because of the above and partly due to the slow rate at which government officials can be trained and socialised into an effective participatory team
- *They were not participatory* The teams themselves made the map of the area, the transect and the Venn diagram without much participation from the community. Of course, the port users were interviewed on the historical profile and the list of problems, but more traditional survey methods such as interviews were used as well.

Nevertheless, the first PUA round was considered a success for a number of reasons. It provided very useful information on the particularities of the artisanal ports. For perhaps the first time port users saw a real and sustained interest of government agents in their port's problems. Fifteen fisheries field workers showed a big improvement in their productivity and efficiency, and they were very happy with their PUA training certificates. Participatory appraisal methods adapted to urban artisanal fisheries were developed, and three IDAF staff showed a big improvement in the efficiency and productivity of their training activities in PUA methods.

Back Down at the Port: Trying to Find Out Who's Really in Charge

When the fieldwork was being carried out for the first studies, it rapidly became apparent that many organisations already existed or were represented at each landing site: in addition to the fisherfolk, official legal presences working daily in the port included the national port authority, the port captain, police, fisheries department officer(s), and often customs authorities (Figure 2)

Figure 2. Venn Diagram of Key Actors (drawn by officers)



Traditionally recognised groups included the fishing boat-owners guild, the transport boat-owners guild, fish-smoking women's association, small merchants' association, bottom fishermen's association, drift-net fishermen's association, and so on.

To our surprise, however, when the results of the baseline studies were discussed with the port users, it rapidly became apparent that *none* of these organisations or associations felt that they were in a position to take responsibility for, or even to initiate action for selecting and carrying out mini-projects designed to maintain or improve conditions in any of the artisanal ports.

Experimental Port User's Committee Fills the Void

Since the port users really wanted to do something about some of their more important problems, it was agreed to try an experiment. The port's Venn diagram gave the structure for a Port Users' Committee (Comité de Développement de Débarcadère - CDD in French) in which the 'heads' of the various port associations became the committee's voting members, while government officers assigned to the port took on the role of non-voting advisors (Figure 3). This Port Users' Committee then took responsibility for choosing priority activities and, with the help of its 'consultants', for finding the resources needed to carry them out (Table 1).

Figure 3. Port Users' Committee (membership closely follows the pattern of the officers' Venn diagram of the port, but was drawn by the users themselves)

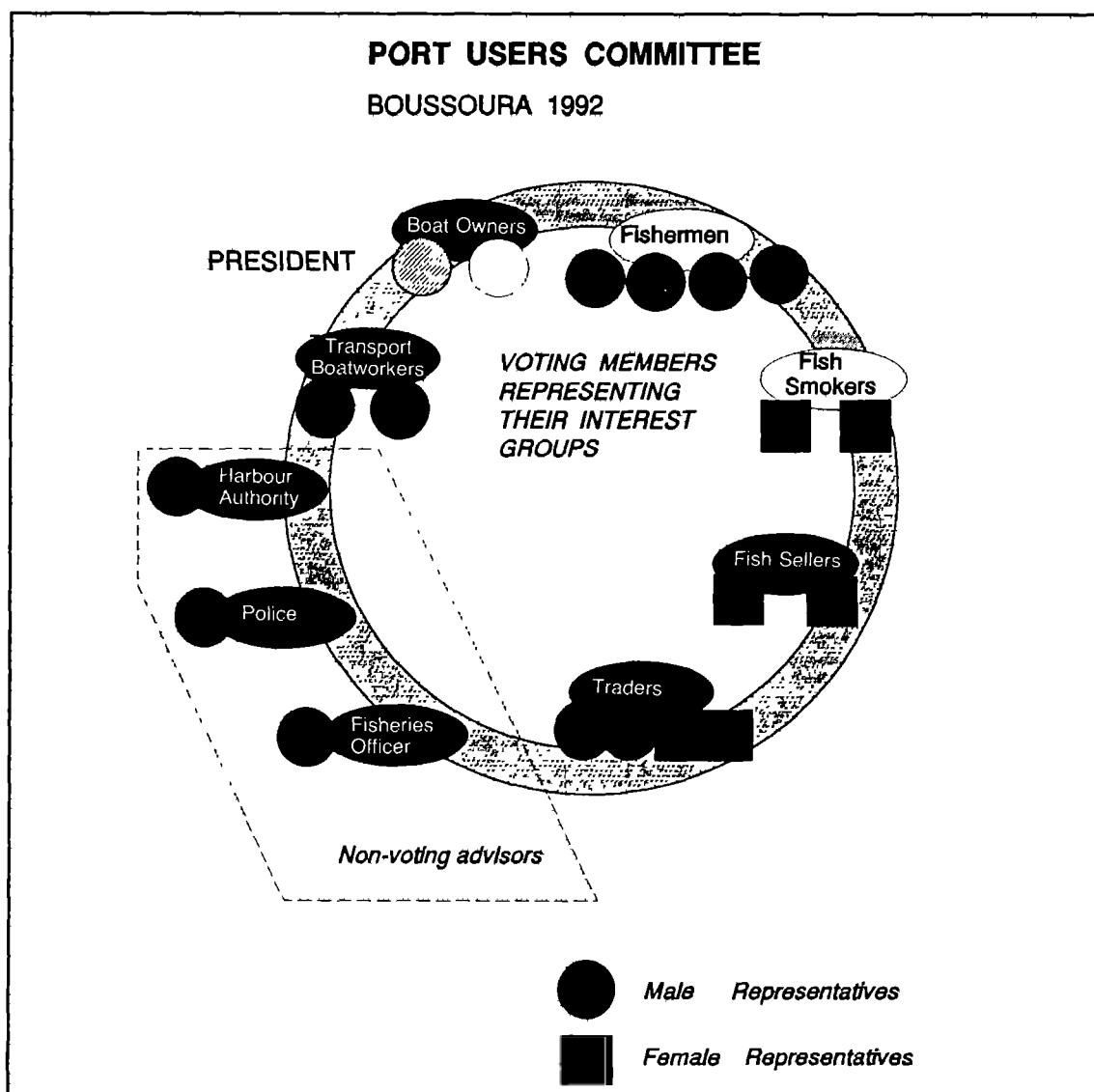


Table 1. Composition of Boussoura Port Users' Committee (Matam, July 1992)

Professional Category	Number of people	Number of Representatives in Committee	Male/Female Representatives
Boatowners	42	2	2/0
Fishermen	144	4	4/0
Fish Sellers	30	2	0/2
Traders	111	5	3/2
Fish Smokers	40	2	0/2
Transporters	33	2	2/0
Harbour Office	2	(1)	1 non-voting advisor
Fishing Dept.	2		1 'Consultant'
Police	5	(1)	1 non-voting advisor
Customs	3		
Totals	412	19	13/6

Putting Follow-up Development Actions into the Fisheries Officers' Work Programme

The PUA training and follow-up actions gave the fisheries officers a kit of needed development tools, but it did not free them from all of their existing administrative duties, nor change the basically authoritarian and hierarchical structure of the ministry to which they reported. However, by agreement with the fisheries department, the fisheries officers were encouraged to psychologically and functionally separate their administrative and their development actions. The field officer's tasks were divided into two distinctly different types of activities:

1. Normal administrative activities, in which the field agent continues to follow the direct instructions of his hierarchical superior in the Ministry.
2. Development activities, where with the *permission* of his/her ministry supervisor, the field agent helps to provide:
 - Technical assistance to Port Users' Development Committees, including acting as their consultant in the planning and implementation of mini-projects.
 - Training of further fisheries field agents in development methods.

This splitting of tasks would under many circumstances create conflicts of interest - it's hard to be both policeman and friend at the same time. However, because a four person fisheries team was responsible to the mayor of each district-commune, rather than being officially assigned to a specific port (the district-commune of Matam, for example, has four ports, see Figure 1 above), team members who felt more comfortable carrying out the normal administrative tasks could concentrate on that, leaving others to focus on PUA-related activities.

Joint Benefits Necessary for Joint Action

It was both a premise of our programme, and an observation made on the results, that effective follow-up action will occur only where each of the interested parties gets an important benefit. Because this principle is so fundamental, the apparent major advantages for the major actors are summarised below.

Fisheries Officers

On completing their first baseline study PUA training cycle, fisheries officers were encouraged to help port users form a development committee and then help them carry out mini-projects chosen and funded by the same port users. There were several incentives for the PUA-trained fisheries officers to continue, including a second IDAF training certificate when the officers' Port User's Committee had successfully implemented at least one mini-project. The fishery officers were also eligible for a field expenses payment of about US\$3 for each day of real PUA field actions approved in advance, and for which an adequate report was presented.

The fisheries officers, with a few notable exceptions, were not usually providing technological advice to the port user groups. Most fisheries officers are not as expert at fish capture, boat building, fish smoking, or fish marketing as the port users with whom they work. Many of the fisheries officers *are*, however, more expert than the port users in systematic planning, accounting, and facilitating contacts and agreements with other government services and agencies. Combining the educated skills of the PUA-trained fisheries officer with the technological and practical knowledge of the port users often gave some very practical and useful results.

The Artisanal Fisheries Department

This experiment was started at the beginning of the life-cycle of the new government service (Office for the Promotion of Artisanal Fisheries - OPPA) which had been assigned responsibility for the development of artisanal fisheries. As a new service, it had no established work programme or development strategy which was its own 'protected territory'. On the contrary, the OPPA administration was looking for ways in which it could do something positive for the country's artisanal fisheries when its only resources were fisheries officers with virtually no operating budget nor equipment. The PUA-based programme for local development of the small fishing ports was welcomed by OPPA staff and became its official policy. If a PUA/PUC approach in another country had to compete with another already established (even if relatively ineffective) programme, it might not be so readily embraced by ministerial authorities.

The Port Users

The fishermen and other port users quite naturally felt that the government should take care of fixing up and maintaining the landing sites, installing water and electricity, lighting, sanitary facilities, and all the other things a good port needs. But they knew that previous government top-down projects for the improvement of three artisanal ports in Conakry were not always well-adapted to the needs of the artisanal sector (for which reason, among others, they did not plan to shift their operations to those 'improved' ports), and also that the government had no money to invest in improving the remaining ports.

After an initial period in which the port users still kept hoping that OPPA or IDAF would solve their problems for them, the users started getting their own resources together to deal with those things which for them were really urgent, such as night lighting to drive away bandits and mark the landing site to boats coming back after dark; connecting their port to the city drinking water system; clearing of stones and provision of a breakwater; clearing of garbage from the beach landing sites; protecting their ports from illegal encroachment by residential developers filling in areas of the port to build houses and improved security to reduce theft.

The port users also began to work closely with the OPPA-PUA staff to develop mini-project proposals to be discussed with potential local donors. This was especially the case for useful and important actions which clearly could not be done using only the port's own resources.

PUCs, Their Mini-projects, and Their Consultants

On completing their first baseline study PUA training cycle, fisheries officers decided to help port users to:

- Form an organisation that effectively looks out for the maintenance, the operation and development of the artisanal port as a whole; and to help this organisation;
- Plan micro-projects to deal with the problems that came out of the PUA baseline study.

The community organisation became known as the Port User's Committee (Comité de Débarcadère), and in most ports it became recognised as being able to really act for the port as a whole on questions of common interest. Potential micro-projects were planned and discussed with the PUC and/or the professional group involved. The task of the field workers was officially to merely assist the PUC. The finance, materials, and manpower for these mini-projects came from a variety of sources:

- Voluntary contributions;
- Landing rights fees imposed on canoe landings, and other users' fees;
- Outside donors directly assisting a specific mini-project;
- The port's mini-project being included within the umbrella of some bigger project.

On the one hand, the aim of the PUC is not primarily to attract donor money. The PUC first seeks to solve the problem itself with local resources. On the other, for projects which are too big to be carried out by the port itself, nothing should prevent donors or other potential financial partners from being approached. The boxes below give two examples of mini-projects in Coleah Port:

Box 1. Coleah Port Mini-Project with External Assistance

An example from Coleah is the problem of garbage on the landing beach. There being no municipal garbage collection in that section of the city, all the extended neighbourhood (in which fishermen were a very small minority) carried their trash down to the nearby beach and dumped it. Unfortunately this was the only beach for several kilometres along the coast where fishermen could land their boats and their fish. The four-metre high 'coastal dune' of city trash was very impressive to any observer.

Aided by their PUA-trained fisheries officer, the PUC contacted all the possible government agencies they could think of to help get rid of the trash. They even collected the equivalent of US\$ 250 among themselves, the amount for which the garbage disposal service said they would be willing to haul away the trash. But when the garbage people actually arrived and saw the real mountain awaiting them, they had no choice but to literally back out.

The solution was finally found when, with the help of the Mayor's office and the constant efforts of the PUA fisheries officer advising the PUC, a USAID-financed employment-generating project set up to clean the city streets and gutters was persuaded to include Coleah beach on its agenda. It took 164 trips by *big* dump trucks to haul out the approximately 2 000 tons of accumulated garbage. The PUC decided to use their \$250 to buy their own wheelbarrows, shovels, and rakes to finish putting the site in order after the trucks and tractors had left.

Box 2. Coleah Port Self-Help Mini-Project

The PUC of Coleah Port, in response to a technical suggestion from the PUA system, had already collected the sea-floor stones all around and even beyond their port to build their small breakwater. Adequate for normal tides and sea conditions, their breakwater needed to be higher and heavier to protect their canoes against really severe storms.

The Coleah Port User's Committee was therefore preparing a small but realistic proposal for the integrated development of their port's infrastructure, to be submitted as soon as the PUC had received legal recognition as an independent NGO. (The request for registration as an NGO was introduced in October 1993, and was still slowly but apparently successfully filtering through the various government ministries in mid-1994).

Where there have been truly common interests shared between the major groups involved, the PUA approach has worked. Where this is not the case, trying to make such an approach work in the face of indifference of one or more of the several structural partners will be a total waste of time.

Creating and Maintaining a Participatory Space Between the Ministry and Port Users

It has been possible, at least for the time of this still on-going experiment, to help create and hold open the necessary 'working space' by carefully and explicitly separating the fisheries officers' administrative duties from their development activities. In administrative work, such as working with fishing licences, reporting boat census, making reports, helping to resolve quarrels in the port, the officers remain under the direct authority and instructions of their hierarchical superiors in the Ministry. In their developmental work, however, with the *permission* of their hierarchical superiors, they act as technical consultants at the service of their development client, the PUC.

Figure 4.

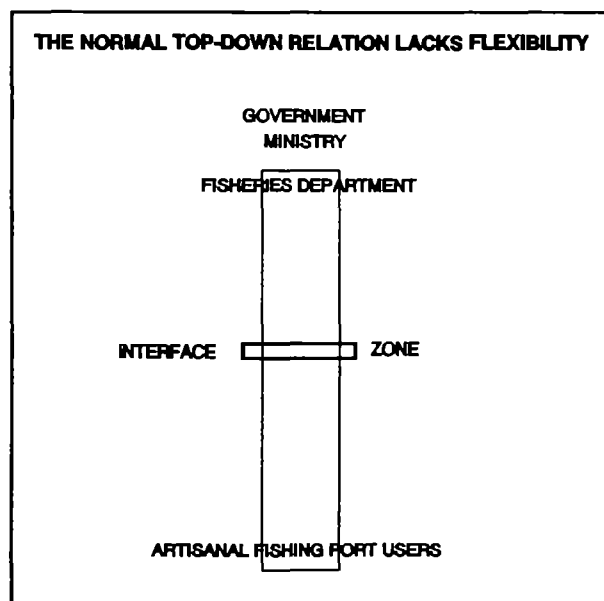
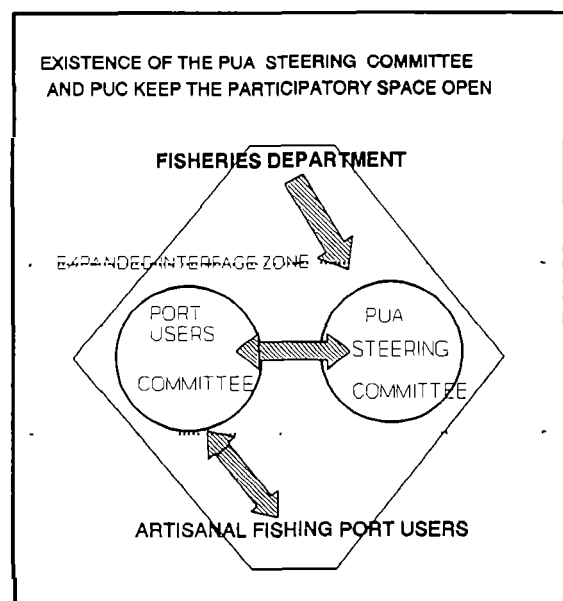


Figure 5.



The interface between a hierarchical ministerial bureaucracy and the economic actors in the field has traditionally been the zone where participatory approaches falter and die (Figure 4). It seems possible that in the work in Conakry we slowly, and not necessarily with prior intention, managed to evolve a kind of buffer structure which provides for a reasonably smooth 'shifting of gears' when passing from the Ministry environment to that of the landing site. This transitional space has been kept open by the working mechanism of a participatory Coordinating Committee, staffed mostly by government officers, which has evolved through a number of stages (Figure 5). It seems likely that the successful

results achieved through the Committee owe much to the fact that it 'grew' into place in response to real problems. Thus a brief look at the history of the committee itself could bring out some of the possibilities for replicability and sustainability.

The group started out during the first PUA training cycle as a Coordinating Committee composed of the team leaders of each of the national teams undergoing PUA training, plus FAO staff. Its main function was to keep track of how the training was progressing, and recommend any needed adjustments in the programme (Figure 6).

After the first cycle was successfully completed, there was strong demand for a second cycle of PUA training be carried out for 15 new field agents and two new fishing ports. While no one wanted to just 'drop' the newly-created Port Users Groups and their mini-projects, the limited time which FAO/IDAF staff could commit to these particular tasks did not allow for both follow-up on the first ports plus carrying out the new training.

The problem was solved by strengthening the Coordinating Committee and giving it very substantial responsibility for supervising both follow-up actions and the new training/research activities.

Those Fisheries Commune-District Team Leaders who had been trained in PUA methods during the first training cycle were made permanent *ex officio* members of the Coordinating Committee (most had been in the first committee anyway, representing their training teams). Two new members representing the new teams in training were added (Figure 7).

Figure 6.

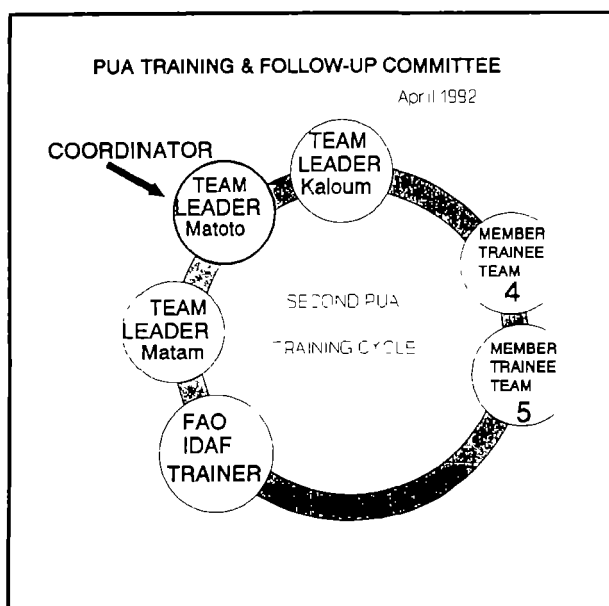
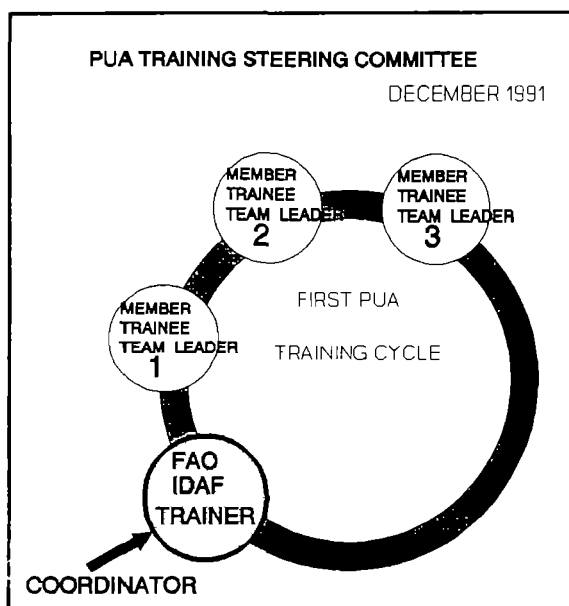


Figure 7.



Although the Coordinating Committee was given *de facto* responsibility for PUA training and ensuing experimental development actions, it very explicitly had nothing to do with the administrative functions of the fisheries department. Having acquired more varied and time-consuming responsibilities, the Committee found that it had to more tightly structure its operating methods - a participatory management approach can rapidly turn chaotic if not operating under agreed upon rules.

Perhaps one of the most important strengths of the way things worked out in Conakry is that the *voluntary* participation aspect applied not only to fishermen but also to fisheries officers: no one was obliged to participate. This principle gave a very positive corollary: everyone who was working with the Coordinating Committee wanted (for one reason or another) to be there.

Sometimes a Commune-District team leader would be temporarily or even generally uninterested in the approach. In such cases, another Commune-district team member usually volunteered to become

a regular member of the Committee until his/her chief regained interest in the operation. Only one District out of five was not regularly represented on the Committee, and even for that District its major artisanal port was 'represented' by a fisheries officer who had participated in its baseline study and was following-up with mini-project formulation.

No field expenses were paid for participation in the Coordinating Committee meetings, which were considered to be a normal part of a professional officer's work. Partly for this reason, everyone felt comfortable with the evolving practice that any officers participating in the PUA field work were also welcome to participate in the weekly meeting of the Coordinating Committee.

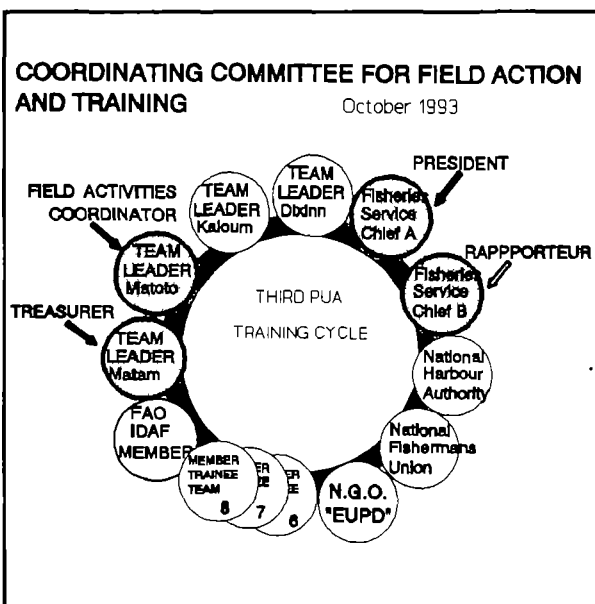
Letting the Coordinating Committee Control its Own Budget

A very interesting development took place about half-way through the second PUA training cycle. IDAF decided that it was a good time to transfer responsibility for the detailed allocation of field expenses to the Committee itself. The results of turning this aspect of management 'over' to the committee far surpassed IDAF's expectations. Committee members made very rational and prudent decisions in the use of their limited budget.

Proposals for fieldwork which were poorly thought out or contrary to policy were not approved by the nationally-staffed committee. Reports on field work which were not clear or inadequate were sent back for redrafting by their authors before field expenses would be paid. If the committee came to feel that certain fisheries officers were not doing their utmost to accomplish the work which the officer himself or herself had proposed, the Committee refused to approve new proposals by the officer concerned - pending his/her 'reform'. Especially important in the local context, and which caused some ill-feelings with some people for a brief time when the Committee first received budget control, the nationally-staffed Committee made it clear that it would not authorise payment for field work which was not done. There were no free rides.

In point of fact, the Committee, applying its own critical but constructive management principles, found that in many months it did not have enough approved fieldwork proposals to use all of its budget allotment. In these months the Committee requested that the unused part of the monthly allotment be credited to its balance for future work.

In early 1993, at the request of the Office for Promotion of Artisanal Fisheries, membership in the Coordinating Committee for Training and Development Actions, as it was by now called, was enlarged to include PUA-trained participants from the National Harbour Authority (Ministry of Transport) and the (independent) National Artisanal Fishermen's Union. Four National Fisheries Department headquarters staff, trained in PUA and attached full-time to work with FAO/IDAF, were assigned as the technical secretariat in support of the work of the Coordinating Committee (Figure 8).



NGO Participation in the Coordinating Committee

A well-organised and reputable local NGO, 'Entre-aide Universitaire pour le Développement' (EUPD), was retained by IDAF to provide organisational and technical consulting services to the

Coordinating Committee. EUPD has furnished the Committee with legal advice on how to go about getting the PUC recognised as legal local associations, provided young civil engineers to help PUCs develop their plans for constructing simple harbour installations, and helped in contacts with bilateral and NGO donors present in Conakry.

The PUCs presently have very limited management capabilities, while for a variety of reasons potential financial partners may prefer not to channel contributions for local mini-projects through official government structures. Under these circumstances it is felt that the participation of a reliable NGO, and its availability (for a fee) to play an active role in the planning and supervision of prospective mini-projects may encourage potential outside financial partners to participate. In a certain sense, a good NGO could be seen as taking over some of the confidence-building role which has been played by IDAF. It would thus be an important element in the potential sustainability of the PUA organisational structures which have evolved in association with IDAF's presence in Conakry.

Observations on the Evolution of the PUA Training

The fourth PUA training round began in January 1994, this time a refresher course for 15 officers who were already trained in one of the three first rounds. This round produced baseline studies for three additional ports in three weeks of five days each week (15 working days). The PUA research-training cycle has evolved into a rapid and participatory tool for basic descriptions and problem identification. The first round took six months, the last one three weeks.

As the field results began to accumulate with succeeding training cycles, and the PUA approach in the ports became more widely known, demand for the training increased dramatically. In the third and fourth training cycles there were far more requests for training than there were places available. Interestingly, many of the more recent requests have come from government services other than fisheries, and even from a number of NGOs. Should financing be available from some source, the national PUA trainers could easily carry out several more rounds of introductory PUA training.

Several of the fisheries officers trained in PUA have also used the techniques to undertake and publish baseline studies of their own agricultural home villages in the mountains. These studies have then formed the foundation for the discussion of village development programmes in their village councils. In one case the relevant PUA baseline study helped convince an international donor to fund a small development project for a women's fabric processing cooperative in the village, now operational for over a year and a half.

The national fisheries officers have become good practitioners and are justifiably proud of the results achieved so far. Perhaps in part because they are well-pleased with the results, they have not yet begun to look at either results or methods with a very critical eye. In particular, PUA methods which could usefully be improved include those for:

- Quantitative aspects of fish capture and processing.
- Understanding the distribution and marketing systems.
- Assisting user groups with the planning of, resource activation for, and implementation of mini-projects.
- Specifically PUA-style tools for evaluating progress with mini-projects and their sponsoring user-groups.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the further development of the PUA toolkit presently being used in Conakry will depend on some further outside technical assistance. Now that the IDAF sub-regional office in Conakry has closed, the most reasonable source of such technical assistance would be the IDAF team based in Cotonou. The results of this strengthening and enlargement of the toolkit could be very

useful to IDAF in its PUA training throughout the region, thus justifying the additional inputs which would be required in the Conakry proving ground.

Applicability of the Experience to Other National Contexts

Local political authorities and national fisheries departments often do not have much technological assistance to offer to fisherfolk in their tasks at sea. They can, however, do a lot to help the situation of the artisanal fishing sector in their shoreside bases.

In the emerging urban fisheries situations, there is no longer a recognised and coherent village structure to analyse and react to changing conditions in the shoreside aspects of fish production. Furthermore, the national governments usually lack both the structure and the finance to do much for the small artisanal ports. Under these conditions, the structure of a Port User's Committee, perhaps organised according to local needs and usages, would seem to have some general applicability at least for West African urban-based fisheries.

PUA-trained fisheries officers would also seem to be useful management consultants for these PUCs. It is possible, however, that Guinea has been unusually appropriate for the experiment, since it was just starting off with a new artisanal fisheries service having no vested interests in already established programmes and strategies.

Nonetheless, in countries where the directors of the national fisheries departments are truly interested in such an approach, it would seem likely that an effective programme introducing the PUA methods and the catalytic approach could be put into action.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN MEXICO CITY

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Mexico

Introduction

Community organisations in low-income urban areas of Mexico have been working with non-governmental organisations in the field of housing for around 30 years, searching for alternative ways of ensuring that low-income groups can have access to housing and participate in decision-making about their surroundings. Over the last few years, they have incorporated the struggle to conserve, improve and protect the environment into their approach. This has resulted in a process called the 'self-managed promotion of popular housing', enabling people to transcend isolated experiences and put forward significant proposals for policy alternatives in town-planning, housing and environment. Working with such organisations is an integral part of developing participatory approaches in Mexico City. The self-managed groups and team of consultants have developed a methodological model based on the active participation of community organisations.

This article gives an overview of housing and environmental problems in the Metropolitan Area of Mexico City. It describes the history of attempts to encourage participation in two particular cases: the Calpulli del Valle Housing Cooperative and the Settlers Union of San Miguel Teotongo. Finally, we discuss the basic elements of the methodology used to conduct these processes.

These particular cases are at different stages of development. The Calpulli del Valle Housing Cooperative is a group which has been working for eight years on a housing project for 1,000 homes and is now about to complete the many negotiations and formalities required to start building. The Settlers Union of San Miguel Teotongo has worked to develop a Neighbourhood¹ Plan for local development and environmental protection.

Housing and Environment in Mexico City

Most Mexicans live in urban areas, the cities having grown in response to considerable economic and population growth as well as migration. The urban fringe has expanded in a spontaneous and unregulated manner on common or communally owned land (the most prevalent form of land tenure around cities.) Although the Government attempted to prevent this process, they lacked the planning capacity and their housing budget has mainly been devoted to the middle income groups.

Low income groups have suffered a serious deterioration in their living standards over the last few years reducing access to housing even further. In 1990, the unemployment rate reached 25% of the economically active population, while 50% of that population was working in the informal sector with access to neither social services nor most state programmes. In 1992, 40% of the population earned less than twice the overall minimum wage and in 1993, 31.7% of the population was living in conditions of extreme poverty. While wages increased by 409% between 1982 and 1993, the price of a basket of basic goods rose by 1,461%. Housing costs increased by 3,000% in 1989 while the highest salaries in Mexico - those in manufacturing industry - increased by only 2,300%.

¹ In the case of the Federal District, the capital of the country, these are known as ZEDECs (Controlled Development Areas). Criteria for land use and urban development in the neighbourhood are established on the basis of an agreement between the various neighbourhood groups and the authorities. This is currently the only case in which the prime movers have been the community organizations in the area.

The only government institution providing assistance to the lowest income groups is FONHAPO (National Social Housing Fund), which has suffered a significant decrease in its resources. In 1990, it received 4.9% of resources allocated to housing, but this fell to 1.5% in 1992. Although the government's total housing budget has increased over the last decade, that increase has not kept pace with the growth in demand.

The problems faced by low income groups in gaining access to housing and the lack of urban planning are compounded by environmental degradation in the cities. Environmental problems include air pollution, lack of water, inadequate waste disposal, exhaustion of underground water reserves and the absence of water harvesting, as well as the lack of space - apart from living space - for the recreation and reproduction of the population. The government and some other sectors have blamed the residents of low income settlements for the deteriorating environment and have tried to prevent the establishment of spontaneous settlements and/or to dislodge those which already exist.

Community Participation in Mexico

Low-income groups have responded to the problems of gaining access to land and housing by organising. Through self-managed organisations, low-income groups have gained experience in working through the different phases of obtaining housing:

- Acquiring and, in many cases, regularising title to land;
- Contracting technicians to develop urban and housing projects;
- Developing collective responsibility and management of housing credit;
- Mobilising savings;
- Controlling the process of housing production; and
- More recently, protecting and restoring the local environment.

The wave of social mobilisation which occurred after the earthquakes in 1985 strengthened the capacity of self-managed organisations to deal with government agencies. They were successful in ensuring the reconstruction or rehabilitation of more than 45,000 homes by the Popular Housing Renovation Programme and 4,000 more by non-governmental groups. In the second phase of the Programme, a further 10,000 homes were renovated. In recent times, community organisations have been able, with the support of NGOs, to influence national urban policy.

Participatory Urban Planning

Participatory urban planning has developed from the social and professional involvement of groups, social organisations and NGOs in the process of securing housing and urban land, as well as in developing more comprehensive legislative and policy proposals for urban areas.

The struggle for collective, organised access to housing has been facilitated by a combination of two factors, community organisation and specialised technical assistance. The participatory methodology that has developed is based on 'action research', an alternative methodology to traditional research techniques. The primary and ultimate objective of such research is to transform reality, so that knowledge becomes a means and not an end in itself. From this perspective, the subject of learning is the group itself and professional intervention is to provide specific technical support to the learning process of the group trying to influence its circumstances. The idea of a separation between the one who knows and the one who does not know is rejected in favour of an interaction between the professional and the subject of social enquiry, both of whom know about reality from different perspectives. The different perspectives are part of the whole which neither can easily master alone. From this perspective, the tasks of the researcher are:

- To structure the investigation process with the social group in order to make available to the latter the options which emerge from the investigation; and

- To undertake a specific technical analysis to provide a basis for taking timely political decisions in accordance with the group's interests.

Popular Housing Technology (PHT)

At FOSOFI, we have developed a series of working methods to support groups involved in alternative urban planning. We have given the name *Popular Housing Technology* to the concept and methodology with which we have been working as consultants and advisers. We use the term 'technology' to describe the set of proposals used and developed to give professional and technical support to groups in different sectors and stages of the process of housing and/or urban-environmental planning. We are developing Popular Housing Technology in an inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary manner, through setting up professional teams to deal with various aspects of participatory urban planning processes: social organisation, town planning, architecture (design), the technical side (building and/or eco-technology), the financial side, the legal side (management and procedures), administration, politics and environmental considerations.

The advice given by the team to the groups covers a variety of areas including research, analysis, evaluation, communication and education. As a result of the exchange between the team and the community group, the advisory team develops work needed by the group such as in-depth analysis and indicative proposals. Decisions about the internal process, interaction with the authorities and the direction to be taken are made by the group itself.

Calpulli del Valle Housing Cooperative

In 1987, the Calpulli del Valle Housing Cooperative was established as a limited cooperative company. There are now 500 members located in several municipalities of the State of Mexico. 70% of the cooperative members are non-wage earners. The others are self-employed or have no regular paid occupation. 73% of the members pay rent; the remaining 27% lodge with friends or relatives. 46% of cooperative members earn incomes less than 1.5 times the minimum salary; 30% earn between 1.51 and 2 times the minimum salary and only 24% are found in the range from 2.01 to 2.5 times the minimum salary. Each head of family has at least two economic dependants.

Obtaining Land

The idea of setting up an organisation to gain access to housing arose in about 1985. Slum dwellers began to look around the northern part of the metropolitan area to locate suitable land for the establishment of a housing project and in May 1986 they found a place within the Coacalco municipality in the State of Mexico. The land was suitable for urban development and had the advantage of belonging to FONHAPO, a government body. The cooperative decided to ask FONHAPO to transfer part of this land to the cooperative. In August the cooperative also requested credit from FONHAPO. In June 1988, the purchase and sale pledge for the land, valued at the equivalent of some \$230,000, was signed with FIPAIN (Real Estate Liquidation Trust). The cooperative paid 15% of the purchase price, undertaking to cover the remainder in three months with a loan from FONHAPO. This was when the major difficulty in the negotiating process began. In order to request a loan from FONHAPO, the municipal and state agencies must certify the feasibility of providing services. The root of the problem was that the property had no services. The Town Council asked the cooperative to make various proposals, as it had no resources to provide conventional water and drainage services.

Provision of Services: The Problem of Water Supply

In August 1988, the cooperative presented technical options for water and drainage to the municipal authorities. A meeting was held with the FONHAPO credit management department and two agreements were reached. As FONHAPO does not fund infrastructural work, it was decided to propose the construction of a well to provide water to be funded jointly by FONHAPO and the

cooperative. One year later it was finally possible to sign the credit agreement for studies and plans and thereby obtain the certificate concerning the feasibility of service provision. In order to reach this agreement, the cooperative conducted many meetings and negotiations with various government bodies.

Defining the Town Planning and Architectural Project

The town planning and architectural project was developed jointly by the consultants and the cooperative members. The plan took several factors into account including developing suitable technological solutions to the lack of services on the land, making optimum use of the facilities available on the property, environmental protection and, in respect of architectural design, the needs and expectations of the future users.

Organisational Characteristics of the Cooperative

The organisational structure of the group reflects both current legislation on cooperatives and the experience of other self-managed groups. The cooperative is a non-hierarchical organisation governed by the principle that each member has the same rights and obligations. Specific bodies and processes guarantee both free expression and the participation of all members. The *General Assembly* is the highest authority; it makes policy and takes the fundamental decisions affecting the group. The *sections* disseminate information, control savings, monitor attendance at assemblies, etc. The *commissions* carry out the work and organise the group's various needs and also collect information for subsequent dissemination. They commission legal representation, management, financial administration and the technical drawings for the housing complex.

Drawing up the Executive Plan

The architectural and town planning blueprint was drawn up gradually in weekly meetings and workshops held by the Technical Commission through which the community forwarded proposals. The participatory design process was conducted in two stages. First, the commission members learnt about various elements of urban development in order to assess the prepared plan. Second, the Technical Commission advised grassroots members of the principles lying behind the preliminary plan. This was the culmination of the design process, which tested the effectiveness of communication between the advisory team, the Technical Commission and the local residents.

Advice and Support

Advice and guidance were provided in different ways:

- Exhibitions, practical sessions, discussions, analysis workshops and information bulletins were arranged to maintain communication and dialogue.
- Group representatives were guided and assisted in the negotiating process with the relevant authorities and given financial and administrative training.
- Scale models, plans and explanatory diagrams were developed.
- Individual interviews clarified the needs and expectations of users.

The Project Today

After several years of struggle with bureaucracy, the group has managed to drill the well, thereby producing more than enough water for the settlement. The loan from FONHAPO has been finalised and the cooperative is recruiting more members (up to 1,000) in order to be able to start housing construction.

San Miguel Teotongo Settlement

The San Miguel Teotongo settlement is located on the slopes of the Santa Catarina mountain range, in Ixtapalapa Department to the east of the Federal District. It has a population of approximately 80,000 in a land area of 260 hectares. The settlement grew up on communal areas and common land sold 20 years ago by illegal property developers. There are now attempts to secure legal tenure.

Background

A series of recent events led to the decision by the Settlers Union of San Miguel Teotongo to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. In October 1991, a group known as *Antorcha Campesina* carried out one of many land invasions on an area of open space within the settlement. This group has violent methods of struggle and this caused considerable tension in the settlement. There was concern within the Union about the risk of confrontation between the settlers and about the possibility of a government decision in favour of the land claim of *Antorcha Campesina* which is considered to be an organisation close to the PRI.² As a result of the invasion, the inhabitants felt there was an urgent need to formalise their tenure of areas which had been common land. They were concerned that the government might seek to resolve the conflict by means of a decree of expropriation. There was also a risk that other members of the Union might decide to invade other collective or communal areas. Therefore, the organisation decided to prepare an alternative land use proposal with an environmental approach. The Union was well aware that they must respond with a proposal that demonstrated social and technical competence and that demonstrated an improvement in the community's quality of life. Such a proposal could be a useful tool in negotiation with the authorities. It was in this context that they sought technical support from FOSOVI.

Organisational Structure of the Union

The Settlers Union is legally registered as a civic association. However, developing and stimulating a participatory process in a settlement with 80,000 inhabitants is much more complex than setting up a simple formal structure. The process needs to seek the best way to collect the opinions of the majority of inhabitants and also to open up ways for the settlers to put their proposals forward. This was achieved through a formal organisational structure. The highest authority in the union is the *General Assembly* which receives feedback from the *Sectional Assemblies*. Projects are carried out by the *work committees* and are developed with the participation of specific work teams.

Planning for Open Space

Since the formation of the Union, the community had informally decided to designate areas within the settlement as *green areas*, preventing the construction of housing on those plots. This decision was very far-sighted, since at that time, most organisations were developing a settlement model which the popular urban movement described as *housing at all costs*. The union allocated 44% of land in the settlement for self-help housing, 25% for highways and 31% for public facilities and green areas. The first attempts at planning were made by settlers from the union with other NGOs, the Faculty of Architecture of the National Independent University of Mexico (UNAM),³ the Independent Metropolitan University (UAM) and other professionals and researchers who cooperated with the Union at different stages of the process. There is no doubt that all this preliminary work constituted a most valuable technical asset when finally drawing up the Neighbourhood Plan.

² The PRI, or Institutional Revolutionary Party, has been in power since 1929 following the consolidation of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920. It is in fact a State or official party and is far from most people's views of what a political party should be; amongst other things, it has practically no militants. Throughout its history, it has set up puppet parties and pseudo-political groups behind the scenes, such as the *Antorcha Campesina*.

³ In this case, considerable support and participation came from the NGO CENVI (Housing Studies Centre), whose leading members included teachers who established the link and brought their experience to bear on the communities' work.

Settlers' Participation in the Neighbourhood Plan

The description of the participatory process is divided into three stages, although these are not necessarily consecutive and there is no clear direction to the process.

- Stage 1. Proposal for use and design of collective areas.
- Stage 2. Drawing up specific projects, such as the ecological park.
- Stage 3. Regional project for the Sierra de Santa Catarina.

Stage One: Proposal for the Use and Design of Collective Areas.

To meet the time-scale and political needs of the organisation, the advisory team helped the union draw up a proposal over a period of seven months for the use and designation of green areas on a sound technical and social basis. This proposal served to back up demands to the authorities that the areas reserved for the union should be respected and that *Antorcha Campesina* should leave these areas vacant. Developing the proposal included several processes:

1. *Historical reconstruction of the settlement process.* This involved considering the geographical origin and cultural background of the inhabitants. This reconstruction was carried out by the Ecological Committee together with the advisory team on the basis of qualitative interviews with the founders of the settlement.
2. *Initial plan for the provisional location of green areas, highways and housing development.* This was done at various meetings with a team of settlers including settlement founders.
3. *Land use assessment/population survey.* A field survey was completed in each of the 16 areas within the settlement. A work team of about five settlers went into each section to look around, observe, take notes and, with the support of the professional team, feed the information back into the plan.

The population survey was conducted to find out the origins of tenure, population density and characteristics, occupation, schooling and level of family income. Sectional and general meetings were held in order to discuss needs and expectations about land use and proposals made there were recorded. Field research provided the necessary information about the physical situation of the settlement and the communal areas that were already being occupied and it was possible to obtain the necessary economic and demographic information.

A permanent process of training and evaluation was developed so that the sectional work teams were able to undertake the physical and social surveys. This enabled 100% of the neighbourhood land to be surveyed, something which is unusual and not normally achieved by such work. The financial cost was very low, since most of the work was done by members of the association.

4. *Drawing up the plan for land use and allocation.* Drawing on the results of the social, economic and physical surveys, and the expectations and needs expressed by the settlers, the advisory team began to draw up proposals. Proposals were continually put forward and revised until a plan was agreed which would provide the basis for negotiating with the government authorities to achieve the support needed to implement the projects.
5. *Negotiation and approval of the plan for land use and allocation.* Land invasions in the settlement were stopped as a result of the permanent mobilisation of the inhabitants to physically defend the green areas and to put pressure on the authorities to prevent them from fostering or favouring their occupation by groups close to the official party (PRI). Although this tactic was effective, the organisation had to be constantly prepared for action. It was therefore decided to go on the offensive with a proposal that would prevent land invasions and allow the union to consolidate the collective areas.

This was how the union, with the support of FOSOVI, was able to present a planned programme of improvement to the authorities. Responses from the authorities varied, some of them, especially from those which had local interests (eg. the Ixtapalapa Government Department), sought ways to hinder and prevent approval of the plan. However, others took a broader view and, following systematic pressure and negotiation by the group, decided to approve the project. Thus, in November 1992, approval of the land use and allocation plan was published in the Official Journal of the Federation.

Stage Two. Carrying out Specific Projects: The Ecological Park.

The organisation's self-management capacity has developed over the years that the settlement has been in existence. This is evident in the organisation's struggle for infrastructure and facilities but also in the more integrated approach it has shown to community needs within the 'self-development project', which includes activities in health, nutrition, production, communication, culture, ecology and housing improvement, all of which seek an overall improvement in the quality of life.

With its long experience of self-management, the organisation was aware of its own interests and quickly developed an environmental protection project. While drawing up the land use and allocation plans, discussion began within the organisation and the whole settlement about which of the projects within the overall plan would take priority and the process of environmental recovery. Following various discussions, analysis and proposals within the group and a more widespread process of consultation with the advisory team, the union decided to begin the Ecological Park Project in one of the largest and most central properties of the settlement. It was hoped that this project might be the driving force in a process of education and of the environment throughout the settlement.

One of the most useful instruments in designing and developing the Ecological Park was the historical analysis by the inhabitants of the settlement. This analysis made it possible to identify a range of cultural elements that could be incorporated into a self-sustaining ecological project. The plan for the Ecological Park included an observation tower, children's garden and game area, ecological museum, processing plant and planting/reafforestation area. Funding for the park has been negotiated with the relevant authorities at the same time as the land use and allocation plan and an agreement has now been reached with them that they will support the settlers' work and fund part of the park's costs. In April this year, construction began.

One activity which is essential to ensure consolidation of this stage is the environmental education of all the inhabitants; this has already begun. The organisation considers that this task is a strategic necessity if the settlers are to feel that the ecological project belongs to them. So far, the bulk of the educational effort has been conducted with children and young people in the settlement in all the schools, but it is hoped to extend the process throughout the settlement.

Stage Three. Regional Project for the Sierra de Santa Catarina

During the process of understanding and developing self-sustaining ecological concepts, the organisation came to realise the need for a regional approach to protecting their environment. They encouraged a series of social organisations to come together to launch the Regional Bio-project for the Sierra de Santa Catarina, of which the San Miguel settlement is part. The organisation has made great progress to date, especially with the involvement of community organisations in trying to influence (or at least question) the government of Mexico about the projects which the Inter-American Development Bank is funding. Furthermore, together with the advisory team and other NGOs and social organisations, they have begun to survey the whole of the Sierra region, in order to provide a starting point for an alternative proposal to government planning and, on the basis of this, to draw up a final project for restoring the environment in the Sierra.

Conclusions

- In view of the difficulties faced by low income groups in gaining access to housing, community-driven self-managed housing development is an alternative way of obtaining this fundamental right even if it takes a long time (eg. in Calpulli, construction has still not

started, eight years on).

- Although the government authorities are beginning to acknowledge popular housing development (eg. in the Law on Human Settlements, which has recently been revised with input from NGOs and social organisations, and in the conception of FONHAPO, which has by now to a large extent been counteracted), in practice there is no government policy specifically for low-income property development of a social nature rather than commercial profit-making property development.
- 'Popular' housing development has been a way for low-income groups to acquire land on a collective basis, since lack of land, especially in the major cities, is currently the first and largest obstacle in the path of such groups seeking access to housing.
- Community self-managed initiatives have been able not only to meet the specific needs of organised groups but also to become mechanisms for the organisation and systematisation of proposals for housing, urban development and the environment which provide an alternative to those currently existing.
- Over the last few years, community housing initiatives have made an important qualitative leap, going beyond simply seeking housing to becoming active proponents of alternative approaches to urban problems.
- A significant element in broadening the perspective of community groups with regard to their understanding of the struggle for housing has been the gradual integration of strategies to overcome environmental problems within their housing and urban projects.
- Environmental problems require government policies to conserve and restore the environment and a process of re-education of the population so that they may participate actively in new practices. The educational work carried out by community groups can be significant in developing new processes for environmental protection.
- The two cases described illustrate this self-management process and are part of a transcendent national movement which, supported by the specialist work of non-governmental organisations in improving living conditions, has demonstrated its viability in ensuring that low income groups can gain access to housing and preserve and improve the environment.
- A fundamental aspect of the self-management experience is the organisation of popular groups⁴ which has enabled them to face up to the many problems and realities of a world which ignores them, hinders them and will not let them be. The objective of group efforts is quite obviously not only to achieve some material benefits, which are important in themselves, but also to go beyond this and seek to transform their entire existence on the basis of the strength of their organisation. Perhaps the greatest richness and most important outcome has been the social and personal growth of the people involved in these processes, which to some extent explains their persistence despite the long years of struggle.

⁴ In social studies jargon, the term 'popular' is used to refer to those social groups which have a series of characteristics such as: family social organisation based on the traditional patterns of Mexican society, ie. extended families, family networks linked in spatial and economic terms, values which have become customary over time, having close links with rural, peasant societies. In Mexico and many other societies in the so-called Third World, these social groups are in the majority and are basically low income groups. To some extent, they represent the other face of what are known as the *middle classes* which are supposed to be the expression of so-called modernity.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT: PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

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This article provides a summary of a new *Guide to Effective Participation*¹, which offers a comprehensive framework for thinking about involvement, empowerment and partnership. It also provides an A to Z of key issues and practical techniques for effective participation.

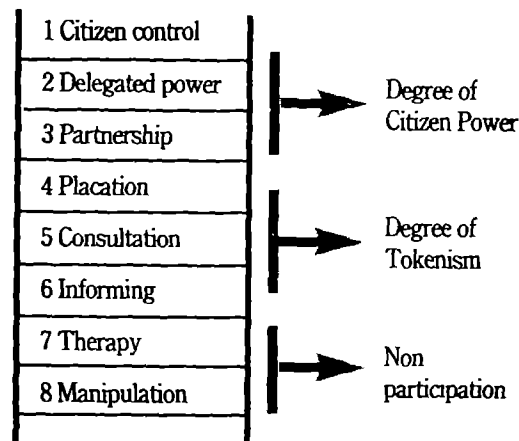
Ten Key Ideas About Participation

The Guide to Effective Participation identifies 10 key ideas which aid thinking about community involvement.

1. Level of Participation

The guide proposes a five-rung ladder of participation which relates to the stance an organisation promoting participation may take.

- *Information:* merely telling people what is planned.
- *Consultation:* offering some options, listening to feedback, but not allowing new ideas.
- *Deciding together:* encouraging additional options and ideas, and providing opportunities for joint decision making.
- *Acting together:* not only do different interests decide together on what is best, they form a partnership to carry it out.
- *Supporting independent community interests:* local groups or organisations are offered funds, advice or other support to develop their own agendas within guidelines.



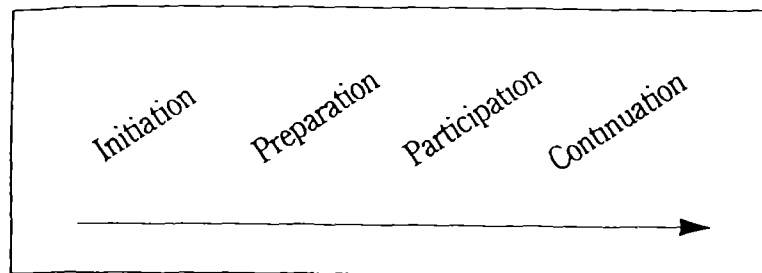
¹The guide was supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and written by David Wilcox, working with an editorial group of Ann Holmes, Joan Kean, Charles Ritchie and Jerry Smith. Their work initially drew on participation and empowerment studies funded by the Foundation. Further development of the guide involved seminars with experienced practitioners and wide circulation of drafts. Copies of the guide are available from the above address. Price £9.95 inc. p&p.

Practitioners consulted during development of the guide felt strongly that information-giving and consultation are often wrongly presented as participation. This can lead to disillusionment among community interests, or pressure for more involvement with the potential for conflict and delay.

The guide suggests it is more productive for all concerned if organisations promoting involvement are clear in their initial stance - even if the degree of participation offered is limited. One stance, or level, is not necessarily better than any other - it is rather a matter of 'horses for courses'. Different levels are appropriate at different times to meet the expectations of different interests. However, organisations promoting involvement should be prepared to negotiate greater degrees of participation if that will achieve common goals.

2. Initiation and Process

The guide deals with situations where someone, or some organisation, seeks to involve others at some level: that is, participation doesn't just happen, it is initiated. Someone (here termed a practitioner) then manages a process over time, and allows others involved more or less control over what happens. In the guide the process is described during four phases: Initiation - Preparation - Participation - Continuation.



Many problems in participation processes develop because of inadequate preparation within the promoting organisation - with the result that when community interest is engaged the organisation cannot deliver on its promises.

3. Control

The initiator is in a strong position to decide how much or how little control to allow to others - for example, just information, or a major say in what is to happen. This decision is equivalent to taking a stand on the ladder - or adopting a stance about the level of participation.

4. Power and Purpose

Understanding participation involves understanding power: the ability of the different interests to achieve what they want. Power will depend on who has information and money. It will also depend on people's confidence and skills. Many organisations are unwilling to allow people to participate because they fear loss of control: they believe there is only so much power to go around, and giving some to others means losing their own.

However, there are many situations when working together allows everyone to achieve more than they could on their own. These represent the benefits of participation. The guide emphasises the difference between Power to... and Power over.... People are empowered when they have the power to achieve what they want - their purpose.

5. Role of the practitioner

The guide is written mainly for people who are planning or managing participation processes - here termed practitioners. Because these practitioners control much of what happens it is important they constantly think about the part they are playing. It may be difficult for a practitioner both to control access to funds and other resources and to play a neutral role in facilitating a participation process.

6. Stakeholders and community

The term community often masks a complex range of interests, many of whom will have different priorities. Some may wish to be closely involved in an initiative, others less so. The guide suggests it is more useful to think of stakeholders - that is, anyone who has a stake in what happens. It does not follow that everyone affected has an equal say; the idea of the ladder is to prompt thinking about who has most influence.

7. Partnership

Partnership, like community, is a much abused term. It is useful when a number of different interests willingly come together formally or informally to achieve some common purpose. The partners don't have to be equal in skills, funds or even confidence, but they do have to trust each other and share some commitment. This takes time.

8. Commitment

Commitment is the other side of apathy: people are committed when they want to achieve something, apathetic when they don't. People care about what they are interested in, and become committed when they feel they can achieve something. If people are apathetic about proposals, it may simply be that they don't share the interests or concerns of those putting forward the plans.

9. Ownership of ideas

People are most likely to be committed to carry something through if they have a stake in the idea. One of the biggest barriers to action is 'not invented here'. The antidote is to allow people to say 'we thought of that'. In practice that means running brainstorming workshops, helping people think through the practicality of ideas, and negotiating with others a result which is acceptable to as many people as possible.

10. Confidence and capacity

Ideas and wish lists are little use if they cannot be put into practice. The ability to do that depends as much on people's confidence and skills as it does on money. Many participation processes involve breaking new ground - tackling difficult projects and setting up new forms of organisations. It is unrealistic to expect individuals or small groups suddenly to develop the capability to make complex decisions and become involved in major projects. They need training - or better still the opportunity to learn formally and informally, to develop confidence and trust in each other.

Turning Theory into Practice

The guide takes these key ideas and deals with the practical implications by challenging the following 'quick fixes' which may be proposed as ways to tackle participation problems:

● **"What we need is a public meeting"**. Meeting the public is essential, but the conventional set-up with a fixed agenda, platform and rows of chairs is a stage set for conflict. Among the problems are:

- The audience will contain many different interests, with different levels of understanding and sympathy.
- It is very difficult to keep to a fixed agenda - people may bring up any issue they choose and organisers look authoritarian if they try to shut people up.
- Few people get a chance to have a say.

As an alternative:

- Identify and meet key interests informally.
- Run workshop sessions for different interest groups.
- Bring people together after the workshop sessions in a report-back seminar.

● **"A good leaflet, video and exhibition will get the message across"**. These may well be useful tools, but it is easy to be beguiled by the products and forget what is the purpose of using them.

In developing materials consider:

- What level of participation is appropriate? If it is anything more than information-giving, then feedback and other people's ideas and commitment are being sought. High-cost presentations suggest minds are already made up.
- What response is sought - and can the organisation handle it?
- Could more be achieved with lower-cost materials and face-to-face contact?

● **"Commission a survey"**. Questionnaire studies and in-depth discussion groups can be excellent ways to start a participation process, but are seldom enough on their own.

Bear in mind:

- Surveys require expert design and piloting to be useful.
- They are only as good as the brief provided.
- In planning a survey, design it as part of a process which will lead through to some action.

● **"Appoint a liaison officer"**. That may be a useful step, but not if everyone else thinks it is the end of their involvement in the process.

Avoid simply passing the buck, and aim to empower the liaison officer. Consider:

- Do they have the necessary skills and resources for the job?
- Will they get the backing of other colleagues?
- Are they being expected to occupy conflicting roles - that is, wear too many hats?

● **"Work through the voluntary sector"**. Voluntary bodies are a major route to communities of interest, and may have people and resources to contribute to the participation process. However, they are not 'the community'.

- There will be many small community groups who are not part of the more formalised voluntary sector.
- Voluntary groups, like any organisations, will have their own agendas funding targets to achieve, issues to pursue. They are not neutral.

Treat voluntary organisations as another sectoral interest in the community albeit a particularly important one:

- Check out organisations with a number of different sources.
 - Having said all that, voluntary organisations will have a wealth of experience and are essential allies. They've been through many of the problems of involving people before.
- **"Set up a consultative committee"**. Some focus for decision-making will be necessary in anything beyond simple consultation processes. However:

- Even if a committee is elected or drawn from key interest groups it will not be a channel for reaching most people.
- People invited to join a committee may feel uncomfortable about being seen as representatives.

Consider instead:

- A group which helps plan the participation process.
- Surveys, workshops and informal meetings to identify other people who might become actively involved.
- A range of groups working on specific issues.

● **"There's no time to do proper consultations"**. While that may be the case if the timetable is imposed externally it should not be used as an excuse to duck difficult questions. These will return more forcefully later.

If the timetable is genuinely tight:

- Explain the timetable constraints.
- At least produce a leaflet or send out a letter.
- Run a crash programme for those interested - perhaps over a weekend.

● **"Run a Planning for Real session"**. Special 'packaged' techniques can be very powerful ways of getting people involved. However no one technique is applicable to all situations.

● **"Bring in consultants expert in community participation"**. There's some truth in the saying that *"consultants are people who steal your watch in order to tell you the time"*. Often those employing consultants have the answer themselves, and are just trying to avoid grappling with the issue. However, consultants can be useful to assist with a participation process, but are no substitute for the direct involvement of the promoting organisation.

In using consultants:

- Give a clear brief on the purpose of the exercise, the level of control and boundaries for action.
- Encourage the consultants to ask hard questions and provide an independent perspective.
- Make sure the organisation promoting the exercise can deliver in response to the ideas produced, and can handle things when consultants leave.

BOTTOM-UP PLANNING FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT: THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FOR REAL PILOT PROJECT

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Introduction

Parallel with the development of RRA and PRA, bottom-up planning methods were being pioneered in urban communities in the UK and USA from the late 1960s. These ranged from advocacy planning, in which professional planners acted as advocates for a particular community, bargaining with city authorities on the community's behalf and interpreting technical language (Davidoff 1973), to formation of neighbourhood corporations where participants directly managed state grants to plan their own economic development programmes in the ghetto (Arnstein 1969), to the use of cardboard models to facilitate community decision-making and planning of resources (Dean 1993). PRA methods have been applied in urban community projects in developing countries from the early 1990s, but the results have not hitherto been documented and widely disseminated. However, there remain important gaps in the development of PRA as an urban planning tool.

- First, the techniques have largely developed from work in rural areas, and then been adapted for use in cities. We have relatively little experience with which to assess how appropriate PRA may be in a complex urban society, where the 'community' may be highly heterogeneous and difficult to define.
- Second, the nature of participation - who does what and when, and for what objective - is often determined and guided by outsiders. Existing participatory methods have provided an excellent source of local information, but there have been few attempts to integrate people's participation throughout the planning process.¹ Can professionals stand aside and allow people to manage the entire process themselves?

This article explores both of these issues. In particular, it describes a new approach for integrating participation into the urban planning process. This approach - *Development Planning for Real* - was designed by a group of postgraduates on the MSc course in Social Policy and Planning in Developing Countries at the London School of Economics, working with Dr Tony Gibson of the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, UK, and myself. Pilot trials of the approach are nearing completion in cities and rural communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America.²

What Does Community Participation in Urban Areas Mean? Exploring Key Concepts

Two basic questions underpin an understanding of community participation in urban areas. What is the purpose of community participation (and whose interests does it serve)? And what is an urban area (and how does it differ from a rural area)? A further issue is the different nature of participation in urban and rural areas.

In terms of providing services to low-income communities, the role of government, international agencies and NGOs is limited compared with that of the people themselves. Although aid agencies

¹An exception is the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India), which in the 1980s trained villagers as PRA facilitators both for their own and for other villages. These village volunteers have worked with their communities to prepare village natural resources and forestry plans. In July 1992 they told the AKRSP staff that "they need not bother to attend" any longer (Chambers, 1992).

²Development Planning for Real is being piloted in Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Gambia, India, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia.

are influential in terms of policy, most 'development' in developing countries is generated by low-income people either acting on an individual self-help basis, or through community mobilisation. For example, the majority of low-income people are housed either in accommodation they have built themselves or, in urban areas where renting is increasingly important, in squatter housing built by the informal sector. The urban poor are increasingly dependent on their own resources. Already limited expenditure in the social sector has been reduced still further by the structural adjustment and stabilisation programmes introduced in many countries in the last decade; typical measures include cuts in government expenditure, a retrenchment of jobs in the civil service, and the removal of subsidies from basic food items.

During the twentieth century there has been a massive shift in where people live. It is estimated that by the year 2010, half of the world's population will be town-dwellers, compared with only 14% in 1920 (UNCHS 1987). Despite considerable regional variation, at an aggregate level the trend for urban growth is unquestioned. The data have three important implications for policy makers and planners:

1. A growing proportion of people in the Third World are living in cities and towns.
2. Big cities (those with at least 100,000 inhabitants) are expanding twice as rapidly as the average urban rate of growth. By the year 2000, just under half of all urban dwellers in developing countries will live in metropolitan cities with half a million or more inhabitants. The coordination of bottom-up planning in large cities poses an enormous challenge.
3. There is great diversity between and within urban centres. Planners must be flexible and innovative in adjusting participatory techniques to take account of local conditions.

A 'community' has both consensual and conflict-ridden relationships. 'Community participation' which openly reveals conflicts also has to be able to resolve them without the less powerful members of the 'community' becoming worse off in the process. There are several reported cases where people who voice complaints in public have been subjected to house burning and beatings (IIED/IDS 1993). The definition of 'community' is thus problematic: if it is too broad, then the difference of interest within the community may be greater than the consensual interests. If it is too narrow, then it can serve to divide and weaken the disadvantaged (it is relevant that the aid agencies' good government agenda does not address accountability within the international community, but rather focuses on the national or sub-national level community of other peoples' countries).

The participatory methods discussed below are all implemented at the level of the 'community' and therefore such questions need to be addressed. In this context, it is important to consider how far urban participation differs from participation in rural areas and how urban and rural communities differ. While many similarities can be expected, there are four areas of potential difference:

Scale and Geographical Proximity of Settlements: The spatial boundaries of the 'community' may be less sharp in the urban context than in a rural village. Urban residents may live in one neighbourhood, and work, attend school, go to markets and health clinics in others. They often interact on a daily basis with people living outside their own immediate residential environment. This creates special problems in the use of PRA. Another problem is scale; how can a city-wide plan in a metropolis with millions of inhabitants directly involve more than a small proportion of people? Alternatively, how can a planning process developed by residents at neighbourhood level take account of the activities of people living in surrounding areas and the strategic needs of the city? Crucially, can local plans be scaled up to city-wide level without losing accountability to the community?

Social Diversity: PRA studies have revealed that rural communities are far from homogeneous (RRA Notes No.15, 1992). Within a village there are wealthy, poor and ultra-poor households. Members of the same household have different gender and age-specific roles, needs and entitlements. Such socially constructed differences are likely to be magnified in urban areas. Rural-urban migrants are still a significant proportion of city-dwellers in Africa and Asia. Ethnic and language diversity can be great. Household composition can also be expected to be more varied.

Complexity of Issues and Interests: Within cities there is likely to be social segregation between high and low income neighbourhoods, and greater awareness of diverging class interests. People who live and work in shanty settlements on the urban periphery are confronted by conspicuous wealth in the city centre. There may be greater opportunity for organised social movements and open conflict.

A growing proportion of urban dwellers - up to 90% in squatter settlements in major African cities - are tenants rather than owners. Tenants are likely to be transitory and mobile. They have to earn a regular cash income to pay rent, and may have limited time to attend community meetings. Urban squatters, landlords and tenants are likely to have different interests, which will affect their willingness to invest time and resources into upgrading and maintaining infrastructure.

Practical Constraints to Participation: In large cities, urban working patterns and travel to work may require workers to be away from home for all but a few hours of the day. For example, in the early 1980s some of the squatters resettled in Hong Kong's new towns returned home at 11 or 12 at night, after travelling from work in the metropolitan centre, and left again at four or five in the morning, while others became weekly commuters (Wratten 1983). Those who are never there are never listened to. In conducting social surveys, night visits in squatter areas are usually deemed too dangerous, so that commuters are missed even in carefully selected random samples.

Development Planning for Real

Tony Gibson's article in this issue of *RRA Notes* discusses *Planning for Real*, an innovative methodology which uses a three dimensional model of the neighbourhood - built by members of the community - to initiate a community-driven planning process. The methodology enables everyone in the community to play an active part, using their local knowledge to reach appropriate solutions, and organising skills and resources in order to make *their* plan work. It shifts the power to initiate and implement away from experts in the government or development agency and towards the local community. *Planning for Real* has been developed and used extensively by community groups throughout the UK and Europe. Versions have been adapted by field workers in South Africa and the Caribbean (Wratten 1984).

In February 1993, Tony Gibson introduced *Planning for Real* to students on the MSc course in Social Policy and Planning in Developing Countries at the London School of Economics. An international group of nine students,³ with extensive development experience and abundant enthusiasm, decided to work with Tony Gibson and myself to design a new participatory planning methodology for use by community groups in developing countries. The idea was to develop a set of prototype kits, which would be piloted by the students when they returned to their home countries that autumn. The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation and the LSE's Reprographics Department provided practical help in producing the kits.

The Methodology

Development Planning for Real encourages people to build a model of their area and use it to identify their problems and resources, find solutions which best use scarce resources and which address

³The design team are: Terezinha Da Silva (senior adviser, Ministry of Social Welfare, Mozambique); Carla Faesler (researcher with the Ministry of Agriculture in Mexico, interested in land reform programmes); Steven Ginther (spent three years as an agricultural extension agent for the Ministry of Agriculture in Guatemala); Monica Jativa (worked as an economist for the State Oil Company in Ecuador, before joining UNDP, where she spent four years as assistant to the President's representative); David Johnson (policy adviser with the European Commission Humanitarian Office in Brussels); Karim-Aly Kassam (worked with the Aga Khan foundation in Pakistan, and has development experience in Zanzibar, Syria and in native Canadian communities); Iain Levine (a nursing graduate who is currently based in Nairobi, coordinating refugee assistance in Southern Sudan); Moses Pessima (social worker who has worked with homeless children and on the drug abuse control programme in Freetown); and Patricia Ramirez (economist and anthropologist with the Social Development Unit of the National Planning Department in Colombia).

problems in an integrated way, prioritise action, determine what they can do for themselves and what kinds of outside assistance are needed, and decide when and by whom each activity will be undertaken. It extends PRA in providing a framework within which local people can direct the entire planning process, from information gathering and decision making through to implementation and monitoring. Low cost materials are used. Pictorial symbols overcome the difficulty of involving illiterate people and allow women to participate non-verbally and anonymously where men would normally dominate public meetings. Children are also encouraged to participate fully.

The methodology starts with the assumption that people know their own surroundings better than any outsider. They know what needs to be done to improve matters. In every community there will be at least a few 'Moving Spirits' - people who want to change things for the better, and who are prepared to give time and thought to something they think might help. The kit is designed to help them to involve the rest of the community, in such a way that nobody feels that someone is trying to dominate, or to push everyone into accepting a particular set of proposals. The 'Moving Spirits' make a rough model of their neighbourhood, using readily available materials (such as cardboard cartons or scrap paper) and coloured cards supplied with the kit, which can be folded to make houses and buildings. They display this model anywhere people meet - in the queue at the clinic, in the market place or outside the mosque - and use it to attract people's attention. Made in portable 2' by 2' sections, the model can be readily transported around and reassembled at another site. The scale is such that everyone can quickly identify their own homes, work places, markets, wells, rivers and roads. People have a bird's eye view of the model, and that helps them to see their neighbourhood as a whole, without losing sight of particular problems and possibilities.

Once the model has been seen by a lot of people, and checked by them to ensure that nothing important has been missed off, a *Development Planning for Real* meeting is held. At the meeting, everyone clusters around the model (which is placed on several tables placed together or on the ground itself), rather than sitting in rows and passively looking at speakers on the platform. In areas where story telling is a popular means of communicating information, a story might be told to introduce the model and show how it can be used.

The kit includes different coloured cards with cartoon drawings which represent particular problems, needs, skills and materials and equipment that might be found in the local community. People are invited to select those which they think are relevant, and to place them on the model. Less articulate people are able to show their ideas without speaking, so that all points of view can be considered. Suggestions are not identified with particular people, thus no one is committed to holding a fixed point of view - people can have second and third thoughts without losing face.

When this process has been completed, everyone can stand back and take stock. The coloured cards show up clearly, revealing the amount of concern about each issue and where people most want to see improvements. The next stage is to identify various kinds of action which the community might take together (represented by gold tokens), and various kinds of outside support (shown by blue tokens) that might be obtained if the community comes up with a practical proposition. People are asked which activities they think should be done first, and what should be done later on. They are then shown the Action Chart. This is divided into three time periods - NOW, SOON and LATER - and has spaces for activities to be done by the community itself, and those to be done by outside partners such as government, NGOs, private firms or international development agencies. People are invited to transfer the problem and solution cards from the model onto the Action Chart, placing them on the spaces provided on the left hand side, and starting with the problem they want to tackle first. The community's resource cards (light yellow, gold and orange) are separated from those which have to be obtained outside (the blue cards), and placed in the appropriate time period.

If there is disagreement, people show this by placing a pink 'disagree' token on the chart. These cards (which are generally few) are discussed and rearranged or removed if necessary. Groups may be formed to follow up particular issues and consider possibilities in more detail and report back later to everyone else. Similarly, new groups can be formed to undertake particular activities required in order to implement the plan, such as researching the problem, organising practical activities such as repairs or building, and working out how best to contact and draw in outside sources of support.

While drawing on the original *Planning for Real* concept, *Development Planning for Real* was worked out from first principles, taking account of the important development issues facing low-income people in the different contexts in which members of the team had worked. Many of these issues are not easy to depict without words (eg, structural adjustment policy!), and cannot be identified with specific spatial locations on the neighbourhood model. Cards were developed to represent social problems including domestic violence, corruption, costly medicines, high rents and child prostitution. These can be added to by users, using blank card supplied with the kit. For the pilot kits, we took care to choose symbols that would be recognisable in all of the countries where we have experience, but where this difficult to achieve we produced different local versions. There is no reason why locally designed sets of symbols should not eventually be produced in each region or country where the kit is used. The kit materials were also adapted to eliminate the need for sellotape or staples in constructing the houses and use scrap cardboard cartons in place of the polystyrene base.

We thought a great deal about ways to include women and men, and are experimenting with holding separate women's and men's sessions in order to unmask differences in knowledge and needs of these groups and allow members of the sub-groups time to acknowledge their own needs before negotiating with others. The problem cards include issues relating to women's and men's practical gender roles as well as strategic gender issues (Moser 1993).

The Pilot Trials

Two training days were held at the LSE in September 1993, attended by those undertaking the pilot trials, and representatives of NGOs and the Overseas Development Administration. We asked each piloter to try the kit out up to four times: once with a group they are familiar with, once with an unfamiliar group, and then two trials by another facilitator who had not been on the training, who should also work with groups which are familiar and unfamiliar to them. Standard feedback forms were provided, and piloters were asked to send us photographs of their trials. So far we have received feedback reports from Cambodia, Tanzania and Zambia (see the boxes below).

Box 1. The Cambodian Trial

This trial was conducted in the ODA Battambang Urban Water Development Project. The whole process was guided by the village planning team, local people nominated by the village leader, with no intervention from ODA project staff. They carried out the exercise with a great deal of enthusiasm and hard work. The model was shown outside in three locations - in the morning at Toultak Village Wat on a festival day, in the afternoon near Boules ground, village office and market, and in the early morning on the main route into the town centre. Several meetings were held attracting 750 people. A short story was told by a retired schoolteacher to illustrate the process. People were attracted by the model, and liked choosing the cards: *"above all it was an activity which everyone seemed to enjoy using and in doing so gain confidence in the value of their own opinions."* However, some people were confused by the visuals on the Action Chart, and most people placed their cards in the NOW column. The gold community resource cards were less popular than the blue cards for government resources.

What Development Planning for Real Adds and What It Doesn't Solve

The early pilot results suggest that the methodology has the following advantages:

- The kits can be produced cheaply (the limited pilot edition cost £16 per kit, excluding the labour for assembly). Future production could be decentralised to the countries where the kits are used, since the required photocopying facilities and card supplies are readily available.

Box 2. The Tanzanian Trial

In Tanzania, trials were initiated by Makongolo John Gonza of the Worker's Development Corporation in three urban communities in Dar es Salaam, Kibaha and Tanga, and in two rural villages in Mwanza and Kibaha. Three of these were facilitated by Gonza himself (who had attended the training course at LSE) with villagers making the model, and the others were conducted by community members after a one hour briefing. Again, the model attracted a great deal of attention from passers-by. People commented that it was *"a beautiful place for living"*, that *"using the model they can identify easily problems facing them and (show) their location on the model"*, that the exercise *"helps to save time and reach agreement quickly...is interesting (and people feel) comfortable, like playing cards, while (dealing with) very big issues touching peoples lives and development"*, and *"they praised the process because it enables all people to participate without any fear"*. In Dar-es-Salaam, people from outside the locality asked if they could also join in.

Meetings were held in a primary school, two childcare centres, under a mango tree (in a village which had no meeting hall), and at the village godown. 620 people of all age groups attended these meetings, and others expressed interest in helping to implement the plans prepared if outside support was obtained (there is some justified scepticism because, in the past, many community projects have not materialised: *"they end up as stories"*). While all of the trials produced community plans with relatively little disagreement, consensus was achieved far more quickly in the rural villages.

The trials have been followed up with favourable responses from NGOs, private firms and local and central government. In all five communities, committees have been formed to coordinate the activities. The community groups are already implementing the activities which do not require external assistance (for example, in Mondo village, Mwanza, in northern Tanzania where the Saharan desert is extending towards the South, the community group has already planted 6,000 trees in the communal forest and each of the 600 families plans to plant 60 trees this year).

Box 3. The Zambian Trial

This trial was conducted under the auspices of the CARE-International Peri-Urban Self-Help Project in part of George Compound, Lusaka. The CARE project manager briefed the three trial conveners (a project community development officer and two members of the George Residents' Development Committee), using the User's Guide only as she had not been able to attend our training sessions. Local residents constructed the model, which was displayed on two mornings at the health clinic, and on a third morning on one of the side roads. Four main meetings were held at the clinic meeting room, attracting a total of 110 people, each meeting being better attended than the earlier one. A story to demonstrate the model was told by two members of the RDC. People used the cards to identify problems and solutions, and found it easy to prioritise problems: *"the participants seemed to really enjoy the process as the interaction was great"*. As in Cambodia, there was some confusion over the 'We Do It' and 'They Do It' rows on the Action chart, and the chronological time sequence (NOW-SOON-LATER), and it is clear that the Action Chart requires redesign in the light of these comments. The exercise has been followed up a sub-group of people from the main meeting, who are interested in setting up a zone Residents Development Committee within this part of George Compound. NGOs and councillors observed the trial, and interested government departments and NGOs have been identified. The CARE project staff see scope for zone committees to use the kit in their further work.

- The model is very flexible, can be transported easily, and the parts can be constantly rearranged so that new ideas can be tried out without commitment.
- People identify with the model: they can point to their own homes and workplaces, and they enjoy working with it.
- Conflicts of interest between different members of the community are mediated because people concentrate on the real problems (represented on the model) rather than the personalities in the group: frequently, solutions emerge that are in everyone's interest.

- The model allows every member of the community, including children and those who do not normally speak at public meetings, to contribute their knowledge and experience of the problems faced in the community and to have an equal say in decision making.
- The information placed on the model and used in planning reflects local people's knowledge about problems and opportunities, and their own priorities rather than the agendas of outside 'experts', though professionals can give advice when invited.
- The model clearly shows the interlocking nature of development problems and leads to an intersectoral approach to solving them (for example, linkages may be made between problems of ill-health, bad housing and malnutrition).
- The emphasis on non-verbal communication of ideas is useful in multi-ethnic urban communities, where there is no single common language.
- The methodology builds in the opportunity to negotiate for resources both within the community and from outside bodies (such as local and central government and international donor agencies), and shows how communities can use their own resources as bargaining counters to lever in additional resources for things they can't do entirely by themselves.
- The approach has been successfully used to generate a community-controlled planning process in both rural and urban contexts, and in a variety of societies and cultures.

Development Planning for Real adds to the existing panoply of PRA techniques a systematic community-managed planning process, which has the potential - by raising awareness, confidence and bargaining skills - to initiate a longer term community building process. While further work is required to simplify and improve the Action Chart, by showing when activities should be completed (NOW, SOON or LATER) and by whom ('We Do It' or 'They Do It'), it is the starting point for community monitoring of plan implementation. The methodology does not automatically resolve conflicts, but it can concentrate people's minds on the problem and make consensus or consensual acceptance of difference easier. It can enable individuals to 'own' their own views, and to see what others are saying, before entering into open discussion. Methods of conflict resolution might be developed in future work on the kits.

As a neighbourhood level pack, the pilot version of *Development Planning for Real* is not designed to solve national or city-wide problems. However, it can help people to organise and lobby for wider policy changes. It should be possible to develop a city model which people could use to show their views about strategic planning decisions. In the UK an interesting experiment has recently been conducted in the town of Ashford, in Kent. An aerial photograph of the town and its surrounding countryside was displayed in a public space in the town centre, and participants were invited to annotate and mark the map with coloured stickers to show their desires, tastes and frustrations. Each participant was then invited to 'play the planner' by allocating stickers designed to represent new development. At a later stage a sample of respondents were presented with a series of artist's impressions of eight alternative future landscapes, based on the information collected from participants in the exercise, and asked to express a preference, explaining their choice. People were found to be willing to consider very carefully the issues involved in city-wide planning, expressed strong preferences, and were willing to learn and to accept compromise as they wrestled with dilemmas (Potter et al. 1994).

There are many ways in which the approach can be taken further. Diversity and the discovery of local variations are to be encouraged. Yet there is a danger, as with any PRA technique, that imitators will adopt a top-down version, co-opting the approach rather than using it to facilitate a community building process. We have already received a draft of one such top-down adaptation, where scaling-up is achieved by preceding the neighbourhood *Planning for Real* exercise with a 'City Game' in which unelected professional planners from government, the private sector and academia decide the city's planning priorities with no input from ordinary citizens. The residents' role is confined to considering the impact of the professionals' proposals, and bargaining over the location

of the new developments proposed. Negotiations between localities would be conducted by 'trading-off gains and losses to arrive at a mutually satisfactory compromise'. There is no mention of the unequal powers of professionals and ordinary people, and the community building process is totally ignored. To compound the misery, the approach is misleadingly entitled 'Urban Development Planning for Real'. Beware of cheap imitations!

Where We Go From Here

A second group of MSc students at the LSE has decided to take the design of *Development Planning for Real* further this year. We hope to revise the Action Chart, improve the prototype kit, and work on the conflict resolution and monitoring aspects. Several of the group are interested in using *Development Planning for Real* as the basis for developing a community planning methodology for use in refugee situations, while others would like to adapt the kit for use in the education sector. We might possibly end up with a menu of kits, comprising a main course basic kit and sets of specialised sectoral or regional card packs to accompany it.

If anyone else is interested in participating in our pilot trials, we have a small number of the prototype kits left. We welcome further ideas and correspondence.

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THE MILLION HOUSES PROGRAMME IN SRI LANKA

This paper has been drawn from *The Urban Poor as Agents of Development: Community Action Planning in Sri Lanka*, a publication drafted by Kioe Sheng Yap for the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HS/278/93E, 1993). The text has been updated to take account of recent developments by Mitsuhiko Hosaka, Chief Training Officer of the UNCHS(Habitat)/DANIDA Community Training Programme in Sri Lanka.

Background

This paper describes the community action planning approach of the Urban Housing Division of Sri Lanka's National Housing Development Authority. The approach was developed in order to implement the urban component of the Million Houses Programme (1984-1989).

The Million Houses Programme (and its successor, the 1.5 Million Houses Programme) aim to assist the process of household construction and improvement through the provision of loan finance to low-income households in both urban and rural areas. Households are able to obtain loans to improve their houses once the community has agreed a programme of development for the settlement. Households receive a householder file which acts as a guide to housing design and construction and they receive further advice from a staff member of the National Housing Development Authority. A variety of loan packages are available depending on the needs of the household and their ability to make repayments.

Faced with the task of implementing the urban housing component on the required scale, the Urban Housing Division set out to develop new procedures and institutional structures. The improvement of low-income settlements in urban areas required more than just the upgrading of individual houses through loan finance. Settlements were often illegal and the regularisation of land holdings was an essential component to a process of household investment in urban areas. Such settlements were generally without infrastructure and services and therefore water, sanitation, drainage and roads needed to be provided. The houses themselves had often developed in contravention of building regulations and therefore this needed to be addressed if the programme was really to be supportive of people's own efforts to improve their housing.

Earlier experiences had shown the importance of effective community participation in improving human settlements. The community action planning approach developed out of several local activities: a United Nations Centre for Human Settlements/DANIDA Training Programme for Community Participation, a series of micro-planning workshops held by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a Demonstration Project on Training and Information for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and the field experiences of the Urban Housing Division.

Community Action Planning

The community action planning and management approach sees people as the main resource for development rather than as an object of the development efforts or as mere recipients of benefits. The objective of the approach is to motivate and mobilise the population of an urban low-income settlement to take the lead in the planning and implementation of improvement. The role of the government, i.e., the National Housing Development Authority and the urban local authorities, is to support this process where necessary, but it is expected that the community will eventually be empowered enough to take its further development into its own hands.

Although these ideas seem straightforward and obvious, experience has shown that there was a lot of 'un-learning' and re-learning required on the part of Sri Lankan housing professionals.

The vehicle for community action planning and management is the interaction/partnership workshop. At such workshops, community members interact as partners with the staff of the National Housing Development Authority, the local authority and the non-governmental organisations. They discuss the problems of the community, identify solutions and formulate plans of action. The community takes responsibility for implementing these action plans in collaboration with the NHDA and other organisations, and for maintaining and managing the built environment after the completion of the project.

The Action Planning Workshop

The first, and key, step in the process of community action planning and management for an urban low-income settlement is the two-day community action planning workshop. It provides an opportunity for the community to obtain a comprehensive view of its socio-economic situation and to identify its main concerns and priorities. It also exposes the community to the opportunities available for the improvement of its living conditions, as well as the constraints and obstacles that need to be overcome. Participants in the workshop are community leaders and representatives of the various interest groups in the settlement, staff of the National Housing Development Authority, the urban local authority and other organisations concerned. The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Identify all problems of concern to the community;
- Determine the nature, the magnitude and, where relevant, the cause(s) of each of the problems;
- Prioritise the problems;
- Explore possible solutions and determine the resources needed and available to introduce the solutions;
- Prepare a concrete plan of action which spells out who will do what, when and how;
- Develop a system to monitor the implementation of the action plan; and
- Design ways to ensure that everyone concerned is aware of the plan of action.

These are achieved in six stages: problem identification; strategies; options and trade-offs; planning for implementation; monitoring; and presentation of the community action plan to the community

Box 1. Workshop Tools

Options-and-trade-offs. An important tool used in the workshop is the 'options-and-trade-off' technique; a problem may be solved in several ways and each solution may call for different trade-offs. The planners have an important role to play by clarifying the trade-offs available for the community, but the choice is left entirely to the community and individual families. The groups are encouraged to resolve issues collectively. For example, they identify problems in three sub-groups, then they identify those which all three groups agree to, those with which two groups agree to and those to which none of the groups agree. Each group is then able to try to convince the other groups to include the issues that they define as important. A handbook proposes a number of other activities that the workshop participants might undertake. For example, once *strategies* are identified, they are divided into those that should be undertaken immediately and those that can be left until later. The *action plan* identifies the WHO, WHAT and HOW for the different plans.

Once the plan of action has been formulated, the community and the external organisations need to discuss more specific problems and issues and to decide on particular actions to be taken. For this purpose, half-day workshops are organised along the same lines as the two-day community action

planning workshop. These problem- or issue-centred workshops discuss any problem or issue which the community wants to raise. Examples of issue-specific workshops are planning principles and technical guidelines, community building guidelines and rules orientation to housing information services.

Land Regularisation

The conventional approach to squatter settlement regularisation starts with a detailed survey by NHDA planners of all existing structures, amenities, roads, trees and other features of the area. In many cases the community does not fully understand the plan prepared by the professionals. The process is slow and often results in the need to relocate large numbers of people and considerable frustration among residents. In the community action planning approach, the individuals and community play a central role¹.

A community workshop determines the broad principles within which the regularisation process should take place, eg. the width of roads and footpaths. The workshop participants are divided into three groups: a women's team, an officials' team and a team of community members and builders. The groups meet separately to identify the needs for land in the settlement for residential plots, roads and footpaths, amenities, a community centre, a playground, a clinic and any other facilities. Each group presents its findings in a plenary session and the presentations are discussed until consensus is reached. Next, the three groups meet again separately to find locations for the land uses and to allocate land. Issues discussed include plot sizes, the pattern and the width of the roads, and the location of the amenities and the community centre. Again the groups make their presentations in the plenary meeting and a base plan of the settlement is drawn. Finally, the workshop discusses the logistics for the on-site blocking-out exercise. If the community leaders and the staff of the local authority and the NHDA feel the need for a conceptual layout plan, the Urban Housing Division will prepare such a plan before the on-site blocking-out starts. The plan can facilitate the blocking-out process if the settlement is large and complex, but it is only used as a secondary tool to help the action planning team establish a planning framework to guide the regularisation and blocking-out work on the ground.

The decisions of the workshop on the principles and guidelines for re-blocking are distributed to all households in the settlement. Community leaders inform clusters of households of the day the blocking-out exercise will be conducted in their cluster and request the households to be at home on that day. The exercise is preferably conducted during several consecutive weekends to allow for maximum community and family involvement, but if this is not possible it can be organised over a period of several days during the week. An action planning team is set up consisting of four persons: *team leader* (an official); *measurer* (an official or a trained community member); *anchor person* for the tape measure (a community member); and *pegger* (a community member if wooden pegs are used) or diggers (several community members if marker stones are used).

On the appointed day, the action planning team visits the cluster to discuss the plot boundaries in the cluster with each of the households, using the planning principles and technical guidelines. The team meets with the families in each block to discuss the size of the area and whether or not it can accommodate all the households and, if not, how the problem will be dealt with. As soon as there is an agreement, plot markers are placed to allow all involved to see the implications of the decisions. This will often lead to objections and further negotiations by the affected families. The process of negotiation between the families is the most important part of the exercise. In the process, all land disputes are settled on the spot and finally consensus is reached about the re-blocking of the land in the settlement. It is hoped that the community development councils will be able to assist if there is a need for mediation.

¹Although there are certain principles for re-blocking set down by the Urban Housing Division, for example, that there should only be one plot per household.

This community-based approach to settlement re-blocking can have very diverse results. The population in one block of Siddharthapath, a highly congested shanty settlement with a strong community organisation, decided to conduct the re-blocking exercise on its own after the Urban Housing Division had informed them that their request for regularisation had to be put on a long waiting list. The community resolved that there would be minimum demolition and as a consequence, the area was divided into small and oddly shaped plots. In the Perth Road project, the community organisation was not very strong and it decided to hire a surveyor to do the re-blocking. The community preferred a new settlement layout which would have long-term benefits rather than a re-blocking which would preserve most of the existing structures. The result was a re-blocked settlement with regularly shaped plots of equal sizes, but with a high rate of demolitions.

Community Building Guidelines

Once land tenure has been regularised, the residents of the low-income settlement are usually eager to start the construction or improvement of their houses. The Urban Development Authority has made a provision in its laws concerning planning and building standards to allow reduced standards in those low-income settlements which have been designated as special project areas (ie. areas developed within the programmes discussed here). For example, the plot on which a house can be built in urban areas is normally 150 square metres but the minimum plot size has been reduced to 50 square metres for special project areas.

In the conventional approach, public health and planning professionals determine the building standards and impose their codes on the community. Such regulations are often totally misplaced in the context of low-income settlements and are therefore evaded. If enforced, they may compel households to construct beyond their means, resulting in large debts or incomplete houses. In the community action planning approach, representatives of the various interest groups in the settlement work together with health and planning professionals to formulate building codes specific to that settlement. Ideally there are some 20-25 participants; 3-5 resource people and 15-20 community members (with at least seven women). The workshop addresses a range of questions about the building regulations and how they should be enforced. Participants are divided into three teams: an all-women's team, an officials team, and a community and builder's team.

Community Management

From the beginning, all urban low-income settlements involved in the programme have to establish a community organisation called a community development council. These councils have been established in order to increase the self-reliance of residents within the settlement. Community development councils are considered to have a central role in the community action planning approach. They have to act as intermediaries between the population of low-income settlements and the external agencies, articulating the needs and the problems felt by residents to the external organisations, taking decisions, formulating plans, executing projects and monitoring the implementation of a multitude of undertakings.

As the programme developed, there was a growing feeling among the staff of the Urban Housing Division that many community development councils did not perform their role as the main actors and decision-makers in the community as well as had been hoped. Community activities often depended on individual members of the community, both within and outside the councils, who were prepared to make an effort to motivate residents and channel community requests for improvement activities to the National Housing Development Authority. The Urban Housing Division, therefore, decided to strengthen the role of these persons and to recognise their vital role as community agents. In 1989, the National Housing Development Authority introduced the concept of *praja sahayaka* (literally, community assistants). A *praja sahayaka* is a person from a low-income community who has worked as an activist in shelter improvement programmes in his or her neighbourhood and is now willing to go beyond his or her community to work as an extension agent in other communities.

By involving residents of urban low-income settlements as community organisers, the National Housing Development Authority also hoped to reduce the distance between the community organiser and the population. The *praja sahayaka* were expected to establish initial contact with the population in low-income settlements and to assist the residents of such settlements to set up a community-based organisation. Once such an organisation had been established, they would try to raise the residents' awareness of the problems in their settlements according to the community action planning approach, to search for solutions to the problems and to assist the community in the implementation of the solutions. They were also expected to promote openness in the administration and management of community activities by community-based organisation, and monitor and review community development activities.

The National Housing Development Authority recruited its first three *praja sahayaka* in 1989. Several problems soon emerged. The *praja sahayaka* soon came to the conclusion that the National Housing Development Authority may be good at improving housing conditions in urban low-income settlements, but that it is probably not the most suitable organisation to conduct social work and to implement an economic support programme. Their role also created confusion at the operational level. The field staff of the Urban Housing Division wanted the *praja sahayaka* to operate under the supervision of an NHDA officer. The *praja sahayaka*, on the other hand, demanded a greater measure of freedom and wanted to establish contacts with communities independently and to operate autonomously.

In 1990, some *praja sahayaka* organised themselves into a non-governmental organisation, the *Praja Sahayaka Service* (PSS), directed and managed by the members to ensure a degree of autonomy in their work with communities. The PSS is an attempt to build on the leadership skills of the urban poor which have been developed through Sri Lanka's political and educational system (for further information, see Gamage, 1993).

Conclusions

In the community action planning approach, the population in the urban low-income settlements is a major resource for development rather than an object of the development effort or a mere recipient of benefits. The key instrument of the approach is the workshop which is alternately called implementation/training workshop or interaction/partnership workshop.

Professionals from a conventional background may have difficulties conducting such workshops, because the participants from the settlement determine the agenda, lead the discussions and draw the conclusions. Such professionals tend to believe that only they can understand and take decisions on issues like settlement planning, housing loans and infrastructure, because they have acquired the expertise after many years of study. Considerable un-learning is required to turn such conventional professionals into people-oriented planners who can interact with a low-income community as a partner, and acknowledge the value of its opinions and decisions.

The original intention of the programme had been to improve housing conditions in low-income settlements. With the development of the community action planning approach, the focus became the empowerment of the population in low-income settlements. There was the hope that the improvement of housing conditions would be a means to create awareness among the people in low-income settlements about their own situation. However, a criticism of the programme might be that little attention was given to the need to develop an internal capacity to solve problems and manage their own affairs (IREN 1990; Tilakaratna 1991). While in some cases, the community development councils have acted effectively and have developed into truly representative structures for the settlement, in others they have not lasted for the life of the project.

The Million Houses Programme was succeeded by the 1.5 Million Houses Programme in 1989. Within this new programme, it is now the task of the urban local authorities to find funds for the implementation of low-income housing projects (either from their own budgets and/or from external sources such as the UNICEF-funded Urban Basic Services Programme). The Urban Housing

Division's primary task is now to disseminate the approach to a wide range of institutions such as the NHDA provincial and district staff, the staff of urban local authorities and non-governmental organisations.

The Urban Housing Division is now responsible for training using the community action planning approach, while the local authority is responsible for implementation of the community action plan. Implementation and training have again been separated, whereas the community action planning approach stresses the integration of training and implementation. The urban local authorities do not always have the financial or human resources to implement the outcome of community action planning workshops and therefore there was a risk that the training workshops would become isolated events without any follow-up. This made it more imperative that the community action planning workshops dealt not only with the problems of the community and the formulation of action plans to solve those problems, but also and increasingly improving the community's ability to identify sources of funding, both internally or externally, to implement its action plan.

In order to minimise the separation, urban local authorities have been made responsible for the community action planning and its implementation. They invite the Urban Housing Division to train the communities with whom they are ready to work on improvement programmes. For the last few years, action planning workshops have proliferated among urban local authorities. The training grants from the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements have been transferred to 14 local authorities working in priority areas. Between August 1993 and July 1994, some 166 workshops were held. Questions are often raised by the municipal authorities about financial resources for project implementation and there is an evident need to address the resource mobilisation capacity of local authorities and community organisations. Among other aspects, the community development committees need to be revitalised as a forum for local-level resource mobilisation.

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IRED 1990. *Community Development Council Management Study*. Draft. Sri Lanka

Lankatilleke, L. 1988. *Integrating Urban Livelihoods with Environmental Concerns in the Million Houses Programmes Settlements, the Case of Colombo*. Sri Lanka.

Tilakaratna, S. 1991. *Evaluation of the Community Participation Component of the Urban Housing Sub-programme: The Final Report*. Colombo.

ENDNOTES

Useful Publications

Rapid Urban Environmental Assessment: Lessons from Cities in the Developing World (Volume I and II). J Leitmann. World Bank Urban Management Programme, World Bank, 1994.

This publication is in two parts, the first on methodology, findings and a summary of results and the second on tools and outputs. The publications outline a methodology for making rapid urban environmental assessments appropriate to planning at the level of the city and/or metropolitan region. The methodology was developed by the Urban Management Programme (a joint undertaking of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the World Bank) with case studies in six cities: Accra, Jakarta, Katowice, Sao Paulo, Singrauli and Tianjin.

The methodology has three main components: an urban environmental indicators questionnaire, an urban environment profile and the framework of a consultation process. The indicators questionnaire is to be filled in by professionals and involves 11 environmental indicator categories and 76 pages of questions and tables (a copy is reproduced in volume 2). Further proposed stages are the development of the environmental management strategy and an environmental action plan with a participatory process that involves a range of stakeholders.

Community Profiling: A Guide to Identifying Local Needs. Paul Burton. School for Advanced Urban Studies, 1993.

Provides a 10-step practical guide to developing a community profile which is defined as a "social, environmental and economic description of a given area which is used to inform local decision-making". Available from: School for Advanced Urban Studies, Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Bristol BS8 4EA, UK. Tel: 0272 741117

Awareness Through to Action. Newcastle Architecture Workshop, 1992.

A pack containing scores of techniques for achieving participation in environmental projects and the design process. Useful for work in schools, training for professional and with community groups. Available from: Newcastle Architecture Workshop Ltd., Blackfriars, Monk Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4XN. Tel: 091 2617349

Change and How to Help it Happen. Community Education Training Unit, 1994.

A comprehensive and practical guide facilitation methods for organisational change. The approach and methods can be adapted for participation processes. Available from: Community Education Training Unit, Arden Road, Halifax HX1 3AG. Tel: 0422 357394

Citizen Involvement: A Practical Guide for Change. Peter Beresford and Suzy Croft. MacMillan, 1993.

A guide to participation and empowerment which focuses on initiatives in social work and social services. Plenty of insights from service users as well as practitioners, and guidelines for agencies.

The following list has been extracted from a bibliography on PRA compiled in 1994 by the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex. For details of how to obtain copies of this bibliography, please contact Robert Chambers at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RE.

Blackman, T. 1993. Research in local government: an assessment of qualitative research. *Local Government Studies* 19(2): 242-263.

Collier, W. and Santoso, K. 1992. *Surabaya Water Environment Study: An Application of Rapid Urban Appraisal Techniques*. PT Intersys Kelola Maju (Consultants), Indonesia.

Cresswell, T. 1992. *Unemployment and Health*. North Derbyshire Health Authority; also RRA Notes 16, IIED, London. Contact: North Derbyshire Health Promotion Service, Scarsdale Hospital, Newbold Rd., Chesterfield S41 7PF.

de Columbani, P. et al. 1991. Exploring the potential for primary environmental care in squatter communities in Salvador da Bahia. *RRA Notes 16*. IIED, London.

Kelly, K. 1994. *PRA Clinic, Nairobi, Kenya*. IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton.

Kendall, C. and Gittelsohn, J. 1991. *A Discussion of the Reliability of Measures of Hygiene Behaviours: The Case of the Health Behaviour Intervention Project, Lima, Peru*. Workshop on the Measurement of Hygiene Behaviour, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Available from: Center for International Community-based Health Research, Department of International Health, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA.

Lee-Smith, D. and Chaudhry, T. 1990. Environmental information for and from children. *Environment and Urbanization* 2(2): 27-32. IIED, London.

Mellor, M. 1993. Ethics and accountability: participatory research in a worker cooperative. *Convergence, Convergencia XXI* (2&3): 73-84.

Mukherjee, N. 1993. *Health-PRA Workshop at Birmingham University*. Mimeo, Birmingham University. See also *RRA Notes 19*: PRA training for health workers.

Patel, S. 1990. Street children, hotel boys and children of pavement dwellers and construction workers in Bombay, how they meet their daily needs. *Environment and Urbanization* 2(2): 9-26. IIED, London

Shah, P. 1994. *Participatory Urban Appraisal in Zambia: Case Study of Chainda*. Mimeo. IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK.

Southworth, M. 1993. City learning: children, maps and travel. *Streetwise; the Magazine of Urban Studies* 4: 13-20. National Association for Urban Studies, Lewis Cohen Urban Studies Centre, University of Brighton, 68 Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 2JY, UK.

Tabidzadeh, I. 1988. *Improving Urban Health Guidelines for Rapid Appraisal to Assess Community Health Needs. A focus on health improvements for low-income urban areas*. WHO, SIDA, SAREC.

Relevant Publications from the Human Settlements Programme at IIED

Environment and Urbanization is a twice yearly journal about the Third World written by leading Third World specialists for a general audience and published at an affordable price. One of the most widely distributed journals in its field - it keeps you in touch with what Third World researchers, community organisers and NGOs think about environment and development.

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Funding Community Level Initiatives. Silvina Arrossi, Felix Bombarolo, Jorge E. Hardoy, Diana Mitlin, Luis P. Coscio and David Satterthwaite. Earthscan, London, 1993, 190 pages. £13.95; for Third World orders or orders of four or more, £6.95 a copy.

Despite four decades of development planning, at least one third of the urban population of Africa, Asia and Latin America remain poor. Over 600 million live in "life and health threatening" homes and neighbourhoods because of poor housing and inadequate or no piped water, sanitation and health care. But even as the shortcomings of governments and development programmes become more apparent, so do the untapped abilities of low-income groups and their community organisations to develop their own solutions. This book analyses the conditions necessary for successful community initiatives and includes 18 case studies of intermediary institutions (most of them Third World NGOs) who provide technical, legal and financial services to low-income households for constructing or improving housing. Many also work with community organizations in improving water, sanitation, drainage, health care and other community services.

Environmental Problems in Third World Cities. Jorge E. Hardoy, Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite. Earthscan, 1992, 302 pages. £13.95; for Third World orders or orders of four or more, £6.95 a copy.

This book describes environmental problems in Third World cities and how these affect human health, local ecosystems and global cycles. It analyses the causes of the problems and highlights their political roots - such as the failure of governments to implement existing environmental legislation and land owning structures which force poorer groups to house themselves on illegal and often dangerous sites. The authors show that practical solutions to many of the problems can be found: especially through building the capacity and competence of urban government, supporting local NGOs and pressure groups and channelling support direct to associations of low income households and working with them to directly improve the environment.

Squatter Citizen: Life in the Urban Third World. Jorge E. Hardoy and David Satterthwaite. Earthscan, 1989, 374 pages. Price: £12.95; for Third World orders or orders of four or more, £5.95 a copy.

This describes the vast and complex process of urban change in the Third World and

considers its impact on the lives of its poorer citizens. Boxes intersperse the text to illustrate points made and also tell stories of how a squatter invasion was organised or how communities in illegal settlements organised their own defence or worked together to improve conditions.

Outside the Large Cities: Annotated Bibliography and Guide to the Literature on Small and Intermediate Urban Centres in the Third World - Silvia Blitzer et al., IIED, 168 pages, 1988. £11.50 (£6.00 Third World orders).

Urban Networks

The Habitat International Coalition is an international network linking NGOs and community based NGOs working on urban and shelter issues. It has two regional groupings, the Settlements Information Network Africa (SINA) and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights. A short introduction to each organisation can be obtained from NGO profiles included in several issues of *Environment and Urbanization*:

Habitat International Coalition	Vol. 2, No. 1
Settlements Information Network Africa	Vol. 5, No. 1
Asian Coalition for Housing Rights	Vol. 5, No. 2

More information, including membership details, can be obtained directly from the respective organisations:

- Habitat International Coalition, Cordobanes No. 24, Col. San Jose Insurgentes, Mexico 03900, DF, Mexico. Tel: (52 5) 651 6807; Fax: 593 5194/545 3263
- Settlements Information Network Africa, PO Box 14550, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, PO Box 24-74, Bangkok 10240, Thailand. Tel: (66 2) 538 0919; Fax: (66 2) 539 9950.

FICONG is a Latin America network with publications, seminars and workshops for staff and members of NGOs, community based organisations and local government. Its aims are to enhance the capacity of NGOs and public agencies to respond to the needs of low-income groups and increase the scale and effectiveness of their programmes. More information from: IIED-America Latina, Piso 6, Cuerpo A, Corrientes 2835, 1193 Buenos Aires, Argentina. Tel: (54 1) 961 3050; Fax: (54 1) 961 1854.

TAP, a programme of the Asian Coalition, has initiated a research project on participatory urban research approaches in Asia (*TAP News Bulletin*, June 1994). The rationale is to understand the scope and potential of PUA, the state-of-the-art of participatory research survey and methodologies in Asia, and the concept and structure of the training for CBOs, NGOs and young professionals. The outcome is hoped to be a regional overview paper on Urban Participatory Research Approaches in Asia, including case materials and a training package. It is intended that a regional training programme on participatory urban action-research will be implemented under ACHR-TAP in 1995. For more information, contact: K.A. Jayaratne, SEVANATHA (Urban Resource Centre), 220/ 3 Nawala Road, Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka. Fax: 941 850 223; Tel: 862 148

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