

49  
49  
49  
49  
49  
49  
49  
49  
49  
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April 2004

# pla notes

participatory learning and action

## Decentralisation and community-based planning



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# pla notes

participatory learning and action

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We are grateful to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for their financial support. Thanks also to Khanya-Managing Rural Change CC, South Africa for their additional support for this special issue.

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**Printed by:** Russell Press, Nottingham, UK

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## Participatory development

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is an umbrella term for a wide range of similar approaches and methodologies, including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA),

Participatory Learning Methods (PALM), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Farming Systems Research (FSR), Méthod Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative (MARPP), and many others. The common theme to all these approaches is the full **participation** of people in the processes of **learning** about their needs and opportunities, and in the **action** required to address them.

Participatory approaches offer a creative way of investigating issues of concern to poor people, and planning, implementing, and evaluating development activities. They challenge prevailing biases and preconceptions about people's knowledge.

The methods used range from visualisation, to interviewing and group work. The common theme is the promotion of interactive learning, shared knowledge, and flexible, yet structured analysis. These methods have proven valuable for understanding local perceptions of the functional value of resources, processes of agricultural intervention, and social and institutional relations. Participatory approaches can also bring together different disciplines, such as agriculture, health, and community development, to enable an integrated vision of livelihoods and well-being. They offer opportunities for mobilising local people for joint action.

In recent years, there has been a number of shifts in the scope and focus of participation:

- emphasis on sub-national, national and international decision-making, not just local decision-making;
- move from projects to policy processes and institutionalisation;
- greater recognition of issues of difference and power; and,
- emphasis on assessing the quality and understanding the impact of participation, rather than simply promoting participation.

Recent issues of *PLA Notes* have reflected, and will continue to reflect, these developments and shifts. We particularly recognise the importance of analysing and overcoming power differentials which work to exclude the already poor and marginalised.

Photo: Charles Ehrhart



Data was brought together and changed into information and ideas in small groups. This approach allowed triangulation and the evolution of individual positions through rigorous dialogue. (see chapter 8, page 52)

## THEME SECTION

### Decentralisation and community-based planning

1. Overview: decentralisation and participatory planning  
*Ian Goldman and Joanne Abbot* .....5

### EXPERIENCES FROM THE FOUR-COUNTRY CBP PROJECT

2. Linking the community to local government: action research in four African countries  
*Ian Goldman, James Carnegie and Joanne Abbott* .....16
3. Experiences of CBP in South Africa  
*Sam Chimbuya, Cecile Ambert, Marc Feldman, Teboho Maine and Tankiso Mea* .....22
4. Experiences with CBP from Uganda  
*Tom Blomley, Paul Kasule-Mukasa, Fiona Nunan and Charles Kiberu* .....28
5. Planning with the area council: experience with CBP in Ghana  
*Ernest Tay Awoosah, John Cofie-Agamah, BJ Oppong, Sampson Kwarteng and Francis Owusu Ansah* .....35
6. Empowering communities through CBP in Zimbabwe: experiences in Gwanda and Chimanimani  
*Absolom Masendeke, Andrew Mlalazi, Ashella Ndhlovu and Douglas Gumbo* 41

### OTHER EXPERIENCES OF CBP IN AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA

7. Experience of the *Programme Nationale de Gestion de Terroirs* (PNGT2) in Burkina Faso  
*Moussa Ouedraogo and Mohamed Drabo* .....48
8. Challenging and changing the big picture: the roles of participatory research in public policy planning  
*Charles Ehrhart*.....52
9. Experiences in *Panchayat*-based planning in the mountains, Himachal Pradesh, India  
*Rajeev Ahal and Silvio Decurtins*.....58
10. Some experiences from the Philippines in urban community development planning: the participatory SAPIME approach  
*Edna Co, Jan Velasco-Fabonan and Jeremy Nishimori* .....64
11. The use of participatory three-dimensional modelling in community-based planning in Quang Nam province, Vietnam  
*James Hardcastle, Barney Long, Le Van Lanh, Giacomo Rambaldi and Do Quoc Son*.....70
12. Municipal rural development plans in Brazil: working within the politics of participation  
*Glauco Regis Florisbello and Irene Guijt* .....77

## GENERAL SECTION

13. Reducing domestic abuses against housewives of *haor* areas of Bangladesh: understanding the impact of Concern's intervention  
*Dipankar Datta and Neli Sen Gupta* .....85
14. Extracts from 'Teach Yourself Citizens' Juries: A handbook by the DIY Jury Steering Group'  
*PEALS, Newcastle University*.....91

## REGULARS

- Editorial ..... 2
- Tips for Trainers .....94
- In Touch .....97
- RCPLA Network.....104

# editorial

## Welcome to issue 49 of *PLA Notes*

### News

Firstly, allow me to introduce myself as Acting Editor of *PLA Notes*, as Angela Milligan is now on maternity leave. As we go to press, I am delighted to announce that Angela had a baby boy, Lindley, on 21st March. I am sure you will all join me in congratulating Angela and her family and wishing them well.

My name is Nicole Kenton and I have been working in the Drylands Programme at IIED for the past 13 years, and as some might say, time for a change! I am delighted to be able to take up this new challenge and I would like to thank Angela for ensuring that the handover was smooth and thorough, and to thank her for all her work on this issue, since she did the bulk of the coordination and editing prior to going on leave. I am also indebted to Holly Ashley, the Editorial Assistant, without whom I would not have been able to produce this issue. Holly, as previous Editor of *PLA Notes*, has provided invaluable experience and help and has worked long hours to get this issue to print. I am also grateful to Andy Smith for his usual high standard of design work. I look forward to working with both of them on the next issues. My thanks also go to the *PLA Notes* Editorial Board for their support and their detailed comments on the articles, with special thanks to Bansuri Taneja. And last, but not least, I would like to thank the two guest editors for their professional and tireless efforts in commissioning and assisting the authors and coordinating all the contributions, and of course I would like to thank the authors themselves. You will see

that the quality of the articles is a reflection of the hard work, professionalism and dedication of all parties involved.

### Theme section

The guest editors of this special issue of *PLA Notes* on decentralisation and community-based planning (CBP) are **Dr Ian Goldman** and **Dr Joanne Abbott**.

Ian Goldman has a Master's degree in Tropical Agricultural Development, and wrote his thesis on enabling planning. He has worked for long periods in Mexico, Zambia, the UK and South Africa, and on short assignments in many countries of Africa and Europe.

Ian was a founder of Khanya-Managing Rural Change in 1998, a collectively-owned and managed company working on sustainable livelihoods and community-driven development. Since then Ian has been involved in a range of work focusing on poverty and reconnecting citizens with the state. One element of this has been on community-based planning, where Ian initiated and has been the project manager of the four-country action research project. He is currently Executive Chair of Khanya.

Jo Abbot completed her PhD at University College London in Biological Anthropology in 1996, combining natural and human science research approaches to examine local use and management of miombo woodlands in a protected area, Lake Malawi National Park. She subsequently joined IIED in London where she worked as a Research Associate, focusing on policy and practice issues around participation, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa. For the last four years, she has worked for CARE

International, first in Uganda and currently in South Africa and Lesotho, where she coordinates CARE's programme on rural livelihoods, HIV/AIDS, and good governance.

As Jo used to work for IIED and coordinated *PLA Notes* for three and a half years, editing eleven issues, it has been something of a *déjà vu* for her to be guest editing an issue five years later!

This issue on decentralisation and community-based planning draws on the four-country CBP Project, the action-research study in Africa which Ian managed. This project is outlined in article two, and articles three to six give experiences from the four countries – South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, and Zimbabwe. The issue also includes other examples, outside of the four-country CBP Project, from francophone Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

What is community-based planning? It is defined in the overview as 'planning by communities, for their communities, which is not isolated from but links into the local and or national government planning systems'. Given increasing decentralisation in many countries, this theme is timely. CBP attempts to be more responsive to local people's needs, through participatory planning and resource allocation, by improving the quality of services, and by deepening democracy through promoting community action and involvement at a local level.

The country studies in this issue seek to draw comparisons between the different approaches, objectives and scales used in community-based planning projects. They highlight the need to look beyond the narrower focuses that have been prevalent in the past, which have resulted in

barriers to participation for the most vulnerable, or have been less than inclusive in their scope and implementation, or have failed to deliver real democratic power to the communities concerned.

The underlying principle of CBP, that the guest editors and authors have sought to demonstrate in this special issue, is how communities can plan for their future, as part of an integrated planning process for an area, thereby improving local governance.

### General section

For this issue we bring you two general articles. The first is by **Dipankar Datta** and **Neli Sen Gupta**, and explores the effects of the work undertaken by Concern Worldwide in *haor* areas of Bangladesh to promote the socio-economic empowerment of poor women, principally by examining the level of domestic violence experienced by housewives.

Our second general article is a little different to the usual, and we hope that you enjoy it! It comes in the form of a series of cartoon extracts by **Kate Charlesworth** taken from *Teach Yourself Citizens' Juries: A handbook by the DIY Jury Steering Group*, published by the Policy, Ethics and Life Sciences (PEALS) Programme

at the University of Newcastle. These extracts look at what a citizens' jury is, why you might want to have one, what the main ingredients of one are, and how to get started.

### Regular features

Continuing with the special theme, this issue's **Tips for Trainers** section brings you two extracts from Khanya-Managing Rural Change's *Action Research for Community-Based Planning* project manual.

The manual offers a practical 'how to' approach to community-based planning, giving a background to the subject, and providing useful information about facilitating and organising CBP activities. These short extracts discuss two of the initial phases of the CBP process: how to ensure the effective representation of people within the planning community, and how to prepare and run a pre-planning community meeting.

Our **In Touch** section contains the usual selection of book reviews, forthcoming events and courses, and our e-participation website reviews. We always welcome contributions from our readers for this section, so please get in touch at the usual address.

The **RCPLA Network** (Resource

Centres for Participatory Learning and Action) has undergone a review of its vision and mission statements with the aim of taking on a far more proactive role within the development sector. You will see from the update, that in order to orient member organisation towards this new focus, it is organising a number of activities this year, including a series of writeshops to document field experiences. We look forward to hearing more about the outcomes of these activities in future issues.

### PLA Notes celebrates its 50th issue!

The next issue will be our 50th and to celebrate this anniversary, we will be inviting past guest editors of *PLA Notes* to give an up-to-date picture of developments in their particular areas, and also to look ahead and think about – what next? And even, what will be in the 100th issue! We are very pleased and privileged to have Robert Chambers guest-edit this special issue and welcome any contributions for our **In Touch** section. In the meantime, enjoy this 49th issue of *PLA Notes*. We welcome your feedback and comments. As Angela would say, happy reading!  
**Nicole Kenton, Acting Editor**

### Corrections

*PLA Notes* 48: In our In Touch section on page 82, we gave a wrong website address for PEANuT. The correct address is: [www.northumbria.ac.uk/peanut](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/peanut). Our apologies to PEANuT for this.

# DECENTRALISATION AND COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING

# Overview: Decentralisation and participatory planning

**Caption: villagers from Dour Yarce village present their plan to visitors from different African countries, including Ian Goldman, Hans Binswanger from the World Bank, and Jean-Paul Sawdogo, PNGT**

by IAN GOLDMAN and JOANNE ABBOT

## Introduction

This issue of PLA Notes focuses on community-based planning (CBP)<sup>1</sup> – planning by communities, for their communities, which is not isolated from but links into the local and national government planning systems. Thirteen years on from the *RRA Notes* theme issue on Local Level Adaptive Planning<sup>2</sup>, it is interesting to review where debates and experiences have and have not moved on compared to those in the early 1990s. A review is also timely given the increased emphasis on decentralisation in many countries throughout the 1980s and 1990s. We also consider the relevance of community-driven development models, including the participatory poverty analyses, being promoted by parts of the World Bank over the last five to ten years, which typically have included a CBP component. The issue draws from an action-research study in Africa on community-based planning, known as the CBP Project, undertaken in South Africa, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Uganda, and outlined in article two. It also includes other



Photo: David Vannier, World Bank

examples, outside of the four-country CBP Project, from Francophone Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

We believe CBP is important as it attempts to make planning and resource allocation systems more responsive to local people's needs – improving the quality of services, while deepening democracy through promoting community action and involvement in planning and managing local development. It thus aims to improve both governmental and other services as well as to empower communities. However, different CBP processes have different objectives. Some focus more on community mobilisation, others on improving participation in local government planning or emphasising participatory forms of information gathering

<sup>1</sup> Note that we use CBP to refer to community-based planning in general. Elsewhere we refer specifically to the CBP Project (a four-country action research project in Africa – see articles two to six).

<sup>2</sup> *RRA Notes 11*, Proceedings of the Local Level Adaptive Planning Workshop, London, 1991. In this issue, adaptive planning refers to planning that takes account of basic needs and promotes integrated development through appropriate technologies.

**“We believe CBP is important as it attempts to make planning and resource allocation systems more responsive to local people’s needs – improving the quality of services, while deepening democracy through promoting community action and involvement in planning and managing their development”**

to inform national or sectoral policies. This theme issue tries to separate out the different approaches and highlights their objectives so that useful comparisons on methodology, scope, and scale can be made.

In the overview to the *RRA Notes* issue on adaptive planning, Pretty and Scoones (1991) provide a good starting point for the current issue. They discuss some of the issues around adaptive planning, highlighting that traditional land-use planning has tended to:

- focus on narrow technical issues with little use of local knowledge;
- be data and information hungry;
- result in maps or other outputs that local people may not understand; and,
- fail to tease out complex problems, such as vulnerability.

In discussing the institutionalisation of adaptive or participatory processes, they highlight:

- that local people may be involved in information collection but not decision-making;
- that politicians may accept participation but not democracy, whereas effective participation implies the devolution of the power to decide;
- the importance of local accountability;
- the need to sensitise bureaucrats to be adaptive planners, how to use the methodologies, and to how to use local information and link it to the formal planning system; and,
- they ask whether adaptive planning can revitalise the processes of government, encouraging an active bargaining process for external support.

The earlier issues of *RRA Notes* had a natural resource bias, perhaps reflecting the emergence of adaptive planning from a rural appraisal origin. However the point of departure for this issue is communities planning in an integrated way for their future, which will include natural

**People from Ward 19, Mangaung, South Africa vote for their preferred outcomes**



Photo: Ian Goldman

resources but also many other sectors, as part of holistic and integrated planning for an area.

### **The drive towards community-based or driven planning**

In the move towards decentralisation there has been a tendency to promote holistic development planning at local government level, such as Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) in South Africa, district plans in Uganda, and municipal rural development plans in Brazil.

These plans are meant to be integrated and multi-sectoral, and supposedly guide spending allocations. However in many countries there is inherent conflict between a planning system driven through local government, and sectoral planning aligned with national ministries. Indeed many countries have multiple planning systems that are not readily integrated or synchronised. For example, Zimbabwe’s planning systems include the following plans: development, physical, environmental, land-use, water catchment, national park, and forest area, and this is by no means uncommon<sup>3</sup>.

So challenges remain in how to develop a vertical planning system, which effectively integrates plans at community, local government, and national government levels – as well as horizontal integration across sectors at all levels. Starting at the local level, CBP may offer some ways forward for overcoming these challenges.

### **End uses of and approaches to community-based planning**

CBP can be undertaken for the following reasons:

- to improve the quality of integrated plans by incorporating perspectives and understanding from local communities;

<sup>3</sup> PlanAfric (1999), “Rural Planning – Zimbabwe Country Study”, produced as part of an IIED study on Rural Planning and Sustainable Livelihoods.



- to improve sectoral plans and so the quality of services, once again by incorporating information generated by and with local communities;
- to promote community action, sometimes as a means of releasing latent energy of communities or to reduce the demands on government by shifting responsibilities to communities (e.g. for maintaining infrastructure in countries where government is seeking to reduce its responsibilities);
- to promote community control over development, either in improving local influence over decisions, or in managing development directly; and,
- to comply with policy or legislative directives for public participation in different types of plans and planning processes.

The current issue focuses on approaches that attempt to integrate a number of these objectives, i.e. where plans are linked to higher level systems, whether local or national government or sectoral departments, but also on empowering communities to control their own development. Table 1 shows some of the characteristics of the articles included.

**“The point of departure for this issue is communities planning in an integrated way for their future, which will include natural resources but also many other sectors, as part of holistic and integrated planning for an area”**

One tension in the different approaches lies in the trade-offs between depth and scale. Shorter, quicker approaches can be applied and replicated more widely, and offer opportunities for roll-out within the resources (human, financial etc.) of government without high levels of external support (beyond initial training). But they are inherently less intensive and so less transformational than those that involve much higher levels and longer processes of facilitation, support, and input. In this edition an example of the latter is that from Brazil (see article 12), while the community-based planning (CBP) project and the examples from South

**Table 1: Some characteristics of the examples included in this theme issue**

Case studies	Community planning unit (nos of people)	Integrated community level plan	Relatively short process in community	Long intensive process	Contribution to high level plans
CBP project		Yes	4–5 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		Local government
South Africa	Ward (10–15,000)	Yes	5 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		
Zimbabwe	Ward (6–8,000)	Yes	5 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		
Ghana	Area Council	Yes	5 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		
Uganda	Parish (5,000)	Yes	3 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		
Uganda/ Tanzania participatory poverty assessments	Community	In some cases	2 weeks		National plans
Brazil	Município (municipality) <20,000 <sup>4</sup>	Yes		Several months, with on-going support	Local government
Philippines	Barangay (village)	Yes	3-4 week profiling		Intended
Vietnam	Commune (3–5,000)	Yes	10 days PRA training; followed by 12-day training in modelling		District
Burkina Faso	CVGT (1000+)	Yes			In future
India	Gram Panchayat (1,000–5,000)	Yes	Series of planning events and workshops at different levels over several weeks		District and State

<sup>4</sup> Although some municipalities can have millions of people, e.g. Sao Paolo

**“Key to the success of CBP is not just the planning itself, but the whole system around it. We focus here on a few key elements: the planning methodology, the facilitation, the training, the link with community-managed funds, accountability/monitoring and evaluation, and the linkage to the local government planning system”**

Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Ghana are closer to the former. The more intensive transformational approaches often build on Freire’s work, and in Africa these include the Training for Transformation work originating in Zimbabwe, and the Development Education and Leadership Training for Action (DELTA) approach, both described in *RRA Notes 11* (Leach, 1991).

Another tension linked to the depth and scale relates to the end use of the process, whether community planning is more closely linked to community and local government plans (most examples in this issue) or informing national planning processes (e.g. the Participatory Poverty Analyses (PPAs) or Poverty Reduction processes). Ehrhart (article eight) outlines some of the challenges associated with PPAs where the participatory analysis has more national than local benefit and where any policy outcomes of CBP may or may not be experienced in the communities where the assessments were undertaken. In the evolution of the CBP Project in South Africa over 2003/4, the importance of linkages to local government planning are emphasised, and new tools have been developed to assist with this.

Across all the examples in this issue, some key themes emerge for comparison:

- approach taken and methodologies used;
- evidence of impact;
- replication and scaling up.

### Approach and methodology

Key to the success of CBP is not just the planning itself, but the whole system around it. We focus here on a few key elements: the planning methodology, the facilitation, the training, the link with community-managed funds, accountability/monitoring and evaluation, and the linkage to the local government planning system.

**Participants attending a planning workshop for the CBP project in New Edubiase, Ghana**



Photo: Tay Awoosah

### Methodology

The different models all use a variety of PRA tools. The major difference is between those taking a long-term approach, focused on a small number of communities, which is the case in the Philippines and Brazilian cases, and those deliberately compromising on the depth of the methodology with the intent to have the resources to cover many communities, perhaps an entire unit of local government (e.g. municipality, district etc.). The contrast between these two approaches, related to their differing objectives, is highlighted in article two, and how approaches were developed that could be empowering and yet not too costly.

Most methodologies involved a classic situation analysis, development of objectives, planning for action, typically using PRA tools. In the case of the CBP project, the methodology was based on livelihoods analysis with social groups (focus groups), specifically seeking to identify and build on the diversity in the community, and use understanding of people’s livelihoods, and their preferred outcomes to drive the planning. The use of a strengths-based approach to developing preferred livelihood outcomes, and not problems, is one of the most innovative features of this methodology. In Tanzania, the emphasis was on focus groups and not community-wide meetings, and the Brazil paper points to a diversity of participatory events and processes, community-wide and more focused.

In the Brazilian case study, a three-part PRA process was used, followed by participatory formulation of a municipal rural development plan (MRDP). Note that in the Brazilian context, the municipalities have small populations, equivalent to or slightly larger than the wards/parishes in the other countries. The three elements of the PRA process included mobilisation, typical PRA, and lastly the deepening and developing of proposals, such that the overall process takes

many months.

In the PPA, the use of the participatory tools was primarily to improve understanding of the context, and in Uganda a community action plan (CAP) was also developed in response to priority problems. In Tanzania the decision was taken not to have a CAP, as without this being linked to the formal planning system, it was difficult to support implementation in the communities which had been included.

The paper on Vietnam highlights one particular tool, a form of mapping using a scaled and geo-referenced 3-D model, which provides the basis for a broader participatory planning framework. Many of the different approaches described in this edition, including the India example (article nine), have incorporated a mapping or transect tool. In the Vietnam case, the mapping has been made three-dimensional, and seems to have had a positive response from communities.

### Facilitation

The use of facilitators varies. In all cases communities were directly involved in the planning process, usually assisted by external facilitators. To promote replication, within the four countries involved in the CBP project, the external facilitators have been municipal officials, local NGOs, and other local service providers. In Burkina, facilitators were from the PNGT programme. In South Africa, ward committee (WC) members were not initially trained directly, but in the rolling out this year, one WC member has been trained per ward and first indications are that ward committee members are very positive and in most cases have had good capacity to undertake the planning.

In Brazil, rural workers unions (STRs) played a key role, as well as farmer groups, which later broadened to include the municipal councils and other municipal-level groups. In Burkina Faso, initial work was facilitated with farmer groups, and this later expanded to village committees. In Vietnam, Village Protection Teams formed as 'legalised' wardens, now control illegal access to resources. As in the Philippines case, an NGO provided the support for a more

#### Box 1: Pillars of the community-driven development approach

- empowering communities (with an emphasis on community plans, and community-managed funds);
- empowering local governments (through fiscal, administrative, and political decentralisation);
- realigning the centre;
- improving accountability, downwards and upwards; and,
- capacity-development at all levels.

**“One of the key motivating factors behind CBP is to improve accountability between local government and communities. A key weakness in many attempts at decentralisation is that there is little pressure from below for performance at local government level, often undermining decentralisation processes”**

intensive empowerment process. In many cases an initial change agent facilitation role of an NGO (e.g. CARE Uganda), company (e.g. Khanya), or project (e.g. PNGT) was critical in introducing the innovative approach.

Many of the examples suggest that local service providers and municipal officials can facilitate a CBP process (e.g. the Core Facilitation Team at ward level in Zimbabwe, or sub-county staff in Uganda) following initial training and support.

### Training

A variety of training of facilitators can be seen. In South Africa, this started as a pure learning-by-doing experience, supplemented by a two-day PRA training. This has now evolved into a two-week theory and experience-based training, during which facilitators work in a community to draw up a ward plan. Uganda also found that the initial training was insufficient, and is now experimenting with an experience-based training model. Clearly if this is to be carried across a whole district (for example in Uganda covering 170 parishes in the pilot district, Bushenyi), some cascade model of training has to be used. With the Tanzanian PPA, a three-week training was conducted, as well as a one-week training so that facilitator/researchers understood the policy-making process. The SAPIME methodology in the Philippines used five days of training. In Burkina, villages were not trained to undertake the planning, but village officials have had training to assist with implementation (e.g. in procurement and financial management).

### Community-managed funds

A complementary aspect to community involvement in planning is the ability to make decisions about the use of real money. This happened in Burkina, in the four-country CBP Project, either through funds provided by the municipi-

**“A challenge is to see how CBP can be deepened and widened, so that the methodologies have local benefits in community-driven development and empowerment, but also can be applied at a sufficient scale to deliver significant benefits to significant numbers of people”**

pality (SA, \$1,500–8,000 per ward), or through the use of local revenue (Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana). This element is stressed in the community-driven development approach (see Box 1) and is a key characteristic of many of the large community-driven development projects such as in Guinea (World Bank, 2003), or Burkina Faso.

In Brazil and Uganda, as also in Bolivia (CBP, 2002), the planning related directly to the municipal or district plan, and so to the municipal or district budget. In the CBP Project work in South Africa, Ghana, and Zimbabwe, the planning sought to link the community plans with the local government plan, and indeed in the elaboration of the project in 2003/4, specific methodologies and training have been developed for municipalities so they can incorporate and use information from the community plans. In Vietnam, the planning process allows the community to influence decisions about the use of resources, especially in the allocation of district and provincial funds to locally identified priorities.

#### Accountability and monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

One of the key motivating factors behind CBP is to improve accountability between local government and communities. A key weakness in many attempts at decentralisation is that there is little pressure from below for performance at local government level, often undermining decentralisation processes. Improved accountability was a key element in the Brazilian example, and in the CBP project this aspect has been emphasised in the scaling-up. Uganda offers good examples of simple mechanisms for improving accountability. For example, all funds available to communities and different levels of government must be publicly displayed, typically on flip charts on the walls of local government offices.

Just the presence of a plan can provide a clear direction for political representatives, and for which they can be held accountable. The Araponga case in the Brazil article

**A resident presents goals and strategies to deal with crime in Mantshali, South Africa**



Photo: Ian Goldman

provides a good example of this. Another interesting aspect of the Bolivian experience is the use of civil society structures to hold the municipality to account (Vigilance Committees), made up of representatives from grassroots organisations (OTBs), and these participate in the planning process. In Vietnam, support is required to ensure the accountability and collaboration of the local authorities, upon which the communities rely for processing cases against those who infringed the law in community-controlled areas.

Beyond these examples, accountability is an area where considerable work is needed to assist in developing good practice models and approaches. Improving accountability can also be viewed as part of ongoing support for the implementation of community-based plans, and support to the community structures during implementation.

#### Linkage to local government and higher-level plans

In Brazil and Bolivia, the community plan developed is the municipal plan, i.e. the plan for the lowest level of local government. In the CBP project there was direct impact on local government plans in Uganda, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Over the last six months, the deepening of the methodology in South Africa has included developing a methodology for the local government to incorporate and use the information generated from the CBP project in the local government plan. In the Philippines, this is highlighted but does not seem to have happened yet while in Burkina Faso, this should happen as communes are created next year. The PPA process is explicitly designed to inform national planning processes, and concrete examples from the more advanced Uganda process are illustrated. It would be useful to see how CBP in local government contexts could also lead to the benefits of the PPA, where detailed snapshots are used to inform higher-level decision-making and policy-setting.

Impact	Evidence of impact
Quality of plans at:	
Community level	In most cases there were no plans previously.
Local government level	In South Africa, the IDP was informed and reoriented by the inputs from CBP, as were the sub-county and district plans in Uganda and district plans in Zimbabwe. There is a need to strengthen this, which is happening at present in South Africa and Vietnam. CBP provided a model for developing more participatory forms of local government plans in Brazil (MRDPs).
National level	From Tanzania and Uganda, PPAs seem to have promoted decentralisation, and in Uganda an increased emphasis on water and sanitation.
Quality of services	There is little evidence around this, except the evaluation in South Africa showed that there was an impact on the quality of services where service providers participated in the planning (e.g. police).
Community action	In Burkina Faso, there seems to have been extensive action resulting and a major community contribution. In the four CBP project countries there does seem to have been significant impact on community action, at least while implementing the community-managed funds. However it is not clear this is sustainable without an ongoing system, as in Burkina, or which is emerging in South Africa and Uganda.
Community participation and control over development	
Control over use of funds	Communities have had control over the use of funds allocated to the plan in many of the cases, even if these have been very limited in Ghana and Zimbabwe.
Capacity-development	There has been evidence of significant capacity development in many of the examples, both in community and their service providers, e.g. evaluations in Burkina and Mangaung (South Africa). In South Africa and Vietnam, there is increasing emphasis on training the ward and district committee members respectively, and greater emphasis on training in Uganda to promote wider replication.
Accountability of local government and community representatives	Largest impact seems to be in the intensive examples such as Brazil. Should emerge in others if the work with the community is sustained as intended.

## Impact

On pages 6-7, we suggested a number of possible impacts on:

- the quality of plans at different levels;
- the quality of services;
- community action;
- community participation and control over development; and,
- fulfilling government requirements for participation.

What evidence do we see from these examples? Independent evaluations have been conducted in South Africa and Uganda, and a multistakeholder review in Brazil. Table 2 summarises some impacts that seem to be emerging.

One of the objectives of CBP was to change resource allocations so that they are more responsive to people's priorities, including that for poor people. There is evidence

of that happening at municipal level, e.g. in Mangaung in South Africa. In Uganda, the evidence that emerged from the PPA process led to an increased emphasis on water. In Bolivia, a decision to create (very small) municipalities was accompanied by massive resource shifts from urban to rural areas (Khanya, 2002). However we are yet to see system-wide changes which can be linked directly to CBP, as in terms of widespread rollout these are still at early stages.

In terms of policy impacts, CBP has been incorporated into new national policy, e.g. in the rollout of the Harmonised Participatory Planning Guidelines (HPPG) in Uganda, the addition of a performance indicator for the South African Department of Provincial and Local Government, and the addition of a community-empowerment pillar to the decentralisation approach in Zimbabwe.

**Table 2: Impact of CBP**

Issue	Examples from case studies
1. Strong political commitment to decentralisation and empowerment is vital. Donors should support local champions of community-driven development (CDD)	National rollout programme (PNGT, Burkina). Involving national departments and local governments in the learning process (South Africa). Selecting local governments, which are committed to empowering citizens (South Africa and Vietnam). Making the plan obligatory for accessing local budgets (as suggested in Philippines). Empowering poor groups to negotiate more effectively using the information from the plan (Brazil, Philippines).
2. Successful scale-ups put money in the hands of communities and local governments, to harness their latent capacity through learning-by-doing. This is supplemented by relevant capacity building.	CBP in South Africa, Uganda, Burkina Faso.
3. Best practice in one context can be poor practice in another. Field-testing through pilots reveals problems and suggests adaptations that can be crucial.	Pilots in all cases.
4. Stakeholders require context-specific manuals, procedures, and training courses at different levels (national, state, local government, community). These need constant revision in the light of new experiences and contexts.	CBP manual developed, tested, adapted for each country. Revised versions being produced in South Africa and Uganda, fully integrated with local government planning system. Training manuals developed (Uganda, Philippines, South Africa). Guides for district planners developed (South Africa). Comprehensive manuals, documentaries, and toolkits, in English and Vietnamese, accessible both in printed, CD, and downloadable electronic formats (Vietnam).
5. Good systems for sharing and spreading knowledge help inform different stakeholders precisely what their roles are, and help create common values.	Training in all cases.
6. Incentives for stakeholders should be aligned with programme objectives.	Ensuring that production of CBP part of incentives for local government (Uganda).
7. Physical scaling-up (mass replication) needs supplementation by social scaling-up (making the process more inclusive) and conceptual scaling-up (moving beyond participation to embedding empowerment in the entire development process).	Social scaling-up – using social groups as basis of planning (CBP). Empowering groups to negotiate (Brazil). Conceptual scaling up – widening the CBP agenda to include community funds, implementation (South Africa, Uganda).
8. Success depends on training tens of thousands of communities to execute/manage projects/accounts. Good scaling-up logistics lower costs and improve community ownership, and hence sustainability. So do community co-financing and contracting.	Developing community financing mechanisms (Burkina, South Africa). Using local officials as facilitators as part of their normal job (Uganda). Using community representatives as part of their responsibility (South Africa). Developing local trainers to support facilitators (Uganda, Zimbabwe).
9. Scaling-up is a long-haul process that can take as long as 15 years.	Building a long-term agenda including CBP, e.g. Uganda Local Government Development Programme, PNGT in Burkina.
10. Ease of replication is key to rapid scaling-up. Rules and procedures must be carefully designed, yet be so simple and transparent that they can be replicated easily in tens of thousands of communities with limited skills.	Improved emphasis on documentation could promote more systematic learning. Multi-language toolkits, use of the local media, and cascade training proved useful in Vietnam. CBP examples highlight potential trade-off between depth and scale i.e. tensions between Issues 1 (empowerment) and 10 (replication).

## Upscaling

In order for CBP to have an impact, the approach needs to be deepened (to increase the effectiveness of the approach), as well as widened, so that it can have a larger-scale impact. There does seem to be early evidence of effectiveness, and some areas of how the approach can be deepened are drawn out in the CBP project paper (article two), including:

- improving linkages to the local, national, or sectoral government planning systems and developing tools for analysing information from the community plans (deepening);
- improving the quality with which the methodology is applied (for example in some places the use of preferred livelihoods outcomes was not systematically applied, leading to a reversion to a problem and infrastructure-based approach);
- a recognition that the use of community-managed funds is an essential component, either through a direct funding allocation (as in South Africa or Burkina Faso), or through local revenue raising (such as Uganda), which should be linked to knowledge of the funds available;
- strengthening local government's support for implementation and plan follow-up;
- improving the use of monitoring tools, and accountability mechanisms by community structures as well as local government;
- developing a mechanism for promoting budget allocations for disadvantaged groups whose priorities can otherwise 'get lost' when plans are aggregated; and,
- effective integration of traditional leaders, opinion leaders, civil society organisations and service providers (including the private sector) in the planning process.

This sets an agenda for the deepening process, and work on this has started in South Africa for example. The Brazilian example also shows a more political agenda, around the solidarity of worker groups.

Another challenge is how CBP can be achieved at scale, so that impacts are significant in country terms. Table 2 draws out critical issues proposed around upscaling community-driven development (Binswanger, 2003), which are relevant to CBP. Some highlights from the CBP examples are included. These did not necessarily happen in all cases, but illustrate examples that could be followed elsewhere.

## Conclusions

The articles in the current issue show examples of attempts to develop participatory planning systems that will empower communities, but are also linked to government planning systems. In many ways the debates that arise from this issue are similar to those from the earlier RRA *Notes*. We see a similar range of concerns about quality and training, and similar methodologies, all using PRA-type tools.

What appears to be different is the intention for systemic effects, to influence at scale, and to ensure that the priorities of poor people are integrated effectively into the government planning system. A key point of departure is the focus on the decentralised planning system as well as the planning methodology – the latter was often the only emphasis in many early examples of RRA and PRA. All the examples in the current issue emphasise an improved institutional analysis and understanding, positioning planning within a governance arena rather than a toolbox, and recognising the importance of mainstream government planning processes. The emerging decentralising contexts offer new and exciting opportunities for local participation, and much of the impetus for CBP seems to be both driven by, and drives, democratic decentralisation which reaches to communities. A new political literacy transcends many articles – obvious in many ways (as the Brazil article suggests) but a missing piece in many early PRA processes. While there is still room for innovation in the development of tools (as the Vietnam case illustrates), the way in which participatory approaches are used, facilitated, sequenced, analysed, and linkages are created between different stakeholders seems more important in determining the outcomes of the CBP than the exact tools themselves.

A challenge is to see how CBP can be deepened and widened, so that the methodologies have local benefits in community-driven development and empowerment, but also can be applied at a sufficient scale to deliver significant benefits to significant numbers of people. The upscaling happening in Uganda and South Africa, and others community-driven development (CDD) projects such as PNGT2 in Burkina, would seem to provide emerging lessons for how this upscaling can happen.

So in these articles we see examples of participation and participatory methodologies being integrated into mainstream government processes, which is a major step forward on a long journey to improved local governance.

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# EXPERIENCES FROM THE FOUR-COUNTRY CBP PROJECT

## 2

# Linking the community to local government: action research in four African countries

by IAN GOLDMAN, JAMES CARNEGIE and JOANNE ABBOT

## Introduction

This paper introduces the work on the project Action Research on Community-Based Planning, providing both the background to the topic and findings after two years. How community involvement in planning and management can link to decentralised delivery systems has formed the basis of this DFID-funded action-research project covering Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana, and South Africa. Several other papers in this edition focus on the experience of particular partner countries – South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Ghana.

## Background

The CBP (community-based planning) project was developed as a response to two challenges:

- an analysis of the institutional issues in trying to implement a sustainable livelihoods approach; and,
- a realisation of the limitations of efforts to promote decentralisation, where these concentrated on local government itself, and not also on how local government serves citizens.

## The challenges of implementing a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) emerged in the

nineties from best practice as participatory holistic development approach building on people's strengths and working in partnerships from the community to the policy levels<sup>1</sup>. Khanya implemented a study funded by DFID looking at the institutional support required to implement a sustainable livelihoods approach (Khanya, 2000). This work was conducted in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and South Africa (in two provinces). The key findings are summarised in the need to develop the following six governance issues from micro to macro levels in order to effect a livelihoods approach:

### Micro level (community level)

- poor people are active and involved in managing their own development (claiming their rights and exercising their responsibilities); and,
- the presence of a responsive, active, and accessible network of local service providers (community-based, private sector, and/or government).

### Meso level (local government)

- at local government level (lower meso) services are facilitated, provided, or promoted effectively and responsively, coordinated, and held accountable;
- the region/province (upper meso) providing support and supervision to local governments.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the SLA refer to [www.livelihoods.org](http://www.livelihoods.org)

A female participant presents her group's work, New Edubiase, Ghana



Photo: Tay Awoosah, ISODEC

**“The requirement for widely dispersed and accessible services implied by the second suggests a rethinking of service delivery paradigms. Addressing how community involvement in planning and management can link to decentralised delivery systems has formed the basis of this action-research project”**

the focus on developmental local government and integrated development planning (IDPs) in South Africa. The Ugandan and Zimbabwean programmes have been pioneers in how to develop effective local government, but neither has been effective in strengthening community levels, and both recognised this deficiency, and were keen to see how to address this. Similarly while the IDP process recognises the need for participation, it lacks the appropriate methodology for doing this.

The first of the governance issues above implies community involvement in planning and management of local development. The requirement for widely dispersed and accessible services implied by the second suggests a rethinking of service delivery paradigms. Addressing how community involvement in planning and management can link to decentralised delivery systems has formed the basis of this action-research project.

### **Action-research on community-based planning**

The purpose of the project is that:

*Realistic plans have been developed in each country for policy change, implementation or piloting of community-based planning systems, which participating institutions are committed to take forward.*

The project has involved a range of partners in the four countries, including:

- the key national organisation involved in decentralised planning (to consider promoting policy impacts);
- a local government where the learnings are being implemented immediately; and,
- a development facilitator involved in participatory planning.

In this way it has micro-macro linkages imbedded in the design. It is an action-research project, building on committed partners for whom these questions are critical.

The project has involved in-country reviews of

### Macro level (policy)

- The centre providing strategic direction, redistribution, coordination and oversight;
- The international level supporting capacity of nations and regions to address poverty.

It is also essential to ensure effective linkages between the different levels.

This research highlighted the major gap between the micro and meso levels, where most communities in Africa do not receive many services from government, and depend rather on community-based services such as traditional healers, local crèches, advice from other farmers, local shops, local markets, and various forms of reciprocity. There are some very interesting examples of work at the meso level, and setting the appropriate macro/policy environment, e.g. the Local Government Development Programme (LGDP) in Uganda and the Rural District Council Capacity-Building Programme (RDCCBP) in Zimbabwe, and

**Table 1: Proposed approach to community-based planning linked to the IDP**

Pure empowerment CBP approach	Proposed 3rd Way for CBP in this project	Conventional participatory planning
Directly related to local action	Starts with community view. Planning for local action, municipal, provincial, and other inputs	Primarily related to municipal budgets, decisions, actions
Intensive, time-consuming	Limited time, e.g. three to four days plus follow-up contacts, budget cycle related	Limited time, budget cycle related, typically two hours
Process oriented	Partnership approach including capacity-building and empowerment	Delivery oriented
Decisions primarily on members' own resources	Decisions on own resource proposals, proposals for government, and other resources through IDP	Decisions primarily on government-controlled resources
Learning process crucial	Mutual learning crucial	Learning process as a side-effect
Not necessarily inclusive, initiative-based	Inclusive, covering whole ward/parish/area	Inclusive, area-covering, (democratic right)
Focus primarily on rights, strengths, opportunities, as well as needs	Strategic planning: linking people's strengths, opportunities, needs, and local knowledge with external specialists' know-how, to find effective solutions for many	Strategic planning: linking people's needs and local knowledge with external specialists' know-how, to find effective solutions for many
No consideration of municipality-wide approaches for community needs	Focus on the ward, but some consideration of municipality-wide issues	Consideration of municipality-wide approaches through negotiation across communities

experience, cross-country sharing, development of pilot and revised methodologies, and visits to other countries from whom lessons can be learnt. The design did not envisage piloting during this project, but as a subsequent phase. In fact, piloting has happened in all the four countries and full-scale implementation has happened across at least one local authority in each country.

The approach being adopted in the CBP project is that we need to address all the focuses of CBP in a manner that is implementable and sustainable using the resources available to local governments and in local communities. The four focuses include:

- to improve the quality of integrated plans by incorporating more accurate information from local communities;
- to improve sectoral plans and so the quality of services, once again by incorporating more accurate information from local communities;
- to promote community action, sometimes as a means of releasing latent energy of communities or to reduce the demands on government by shifting responsibilities to communities (e.g. for maintaining infrastructure in countries where government is seeking to reduce its responsibilities); and,
- to promote community control over development, either

in improving their influence over decisions, or in managing development directly.

Therefore the CBP project has focused on the question of what sort of community-based planning system can be implemented which is holistic, which reflects the complex reality of people's lives, is linked to the mainstream planning system (usually local government, but also sectoral), can be empowering, and is realistic within the resource envelopes (human and financial) available within a local government area. This is further expanded in the overview.

This article focuses on the generic approaches developed in the project, and the articles on each country bring out the specific adaptations and experience of each country.

**Principles underlying this approach to CBP**

Key principles were developed that underpin the approach to CBP being followed in this project (and which emerge from the principles of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach). These include:

- ensuring that poor people are included in planning;
- systems need to be realistic and practical, and the planning process must be implementable using available resources within the district/local government, and must

Stage	Planning activities
Preparation	Preparatory meetings with ward committees and opinion leaders one to two weeks prior to the planning being due to start.
Situation analysis (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting different social groups to analyse their livelihoods.</li> <li>• using a Venn diagram process to analyse local support institutions, whether CBO, government, NGO, or private sector.</li> <li>• mapping the resources and problems of the community.</li> <li>• doing a timeline of key historical events in the community.</li> <li>• doing a SWOT analysis of the community.</li> </ul>
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in a community meeting all the outcomes and key vulnerabilities identified by different social groups are prioritised, and a vision statement drawn up for the ward.</li> <li>• based on the top five priorities, groups then work on each of the development priorities to develop objectives, strategies, and projects/activities including what the community will do, what the local government needs to do, and what others need to do.</li> </ul>
Action planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proposals are then made for projects to be submitted to the main local government plan, and in SA for the approximately \$2–5,000 that was guaranteed to each ward to support their process.</li> <li>• the ward committee draws up an action plan to take the plans forward.</li> </ul>
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• project groups take forward implementation of community activities, in some cases with support from local government.</li> <li>• monitoring by ward/parish committees, and reporting to local governments and citizens.</li> </ul>

link in and integrate with existing processes, particularly local government planning;

- planning must be linked to a legitimate structure that can take funds, such as a ward/parish;
- planning should not be a one-off exercise, but be part of a longer process;
- the plan must be people-focused and empowering;
- planning must be based on vision and strengths/opportunities, not problems;
- plans must be holistic and cover all sectors;
- the process must be learning-oriented;
- planning should promote mutual accountability between community and officials;
- systems should be flexible and simple; and,
- there must be commitment by councillors and officials and there must be someone responsible to ensure the plan is implemented.

The **clients** of the planning are communities/interest groups/individuals, local politicians as well as technical staff of local governments, and service providers (including national and provincial government departments, and NGOs).

Table 1 compares some different approaches to CBP, and illustrates the approach being undertaken in this project.

### Challenges of this approach

Some of the key challenges that this type of CBP raises are:

- the need for a short process (and so not too resource-intensive) and yet sufficiently in-depth to address the needs of poor people, and to be empowering in how the planning is conducted;
- in order to have sufficient facilitators, there is a need to develop a facilitation capacity not just in local government, but by ward/area committee members, as well as in a range of service agencies operating within an area (e.g. departments of social development, agriculture, health, education, who also need to get to know the priorities themselves), and who need to provide their time at no cost;
- the need for a community budget to be available immediately to support local action after the planning, and avoid planning without a budget which has been a common problem; and,
- the need to train people to undertake planning, including ward/parish committees, and developing their ability to plan and manage development in their wards.

<sup>2</sup> This tool can be found in the generic CBP manual available at [www.khanya-mrc.co.za/cbp/SA.htm](http://www.khanya-mrc.co.za/cbp/SA.htm)

**“This is part of the process of changing the relationship between state and citizen, from one where the citizen is passive, begging for resources from a supposedly all-powerful and beneficent state, to a more realistic and empowering relationship”**

### The core methodology

The core methodology that was developed involved the use of a variety of PLA tools, combined into a three to five day strategic planning process. This was not done at the lowest level of organisation (e.g. a village), but rather at the next level above (e.g. a ward, parish), typically of 5–10,000 people. At this level all countries could conceive of the whole country being covered using the resources available in terms of staff and finances. Table 2 summarises the elements in the planning process.

Some of these planning methods used established PRA/PLA tools, such as the Venn diagram, seasonal calendars, mapping, timelines, etc. However, there were some critical innovations developed across the four countries:

- Basing the analysis on a participatory livelihoods analysis of different social groups (or in some cases interest groups) which assumes that communities are diverse and that the interests of these groups differs. A tool developed by Khanya in the prior research was used, which analysed peoples' assets, vulnerabilities, preferred outcomes, livelihoods strategies, and also developed some semi-quantitative data, to avoid the generalisations which are a problem in much PRA-type data collection<sup>2</sup>.
- Development of priorities based around **outcomes**, not needs, and the use of these outcomes to develop a community vision.
- A fairly typical planning process based on goals, strategies, and then projects and activities. Many of the countries focus on projects – this planning focused more on activities which the ward/parish could undertake themselves, as well as the support they needed from the local government, or other service providers (see Table 2).
- Building on the strengths of groups in the planning process.
- Making proposals for larger projects for incorporation in the local government plan.

The combination of these elements led to a strengths-

**Villagers from Dour Yarce village, Burkina Faso, presenting plans**



Photo: David Vannier, World Bank

based plan based around local action, rather than a problem-based plan usually about pieces of social infrastructure, implemented and funded by others, and usually a fanciful wish list which can never be implemented. This is part of the process of changing the relationship between state and citizen, from one where the citizen is passive, begging for resources from a supposedly all-powerful and beneficent state, to a more realistic and empowering relationship, where the state provides a supportive environment, people act on their development, and the state listens to people's views and supports where possible.

### Results

In the first year of piloting, some two million people were covered by the methodology in six local governments in the four countries. In South Africa and Uganda this was integrated immediately into the local government's plan. Some independent evaluations were carried out in Uganda and South Africa. These were positive, finding that the methodologies had worked, and had led to community action as a result. In the case of Uganda there were some questions as to how far the priorities of the poor were incorporated and the decision was taken to upscale. A range of areas where the methodology needed to be strengthened were identified which have been the focus during 2003. These were notably:

- improving the linkage to the local government plan and developing tools for analysing information from the community plans (deepening);
- improving the quality with which the methodology was applied (for example in some places the use of outcomes was not systematic, leading to a reversion to a problem and infrastructure-based approach);
- a recognition that the use of community-managed

**A resident drawing a base map for mapping exercise, Mangaung local municipality, Bloemfontein, South Africa**



Photo: Ian Goldman

**“An important spin-off has also been the development of a positive relationship between participating NGOs and the state, with a recognition by government of NGO’s knowledge of participatory methodologies, and by NGOs of the need to link to macro-level processes to make a significant impact on systems and so on poverty”**

funds was an essential component, either through a direct funding allocation (as in SA), or through local revenue raising (in the other three countries) which should be linked to knowledge of the funds available;

- strengthening local government’s support for implementation;
- improving the use of monitoring tools, and accountability by community structures as well as local government;
- develop a mechanism for promoting budget allocation for **disadvantaged groups** (i.e. in the guidelines, use of prioritisation criteria, etc.); and,
- integration of **traditional leaders**, opinion leaders and service providers effectively in the planning process.

An important spin-off has also been the development of a positive relationship between participating NGOs and the state, with a recognition by government of NGO’s knowledge of participatory methodologies, and by NGOs of the need to link to macro-level processes to make a significant impact on systems and so on poverty.

### Upscaling

The challenge of such projects is the uptake and upscaling in country championed by government. As the project is a learning project, based on partnerships from the beginning, this has occurred. In Uganda’s case CBP methodology was incorporated in a Harmonised Participatory Planning Guide (HPPG) for parish and subcounty planning, and an attempt was made to the cover the whole country in one go, later scaled down to about half the country. This is part of the next phase of LGDP. In SA’s case the decision was taken to cover eight local governments, covering about five to eight million people, with a range from the city of Durban (eThekweni) to a small rural municipality. In Zimbabwe the wish to mainstream CBP led to a change in the approach to decentralisation, and the addition of a priority around community empowerment. One of the important realisations was that if this was to be upscaled a training of trainers methodology would be needed, and a manual and training programme were developed, and are being applied and rolled out in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

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## 3

# Experiences of CBP in South Africa

by **SAM CHIMBUYA, CECILE AMBERT, MARC FELDMAN, TEBHO MAINE and TANKISO MEA**

## Background

Article two outlines the overall approach to community-based planning, as well as some of the experiences of using CBP in Mangaung Municipality in South Africa, one of the early partners in the project. This article takes this further, describing this experience in some detail, as well as the lessons that have been learnt as CBP has been rolled out to eight municipalities during 2003–4.

## Participatory structures within municipalities: the role of Ward Committees

The South African Constitution of 1996 provides for the establishment of three distinct spheres of government (the national, provincial, and the municipal level), each with dedicated as well as shared competencies. Table 1 shows the different levels of government and their roles.

## Legal basis of participation

The Municipal Structure Act 117 of 1998 defines categories of municipalities and the institutional structures below municipalities. In this system, ward committees are the only legally recognised structure below municipalities and act as the formal communication link between the community

**Ward Committee member Conference Majola presenting the HIV/AIDS component of Ward Two Mangaung's plan back to the community**



Photo: Ian Goldman

and council. Local government's role (according to the White Paper on local government) is to ensure that all citizens have access to basic services, to promote democracy and human rights and economic and sectoral development. The White Paper urges municipalities to:

- establish a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative participatory government;
- encourage, and create conditions for, the community to participate in the affairs of the municipality; and,
- build the capacity of the community, especially women and other disadvantaged groups, to enable them to participate in the affairs of the municipality so as to foster community participation.



**Table 1: The structures of government that provide services to communities**

Level	Approx population	Structure	Role
Province	1.5–9 million	Provincial Government	Major responsibility for service delivery e.g. agriculture, health, education.
Metro (city)	3 million	Metro (six in South Africa)	Integrated local and district functions. Also play significant role in service delivery.
District	500,000 to 1 million	District Municipality	New level of local government and role emerging. Plays a support and strategic role for local municipalities, as well as managing some services.
Local Municipality	50–800,000	Local Municipality	Responsible for local government planning, infrastructure services, services not catered for by high levels.
Ward	5–15,000	Ward committee	Only legally recognised level below local government. Very limited role at present but used as level for community-based planning.

### CBP in the context of the planning system in South Africa

Two national planning processes, the nationwide Medium Term Expenditure Framework facilitated by Treasury and the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) specify community participation requirements as part of the formulation of municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). IDPs were introduced as part of the post-Apartheid process of creating a more responsive public administration and to assist with the integration of development at local government level. The realisations of the participatory aspects of the IDP formulation process are contingent on the following:

- **Representation:** through broadening the range of stakeholders that need to be involved in the IDP process (e.g. the local press, NGOs, women, community leaders);
- **Responsiveness:** through promoting flexible planning practices that respond to community priorities and operate in partnership with communities; and,
- **Accountability:** IDPs are proposed as a means for public assessment and prioritisation of needs within communities.

CBP supports the participatory objectives of the IDP by grounding local governance through effective linkages with communities. The strategic thrust of municipal level decision-making in the IDPs is maintained while empowering communities to take on development responsibility and making the local government more accountable.

### The initial application of CBP in Mangaung

Article two in this edition describes the four-country CBP project. The initial partners in the CBP project in South Africa were Mangaung Local Municipality, the section on Decentralised Development Planning in the national Depart-

ment of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), and CARE with Khanya as the project managers. Mangaung Local Municipality comprises urban and rural areas inhabited by some 800,000 inhabitants spread across 43 wards. Mangaung committed its own resources to support the project, in part through the R50,000 (US\$5,000 – the exchange rate was R10 to one US\$) allocated per ward in support of ward plan implementation as well as resourcing a training process for facilitators.

### The planning methodology

The four- to five-day planning methodology used in Mangaung aligns closely with the generic methodology described in article two. A learning-by-doing process was used to train facilitators; soon after morning classes, afternoon practicals were conducted, followed by reflection sessions held in the evenings. This was strengthened by a cascading learning-by-doing process where the first ward plan was led by a Khanya person; this was followed by trainees taking charge of the facilitator's roles in the next two wards while Khanya supervised the process. Finally trainees facilitated ward planning without assistance from Khanya.

The methodology was modified based on the experience in the initial wards. In affluent and commercial farming areas time was shortened and social groups were fewer as meetings could only be held in the evenings after work. In predominantly black areas there was participation fatigue and more time was needed to explain the merits of CBP in the context of the IDP. The key elements of the initial approach are shown below in Table 2.

### Initial results

An independent evaluation was conducted of the impact

**Table 2: Elements of the initial CBP approach in Mangaung (with comments on the modified approach)**

Elements	Approach
Training of lead trainers	Through learning-by-doing. <i>In the modified approach lead trainers from eight municipalities were trained in the classroom and in the field. Course included PRA tools.</i>
Training of Facilitators	Through cascade learning by doing plus two-day PRA training. <i>Training of facilitators was done by lead trainers mentored by Khanya. Ward committee members were included as facilitators.</i>
Community participation and ownership	Social groups are used for livelihood analysis to obtain a wider spectrum of the preferred outcomes.
Political buy-in	Ward committee members take part in the ward planning as facilitators or as working group leaders. They also ensure the ward plan reaches the municipalities.
Stakeholder involvement	Service providers in the ward (such as police, or home-based care CBOs) are involved in the situation analysis and working groups and take on responsibilities in implementing some elements of ward plans.
Finance	Untied funds of US\$7,000 were provided for implementing ward plans by municipality. The community itself undertakes many projects, without outside funding.
Link to local government planning process	Projects identified in the ward plans that require large sums of money were submitted to the municipality for inclusion in the IDP projects and programmes. Ward priorities used to develop overall LG priorities, as well as to inform development programmes.
Follow-up and community management	Ward councillors and ward committee took on the responsibility of supervising implementation of ward plan. Almost all wards implemented their ward plans with 98% of funds used appropriately according to audit. This was done with rudimentary monitoring of implementation by municipality.

of CBP six months after planning started. Of the wards, 42 completed their plan and 41 of the 42 wards spent their R50,000 allocation. In 18 of the 20 wards surveyed, there were regular ward committee meetings afterwards, suggesting that ward planning enhances ward committee activity levels. Ward 19 (Mangaung East) failed to take off completely as the ward committee failed to understand the process.

**Ward level**

There were no ward plans prior to CBP. Local action occurred in almost all wards to implement their plans, although there were some problems with some of the projects funded. In Ward 20 (a predominantly white population) there was initial hostility to participatory planning from the councillor who was used to working with selected persons from NGOs. However in the end an implementable ward plan was produced.

**Municipal IDPs**

The ward planning changed the course of Mangaung's IDP. Economic development was overwhelmingly the top development priority rather than the traditional municipal focus on infrastructure. Other priorities emerged such as HIV and security, where the municipality has to play an enabling

rather than provider role. CBP also contributed to shaping development programmes and projects, in particular for year two of the IDP.

**Improved services**

Where service providers participated in the ward planning process this appears to have enhanced service provision. In north Mangaung the municipality is now cutting grass more frequently and broken signboards have been replaced. In Ward Two, the crime rate has dropped due to the increase in police patrols.

**Community empowerment, ownership, and action**

Community empowerment and ownership of the ward development agenda and process were raised as significant outcomes of the CBP process by ward councillors, contributing to 'proud community members and ward committees'.

**Impact on local government**

There was a significant shift in emphasis from infrastructure to Local Economic Development initiatives in the municipal IDP in response to CBP results. The 30 trained municipal facilitators found the methodology empowering, enhancing

**Ward Committee member Sam presents the housing component in Ward Two's plan, Mangaung**



Photo: Ian Goldman

**Farmers from Ward Two in BelaBela (Warmbaths) at a Local Municipality meeting as part of the national training of trainers**



Photo: Ian Goldman

the spirit of participation and enabling sector department realignment.

The financial cost of ongoing CBP facilitation is relatively low, but the initial facilitator training costs are significant. A ten-day training for 50 facilitators will cost about R490,000 (about US\$70,000: the exchange rate is at R7 to the US Dollar). Ward allocations of R50,000 (US\$7,000) to support wards taking forward their plans was critical. This catalytic allocation levered substantial community voluntary action. Initiating CBP in the early stages of the IDP review ensures that its outcomes can be carried out very early in the IDP review process so that the plans and projects can be included in the IDP budget.

### Upscaling CBP in South Africa

A national workshop held in October 2002 reviewed Mangaung's CBP experience and agreed to establish a national steering committee to scale up this experience. The Steering Committee Members include the South Africa Local Government Association, the National Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), the Free State Department of Local Government and Housing, the Municipalities of Mangaung, Ethekewini, Greater Tzaneen, Thabo Mofutsanyane, IDT, GTZ, with Khanya as CBP Project Manager providing the secretariat, and later the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). Based on the lessons learnt from the Mangaung experience, the steering committee recommended widening and deepening the participatory process and strengthening linkages to the IDP. The elements of scaling up include:

- establishing a national coalition and partnership of national government, donors, municipalities, and service providers;

- developing methodological guidelines;
- piloting as a learning process;
- rolling out of a cascade training process including a two week training of facilitators supported by a service provider; and,
- securing resources to support rollout, including significant contributions from municipalities themselves.

The DPLG (through Netherlands Aid), DBSA, DFID, and GTZ are supporting the process, while significant inputs are also being contributed by participating municipalities, amounting to a total ZAR 6 million (around US\$0.9 million).

During this process Khanya partnered with a service provider with expertise in IDPs called Development Works. The initial CBP methodology was modified slightly, notably to include a reconciliation process in the middle where the results from the situation analysis are brought together to inform learnings against priorities. An additional dimension was introduced through the development of a manual to strengthen linkages between the process and outputs of CBP and IDP and ensure that information arising from one process can be used in the other, so as to:

- systematically consider IDP information for alignment between the ward plans and the IDP; and,
- use strategic information emerging from the ward plans to inform the strategic and operational contents of the IDP.

To support the application of this approach additional guidelines had to be developed and three manuals have now been produced:

- a CBP facilitators manual;
- a training manual for a two-week training course for CBP facilitators; and,
- guidelines for IDP Managers to manage the CBP process

**Table 3: The approach taken during national rollout**

Elements	Modified approach
Training of lead trainers	Participating municipalities sent four lead trainers for a ten-day training course. The course combined classroom with practical PRA training and the implementation of a ward planning process.
Training of facilitators	Trained trainers run a training course for facilitators drawn from the ward committees in their respective municipalities supported by a service provider. Facilitators were also trained through doing ward planning.
Community participation and ownership	One ward committee member is being trained to strengthen ward ownership.
Political buy-in	Ward committee members take part in the ward planning as facilitators or as working group leaders. They also ensure the ward plan reaches the municipalities.
Stakeholder involvement	Service providers in the ward (such as police, or home-based care CBOs) are involved in the situation analysis and working groups and take on responsibilities in implementing some elements of ward plans.
Finance	The cost of the pilot is borne by external funds. However costs for training and planning (as well as implementation support costs) are provided by the municipality.
Link to local government planning process	This has been much increased and training conducted on how to take this forward. This stage will happen during the period February to May 2004.
Follow-up and community management	Ward councillors and ward committees will take on the responsibility of supervising the implementation of the ward plan. More emphasis has been placed on M&E of implementation by the wards, whether by the ward committee, by citizens of the ward committee, or by the Municipality (i.e. three different types of M&E).

and the use of CBP information in the IDP review process. Some revisions to the approach are shown in Table 3.

**Lessons learnt**

Some of the key lessons learnt during this process have been:

- Emphasising the strengths-based approach to build on local conditions and avoiding planning for the impossible (typically with massive investment requested in infrastructure) and supporting the community action-orientated plans. Working objectives are screened as part of the reconciliation exercise to identify the strengths in the community that have a bearing on achieving that objective and to avoid ‘shopping list’ planning.
- Ensuring linkages for integrating the ward plans with local government plans. Ward plans are drawn upon to inform the priorities, objectives, strategies, and projects of the IDP. However, CBP priorities and objectives are outcomes-focused and strengths-based. This means that where the practice of IDP is problem-based, the two are not always easily reconcilable.
- Improving monitoring mechanisms so that ward/area committees, community members, and local government

can monitor the plans effectively. In Mangaung, after the disbursement of process funds, their use, although monitored, was the sole responsibility of the ward committee. Transparency, and simple and effective monitoring mechanisms meant that 99% of the funds were accounted for.

- Developing mechanisms to support community-based implementation and management, and not seeing planning as an end but a beginning. This entails institutionalising the planning and implementation process through legitimate structures such as the ward committees.
- Ensuring political buy-in and support role of ward councillors, the mayor, municipal officials, and the municipal manager. This needs to include institutionalising the administrative support requirements for rolling out CBP and ‘mainstreaming’ it as part of the municipal planning and implementation process.
- Managing the role of customary/traditional authorities where there is competition between them and the statutory authorities. Where they are operational, customary or traditional authorities should be involved at the preplanning stage to ensure their ownership of the plan especially where the ward councillor and committee are ineffective. In practice, challenges may arise where

**Groups from Ward 4 BelaBela meeting using a local house and doing a SWOT analysis**



Photo: Ian Goldman

customary or traditional authorities' areas of jurisdiction overlap within the boundaries of a ward, in particular where more than one customary or traditional authority exists within the same ward.

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### Some comments by facilitators and councillors on the CBP process in Mangaung Municipality

Facilitators found the experience of CBP very powerful. Some of the comments made were:

"I was annoyed when my Head of Department nominated me. But now I am glad that I could play a role in this process. My eyes were opened and I can now make better contributions in my department".

"Initially, I was extremely sceptical. However, I think the process is an absolute necessity. We in government do not always know what the needs of communities are. This process helped me to understand these needs and priorities better. For the first time in my life we actually asked people their opinion".

"It is the best thing that happened to Bloemfontein. I cannot see how we could have worked as councillors for such a long time without direct interaction with the community. Those who did not know about you will now know".

### Ways forward in the future

This phase of upscaling finishes in August 2004, with a review of the experience of the pilots and proposals for how this could be upscaled nationally. This will include reviewing the methodology and guidelines, as well as making proposals for national support. This approach would aim to provide a methodology, which municipalities can use to give effect to their participation mandate. This will be based on an assessment of the rollout process, in terms of the levels of energy released, whether community action happens, and whether improved IDPs and services result from the process.

# 4

## Experiences with CBP from Uganda

by TOM BLOMLEY, PAUL KASULE-MUKASA, FIONA NUNAN and CHARLES KIBERU

### Background

The Government of Uganda is strongly committed to decentralisation, as evidenced by the devolution of responsibilities for local planning, resource allocation and budgeting, and investment management to local governments. It is a statutory requirement for each local government to produce a three-year integrated rolling development plan.

The Local Government Act 1997 created five tiers of Local Councils (see Table 1). The highest level is the District/City Council (lower council level five, or LC5). This is followed by the county/municipal council (LC4); the sub-county/municipal division/town council (LC3); the parish/ward council (LC2); and the village council (LC1). The table below summarises the nature of local council structures, their populations, and roles.

Prior to the introduction of the Community-based Planning project in Uganda, there were a number of participatory planning models in use, ranging from the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques for identifying community needs, to the involvement of communities in the provision of services and maintenance thereafter. Uganda has had an innovative Local Government Development Programme (LGDP) that has made great strides in the development of local government and lower level structures. However the Ministry recognised that it did not sufficiently

address the strengthening of the lowest levels (LC2 and LC1) and so was keen to be a partner in the four-country project, and see how CBP could complement what Uganda was already undertaking.

A steering group was formed to oversee the implementation of the CBP project, which consisted of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Local Government Development Programme, Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA), CARE International, Bushenyi District Local Government<sup>1</sup>, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and Uganda Participatory Development Network (UPDNet).

### From CBP to Harmonised Participatory Planning Guidelines (HPPG)

This CBP steering group commissioned a study to review the diverse approaches to CBP in Uganda within the context of decentralisation, which was funded by DFID under the four-country CBP project. A national workshop was held to discuss the lessons emerging from the study, which were then shared with other partners in the four-country project. Key policy

<sup>1</sup> It was decided to include one local government where CBP would be implemented, and Bushenyi is an active and innovative local government in the south west of Uganda, which was already being supported by a range of CARE International initiatives.

**Table 1: Levels of local administration in Uganda and their roles**

Level	Approx population	Structure	Role
District/city Council (LC5)	1.5–2.5 million	District local government/ city council (Kampala only)	Primary local government structure. Elected council appoints and oversees executive staff. Major responsibility for service delivery e.g. agriculture, health, education, water/sanitation. Increasing emphasis on out-sourcing service delivery.
County/ municipal (LC4)	50–200,000	County council/ municipal council	County councils within the rural areas are an administrative structure. These include Municipal councils in urban areas.
Sub-county (LC3)	60–120,000	Sub-county council	Integrated local and district functions. Lowest legal level of LG that can manage and disburse funds. It also includes town councils and municipal divisions in the urban areas. This level plays a significant role in service delivery.
Parish (LC2)	4–20,000	Parish council	Not a legal level of local government – but has administrative community level functions. Council members elected from village level representatives.
Village (LC1)	2,000	Village council	Not a legal level of local government – but has administrative community level functions.

issues that emerged included:

- The current basis for local government planning (developed in 1998) was based on PRA principles and emphasised identification and solutions of problems. Constraint-based planning methods can lead to simply addressing symptoms (and not root causes) of poverty, and rarely raise or address issues such as gender, environment, or HIV/AIDs.
- Despite efforts by government to issue a single set of planning guidelines for community level, there was a multiplicity of planning approaches and systems being implemented by a range of actors. NGOs were particularly guilty of ignoring local government planning cycles, by leading the facilitation process themselves, and undertaking 'project/sector-specific' planning to fit in their own project schedules.
- Planning at the community level was still viewed as a mechanism by which lower level stakeholders could voice their needs to higher-level authorities. It was rarely used as a means to mobilise local resources, influence local decision-making, and identify opportunities for lower level development.
- Planning within local governments remained highly sectoral. This sectoral thinking discouraged opportunities for multi-disciplinary action, reinforced project structures, and meant that sectors outside of the five national priority programme areas (roads, water, health, education, and agriculture) were frequently missed out.

To begin the development of a CBP approach to lower

level local government planning in Uganda, it was decided to pilot the approach in Bushenyi District, which had agreed to be an implementing partner in the project. Bushenyi was supported by the DFID-funded Integrated Lake Management project, which provided significant resources to support Bushenyi. This initiative strongly supported the subsequent development of government guidelines for planning at lower local government levels, the Harmonised Participatory Planning Guidelines (HPPG).

### The initial experience in Bushenyi

Bushenyi District had decided to implement CBP in all 170 parishes (covering approximately 1,000 villages). The Ugandan partners adapted the core CBP manual developed under the four-country CBP project to produce a version for Bushenyi, modifying the methodology to a three-day planning process (see Table 2). A training of trainers was implemented in February 2002, and the planning process undertaken in March and April, linking into the overall district planning process. The piloting of the CBP process within Bushenyi District attracted considerable interest from national government institutions as well as donors and projects supporting decentralisation.

An evaluation<sup>2</sup> was commissioned under the four-country CBP project for the Bushenyi experience in 2002 some four to six months after CBP had been conducted. The evaluation

<sup>2</sup> This was carried out by an independent consultant selected by the CBP working group in Uganda.

**Table 2: Application of the CBP methodology in Bushenyi District**

Element	Adaptation in Bushenyi
Planning unit	Parish and sub-county
Methodology	Visioning and livelihoods analysis, including interest groups, such as women and people living with a disability) rather than social groups found within communities. Less emphasis was put on outcomes in the first round.
Facilitation of parish plans	By sub-county staff (sub-county chief, community development, agricultural extension).
Training	Three-day training session by district staff of sub-county staff, supported by CARE Uganda and the Integrated Lake Management Project.
Financing of planning process	District local government, sub-county local government, community contribution in kind, Local Government Development Programme, Poverty Action Fund, CARE, four-country CBP project.
Funding of the plans	From local revenue for community projects.
Linkage to sub-county and district plans	<p>LGDP system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-county local government plans integrated in the district plans.</li> <li>• Sub-county local governments seek guidance from district local government. before implementing projects that will have recurrent cost on the district local government budget.</li> <li>• District informs sub county local governments in writing of projects to be implemented in their respective areas.</li> </ul> <p>Introduced with CBP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parish and sub-county planning manuals under the HPPG were 60% adopted under CBP. The sections/ideas included visioning as opposed to problem approach, used livelihood analysis and the programme for the planning process.</li> </ul>
Implementation of the parish plans	Implementation of parish plans is either contracted out to the private sector or implemented directly by the community through self-help programmes, with targeted support from sub-county or district level staff. Non-governmental organisations may be contracted to implement certain components.
Monitoring of implementation at parish level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By parish executive and parish council.</li> <li>• District and sub-county local government officials.</li> <li>• NGOs, CBOs, and civil society organisations.</li> <li>• The parish residents themselves as key stakeholders.</li> </ul>

itself adopted a participatory approach to ensure a wide range of views and concerns were taken into account and to enable the evaluation to be used as a learning experience for those involved. The conclusions included (Androa, 2002):

- more training was needed for facilitators on cross-cutting issues (gender, environment and HIV/AIDS), as these were not prioritised and adequately covered, and on some of the tools;
- more feedback to the communities is needed, such as approval of the plan being announced on radio, public notices and other media;
- refreshments at meetings are a good way of showing appreciation for the time and input people have given;
- the process was too hurried and more time should ideally

be given in the future; and,

- documentation of the process would be useful so that lessons can be learnt and shared.

The evaluation report was used in the review of the HPPG and learning from the experience of Bushenyi was further facilitated by the District being represented on the steering group.

### Taking forward the HPPG

The Bushenyi Pilot was run in 2001–2 and the district has continued with CBP since then. Following the South Africa CBP Workshop in August 2001, the Ministry of Local Government worked with the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the UN Capital Development Fund, to initiate a process to review



**Table 3: Comparison between CBP and problem-based planning**

Local Government and Planning Guide 1998 and March 2002	Community-based planning approach
Investments based on identification of constraints and problems.	Investment identification based on negotiation of shared vision.
Focus on community meetings at village level with no effort to disaggregate population, particularly the poor and marginalized.	Livelihoods analysis identifies different groups, including poor and marginalized households and solicits their views directly. Views of women solicited and gender sensitive investments identified. Checklists for screening investments gives higher rank to those investments that impact upon poor households.
No explicit poverty focus as emphasis is on community priorities.	Livelihoods analysis promotes better understanding of poverty and project profile incorporates question on linkages between investment and poverty eradication.
No effort to identify assets or opportunities for investments.	SWOT analysis of livelihoods looks at natural resources as investable assets.
No efforts to mainstream environmental issues.	Checklist for screening investments that encourages consideration of environmental impacts.
No analysis of community strengths or weaknesses.	SWOT analysis part and parcel of planning process.

the investment and planning guidelines for lower local governments, which had been in operation since 1998. Considerable input was provided by the Uganda CBP partners and from the experience of Bushenyi Local Government. In 2002, an initial version of national guidelines was prepared, known as the HPPG, which was a combined manual for villages, parishes, and sub-counties.

After an internal review by MoLG, the draft HPPG were distributed to all local governments and town councils in the country, and five two-day regional workshops held in which local government staff (planners, administrative officers, and civil society) were presented with the guidelines and provided guidance in their use. The guidelines were used at village, parish, and sub-county levels.

This rollout enabled widespread piloting of the guidelines, providing essential feedback for the finalisation of the guidelines. The rollout was reviewed in the first half of 2003. This indicated that 50% of the 14 local governments sampled had applied some aspects of the HPPG, but that despite the considerable efforts made to ensure widespread dissemination, capacity gaps existed at local level, restricting the adoption of these guidelines, and its rather bulky and 'user-unfriendly' format restricted uptake. As a result the guidelines have been simplified, and some key decisions made:

- It was acknowledged that detailed planning at village level was too resource intensive and unsustainable. It was agreed that village priorities, from a range of stakeholder

groups, would be incorporated into Parish Development Plans, rather than undertaking CBP at village level.

- It was split into two manuals: one for parishes/wards, and another for sub-counties/municipal councils, so that each group had a shorter more focused manual.
- In addition, greater effort was to be placed on providing focused skills-based training for local government facilitators. This coincided with efforts by the four countries to develop generic CBP training of trainer guidelines, which could be adopted for use locally. The generic guidelines were produced in January 2003.
- It was decided to reduce the scale of the rollout, to only 26 districts for 2003–4, to have a better control on the quality, and to ensure that this would be accompanied by the training above.

The approach used in the revised HPPG is shown in Table 4.

### Innovations in the use of participatory methodologies

The CBP programme in Uganda introduced some of the following attributes to the participatory planning process in Uganda:

- a shift in approach to complement the 'needs-based', with the 'vision-based' focus of planning;
- a new emphasis on the parish planning level for participatory planning, as previously more emphasis was placed on the sub-county level of planning;
- planning based on social/interest groups, recognising that

**Table 4: Approach to planning in the revised HPPG**

Element	Adaptation for HPPG
Planning unit	Parish and sub-county.
Methodology	Situation and livelihoods analyses, service provider analysis, timeline mapping, SWOT analysis, developing a vision and a budgeted action plan.
Facilitation of parish plans	By sub-county staff (including, for example, community development and agricultural extension staff) plus parish chief.
Training	Being finalised – training of training and then training by district staff of sub-county staff planned.
Financing of planning process	By district.
Funding of the parish plans	Implementation of Parish Development Plans is through implementation by local communities, funding from local revenue, national government, NGOs, and donors.
Linkage to district plans	Parish Development Plans are incorporated into sub-county Development Plans, which are in turn incorporated into District Development Plans.
Implementation of the parish plans	Implemented through communities, all levels of local government and through SDPs and DDPs.
Monitoring of implementation at parish level	By sub-county.

- communities are diverse with differing interests;
- involvement of non-council stakeholders (NGOs, CBOs, PSOs) in the planning process;
  - inclusion of methodological issues in the guidelines (i.e. description of the 'how to') in relation to the various tools proposed; and,
  - harmonisation of planning activities with the Local Government Budget Framework Paper (LGBFP).

All of these attributes have supported the integration of the approach and subsequent plans into mainstream local government development planning. Finally, efforts are now underway to ensure that the rather ad-hoc nature of the CBP working group is more formally institutionalised with regard to the Ministry of Local Government and other central government structures. A working group established by MoLG to advise on participatory planning processes from parish to district level is currently being merged with the CBP working group to ensure that CBP lessons are mainstreamed within government.

**Lessons learnt**

Many lessons were learnt from the initial implementation and review, which have led to an improved and agreed set of guidelines. These lessons include:

- **The original guidelines were too long and complicated** and the revised version has made the guides simpler, shorter, and more user-friendly.

- **The importance of the strong sense of ownership, interest, and momentum by the Government of Uganda** with a high degree of ownership from LGDP in the Ministry of Local Government and the adoption of the CBP principles in the design of the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF).
- **The necessity to build incentives within facilitating agencies (particularly local governments) if local-level planning is to be institutionalised across Uganda.** Participatory planning criteria are now included in the annual performance assessment process conducted by central government on local governments. Those local governments that score highly on these annual assessments stand to gain greater funding allocations from the centre, and are accorded greater flexibility in how the funding is allocated in support of local planning needs.
- **The participation of non-governmental actors in the development of government guidelines strengthened the process.** The interaction of government with the NGO sector resulted in a healthy debate and even some changed perceptions regarding the respective roles and contributions that each can make to the other, both at local and national levels.
- **Piloting and review have enabled the development of well thought through and practical guidelines.** The process was field tested in the whole country, beginning with Bushenyi District, allowing opportunities for review and finalisation

Photos: Malikhang Masia (ex-Khanya, now IDT)



**Planning in  
Katooka  
parish**

**Group meeting  
under tree in  
Katooka parish**



following a structured review process, involving both governmental and non-governmental institutions. There is an appreciation that the process is a long term initiative, requiring corresponding training and capacity building, as well as adjustments in the methods used as the process evolves and develops.

- **It takes time and patience** to change how planning takes place, and to put local institutions and communities in the driving seat. It requires changes in attitudes of local governments, as well as modifications in the systems and structures at district and national levels. Development of new nationally approved guidelines is an important step in the right direction – but it requires a parallel process of training and capacity building, which is now being developed and implemented.
- **The new planning approach challenges parallel planning systems within local government, as it should incorporate all planning needs** (see below).

### Way forward

In addition to an extensive capacity building programme to support the adoption of the HPPG manuals, there are three key challenges ahead for effective implementation of the CBP approach and of its resultant plans. These are integrating the results of parish and sub-county plans with district level plans, the existence of parallel environmental planning, with the challenge of integration of the environmental plans into mainstream development plans, and the challenge of ensuring that CBP results in immediate rather than deferred action.

Community-based planning is a cross sectoral, multi-disciplinary process that works from the bottom up. This

approach does not fit well with the existing approach to district development planning. District level planning remains highly sectoral – with sectoral plans providing the foundation for a final district development plan. The forthcoming revision of guidelines for district development planning provides an excellent opportunity to influence the development of a new approach to planning at district level, which should facilitate improved integration of PDPs and SDPs into district development plans.

Currently the planning under the HPPG is for the subsequent financial year. This can result in many months separation between the planning process and implementation, while communities are implementing what they planned last year. For CBP to be fully effective in promoting community action, it is important that the planning leads to immediate implementation. This suggests a differentiation between sub-county planning, which primarily uses external resources and so needs to be part of the annual budgeting process, and parish level planning which primarily uses a community's own resources and some of which could be implemented in the current financial year.

The existence of separate guidelines for environmental action planning, and subsequently, separate plans, has confused the integration of environmental and natural resource (ENR) issues into mainstream planning. As so many people within Uganda are directly dependent on the natural resource base, full integration of ENR into mainstream planning, rather than separate planning, would improve resource allocation and hence management. The National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) has begun to become engaged in the new planning processes being developed within Ministry of Local

Government, but there is more work to be done in improving integration of approaches. Ultimately, a community-based planning approach within local government is

needed to improve the sustainability of planning by requiring fewer resources than those needed for multiple planning processes.

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# 5

## Planning with the area council: experience with CBP in Ghana

by ERNEST TAY AWOOSAH, JOHN COFIE-AGAMAH, BJ OPPONG, SAMPSON KWARTENG and FRANCIS OWUSU ANSAH

### Introduction

The concept and practice of participatory planning (also called variously bottom-up planning, sub-district planning, etc.) is not new in Ghana, however the link to the national planning system is either weak or non-existent. This article highlights the experiences of two projects which aim to deepen community participation in planning and link it to the existing planning system of the country. It also discusses Ghana's experience in planning at the sub-district level, reviewing approaches by the communities, NGOs, project interventions, etc. and outlines Ghana's local government system, CBP and its lessons, and the way forward.

### Background

The Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462) established the current local government system, while the National Development Planning (Systems) Act of 1994 (Act 480) provides for a decentralised planning system in Ghana. However a number of factors hamper their effective implementation, including limited financial and human resources. As a result, structures like the town/area councils, which provide the link between the community and District Assembly (DA), are either functioning poorly or do not exist. In practice, participatory planning has usually not been applied in sub-district

planning, except in planning for specific projects.

Ghana has a four-tier system. It consists of a Regional Coordinating Council on the first tier, the Metropolitan/Municipal and District Assemblies on the second tier, Town/Zonal/Urban/Area Councils on the third tier and the Unit Committees on the fourth tier.

Traditionally, social and project participation is promoted through public fora or by representation. Public fora are mainly open community meetings to which invitation is by public announcement (beating the gong-gong). Discussions at these meetings are open to all, but in practice a few vocal individuals dominate the discussions. In most cases women and the marginalised, though they may be present, may not make any contribution or challenge any decision. Representation is based on the traditional structure and is limited in most cases to male family and tribal heads. Where NGOs are involved, all-inclusive participation approaches have often been adopted, e.g. separating discussants by gender, livelihood and age.

The legal basis of participation is through representation at the Assembly level, with elections held once every four years. The Local Government Act provides for the election of 70% of the membership of the Assembly and 30%

**Table 1: Steps in the formal local government planning process (abridged)**

Step	Involves
1.	Sensitisation of all stakeholders <sup>1</sup> in the planning and resource-mobilisation system to give inputs to the preparation of the five-year development plan.
2.	Collection, collation and reviewing of data/information from the above sources including questionnaires necessary for producing district profiles on education, health, agriculture, commerce, industry, poverty, etc. which aid in the plan preparation.
3.	Every Unit Committee submits its plans to serve as input for the composite plan of the Assembly through the area councils
4.	All Unit Committees' plans are then harmonised into a holistic unit. Together with the inputs from departments, NGOs/CBOs and other donor agencies, a district profile is built to serve as the basis of fashioning the Five-Year Development Plan of the district.
5.	Critical review of the profile by the District Planning and Co-ordinating Unit and a consultant employed for that purpose.
6.	From the reviewed profile a Statement of Plan/Project Proposal is prepared.
7.	The Project Proposal is then submitted to sector heads for their technical assessment.
8.	The Statement of Plan is then submitted to appropriate sub-committees for ranking. Ranking is important because of the limited finances of the Assembly.
9.	All proposals from sub-committees are then submitted to the Executive Committee for debate.
10.	The first Draft Document is then prepared and sent to all the Area Councils for public hearing.
11.	After the public hearing the second Draft Document incorporating comments from the Area Councils is prepared.
12.	The second Draft is again sent back to the Executive Committee and then General Assembly for debate.
13.	It is then subjected to a public hearing at the Area Councils.
14.	The final document is prepared and submitted to the Regional Co-ordinating Council for onward transmission to the National Development Planning Commission.

by appointment. At the sub-district level representation is also by election and appointment (with the same 70%/30% formula).

Therefore there is a challenge to have a participatory system where all members of the community can participate effectively in decision-making.

The way the formal planning system functions is shown in Table 1. In practice, this system has only been applied erratically with district plans prepared in 1996, and then in response to the Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2003.

In Ghana, the chieftaincy institution is highly respected, wields a lot of power and influence in local processes and resource mobilisation, and presides over community meetings where development is discussed. Community-initiated

projects that have the personal involvement of the chief are likely to succeed and be sustained. Conversely, situations of unity or disunity at community level can often be traced to the role played by chiefs. However, the outcomes of these local processes do not necessarily link with the formal planning system, despite there being legal provisions for the participation of chiefs in the local government system<sup>2</sup>.

NGOs' experience in participation has moved on from the era where NGOs implemented projects with little or no consent of the communities, to a situation where most NGOs are consciously increasing community participation in the formulation, implementation, management and evaluation of their projects. NGOs have used a number of approaches to enhance community participation, usually

<sup>1</sup> The stakeholders include the decentralised departments and the relevant sub-committees of the District Assembly. Other stakeholders include the local private sector operators, NGOs/CBOs and ordinary citizens within the district.

<sup>2</sup> Government appointees to the general District Assembly and the sub-structures are appointed by the District Chief Executive (DCE) in consultation with the chiefs and 6% out of the 30% government appointees to the general assembly are allocated to the chiefs. They are also represented at the RCC.

Community map of New Edubiase



Chief and elders during a group discussion; (bottom) A section of the township



Photos: Adansi East District Assembly

based on modified PRA principles and tools. Some NGOs have also been engaged in capacity building of local government structures providing skills, knowledge and logistics to enhance participation in planning and management processes. Despite this, the linkage between the Assembly's development planning process and NGO activities is still usually very weak.

**The application of community-based planning systems in Ghana**

Prior to the two projects highlighted later, there have been examples of the application of CBP-type approaches in Ghana. Organisations like ActionAid, Pronet, Plan International and ISODEC, just to mention a few, were involved in building capacity at the district and sub-district level to promote participatory planning and decision making.

**The Community-based Planning Project**

Both ISODEC and Action Aid were involved in the development of the CBP project in Ghana, which started in May

2001, and was linked to partners in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Uganda. The initial partners in Ghana were the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), the National Development and Planning Commission (NDPC), ISODEC as facilitator, and two DAs selected for pilots, Asante Akim South and Adanse East.

The first step in the action-learning process was a review of Ghana's experiences in participatory planning processes in the country. The findings of this research were disseminated to all stakeholders. This was then debated at a stakeholder workshop<sup>3</sup> with participants from the MLGRD, District Assemblies, Unit Committees, NGOs and donors. The idea of forming a Technical Committee<sup>4</sup> to foresee Ghana's participation in the four-country action research in CBP was agreed at the workshop.

Two area/town councils were chosen to host the pilot project. These were the New Edubiase and Morso/Kurofa

<sup>3</sup> Making the link between micro and meso - learning from experience on community-based planning and management.

<sup>4</sup> Members were drawn from MLGRD, NDPC, ISODEC and the two participating districts.

**Table 2: Application of the CBP methodology in Adansi East and Asante Akim South Districts**

Element	How applied
Planning unit	Area/town council
Methodology	Visioning and livelihoods analysis, using interest groups rather than social groups Less emphasis was put on outcomes in the first round
Facilitation of area plans	By local facilitators drawn from the area council, the decentralised departments and some retired civil servants
Training of facilitators	By facilitators from the DPCUs
Financing of planning process	District Assembly with some support from the four-country project
Funding of the plans	From local revenue <sup>5</sup>
Linkage to district plans	Supposed to be first tier of plans towards district plan. However timing of PRSP process meant that district plans were produced without area inputs, except for the first two area councils
Implementation of the area council plans	Implementation of town/area plans is supervised by the town/area council committee with support from the Traditional Authority
Monitoring of implementation at area council level	By area council committee

in Adansi East and Asante Akim South District respectively.

Local facilitators from the two town/area councils were trained to facilitate the planning processes in their councils. The generic four-country CBP manual was used as the basis for the facilitators, which was adapted, with a five-day planning process. Facilitators were drawn from the District Planning and Co-ordinating Units (DPCU) of the two District Assemblies. Their roles consisted purely of guiding and providing technical information and advice. They were also responsible for writing up of the final plan using the information generated from the process. The result was a five-year development plan for each of the councils.

After successful piloting in one area council in each district, a decision by the Technical Committee was taken to extend CBP activities to cover the rest of the town/area councils in the two districts. This activity was suspended for some time for the districts to respond to the government's instruction to develop a three-year development plan based on the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) guidelines. After this, all area councils were covered in the two districts, a total of nineteen town/area councils, and about fifty facilitators were trained. All of the nineteen town/area councils now have a five-year development plan.

<sup>5</sup> The locally generated revenue is derived from six main sources. These are Land, Fees (cattle ponds, market dues, slaughter houses etc.), Licences, Trading Services, Rates (basic, property and special rate) and miscellaneous sources.

Implementation of these plans has started, and there has been extensive community action, effects of which can be seen in the first two area councils covered.

**The Village Infrastructure Project (VIP)**

The Village Infrastructure Project (VIP) is a second project, which has been using elements of CBP approach in Ghana. In contrast to the CBP Project, which only has very limited funds for learning and sharing, this is a US\$60 million five-year poverty reduction and community-driven development initiative of the Government of Ghana with support from the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). It closes in June 2004 and a follow-up project is being planned at present. The project aims to enhance the quality of life of Ghana's rural poor through increased transfer of financial and technical resources to develop and sustain basic village level infrastructure. Its specific objectives are to:

- a) Empower local communities and beneficiary groups to identify, plan, implement and maintain small village-level infrastructure investments;
- b) Increase rural communities' access to development resources to leverage the implementation of rural development priorities set by beneficiaries;
- c) Strengthen institutional capacity at community and



<b>Element</b>	<b>Involved</b>
Selection of pilots	Development of criteria based mainly on agricultural production, the state of rural infrastructure in the districts, poverty levels and population. The most deprived districts were then selected for the pilot programme.
Training	Development of training manuals using consultants. Recruitment of training consultants who were passed through "Training-of-Trainers" workshops. Training of area council and unit committees in roles, groups, planning, participatory M&E, community-based procurement and financial management.
Planning methodology	Use of area council members, opinion leaders from identifiable groupings, and traditional authorities. Development of Community Action Plans culminating in area council plans with prioritised sub-projects for implementation.
Financing of planning process	By VIP.
Financing of implementation	Procurement of services and works for the prioritised projects already determined by the area councils. Funding by VIP through area council accounts.
Implementation	At the area council level. Some support is provided by District Assemblies.
M&E	Project monitoring by area council.

district levels in order to improve the efficiency of rural transfers and to ensure sustainability of poverty reducing interventions, and;

- d) Support the government's strategy of decentralisation of development responsibilities to District Assemblies and other local government entities.

The project focuses primarily on infrastructure (water, post-harvest, and transport), but also has an institutional strengthening and capacity building component which focuses on "learning-by-doing". It also has a small enterprise development (micro-credit) component. The project is being implemented in all the 110 districts of the country. The project has used NGOs and consultants to strengthen the capacities of the districts in areas such as participatory planning, financial management, procurement, and facilities management. Key elements in the methodology are shown in Table 3.

To further support the deepening of the decentralisation process, VIP has embarked on building the capacities of some 61 selected area councils on a pilot basis (usually one per district) by assisting them in producing a plan, making appropriate decisions and then implementing the projects resulting. As well as area council members, others have been trained, including opinion leaders from various identifiable groupings, traditional authorities, identifiable women's groups and leaders. This approach has helped to

build consensus between the various factions of the rural societies within the area councils' jurisdiction.

At this stage some area councils have signed contracts, and prioritised projects are being implemented, with some support, by the District Assemblies.

### **Innovations in the use of participatory methodologies**

One of the innovations introduced by both projects in Ghana has been the inclusion of traditional rulers in the planning process. Chiefs and elders were individually contacted during the pre-planning stage to discuss and explain the modalities of the process, and in both cases were part of the training and planning process. Apart from the chiefs participating in all subsequent meetings, they also played the role of mobilising the communities to attend these meetings. The participatory methodologies (including use of livelihoods analysis) have also enabled the full participation of disadvantaged groups including women.

In the CBP project, a plan hearing was also introduced as part and parcel of the planning process whereby the first draft plan was subjected to public discussion at area/town council level. Inputs from the first public meeting are incorporated in the plan for a second public hearing. The final plan is adopted as a working document at a public hearing, thus making the process outlined in Table 1 a reality.

A focused group discussion



Preference ranking on flipcharts



The DCD addressing the workshop



Photos: Adansi East District Assembly

VIP provided training of the area councils, made funds available directly for them to manage, and assisted them with participatory M&E. In Adansi East and Asante Akim, the districts have decided on revenue sharing with the area councils, and the introduction of community-managed funds is a significant innovation.

**Lessons learned**

The experience from both CBP and VIP is that area councils are able to develop effective long-term plans, and that local facilitators can be trained to do this. In the two CBP districts, where the whole districts were covered, there was a major commitment from the DAs to support the process. The experience was that a mixed team of local facilitators drawn from the town/area council with frontline staff of the decentralised departments performed better than town/area council facilitators alone. This may be due to the fact that the frontline workers brought external influence, experience and resources to bear on the process.

Planning at the town area council level has assisted with developing consensus amongst different stakeholders, helping to iron out their differences and agree on a common approach to solving their developmental problems.

On the VIP, encouraging and giving preference to identifiable women’s groups and leaders has enhanced gender participation. To enhance participation in the planning

process, both community forum and representation approaches should be adopted with enough time allowed for the various livelihood group representatives to consult their members for feedback and inputs. Public hearings including acceptance of the final plan are a crucial step for a higher sense of community ownership.

The involvement of the town/area council in plan facilitation, implementation and evaluation could be one way of resuscitating the town/area council concept, which has largely become defunct in Ghana. As VIP experience rolls out we will also be able to assess the capacity at this level to manage funds.

**Ways forward in the future**

For Ghana four issues are paramount. These are:

- Advocating for reactivating the town/area council concept as an effective level for managing community-driven development;
- Harmonising various approaches to CBP and CDD by government and NGOs for best practice and adoption by District Assemblies;
- The need for an effective champion in the national Ministry, MLGRD, and also allies to advocate for CBP to be included in the national planning process.
- Institutionalising a steering committee of experienced players in participatory planning as a think tank to advance the course of CBP in the country.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Special thanks to Francis Owusu Ansah for making the photos available.

# 6

## Empowering communities through CBP in Zimbabwe: experiences in Gwanda and Chimanimani

by **ABSOLOM MASENDEKE, ANDREW MLALAZI, ASHELLA NDHLOVU and DOUGLAS GUMBO**

This article briefly describes the experiences and lessons of community-based planning (CBP) in two pilot districts (Gwanda and Chimanimani) in Zimbabwe. The CBP process created the need to revitalise the planning and development structures in the pilot districts and engaged government throughout the process, which resulted in the mainstreaming of community empowerment principles in the decentralisation framework of the government of Zimbabwe.

### Background

#### Systems for participation and local government

Zimbabwe has a long history of autocratic national and local political systems, including the kingdoms and chieftainships of pre-colonial times, the colonial and Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) regimes, and the *de facto* one-party state system of the 1980s.

From 1980 to 1988 the system of rural local government comprised the poorly resourced District Councils in the Communal Areas (formerly known as tribal trust lands) administered in terms of the District Councils Act (1980) and richer Rural Councils in the commercial farming areas,

administered in terms of the Rural Councils Act, 1966. In 1984, the Prime Minister's Directive was issued to establish planning structures from village level to national level to ensure a more participatory and bottom-up approach to development planning. This was one giant step towards the decentralisation process taken by the government. In 1988, the Rural District Councils Act resulted in the amalgamation of Rural Councils and District Councils in 1993. Some of the key legislative changes after this include the conferring of statutory planning powers to Rural District Councils through Statutory Instrument 175 of 1999 and in 2000 the Traditional Leaders Act, which sought to strengthen the role of traditional leaders over local planning and development issues.

The structures of sub-national government in Zimbabwe are shown in Table 1.

The Traditional Leaders Act (2000) gave the chiefs, headmen, and village heads the powers to co-ordinate development, allocate land as agents of the Rural District Council, manage natural resources, preserve and maintain family life, culture, health and education, keep population records, try a range of crimes, and collect all levies and taxes payable to the council. This act gives traditional leaders a

**Table 1: Structures of government in Zimbabwe**

Level	Approx population	Structure	Role
Province	1–1.3 million	Provincial Development Council (political) and Provincial Development Committee (technical)	Consolidation of district plans and providing a link for local government to central government.
Local Authority	300,000–500,000	Rural District Council and Rural District Development Committee.	Planning and development authority at local level. The Rural District Development Committee provides technical support to the Council and is chaired by the District Administrator who is national government's representative at local level.
Ward	6,000–8,000	Ward Assembly and Ward Development Committee.	Unit of planning which coordinates village plans and links them with local government planning processes. The Ward Development Committee provides technical support to the Ward Assembly and is chaired by a Councillor who sits on the Rural District Council.
Village	600–1,000	Village Assembly and Village Development Committee.	The Village Assembly is the point where plans are generated and are chaired by the Village Head. The Village Development Committee provides technical support to plans at village level through an elected Chairperson.

wide range of powers in the planning system. It is however, still debated whether the Act will manage to link traditional leadership to the democratically elected rural district council structures in a manner that will remove rivalry, tensions, and conflicts in the planning process.

Planning in Zimbabwe is usually initiated at national or district level, to achieve national or district objectives, and is often linked to particular sectors or types of project. However, due to recent resource limitations, central government agencies, including local authorities, have not been initiating planning processes. Following the Traditional Leaders Act in 2000 there has been a shift from local authority-driven planning to a planning process driven by traditional structures. Many stakeholders are now unclear on the planning system and how it works and despite various local government legislative provisions since Independence, these only provide for community consultation, not participation. Attempts to develop an effective bottom-up system have been frustrated by factors including resource limitations, donor funding conditions, and change in government policy directions and planning procedures that are often developed from above. Hence there is still a lot of work needed in local government legislative reform in Zimbabwe to uphold principles of participation and people's empowerment.

**Experience of participation in the NGO sector**

Many NGOs in Zimbabwe are engaged in community-based development activities and most involve some form of

community participation. CBP in Zimbabwe meant drawing on this experience and linking it to the local government planning system. Building CBP on existing forms of participation enabled various stakeholders to present their experience and input on the content, process, and implementation options. Developing training materials created a high level of commitment for both district and community facilitators to drive this process. These NGOs included SNV, the Zimbabwe Decentralised Cooperation Programme, Intermediate Technology Development Group Southern Africa and the Africa Community Development Publishing Trust. UNICEF, an inter-governmental body, was also involved, using the Community Capacity Development Approach (CCD).

**Developing CBP in Zimbabwe**

**Evolution**

The CBP project evolved from engagement and reflection between government, NGOs, and development practitioners, with interaction with Khanya, the South African organisation facilitating the CBP project. There was a common observation that despite heavy investment of resources and time at district and community level, three key concerns were evident:

- People's participation in determining their future and developing their own areas was far from satisfactory. People were still not exercising their basic rights and lacked the freedom to organise themselves to improve their livelihoods.

Photo: Douglas Gumbo, IT Southern Africa



**Mr Siziba presents to the broader community in Ward 17 in Gwanda. Many came and contributed towards setting ward priorities**

**“Comparative regional experiences from the four-country CBP project were also shared to stimulate national debate. The CBP national dialogue process led to the production of briefing papers that were targeted at key decision makers and donors”**

- Communication lines between communities and rural district councils and other support institutions remained relatively closed. Lack of open dialogue tended to limit opportunities for promoting accountability and transparency.
- Planning at district level remained dominated by top-down strategies and RDCs lacked clearly developed mechanisms for responding to community priorities.

CBP was seen as an opportunity for addressing some of these emerging concerns, and there was consensus to use existing knowledge and experiences to pilot a more effective approach to community-based planning in Zimbabwe, linking it with resource allocation systems. A number of possible benefits were identified, notably:

- creating opportunities for promoting community empowerment and ownership in the development process;
- developing a reliable method for obtaining realistic, integrated, and focused plans from ward level;
- increasing potential for integrating ward and local authority level plans;
- helping to identify additional sources of revenue for implementing local plans;
- creating opportunities for capacity-building for institutions operating at subdistrict level;
- bringing transparency to the selection and prioritisation of projects at all levels; and,
- creating opportunities for improved accountability during project and programme implementation.

In 2001 a review of experiences was conducted in Zimbabwe using participatory planning (Conyers, 2001) and a national workshop held to discuss the emerging findings, funded by the four-country CBP project. A decision was taken to pilot CBP in the Gwanda and Chimanimani districts. A core steering group was formed including the

Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing (MLGPWNH), IT Southern Africa, Chimanimani RDC, Gwanda RDC, and Development in Practice (a consultant organisation focusing on local governance and community empowerment in Southern Africa) to monitor the implementation and knowledge-sharing process. The team met regularly with implementation teams on the ground. The implementation team consisted of multisectoral teams who underwent rigorous training in community-based planning building on their own experiences.

District Training Teams (DTTs) were established and trained to support the planning from district level, and Core Facilitation Teams (CFTs) were established at ward level, which included the Councillor, Technical extension staff, Ward Coordinator, and a respected person from each ward. Sharing results at district level involved electing community representatives, who later provided feedback to the broader community. Emerging lessons were then shared by community representatives at the national level. Comparative regional experiences from the four-country CBP project were also shared to stimulate national debate. The CBP national dialogue process led to the production of briefing papers that were targeted at key decision makers and donors such as the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Local Government and National Housing and DFID. A national workshop in 2003 shared the emerging results with stakeholders at both national and district level who were convinced of the need to roll out CBP in other parts of Zimbabwe. The steering group was then formalised as a national steering committee to spearhead the process.

#### **The CBP approach used in Zimbabwe**

The CBP system in Zimbabwe was process-based and involved:

- adaptation of four-countries CBP training manual;
- training district training teams;
- training core CBP facilitators.

Table 2: CBP approach in Gwanda and Chimanimani districts

Element	Adaptation in Zimbabwe
Planning unit	Ward.
Methodology	Five-day planning session facilitated by a core team chosen by the community. Emphasis of the methodology was more on developing a shared vision rather than dwelling on problems and constraints.
Facilitation of ward plans	By ward staff, part of Core Facilitation Team (CFT).
Training	An intensive ten-day training of District Training Team members by experts followed by three-day training sessions of the ward core facilitation teams by the DTT.
Financing the planning process	Rural District Councils and participating NGOs including transfer of funds from the CBP project managed by Khanya.
Funding the plans	Use of 50% of the levy paid by each ward in Gwanda.
Linkage to district plans	Ward plans are used as a basis for preparing district annual plans and budgets.
Implementation of the ward plans	Implementation occurs at two levels: first, the interest groups are responsible for implementing the relevant sections of the plan. Secondly, the support agencies, including the RDC, implement the rest of the plan with community participation.
Monitoring of implementation at ward level	An internal monitoring system has been developed in conjunction with the monitoring of council budgets on a quarterly basis. In practice, monitoring is initiated at ward level and then followed up by a similar exercise at district level – the impact of this monitoring system is still being evaluated.

- CBP manual trial runs and review
- actual ward planning
- community documentation of plans
- integration of ward plans at RDC level
- community feedback meetings
- district training team review meetings
- budget allocations and ploughing back of development levies
- knowledge sharing and information dissemination workshops

Table 2 summarises the methodological approach used in Zimbabwe.

### Innovations in the use of participatory methodologies

Some of the innovations, which were introduced in Zimbabwe in the application of the CBP approach, included:

- Setting up a local and trusted Core Facilitation Team (CFT), which inspired a lot of confidence in fellow community members and unlocked their full participation.
- The creative involvement of respected leaders such as chiefs and councillors as facilitators;
- The establishment of the DTT, with periodic review and knowledge sharing meetings;

- The use of 50% of the levy paid by each ward in Gwanda proved to be a key innovation in sustaining community participation and financial contribution;
- CBP was applied in a manner that allowed divergent groups to build consensus and visions for the ward. The strength of the approach was seen when it was accepted in new resettlement areas and convinced groups such as the war veterans who had previously seen themselves as a superior groups in any community (see Box 1).

### Impacts and outcomes

Some interesting impacts and outcomes have emerged:

- The DTTs brought a new level of commitment and new modes of institutional behaviour at district level, with a focused and shared vision. In the two pilot districts, 33 DTT members were trained and 75% of these can confidently drive the whole process without external support. The decision to focus on DTTs helped to promote greater integration by various stakeholders operating at district level in their approach to community planning and development processes. However, developing a shared long-term working framework proved challenging due to differences in institutional culture, resources, and funding conditions.

**Box 1: Community-based planning and peace-building in Ward 22, Gwanda District**

Ward 22 is a former commercial area which is now a resettlement area following implementation of the fast-track land reform programme in Gwanda District. There has always been a tendency in the new resettlement areas for war veterans to be the most prominent and visible group. When the initial CBP meetings were organised, 28 socio-economic interest groups were identified and invited to participate in the planning process. Although dominant groups such as the war veterans association were quick to show themselves, most participants felt that the CBP visioning process had brought them to the same level of understanding. CBP is now widely regarded as a powerful peace-building tool in this ward of Gwanda. It has also shown a lot of potential in unlocking the participation of previously marginalized groups in a peaceful manner. Interestingly, there is no difference in application and impact of CBP in communal or resettlement settings in Zimbabwe.

- The CFT concept worked well in all participating wards in Gwanda, while the process in Chimanimani was affected by the prevailing political climate of that district which resulted from parliamentary elections in which the electorate was highly polarised. Of the 184 CFT members targeted, 169 were successfully trained in facilitating CBP at community level. This helped communities to internalise a range of participatory methodologies, facilitating the participation of over 120 community representatives in each ward planning session, i.e. a total of over 2,700 people who participated in the CBP process in each district.
- The community felt more empowered and inspired to participate in planning processes than ever before. This has been the central message in community review workshops and monitoring visit reports, demonstrating a sense of ownership of the ward plan by the community. However, community documentation and monitoring and evaluation skills emerged as key challenges towards ensuring full local ownership and control of the process.
- The plans produced are all based on **strengths, opportunities, and a collective vision** for the ward rather than a shopping list of problems they face in the ward. However, this process needs to be carefully facilitated to avoid falling into shopping list trap. Thorough training of community-level facilitators backed by targeted refresher courses is key to the success of this process.
- The CBP process has promoted inclusiveness of marginalized and vulnerable groups in the planning process as it enabled different socio-economic groups that had not previously been involved in planning to come together and formulate a shared vision for the ward.
- The process has convinced politicians who had earlier

The community of Ward 1 in Gwanda review and reflect on the CBP process, including representatives from NSC, Mr Andrew Mlalazi (standing), Mr Ronnie Sibanda (Gwanda Rural District Council, second from left) and Ms Ashella Ndhlovu (third from left)



Photo: Douglas Gumbo, IT Southern Africa

resisted it after realising the process was non-partisan, people-focused, and empowering communities to respond more effectively to their livelihood needs.

- The CBP process has made the role of the traditional leaders, councillors, and the local authority more visible in the ward, and given local people the conviction that CBP has created a new generation of leaders interested in their well-being.
- The use of legitimate structures has given different socio-economic groups and the wards an opportunity to interact, link up, and influence service provision. More service providers, particularly government departments, are now responsive to community priorities, e.g. the District Development Fund (DDF), AREX, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have restructured their service delivery approaches in response to community demands.
- Accountability between the Gwanda Rural District Council and the wards has improved as the communities participate in deciding how the levy is to be used and are aware of how much they will receive from the local authority. A lot of councillors are reporting that it is now easy to collect development levy.
- The CBP process went beyond the district boundaries and created the need to revitalize the planning and development structures in Matabeleland South Province. Other districts (six) have shown interest in the process.
- The creative engagement of government throughout the process resulted in the mainstreaming of community empowerment principles in the decentralisation framework of the government of Zimbabwe, although as yet there is no new legislation to reflect this.

**Lessons learnt**

The adapted CBP methodology, training, and facilitation

manuals/guides were well received in pilot districts. The training process resulted in useful inputs by stakeholders on the content, process, and implementation options. The process of developing the training materials created a high level of commitment for both district and community facilitators to drive this process to its ultimate end.

The concepts of the Core Facilitation Team and District Training Teams seem to be useful institutional models in implementing CBP. However the documentation capacity and the participatory monitoring and evaluation process of CFTs needs to be strengthened to enhance learning and innovation in communities.

The CBP plans that emerged in Gwanda triggered debate on the need for basing the district plans on community priorities. There is now consensus among councillors to build the district strategic plan and budget on the community submitted plans. SNV Zimbabwe (a non-governmental organisation focusing on promoting local governance) is working with local authorities to come up with strategic plans. It is this opportunity that the CBP process would like to link and collaborate with.

### Ways forward in the future

The implementation team only managed to consult with the targeted districts that expressed a lot of interest in the CBP methodology. Consultations with various stakeholders have indicated the existence of a huge demand for CBP in Zimbabwe. Despite this interest it has proved difficult to raise resources for CBP activities in the current economic and political environment prevailing in Zimbabwe. The National Steering Committee (NSC) in collaboration with Intermediate Technology Development Group Southern Africa have put on their agenda the need to mobilise resources and share with stakeholders nationwide so as to scale up the process to ensure that lessons and experiences gained in this project are not lost.

Through continued dialogue with government there is a need to fully mainstream community-based planning into the decentralisation process. National guidelines are needed to support all these initiatives, and it is important to create and consolidate forums for sharing CBP lessons and experiences at community, district, provincial, and national levels. The NSC has been given the mandate by the government to look at the modalities of forthcoming national guidelines.

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#### ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACDPT	Action Community Development and Publishing Trust
AREX	Agriculture Research and Extension
CBP	Community Based Plan
CFT	Core Facilitation Team
DDF	District Development Fund
DFID	Department for International Development
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DTT	District Training Team
ITDG SA	Intermediate Technology Development Group Southern Africa
MLGNHPW	Ministry of Local Government National Housing and Public Works
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Steering Committee
RDC	Rural District Council
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
ZDCP	Zimbabwe Decentralised Co-operation Programme



# OTHER EXPERIENCES OF CBP IN AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA

## 7

# Experience of the *Programme Nationale de Gestion de Terroirs (PNGT2)* in Burkina Faso

by **MOUSSA OUEDRAOGO** and **MOHAMED DRABO**

## Introduction

In promoting sustainable economic and social development from the mid 1980s, the Burkinabe government has promoted strategies and approaches that are participatory and decentralised. The implementation of these approaches has been supported by a political and legal environment that favours the adoption of appropriate legal instruments. In regional/land management, the law 014/ADP of 23/05/1996 and the associated decree 96-208/PRES of 30/06/1996 have introduced land reform and land tenure reform in Burkina Faso. In terms of good governance, the government has, since 1997, undertaken to define and implement a legislative system which encourages the emergence and growth of civil society in the conception and implementation of development policy. The decentralisation process since 1998 has involved the transfer of roles, functions and resources from the state to other actors. In rural areas, the process is still in its early stages.

The implementation of these different regulations and laws has required improvement in the management of all actors to ensure appropriate coordination and synergy of delivery. Over the last fifteen years there has been increasing coordination between agencies that are external to the village with rural communities, based on pressure from the state and its bilateral and multilateral partners. This has

given rise to a diversity of approaches.

It is in this context that the government adopted the policy on Decentralised Rural Development, as part of its strategy to promote the capacity of communities to take local action, and to integrate the different programmes and projects that are promoting poverty reduction and improved quality of life in rural areas.

The implementation of this approach has been based on the establishment of the structures outlined in Table 1.

## The experience of the second *Programme National de Gestion des Terroirs*

From 1986 Burkina has been developing the use of an approach called *Gestion de Terroirs* (participatory land management<sup>1</sup>). From 1991 the approach was widened with the first phase of the National Programme for "Gestion de Terroirs" from 1992-1996. The approach is based on the participation and handing over of responsibility to rural communities for managing their area. The approach is multisectoral, multidisciplinary and flexible and based at village level.

Burkina is only now developing a system of local

<sup>1</sup> This is actually a difficult term to translate – it also has the sense of participatory management of local areas.

**Table 1: Levels and roles of government in Burkina**

Level	Structures	Roles
National	National Team for Coordination of Rural development Partners	- Promote an overall strategy of decentralised rural development - Ensure learning from experiences in the field - Implement a M&E system with agreed performance and impact indicators
Region	Regional Council	- Defines development approaches for the region in accordance with national policy - Harmonise the different development plans from within the region
Province	Provincial Technical Coordination Team	- Harmonise the approaches of different agencies in the province - Support communities in the development of their development plans - Promote coordination at all levels - Capture and disseminate learnings from experience - Establish priorities for investment at the level of the province in relation to the region
Village	Commission Villageoises de Gestion des Terroirs (CVGT)	- Coordination and lead on development actions at local level - Manage funds effectively - Mobilise funds needed to implement its programmes - Plan development at local level, both in terms of time and space - Act as the interface between different development partners

government, which should come into place with communes established in 2005. Meanwhile it has a well-developed system of legally recognised community structures called Village Committees for Area Management (CVGT). These can receive funds, and manage development in their area. Some are as small as 1,000 people. According to legislation the CVGTs have a general assembly composed of all members of the community, an executive committee, specialised subcommittees depending on need, a subcommittee responsible for monitoring, and one on land issues (which is generally mainly elders and traditional authorities). There is not a fixed number of men/women on the committees, but for example in Dour Yarcé there were two women on the executive, and this rises in some places to four or five, including some Chairpersons.

PNGT works in all 45 provinces, in some cases through coordination agreements with other donors. At regional level there is a Consultative Council for Development (CCRD) which coordinates regional services of government departments, promotes government policies, and ensures coordination amongst services.

In all PNGT2 has a budget of US\$ 114 million. 12% of the budget is for training of local communities, 48% for the local development funds, 26% for technical support, 4% for promoting secure land rights, 11% on programme management.

### PNGT approach

Some of the components of the programme include:

- Establishment of the CVGTs (over 2000);
- Provision of technical support for the CVGTs, partly by the private sector or NGOs;
- Support for development of local development plans by CVGTs;
- Provision of local development funds to CVGTs based on the plans, linked with a system of credit for productive investments;
- Efforts to ensure coordination of actors at different levels
- Preparing for decentralisation.

The major elements are shown in Table 2.

The participatory diagnosis is undertaken by a multidisciplinary team and local people, using the accelerated method for participatory research (MARP). After the situation analysis, the team identifies the constraints, difficulties, key problems of the community and also the potential of the area, covering social, cultural, environmental and economic issues. This is not a sectoral but a holistic approach to development.

Major efforts are made to coordinate the activities of different agencies with and between communities. It is essential that actions identified are taken forward quickly to implement what is planned.

The CVGTs make their own choices as to the projects they would like funded, while having to make a local contribution in cash and in kind. They develop their community plans, and manage the projects which are implemented through them.

At the level above the CVGT (called a province, which

**Table 2: Elements of village land management approach**

Elements	Tools and approach
Information/sensitisation	- Use of media including drama, radio and press - Focus group meetings
Joint analysis (identification of problems, opportunities, and research into solutions)	- MARP PRA tools (mapping, transect, wealth ranking, direct observation, Venn diagrammes, flows , etc
Planning of activities in time and space and elaboration of a Village Development Plan	- MARP tools, maps, focus groups
Organisation and skills development to implement the plan	- in situ training, study visits, action-research, experimentation with management of works, etc
Action-research	- Tests at small scale
Mobilisation of finance	- Development of partnerships - Development of negotiation skills - Promotion of local savings
Implementation of village micro-projects	- Technical and management training - Promotion of specific working groups - M&E
M&E	- Obligation to account to the wider community - Field visits to projects

will become the level of local government, through a Commune), there is a technical coordination framework between government and NGOs who have a role in relation to investments that need to be approved at higher levels, and in M&E.

Box 1 gives a case study from Dour Yarce village, near Tendogogo.

**Results**

PNGT1 covered 8 provinces of the country, including 486 villages, or around 150 000 people<sup>2</sup>. The main investments which resulted included:

- Social and economic infrastructure (roads, schools, dispensaries, dams..)
- Land management in the villages (stone bunds..)
- Support for agricultural production
- Support for management of classified forests

At the end of PNGT1, a study was undertaken of impacts on communities<sup>3</sup>, also using participatory method-

<sup>2</sup> A village in Burkinabe legislation must have a minimum of 100 inhabitants or 20 family units. The average for villages covered by PNGT is 300 people.

<sup>3</sup> This included only a sample of 40 or so villages out of 486, but those chosen were amongst the most impoverished in terms of food supply during PNGT1.

**Box 1: The CVGT of Dour Yarce**

Dour Yarce is a village where agriculture is the predominant economic activity. The people are Morse, with some Peulh, and total 1133 inhabitants. They were helped under PNGT1 and now 2. They did not have a CVGT during PNGT1, when the programme worked with farmers' groups.

The CVGT was established in December 2002. A plan for "Gestion de Terroir" was developed, covering 5 years. The main problems identified were water and they now have two wells and a small dam. Food security is also a problem, and other interventions planned were for stone lines, composting and other soil conservation activities.

They have a map of the CVGT, which is embroidered on cloth. This shows no school, with the nearest 8 km away, and the nearest clinic 12 km away. They have a literacy centre. In the rainy season the main village is inaccessible due to the flooding of the river, confining them to the village. Generally children are on holiday during this period, they cannot access markets and women use stores of dried and leaf vegetables as foodstuffs. They have to use traditional healers during this period.

The contribution in cash and kind from the community is 29% of the total planned spend of 4.6 million CFA. Generally the community contribution is 20%, including contributions in kind.

The CVGT has two general assemblies per year and the committee meets monthly. Subcommittees have been established of the CVGT to address particular tasks, including one for agriculture, livestock, education, environment, health, domestic water, land and M&E. Ten members of the committee have had a 5-day training on procurement.

A map of Dour Yarce being shown by members of the CVGT



A group of villagers from Dour Yarce village presenting their plan to a group of visitors from different African countries, including Ian Goldman, Hans Binswanger from World Bank and Jean-Paul Sawdago, PNGT.



Photos: David Vannier, World Bank

ologies (MARP), including wealth ranking. Five years later this showed that the situation in terms of food security of vulnerable households, with 73% of beneficiaries estimating that they had improved their production, and 80% their food security. In terms of impact on natural resources, the main impacts were improved soil fertility, increased vegetation cover, increased biodiversity and increased yields.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that rainfall was plentiful during this period, which explains why the results are particularly good.

Participatory management of classified forests is in itself also a real revolution.

There were also significant impacts on local capacities, through training and study visits. New village organisations were created, and there was an improvement in decision-making. National government is referring to the CVGTs as a conduit for resources to support local development. More and more, where CVGTs exist they are becoming the key institutions for development actors, local and national government.

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# 8

## Challenging and changing the big picture: the roles of participatory research in public policy planning

by CHARLES EHRHART

This article examines the guiding ideas and ultimate realities of government-led participatory research in Tanzania and Uganda. It considers the extent to which research results have influenced meso- (e.g. district) and macro- (e.g. national) level planning for poverty reduction and why; the degree to which research processes have contributed to democratisation and citizen empowerment; and implications for the future of participatory approaches to policy-oriented research.

### Introduction

The World Bank and similarly powerful institutions have come to acknowledge that their ideas about development cannot be imported and applied wholesale irrespective of the different circumstances faced by people in poor countries. At the very least, information about local specificities is now regarded as a prerequisite to:

- customising conventional development proscriptions/rationalising public policy decisions; and,
- monitoring their implementation.

The interest in data to inform Poverty Reduction Strategies is now merging with the need to monitor progress towards Millennium Development Goals and bilateral donors' wish to streamline development assistance/improve

the performance of sector ministries. As a result, there is unprecedented pressure for poor countries to generate up-to-date, detailed socio-economic data.

In East Africa, this has led to many changes. The most comprehensive response to the demand for development data has been in mainland Tanzania, where the government's Poverty Monitoring System is quickly becoming a regional model. Though less sweeping, important changes have also been made in Kenya, Uganda, and Zanzibar. In each case, changes include:

- enhanced coordination by central government (typically under the ministry responsible for preparing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers) in order to improve information flows and reduce duplication of efforts;
- an emphasis on practical 'partnerships' involving central government, donors, CSOs and, to a lesser extent, the private sector; and,
- the use of participatory research methods to inform, monitor, and advance public planning for poverty reduction.

This article looks at the biggest examples of participatory, policy-oriented research in East Africa; namely, the Tanzania Participatory Poverty Assessment (TzPPA) and the Uganda PPA Process (UPPAP).

**Data was brought together and changed into information and ideas in small groups. This approach allowed triangulation and the evolution of individual positions through rigorous dialogue.**



Photo: Charles Ehrhart

### Participatory Poverty Assessments

The first Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) were conducted in Africa during the early 1990s. Together with information generated through surveys and individual interviews, their findings were meant by the World Bank to show the complex relationship between poverty profiles, public policies, expenditures, and institutions.

PPAs quickly spread beyond the Bank to other agencies, where they continued to evolve and develop in terms of methodology and objectives. As a result, there are many different definitions of what a PPA is and no apparent agreement on what a PPA is not. In the midst of continuing debate, the many goals of PPAs have grown to include:

- providing critical information (especially qualitative data inaccessible to surveys) on which to base effective plans for poverty reduction;
- building poor people's capacity to analyse and solve their problems;
- stimulating local activities for poverty reduction (i.e. wide-spread community-based planning);

- raising poor people's awareness of their rights and responsibilities;
- changing policy makers' understanding of and attitudes towards poor people by involving government officials in the research process;
- building governments' capacity for poverty analysis and policy design; and,
- ensuring that Poverty Reduction Strategies reflect the priority needs of poor people.

Not all PPAs aim to meet all these goals, nor do all PPAs meet their goals. However, many are realised and have made important contributions to poverty reduction efforts at local, national, and international levels.

### The Tanzania Participatory Poverty Assessment and the Uganda PPA Process

The 2002-3 TzPPA explored the causes, consequences, and policy implications of 'vulnerability' in thirty sites. Locations were spread throughout the country and selected on the basis of representing diverse livelihood (agriculture, live-

## “While cases of change at the local level are plentiful, the impact of the TzPPA and UPPAP on national-level policies remains less clear. It is, perhaps, too early to tell whether or not the 2002–3 TzPPA will have an important effect”

stock-keeping, fishing, and town-based work) conditions. Research teams were composed of six people from local and central government, as well as national and international civil society organisations, and they lived for up to three weeks in each site.

The first round of UPPAP lasted from 1998 to 2001. During this time, it worked in 36 communities – most of which were selected because they were especially poor. This approach to site selection maximised opportunities for the country's poorest people to communicate their experiences and priority problems. Nonetheless, it also meant that UPPAP's research results were less representative of conditions in Uganda as a whole. Three-person teams spending up to two weeks per community conducted research. As with the TzPPA, these teams were multi-sectoral and involved people from local government. This strategy worked well in both cases and was retained in UPPAP's second cycle, which began in 2001<sup>1</sup>.

### Methods and methodology

Many aspects of the TzPPA and UPPAP – including their core beliefs, principles, and methods – are typical of good participatory research in general. Thus, their approaches were founded upon:

- the belief that ordinary people are knowledgeable about, and are capable of particularly reliable and insightful analysis of their own life-circumstances;
- the principle that all people – irrespective of age, gender, level of formal education, etc. – have a fundamental right to participate in informing the decisions that shape their lives;
- the use of visual methods, such as seasonal calendars, Venn diagrams, etc. to facilitate the meaningful involvement of people in the research process; and,
- a commitment to sharing ownership of research results with local people and facilitating – through community

and district workshops – the identification of practical measures people can take to improve their lives.

In both Tanzania and Uganda, researchers were provided with an extended residential training programme. In the case of UPPAP, this lasted three weeks and focused on PRA principles and methods as well as improving report-writing skills. In Tanzania, training was composed of:

- a one-week course examining how public policies are made, the scope of poverty-oriented public policies in Tanzania and specific features of key policies;
- three weeks learning about the ideas and methods of participatory research (including two special sessions on working with hard-to-reach social groups and researching sensitive subjects like substance abuse and domestic violence); and,
- three weeks jointly planning implementation (including sessions on comprehensive note-taking and report-writing).

The TzPPA's extended preparatory period paid dividends in the long run as it led to (a) **more informed assessment of policies** and (b) **smoother implementation** because researchers themselves had been part of the decision-making process that established reporting procedures, standards of behaviour etc.

### Methodological differences

The two most significant methodological differences between the TzPPA and UPPAP surround their engagement in community-based planning and the size of research activities.

### Community-based planning

Though the primary objective was to improve district- and national-level planning processes, UPPAP also established Community Action Plans (CAPs) and committed itself to assisting in their implementation.

This decision was value driven. Indeed, members of UPPAP's Implementing Consortium (IC) feared that without instituting CAPs their work would have been fundamentally extractive and exploitative. While well meant, the practice of combining a nationwide research project with community-based action plans proved to be a major problem because:

- Some IC members (such as the National Bureau of Statistics) were ill suited to helping implement CAPs. Those that could found their human and other resources incapable of dealing in a timely manner with the scattered nature of partner communities and the diverse problems they prioritised. Moreover, attending to CAPs was at odds with

<sup>1</sup> More information about the TzPPA can be found at [www.esrftz.org/ppa](http://www.esrftz.org/ppa) and about UPPAP at [www.uppap.org](http://www.uppap.org)



**The TzPPA initiated work in each community with a video presentation. The novelty drew huge crowds who listened to a consistent, dramatised explanation of what the TzPPA sought to do, what opportunities it offered and didn't, and what the research process would be like. This substantially reduced the risk of raising false expectations**



Photo: Charles Ehrhart

expectations for IC members to remain in political centres where they could contribute to advocating pro-poor policy changes.

- Due to the irreconcilability of these tensions, the lag between CAP formulation and implementation was excessive. In the meantime, many local priorities had changed, some community members had forgotten about UPPAP and others had grown bitter with the certainty that researchers had never intended to return and fulfil people's expectations of aid.

As a result of this experience, as well as consultations with local authorities and community members during its design phase, the TzPPA chose not to engage in CAPs. Besides the difficulty of doing otherwise, it was argued that PPA-incited CAPs would duplicate the responsibilities of others' under the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP). Also, community members said the research would not be exploitative **if** the results were shared with them and

**if** researchers used it to advocate their interests. For these three reasons, the TzPPA opted to make just one promise; that is, to wholeheartedly try challenging and changing public policies in light of information and insights from the grassroots.

#### From village assemblies to focus groups

UPPAP aimed to involve as many community members in each of its activities as possible. In contrast, the TzPPA only sought large, community-wide meetings as venues in which to introduce itself and feedback/triangulate research results on the last day. Depending on their subjects, intervening activities aimed at involving between eight to sixteen participants in order to maximise the likelihood that all present would have a meaningful chance to share, debate, and refine their inputs.

This approach suited the TzPPA's needs. When the goal is participatory planning, facilitators typically seek a rela-

tively small number of inclusive meetings wherein a critical degree of consensus can be fashioned around a specific course of action. In the process of pursuing this worthwhile goal, marginal perspectives and agendas for change are frequently left behind.

In contrast, the TzPPA did not need to develop 'community consensus'. In order to fulfil its mandate and contribute to well-informed policies at various levels of government, it sought to learn about the range of conditions people face, as well as their concerns, competing priorities, success stories, etc. Instead of determining a single course of action, it could – on the basis of such rich information – recommend hundreds. This is an ideal outcome that would undermine the likelihood of community-based planning leading anywhere at all.

### Benefits

Participatory Action Research in general, and PRA/PLA in particular, typically seek to benefit participants in two ways. These are:

- improving the material and/or social conditions in which they live; and,
- enhancing people's power to shape their lives.

Therefore, it is worth asking how the TzPPA and UPPAP lived up to these goals.

### Policy impact

Both UPPAP and the TzPPA generated a large amount of high quality, practical information that could not have been developed through conventional survey-based research. By feeding these results back to policy makers at meso- and macro- levels in a variety of easily accessible formats they were both able to have immediate, significant impact on policies at local (district and community) levels.

While cases of change at the local level are plentiful, the impact of the TzPPA and UPPAP on national-level policies remains less clear. It is, perhaps, too early to tell whether or not the 2002-3 TzPPA will have an important effect. Yet a number of important policy changes have been attributed to UPPAP. Of these, the highest in profile are:

- the decentralisation of budget-item decisions to districts (allowing local government to decide how to spend their health or infrastructure budgets, for instance); and,
- a substantial increase in the proportion of Uganda's national budget allocated to water and sanitation services.

These changes are important. However, valid questions remain. First is the extent to which these and other policies were, in fact, influenced by findings from UPPAP. Second is

### Box 1: Local change due to participatory research

Some of the best examples of local change set in motion by the TzPPA are in Ilala Municipal District, Dar es Salaam Region, where municipal staff and community members planned responses to research results. These included:

- Provision of counselling and other forms of targeted assistance (e.g. training in alternative employment and soft loans) to commercial sex workers.
- A new strategy to encourage equal provision of schooling opportunities to girl and boy children. This strategy, unlike those in the past, begins from an understanding of local ideas about gender and education.
- The creation by community members of transparent criteria for priority support to especially poor households.

why equally important (if not more important) findings about insecurity, corruption, and macroeconomic policies were not addressed.

The answer to both questions points to the same conclusion; that is, PPAs are more 'consultative' than 'participatory' because government is under no obligation to take their findings into account in policy decisions. This does not imply governments should adhere verbatim to recommendations coming from community members. To the contrary, one of government's responsibilities is to balance the concerns of individuals and particular social groups/regions with others and all of this against financial constraints, etc. But the majority of policy makers still see themselves as having no obligation to either negotiate or explain their decisions to the public. Until this changes, it seems likely that they will continue to use research results that support their positions and disregard those which are, for whatever reason, unpalatable.

### Empowerment

The methods through which the TzPPA and UPPAP generated their findings contributed to participants developing a deeper understanding of local realities. As evidenced by the ways in which they sometimes took these insights and transformed them into action, a degree of 'empowerment' took place at the grassroots. Nonetheless, this should not be overstated.

Because the presence of PPAs in each community was fleeting in comparison to the long-term partnerships that characterise effective community-based planning, the extent to which they shifted perceptions and power relations was almost certainly far less. This is not to say that the TzPPA and UPPAP failed to challenge or affect power relations. To the contrary, these projects invested a great deal of resources into training team members in research and

advocacy skills. Moreover, these urban-based professionals gained a great deal of information and insights from, as well as invigorated sympathy for, people at the grassroots.

Without doubt, this has contributed in both Tanzania and Uganda to the capacity of civil society to understand, communicate, and exert political pressure for positive social change. It has also helped improve understanding and dialogue between civil society and governments – the significance of which should not be understated. This may amount to empowerment of poor people by proxy and, as such is surely less than ideal. Yet realistic alternatives are unclear since effective advocacy – especially at macro levels – requires contacts, planning, and a command of relevant information that is simply inaccessible to most poor people.

### Conclusions

PPAs have their potential pitfalls and limitations. For instance:

- It would be counterproductive (and logistically impossible) to involve all stakeholders. Thus, good representation is necessary – and dangerous because some points of view may (wittingly or not) be excluded.
- Not everyone in a community will want to invest their time in the process of participatory research – especially when they expect a welfare relationship to government or lack faith that their efforts will be heard and listened to.
- Many development issues are extraordinarily complex and far removed from the direct experience of ordinary people. Therefore, it may be impossible for PPAs to rigorously examine some issues without demanding too much of people's time.
- PPAs can generate quantitative and qualitative development data. However, they cannot identify the scope of certain conditions or practices across a region or country.
- Participatory research does not 'help' conventional decision makers. To the contrary, it is much easier for them to draw conclusions without the information provided by PPAs. Good research exposes competing interests, chal-

**“Without doubt, this has contributed in both Tanzania and Uganda to the capacity of civil society to understand, communicate, and exert political pressure for positive social change. It has also helped improve understanding and dialogue between civil society and governments – the significance of which should not be understated”**

lenges orthodox assumptions, and reveals complexities that make decision-making very, very difficult.

- PPAs are time-consuming and expensive in comparison with the process of elites meeting behind closed doors, speculating about citizens' lives, and setting policy.
- Many of the forces causing and perpetuating poverty in East Africa are rooted in the policies of distant countries and institutions. Though PPAs may demonstrate such linkages, there is a tragic disconnection between these findings, advocacy efforts, and policy change.

Despite these hurdles, the TzPPA and UPPAP have shown the potential of participatory, policy-oriented research to improve policy-making processes and outcomes. Ironically, one of the greatest threats to participatory policy research as a whole may be the success of these and comparable initiatives. Indeed, there is the risk that governments will be satisfied with their contributions and neglect to explore how other innovations – including citizen report cards, participatory service assessments, and policy relevance tests – could add to development data and further democratisation. In the future, these and other options should be routinely integrated into national poverty monitoring and evaluation strategies to ensure the best possible contexts for community-based planning.

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## 9

# Experiences in *Panchayat*-based planning in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh, India

by RAJEEV AHAL and SILVIO DECURTINS

## Background to Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh (HP) is a rural mountainous State of India, lying in the western Himalayas. With two-thirds under forest management<sup>1</sup>, only 10.5% is devoted to crop production. But 67% of the owners have a plot size of less than 0.4ha and thus non-farm resources are important in people's livelihoods. The increasing population is further fragmenting the hilly terraced croplands. Socially, the mountain communities are composed of people from different caste backgrounds, involving a complex social hierarchy of castes, connoting a differential status, with the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) being accorded the lowest status in practice although constitutionally, all citizens of India enjoy an equal status.

The mountain areas are both inaccessible and fragile, leading to restricted opportunities for growth as well as hidden poverty. Welfare investments through grants from Central Government and loans from financial institutions made some impacts from 1960s to 1980s. But with the shrinkage of Central Government funding and the poor revenues generated, the state of HP is now facing a financial crisis. In this context, there is a real need for an effective,

local methodology for identifying and funding community priorities and reducing wastage. This article documents the trials undertaken in this direction, the approaches used, and their impacts.

## Structures of *Panchayati Raj* Institutions in HP

The state of HP embraced the key elements of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment<sup>2</sup>, leading to the 1994 HP *Panchayati Raj* Act, which strengthens the devolutionary process through the following *Panchayati Raj* Institution (PRI) structures as shown in Table 1.

In HP, the *Panchayati Raj* and Rural Development Department (PRRDD) is the department responsible for PRIs and caters for training, administrative, and support needs of the about 3037 *Gram Panchayats*, 75 *Panchayat Samitis*, and 12 *Zila Parishads* with about 26,532 elected office bearers working within them. All PRI bodies are elected on a non-party basis for a five-year term and include the mandatory reservation of seats for some sections of society with a traditionally lower social status to ensure equity in political opportunity. One third of all seats, including those of Chairs of the different tiers, are reserved for women. For the SCs and STs,

<sup>1</sup> Of the 67% forest, almost 29% is for grazing and pastures. A third of forest lands have not yet been demarcated through surveys and settlements.

<sup>2</sup> After almost five years of debate and the introduction of Bills by successive governments in Parliament, the PRIs were accepted with the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution providing them with the basis on which to act as statutory bodies for local self-governance.

**Table 1: Structures of Panchayati Raj Institutions in HP**

Level	Constitution	Role
<b>The Zila Parishad</b>	Constituted for each District, they consist of directly elected members representing a group of Panchayats with a population of 20,000. Elected members elect from within themselves an executive committee. National parliament members are also Zila Parishad members.	Plans and implements economic development and social justice schemes. Financed by Central and State governments. Controls, coordinates, and guides the Panchayat Samitis & Gram Panchayats.
<b>The Panchayat Samiti</b>	Constituted for each development block and consisting of a directly elected member representing a Gram Panchayat(s) with a population of about 3,000. Elected members elect from within themselves the executive committee. Members of national parliament, whose constituency falls in that block, are also members. One fifth of Gram Panchayat presidents are members by rotation.	Plans and implements developmental projects and schemes based on specified roles and functions and subject to funds received from state and central government. Also acts as a coordination body between the Gram Panchayats and the block level departments.
<b>Gram Panchayat</b>	Executive of the Gram Sabha. It consists of ward members elected by each Up Gram Sabha and a directly elected Panchayat president. Each Panchayat has at least one trained secretary/assistant paid by the PRRDD.	Meeting twice a month, it is responsible for 29 civic functions e.g. maintenance of village roads, public wells, culverts, sanitation etc. Prepares and implements schemes for economic development and social justice. Receives grants from State and Central Government.
<b>Gram Sabhas and Up Gram Sabhas</b>	A village or a group of villages with a population of 1,000–5,000 (an average of 1,200–1,800 in practice). Each Gram Sabha is further subdivided into 5–13 Up Gram Sabha (wards), where the communities can meet and participate more easily and effectively.	Working as the common platform for all voters, the Sabhas provide the foundation for direct democratic control and accountability by the communities over their elected PRI representatives. Each Gram Sabha meets four times a year, while the Up Gram Sabhas hold their meetings twice a year.

seat reservation is in proportion to their population.

Line departments suffer from a narrow approach to development that has discouraged partnership and participation by the communities. Historical experiences from all over India show that **people-based planning** is an effective mechanism for strengthening local self-governance, as it entails the implementation of activities as directed by a People's Plan, in the form of a Panchayat Micro Plan (PMP).

### History and background to PMP

Panchayat Micro Planning (PMP) came into HP in 1996, with the first trials conducted by the NGO Rural Technology and Development Centre<sup>3</sup>(RTDC). Subsequently, many other organisations piloted PMP processes. State-level workshops were held to promote experience sharing and strengthen PMP processes. Due to this advocacy, in 1999 the Government emphasised the promotion of PMPs, adding a further legitimacy and fresh impetus.

The Indo-German Changar Eco-Development Project (IGCEDP)<sup>4</sup>, a bilateral project between the governments of Germany and HP, and implemented by GTZ and the Forest Department, had simultaneously built up a village-level planning approach called Integrated Resource Management Planning (IRMP). Recognising the importance of mainstreaming natural resource-based development planning, IGCEDP initiated trials in eight Panchayats (45 villages). The result was the evolution of IRMPs into a methodology for villagers to make Panchayat-level PMPs.

The impact of these was limited as they were implemented in a project mode. RTDC, whose core staff had been working with IGCEDP, decided to initiate community block-level trials in direct collaboration with the PRRDD, involving staff from the line departments at the block. Finally, the Government agreed to and initiated the Bhatia pilot PMP block trials in Chamba District in 2003, one of the poorest districts of the country.

<sup>3</sup> Contact: Sh. Sukhdev Vishwapremi, Co-ordinator, at rtdc@glide.net.in or more information on www.navrachna.org

<sup>4</sup> Contact: Dr. Rajan Kotru, current Team Leader GTZ-PSU, at rkotru@gtzindia.com

**Volunteers of one of the seven ward planning teams of the Panchayat learning how to read their ward map using a standard 1:1000 cadastral map traced from the revenue records.**



Photo: Rajeev Ahal

The objective was to:

- develop a **team** that could take the planning process forward for implementing the PMP, and expand it in phases into neighbouring *Panchayats* and the whole block;
- develop a model that can later be **replicated** by PRRDD in the whole state;
- involve **line departments** (such as agriculture, horticulture, irrigation, forests etc.) in the preparation and implementation of PMPs;
- **promote convergence** between watershed committees<sup>5</sup> and the *Panchayats* using PMPs as a common plan;
- part-finance PMPs through funds already available (untied funds, watershed funds, and some lapsing tied funds at the block and district levels); and,
- enhance **local livelihoods** based on natural resources and existing livelihood skills identified through PMPs.

The process has now been demonstrated in six *Panchayats* and is currently underway in 11 more. In each *Panchayat*, a minimum of 30–45 volunteers from the local villages learn and conduct the process without payment of any kind.

### PMP methodology and approach

The process is initiated through one trained facilitator for each *Panchayat* using a detailed methodology manual and two planning workbooks, one for *Up Gram Sabha* (village) planning and one for integrating them all into the *Panchayat* plan. All these are in the local language.

<sup>5</sup> The Central Government in India provides direct support to watershed projects in degraded districts. Funds are routed through the deputy commissioners at district level, with BDOs as project implementing agencies. Watershed committees play the role of executing the works, but they are often formed by politically-motivated individuals and act as parallel institutions to PRIs, especially the *Panchayats*. Sixteen of the Bhatia block's 64 *Panchayats* have watershed projects.

### Initiation and organisation formation

Poor communications and the limited capacity of CBOs undermine participation and allow vested interest groups to take control of any new initiatives. PMP volunteers worked to form community groups and provide information about the PMP process (objectives, methodology, roles, and benefits) through *Up Gram Sabha* meetings. A *Gram Sabha* meeting was then held to seek public endorsement for the initiation of the PMP process in each *Panchayat*. The involvement of the block and district administration was ensured.

### Ward-level participatory data collection

Each *Up Gram Sabha* met and nominated a team of volunteers called the ward planning team (WPTs), which included semi-literate men and women (one third of the team). They were introduced to the *cadastral* maps<sup>6</sup> of their wards and taught how to mark the households, hamlets, infrastructure, and physical features (roads, rivers, gulleys, temples, spring wells etc.). The WPTs went back to their wards and completed the forms and the maps at village meetings. The listing of existing infrastructure (buildings, roads, wells etc.) and their preference ranking for services provided by the different line departments were ascertained by WPTs using participatory tools.

In a second training session, the WPTs learnt to identify the different land uses and mark them on the *cadastral* map, as well as how to catalogue basic information about their ownership (including both individuals and communities), size, and status, leading to the identification of problems and potentials. Watershed boundaries and drainage lines were identified and marked on the maps by the WPTs, each working simultaneously in the seven to thirteen wards making up each *Panchayat* (each ward consists of five to eight villages on average).

### Ward-level data interpretation and planning by communities and support agencies

The data collected was presented and verified by the community in an *Up Gram Sabha* meeting and corrections made. The problems and potentials for each ward were analysed. Each *Up Gram Sabha* discussed in depth the issues related to natural resources, social justice, and infrastructural needs.

<sup>6</sup> Each revenue village in HP has been surveyed. *Cadastral* maps showing boundaries, ownership etc. of each private and Government land parcel are available at the office of the Land Revenue official for that revenue village. Maps were last updated in 1976. Each revenue village in HP has been surveyed. *Cadastral* maps showing boundaries, ownership etc. of each private and Government land parcel are available at the office of the Land Revenue official for that revenue village. Maps were last updated in 1976.

**A ward land-use map prepared by the eight members of the ward planning team, two of whom are women. They are semi-literate, local villagers with no prior training. The associated Land Status Register contains information about the ownership, production, and status (good, moderate, or bad) of each plot of land in the ward. The land-use planning identifies problems and potentials with each landscape element.**



With the help and support of specialists and field staff from the line departments, technical solutions to the problems and potentials identified in each ward were analysed. Some proposed activities fitted into the existing departmental schemes while others had to be supported through innovative grants. Putting together the problems and their solutions, along with the technical details, resulted in the ward draft plans (WDPs). The community collectively discussed the options and solutions generated in these plans. In an open meeting, all the members of the *Up Gram Sabha* reached consensus on priorities and approved the final ward plan. A typical WDP consists of:

- self-help activity list – to be implemented by the community with its own resources;
- line department lists – priorities for line departments that they must respect;
- works to be done by the *Panchayat* with its own funds that it receives; and,
- activities to be taken up through other projects working in the area – special schemes from Central Government, bilateral projects etc.

#### *Panchayat*-level plan formulation

The WDCs of all of the wards falling in each *Panchayat* came together in a two-day conference. Each ward action plan was presented by the Ward Development Committee and was sectorally integrated at *Panchayat* level to form the draft PMP whose outputs consisted of three very specific sets of activities:

##### Activities to be undertaken by *Panchayat* from its own funds

Each *Panchayat* has some untied funds (from Central and State Governments) and its own revenue. Allocations were determined by the priorities of PMP and an annual plan of operation was made.

##### Activities to be undertaken by concerned line departments

These are department-specific lists that integrate the priorities from each ward plan at the *Panchayat* level. The departments are expected to implement their activities using these priorities over the next five years, as these had already been verified at community level during the planning process.

##### Project packages

Special activities were developed into packages for Central Government, bilateral schemes, or project funds.

## **“This is a long-term human resource investment. Selected volunteers from these teams are now working as facilitators in other nearby *Panchayats*, meaning the PMP has the potential for self-replication”**

In addition, the prioritised lists of individual beneficiaries for the different state- and central-level welfare schemes were also collated at the *Panchayat* level. This made the selection of beneficiaries fully decentralised and community-driven.

At a special *Gram Sabha* meeting called by the *Panchayat*, the draft PMP was tabled and approved. This draft plan was a strategic tool that ensured community control and ownership of their negotiated developmental priorities. The *Panchayat*-level standing committees were also formed from members nominated by *Up Gram Sabhas*. The next task was to send the relevant parts of the plan to the relevant agencies to act on, including the deputy commissioner's office at district level.

The guidelines and procedures for activities to be implemented by village-level works committees were based on the HP *Panchayat* financial rules to ensure conformity and ease in implementation. Actions to integrate *Panchayat*- and block-level plans are now underway. Significantly, the Bhatiat pilot block has encouraged other State-level institutions wanting to develop and demonstrate their sectoral plans as parts of PMP to converge and undertake their trials on a common platform in Bhatiat (including the health and family welfare department and the HP Forest Sector Reforms Project).

### **Positive impacts of the PMP process**

- The strategic role of the *Up Gram Sabha* village community as a basic unit planning has been demonstrated. Marginalized sections of the communities (women, scheduled castes, and the poor) who were earlier excluded in the *Gram Sabha* meetings have found a community platform and have become active in accessing schemes and voicing their problems.
- The previous planning processes of the *Panchayats* often did not include natural resources or social justice, core concerns for sustainable development. The new PMP process emphasises these in order to build *Panchayats* as institutions with social equity and long-term assets – and not merely bodies

providing infrastructure. For example, the *Panchayats* are now supporting reforestation and soil and water conservation works through the standing committees.

- The listing of genuine beneficiaries for the Government welfare schemes and their prioritisation by the different village communities sitting together as an *Up Gram Sabha* was a novel innovation. The beneficiaries were selected on merit and not on political considerations, demonstrating the strength of planning at village/community level to all participants.
- *Panchayats* and ward planning teams are trained in participatory tools and planning processes, with 35–65 trained volunteers in each *Panchayat*. This is a long-term human resource investment. Selected volunteers from these teams are now working as facilitators in other nearby *Panchayats*, meaning the PMP has the potential for self-replication. The involvement of the *Panchayat Samiti* and the *Zila Parishad* members throughout the PMP process has sensitised and prepared them to play a supportive role in sanctioning financial allocations for the PMP at block- and district-level.
- The *Panchayats* have formulated their annual plans of operation (APOs) for 2003–04 using their own funds based on the micro-plan priorities. This is unique because previously, the secretary (a Government employee) would make the plan with no involvement from the *Gram Sabhas*. The *Panchayat* executives are now able to formulate APOs reflecting ward-level priorities themselves. The communities can crosscheck the APOs, which serves as a useful check for accountability.
- Documents outlining five-year plans for the *Panchayats* are now ready as PMPs. They articulate clear needs for the different user groups in different wards for each of the line departments. This document can (and should) be used as a reference (with complete household-level and baseline data) by all external agencies, without them having to continue their parallel investigations.
- The hitherto inactive statutory *Panchayat* standing committees are now armed with the citizens' approval and the *Panchayat's* support, and are working to assist and monitor the *Panchayat* in implementing the PMPs. The allocation of funds from the block level is now based on the needs of the people and not at the selective discretion of bureaucrats and politicians.
- Civil servants were relieved that the major problems of mobilising communities and of consensus formation were to a large extent resolved by the PMP process. Politicians, who were initially reserved, now find that this process does not undermine their authority; instead it helps them to focus on majority-based priorities instead of on the pressures from



minority groups that had previously led to the splitting of their votes and rampant infighting within communities.

### Limitations of PMP

- There is a need to enhance the involvement of line departments in the process through using their specialist advice to communities on technical solutions to the problems and potentials emerging from the initial plans.
- The PMP process needs to be made more participatory by facilitating it as a mass campaign involving all sections of the society, instead of as a top-down Government-run activity. The participation of women and other vulnerable groups can be enhanced by having specific and separate confidence-building meetings and activities with them.
- The integration of the emergent PMPs into block- and district-level planning systems must be addressed, as this is currently a key weakness in the process. The district level offers a platform for the convergence of community-based planning processes with the more strategic and centralised process of macro planning from the top. For this, the ongoing engagement with the *Panchayat Samitis* and *Zila Parishads* will have to be accelerated.
- More people-friendly systems of fund routing, agreements, and audits have to be tested to strengthen implementation of the PMPs.
- Documentation of successes and constraints need to be shared with the government, the PRIs, and the NGOs/bilateral agencies for them to advocate changes to the relevant procedures and statutes.

**“The process of decentralisation is a long-drawn one and its impacts are incremental and not always tangible. Community-based planning approaches like PMP provide an immediate remedy to some of the problems arising out of centralised planning and implementation”**

### Lessons learnt

The process of decentralisation is a long-drawn one and its impacts are incremental and not always tangible. Community-based planning approaches like PMP provide an immediate remedy to some of the problems arising out of centralised planning and implementation. Political will, commitment from the Civil Service, and the mobilisation of communities to use the process of decentralisation for better local governance increases the speed at which these processes can be core-streamed to positively affect Government planning and allocation systems. The experiences of designing and introducing PMP in Himachal show that it is possible for semi-literate communities in the mountains to work in a participatory mode and deliver community-based plans into the hands of PRIs, making them better institutions of local governance.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank the RTDC and IGCEDP for the use of written materials on different aspects of PMP and decentralisation. The authors are responsible for the conclusions drawn in this paper.

# 10

## Some experiences from the Philippines in urban community development planning

by EDNA CO, JAN VELASCO-FABONAN and JEREMY PHILIPPE NISHIMORI

### Introduction

#### The legal background and structures

Local autonomy is enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. The Local Government Code of 1991 (LGC) provides the legislative basis for people's participation in governance. Under the LGC, the local government units (LGUs) assume broader responsibility and greater accountability to their constituents. Each local government unit (LGU) must have a multi-sectoral development plan to be developed by its corresponding Local Development Council (LDC). The Local Development Council is the mechanism through which the local council, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), people's organisations (POs), and the private sector participate in local development planning, including budget planning and local resource allocation. At least 25% of the seats of the local development council should come from non-governmental groups, people's organisations, or the private sector. Table 1 shows the composition of the Local Development Councils at different levels.

#### The case study: participatory situational analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (SAPIME) in three urban *barangays*

ECPG (Empowering Civic Participation in Governance) is an

NGO working on village-level local governance. Participation of NGOs and POs in participatory development planning has been more common in rural areas than in urban areas, and so it was a challenge for ECPG to venture into participatory local development planning in urban areas, and it is now working in three *barangays* (villages) in Quezon City, the capital of the Philippines (Culiat, Sauyo, and Santa Monica, with populations of 27–50,000 people). The city holds the largest number of informal urban dwellers in metropolitan Manila and probably in the Philippines. One of the basic qualities shared by the three *barangays* is the presence of strong people's organisations, with whom ECPG works.

#### The SAPIME methodology

ECPG is committed to the improvement of urban participatory local development planning as opposed to narrow technical planning. ECPG's strategy is called *Barangay* Development Planning Through Participatory Situational Analysis, Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation (BDP-Participatory SAPIME). In this participatory methodology community members themselves identify and analyse their problems, the situation within which these problems are embedded, and the possible solutions. Table 2 summarises the approach.

**Table 1: Structures and roles of local government**

Local Government unit	Approx. population	Role of the Local Development Council	Composition of the Local Development Council
<b>Province</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not less than 250,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the formulation of annual, medium-term, and long-term socio-economic development plans and public investment programmes</li> <li>• the evaluation and prioritisation of socio-economic programmes and projects</li> <li>• the formulation of local investment incentives that will promote the inflow of private investment</li> <li>• the coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of development programmes and projects being implemented in its jurisdiction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• governor</li> <li>• mayors of the component cities and municipalities</li> <li>• the chairperson of the Committee on Appropriations of the Provincial Government (budget committee)</li> <li>• the congressman or his representative</li> <li>• NGO/PO representatives operating in the province, who should constitute no less than one-fourth of the members of the fully organised council</li> </ul>
<b>City/municipality</b>	150,000+ 25,000 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The formulation of annual, medium-term, and long-term socio-economic development plans and public investment programmes</li> <li>• The evaluation and prioritisation of socio-economic programs and projects</li> <li>• The formulation of local investment incentives that will promote the inflow of private investment</li> <li>• The coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of development programmes and projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mayor</li> <li>• All of the <i>punong barangays</i> (village heads) in the city/municipality</li> <li>• The chairperson of the Committee on Appropriations of the City/Municipal Government</li> <li>• The congressman or his representative</li> <li>• NGO/PO representatives operating in the city/municipality, who should constitute no less than one-fourth of the members of the fully organised council</li> </ul>
<b>Barangay (barangay Development Council)</b>	2,000+ for municipality 5,000+ for city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mobilisation of people's participation in local development efforts</li> <li>• preparation of local development plans based on local requirements</li> <li>• implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national and local programmes and projects in their locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>punong barangay</i> (village head)</li> <li>• members of the <i>barangay</i> council</li> <li>• The congressman or his representative</li> <li>• NGO/PO representatives operating in the <i>barangay</i>, who should constitute no less than one-fourth of the members of the fully organised council</li> </ul>

## Key elements

### Social preparation and capability-building interventions

Upon establishing the partnership between the *barangay* and ECPG, the *barangay* officers went through a three-day capability-building workshop called an Empowering Local Governance Seminar (ELGS) on management and planning issues, as well as the role of civil society, and emphasising the engagement of the *barangay* officials with people's organisations. A Technologies of Participation (TOP) participatory methodology was used to engage participants in the discussion and planning. Smaller workshop sessions enabled all participants to speak out, others were empowered to show their leadership by serving as small group facilitators, and others reported on the outcomes of the group discussions. By doing this, the leadership skills of the individuals were honed, the ability to articulate and communicate with others on issues that matter to them is strengthened, and self-confidence built among these potential leaders. More-

over, unity and group cohesion emerged as another inspiring outcome of this technique.

To help start the participatory planning process, ECPG ran a social preparation programme, specifically for the POs and other community associations in the *barangays* to reintroduce the *barangay* as a venue for people's participation, specifically through the formulation of a comprehensive development plan.

Later on, the ECPG organised a seminar called Citizens' Legal Capability-Building Seminar (CLCBS), which introduced POs to the laws, policies, and citizens' rights that are relevant to their interests.

### Multi-sector assemblies

Multi-sector assemblies comprising of different interest groups such as transport groups, the urban poor, the elderly, youth, the various homeowners associations, and other interest groups were initiated by ECPG's community facilitators as a venue for sharing experiences and concerns, to

Table 2: Elements of the community-based planning process

Elements	CBP in Quezon City, Philippines
Planning unit	<i>Barangay</i> (village)
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• three- to four-week process mostly at weekends including <i>barangay</i></li> <li>• profiling (situation analysis) by sector and area, development plan</li> <li>• multi-sector assemblies developed as forums</li> <li>• acts as guide for a Local (<i>Barangay</i>) Development Investment Plan (LDIP)</li> </ul>
Facilitation of <i>barangay</i> plans	By community facilitators.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• three-day training for <i>barangay</i> officers by NGO on empowering local governance</li> <li>• social preparation programme for POs, highlighting role of development plan, as well as legal capacity-building</li> <li>• two-day training for participatory planning facilitators from the community</li> <li>• capacity-building on implementation, M&amp;E, and legal rights for <i>barangay</i> structures</li> </ul>
Financing of planning process	The budget allocation includes support for workshops and similar activities that would engage community participation through POs' participation in the <i>Barangay</i> Development Plan.
Funding the plans	Stakeholders forum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Government agencies</li> <li>• NGOs – provide organising, training/seminars, and medical missions</li> <li>• Local Government officials Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) for footpaths, sanitation, livelihood training /seminars, medical missions, improvement of PO participation in <i>barangay</i> affairs</li> <li>• City Government for financing of infrastructure and human development projects such as rip-rapping, <i>barangay</i> roads, micro-re lending, parks and recreation, improvement of rivers/creeks</li> <li>• the Community Development Fund of district representatives for <i>barangay</i> roads, park, and recreation centres.</li> <li>• People's organisations – can work on the implementation and financing aspects of the plan</li> </ul>
Linkage to city and provincial plans	The Local Development Investment Plan is adopted as a component of the <i>barangay</i> plan, which in turn is forwarded to the higher level of local government, for budget consideration and support by the higher local government level.
Implementation of the <i>barangay</i> plans	Through the leadership of the <i>barangay</i> as the LGU concerned, the projects in the development plan are cooperatively implemented with the concerned National Government agencies, LGUs, and other possible stakeholders.
Monitoring and evaluation of implementation at <i>barangay</i> level	For monitoring and evaluation needs, the participatory planners who participated in the participatory planning process are transformed into participatory monitoring and evaluation teams.

bring out the common agenda in local development among community associations. The multi-sectoral assembly also provides a forum for community members to validate the development programme initially drafted through the seminar-workshops.

#### Preparation for and mobilisation of BDP-participatory SAPIME

The community is prepared for the development planning process through a combination of the initial groundwork by ECPG's community facilitators and a two-day training for participatory planning facilitators (PPFs) and *barangay* participatory planners (BPPs).

#### The planning methodology

The overall process of participatory situational analysis, planning, and budgeting takes three to four weeks, with most of the work done during the weekends. The planning methodology used is shown in Table 3.

Once familiarised with the tools, the planners and the facilitators work with sector-based and geographic groupings to produce a corresponding situational analysis for each, which is later consolidated into a comprehensive multi-sectoral development plan. Subsequently a two-week process of validation, enrichment, and refinement is

**Table 3: Planning methods used in SAPIME**

Stage	Tool
<b>The Technologies of Participation (TOP) tools for the PPFs and the BPPs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>the discussion method:</b> objective, reflective, interpretative, and decisional (ORID) mode of discourse, for situations where participants have a common experience</li> <li>• <b>the workshop method:</b> a mode of discourse for situations where there might be differences of experiences, but with a common ground</li> </ul>
<b>Situation analysis (SA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>resource and social mapping:</b> including 'community walks' where PPFs and BPPs walk through geographic sub-areas of the community to take note of its social and resource characteristics</li> <li>• <b>historical transect map:</b> including political, social, and economic transitions</li> <li>• <b>Venn diagram:</b> measuring the degrees of influence and persuasion that community leaders, organisations, government agencies, and personnel have in different arenas and issues</li> <li>• <b>service map</b> of all the services that can be found within the community, which are given a rating</li> <li>• <b>organisational ratings matrix</b> assessing all organisations and institutions within the community, including the <i>barangay</i> council</li> </ul>
<b>SWOT Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWOT for each SA tool and a Grand SWOT which takes into consideration the SWOT results of each SA tool</li> </ul>
<b>Reconciliation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of situation analysis by sector and area</li> </ul>
<b>Participatory Planning (P) tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>problem tree:</b> participants identify the main problems, the root causes, the extensions and their interrelations, as experienced by the <i>barangay</i></li> <li>• <b>objective tree:</b> participants transform the problems outlined in the problem tree into ideal situations and the actions necessary to achieve that situation</li> <li>• <b>alternatives analysis:</b> participants analyse and prioritise the different possible projects based on necessity, acceptability, and the availability of funds</li> <li>• <b>participation analysis:</b> through this process, the participants evaluate the motives, interests, and possible contributions of all the stakeholders for specific projects. As such, a strategy for each stakeholder can be constructed</li> <li>• development of <b>sectoral/area plans</b></li> <li>• <b>validation, enrichment, refinement over two weeks</b></li> <li>• development of <b>consolidated multi-sectoral plan</b> with short-, medium-, and long-term sectoral goals</li> </ul>
<b>Planning implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of a Local (<i>Barangay</i>) Development Investment Plan (LDIP),</li> <li>• Preparation of the <i>barangay's</i> annual budget</li> </ul>

undertaken through sector and area assemblies.

## Some responses to the process

### Reactions from the community

Some of the initial reactions from the community regarding the process were:

#### Situational analysis

- Most community members were surprised that they were being invited to participate in the process of planning for the development plan, and thus, were eager to participate.
- Some participants found the planning tools initially difficult to use but eventually found the visual and participatory nature of the tools attractive and encouraging.
- *Barangay* officials were generally supportive of the participatory process being implemented. A few others with

traditional leadership backgrounds were hesitant to move into a terrain of planning that involved people's participation and power-sharing structures.

- Some members of the community were not interested.

#### Participatory planning

- Some community members found the process difficult and hard to sustain, specifically in some sectors and certain areas.
- Community members from homeowners' associations and organisations that manage the affairs of private subdivisions were often outnumbered by the informal settlers in the community. In the past, issues such as peace and order and waste management, have been the focus of development planning; the current process being introduced has balanced the focus on other urban poor issues e.g. housing and basic services.

**“Besides social preparation (information dissemination, coordination, collaboration, and consultation), funding is the biggest hurdle for the participatory development plan as the available funds are likely to be less than the requirements of the projects planned for. Prioritisation is therefore an essential process”**

- Some *barangay* officials felt that participatory planning encroached on what is essentially the terrain of *barangay* officials.

#### Implementation

- The three *barangays* are in the process of setting the plan into an ordinance.
- The various POs in the three communities are currently lobbying for the passage of the ordinance.

#### Reactions by local government

The commitment and support of the Local Government units concerned towards the participatory planning process is also important. On many occasions during the planning, the *barangay* officials opposed some of the proposals raised e.g. citing budgetary restrictions that already limit the provision of basic services. Previously, local development planning overemphasised infrastructure projects. While LGUs can provide support for the participatory planning process, it is equally important that they redirect their priorities towards more responsive and people-centred programmes and projects. The involvement of *barangay* officials in the planning helped to ensure a better balance between physical and socio-economic projects.

At present, the use of participatory planning in the three *barangays* has been given legal status through ordinances, incorporating participatory development planning into the *barangay's* budget system. A pledging session is also underway with the higher Local Government units, National Government agencies, and funding agencies, to supplement the limited financial capacities of the *barangays*.

Currently, the on-going BDP has to be integrated with the Community Development Plan of Quezon City to tap budget allocations to support the projects at the *barangay* level that would eventually lead to direct improvement of the Quezon City dwellers as a whole. These include budgets for education, the Social Development Fund, and other related resources.

#### Issues and challenges

There were tendencies among some people's organisations to use the newly gained planning skills as a tool to challenge *barangay* officials on issues pertaining to transparency and management. Some *barangay* officials felt threatened by the empowerment of POs and saw PO leaders as potential competitors in the next elections. To avoid this jeopardising their willingness to support the plans, participants have to be reminded to focus on the planning goals and not personal attacks.

The majority of inhabitants in the three *barangays* are poor and marginalized, and in the process the development plan must be continuously challenged to check how it responds to the needs of this majority. For example the issues of basic services and housing rights are given priority by the BPPs over other demands such as peace and order. However, the other needs cannot be ignored and should also be addressed.

Besides social preparation (information dissemination, coordination, collaboration, and consultation), funding is the biggest hurdle for the participatory development plan as the available funds are likely to be less than the requirements of the projects planned for. Prioritisation is therefore an essential process, as well as ensuring that funds already allocated for Local Governments by the National Government are actually disbursed to them on time. The late disbursement of these funds causes the Local Governments to use their funds for these devolved functions, thus further reducing the budget available for LGU projects.

Another issue is the lack of coordination among the *barangay* and their parent cities or provinces in their planning processes. For example, the City Government drafts their own plans and LDIP to comply with the prerequisite for receiving their annual funding but without considering the individual BDP's from their localities. More often than not, these city plans would advocate the political agendas of the city's leaders. This has resulted in poorly synchronised programmes, and the formulation of community development and land use plans that do not reflect the felt needs of the *barangays*.

#### Replication and scale-up

The experience of these three *barangays* illustrates that the system is workable and practical and can be replicated in other *barangays*. However, the three pilots are essentially poor urban communities. Another set of pilots may have to be conducted in dissimilar communities so that a more comprehensive set of guidelines and performance indicators can be developed.

*Barangay* officials are sensitive to the threat of being unseated by members of the participating organisations or being subjected to severe criticism. Therefore, unless the process is made a mandatory annual exercise for all *barangays*, e.g. for the release of the *barangay's* budget, it will not be easy to ensure widespread adoption of this process.

The city or provincial level should also benefit from the participatory process. Should the provincial plan not be the amalgamation of the plans of the subordinate Government units? This cannot simply be the case, because the social and economic requirements of a province or a large city are more than the sum of the requirements of its subordinate units. Nevertheless, the concept of participatory planning is very relevant using representatives from the planning units of the

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*barangays* in the city or provincial planning process, and avoiding the arbitrary selection of planning members and the non-representation of some sectors in the planning process.

Local governments as enablers should provide a level playing field, role definitions, advice on workable courses of action and priorities, and they should set up monitoring and evaluation units to promote transparency in the budget allocation for community activities.

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**GLOSSARY**

BDP	<i>Barangay</i> development plan
BPP	<i>Barangay</i> participatory planners
ECPG	Empowering Civic Participation in Governance (the lead NGO)
LDC	Local Development Council
LGC	Local Government Code of 1991
LDIP	Local ( <i>Barangay</i> ) Development Investment Plan
LGU	Local Government units
PO	People's Organisations
PPF	Participatory planning facilitators
SAPIME	Participatory Situational Analysis, Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation
TOP	Technologies of Participation methodology

## 11

# The use of participatory three-dimensional modelling in community-based planning in Quang Nam province, Vietnam

by JAMES HARDCASTLE, BARNEY LONG, LE VAN LANH, GIACOMO RAMBALDI and DO QUOC SON

Vietnam has set a course for political and economic change. Decentralisation has allowed individual provinces in Vietnam significant autonomy to interpret national laws and policy. These changes are opportunities to harness the legal framework for change into community-based planning and participation in natural resource management. The MOSAIC programme in Quang Nam province, central Vietnam, has adopted innovative planning tools at the local community level, such as participatory three-dimensional modelling (P3DM). MOSAIC is building experiences, lessons, and partnerships to frame provincial policy for sustainable land-use planning. The programme is navigating the complex State administrative structure to magnify site-based results into wider-scale policy and planning at provincial, regional, and up to national levels.

## Introduction

In Vietnam environmental problems are mounting as the country develops the economy and rural infrastructure after decades of war, instability, and social upheaval. With a high proportion of the rural-based population dependent on forest resources (Baker *et al.* 2000), sustainable development and poverty alleviation are seen as priority, and are

intrinsically linked to forest resource conservation.

Towards this recognition, the Vietnam government has attempted to switch its focus to community-based planning approaches. There is an evolving policy framework for community participation in the natural resource management sector. The decree Strengthening Democracy at Local Level<sup>1</sup> and the recent circular on Strengthening Urgent Measures on Forest Protection and Development<sup>2</sup> call for grassroots participation in Local Government issues, with specific reference to the management of natural resources. In Quang Nam province, a logging ban decree details the importance of local collaboration in forest protection measures. Despite supportive legislation and wider macro-economic decentralisation policies, the on-the-ground reality is a lack of political credibility, resources, communications, and capacity. However, in Quang Nam province, political willpower has allowed for a coherent attempt at

<sup>1</sup> Decree No. 29 ('The Democracy Decree') was issued in 1998 by the Government of Vietnam with the aim of strengthening democratic mechanisms at the local level. It stipulates increased consultation and participation of citizens in Local Government issues.

<sup>2</sup> Circular number 12, 16 May 2003 challenged the effectiveness of current natural resource management, protection and enforcement, and urged for continued reform.



strategic land-use planning for long-term natural resource management, with communities involved in the decision-making processes. This is in part due to recent national circulars highlighting forest protection as a key factor in reducing the impacts of flooding, to which Quang Nam is particularly prone. The last catastrophic inundation, in 1999, cost millions of dollars and hundreds of lives.

### The focus area: Quang Nam province, central Vietnam

Quang Nam province is rated as one of the poorest in Vietnam. The Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) has ranked 60 communes in the six mountain districts as highest priority for poverty alleviation. The population of these six districts is 87% 'ethnic minority', from 12 different ethnic groups, predominantly Ka Tu. In the Song Thanh area, transport, market access, education, basic infrastructure, health care, and social services are all minimal, whilst the effects of decades of war still have ongoing repercussions.

Upland communities in Quang Nam exhibit strong potential for effective forest governance through local institutions (Hardcastle, 2002). However, open-access resource regimes are rapidly depleting local forests, with the indigenous communities powerless against outsiders, despite provincial plans to accelerate the allocation of forestland to localities.

### The MOSAIC Programme

The MOSAIC (Management of Strategic Areas for Integrated Conservation)<sup>3</sup> programme is a partnership between WWF, the Vietnam Forest Protection Department (FPD), and other key stakeholders in Quang Nam Province. The aim of MOSAIC is to provide for appropriate and long-term management of important natural resources throughout the province and it supports the pilot forestland allocation programme through innovative approaches to community-based planning.

MOSAIC works at three administrative levels (see Table 1): firstly, with a coordination unit at the provincial level, directly linked to key government departments. Secondly, MOSAIC is active in all 16 districts of Quang Nam province, working through the relevant sub-departments. Finally, MOSAIC works within the Commune level, initially within twenty-one prioritised Communes, liaising with the

**Community consultation underway in the Ka Tu Guorrl' meeting house**



Photo: Le Van Lanh

Commune People's Committees, whilst working on the ground with villages and communities.

One of MOSAIC's goals is to help develop a provincial-level strategy for effective forest management including sustainable natural resource harvesting. MOSAIC has worked with all stakeholders to prioritise forest units for concerted conservation effort in order to mitigate and offset current and potential threats, and act on the varied opportunities. Towards this effort, innovative approaches to community engagement in conservation action are being piloted. Three of the priority Communes, including Tabhing (described below), were selected as pilot sites according to biological, socio-economic, and political contexts.

### Tabhing commune and Song Thanh Nature Reserve

The primary MOSAIC pilot site, Tabhing Commune supports 379 households in nine villages. The terrain is steep, inaccessible, and cut by many rivers and streams. Natural forest cover is high, apart from the inhabited valleys and swidden agricultural plots. Tabhing Commune is partly included within the boundary of Song Thanh Nature Reserve (STNR).

### Participatory planning for Tabhing commune

#### Reaching the grassroots

A series of multi-stakeholder workshops provided crucial support and approval for the MOSAIC programme. For Tabhing, a draft action plan was compiled based on detailed participatory research, with twenty key activities to be initiated over a six-month period. Participatory three-dimensional modelling was one of the primary tools to be employed, primarily to facilitate forestland allocation and resolve tenure conflicts. The action plan was then taken to

<sup>3</sup> The MOSAIC concept was developed by the primary authors, based on experience of community-based conservation activities in northern Vietnam, yet in response to the Quang Nam provincial call for assistance in strategic planning for natural resource management. It was developed to match the WWF Indochina support for landscape-level conservation in the Central Truong Son area.

**Table 1: The administrative structure in Vietnam**

Level	Approx population	Structure	Role
Provincial level	1 million to 3.5 million	Provincial People's Committees	Administrative authorities. Broad decentralised legislative powers within the overall national policy and legal framework.
District level	300,000 to 500,000	District People's Committees	Administrative authorities at local level. Legislative power within an allocated budget and provincial policy and legal framework. Degree of decentralised powers depends on the particular situation, and especially on individual leadership.
Commune	3,000 to 5,000	Commune People's Committees	Sub-committee reporting to the district authorities. The commune has legislative power at the local level, but all decisions must be approved by a relevant department at the district.
Village	100 to 1,000	Village leader	No legislative power, yet an officially appointed leader reports to the commune people's committee. However, often <i>de facto</i> leadership (such as village elders) lies outside the state institutions with limited reach and no legal recognition.

the Commune and villages for public scrutiny. A series of consultation meetings preceded village-level 'citizen's juries' (called 'people's forum' in Vietnamese). Each item on the action plan was presented for questioning by local villagers, using the discussion forum and also a household response sheet. The aim of the action plan is to clarify local land-use issues and develop a coherent land-use plan for each village within the Commune. The final action plan for the commune was approved at the district level, where all stakeholders had a chance to review the plan. Budgets and timeframes were linked to milestones and indicators, and the plan was officially recognised by the District Government.

### Participatory three-dimensional modelling

One particular element of the methodology is the use of participatory three-dimensional modelling (P3DM), building on experiences gained in Pu Mat National Park (Rambaldi *et al.*, 2003). The method leads to the manufacture of accurate 3-D models of a chosen area, upon which to hinge discussions, communication, and planning. The P3DM activity was introduced to the Quang Nam provincial authorities in an orientation seminar, with participants from all relevant departments.

The coordinating team and twenty 'trainees' from provincial departments travelled to Song Thanh Nature Reserve in Tabhing, where the P3DM exercise was carried out between 6-16 May 2003. The area covered by the model totals 300km<sup>2</sup>. A base map at 1:10,000 scale with

20m contours was used. Carton sheets, 4mm thick, were cut for each contour, resulting in a vertical scale of 1:5,000. After a preparatory day, students and teachers from Tabhing secondary school were invited to attend, over two days, to help manufacture the blank model, before preparing to invite the local Ka Tu people to take the stage.

Once the model was completed, locals from nine villages in Tabhing, and two from neighbouring Ca Dy Commune were invited, in two groups, to transfer local knowledge onto the model. In total, 125 villagers actively participated in producing the model, with orientation conducted in Ka Tu language.

Villagers selected the features they would depict on the model, using coloured paint, yarns, and pins provided by the facilitators. In this way, intellectual ownership of the output was ensured and an insight into the relative local value of land features was gained. For example, the rivers and streams were marked very prominently, before forest areas, roads, or mountaintops were identified. With five or six people from each village, there was enough 'peer discussion' to locate, identify, and name features accurately. These included paths, streams, households, traditional meeting houses, different types of forest, shifting cultivation land, cinnamon plantations, artisanal gold mine workings, and even wartime helicopter bases.

Animated discussion arose between villages and several minor conflicts, such as village boundaries, were resolved through debate focused around the model. Other issues, such as illegal gold mining, were identified and discussed. As the model began to take shape, more specific issues emerged.

<sup>4</sup> Rural areas have significantly lower populations than the coastal strip and lowland plains.

Element	Community-based planning in Quang Nam
Planning unit	Commune.
Methodology	Action planning. Special emphasis on 3-D modelling as a form of participatory mapping.
Facilitation of commune plans	By local Forest Protection Department and other partner departments, supported by WWF, and endorsed by the district People's Committee.
P3DM exercise	P3DM exercise covering the Tabbing area (30,000 ha) and involving 125 representatives from local communities. The event has also served as a hands-on training ground for a wider audience and lay the ground for adoption of the P3DM method elsewhere.
Financing the planning process	Largely through MOSAIC, with funds from a range of WWF sources, as well as local government contributions and mobilised resources.
Funding the implementation of the plans	Principally from local revenue for community projects, backed up by national programme budgets, such as the '5 million hectare' reforestation programme. Focused support from MOSAIC is ongoing.
Linkage to district and provincial plans	Direct linkage to district development plans and to provincial strategy for conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. It is also a pilot for the provincial forestland allocation programme, which will be replicated across 60 upland Communes in Quang Nam, allocating nearly 500,000ha of forest land to local management regimes.
Implementation of the community plans	Identified responsibilities and finances are clearly outlined. Much of the support is for the community itself to carry out and monitor activities.
Monitoring of implementation at community level	Community groups, such as the 'village protection teams', with external monitoring from a set of relevant departments and individuals. Monitoring will be based on a set of mutually defined indicators, with many data collated at the household level.

Foremost was the placing of the boundary of the Nature Reserve by the STNR vice-director. It was instantly clear that it conflicted with local agricultural and forest resource use. The villagers from both groups challenged this boundary, and after discussion, demarked a preferred boundary, to which the STNR vice-director agreed in principle – a significant breakthrough.

MOSAIC is currently working with STNR and the provincial authorities to facilitate an assessment of the reserve boundary. Due to the legal status of the reserve, this is possible at provincial level. However, the boundary issue is also under discussion at national level for a separate issue, gold mining. The model has shown clear conflicts between local resource-users and illegal gold miners. The model has allowed MOSAIC to raise these topics directly with the relevant authorities, following local community identification of hot issues during the modelling process, in an official and recognised planning activity.

### Lessons learnt from P3DM as a tool for community-based planning

Feedback from the participants, both trainees and local people, allowed for an initial stock-take of lessons from the whole planning exercise. Five common themes emerged:

- The model was a powerful tool to use as the basis for discussions and planning for the local area, and to assess the importance of issues.
- The model, including the legend identifying which data is represented by the model, must be 'owned' by the community participants, accurately reflecting the values local people attach to landscape features and resources, and giving them confidence.
- Local people are capable resource persons, with a good knowledge of the lay-of-the land, and are well capable of making models and using spatial representation.
- It is important to listen to the local interpretation and presentation of the detailed model in plenary discussion, and reflect these lessons in future activities. Women and

Ka Tu girls tracing contour lines during the manufacture of the blank model



Photo: WWF / James Hardcastle

'Tell me, I forget.  
Show me, I remember.  
Involve me, I understand.'  
(Moore and Davis, 1997)

children made an invaluable contribution to the model and to the discussions.

- It is important that authority representatives are present during the modelling activity, as well as local representatives from across the locality, to quickly settle disagreements and ensure that the local perspectives are well understood by all.

#### Initial follow-up in Tabhing

**Village protection teams:** Tabhing commune People's Committee passed two decrees establishing village protection teams, which are recognised under national and provincial laws. The teams were granted powers of arrest to apprehend, for a period of twelve hours, 'outsiders' caught in any act of illegal access or forest crime, and anyone else in transgression of a series of agreed terms on local forest protection. This provides sufficient power to enable violators to be handed over to the appropriate authority. They used **patrol zones**, based on markers placed on the 3-D model.

The number of arrests to date are estimated at around sixty.

**Boundary reassessment:** the reserve boundary will be reassessed over the coming two years and demarcated on the ground in partnership and with consensus of local communities.

**Forestland allocation programme:** data extracted from the 3-D model through digital high-resolution photography<sup>5</sup> have been merged with topographic data and elaborated in a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) environment. The resulting information has been used to draft thematic maps to be used in a consultative process meant to support forestland allocation.

**Village and Commune land-use plans:** based on the information and issues visualised on the 3-D model, land use plans are being collated in collaboration with the Commune authorities and relevant departments. A series

<sup>5</sup> More information on the extraction process is found in issue 46 of PLA Notes, 2003 (Rambaldi *et al.* 2003) and at [www.iapad.org/participatory\\_p3dm.htm](http://www.iapad.org/participatory_p3dm.htm)

**Conflict resolution during local planning discussions based on the 3D model**



Photo: WWF / James Hardcastle

of local-level meetings will confirm the plans and link them to other activities (reforestation, forestland allocation).

**Clear steps for co-management arrangements:** Song Thanh Nature Reserve (STNR) is currently preparing a management plan, based on an operational plan for the period 2003–2008. This operational plan outlines steps to be taken to devolve relevant management responsibilities to the local communities in and around the reserve.

**Proposed modelling activities** to the east (Cha Val) and South (Phuoc Duc-Phuoc My) to cover the full boundary of the STNR.

**Transfer of the model to the Commune office:** the model will be moved to a Commune office after the *Tết* New Year, to allow for wider use of the model for local-level issues.

#### Replication and scaling-up

MOSAIC will continue to foster pilot sites, with a fourth site encompassing the A'Vuong watershed area, consisting of five Communes. Elsewhere, the MOSAIC model is providing

lessons for the newly listed Phong Nha-Ke Bang Natural World Heritage Site, in north-central Vietnam. MOSAIC also has a 'sister' programme underway in the Monduliri province in Cambodia. As the Central Truong Son Initiative gathers momentum, the MOSAIC lessons in community-based planning will be tested across the central mountains of Vietnam.

#### Conclusion

The MOSAIC results show community-based planning as a tool for framing action at a 'provincial' scale and how efforts to link landscape-level planning into micro-level conservation action have benefited from P3DM as a learning, planning, and mediating tool. The P3DM method<sup>6</sup> has proved to be cost effective in terms of collating and visual-

<sup>6</sup> P3DM has been used in Thailand and the Philippines for many years in the contexts of natural resource management planning and Indigenous Peoples' rights. It has been recently introduced in Nepal, India, Colombia, Ecuador, and Vietnam.

**The Ka Tu  
village  
protection  
teams plan  
their patrol  
routes**



ising community knowledge in an accurate and clearly understandable manner. The cost of completing a 1:10,000 scale 3-D model involving a large number of informants and exporting the displayed data into a GIS environment, corresponds to approximately US\$4/km<sup>2</sup> or four cents/hectare. Compared to alternative data gathering methods, P3DM is cost effective. Investing in it also has many additional non-monetary benefits, when P3DM is seen as a method for efficiently supporting learning, planning, and community empowerment.

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The primary authors would like to dedicate this paper to Mai Dang Khoa, a friend, colleague, and inspiration behind the MOSAIC. An enthusiastic example to all who work in conservation in Vietnam, he was tragically killed in a motorbike accident in Hanoi on 22nd April 2003. Acknowledgements are due to Thai Truyen, Tran Van Thu; the Quang Nam provincial and district authorities; all the people of Tabhing Commune; Tom McShane; Kristin Clay; Nguyen Thi Dao; Mike Baltzer; Phan Van Truong and the WWF MOSAIC team; the CETD team; all at WWF Indochina Programme; Nigel Dudley; Professor Nigel Leader-Williams and the Durrell Institute for Conservation and Ecology (DICE); the Netherlands Development Agency (DGIS); the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); and the United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

# 12

## Municipal rural development plans in Brazil: working within the politics of participation

by GLAUCO REGIS FLORISBELO and IRENE GUIJT

Meeting of CTA-ZM's Local Development Programme to systematise experiences in three municipalities of participatory municipal planning

### Background

In Brazil, recent years have seen the growth of the municipal level as a critical focus for action. At State and national levels, municipalities represent a strategic unit of intervention for local development. Representing the lowest level of elected Government (see Table 1), municipal initiatives and partnerships are increasingly the focus of investment by Federal and State Government policies and programmes and the arena of NGO action. The elaboration of municipal development plans and implementation of municipal management councils are preconditions for receiving certain resources from national or State-level agencies.

One organisation at the forefront of developing **participatory** municipal rural development plans (MRDP) is the Centre for Alternative Technologies (CTA), a local NGO working on alternative futures for and with rural smallholders in the Zona da Mata of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Founded in 1987 by marginalized farmers, their trade unions, and committed agricultural professionals, CTA now encompasses many activities, one of which is the Local Development Programme (LDP) that focuses on MRDPs. CTA staff work on this programme in three municipalities:



Araponga, Tombos, and Acaiaca. This article compares the three municipal planning processes, offering them as an exciting alternative methodology for local development in the Brazilian context.

### Municipal development plans as a social innovation in Brazil

#### CTA's working context

The Zona da Mata of Minas Gerais covers 143 municipalities, of which 128 have a population of less than 20,000.

<sup>1</sup> Centro de Tecnologias Alternativas – Zona da Mata (Centre for Alternative Technologies of the Zona da Mata).

**Table 1: Levels of local administration in Uganda and their roles**

Level	Approx population	Structure	Role
National	170 million.	Directly elected president with a national constituency and a bicameral National Congress (an 81-seat Federal Senate and a 513-seat Chamber of Deputies).	National policies for all sectors, national budgeting.
State	Ranging from 325,000 to 37.3 million.	26 administrative states and the Federal District of Brasília.	Strong Federalist system gives strong powers to State, especially to governors (directly elected) who control budgets and thousands of jobs, with few checks and balances.
Municipal	From several hundred to 10.5 million (Sao Paulo city, the world's fifth largest municipality).	5,581 municipalities, with four-yearly hotly contested elections determining which of the 26 official political parties will provide the (deputy) mayor (who appoints the departmental secretaries) and councillors that form the municipal council.	The only level of local government. Responsible for its own municipal development planning and implementing urban and rural services (health, agriculture, environment, education, infrastructure). Can seek State/national funding. The mayor holds executive power (supported by municipal secretaries) and is considered the local political boss. Legislative power is exercised by the municipal council.

Smallholder agriculture represents a large proportion of production and of the number of properties, although not of total land area given the skewed land tenure relationships. The region is marked by chronic environmental degradation – deforestation, soil erosion, poor sanitation and waste disposal, and intense use of agrotoxins – threatening livelihood security for poor households. Smallholders generally expect little or no support from municipal councils as, in most cases, mayors and secretaries have been large landholders or their supporters and most voters live in the towns and have urban rather than rural concerns.

CTA has worked for 15 years in developing viable alternatives with rural workers unions and their smallholder members (CTA, 2002). Legally a non-profit civil association, the organisation aims to strengthen smallholder organisations, promote equity of social relations, and influence public policy by promoting public debate about sustainable agriculture and documenting good practices.

### CTA's evolution to municipal planning

CTA has not always focused on the municipal level. Originally working through farmer groups but with limited impacts, in 1997 it deliberately chose to concentrate on a handful of municipalities to understand how this larger scale of action could lead to more sustained and widespread improvements. By facilitating municipal dialogue

and analysis, the idea is to establish more diverse civil society-government partnerships that can increase the voice of poor local rural communities in designing rural development public policies.

The first steps were taken in Araponga in 1996, when the rural trade union *Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais* (STR)<sup>2</sup> of Araponga turned its attention to the theme of 'local development' moving beyond the traditional role of ensuring pensions and documents for its members. Their first participatory rural appraisal (PRA) in 1994 (Fária, 1994), facilitated by CTA and local university students, resulted in a 28-point STR-specific plan of action. But the absence of victories for union leaders in municipal council elections provoked an analysis of the limitations of a development plan that was only supported by the union. They recognised the need to collaborate with municipal authorities if a local development plan was to gain a significant level of support and resources.

Two years later, the LDP process started in Tombos when CTA signed a convention with the municipal council and farmers' organisations to facilitate the formulation and implementation of an MRDP and provide technical assistance to farmers. The process in Acaiaca started in 2000, where the embryonic STR invited CTA to help facilitate participatory appraisal and planning for developing a municipal plan that could help guide the newly installed pro-poor municipal council (CTA, 2001).

Currently, CTA sees the LDP work it supports as primarily a 'learning laboratory' to understand, document, and

<sup>2</sup> STRs are membership organisations, operate at the municipal level (and are federated at State/national levels), and are the most accepted, democratically elected body that represents smallholder agriculture.



**Meeting of CTA-ZM's Local Development Programme to systematise experiences in three municipalities of participatory municipal planning**



Photo: CTA-ZM

**Meeting with Rural Workers union, Municipal Council, councillors and other organizations – Local Development Programme, CTA-ZM.**



Photo: CTA-ZM

disseminate different political-methodological experiences that could inspire other municipalities in the region and other NGOs in Brazil in pro-poor local development.

### CTA's vision for pro-poor municipal planning

CTA's core strategy is to support pro-poor farmers' organisations in developing and facilitating participatory processes for formulating and implementing an MRDP. Both CTA and its local partners see these plans, and in particular the processes they require, as practical ways to improve the implementation of State and Federal-level programmes of smallholder support. They emphasise methodologies that can improve the often-polarised inter-institutional relationships and help smallholders to articulate needs in forums where decisions are made.

CTA's local development work is based on a deep-rooted political vision of rights, the value of societal debate, environmental sustainability, and the urgency of practical options for poor smallholders. Working initially with PRA and farmer participatory research, CTA and its partners had perceived a ceiling to the impact they were having. Waiting for a pro-poor political party to win council elections became a problematic strategy for scaling-up impact. This fed the idea of MDRPs based on wider partnerships that required creating space for critical reflection, negotiation, and conflict management. Today, the MDRP processes involve continual and elaborate consultation and strategic realignment in which PRA is but one of several important methodologies. Other approaches include political strategising in diverse coalitions, using facilitation skills for engaging effectively with community members, leadership development, participatory popular education programme development, cooperativism and associativism, participatory evaluation and systematisation of experiences, and participatory on-farm technology development.

### Building blocks of the CTA-supported MDRP

#### Participation as a (learning) process

Some critics of PRA paint a caricature of the sloppy and mechanical application of tools within a few days. The practice of CTA staff shows a more elaborate and considered approach to participatory development. They invest up to one year in collective research, negotiation, and debate before priorities for action are formulated.

Many methodologies are woven together – farmer participatory research, PRA, participatory monitoring and evaluation (including socio-economic self-monitoring by farmers) – to develop and implement municipal plans. Each methodology contributes its part, depending on the issue at hand, and is implemented through different structures, which may be more or less permanent.

For example, in Acaiaca, an executive committee was formed to coordinate the PRA and resulting municipal plan. Representatives included EMATER (State agricultural extension agency), CTA, STR, Municipal Council, and the Secretaries of Agriculture, Social Work, and Health. Another example is the participatory systematisation that has been constructed as a temporary series of meetings between local leaders in the three municipalities, facilitated by CTA. It aims to critically review CTA's support to MRDPs and gives union leaders opportunities to refine their strategies of municipal intervention.

#### Planning process and methodology

Despite the uniqueness of each experience, Araponga, Tombo, and Acaiaca all started with an elaborate three-phase PRA and participatory formulation of an MRDP.

First is a process of getting in touch with potential actors, farming households, and groups in all communities. This 'mobilisation phase' involves contacting communities,

Table 2: Comparing the three municipalities

	Tombos	Araponga	Acaiaca
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	875	304	102
Inhabitants - % rural	11,000 – 30% rural	8,000 – 68% rural	3,900 – 39% rural
Year STR established	1985	1989	1990 (registered in 1994)
Growth in STR membership	875 (1985) to 2,500 (2002)	29 (1993) to 805 (2001)	50 (1990) to 416 (2003)
Role of CTA with STR	Independent of CTA	Established with CTA's help	Independent of CTA
Relationship CTA-STR	Good, long, close ties of mutual help, helped in each other's foundation	Long and close, often with blurred boundaries about respective responsibilities of the two entities	New, with cooperation limited to specific issues. Close, intense links during LDP process.
Main local driver of LDP	APAT (farmers' cooperative created by STR)	STR	Municipal council
Year of (first) municipal PRA	1998	1994, updated in 2001	2001
General state of STR	Centralisation of leadership around same individuals (causing tensions)	Stable, no factions, diversifying leadership (to include youth and women)	Young and fragile, low membership, few leaders

and negotiations and networking between partners to agree on the guiding principles for the local development process and each partner's role. In Acaiaca, this phase took about two months, which led to an executive committee being established and agreement on the methodology.

The second phase, which most people would identify as the 'typical PRA' phase, involves all communities (but not all people!) in the municipality in group meetings and subsequent family interviews. A smaller group, with representatives of various partners, then undertakes the first (sectoral) analysis of issues. In Acaiaca, this took place over a two-month period.

Phase three closes the planning cycle, which involves:

- Providing feedback to each of the communities for additional insights, corrections, debate, and the start of convergence around priorities. In Acaiaca, each community elected three representatives to sit on the Plan Elaboration Committee (a youth, a woman, and a man).
- Deepening, with the committee, the analysis of key problems identified by communities during the initial appraisal phase, identifying causes and consequences of the problems.

- Identifying proposals to resolve problems related to agriculture, environment, infrastructure, health, education, and social assistance.

- Prioritising proposals.

The process and results are documented in a municipal rural development plan, outlining the partners involved, methodology, timeframe, the sector-specific analysis of problems, causes and consequences, and the agreed priority actions. This document becomes the official agreement between civil society organisations and the municipal council.

### Working with new partners

In CTA's work, the main players have always been the technical team, the rural workers unions (STRs), and farmer groups. The technical team acted as conveners, methodology-suggesters, and documenters. The STRs take centre stage in the LDP although each has a unique history, maturity, and membership, and maintain different relations with the municipal council (Table 2). Within the LDP, the farmer groups helped research the issues and are now implementing aspects of the plans.

**Table 3: Key elements from the three MRDPs**

	<b>Araponga</b>	<b>Tombos</b>	<b>Acaiaca</b>
Focus Funding sources	The MRDP is being used by STR to hold the municipal administration accountable to its policies and actions. Agroecological alternatives played a relatively important role in discussions and in formulating proposals.	Income generation via processing and marketing of organic produce (sugarcane and dairy products, coffee).	First attempt to define integrated development strategy. In agriculture, livestock development was key, as was defining the focus of the Secretary of Agriculture and other agricultural partners.
	1st CTA budget for technical agriculture person. 2nd Municipal budget.	1st Municipal budget. 2nd InterAmerican Foundation grant (initially CTA budget for technical agriculture person which later fell under IAF grant).	1st Municipal budget. 2nd Local Agenda 21.

However, as a result of casting the net more widely, the circle of actors has broadened to include a diverse and municipality-specific range of other groups, including in all three cases, the municipal councils themselves. The idea of partnership between a pro-poor union leader and municipal councillors often of the political right has changed so much that in Araponga, the current (right-wing) mayor has invited one of the STR leaders to consider a more formal alliance, already anticipating the votes this may bring in the next elections. While this partnership can be dangerous, it also offers previously unheard of opportunities.

### Building accountability structures

A plan, without follow-up, can remain on paper. To ensure continued debate and implementation, CTA and its partners invested in establishing a municipal council for rural development (MCRD), making use of national legislation that encouraged such bodies. The council is responsible for implementing the plan, thus holding everyone accountable to their commitments and monitoring progress. The council also provides a forum where the municipal policies and proposals for rural investment are discussed. The council is composed of representatives from the town council, councillors, agricultural/forestry extension and research services, CTA, STR, and any women's groups or smallholder cooperatives that might exist. Following national guidelines, at least 50% of MCRD members represent smallholder agriculture.

### Non-neutral facilitation

CTA was not neutral in the MDRP processes, choosing to invest in pro-poor farmer organisations. During all phases of the appraisal and planning, CTA and the STRs and associations were in constant communication, with CTA working

to build union leaders' capacity to act as effective local protagonists in municipal debates. Various strategies were adopted to enable community representatives, with CTA financial support for transport, to participate in meetings. The participatory methodologies used were designed to facilitate access by farmers to information and enable them to express their concerns.

### Learning from diversity

Despite these similarities, the differences were – and continue to be – considerable between Araponga, Tombos, and Acaiaca in terms of initial conditions and evolution. The initial motivation came from different players and involved different numbers of partners, although the STRs were key players in all three. Although PRA and subsequent MRDPs were common methodological elements, the moment at which they were undertaken and the roles of partners in each case varies.

While CTA has maintained the same basic strategy of working via the STRs, local conditions and capacities moulded its role in each process. In Araponga, CTA provided much technical assistance on agroecological innovations and subsequently in the PRA work while, in both Tombos and Acaiaca, the CTA technical team invested more in facilitating the PRA and MRDP processes.

Differences in political relationships, socio-economic, and biophysical variations led in each case to a different role for the plan in terms of rural development (Table 3) and to different opportunities for funding. The Araponga MRDP was viewed by the union movement as an opportunity to hold the municipal council accountable to earlier promises of policies and actions, no longer accepting excuses like 'this can't be done', 'there isn't enough money' from public office holders. In Tombos, the municipal plan was grasped as an

**Box 1: Changes in Araponga**

Work on an LDP accelerated when CTA contracted a local farmer to take on full-time work for them. As a native of Araponga and familiar with CTA and the STR, he helped close the gap between CTA, STR, and the municipal council. Focusing on a non-political issue – waste disposal – opened the door for other topics to be broached. The STR has grown in respect and is now considered a legitimate civil society partner – resulting in the STR being invited by the municipal council in 2001 to participate in making a MRDP and be a key driver of the MCSRDP. Key tangible impacts include: establishing a farmers' market for organic products and a micro-credit association, increased uptake of organic agriculture, developing a Family Agriculture School, as well as promoting environmental education in 11 primary schools.

opportunity by the union movement to translate their rural income priority into concrete action. In Acaiaca, certain sectors had never had clear policies and actions, so the plan has defined priority actions for the different secretaries.

**Key impacts and challenges**

From unique beginnings unrolled different processes, each with successes and challenges. Impacts can be found at the political/methodological levels, but also at the concrete in terms of livelihood improvements (see Box 1).

The process of building partnerships and dealing with conflicts, appraisals, and planning is a form of political and methodological capacity-building that is not skill- or issue-specific. These capacities have proven vital to ensure continuity of the participatory spaces needed to implement the MRDP as well as strengthening the management and effectiveness of organisations involved in these participatory processes. Other impacts include: enhancing political maturity beyond the narrow party-bound perspective pervasive throughout Brazil, making viable what were hitherto unlikely partnerships, making the municipal council accountable, developing a collective vision, and increasing the scope of community action to new and more complex issues.

As with any political process, challenges abound. All three municipalities continue to deal with the political, organisational, and financial challenges that they now recognise as shared responsibilities between previously divergent partners. The key political challenge is to ensure that promises are fulfilled, and to maintain alliances (despite the difficulties) and partnerships established during the phase of elaborating the MRDP. The main organisational challenge is to maintain the mechanisms by which families can continue participating in decision-making processes. Financially, they all struggle with ensuring sufficient resources to enable ongoing implementation of the plan.

**Meeting to detail one of the municipal level plans in the context of the Local Development Programme of CTA-ZM**



Photo: CTA-ZM

**Conclusions**

CTA is now investing considerable effort in ensuring that these lessons learnt are carried, not just by the technical team, but by all partners. This collective sense-making process has helped to value the unique differences, and thereby avoids the idea that there is a single formula or model that can be followed.

Clearly, the participatory municipal-level planning described here is shaped by the dynamics of political process and the existing social and historical patterns of communication and domination. Of course, one says! But this is significant for those trying to standardise the experience into a set of steps, as will inevitably happen as efforts to scale up such localised experiences emerge. It cannot be 'methodologised' nor can a model be set down for others to follow – beyond the level of some general principles, inspiring examples, and cautions.

Nevertheless, several elements have been effective in these three cases:

- the value of participatory visioning, problems appraisal and solution identification (PRA) when well prepared and embedded in an ongoing planning and implementation process;
- the importance of some form of supervision and decision-making body in which the elected councillors are but one of the actors (in these cases, this body is the MCRD);
- the need for patience by all to ride the ups and downs of conflict **between** municipal actors and **within** each group, including the union movement;
- slow but steady capacity-building of leadership, facilitation, and negotiation skills; and
- the need for clear facilitation at the onset of the process, external in these cases, and the gradual transformation of the role of external bodies (such as CTA) to advisory bodies (technical, strategic, or methodological).

For CTA and the STRs of Tombos and Araponga, it is

clear that simply creating and occupying strategic and physical spaces for participation or taking up existing spaces does not mean that there is participation. Ensuring clear and active diverse voices in these spaces is critical. On the other hand, people's absence does not necessarily represent lack of participation. During a recent evaluation of the LDP process in Araponga (January 2003), the MCRD members noted that no-one can be expected to participate in or even keep track of all the 25 activities they undertake. What is more important is that some strategic players maintain linkages across the activities and communicate key issues to the different social groups.

The three MRDP processes illustrate that participation is inherently about conflict. Dissent forms an opportunity for negotiation and creative inputs in identifying actions. Clearly not everything can be resolved by consensus. Each process includes moments when majority decisions, by voting, have to suffice although this does not close the door to creating consensus in future.

The LPD, with PRA as a critical ingredient, is fundamentally a pedagogic process. The learning is institutional at municipal level in people's organisations and in the seat of municipal power. The participatory processes in Araponga, Tombos, and Acaiaca are examples of democracy in action.

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#### NOTES

The chapter from which this article is drawn is called 'Participatory Municipal Development Plans in Brazil: divergent partners constructing common futures.' Forthcoming in Hickey, S and G. Mohan (Eds). (2004) *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation? Exploring New Approaches to Participation*. Zed Books, London.

# GENERAL SECTION

# 13

## Domestic abuses against housewives in *haor* areas of Bangladesh: understanding the impact of Concern's intervention in reducing abuses

by DIPANKAR DATTA and NELI SEN GUPTA

### Introduction

The *haor* basin takes up the greater part of the northeast region of Bangladesh. The area remains flooded for about six months of the year and looks like an enormous lake in which villages resemble islands dotted through the landscape. The flooding erodes the edges of these 'island villages' and the villagers have to construct various forms of erosion barriers to preserve their village land from the floodwaters. Travel is by boat for six months of the year. In the dry season, the area is a vast plain of rice fields. National NGOs and Government services are rarely visible in this area. However, this area has been targeted by a few international NGOs, such as CARE and Concern Worldwide.

Concern Worldwide in Bangladesh has been implementing integrated rural development projects in three remote sub-districts – Khaliajuri, Itna, and Gowainghat – of the *haor* area for the last ten years. Key project activities include the formation of community-based groups with the poor for raising awareness, human development training, skill training, non-formal education, savings and credit schemes, and rural infrastructure development. At present, about 96% of the group members are female. These activities aim to contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of poor women, an inherent part of which is raising awareness of their own rights, as many women suffer from

abuse in their households and communities.

To understand the effectiveness of Concern's programme towards empowering poor women in *haor* areas, research was undertaken early in 2003. The key research questions were:

- what are the socio-economic factors contributing to abuses against housewives in the family?
- what are the most common types of abuse? What are the health consequences?
- as a result of Concern's interventions, what has been the extent of the reduction of physical and mental abuse of housewives?

### Research methodology

The study was conducted in 12 *haor* villages (Table1) over a period of three days in each village.

To begin with, poor and non-poor households were identified in every village by using a social map. In the control villages, 20 women from poor households were invited to participate in PRA sessions. In the Concern villages, the poor households were further categorised as Concern and non-Concern households, from which 15 and 10 women were invited to participate in PRA sessions respectively. Participants were invited considering their availability.

**Table 1: Distribution of selected villages**

Name of sub-district	Concern village (Concern working areas)	Control village (where Concern and other NGOs have not worked)	Total
Khaliajuri	2	2	4
Itna	2	2	4
Gowainghat	2	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>

Next, two groups were formed, a housewives group and a mothers-in-law group. This division was to facilitate open discussions within peer groups.

With the mothers-in-law group, a Focus Group Discussion was held, focusing on major changes that the mothers-in-law noted between their being housewives and the housewives of the present generation. This was followed by a discussion on the issues of dowry, polygamy, divorce, the abuse of women, and the impact of Concern's intervention in empowering housewives.

With the housewives group, a Family Relationship diagram was used to analyse their relationship with other family members (Chart 1). Next, a Venn diagram (Chart 2) was used to facilitate discussions to ascertain the causes of poor or abusive family relationships. Discussions were also held on the nature of abuse, the related health consequences (Chart 3), and defence strategies at times of severe abuse. This was followed by a discussion about women's feeling about power. In Concern villages, an Impact-Flow diagram was used to understand the overall impact of Concern's intervention (Charts 4 and 5).

Towards end of the exercise in each village, findings were presented to other housewives living in that village for triangulation.

### Household relationships analysis

#### The fabric of inter-household relationships

The housewives considered and evaluated different perceived virtues like obedience, honour, dignity, duty, affection, subordination, etc. in describing their relationship with other family members.

In all cases, the son is considered to be the closest in the relationship network, followed by the daughter, and then the husband. Housewives generally have a better position

**A triangulation session in Mehendipur village of Khaliajuri**



Photo: Dipankar Datta

if other family members are in some way dependent on her or her husband.

Both the *sosur* (father-in-law) and the *sasuri* (mother-in-law) play a vital and subtle role in the family. The *sasuri's* role is like a catalyst, particularly in family decision-making related to housewives and in exerting influence over her son. The *sosur* is more like a father, an ultimate decision maker, and one who can rebuke or even physically assault a housewife.

The *vasur* (husband's elder brother) is more like a *sosur*. However, it is a social norm for a housewife to wear a long veil before a *vasur* and not to touch him for any reason. It could be extremely embarrassing if a *vasur* abused her, either verbally or physically. The *vaz* (*vasur's* wife) often commands adoration and respect, the depth of which depends on many interrelated factors, such her husband's economic status and her relationship with the *sosur/sasuri*. Usually, housewives share their emotions and feelings and discuss personal issues with the *vaz*, as she is also a family housewife.

Housewives normally have a more friendly relationship with *debors* (husband's younger brothers) than with *nanads* (husband's sisters). *Nanads* usually have unrestricted access to the housewives' cosmetics and clothes, which can be a source of annoyance to them.

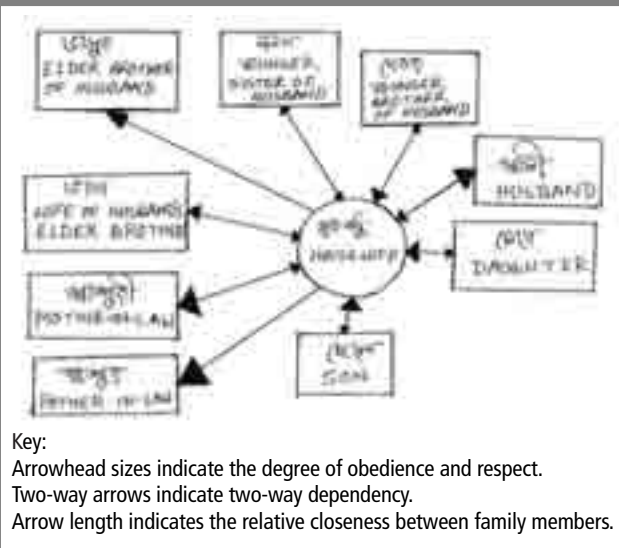
#### Analysis of abuse in family relationships

Factors contributing to poor or abusive relationships within families and which often result in mental and physical abuse are most commonly related to financial problems within the household, neglecting household chores, or socio-religious discrimination. The health consequences of physical torture have been summarised in Chart 3.

Dowries were a repeated theme. In Muslim-dominated villages, a dowry is considered to be an investment to



**Chart 1: Relationships between housewives and other family members in Nuralipur village, Khaliajuri**

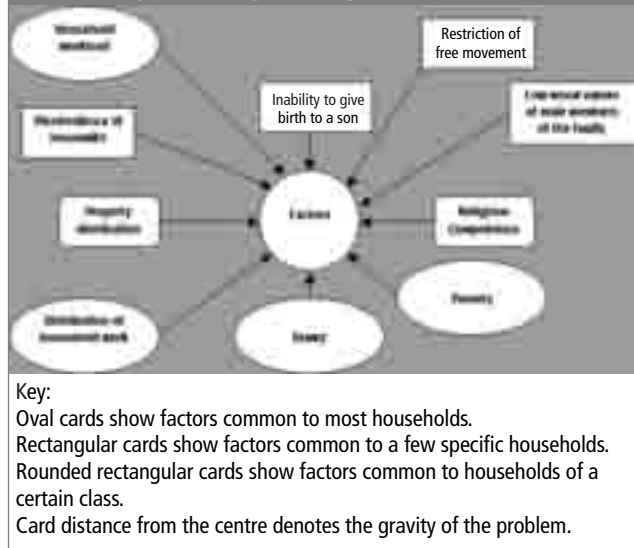


strengthen the husband's livelihood. Like Muslim women, Hindu women get no share of their paternal properties after marriage. A bride's parents' inability to pay a dowry means that her parents risk being stigmatised and the bride herself risks being violated. The most common dowry-related abuses include physical torture, forced eviction from the marital home, a second marriage or the threat thereof, and being denied adequate food.

Causes of poverty like seasonal unemployment or working family members being unable to work due to long-term illness directly affect the household income flow, putting intense psychological pressure on male family members. The most common poverty-related abuses were beatings and verbal abuse. These abuses were also common if housewives failed to do household chores on time or take care of male family members. In contrast, in recent years, housewives have not only been involved in household activities but also in most cases directly involved in income-generating activities. Even this is not without problems: some Concern members also work on project-related activities in addition to their household work. However, because of heavy workloads, they can sometimes become bad-tempered with their husbands or other family members, often resulting in domestic violence.

In Muslim-dominated villages, socio-religious discrimination can occur because of a housewife's free movement in the community. Formal complaints by religious or village leaders made to male family members can result in physi-

**Chart 2: Factors responsible for poor or abusive relationships in Dhanpur village, Itna**



cal abuse and/or the restriction of a housewife's freedom of movement. Infertile wives and those who fail to give birth to a son also encounter socio-religious discrimination, usually facing neglect by their husbands, opposition from in-laws, and denial of access to their husbands' property.

Other significant factors in abusive family relationships include the unjust distribution of property and goods/services among family members, issues relating to children's upbringing, a husband's unwillingness to repay loans which his wife has taken from groups, a housewife's inability to satisfy her husband's physical needs<sup>1</sup>, or a husband's involvement in antisocial activities.

**Defence strategies**

From the study it became evident that many housewives resort to silence as a self-protecting strategy when having few socio-economic options available to them. According to the participants, most husbands who married a second wife initially hid this fact from them. Once discovered, they had no choice but to accept it. Participants noted that most

<sup>1</sup> This study did not focus on sexual abuse. However, sometimes this issue arose in the discussions. About 90% of marriages take place before a woman's first menstrual period. The average housewife marries at the age of 12 and the average inter-spouse age difference is 15 years. Discussions revealed that most of the newly married housewives were not physically mature enough for sexual intercourse and as a result they became ill. Failure to satisfy their husband's physical needs sometimes resulted in torture or divorce. In addition, husbands ignored these factors during their menstrual period and after giving birth. Painful situations occurred when they were forced to fulfil the physical needs of their husbands at those times.

**Chart 3: The health consequences of domestic abuse against housewives**



second wives were divorced or widowed women, choosing to marry again for their livelihood security, knowing that their new husband already had a first wife.

However if, after their second marriage, their husbands misbehaved or tried to divorce them, the first wives generally appealed to the *salish* (village court) to try to reclaim their dowry or filed suits against their husbands in a judicial court, though usually with limited success.

Over time however, a lot of Concern women members have begun to resist physical abuse through various concerted actions, including:

- discussing issues with others group members;
- arranging shelter for the victims (abused women) in other houses; and
- women’s group members intervening to help resolve the crisis.

Participants acknowledged their husbands’ moral support in arranging shelter for these victims. The actions of women members and their husbands’ behavioural change have not only reduced the incidents of physical abuse but have also provided strong moral support, helping them to resist abuse and protest against the oppression of women socially.

**Analysing the effectiveness of the Concern Project**

**Housewives’ feelings about power**

Housewives felt that one form of power was that of their husband attaching importance to their opinion. They also felt that having sons earning a wage<sup>2</sup>, an education, intelligence and commonsense, the ability to speak with others, some money, their own assets, respect for their opinion from family members, being able to participate in settling

<sup>2</sup> Women perceive that sons will take care of them in their old age. Besides, only sons have the right to perform the last religious rites.

**Chart 4: Impact of group formation in the family in Lengura village, Gowainghat**



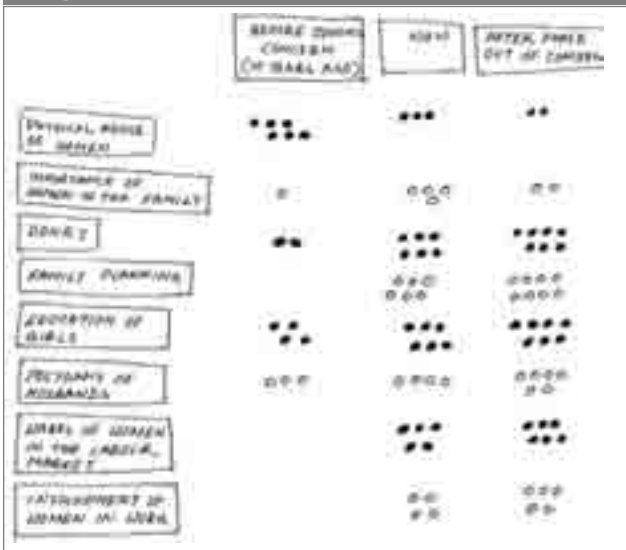
family disputes, and the ability to buy necessities were forms of power. In addition, some participants thought that a housewife was powerful when she could make decisions in the absence of her husband.

**Achieving power: not an elusive goal**

In the control villages, the incidence of abuse has not reduced over the last decade. Instead, the rate of divorce, polygamy, and the demand for dowries and related abuses has increased over the last ten years. The mobility of housewives is restricted. Usually they are not allowed to vote at elections according to their choice. Housewives referred to abuse against them as an accepted behavioural norm. With increased economic hardship and rising male unemployment, housewives in poor families are working outside the home (but within the village) in larger numbers than ever to supplement, sometimes very substantially, household budgets. Housewives’ rising economic responsibilities, however, do not automatically give them greater power and security in their households. Housewives working outside the home violate social norms – a source of tension and shame for their menfolk, especially if the primary reason is her husband’s unemployment. These sweeping changes place an enormous stress on households.

In contrast, as a result of Concern’s interventions, the decreasing number of incidents of abuse experienced by Concern housewives since joining the programme revealed many gradual and positive changes, towards a more elevated social status for women. The reduction of physical abuse was particularly noted.

**Chart 5: Impact of Concern's activities in Purbo-Gram village, Itna**



**Analysing the impact of Concern's activities in Rustampur village, Gowainghat**



Photo: Dipankar Datta

- Increased organisational strength, increased mobility, and free interaction with outsiders, has contributed significantly to the empowerment process.

**Key lessons**

There are multiple dimensions to domestic abuse. The combinations of abuses are specific to individual housewives, households, and villages. In the control villages, the increase in domestic abuse is linked to an increasing demand for dowries, an increase in male unemployment, the violation of traditional norms, and the threat to men's sense of masculine identity, etc. The restricted socio-economic mobility of housewives limits their choices and increases their vulnerability within their households as well as in the village.

In the Concern villages (with the exception of dowry-related cases) the decrease in the incidence and severity of domestic abuse has been linked to the greater organisational strength of both the female and male groups and housewives' income-earning ability. The highest reduction of abuse has been observed in the incidence of physical torture compared to the incidence of verbal abuse or the deprivation of basic needs.

Although dowries are regarded as a harmful practice, participants were not sure how these problems could be resolved. Despite there being a law against them, discussion groups did not see it as an effective tool able to address this problem. Discussion groups in some villages suggested broadcasting radio and television programmes to raise awareness of the problems associated with dowries.

The findings about linkages between decreased abuses, housewives' increased economic roles, and the benefits of supportive actions to reduce abuses give hope. Building on this, participants emphasised the need for more direct involvement of male family members in micro-credit activ-

Previously, women's mobility, especially in Muslim-dominated villages, had been very restricted. More recently, women are not only working outside of the village but also visiting the Concern office and bank for various purposes. They have been able to create a situation within their families where they are able to share their opinions. Now, if a husband physically abuses his wife publicly, other women in the village protest against this. Both divorce and polygamy are still prevalent but women have intensified their protests against these incidents. Despite many efforts to raise awareness, the intensity of dowry-related problems has increased over the past decade, but incidents of related physical abuse have reduced significantly. There have been cases where Concern members have mobilised villagers to raise the money for a dowry where a poorer family has been unable to pay in full, and thus settle a marriage.

A number of positive factors were found to have contributed to the levels of influence and control over family-related issues gained by the Concern women members.

- Concern's human and skill development training has empowered women by increasing their ability to generate income and by raising awareness of their own rights.
- Concern's credit programme has proved to be an effective tool for empowerment, enabling women to achieve economic freedom and to fulfil basic family needs through self-employment, increasing their transactions with other members of society, enabling them to provide credit to their husbands, and by reducing fear and uncertainty.

ities. According to the Concern group members, 96% of whom are women, the women who had access to micro-credit were solely liable for this fund, though in reality most women hand over this money to their husbands and still depend on their husbands' willingness to repay the loan. They suggested making their husbands jointly (and legally) liable for any financial credit. This approach would encourage their husbands to work more closely with them, e.g. discussing business opportunities, repayment procedures etc. It would also improve the wife's position both socially and within the household, and remove the humiliation of husbands only having access to credit through their wives. The immediate outcome of putting this recommendation into practice is promising. Women now find that their husbands take more interest in understanding the functionality of groups, help in group-related activities, and share the responsibility of repaying loans on time.

Local institutions did not serve the needs and interests of poor women. Neither village institutions (like the *salish*) nor legal institutions (police, judicial court) supported housewives contesting incidents of polygamy and divorce. To improve access to village institutions, discussion groups suggested promoting and expanding the number of male groups, to help build organisational strengths and create opportunities for male family members to participate in

human development training, such as the social and legal rights of women.

Concern has already taken steps to put the above-mentioned learning into practice.

- Instead of just the housewife, the whole family will be considered to be Concern's beneficiary. This will enable other family members to participate directly in many group-related activities.
- Both husband and wife will be equally liable for loan money.
- The number of male groups will be increased. Women's group leaders will facilitate the formation of new male groups in association with Concern project staff.
- A popular theatre will be formed with interested group members. This theatre will perform shows about dowries and other social issues in every village.
- Concern has increased the number of training sessions on legal and women's social rights issues for the groups. Husbands and other male family members will be encouraged to participate in this training.

These studies show that processes of change in gender relations and attitudes are ongoing and take time and that it is equally important to work with both woman and men to change attitudes. Though it is a good start, Concern will need to be in for the long haul.

#### CONTACT DETAILS

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# 14

## Extracts from 'Teach Yourself Citizens' Juries: A handbook by the DIY Jury Steering Group'

**"A citizen is a person who feels responsible for the area in which they live and would like to have some say in the running of it."**

Resident, Newcastle, UK



Have you ever thought about running your own citizens' jury but were not sure how to go about it? The following extracts are taken from a new handbook *'Teach Yourself Citizens' Juries: A handbook by the DIY Jury Steering Group'*. Using a series of cartoons as a guide, it takes you through a step-by-step process on how to plan, implement, and follow-up a citizens' jury. The cartoons illustrate what a citizens' jury is, why you might want to have one, what the main ingredients of a citizens' jury are, and how to get started.



Made to accompany the video 'Teach Yourself Citizens' Juries: Making a difference' the manual explains the origins of citizens' juries, and provides examples of some of the situations in which you might feel it would be worthwhile to hold a citizens' jury for yourself.

This 22-minute video shows how a citizens' jury was formed 2003 in Newcastle, UK, to explore health issues affecting older people. The video takes you through each aspect of the processes that were involved, from organising the first meeting, where people explored and prioritised the issues of concern, to selecting a steering group, oversight panel, expert witnesses, and jury members, to meetings where jury members could debate and analyse the 'evidence'. The result was a set of practical recommendations identified by the jurors that were then presented at a high-profile launch to policy makers and the media.

This video demonstrates how to find common ground between people from diverse backgrounds, and how ordinary citizens' can make complex, informed decisions based on the information presented to them by expert witnesses and from their own deliberations. It also includes commentary recounting the experiences of some of the people involved.

The handbook and video are published by the Policy, Ethics, and Life Sciences (PEALS) Programme, University of

**"You think of a jury, you think of a courtroom, and it was that type of setting that I thought I would be coming into – but this is different, it's more friendly, and an atmosphere is created where you can openly ask questions and get answers."**

Steering group member

Newcastle, 2003. These extracts were reproduced with kind permission from PEALS. The cartoons are by Kate Charlesworth, and the accompanying video was produced by Swingbridge Video.

A single copy of the handbook and video are available free of charge to community groups on request – thereafter all additional copies as priced. The handbook and video cost £10.00 per copy plus postage.

● To order, please contact:  
**PEALS, Centre for Life,  
 Times Square, Newcastle, NE1 4EQ.  
 Tel: +44 191 241 8614.**





If you are an individual, you might want to consider inviting a citizen-juror in your community to help. What will you discuss together in the first of a day? You'll be about getting local concerns, a better hearing from local citizens - not taking a day of getting greater recognition for a standing in international law.



**A: TESTING THE PUBLIC OPINIONS ON A SUBJECT THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY DECIDED**

**B: TO ALLOW SPACE FOR PEOPLE WITH DON'T NORMALLY GET A VOICE TO HAVE THEIR SAY**



### CHOOSING A SUBJECT



Assuming that you want to attract people that you don't already know, the first question to ask is whether you wish members of your local community to be a group of people that a wide area who already share a common interest but a not nearly confined to have issues from an interest, local population, or local history.



### HOW TO GET PEOPLE TO THE FIRST MEETING

When arranging your meeting there are various ways of making sure that people who don't normally come to meetings do not miss out.

- Publish the meeting to news of interest, via local TV printed advertising.



- Make the first time of the meeting one that you prepare, and offer help with children, and access for people with disabilities.



# Tips for trainers

As part of this special issue on community-based planning, *Tips for Trainers* brings you two extracts from Khanya-Managing Rural Change's *Action Research for Community-Based Planning* project manual.

The development of the manual was funded under the project for action-research on community-based planning on which several of the papers in this special issue are based and represents the collective work and experience from this broad group.

The two examples selected demonstrate two aspects of the community-based planning process: ensuring the effective representation of people within the community concerned in the planning activities, and how to prepare and run a pre-planning community meeting in advance of the main planning events, in order to mobilise leaders from diverse sections of the community.

## Extracts from the *Action Research for Community-Based Planning* project manual

### Ensuring effective representation

It is important to ensure the effective participation of people, including sub-planning unit structures, in the planning process. The various groupings within the community may have organised structures, which can be used for representation purposes e.g.

- Economic groups such as market women, bakers' associations, and palm oil producers' associations.
- Social groupings such as youth associations, student unions, and boy scouts.
- Religious organisations such as Catholic associations, Muslim associations, and Pentecostals groups.
- Traditional associations such as

cultural groups.

- Environmental groupings: these include both groups of natural resource (NR) users as well as environmental interest groups. Groups of NR users include farmers' associations (livestock and crop), gatherers of water, beekeepers, and traditional healers groups (who often gather herbs and other plant and animal products from wild areas and thus have valuable knowledge of the state of natural resources). Environmental interest groups include waste management groups (e.g. clean-up campaigns, recycling organisations, waste pickers), environmental clubs at schools, and other CBOs concerned with environmental issues.

There may well be groups who are not organised, and these will typically be marginalized groups like the disabled, widows, and orphans. These groups also need to be represented.

The principles of effective representation are based on the assumption that every community is made up of a diversity of groups whose interests might either coincide or be at variance, and as CBP is a democratic process, there needs to be effective representation of these different groups, and some consensus-building about priorities. In a small unit such as a village in Uganda, all adults are members of the Village Council. However as units get larger, such as a ward in South Africa with 10–20,000 people, some representative structure is needed to ensure that the voices of important groups are heard. Some of the issues include the following:

- resources are generally limited and there is the likelihood that those who are not effectively represented would have their interests overtaken by the more aggressive;

- if a representative structure is needed, each social, economic, or livelihood grouping should be represented by a leader who is expected to articulate the aspirations of the people s/he is representing;
- leaders that are chosen must be truly representative and not personally motivated;
- there must be scheduled feedback meetings for the represented and the representatives in between the planning events to ensure accountability of those leaders; and,
- the number of feedback meetings should depend on time, availability of resources etc.

A way to improve participation, ownership, and representation is to carry out sufficient **community feedback processes and mechanisms**. The importance of feedback during the CBP process cannot be stressed enough. Feedback helps to increase accountability and transparency, thus ensuring improved representation.

The amount of time available for feedback obviously depends on the time the CBP process takes in the community. It stands to reason that the more the basic five-day CBP process is spread out, the greater the need for feedback to keep the community on board.

There are several main areas where feedback is necessary during the CBP process:

- at the pre-planning phase – to increase community awareness and elicit questions and suggested improvements, and ensure interest and participation;
- at the community launch meeting – further awareness raising, but also sharing the information gathered in the pre-planning phase;
- at the community meeting undertaking the strengths;



- weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis for the planning unit, after the livelihoods analysis with groupings;
- at the meeting of the community to develop visions and objectives;
  - at the community meeting to confirm and verify the plan;
  - once the plan has been reviewed by the local authority; and,
  - during regular meetings to monitor the implementation.

### Pre-planning community meeting

#### Background

This meeting is held a week or two prior to the main planning week, initially just with unit committee members. This could also include a broader session with opinion leaders (such as teachers, clinic staff, religious leaders, youth leaders, leaders of unemployed groups, trade union, women's groups etc.). The aim is to mobilise the leaders of many different sections of the community. It is also to ensure broad ownership of the plan so that people realise that this is about their process, that one of the outputs needs to be local action and not just demands for resources from others. It is important to ensure that from this early stage, participants with environmental knowledge or competence are involved in the process. This could include representatives from CBOs dealing with environmental matters and other advocates for specific local environmental issues.

#### Objective

By the end of this meeting local leaders should:

- understand the planning process and outputs;
- be committed to supporting an inclusive planning process (which

prioritises the needs of marginalized groups);

- be ready to mobilise their constituencies ready for the planning phase;
- have defined the main socio-economic and interest groups to take forward the planning process;
- have begun collecting existing background information; and,
- have developed a timetable for the planning week and the first meetings will have been scheduled.

#### What part of the plan does this feed into?

Use in Section 1, 'How did we make this plan?' (See Box 1)

<b>Tools/methods</b>	Group discussion
<b>Timing</b>	Two hours
<b>Facilitators</b>	Core facilitation team
<b>Participants</b>	Elected leaders e.g. planning unit committee, possibly joined by opinion leaders, traditional leaders, interest groups, etc.
<b>Process</b>	Introductions and ensuring elected leaders understand the planning process; roles; social analysis and organising the week; resources needed; and comments/tips.

#### Process

Introductions and ensuring elected leaders understand the planning process

- introduce facilitation team and elected leaders;
- discuss overall planning process within which the community plans fit;
- discuss expectations and concerns;
- discuss content of the plan (use flip

#### Box 1: The main sections of a community-based plan

Documentation of the plan is a key issue. Not all the meetings and discussions need to be documented (although one may decide to keep minutes of all planning meetings).

#### Cover and/or endorsement page (with key signatures)

Section

- 1 How did we make the plan? The process we went through.
- 2 What is the situation in our community? Detailing background, different groups, state of the natural environment, services, and SWOT analysis.
- 3 What do we want to achieve? The vision, goals, and strategies and projects/activities to reach the goals.
- 4 Implementing our plan. Summary of who needs to do what for our projects and activities. Detailed project proposals should be included in the plan Annex.

#### Annex

**Project profiles:** project summaries that must be completed for projects submitted to Council or sectoral departments. The plan should act as the community record book, enabling decisions to be reviewed and information to be updated in due course. It is a tool for monitoring progress in plan implementation and can be updated annually as projects move forward, and new priorities emerge.

chart which is left with the committee);

- discuss overall shape of the week (assume here that there has been some introduction to councillors prior to this meeting); and,
- discuss availability of any existing information that can be used to help with the plan.

#### Roles

Discuss who is in the core facilitation team and who is supplementary, and what their roles are (including that some committee members/councillors will become trainers).

Social analysis and organising the week

- Discuss what are the socio-economic and interest groups in the area, using the question 'what are the different groups that you recognise in the area who have different levels of well-being?' Give one or two examples (e.g. unemployed, youth, elderly women, business people, farmers, salaried people etc.).
- Tell people that you would like to meet representatives from these groups, and that all these groups need to participate in the broad community meetings (ward planning forum).
- Arrange a timetable for the week and in detail for first day.
- Agree how to obtain the participants for first community meeting and who will organise them (e.g. do we have some

meetings in villages/sections at which representatives are elected/selected for the community meeting/ward planning forum?).

**Resources needed**

- A flipchart with contents of the plan.
- A flipchart with a table showing the week.

**Comments/tips**

Discuss what form of representation will be used for the broader community meetings to create a representative planning forum. There are two main possibilities:

- people are selected from different parts of the planning unit to form a representative structure for planning; and,

- those people who participate in other meetings who are invited to join in the broad community meetings.

There could also be a combination. However it must be stressed that the group selecting vision and goals should be seen to be representative of the community, and a ten-person committee is not enough.

The extracts have been reproduced with kind permission from Khanya-Managing Rural Change. For more information, to download the *Action Research for Community-Based Planning Project* manual, or to download other CBP-related material published by Khanya, visit the community-based planning page at [www.khanya-mrc.co.za](http://www.khanya-mrc.co.za)



Welcome to the In Touch section of *PLA Notes*. Through these pages we hope to create a more participatory resource for the *PLA Notes* audience, to put you, as a reader, in touch with other readers. We want this section to be a key source of up-to-date information on training, publications, and networks. Your help is vital in keeping us all in touch about:

- **Networks.** Do you have links with recognised local, national or international networks for practitioners of participatory learning? If so, what does this network provide – training? newsletters? resource material/library? a forum for sharing experiences? Please tell us about the network and provide contact details for other readers.
- **Training.** Do you know of any forthcoming training events or courses in participatory methodologies? Are you a trainer yourself? Are you aware of any key training materials that you would

like to share with other trainers?

- **Publications.** Do you know of any key publications on participatory methodologies and their use? Have you (or has your organisation) produced any books, reports, or videos that you would like other readers to know about?
- **Electronic information.** Do you know of any electronic conferences or pages on the Internet which exchange or provide information on participatory methodologies?
- **Other information.** Perhaps you have ideas about other types of information that would be useful for this section. If so, please let us know.

Please send your responses to:  
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*PLA Notes* is published in April, August, and December. Please submit material two months before the publication date.

## Book reviews & videos



**Participatory capacity building: a facilitator's toolbox for assessment and strategic planning of NGO capacity**

● Jouwert van Geene,  
PSO Capacity Building in

Developing Countries, Case Studies and Tools, Issue Paper 1. The Institute of Cultural Affairs, Zimbabwe, 2003.

Developed in collaboration with the National Association of NGOs (NANGO) in Zimbabwe and ICCO-Psa and PSO in the Netherlands, *Participatory Capacity Building* is a practical toolbox for internal or external facilitators of capacity building of NGOs. The tools can be used to assess an organisation's capacity and plan for strategic and innovative directions for organisational improvement.

After an introduction to the processes involved and a discussion of the broader perspective, the manual introduces two methodologies: Participatory Organisational Evaluation Tool (POET) and Technology of Participation (ToP). There are then six chapters which focus on: participatory capacity assessment (PCA); analysing and reporting PCA scores; information about feedback and running workshops; and, monitoring and evaluating capacity building systems. The Toolbox also includes experiences of using the Toolbox as it was developed and applied with NGOs in Zimbabwe.

■ Available in both hard copy and CD-ROM format from: ICA Zimbabwe, PO Box CY 905 Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe. Email: [icazim@africaonline.co.zw](mailto:icazim@africaonline.co.zw)



**Stakeholder incentives in participatory forest management: a manual for economic analysis**

● Michael Richards,

Jonathon Davies and Gil Yaron. ITDG Publishing/Overseas Development Institute, London, UK, 2003

This manual stems from a widespread concern that there is insufficient understanding of the costs and benefits to local communities and small farmers of participatory forest management (PFM) and a realisation that this has contributed to the limited success of many PFM experiences.

This manual provides a toolbox of economic methods, which will help maximise the understanding and ownership of local people. Designed for use at the project or micro level, the book integrates economic analysis with other decision-making criteria to provide a systematic yet flexible approach to analysing stakeholder incentives in PFM. Part I introduces the economic concepts to PFM, and Part II sets out a step-by-step approach to economic stakeholder analysis – from the identification of stakeholders to establishing a participatory monitoring system.

■ Available from: ITDG Publishing, 103-105 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4HL. Website: [www.itdgpublishing.org.uk](http://www.itdgpublishing.org.uk)



**Community-based animal healthcare: The how-to-do-it videos**

● CAPE Unit, OAU/IBAR, 2003

These 'how-to-do-it'



videos describe the key issues to consider when setting up a community-based animal health system. The videos will be useful for

veterinarians who work for government, NGOs or the private sector and who want to establish a community-based project, or improve an existing project.

The first video in the series covers community participation, sustainability and the role of vets. The second video covers participatory approaches to adult learning, project monitoring and evaluation, and how to influence policy.



**Community-based animal healthcare: issues for policy makers (video)**

● CAPE Unit, OAU/IBAR, 2003

Community-based animal healthcare systems are becoming increasingly popular as a means to improve primary-level veterinary services in marginalized areas. Ultimately, the success of community-based approaches requires support from policy makers.

This video presents the key issues for policy makers to consider when assessing community-based animal health systems. The video also describes ways to involve policy makers in learning more about community-based approaches and formulating appropriate policies.

■ Available from: Andy Catley, CAPE Unit, OAU/IBAR, PO Box 30786, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: +254 2 226447; Fax: +254 2 212289; Email: [andy.catley@oau-ibar.org](mailto:andy.catley@oau-ibar.org)



**Guidelines on participatory development in Kenya: critical reflection on training, policy, and scaling up.**

● Edited by Eliud

Wakwabubi and Hudson Shiverenje. Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya (PAMFORK). Kenya, 2003

Based on field experiences of researchers and practitioners, this book is intended primarily to be used as a practical guide for participation as applied in training, policy, and scaling up. The underlying assumption in the guidelines is a rights-based approach that seeks to achieve equity, social justice, empowerment, and citizen participation in development. Case studies with lessons and challenges by actors with diverse experiences on participatory development in Kenya form building blocks for the guidelines.

A follow-up to *Participatory development in Kenya: lessons and challenges, Volume I*, this book builds on this earlier volume taking into consideration current trends and thinking on participation. It focuses on critical and essential issues aimed at improving the quality of participation in training and facilitation, policy processes, and scaling up of development work.

■ Available from: Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya (PAMFORK), PO Box 2645, KHN Post Office, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: +254 2 716609. Email: [pamfork@nbnnet.co.ke](mailto:pamfork@nbnnet.co.ke). PAMFORK is a member of the RCPLA Network.



**Challenging women's poverty: perspectives on gender and poverty reduction strategies from Nicaragua and Honduras.**

● CIIR Briefing Paper.

Sarah Bradshaw and Brian Linneker. Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), 2003.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund now require poor countries seeking debt relief to outline their plans for reducing poverty in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). This CIIR briefing paper examines the extent to which women and gender issues are included in these poverty reduction strategies.

Combining an incisive review of the PRSP policy context and of women's experiences of poverty with detailed analysis of the PRSP process in Nicaragua and Honduras, the authors critically examine the ability of PRSPs to recognise women's needs and challenge women's poverty. Their findings and conclusions will be essential reading for anyone involved in PRSP processes or interested in poverty and gender issues in Latin America and beyond.

■ Available from: Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), Unit 3, Canonbury Yard, 190a New North Road, London N1 7BJ, UK. Tel: +44 20 7354 0883 or +44 20 7288 8600; Fax: +44 20 7359 0017; Email: ciir@ciir.org; Website: www.ciir.org

### **Community integrated pest management in Indonesia: institutionalising participation and people-centred approaches**

● Mansour Fakih, Toto Rahardjo, and Michel Pimbert. Institutionalising Participation Series 5. IIED, 2003

Integrated pest management (IPM) emerged in Indonesia in the late 1980s as a reaction to the environmental and social consequences of the Green Revolution model of agriculture. Focusing on farmer field schools (FFS), the FFS aimed to make farmers experts in their own fields, enabling them to

replace their reliance on external inputs, such as pesticides, with endogenous skills, knowledge, and resources. Over time the emphasis of the programme shifted towards community organisation, community planning and management of IPM, and became known as Community IPM (CIPM). This study assesses the extent to which Community IPM has been institutionalised in Java (Indonesia), and the dynamics of institutionalising people centred and participatory processes.

### **State versus participation: natural resources management in Europe**

● Andréa Finger-Stich and Matthias Finger. Institutionalising Participation Series 2. IIED, 2003

The participation of the public, local communities, indigenous peoples, and various other stakeholders in natural resources policy-making, planning, and/or management has been increasingly promoted in international and national policies. This book analyses and discusses how participation does – or does not – occur in the management of forest and water resources at various institutional levels in European contexts. The authors critically analyse how the State has, over time, strengthened its own development interests by removing decisions over the management of natural resources from local users and communities' hands and today tends to instrumentalise peoples' participation for its own legitimacy purposes. This evolution is considered in light of two more recent trends, namely the globalisation of economic interests and the demands for democratisation, decentralisation, and accountability. The book highlights the strategies various State agencies use to control participation in decision-making processes relating to forest and water resource management.



### **Mind the gap: mainstreaming gender and participation in development**

● Nazneen Kanji, with preface by Michel Pimbert.

Institutionalising

Participation Series 4. IIED, 2003

*Mind the Gap* draws out lessons from gender mainstreaming work for those who seek to institutionalise participation. It begins by discussing the shift from women in development (WID) to gender and development (GAD) and the conceptual frameworks that contributed to this process. It examines the strategies used to mainstream gender, the achievements and the challenges involved, and the shifts from participation per se to governance, suggesting a greater focus in both on a relational perspective, policy processes, and institutions. It explores the tensions between gender mainstreaming and participatory development, suggesting ways of bridging the gaps between 'gender' and 'participation'. The author argues that renewed alliances with emerging movements and more critical perspectives are required to prevent the cooption of visions and weakening of values which underpin efforts to mainstream both a gender perspective and participatory approaches to development and social change.

■ Available from: Earthprint Limited, Orders Department, PO Box 119, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 4TP, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 1438 748111; Fax: +44 (0) 1438 748844; Email: orders@earthprint.co.uk; Website: www.earthprint.com. These and other publications in the Institutionalising Participation series are also available in PDF format on the IIED website [www.iied.org/sarl/pubs/institutpart.html](http://www.iied.org/sarl/pubs/institutpart.html)

## Workshops and events

### Introduction to Participatory Appraisal courses 21st–25th June 2004

#### PEANuT Project, Northumbria University, UK

This course, coordinated and facilitated by Northumbria University's Participatory Evaluation and Appraisal in Newcastle upon Tyne (PEANuT) project, is designed to further the ability of local people in identifying and effecting the changes they desire in their communities. The courses are open to anyone with an interest in the communities in which they live and/or work, focus on learning-by-doing, and run over five full days. Participants learn about the background and philosophies of participatory appraisal and how to use the tools and techniques with confidence. Pre-arranged fieldwork placements enable students (in teams) to practice their skills in an ongoing, real-world project. Themes of previous placements have included homelessness, consulting young people, and financial exclusion.

Full cost places are £380, and voluntary/not for profit sector places are £190. Places are strictly limited (16 participants) and are allocated on a first come, first served basis. There will be further courses in 2005.

● For more information and how to book contact: PEANuT (Participatory Evaluation and Appraisal in Newcastle upon Tyne), Lipman Building, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. Tel: +44 (0)191 2273951; Fax: +44(0)191 2274715; Website: [www.northumbria.ac.uk/peanut](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/peanut)

### Environmental Consensus and Conflict Resolution Workshop 26th–28th October 2004

#### University of Edinburgh, UK

This training course is designed for decision makers actively involved in environmental or other public policy matters or with managing conflicts concerning natural resources.

The workshop provides a foundation in consensus building and the thinking that underlies public participation and mediation, which have previously been perceived as separate specialised disciplines. It demonstrates how the skills of both disciplines can be combined to enable stakeholders to participate effectively in community planning or conflict resolution. It advocates a strategic approach to selecting the appropriate techniques to get effective participation and enables you to determine when outside expertise may be required to design a consultation exercise or to initiate mediation.

The cost for this three-day workshop is £395 and a special discount rate of £295 is available for a limited number of volunteers (a special application must be made for these places).

### Participatory Appraisal Workshop 6th–10th September 2004 University of Edinburgh, UK

The term Participatory Appraisal (PA) describes a growing family of approaches and methods, which enable local people to appraise and share their knowledge of life and local conditions, in order that they can analyse, plan, and act on these ideas. Through PA, local groups are able to identify their own priorities and make their own decisions about the future. This workshop will concentrate on the practical application of PA and will consist of five days of intensive training, with three days spent on practical exercises and other methods for learning about PA. The remaining

two days will include placements in Edinburgh and the surrounding area, and will provide an opportunity for a practical application of the approach.

The cost for this intensive five-day workshop is £475 and a special discount rate of £325 is available for a limited number of volunteers (a special application should be made for these rates).

● For more information about these courses, contact Vikki Hilton, School of GeoSciences Ecology and Resource Management, The University of Edinburgh, Darwin Building, Mayfield Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JU, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 131 650 6439; Fax +44 (0) 131 662 0478; Email: [vikki.hilton@ed.ac.uk](mailto:vikki.hilton@ed.ac.uk); Website: [www.ierm.ed.ac.uk/shortcourses/eccrw.htm](http://www.ierm.ed.ac.uk/shortcourses/eccrw.htm)

### Results-based Management, Appreciative Inquiry, and Open Space Technology 12th–16th July 2004 MOSAIC, Canada

This new workshop introduces participants to results-based management, appreciative inquiry and open space technology. This course will show you how to demonstrate the effectiveness of your programmes with results-based management, master results, develop programme/organisational plans that are results-based, and design performance-monitoring systems based on indicators and participatory methods. Participants will also learn how to apply gender analysis to your work, expand their repertoire of tools, and learn about appreciative inquiry and open space and how they can be applied to any organisation, programme, and/or project. These increasingly popular approaches are being used around the world to tap into new ways to work that are more results-oriented, more appreciative, less problem-focused, and more self-organised.

**Participatory Development  
Concepts, Tools, and Application in  
PLA/PRA Methods  
19th–24th July 2004  
MOSAIC, Canada**

This workshop focuses on core participatory concepts, tools, and their application. This is an intensive six-day workshop set in the community to maximise learning, group interaction, and networking. Topics include: the origins of participatory development; learning and application of PRA/PLA tools; the application of participation to project design; monitoring and evaluation; PLA interventions that are gender sensitive; developing effective facilitation skills; building action plans; and, team-building. Two-day community assignments proposed by community-based organisations in the Ottawa region will allow participants to apply tools learned in the workshop to real-life situations.

The cost for this course is CAD\$895.00/US\$695.00 for international participants. A 10% discount is given to NGOs, community groups, and full-time students.

**Participatory Monitoring and  
Evaluation  
26th–31st July 2004  
MOSAIC, Canada**

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) involves a different approach to project monitoring and evaluation by involving local people, project stakeholders, and development agencies deciding together about how to measure results and what actions should follow once this information has been collected and analysed. This intensive six-day experiential workshop is practically focused with daily excursions into the community and a three-day community assignment.

Topics covered at the workshop include: origins of PM&E, skills and attributes of a PM&E facilitator, learning PM&E tools, designing a monitoring and evaluation framework and actions plan, and much more.

The cost for this course is CAD\$895.00/US\$695.00 for international participants. A 10% discount is given to NGOs, community groups, and full-time students.

● For more information about these three courses contact: Françoise Coupal, Mosaic.net International, Inc., 705 Roosevelt Avenue, Ottawa, K2A 2A8, Canada. Tel: + (613) 728 1439; Fax: +(613) 728 1154; Email: [workshop@mosaic-net-intl.ca](mailto:workshop@mosaic-net-intl.ca); Website: <http://mosaic-net-intl.ca>

**ICA:UK ToP Facilitation Training  
courses**

**Group facilitation methods**

**ICA:UK, UK  
20th–21st May 2004, Cambridge,  
UK; 24th–25th June 2004, Exeter, UK;  
6th–7th July 2004, Manchester, UK**

A structured introduction to the basic ToP Focused Conversation and Consensus Workshop methods, this course presents the foundations of the ToP methodology in a practical and participatory way, demonstrating, discussing, and practicing each method. Includes how to conduct purposeful, productive focused conversations; capture the wisdom of the group; stimulate feedback; and, reach shared awareness in meetings. Participants become familiar with a five-step process that moves from the collection of data and ideas, through the organisation of the data into meaningful groupings and to a point of consensus, resolution, and product.

**Group facilitation skills  
ICA:UK, UK  
8th July, Manchester, UK**

This course enables participants to explore the role and skills of the facilitator. Facilitating participatory processes goes beyond being able to design events and knowing which methods to use. There is a whole range of skills that a facilitator needs to bring into play both before, during, and after the event itself in order to ensure that the process and the methods employed are effective. The course enables participants to share actual experiences and challenges; explore ways of addressing these in future; reach a deeper understanding of what it means to facilitate; and, experience the ToP Focused Conversation and Consensus Workshop methods. This one-day course is scheduled back-to-back with Group Facilitation Methods to allow from one to three days of training.

**Participatory Strategic Planning**

**ICA:UK, UK  
10th–11th May 2004, Manchester,  
UK**

This course presents a structured long-range planning process, which incorporates the Consensus Workshop method for building consensus, the Focused Conversation method for effective group communication, and an implementation process for turning ideas into productive action and concrete accomplishments. Group Facilitation Methods is a pre-requisite for this course. The course enables participants to: enhance their capacity for creative strategy building; experience the complete strategic planning process; learn to enable a group to come to a common vision and create a participant owned plan that deals creatively with the realities that are blocking the group; and, explore the variety of applications for these skills.

**Team Leadership**

**ICA:UK, UK**

**3rd–4th June 2004, Manchester, UK**

This course is for team leaders who are committed to participation in deciding tasks and implementing them. It offers tools and methods to help a team through difficult times. This course will show participants how to: enhance teamwork on the job; develop effective task forces and committees; motivate and sustain coalitions and partnerships; launch and complete short and mid-term tasks; and, gain the confidence needed to let a team do its job. Group Facilitation Methods recommended but not a pre-requisite for this course.

**Participation Paradigm**

**ICA:UK, UK**

**7th–8th June 2004, Manchester, UK**

ToP methods are based on years of cross-cultural research into human patterns of perception and experience. This course focuses on the underlying assumptions that provide the framework for creative, powerful usage and understanding of ToP methods. This course will show participants how to: enhance their capacity to use and adapt ToP methods to specific challenging situations; develop their ability to respond appropriately to individual and group struggles; deepen their understanding of the compelling nature of the ToP processes; and, see

through the techniques of facilitation to grasp the human drama of participatory processes.

Future dates are also available for each course. Course costs per person, per course: £385 for private and public sector organisations (except Group Facilitation Skills, £195); £275 for large voluntary sector organisations (except Group Facilitation Skills, £145); £195 for small voluntary sector organisations and individuals (except Group Facilitation Skills, £105).

● For more information please contact: ICA:UK ToP Coordinator, Tel: +44 (0)161 232 8444 or (local rate, UK only) 0845 450 0305; Email: martin@ica-uk.org.uk or top@ica-uk.org.uk; Website: www.ica-uk.org.uk





# e-participation

## Renewal.net

[www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net)

This is a UK-based online guide to what works in neighbourhood renewal. Documents on the site include 'how to' guides, case studies, project summaries, and much more. Wherever possible, the documents are based on evaluated evidence. The site also includes a Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) toolkit, designed to support all LSPs in producing credible plans for neighbourhood renewal, putting in place their means for delivery, and reviewing and improving existing strategies. The toolkit contains a number of useful tips and case study examples that are drawn from research into neighbourhood renewal strategies.

## The Decentralised Livestock Services in Eastern Indonesia (DELIVERI)

[www.deliveri.org](http://www.deliveri.org)

This website describes projects aiming to improve rural services in Indonesia, with information on how to improve services by government and non-government organisations by increasing participation and community empowerment, through decentralisation, government reform, privatisation, and establishing community-based services. The website has a database which includes basic information about a wide range of organisations that have been involved in community development in Indonesia, summary information about relevant audiovisual materials, literature and training materials, and contact details of relevant institutions and libraries.

## Khanya-Managing Rural Change

[www.khanya-mrc.co.za](http://www.khanya-mrc.co.za)

This is the website for Khanya, where one of our guest editors for this issue is based. The website includes downloadable publications and reports, and includes community-based planning manuals for Zimbabwe and South Africa, two of the four country projects that are discussed in this special issue. It also includes Khanya's regular newsletter 'Sustaining Livelihoods' online. The site also includes useful links to other, CBP-relevant organisations, and information and documents relating to community-based workers and service delivery.

## Olive (Organisation Development and Training)

[www.oliveodt.co.za](http://www.oliveodt.co.za)

Olive ODT is a not-for-profit development organisation based in Durban, South Africa. Olive publishes and produces a wide range of publications and periodicals covering various aspects of organisation development, management, and change. ODdebate, published quarterly, is a journal of ideas for all people involved in change and organisation development. The site also has many working papers on different topics available online, such as organisational development, tools and approaches, funding, NGOs, and development issues.

## Oneworld.net

[www.oneworld.net](http://www.oneworld.net)

The OneWorld partnership brings

together more than 1,500 organisations from across the globe to promote sustainable development, social justice, and human rights. This website has a vast array of current news and more in-depth reporting on issues of importance to those working in the arenas of sustainable development and empowerment, including many resources such as tools for non-profits, capacity-building and civil society, women's empowerment, and much more. It has country guides, topic guides, and handy resource links to other relevant organisations for each topic and country.

## Development Gateway Foundation

[www.developmentgateway.org](http://www.developmentgateway.org)

The Development Gateway Foundation aims to improve people's lives in developing countries by building partnerships and information systems that provide access to knowledge for development by increasing knowledge sharing, enabling aid effectiveness, improving public sector transparency, and building local capacity to empower communities.

The Development Gateway is an independent not-for-profit organisation, initially developed by the World Bank in 2001. The site includes news and updates on development activities across the world, a search engine, country-specific Development Gateways, and many online documents relating to participation and development.

# RCPLA Network

In this section, we aim to update readers on activities of the **Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action Network (RCPLA) Network** ([www.rcpla.org](http://www.rcpla.org)) and its members. For more information please contact the RCPLA Network Steering Group:

**RCPLA Coordination:** Tom Thomas (Network Coordinator), Director, Institute for Participatory Practices (Praxis), S-75 South Extension, Part II, New Delhi, India 110 049. Tel/Fax: +91 11 5164 2348 to 51; Email: [tomt@praxisindia.org](mailto:tomt@praxisindia.org) or [catherinek@praxisindia.org](mailto:catherinek@praxisindia.org)

Janet Boston, Director of Communications, Institute for Environment & Development (IIED), 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, UK. Tel: +44 20 7388 2117; Email: [janet.boston@iied.org](mailto:janet.boston@iied.org); Website: [www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org)

**Asian Region:** Jayatissa Samaranayake, Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development (IPID), 591 Havelock Road, Colombo 06, Sri Lanka. Tel: +94 1 555521; Tel/Fax: +94 1 587361; Email: [ipidc@panlanka.net](mailto:ipidc@panlanka.net)

**West Africa Region:** Awa Faly Ba, IIED Programme Sahel, Point E, Rue 6 X A, B.P. 5579, Dakar, Sénégal. Tel: +221 824 4417; Fax: +221 824 4413; Email: [awafba@sentoo.sn](mailto:awafba@sentoo.sn)

**European Region:** Jane Stevens, Participation Group, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK. Tel: + 44 1273 678690; Fax: + 44 1273 21202; Email: [participation@ids.ac.uk](mailto:participation@ids.ac.uk); Participation group website: [www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip](http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip)

**Latin American Region:** Fernando Dick, Dirección de Programas de Investigación y Desarrollo (DPID), Universidad Nur, Casilla 3273, Ave Cristo Redentor No. 100, Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Tel: +591 3 363 939; Fax: +591 3 331 850; Email: [participa@tabarsi.nur.edu](mailto:participa@tabarsi.nur.edu); Website: [www.dpid.nur.edu](http://www.dpid.nur.edu)

**North Africa & Middle East Region:** Ali Mokhtar, Center for Development Services (CDS), 4 Ahmed Pasha Street, Citibank Building, Garden City, Cairo, Egypt. Tel: +20 2 795 7558; Fax: +20 2 794 7278; Email: [cds.lrc@neareast.org](mailto:cds.lrc@neareast.org); Website: [www.neareast.org/explore/cds/index.htm](http://www.neareast.org/explore/cds/index.htm)

**Southern and Eastern Africa Region:** Eliud Wakwabubi, Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya (PAMFORK), Jabavu Road, PCEA Jitegemea Flats, Flat No. D3, P.O. Box 2645, KNH Post Office, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel/Fax: +254 2 716609; Email: [pamfork@nbnet.co.ke](mailto:pamfork@nbnet.co.ke)

## News from Praxis

Greetings from RCPLA! I hope all of you have had a fruitful and productive first quarter of 2004. RCPLA has been busy in 2004 strategising about how the network can have a stronger presence within the development sector. In 2004, the network is consciously working to broaden its scope and transition from being simply a resource base and become a more influential voice in the development field. Presently, RCPLA is working on a few key initiatives for the network to successfully reorient its focus.

As a first step, RCPLA decided to revise the vision and mission statements of the network to reflect its changing focus. We all saw this as a critical component in formulating RCPLA's next step as network. After extensive consultations amongst our member organisations, the following are the new vision and mission statements for the network:

**Vision:** A just world that empowers all of the human race to participate and positively impact upon processes and decisions that affect their lives and collective destiny.

**Mission:** Bring together a diverse, international network of development practitioners to strengthen impact on processes of social change. By sharing field experiences, facilitating capacity building, and encouraging the use of participatory practices, RCPLA will positively influence development initiatives, while working towards qualitative social advancement, equity and justice.

In conjunction with taking a critical look at our vision and mission statements, it also was a logical time to reassess our membership base. RCPLA network would also like to focus on forging alliances across new networks and organisations to broaden its influence on policy processes. Ideally, the network will expand to have a global niche with a

vast geographical spread as well as an increased skill and capacity base. Although, strong institutions will add to the value of the network, the quality of the joining members is more important than numbers. Consequently, RCPLA is analysing its application and recruitment process to ensure that qualified organisations join the network and to guarantee that they are ideologically in tune with the new vision and mission of the group.

RCPLA has a number of activities planned that will mobilise the member organisations towards its new focus. Regional programmes are set to commence in the beginning of 2004. This includes a series of writeshops that RCPLA members will implement throughout the world. In a concerted effort to provide the development sector with more documented field experiences, RCPLA members are organising three writeshops to take place in Asia,

Africa and the UK in 2004. RCPLA would like to utilise its extensive resources and scope to emphasise the importance of documenting the field experiences of development professionals. These writeshops will facilitate theoretical debates surrounding the use of participatory methods, while also providing a space for development practitioners to reflect upon their own personal experiences. With a diverse group of participants and a wide-range of high-profile resource people, RCPLA will bring together an accomplished group of development workers to contribute to existing scholarship on Participatory Practices and Democracy. This will not only provide development practitioners with the space to reflect upon their experiences, but it will also build their

capacity to document their own field experiences. RCPLA is dedicated to documenting these important field experiences and we look forward to sharing our case studies and findings with all of you in future issues of *PLA Notes*. If you are interested in additional information on the RCPLA writeshops or the network in general, please contact Catherine Kannam at [catherinek@praxisindia.org](mailto:catherinek@praxisindia.org).

#### **News from IIED**

We welcome Dr Camilla Toulmin as Director of IIED from February 2004. Dr Toulmin had been Acting Director of IIED since July 2003 after the resignation of Nigel Cross on the grounds of ill health. Prior to that, she was a Senior Fellow of the Drylands Programme, having been Director of the Programme since she

established it in 1987. An economist by training, Dr Toulmin has worked mainly in francophone West Africa, on agricultural, pastoral, and tenure issues. She was a member of the International Expert Panel supporting the preparation of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

Janet Boston was appointed Director of Communications at IIED from March 2004, replacing Lillian Chatterjee. Ms Boston will continue to be Executive Producer of *Earth Report* ([www.tve.org/earthreport](http://www.tve.org/earthreport)), a major series that is part of the portfolio of Television Trust for the Environment (TVE). Her previous experience includes the position of Media Manager at the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG). IIED welcomes her to the post.



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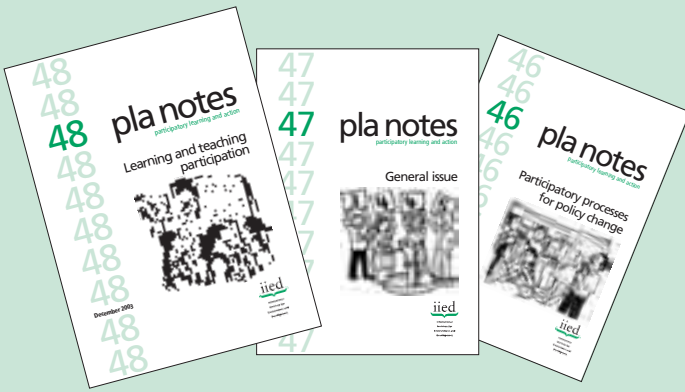
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- *Tips for trainers*: training exercises, tips on running workshops, reflections on behaviour and attitudes in training, etc., max. 1000 words.
- *In Touch*: short pieces on forthcoming workshops and events, publications, and online resources.

We welcome accounts of recent experiences in the field (or in workshops) and current thinking around participation, and particularly encourage contributions from practitioners in the South. Articles should be co-authored by all those engaged in the research, project, or programme.

In an era in which participatory approaches have often been viewed as a panacea to development problems or where acquiring funds for projects has depended on the use of such methodologies, it is vital to pay attention to the quality of the methods and process of participation. Whilst we will continue to publish experiences of innovation in the field, we would like to emphasise the need to analyse the limitations as well as the successes of participation. *PLA Notes* is still a series whose focus is methodological, but it is important to give more importance to issues of power in the process and to the impact of participation, asking ourselves who sets the agenda for participatory practice. It is only with critical analysis that we can further develop our thinking around participatory learning and action.

We particularly favour articles which contain one or more of the following elements:

- an *innovative* angle to the concepts of participatory approaches or their application;
- *critical reflections* on the lessons learned from the author's experiences;
- an attempt to develop *new methods*, or innovative adaptations of existing ones;
- consideration of *the processes* involved in participatory approaches;

- an assessment of the impacts of a participatory process;
- potentials and limitations of *scaling up and institutionalising participatory approaches*; and,
- potentials and limitations of *participatory policy-making processes*.

## Language and style

Please try to keep contributions clear and accessible. Sentences should be short and simple. Avoid jargon, theoretical terminology, and overly academic language. Explain any specialist terms that you do use and spell out acronyms in full.

## Abstracts

Please include a brief abstract with your article (circa. 150-200 words).

## References

If references are mentioned, please include details. *PLA Notes* is intended to be informal, rather than academic, so references should be kept to a minimum.

## Photographs and drawings

These should have captions and the name(s) of the author(s)/photographer clearly written on the back. If you are sending electronic files, please make sure that the photos/drawings are scanned at a high enough resolution for print (300 dpi) and include a short caption and credit(s).

## Format

We accept handwritten articles but please write legibly. Typed articles should be double-spaced. Please keep formatting as simple as possible. Avoid embedded codes (e.g. footnotes/endnotes, page justification, page numbering).

## Submitting your contribution

Contributions can be sent on paper, by email, or on disk. We use Word 6 for Windows, but can read most other word processing packages. If you are sending a disk, please include a hard copy of the article as well. Contributions should be sent to: **The Editor, PLA Notes, IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1 0DD, UK.**  
Fax: +44 20 7388 2826  
Email: [pla.notes@iied.org](mailto:pla.notes@iied.org)  
Website: [www.planotes.org](http://www.planotes.org)

## Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) Network

Since June 2002, the IIED Resource Centre for Participatory Learning and Action is no

longer able to provide a document delivery service. However, practical information and support on participation in development is still available from the various members of the RCPLA Network.

This initiative is a global network of resource centres for participatory learning and action, which brings together 15 organisations from Africa, Asia, South America, and Europe. The RCPLA Network is committed to information sharing and networking on participatory approaches.

Each member is itself at the centre of a regional or national network. Members share information about activities in their respective countries, such as training programmes, workshops and key events, as well as providing PLA information focused on the particular fields in which they operate.

As part of the devolution process, Tom Thomas, of Praxis, India has been appointed as network coordinator by the RCPLA steering committee. More information, including regular updates on RCPLA activities, can be found in the In Touch section of *PLA Notes*, or by visiting [www.rcpla.org](http://www.rcpla.org), or contacting:

Praxis, Delhi Office, C-75 South Extension, Part II, New Delhi, 110 049, India. Tel/fax: +91 11 5164 2348-51; Email: [tom@praxisindia.org](mailto:tom@praxisindia.org) or [catherinek@praxisindia.org](mailto:catherinek@praxisindia.org)

## Participation at IDS

Participatory approaches and methodologies are also a focus for the Participation Group at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK. This group of researchers and practitioners are involved in sharing knowledge, in strengthening capacity to support quality participatory approaches, and in deepening understanding of participatory methods, principles, and ethics. It focuses on South-South sharing, exchange visits, information exchange, action research projects, writing, and training. Services include a Participation Resource Centre (open weekdays) with an online database detailing materials held. The Group also produces a newsletter and operates an email distribution list.

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BETWEEN PEOPLE  
AND PLACE



*PLA Notes* is the world's leading informal journal on participatory approaches and methods. It draws on the expertise of guest editors to provide up-to-the minute accounts of the development and use of participatory methods in specific fields. Since its first issue in 1987, *PLA Notes* has provided a forum for those engaged in participatory work – community workers, activists, and researchers – to share their experiences, conceptual reflections and methodological innovations with others, providing a genuine 'voice from the field'. It is a vital resource for those working to enhance the participation of ordinary people in local, regional, national, and international decision making, in both South and North.

ISSN: 1357-938X  
ISBN 1 84369 504 9

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49  
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