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Participatory needs assessment in the peri-urban areas of Lusaka, Zambia

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Introduction

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

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

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

the physical, social and economic injustices¹. Fundamental to this approach is a shift from a physical development process - infrastructure improvement through FFW - to a human development process to build individual and institutional capacities.

The Participatory Appraisal and Needs Assessment (PANA) training²

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Day one of the training focused on eliciting and then comparing the various models of development to which the participants adhere,

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

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

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

The analysis of this code took nearly an hour and by the end all the issues had been identified that the second phase of the PUSH project could possible hope to identify. Since then too, Beatrice Chama has become a metaphor for the concept of livelihood. Using the scenes as a text and a model built around tangible and intangible assets, production, entitlements and consumption⁴, it has proved possible to train the workshop participants, even those who have never previously carried out any sort of interview, to carry out a basic livelihood interview. Beatrice herself has lived on too - the community member who acted her is now as often as not called Beatrice in report back meetings.

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

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

• **The PANA process and conclusion**

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

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

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

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