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Linking government agents and local users: PUA for artisanal fishing port development

• Overview

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

• Background

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

development, maintenance, and operation of artisanal ports and landing sites, one of the main subjects of this article.

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

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

Despite being given these tasks, the fisheries officers are usually not provided with the training, technical knowledge, administrative structure, strategic plan, material means or authority needed to carry out the work. The field officers and their supervisors in national headquarters, though they have a general idea of the fisheries situation, do not usually have a truly detailed and systematic knowledge of the artisanal fisheries ports at the local level: how people work, what the economic producers see as their most important problems, and what they would like to do about them. Government officials also suffer from the fact that they are very often distrusted by the fishing communities since they are the ones responsible for taxes, licences, and fines. Finally, local government structures often simply do not have the internal organisation necessary to really discuss with users, in a participative fashion,

the needs of small-scale fisheries, and to assist users in their own development actions.

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

Artisanal fisheries in Guinea

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

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

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

- *Strong interest and support from local officials.* The second interesting event was

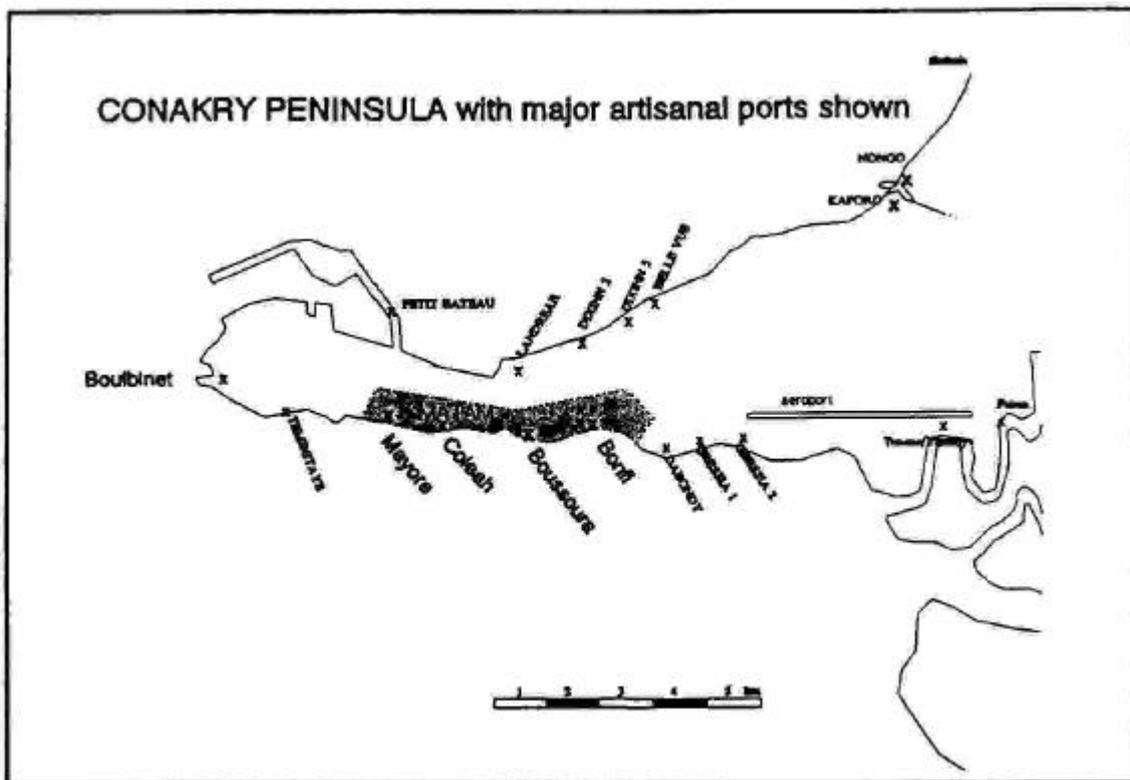
a request from the newly elected Mayor of Matam-Conakry for suggestions on what she could do to help artisanal fisheries in her community. The Guinean fisheries department and IDAF suggested that the mayor's office could do a lot to support efforts to improve the infrastructure and working conditions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

Baseline studies: getting to know the Ports - and making the Ports known

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

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

Figure 1. Matam artisanal ports



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

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

many such new problems were found. Armed with their hypotheses (the reality they expected to find), the teams then proceeded to apply their new PUA tools at 'their' landing site, comparing the reality they found with their preconceptions.

Mobilisation without gifts

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

- **The first training cycle: some problems and some real successes**

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

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

Nevertheless, the first PUA round was considered a success for a number of reasons. It provided very useful information on the particularities of the artisanal ports. For perhaps the first time port users saw a real and sustained interest of government agents in their port's problems. Fifteen fisheries field workers showed a big improvement in their productivity

and efficiency, and they were very happy with their PUA training certificates. Participatory appraisal methods adapted to urban artisanal fisheries were developed, and three IDAF staff showed a big improvement in the efficiency and productivity of their training activities in PUA methods.

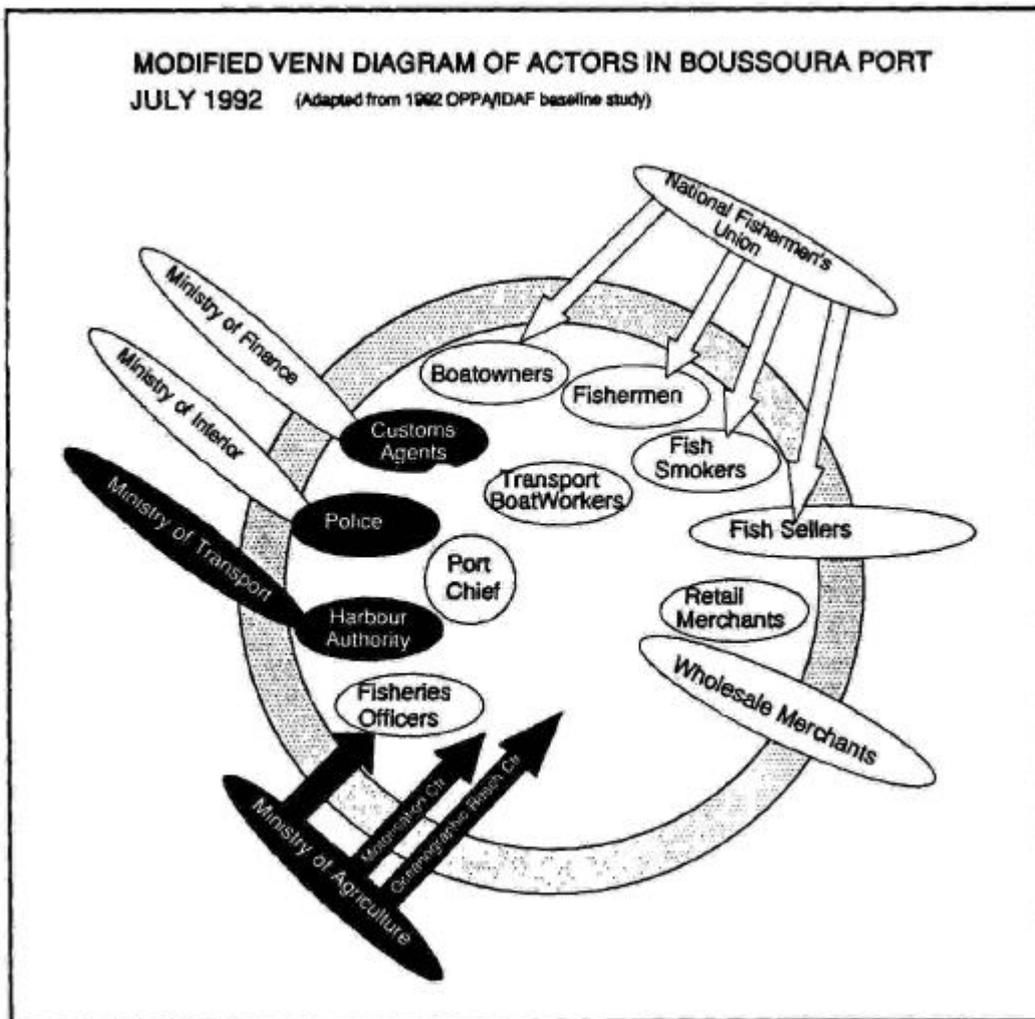
- **Back down at the Port: trying to find out who's really in charge**

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

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

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

Figure 2. Venn diagram of key actors (drawn by officers)



Experimental port user's committee fills the void

Since the port users really wanted to do something about some of their more important problems, it was agreed to try an experiment. The port's Venn diagram gave the structure for a Port Users' Committee (Comité de Développement de Débarcadère - CDD in

French) in which the 'heads' of the various port associations became the committee's voting members, while government officers assigned to the port took on the role of non-voting advisors (Figure 3). This Port Users' Committee then took responsibility for choosing priority activities and, with the help of its 'consultants', for finding the resources needed to carry them out (Table 1).

Figure 3. Port users' committee (membership closely follows the pattern of the nn diagram of the port, but was drawn by the users themselves)

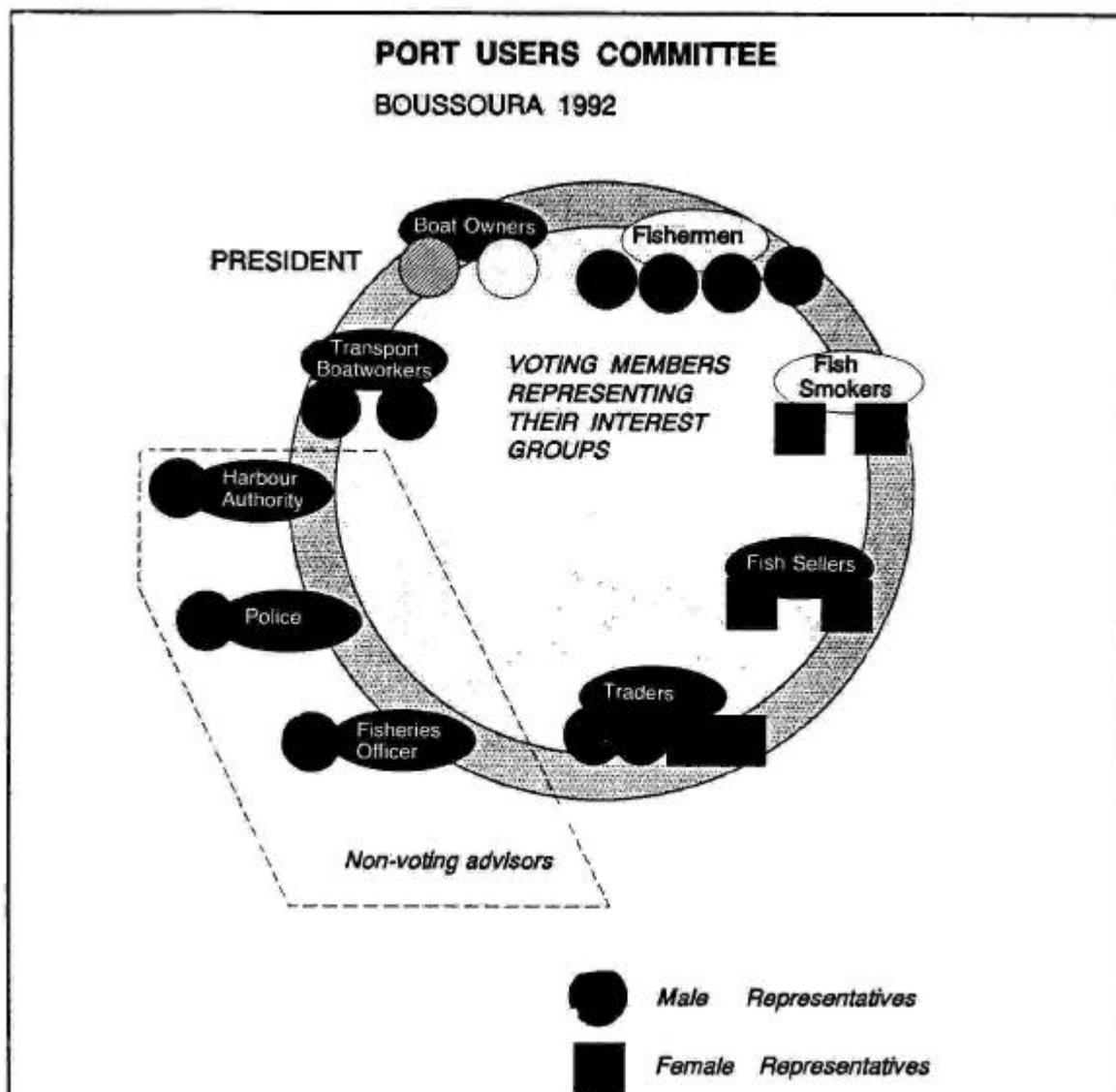


Table 1. Composition of Boussoura Port users' committee (Matam, July 1992)

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

Putting follow-up development actions into the fisheries officers' work programme

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

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

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

Joint benefits necessary for joint action

It was both a premise of our programme, and an observation made on the results, that effective

follow-up action will occur only where each of the interested parties gets an important benefit. Because this principle is so fundamental, the apparent major advantages for the major actors are summarised below.

Fisheries officers

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

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

The artisanal fisheries department

This experiment was started at the beginning of the life-cycle of the new government service (Office for the Promotion of Artisanal Fisheries - OPPA) which had been assigned responsibility for the development of artisanal fisheries. As a new service, it had no established work programme or development strategy which was its own 'protected territory'. On the contrary, the OPPA administration was looking for ways in which it could do

something positive for the country's artisanal fisheries when its only resources were fisheries officers with virtually no operating budget nor equipment. The PUA-based programme for local development of the small fishing ports was welcomed by OPPA staff and became its official policy. If a PUA/PUC approach in another country had to compete with another already established (even if relatively ineffective) programme, it might not be so readily embraced by ministerial authorities.

The Port users

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

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

The port users also began to work closely with the OPPA-PUA staff to develop mini-project proposals to be discussed with potential local donors. This was especially the case for useful

and important actions which clearly could not be done using only the port's own resources.

PUCs, their mini-projects, and their consultants

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

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

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

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

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

BOX 1

COLEAH PORT MINI-PROJECT WITH EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

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

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

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

BOX 2

COLEAH PORT SELF-HELP MINI-PROJECT

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

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

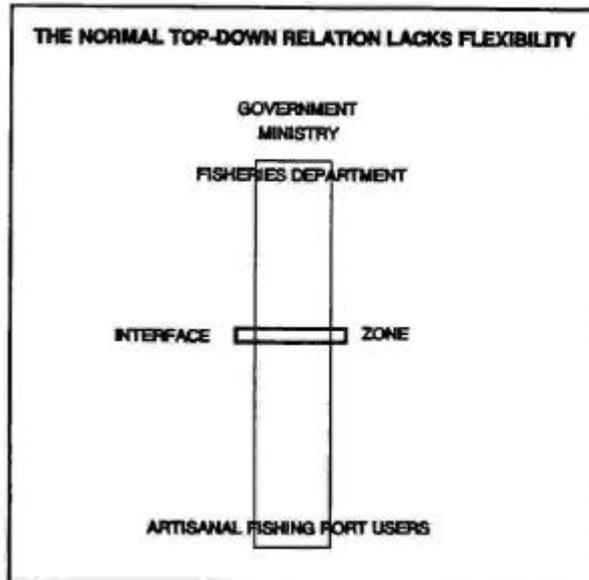
Where there have been truly common interests shared between the major groups involved, the PUA approach has worked. Where this is not the case, trying to make such an approach work in the face of indifference of one or more of the several structural partners will be a total waste of time.

Creating and maintaining a participatory space between the ministry and port users

It has been possible, at least for the time of this still on-going experiment, to help create and

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

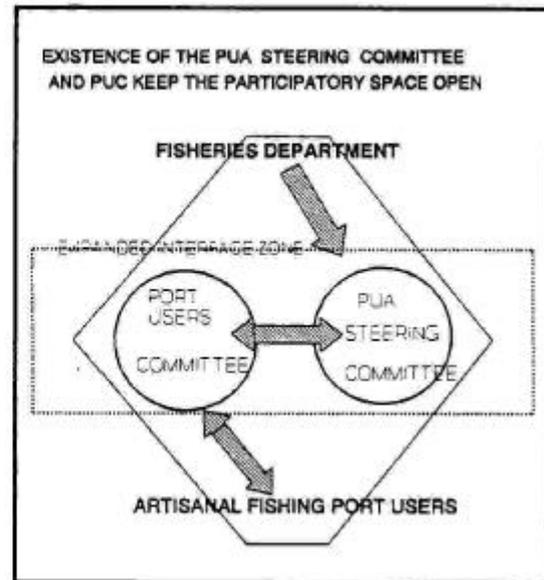
Figure 4



The interface between a hierarchical ministerial bureaucracy and the economic actors in the field has traditionally been the zone where participatory approaches falter and die (Figure 4). It seems possible that in the work in Conakry we slowly, and not necessarily with prior intention, managed to evolve a kind of buffer structure which provides for a reasonably smooth 'shifting of gears' when passing from the Ministry environment to that of the landing site. This transitional space has been kept open by the working mechanism of a participatory Coordinating Committee, staffed mostly by government officers, which has evolved through a number of stages (Figure 5). It seems likely that the successful results achieved through the Committee owe much to the fact that it 'grew' into place in response to real problems. Thus a brief look at the history of the committee itself could bring out some of the possibilities for replicability and sustainability.

The group started out during the first PUA training cycle as a Coordinating Committee composed of the team leaders of each of the national teams undergoing PUA training, plus FAO staff. Its main function was to keep track of how the training was progressing, and

Figure 5



recommend any needed adjustments in the programme (Figure 6).

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

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

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

Figure 6

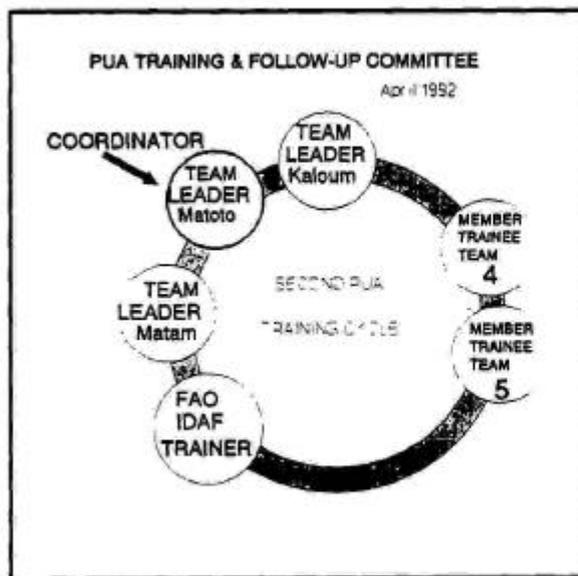


Figure 7



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

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

Sometimes a Commune-District team leader would be temporarily or even generally uninterested in the approach. In such cases, another Commune-district team member usually volunteered to become a regular member of the Committee until his/her chief regained interest in the operation. Only one District out of five was not regularly represented on the Committee, and even for that District its major artisanal port was 'represented' by a fisheries officer who had

participated in its baseline study and was following-up with mini-project formulation.

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

Letting the coordinating committee control its own budget

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

Proposals for fieldwork which were poorly thought out or contrary to policy were not approved by the nationally-staffed committee. Reports on field work which were not clear or inadequate were sent back for redrafting by their authors before field expenses would be paid. If the committee came to feel that certain

fisheries officers were not doing their utmost to accomplish the work which the officer himself or herself had proposed, the Committee refused to approve new proposals by the officer concerned - pending his/her 'reform'. Especially important in the local context, and which caused some ill-feelings with some people for a brief time when the Committee first received budget control, the nationally-staffed Committee made it clear that it would not authorise payment for field work which was not done. There were no free rides.

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

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

Figure 8



NGO participation in the coordinating committee

A well-organised and reputable local NGO, 'Entre-aide Universitaire pour le Développement' (EUPD), was retained by IDAF to provide organisational and technical consulting services to the Coordinating Committee. EUPD has furnished the Committee with legal advice on how to go about getting the PUC recognised as legal local associations, provided young civil engineers to help PUCs develop their plans for constructing simple harbour installations, and helped in contacts with bilateral and NGO donors present in Conakry.

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

Observations on the evolution of the PUA training

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

As the field results began to accumulate with succeeding training cycles, and the PUA approach in the ports became more widely known, demand for the training increased

dramatically. In the third and fourth training cycles there were far more requests for training than there were places available. Interestingly, many of the more recent requests have come from government services other than fisheries, and even from a number of NGOs. Should financing be available from some source, the national PUA trainers could easily carry out several more rounds of introductory PUA training.

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

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

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

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

region, thus justifying the additional inputs which would be required in the Conakry proving ground.

Applicability of the experience to other national contexts

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

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

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

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

- **René Reusen and Jan Johnson**, Fishery Industries Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy.

NOTE

René Reusen was formerly Associate Professional Officer, DANIDA-FAO Integrated Development for Artisanal Fisheries Programme in West Africa, Cotonou, Republic of Benin.