Editorial

This Issue of RRA Notes is devoted to Local Level Adaptive Planning, and represents a departure from the usual form of RRA Notes. It reports the discussions and findings, together with 15 summary papers, of a workshop held in December 1990 in London and organised by the Sustainable Agriculture Programme of IIED and the Development Administration Group of the University of Birmingham. The aim of the workshop was to take stock of current experience in local level participatory planning approaches, to reflect on how these relate to more conventional planning, and to explore the implications for organisation, management and institutionalisation of local level planning in different settings. The principal findings and challenges for the future as identified by participants are recorded in part A of this issue. These resolved into six areas: the role of RRA in adaptive planning; institutionalising adaptive planning; methods and training issues; scaling-up and scaling-down; governments and NGOs; and organisation and management.

Part B of this RRA Notes represents a selection of the contributions made at the workshop. Some are in abstract form, others have been extended to summary papers. For more information on the specific cases, please contact the authors directly.

We are very grateful to Martin Greeley, Susanna Davies and Robin Grimble for providing commentary during the workshop so as to establish the agenda for discussion sessions. Their comments are not recorded, but have been incorporated along with those of other participants in the overview. The Swedish International Development Authority funded the workshop through a grant to the Sustainable Agriculture Programme at IIED.

Request for Readership Survey Forms:

At the time of printing we have received about 120 returns of the readership survey sent with Issue No.10, for which we are extremely grateful. There are many valuable comments and suggestions, and we will report fully on these in a future issue. Can we take this opportunity to remind anyone thinking of sending in their yellow form, but who have not done so, that every contribution is helpful and is certainly gratefully received. If you do not have a copy and would like one, please make contact with the Sustainable Agriculture Programme at IIED. Many thanks.

- **Jules N Pretty & Ian Scoones,** IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H ODD, UK.

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Confessions of a reconstructed planner

Barry Dalal-Clayton

I was once a land use planner! Armed with a first degree in Botany, experience on 2 student expeditions and two weeks orientation training at Silsoe College, I arrived in Zambia in 1972 to the surprise of the Land Use Services Division of the Ministry of Rural Development. I subsequently spent a total of 9 years as a planner and then soil surveyor in Zambia.

Land use planning in Zambia is limited, being almost exclusively for agriculture. It does not involve forestry, wildlife, water use, urban issues, etc. The main tasks undertaken by land use planners is illustrated by the chapters in the Land Use Planning Guide (1977) many of which derive from technical papers of the old Federal Department of Conservation and Extension (CONEX), eg:

- aerial photography interpretation
- land classification
- land use survey techniques
- mechanical protection of arable land
- basic instructions for dam construction
- agricultural land use planning in Zambia
- national, provincial and district inventories
- catchment conservation planning
- farm planning
- farm management
- settlement planning
- planning of irrigation schemes
- special projects
- subsidies

The process is very 'top down' and most of the Planning Guide is comprised of technical instructions. The need to 'involve' people is mentioned only twice in the document. In the chapter concerning Catchment Conservation Planning, one finds:

"The aim in [catchment conservation] planning would be to <u>direct the people</u> to cultivate suitable land, to use the best methods applicable to the area and to make sure that controls to land use are implemented in both the mechanical and cultural spheres".

This chapter goes on to admit that:

"the people must be informed and consulted about the plan so that in the early stages they can help with the survey and, at a later stage, they can participate in drawing up the plan proposals and the implementation of the plan itself".

Unfortunately, whilst this chapter provides much technical guidance, it gives no advice on how the people should be involved. Nor, in practice, are they systematically involved.

Similarly, in the chapter on farm planning, an objective should be

"to work with the farmer to help him gain a full insight into land capability and the potential of his farm and to assist him to draw up a plan to further his farming inclinations within the capabilities of the farm".

But this chapter is again rich in technical guidance whilst giving no indication of how to ensure farmer participation. In practice, farm planning is mainly conducted on commercial farms in state land areas and rarely, if ever, for subsistence farmers in the so-called trust lands.

The cornerstone of much of the planning process in Zambia, as elsewhere in the region, has long been 'land use capability classification'. The system used derives from

one originally developed in the USA and places land in suitability grades ranging from good to poor arable land and includes grazing classes and land unsuitable for either arable use or grazing. The system was designed during Federal days, based on criteria for the commercial production of maize and tobacco, and has mainly been applied in state land areas. It is ill-suited for other crops and has little relevance to non-commercial and subsistence farming systems. An attempt in the 1980s to promote a separate system for small-scale farming was made but was little used.

During the 1970s, a Soil Survey Unit was developed within the Department of Agriculture as a service providing land capability and soil maps to planners. The unit gradually took over all land capability surveying so that planners themselves gradually lost the function and ability/experience in undertaking such surveys. With little technical direction provided by government, the Soil Survey Unit moved gradually in the direction of producing mainly technical soil maps and became less concerned with land capability surveys. During the 1980s, soils were increasingly mapped in terms of units of two international systems -the USDA Soil Taxonomy and the FAO-UNESCO legend for the Soil Map of the World. There was a certain mesmerisation with the Soil Taxonomy as a vehicle for international agrotechnology transfer a concept heavily promoted by USAID. Land capability was replaced by a modification of the FAO system of land evaluation which itself requires much data not available or not collected by soil surveys (eg socio-economic data).

Thus, technical soil maps were undertaken for specific government projects (eg large state farms, crop production schemes, settlement schemes, etc.) and a system of national soil mapping was instituted. At first, this was based on quarter degree sheets at a scale of 1:100,000 (to mirror the existing geological map series) and subsequently on administrative districts at a scale of 1:250,000. The first scale was of little relevance to either regional or local planning. The latter was possibly of more use for strategic regional planning but the maps were not useable (see below).

It is not clear why the government instigated this systematic mapping. There appears to have been no clear idea of why the particular map scales were selected or for what purpose they could be used. Experience indicates that, with the exception of professional soil scientists and academics, no one could understand the classification systems used certainly not decision makers, planners or farmers. Who, for instance, could conceptualise an Oxic Paleustalf? These systems provide an international language for the scientist and academic but are, in reality, an impossible obstacle for planners. The momentum given to the systematic mapping programme and the use of international classification systems came mainly from within the Soil Survey Unit. Perhaps the only real benefit of these systems has been the enriching of the source of names for children. Somewhere in Zambia, vertic Ngoma and Pachic Phiri are alive and well!

Most of the maps and reports produced are rarely consulted and gather dust on shelves. One particular survey of the Mtetezi River Area in Eastern Zambia, which conservatively cost at least £250,000 to undertake, remains unpublished after several years. It was to have been followed by a land evaluation exercise to interpret the base soil map for various crops and management systems. This was never done. These soil surveys required a very technical procedure and local people were seldom involved (except as labourers).

The land systems approach to resource assessment for planning purposes has also been tried in Zambia. For instance, the then Land Resources Division of ODA undertook such a survey in the Northern and Luapula Provinces over several years in the early 1970s. The maps and reports, whilst technically excellent and full of data, are seldom used by planners, who cannot understand their complexity.

The main market for the soil maps appears consultants who can utilise the data and then government.

There will always be a need for national and regional strategic planning. But this process needs to involve information delivery to planners which is understandable and

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utilisable, and which reflects both national/regional and local needs. There is also a vital need for local level planning which involves local communities in identifying issues and designing solutions. We need planning systems which bring these two requirements together. Neither are mutually exclusive.

- **Barry Dalal-Clayton,** IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, WC1H 0DD,UK.

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Re-orienting land use planning: towards a community participatory approach

Adrian Wood

- **Introduction**

The value of land use planning at the local level has been limited by a number of characteristics of the standard approach which has been followed. A new approach to land use planning is needed if this concept is to be more sensitive to the needs of rural communities.

- **Critique of the standard approach to land use planning (SLUP)**

Based on experience in Africa four groups of problems can be identified.

- Lack of local participation: the initiatives for SLUP usually come from government officials or others outside the local community. These outsiders set the goals for SLUP while external technicians undertake the analysis. SLUP uses few of the resources and skills of local communities and relies heavily upon innovations developed on research stations.

- Incomplete conceptualisation of problems: because SLUP has developed from soil survey and land capability assessments, it focuses upon the relationship between land use and the environmental characteristics of an area. This has led to a neglect of the socio-economic and political factors at the household, community and national levels, which influence land use. In SLUP there is also a tendency to focus on land use per se and to neglect the details of land management and husbandry, i.e. how land use is implemented.

- Limited replicability: SLUP involves considerable manpower and technical resources. These are often supplied by donors in the form of a project. The development of a national capacity to undertake SLUP is restricted by the resource costs with the result that land use planning tends to be a 'one-off' exercise.

- Poor utilisation and implementation of the output from SLUP: The maps and documents, which are typically produced by SLUP, are not easily used by field staff and farmers. They need translating into forms, which can be understood. As a result the implementation of LUP is often difficult and tends to be delayed while appropriate 'translation' is undertaken. This problem is often made worse by the way in which SLUP is often undertaken as an exercise, which is separate from project implementation. This tends to produce land use plans for unspecified others to implement.

Overall it appears that SLUP tends to increase dependence on external interventions, skills and solutions, and fails to develop local capacity to analyse problems and develop locally-relevant innovations.

- **Principles of a participatory approach for local level land use planning (PLOP)**

A series of principles can be outlined which should guide the reorientation of land use planning for local level use. These would include:

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- <u>Local agenda setting and an integrated approach:</u> the local community must, as far as possible, initiate and set the agenda for activities in their communities. Natural resource management (NRM) issues must not be forced to the top of the agenda by outsiders. Other more pressing issues must be addressed first, so an integrated approach is needed in order to raise NRM to the top of the agenda.

- <u>An holistic view with socio-economic perspectives:</u> better land use and natural resource management requires consideration of the full range of influences upon land use. Rather than collecting vast amounts of detailed environmental data, which are often redundant because local communities know where new land uses and innovations may be appropriate, more attention should be given to analysis of the various causes of land use problems. Action in a variety of areas such as off-farm employment, pricing policies, etc may help address land use problems.

- <u>Indigenous technical knowledge (ITK) and the loop process:</u> PLUP should try to build upon ITK so that innovations are rooted in local experience and relevant to local resources. In many cases ITK is no longer able to cope with rapidly changing conditions and so analysis of the maladjustment is necessary. A 'Loop Process' is proposed which involves understanding the original logic and rationale of ITK, analysing why it is no longer satisfactory, and then drawing on both ITK and modern knowledge to develop a set of techniques which are appropriate.

- <u>Participatory trials and local capacity development:</u> the key element of PLUP is the development by the local community, through in-community participatory trials, of innovations in land use and husbandry which will address problems of natural resource management. These trials will usually be part of the Loop Process and will build upon both the ITK of communities and their own traditions of research and experimentation. This will help develop local capacity to address land use problems with minimal external assistance.

- <u>Lateral extension:</u> the recommendations concerning land use and land husbandry from participatory trials will be attractive to farmers and pastoralists, and so should not need to be 'sold', as is often the case with innovations introduced through SLUP. As a result innovations can be left to spread by lateral adoption, although it may be helpful in some cases to have small demonstration landscapes on farms or grazing land. New patterns of land use and land husbandry will evolve, rather than being planned.

- **Some Issues for clarification**

While the above principles are important in ensuring that land use planning helps to develop local capacity to address land use and natural resource management issues, the practical implementation of this approach will encounter a number of difficulties. Some of those which will require careful attention include:

- <u>Community participation:</u> community approaches are difficult as there is often considerable economic diversity within such groups. There is a danger that participatory approaches are dominated by those who are economically and politically powerful. Hence it may be necessary for facilitators to work with groups of similar socio-economic status within the total community.

- <u>The nature of participation:</u> this must not be limited to providing information and assisting in implementation. The local community must have the power to determine the content and priorities of PLUP and control project resources.

- <u>The preconditions for participation:</u> participation requires a set of circumstances which give people control over their own future. This requires appropriate policy environments as well as local powers over natural resources. Hence PLUP initiative must support local communities in pressing for positive changes in these areas, as well as

focussing on local problem-solving activities.

- Facilitatory role and skills: facilitators have to work with farmers and pastoralists on an equal footing and be willing to learn from and with them. As a result there are no automatic benefits of status which at present accrue to 'educated' field staff. As a result, considerable dedication, even a missionary zeal will be required of these facilitators, so making it important to train and orientate them correctly.

- Relation to national institutions: while the emphasis in PLUP is upon on-site trials and building on local knowledge to develop skills in communities, there is a need for links with national environmental surveys and the work of research scientists on research stations. This requires the development of two-way communications between communities and these national services, with the activities of the latter driven in large part by the needs of the communities.

- Village level co-ordination of individual decisions: while individual land users should have control over their land and natural resources, there is a need for some community and regional institutions to co-ordinate land use and husbandry. These organisations will address issues where there are impacts of land use on neighbouring sites, pressures upon community resources, and inter-community competition for land and other resources.

- **Policy and institutional implications**

The PLUP approach to land use planning at the local level has institutional and policy implications. The most important of these relates to the institutional links which land use planning requires. It is suggested that there needs to be clear links with adaptive research and national development policy formulation, while less emphasis is needed on ties with soil surveys etc.

A second implication is that land use at the community level must not be determined by national land use policies, but rather should evolve out of the actions of farmers, pastoralists and their communities. Land use and land husbandry must not be the result of policies imposed from above, but the result of co-operation between national institutions and communities, with decisions left as much as possible to the local communities.

A third implication of the more holistic conceptualisation of land use and natural resource problems, is that the resolution of many problems requires greater involvement of the local population. Hence there is a clear link between the technical/institutional changes proposed here and political moves towards greater pluralism and democracy.

- **Adrian Wood,** Department of Geographical & Environmental Sciences, School of Applied Sciences, Huddersfield Polytechnic, West Yorkshire.

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Planning for real: the approach of the neighbourhood initiatives foundation in the UK

Tony Gibson

In community development there is a need for <u>all</u> views to be accounted for, yet the 'talkers nearly always win'. Local planners have the rhetoric "what we want to do is consult you". At public meetings the outsiders sit on a platform, behind a table, maintaining their superiority; when only a few people turn up, and only a few of them speak up, they say "It's the indifference that gets me. Here we are trying to do our jobs, and they don't come". Planning for Real attempts to bridge the gap between 'us and them', to identify local needs and resources, and to do it without endless talk.

The focus is a model of the neighbourhood. Unlike an architect's model, these should be touched, played with, dropped, changed around. At the first meeting the neighbourhood model is constructed, using houses and apartment blocks made from card and paper on a polystyrene base. Generally people put in the 'grotty bits first'. The model then goes into the community, to the laundrette, the school foyer, the fish and chip shop, so that people see it and get to hear of the second consultation. At the second meeting the objective is to find out: "have we got it right?" There is no room for passivity, not many chairs, no platform, with the model in the middle of the room.

People spot the landmarks, discuss, identify problems and glimpse solutions. They move around, arid can put down pieces of paper with suggested solutions written on them at particular locations (there are 150 pre-written solutions). They are permitted to put more than one on the same place - so allowing for conflicts to surface. Eyelines are now different as everyone focuses on the model, talking out of the sides of their mouths.

Often "people who put down an idea wait for others to talk first about it, and then say themselves: "I agree with you". The process permits people to have first, second and third thoughts - they can change their minds. "At a certain point, you don't need words". A large model allows people to address conflicts without needing to identify themselves. It depersonalises conflicts and introduces informality where consensus is more easily reached.

The professionals attend too. These local planners, engineers, transport officials, police, social workers, wear a badge identifying themselves, but can only talk when they are spoken to. The result is they are sucked in, and begin to like this new role. The 'us and them' barriers begin to break down, and the professionals begin to find a new role and relationship.

The priorities put on the model have <u>disagree</u> written on the reverse side. Anyone can turn these over, again remaining anonymous. The priorities are assessed as <u>Now</u>, <u>Soon</u>, <u>Later</u> and whether they can be done solely by local people, with the help of outsiders, with some money and advice, or only by outsiders. Obligations are negotiate d and made explicit. People are able to negotiate compromises. People don't label and classify in academic ways.

The next stage is a local-talent survey conducted by local people. The form is pictorial and does not look like a government form. The human resources are documented, and planning can then capitalise on these hitherto hidden resources. Participation in planning processes can act as a demonstration

of local capacity, from which larger things can grow.

- **Tony Gibson**, Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, Chapel House, 7 Gravel Leasowes, Lightmoor, Telford TF4 3QL, UK.

NOTE

This article is drawn from a presentation made at the workshop.

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Information for food security planning: asking local people

Case studies from Sudan and Mali

Margie Buchanan-Smith and Susanna Davies

Information needs for food security planning are typically determined by donors or national government. Whilst the need to promote food security planning at sub-national as well as national level has received attention in recent years, much information collection to support it has been of a top-down data-orientated nature. Huge resources have been invested in 'high tech' methods of collecting information. Satellite imagery is the obvious example. Attempts to find objective indicators to quantify food insecurity have been a driving force. One of the consequences of this has been a tendency to centralise the processes of information collection and analysis and to reduce ground truthing. Information collection is distanced from the very people it is supposed to be about. The complex factors affecting food security are simplified in the pursuit of perfecting techniques to monitor only one or two key factors.

The alternative is a local level, 'low tech' approach to information collection and analysis, designed to tap three highly relevant sources of information:

- information generally available within local communities and upon which they depend;
- purpose-built indigenous information systems, which fulfil a specific function for a particular group (for example, among pastoralists, monitoring-grazing resources and migratory movements); and,
- local key informants.

Some useful work has been done at a local level, setting up exactly these kinds of low profile, people-oriented information systems.

They are more likely to reflect the complexity of the food security situation by incorporating perceptions of local people themselves. They are relatively cheap and simple to operate. This kind of information system is more likely to create the conditions in which interactive planning with local people can take place.

There are two challenges facing such local level 'informal' information systems. Firstly, they are in danger of being taken over by the over-zealous pursuit of 'the single right indicator' of food insecurity. This would compromise the system by over-simplifying and by removing the vital ingredient: flexiblity. Secondly, although limited quantification is possible, the output of this kind of information system is predominantly qualitative. Yet the donors and government demand 'hard' quantitive data to make decisions about food security planning. If the bogus quantification which characterises many top-down information systems is imposed in this kind of local level information system, much of the system's usefulness would be undermined.

- **Margie Buchanan-Smith** and **Susanna Davies,** Institute of Development Studies University of Sussex Brighton BNI9RE, UK.

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ACORD's experience in local planning in Mali and Burkina Faso

Chris Roche

• Introduction

In Mali and Burkina Faso ACORD has attempted, through a variety of support to informal and formal groups, to reinforce the participation of non-governmental structures in local planning mechanisms. In both cases collaboration with governmental technical services and planning bodies was seen as essential to this process, though problematic. This abstract will attempt to draw some tentative conclusions from this experience relating particularly to the NGO/state relationship.

• Mali

In Mali ACORD initially supported formal state-inspired cooperatives which enabled its programme of activities to insert itself in a non-confrontational manner into the government's planning strategy for rural areas. However it was apparent that the majority of the co-operatives were not representative of their members and those that were to some degree, had little influence on regional development planning. ACORD therefore shifted its support to more informal groups (producer/marketing/women's groups) and encouraged an on-going process of decentralisation of what were very large cooperative structures. This change whilst permitting ACORD to work with emergent indigenous groups, rather than artificial externally created ones, posed two major problems. The first was that despite this approach being in line with government policy, which was based on drawing together village level projects which were then to be considered by the government Local

Development Committees (LDCs), in practice such poorly resourced structures had great difficulty in coordinating and planning such a multitude of micro-projects. The second problem was that the majority of these groups did not have the economic and thus political clout to make their voice heard at the level of the LDCs.

In the long term the programme aims to reinforce the capacity of the groups to play a greater role at the level of the LDCs by encouraging, but not imposing, unions and federations (similar ACORD experiences in the Sahel zone of Burkina Faso proving relatively successful). However in the short term ACORD, in order to create the space to achieve this, is obliged to work at several levels simultaneously:

- with specific interest groups at the micro-level;
- with spontaneous alliances of such groups for specific activities (e.g. marketing);
- with local NGOs offering similar support;
- with LDCs at 'arrondissement', 'cercle' and regional levels;
- with regional technical services (livestock, agriculture, cooperative action etc.); and,
- with ministries at the national level.

The complexity of the management that this demands is evident and it necessarily limits the amount of work that can be done at the micro-level. ACORD has therefore tended to concentrate its activities geographically. It is felt that if the programme is to surpass a simple juxtaposition of micro-projects, if it is going to produce some sustainable changes to local-level planning and if it is to help in the consciousness-raising and training process at the level of governmental structures (as well as

proposing possible new ways of participatory planning), then it has to limit itself in this way.

One of the major ways that a greater participation of rural groups in local planning has been attempted is the establishment of an 'auto-evaluation' mechanism. This methodology was developed after an evaluation of the programme in 1987 with the help of IMRAD (Institute Malien de Recherches Appliquees au Development) and lRAM (Institute de Recherché et d'application des Methods de Development). The evaluation highlighted the need to find more effective ways of working with grass-roots groups other than through the formal cooperatives structure. Through discussions with informal village groups and state structures a systematic approach has been adopted.

The ACORD teams were trained in the GRAAP animation methodology (see below), and with the assistance of a local artist generated pictures which corresponded with the reality in the programme areas. The teams visit villages to begin an animation phase, and collect information on the conditions of that group or village e.g. population, calendar of activities, environmental, economic and social conditions. This constitutes a group 'fiche' or file for baseline information. The group or village divides into sub-groups according to age and sex to discuss their problems. With the assistance of an animator a full village meeting then listens to the problems of each sub-group and tries to agree on a common priority to all. This discussion leads to an idea for a project they wish to initiate. Another file a 'fiche-action' is drawn up with details of the activity, and the support they will need from ACORD. This takes the form of a contract, where ACORD and the group agree on certain commitments. At this stage the group is asked how they will evaluate the proposed activity. The team helps the group to discuss various indicators: social, economic, technical and organisational. These indicators are combined with ACORD's criteria to form an overall evaluation framework. A permanent record of the expected results, criteria and indicators is left with the group. A 'fiche de suivi' is then created and any visit by ACORD or local government service is recorded with details of the activity, advice or further commitment.

An evaluation is carried out by the community and ACORD at the completion of a particular activity. The monitoring and evaluation at the group and ACORD level is undertaken with the assistance of the local research institute (IMRAD). This process is finally supplemented by a third level of external evaluation by local technical services, Local Development Committees, or donors. This would be carried out at the end of a programme funding period.

An interesting example of the process concerns a project of riverine fodder-crop (Panicum bourgou) regeneration along the Niger river. It had been assumed by most people (particularly the technical services working in the area and external aid agencies) that the primary reason that groups were interested in this activity was in order to ensure adequate fodder for their animals during the dry season. Whilst this was true for many individuals, discussions with women established that they would judge the success of this activity on the amount of 'Kundou' (a sweet drink made from this grass) that their children would drink during the year. Further discussion revealed this criterion for success was a single indicator that allowed rapid appraisal of several aspects of the project, as if the 'Kundou' had been made available to the children it would indicate that there had been enough to satisfy the needs of the animals.

This also indicated the different priorities between men (whose evaluation criteria was "if we can offer you some milk in March when you return then the activity will have been successful") and women, and between women who owned livestock and those who did not, given to the activity itself. A further lesson that the exercise of 'auto-evaluation' gave was the very difference within household relations that existed particularly between pastoral groups. These differences often depend on the levels of sedentarisation of the groups and the social origins of the household (i.e. noble, vassal or marabout). The repicability therefore of analyses of within household relations and evaluation criteria needed to be tempered by such factors. One of the main differences is between female headed households and male headed households.

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Discussion

The strength of this methodology is that the concept of auto-evaluation is integrated into the team's approach and work from the beginning thus lessening the danger of external criteria being imposed. The focus on auto-evaluation also acts as a 'reflection period' for groups to establish a deeper analysis. This assists needs-identification and an examination of the group's own expectations in the light of external assistance. The use of sub-groups enables the views of marginalised groups, e.g. women, to be highlighted rather than subsumed within the overall needs of the village. This has revealed inter and intra-household differences in the objectives for certain activities and in the criteria for success.

Some technical and local government personnel were involved in the initial training, given the need to continue communication with technical services and the Local Development Committees (LDCs). The identification of new activities or villages to work has to be approved by the LDCs and should take into consideration local plans and regional planning policy. It is, however, not yet clear whether the LDCs could act as the mechanism whereby the needs identification carried out by village groups and ACORD are really reflected in the formulation of regional policy. Such structures do, in theory, have this potential and it is therefore important to attempt to influence them and thus bring some coherence to what would otherwise be a programme of dispersed and uncoordinated micro-activities.

The creation of the 'fiche action' and 'fiche de suivi' provide for:

- the creation of a baseline for monitoring and evaluation using criteria set down by the groups;
- a systematic method for the on-going collection of information; and,
- a management framework to assist the participatory process.

The programmes have come up against various constraints in the implementation of the methodology:

- the 'fiche' are completed by the team members as they require a considerable level of literacy. Diagrams, pictures and maps could perhaps be used not only as an animation technique, but also as a way to leave a permanent record of the group's analysis which is accessible to non-literate members of the village.
- staff have a heavy paperwork load to keep all the 'fiche' up-to-date, but this is essential as a monitoring tool.

The annual support mission of IMRAD in 1989 raised the following points:

- That although the communities had been capable of analysing and fixing objectives for technical and economic factors relating to activities it was much more difficult for them to articulate (or for ACORD to understand) their analysis on social factors or secondary or unexpected effects of the activities.
- That an increased effort should be made in the training of ACORD staff in the utilisation of the auto-evaluation technique and on animation techniques in general. There is still a certain attitude of 'we know best' and a feeling that if something goes wrong it is probably the fault of the community rather than ACORD and its methodology.
- That there was often a large difference between what the local development committees thought people wanted and what they actually wanted. It is important for ACORD not to neglect its role in informing the LDCs of this and discussing and convincing them that there are more suitable means of identifying what the communities actually want.
- That flexibility was vital in the elaboration of 'fiches', they needed to be tested thoroughly amongst a representative sample of groups, the way that questions were asked needed to vary according to the different ethnic and social groupings. Above all it was necessary to remember that the process must adapt over time.

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- That over and above the technical difficulty of identifying 'societal projects' is the lack of cohesion within certain groups. This was notably for pastoralists where a certain desire for a form of agropastoralism amongst many can challenge the traditional social hierarchies and power of the few.
- The degree of integration of the ACORD team remained weak. Sectoral technicians were not yet collaborating sufficiently and their role as 'development agents' rather than technical assistants was not yet being fully realised. This posed problems in terms of multi-disciplinary analysis where one activity may provoke a brake on another. For example, by increasing women's labour on rice fields one reduced their market gardening activities, one of their few sources of revenue.

At this stage of the programme it is difficult to determine whether groups are able to carry out the process of needs identification, project planning etc. themselves or whether they are still dependent on ACORD. Do village groups feel that they have to undergo the animation process in order to receive support for a project from ACORD? The feasibility of training village group animators could be explored in addition to the development of funding networks other than ACORD. A time-scale for ACORD's support could also be written into the contract between ACORD and a group. The Mali programmes are working with many ethnic groups and production systems. To date the ACORD team has found that it is easier to work with poorer groups in some villages than others and that work with women has been more successful in some areas. It would be interesting to know whether the auto-evaluation method can be adapted to reflect this.

Relationships between the Mali programme and the state have been more ambiguous than the case of Burkina Faso. At first the Mali programme only worked through state structures and formal cooperatives. A change in policy to become much more of an intermediary between the state and the population has proved to be a politically difficult step. In Burkina this role was assumed at the outset.

Overall the lessons to date indicate that the relationship of an external agency with resources (whether it is staffed by Malians or not), and local groups will always be artificial and biased. In the long term the programme aims to overcome that by facilitating the emergence of structures that emanate from such groups. In the short term the objective must be to minimise that artificiality whilst recognising its existence. The project has gone some small way to improving the relationship by allowing local groups to have their say and by establishing a link with a local research institute that can provide a continuous and objective 'exterior' appreciation of the programme's work.

- ## Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso ACORD has used GRAAP methods in its programme of support to socio-economic village groups. The GRAAP methodology has been developed by the Groupe de Recherche et d'Appui pour l'Autopromotion Paysanne (GRAAP) in Burkina Faso. It aims to assist groups to recognise change as one way to improve their situation. This is achieved through a continuing cycle of analysis, reflection and action. A trained animator encourages this process through posing questions on different themes: the different types of people living in the village; constraints to production; and areas of conflict between groups. These discussion sessions are held in sub-groups and use clear simple pictures to aid visualisation of the issues discussed and the relations between different people or groups of people. An important element of the GRAAP method is the iteration between sub-group sessions and plenaries when the groups come together. This is particularly important to ensure the participation of women and youth. The spokesperson for a group is much more likely to speak up on behalf of a group than on behalf of him/herself. Proverbs, stories and songs are also used. The training helps animators to provide a discussion framework for the role of religion, modern science and indigenous knowledge, inter-generation

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conflict, dependency relationships, and the role of an outside catalyst or animator.

The groups ACORD supports were set up with the assistance of extension services but are not government organisations. An initial survey of the village groups showed that projects failed because: villages did not consider the projects as their own, but as externally imposed; that limited management capacity hindered implementation; and that some village groups had internal problems which were further aggravated during project implementation. At the regional level there was no overall policy to tackle the particular needs of the area and few criteria for the establishment of projects. ACORD believed that state structures were sincerely trying to help rural communities, and that instead of by-passing or emphasising the negative aspects of local government, ACORD's strategy should be to support those structures to become more effective e.g. through assistance with planning rather than material resources. Thus the programme aims to support training for animation at several levels:

- trainers/supervisors are trained/upgraded in animation techniques;
- training of extension workers;
- training and refresher courses for officials of rural organisation; and,
- at the village group and village group union level there is assistance to animation sessions (this assistance includes preparing and adaptation of the GRAAP method).

The overall animation objective is the identification of problems, opportunities, misunderstandings, and activities by and with the villagers at the village level. More specific animation focuses on discussion of the solutions which villagers themselves can apply to a problem and the aspects for which some support is deemed necessary. The idea is to work out with them the activities to be undertaken and to demonstrate the need for the organisation to carry out these activities.

It is argued that one of the main constraints to village organisation and management is functional literacy for village group and village group union officials. Programme support to literacy work includes the design of simple management systems in local languages and training extension workers to improve training and support for village groups.

Lack of funding per se, was not seen as a constraint for effective projects. Instead assistance is provided in project formulation, writing up, presentation and fund-raising. Any financial support is given as loans not grants to ensure that the activity is seen as a village project.

Discussion

This approach has emphasised the training of existing government extension workers. This has the benefit of sensitising government structures to participatory approaches by fully involving them in that process. The risk of creating a parallel structure is minimised and 'handover' is not required as the project begins to be institutionalised from conception. By using government extension agents this approach is probably more cost effective. However, resources are still necessary for supervisory structures, and logistical support for follow-up.

Some of the drawbacks which the programme has faced include the mobility of staff and the need for training to be put into practice as soon as possible. During the Sankara period relations with the government were good; however since the change of government extension services have had to fund themselves to a greater degree. This means that their priority is to sell inputs to farmers to cover their running costs. As a result, animation work suffers. There is also the problem (from a donor viewpoint) of the lack of visible results, which take longer for a programme of structural support.

Although this programme has a limited 'loan fund' available to pre-finance activities, it does not see its role as providing technical interventions. Assistance with animation training and group sessions is separate from any technical support required for identified activities. The key question is the effectiveness of this approach in actually linking groups with founders and technical assistance.

It has been argued that IGRAAP as a method is too global and is not so useful in addressing

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specific village problems. The GRAAP method perhaps works better in situations of crisis where there is rapid change and crises in relations, and where there is a need for conflict resolution. It requires highly skilled and committed animators who already have a good knowledge of the area, power relations, and yet can take an objective view point and act as a mirror for village discussions. The responsibility of the animators is to generate dialogue, encourage reflection and provoke action, it is not to transmit extension messages. The method depends on appropriate pictures which have to be created for each situation. This could be seen as a constraint on the replicability of the method or alternatively as a way of promoting participation in the continuing adaptation and development of the methodology.

The Burkina Faso programme's approach, a combination of the GRAAP method with support to managerial and planning capacity, is tackling the issues of participation at several levels, whilst attempting to avoid a situation where participation at the grass roots is seen as a threat and blocked by local government structures.

Since 1983, this programme has therefore tried to strengthen village groups and encourage links between them whilst at the same time facilitating their access to financial and other support from other agencies. The problem for many founders was their inability to identify suitable groups or projects to support and their capacity to adequately follow-up on what they funded. ACORD, through a process of participatory 'animation' using the locally developed GRAAP methodology and an important training component, managed to build up village portfolios that corresponded to the individual needs of the groups into a coherent regional planning document that allowed founders to invest in the diverse areas of support that were required. This process, apart from reinforcing local planning capacities, succeeded in channelling an average of between £500,000 to £1,000,000 per annum to properly identified projects at a cost of between one quarter and one fifth of the additional funding attracted, thus not only guaranteeing a better utilisation of funds but also increasing the accessibility of such support to many more groups. This experience

indicates the feasibility of strengthening local groups and at the same time coordinating and directing external support to them (although it must be said that the political climate between 1983 and 1988 was particularly favourable to the development of this process).

• **Conclusion**

The state is not a monolithic block. There are unique parts of the structure within it with diverse interests and agendas which are committed to the development of the zones in which they work. NGOs need to identify how best they might support but not substitute themselves for what exists. They need to exploit their comparative advantage over the state in terms of the different relationship they can have with intended 'beneficiaries' and their capacity to organise themselves in an appropriate manner, rather than compete.

The questions that remain to be answered are:

- how to achieve the right balance between the support offered at each level?
- how best to influence change without antagonising local government?
- how to retain a degree of independence from the state, whose policies and personnel are liable to change, whilst developing links and mutually beneficial relationships?
- how to ensure that the least powerful or unheard voices (women, minority groups, etc.) are listened to and represented at the local planning level?

- **Chris Roche,** ACORD, Francis House (3rd floor), Francis Street, London SW1, UK.

6

Delta and village level planning in Sierra Leone: Possibilities and pitfalls

Melissa Leach

In Sierra Leone, local level adaptive planning approaches are under current debate and early application amongst both small NGOs and church organisations, and large-scale integrated rural development projects. Attention is focused on the DELTA/'Training for Transformation' approaches first developed in Kenya. These have much in common with other RRA/PRA approaches, but place particular emphasis on confronting and working through local conflicts of interest. They offer exciting possibilities but also pose challenges to institutional and socio-political sustainability.

Conventional planning approaches to integrated rural development in Sierra Leone have suffered from a lack of Sectoral co-ordination and a failure to ensure that the priority needs of different social groups (e.g. men and women in different types of households) are being met. The one-off small projects (infrastructure, agricultural projects, community stores, etc) undertaken by NGOs and larger agencies' 'small projects' funds frequently do not respond to community needs, rather becoming vehicles for local politicians' rivalries or chiefs' attempts to rally electoral support within the peculiarly resilient Sierra Leonean brand of patron-client politics. The call for 'participatory' planning is emerging as a response to such 'failures', as attributed to top-down, out-of-touch extension methods. Current appraisal methods such as baseline surveys are also out of touch in their identification of static 'needs' of (sectors of) the community, rather than focusing on the social, economic and political processes through which different villagers' priorities arise, come into conflict, and are negotiated and bargained over.

DELTA (Development Education and Leadership Training for Action) was introduced to Sierra Leone in 1983 from Nigeria. The approach combines 'conscientisation' ideas derived from Paulo Freire with US-derived management training principles and originally - biblical messages. Teams of 5-8 people from NGOs, church organisations and local communities undergo training through a series of four workshops, spaced at six-month intervals, through which they are intended to develop communication skills and radical critical awareness of local and national conditions. They are expected, in turn, to train further groups. DELTA trainees then undertake 'listening surveys' to determine needs within their own communities. On the basis of the problems voiced most often and most intensely they prepare 'codes' - sketches, pictures or songs - which illustrate the problems to community, and which are presented in a meeting. Each code is 'processed' through discussion of the causes and conflicting interests, which affect the problem. Villagers are expected to reach a consensus about which problem requires most immediate action, and then to undertake a process of 'action planning' to tackle its causes. Action planning involves the clarification of objectives and time scales, and the management of labour and resources - including applying for funding. Typical projects initiated in this way include child delivery rooms, bridges and seed banks.

DELTA training in Sierra Leone currently centres on the Anglican Church (Bo Dioscese) and the Catholic Pastoral Centre in Kenema. There is now a network of 'Community Animation Teams' which have undergone the training and which make more or less operational use of the approach in their work, supporting it with various sources of funding.

A large number of NGOs have shown interest in the approach. In 1987 the large GTZ-funded Bo-Pujehun Rural Development Project adapted DELTA into an approach called 'Village Level Planning' (VLP) to ensure that project initiatives from its 'Community Action Fund' met local interests and to integrate Sectoral planning at the local level. With VLP still at a pilot stage, the project administers a truncated version of the DELTA training programme to local staff who then apply the listening survey/action planning framework in villages.

The approaches pose institutional challenges. Firstly, the Church model DELTA practised by isolated communities for themselves - offers more control to people and little to the funding agency, which is expected to react to and provide for local requests. While this often suits understaffed NGOs and churches who can use a few trained DELTA workers as 'animators', it does not fit the accountability requirements of larger funding agencies. To get round his difficulty, the Bo-Pujehun project supports VLP with an extensive set of tightly controlled monitoring procedures and feedback to a hierarchy of committees. Yet this is proving even more costly and cumbersome to administer than conventional planning and M&E procedures. Secondly, DELTA and VLP are training-intensive, and trainers, trainee-trainers and village-level workers all need to be talented communicators. Bo-Pujehun is finding that extension workers with and without good communication skills achieve markedly different results. If the approaches are to be adopted on a larger scale by other agencies, the whole recruitment profile for extension workers could change, with implications for the existing (shakily pursued) policy to work with Ministry staff wherever possible.

DELTA and VLP also raise local socio-political questions. On the positive side, the approaches do offer a more dynamic, process-oriented way of identifying and responding to local interests. The code presentations - especially the sketches - model bargaining processes effectively and help make conflicts of interest explicit by showing people a mirrored reflection of their own lives. The animator-led processing sessions provide fora for conflict arbitration and more opportunity

for the socially uninfluential to voice their concerns than they would find, say, in court or a village meeting.

On the negative side, the approach cannot ensure that conflicts are not resolved in the interests of more powerful groups. In one VLP session, for example, men and women were strongly opposed over whether a rice store (men's preference) or a delivery house (women's preference) should be built first; consensus could not be reached, and the men asserted their priority. 'Consciousness raising' and provoking open conflict at village level could rebound in unfortunate ways on people's private relations for their relations with higher authorities (in Kenya, DELTA was banned by the state which considered it to be provoking insurrection).

While well-suited to village-level projects, VLP cannot easily respond to the particular needs of small vulnerable minorities such as young wives' desires to increase their incomes to compensate for failing male support. Voiced only by a few, such issues rarely rank highly in listening surveys. Finally, the approaches offer no guaranteed safety from take over by local political processes. Sierra Leonean patrons have successfully hijacked IADP inputs, rural credit schemes and conservation programmes in the past to increase their clientele. DELTA could become a similar vehicle with a little ingenuity and perhaps some careful engineering of the 'needs' voiced in listening surveys. Like 'Action Researchers' who attempt to subvert existing power structures, therefore, practitioners of this kind of local level adaptive planning face both difficulties and dangers.

- **Melissa Leach,** Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK.

7

Adaptive local planning: institutional issues

Donald Curtis

• Introduction

The question that we face is whether adaptive local planning techniques are sufficiently powerful, persuasive and, in themselves, adaptable to local situations to facilitate a breakthrough in the logjam of local institutional structures, procedures and interests that has so far set limits to the effectiveness of local planning.

• The local planning context

In many Third World countries three principal forces are at work at local levels of governance.

- Conflicting centralisation - decentralisation imperatives:

    At macro level these are seen as the conflicting requirements of holding the state together versus allowing expression of local interests. Local outcomes include:

    - central and local politicians struggling over control of local opportunities for patronage;
    - for administrators, questions of degrees of discretion or conformity; and,
    - for technical officers, conflicting loyalties to central ministries and local co-ordinating or planning bodies.

- Parallelism of line ministries:

    - separate ministries, represented at local levels by technical officers, each with their own budgets (great or small), lacking any interest in collaboration.

- In some places, plurality of NGO initiatives:
    - each exerting demands for information or permissions etc.

• How does planning fit?

In this context planning is not just a question of knowing what best to do in an area (itself a difficult enough matter) but of providing:

- a legitimate means of decision making at a decentralised level (i.e. a framework through which the centre/local issue can be resolved).
- a means of co-ordination: between the activities of departments, between other development agencies, and between statutory and voluntary sectors.

Insofar as local planning has been institutionalised at all, it is evidence of a desire, at some level of government, for development activities to be adapted to local needs. This desire can be backed up by an element of conditionality in budget allocations and other persuasive measures. However we can still look critically at the institutionalisation of local planning directives to see to what extent they represent battles won or lost (e.g. at the political level, local planning committees chaired by central MPs rather than local councillors) or varying degrees of token conformity (e.g. the stapling together of departmental budgets to form a plan).

- **Types of plan**

Different actors on the local planning stages are likely to perceive strategic advantage in different forms of plan.

- End state plans are likely to be favoured:

  - by administrators and technical officers who are seeking to limit political discretion or 'interference' (i.e. political involvement in particular allocations); and,
  - by donors seeking evidence of commitment to the aims of 'integrated' area development packages.

- Rolling plans will be the outcome of accommodating processes, in which different stake holders (politicians, elites, technical officers) are represented on local planning bodies, to bring together shopping lists from the grassroots, technical department budget proposals etc.

- Advocacy plans will be favoured by voluntary bodies that seek to influence local allocations (usually seeking maximum discretion for their own activities nevertheless).

To a certain extent the dominance of different parties in different places or in different stages of rural development history, can be seen in the prevalence of one or other of these planning devices.

- **How effective is adaptive local planning?**

I take adaptive planning to be a number of techniques or procedures (including RRA) for bringing local peoples' perspectives to bear upon resource allocating and controlling processes. In many cases the fact-finding activities required will be prior to the 'on paper' or 'in committee' phases of the above kinds of plan. They can be used to sensitise the proposals of technical departments to local perceptions of need, or to prioritise politically

mediated demands from grassroots organisations, or to enable NGOs to be responsive rather than prescriptive. As such, adaptive planning can be seen as a useful addition to any planning process at the local level. However, is it in the interests of any powerful people within the planning process to do it? The institutionalisation of adaptive planning hangs on this question.

- **Donald Curtis,** Development Administration Group, Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham, PO Box 363, B152TT Birmingham, UK.

8

The role of developed country institutions: Is there a meeting point between the top-down and bottom-up?

Robin Grimbi

The need for client-oriented and participatory research and planning is unarguable; a large measure of responsibility for this rests with local institutions. But what role is there for international and developed-country research organisations, largely dominated by natural scientists, that are more development than academically orientated?

A major problem is that demand-led and participatory research is, almost by definition, specific to local conditions to a particular set of environmental and socio-economic conditions. Identifying constraints and opportunities for research and development is a particular skill that social scientists (including economists), preferably working alongside natural scientists, can provide but the task can only be done on site. Identifying needs, whether for research or development, depends on detailed local knowledge and understanding that an overseas-based institution is not best placed to provide.

A related problem particularly peculiar to some research organisations is that research orientation is supposed to be 'strategic' rather than specific to one particular country, location or community. This type of research can easily become driven by science or technology, or by the scientific interests of the individuals concerned. The chances of such research ending up as appropriate to the circumstances of any group of farmers or rural people, would therefore appear to be distinctly uncertain (though the value of an occasional breakthrough may be high).

If it is going to be increasingly difficult for outsiders to undertake bottom-up research and planning - and also if research is designed to

yield broad or strategic results - what is the role in research for international centres and developed-country based institutions? Clearly the answer will vary from case to case, but one possible way forward is to concentrate attention on strengthening the capacity of local institutions to do the work themselves. The need and opportunity would appear to be greatest in the public sector but NGOs could also receive support.

Appropriate assistance would depend, in the first instance, on an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the collaborating institution and would need to take full regard of the perspective and attitudes of that institution. However it is likely that assistance would be useful in some of the following ways:

- strengthening systems and methods for diagnosing problems and identifying development and research needs and priorities;

- facilitating interdisciplinearity, through working with common (development) objectives and establishing structural links between disciplines. Economics and socio-economics should be at the beginning and end of research and planning;

- strengthening multi-way information flows between farmers, researchers, extension agents and rural developers;

- feeding back information from the field to natural scientists working at a strategic level (and interested in developing principles, processes and methodologies);

- making available information on new science and technology. This includes facilitating information flows through training, seminars, publications and networks;

- strengthening systems for monitoring and evaluation of research and development;

- anticipating spontaneous structural changes and the effect of these changes on research and planning needs;

- anticipating technological developments and analysing the place of these developments on farming systems (with a view to suggesting priorities and no-hopers); and,

- improving the focus of research by identifying key questions that should be addressed - by policy-rnakers research managers, extension managers and, of course farmers.

But for international and developed-country institutions to consider institution-strengthening as their primary role would require in some cases a radical change in direction and attitude.

- **Robin Grimble,** Natural Resources Institute, Central Avenue, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, Kent ME4, UK.

9

What happened to participatory planning in Kenya's arid and semi-arid land?

Martin E. Adams

• Introduction

In Kenya, the idea of participatory planning is certainly not new. References to the concept have recurred repeatedly in planning documents since the early 1960s. It is necessary to ask why a practice which is so widely recommended is so rarely applied. One must conclude, at least in the context of Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands' development programme, that both donors and government find participatory planning and implementation administratively inconvenient, even impracticable. In order to explain why, it is necessary to consider the framework for implementation in some detail.

The government of Kenya has pursued an active strategy for the development of Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL)[1] for more than a decade. ASAL areas account for more than 80% of Kenya's land area yet hold only 20% of the population. Because of their low economic potential, these areas tended to be neglected in development strategy until, in the mid-1970s, it was recognised that they merited special attention since (a) their inhabitants were often amongst Kenya's poorest, (b) they needed to support and feed a growing population if they were not to become an increasing burden on the rest of the economy,

and (c) the intensified pressure on the ASAL carried dangers of environmental degradation.

The 1979 government policy document (GOK, 1979) on SAL was followed by the establishment of 12 donor-funded integrated rural development programmes (IRDPs) in 14 of Kenya's 22 ASAL districts. To coordinate them, a special ASAL Section was created in 1980 in the Rural Planning Department of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MEPD), subsequently the Ministry of Planning and National Development (MOPND). Through the 1980s, the ASAL continued to have an important place in national policy. However, by 1988 it had become apparent that the manifold problems of ASAL required more resources and better coordination. As in the rest of Kenya, problems of the ASAL districts had continued to grow as the population increased. Despite the fact that the provision of basic services had improved in ASAL, they remained poor in relation to the rest of the country. In May 1989 a separate ministry, the Ministry of Reclamation and Development of Arid, Semi-Arid Areas and Wastelands (MRDASW), was created, primarily as a coordinating body. This took over from MOPND the responsibility for overseeing the ASAL IRDPs.

• Decentralised integrated planning

Decentralised integrated planning was initiated in Kenya in 1971 under the Speical Rural Development Programme (SRDP) in areas chosen to cover a cross section of the nation, including ASAL. The primary objective of SRDP, which was focused at the sub- district

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[1] ASAL is the common abbreviation for Arid and Semi-arid Lands. The definition of ASAL is derived from the Farm Management Handbook of Kenya (GOK, 1982) which identifies seven agro-ecological zones (AEZs). ASAL comprise AEZ IV-VII. Twenty-two districts, the so-called ASAL districts, have more than 30 per cent of their area with an evapo-transpiration of more than twice the annual rainfall, that is within AEZ IV-VII.

level (i.e. the division), was to increase rural incomes, employment and welfare. Attempts were made to identify critical gaps and bottlenecks and to test new ideas and projects. Organisational and sectoral coordination were given attention in both planning and implementation. As with many pilot programmes, a major problem proved to be the conflict between the desire for establishing viable programmes, which could be replicated through the country, and the pressure to create individually successful programmes which were not transferable because of high costs (IDS, 1973). As an outgrowth of the SRDP experiment, the government attempted to extend decentralized planning to all districts in Kenya. The post of District Development Officer (DDO) was created and District Planning units (DPU) were established (Lele, 1975).

The first of the ASAL district programmes was the Machakos Integrated Development Programme (MIDP). This began in 1978 in Machakos District which had long been recognised as a critical area by those concerned with the development of sustainable dryland agriculture on erodable soils. The MIDP has been funded by the European Development Fund to a current total of K Sh.17.25 million. The Phase I objectives were simply to increase productivity and raise rural living standards. Its major justification was poverty alleviation. MIDP strategy emphasised planning at the local level, building local implementation capacity and investing in a range of complementary activities to overcome joint constraints. To achieve the above objectives, planning and implementation were meant to be decentralised to the district level and efforts were made to seek complementarities between sectors. A flexible approach was adopted to the annual programming and budgeting of a series of sectoral activities: soil and water conservation, crop and livestock production, cooperatives, rural afforestation, water supply, rural industries, social services and adult education and institutional support (ie. the funding of a programme Management Unit, training and the provision of Technical Assistance).

Thus MIDP and its imitators were meant to break away from the archetypal donor project. From the outset, the locus of decision-making

and control of the ASAL district programmes committees, from the locational, through divisional, up to the district level. Detailed programmes were expected to evolve as a result of a process of annual planning and budgeting. Despite early progress on MIDP with district-level planning, which led to the formulation of the District Focus for Rural Development policy (GoK, 1984), subsequently little has been achieved in the way of institutional development at district level or below, either in Machakos or in other ASAL districts. Why?

- **Programme planning and management**

Political control

With the introduction of the District Focus, district development was to have been brought under the supervision of the District Development Committees (DDC) and sub-committees at divisional and locational level. Externally funded programmes like MIDP, were expected to provide a source of funds to allow districts to plan and implement their own programmes. The extent to which this happened has depended on the degree of involvement of the community. For example, there were marked differences between the densely settled farming areas, such as Machakos, where the local committees were active and the remote pastoral areas, such as Turkana, where the committees rarely met and were dominated by a handful of officials and politicians. The 1980s have not witnessed the flowering of participatory planning in Kenya. Indeed, since the 1982 constitutional amendment that made Kenya a one-party state, democratic institutions have been steadily eroded. This has blighted genuine participation in local government and has strengthened the hold of KANU's gatekeepers.

Bureaucratic control

Implementation of the District Focus policy has also depended on the degree to which line ministries were prepared to devolve decision-making to district level and below. In spite of the lip service paid to District Focus, Kenya's administrative structure has remained very hierarchical, centralised and vertically

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fragmented. Junior officers at field level are at the bottom of a career ladder which leads progressively to less direct involvement with the poorer sections of the rural community and to less need to undertake tiresome duties in remote areas. The DC, assisted by the DDO, is nominally in charge of all administrative work in the District, but in practice field staff of line ministries continue executing their work with little regard to the need for mutual coordination of either day-to-day administration or long-term planning and budgeting. Public servants are over-represented on development committees at both the district and divisional level (Rono et al, 1990) and have found little difficulty in resisting local wishes if they were so disposed.

Budgetary process

Originally, with MIDP Phase I for example, the ASAL funds allocated to the districts were seen as incremental. They represented funding over and above that which the line ministries in the district would otherwise be receiving from the Treasury. The funds were meant to be used for investments which addressed the special problems of ASAL, namely human resource development, exploitation of productive potential, conservation and integration within the national economy. Yet, even in the case of MIDP, there was a tendency to load the programme with the costs of ongoing national programmes (ODI, 1982). Over the last ten years, ASAL funds have become a substitute for recurrent funding from the Treasury. In some districts, the situation has now been reached in which the major portion of external funds has gone to meet operating costs. Donors have persuaded themselves that it made little sense to finance separate programmes when many of the developmental services were functioning at low levels of effectiveness on account of the scarcity of government funds[2]. They reasoned that comparatively modest incremental resources could be used to make the existing services more effective.

This tendency of IRDPs to absorb recurrent costs has been reinforced by the fact that they proceed by annual programming and budgeting. Annual work plans and budgets are submitted to the Programme Officer by the district heads of line ministries for approval in March/April for inclusion in the budget for the financial year following the one after next, ie. the FY starting in 16 months' time. Because they fear they will not receive funds from the central Treasury to cover routine operating costs, they load them onto the ASAL programme. Thus much of the ASAL budget goes to cover transport, travel allowances, stationery, etc. for routine work with very little innovative content. Even if he/she were so inclined, the scope for the beleaguered Programme Officer[3] from the ASAL Ministry to change submissions, by for example the Ministry of Water Development or the Ministry of Agriculture, is very limited. Thus a prime purpose of the ASAL funds - to provide the opportunity for innovative participatory planning at the district level - has been frustrated.

Donor influence and involvement

In an attempt to resolve these and related problems, the donors' staff tend to become involved in day-to-day management. In order to limit donor influence, it has been proposed that district programmes should be financed by more than one external agency. However, this would not solve the underlying problem, namely the weak representation of the MRDASW, the ASAL Ministry, at district level. The presence of several donors could make matters more complicated at district level. In any case, half the ASAL districts are currently without an ASAL programme and they would prefer to have one donor rather than none at all.

Expatriate Technical Assistance (TA) has been a major issue from the early days of MIDP. Heads of department often saw TA as an imposition; a price that had to be paid for donor funding. TA domination has clearly had a negative impact on past ASAL programmes and has greatly reduced the net flow of

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[2] In Kitui District in 1988/9, for example, only KSh.200 was available per professional officer to meet non-wage operating and maintenance costs.

3 Very often junior economists several job groups lower than the heads of department with whom they are dealing.

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external resources[4]. Donors, on the other hand, have insisted that TA is essential if funds are to be effectively applied and monitored. The heat has gradually gone out of the debate as donors have found it increasingly difficult to recruit staff and as the technical calibre of the departmental heads has improved. Unfortunately this improvement has not been exhibited by staff assigned to the district level by the ASAL Ministry.

Donors continue to be concerned about the improper application of funds[5]. Financial control over ASAL programmes has been and continues to be extremely weak. The volume of funds flowing through a PMU can exceed the allocation to the district treasury. Very often, the PMU accounts' clerks are unable to verify the expenditures incurred or to provide the Programme Officer with financial management information. Initially, ASAL programmes were funded through a system of reimbursement to the Treasury, but, because of growing liquidity problems which delayed project implementation, bilateral donors replaced it by one of direct payment. Most bilateral-funded projects operate through a special account in a local bank, a pre-financing tool which is useful when there are many small expenditures. The obvious benefit for the aid agency of special accounts is that they eliminate the need for it to act as project cashier. Suppliers and contractors benefit as funds are paid immediately. However, special accounts can be held in local currency only and they do not allow scope for foreign expenditures. Thus overseas procurement (eg. cars, equipment, consultants) is normally handled by the donor agency and the PMU may not be kept up-to- date on the financial situation. The locus of financial decision-making and control of donor-funded ASAL programmes has tended to be the donor country office in Nairobi rather than the district treasury.

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[4] For example, in the Kitui District ASAL Programme, 59% of the budget went to Technical Assistance (IFAD/UNDP, 1988).

[5] The adverse consequences of corrupt practices in public office were reviewed in 1987 in the "Kenya Country Study and Norwegian Aid Review" (Chr Michelsen Institute). Since then, the situation has not improved.

District planning

The unclear relationship of the ASAL Project Management Unit (PMU) to the District Planning Unit (DPU) is a further cause of difficulty. Technically, the PMU is part of the DPU. The head of the DPU, the District Development Officer (DDO) is responsible to MRDASW in Nairobi, and not the DPU which bears responsibility for programming, budgeting and the application of ASAL programme resources. In some districts, ASAL funds exceed those voted under all other programmes. Very often the two administrative units are in separate offices. When, as in the case of the ODA-funded Embu, Meru and Isiolo Programme, a single PMU is placed in the Provincial Office, the opportunities for institution-building at district level are very limited, which is one reason why the "ODA has not been particularly successful" (Howell, 1990) in this aspect.

It is apparent that district planning in ASAL remains extremely weak. It is only recently that some districts established District Planning Units (e.g. Laikipia, 1989) others are still without one. Where they exist, the DDO is beset by a massive workload which distracts the officer from strategic issues and leaves no time for travelling in the district, attending locational and divisional development committees and meeting the people he is expected to serve. Little attention has been paid to developing the process of participatory planning or to monitoring the degree to which it is being affected. There is clearly a need to develop a methodology which can be widely applied and which will encourage the participation of various community groups.

- **Conclusions**

The reasons why so little progress has been achieved with participatory planning on ASAL programmes *in* Kenya would seem to be briefly thus:

1. The organisation of participatory planning is management intensive and the trained personnel needed to facilitate the process are generally scarce in rural areas, particularly in ASAL.

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2. No widely applicable methodology has been developed by which participation may be institutionalised.

3. The ASAL programmes have operated separately from the District Planning Units and, in some instances, look towards Nairobi rather than the District for guidance.

4. In any case, the district (with a population often in excess of one million) is probably at too high an administrative level to foster participation, divisional level is probably the upper limit.

5. The local government system is very poorly developed in most ASAL districts, particularly the remote pastoral ones.

6. The government budgetary process is both complex and unduly attenuated. It does not easily accommodate the allocation of government funds to finance ad hoc local works.

7. 7 Widespread corruption in the public service and the lack of accountability among officials handling funds makes it difficult to channel resources through the government system to community groups.

8. The weakness of the coordinating ministry results in a high degree of donor involvement in day-to-day management of programmes.

- **Martin E. Adams,** 2 Gifford's Close, Girton, Cambridge CB3 OFF, UK.

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Local level adaptive planning:
Winners and local losers in machakos district, Kenya

Mary Tiffen

Participation cannot be effective if it stays at the extremely local level. The decay of local government institutions and of local government's independent revenue limits local people's power to influence; it increases that of civil servants, consultants, and aid agencies. This situation can only be changed by a conscious political decision of the government concerned.

The Machakos Integrated Development Programme (MIDP) was the first District level-planning programme, launched in 1978 with European Development Fund (EDF) aid. In principle, its planning was to be integrated, decentralised and participative.

In an evaluation carried out after the first four years, we found that it was effectively decentralised, but to the district level officers of the central Government Departments. There was a structure of Location, Divisional and District Development Committees, in which local leaders participated, which were in theory consulted at the outset on the planning. They identified water as a primary need, and this was reflected in the allocations of money under the programme. This was, however, effectively the end of participation in planning (participation in work continued to be desired for financial reasons). The choice of watersheds to be developed with dams and conservation measures were made on the grounds of technical possibilities and administrative convenience.

Integration implies a top-down approach, since the experts decide which activities should be integrated. It meant activities were concentrated in certain areas, whereas the County Council, the only elected body in the District, would have preferred a more even spread of activities around the district.

Decision-making was adaptive, in that the District Steering Committee met to receive reports and adjust plans on a monthly schedule. Its decisions were rubberstamped by the District Development Committee, a large and not very effective body meeting about 3 times a year. On this, elected representatives such as the local MPs and officers of the County Council were completely outnumbered by officials of Government Departments.

Machakos is noteworthy for the activity of self-help groups, and for the effectiveness of its coffee co-operatives. These organisations carry out activities within the area of a sub-location or location. However, one also needs an institution that can decide priorities, make allocations of scarce resources, and look at the overall benefits and losses of programmes that necessarily affect several areas. Inter-location issues are typical of environment-related programmes: a dam may be required in an upstream location to supply a downstream area; forestry protection on the upper catchment may be in still another administrative area. The institution carrying out this function is either the District Steering Committee, consisting of civil servants, or the local representative of the co-ordinating Ministry (formerly Planning, now the Ministry for the Reclamation and Development of Arid and Semi-arid Lands) together with the consultants they appoint. The civil servants are mostly only in the District on a temporary basis.

The consequence is that an immense reservoir of local knowledge and talent is not utilised. The Machakos Co-operative Union, for example, had imposed on it in the 1978 plan a credit programme for food crops and cotton which its members had not requested, but which the experts of the Ministry of

Agriculture thought desirable. Both programmes failed for reasons which the unconsulted Union officers and members could probably have forecast. It is quite possible that an elected body would have preferred to move more resources into animal health, and to reduce allocations to crop support. A political body is required to make such decisions; if it is left to the Ministries each will seek to preserve its budget for existing activities. It is quite apparent from the formulation document submitted in 1990 to the EEC for the third phase of MIDP that the plan has been prepared by (local) consultants in consultation with line ministries, but without any input from Divisional or Location Planning Committees, or from elected County Councillors.

A revision of policy towards elected bodies is the responsibility of the government and people concerned, though we know that outside bodies could influence this, as they do on other matters, if it became part of structural adjustment programmes. Where it is part of government policy, as in Zambia, aid agencies can give assistance for the training and restructuring required.

In countries where such restructuring is not on the political agenda, there are nevertheless some ways in which an increased local input into planning can be encouraged.

Firstly, we should not underestimate local capacity to work the present system. The Akamba, for example, are extremely good at lobbying. When they do not obtain what they want through official channels, they exercise pressure through their MPs, through NGOs, through Machakos-born officials in senior positions, and by various other means. Examples can be given of them obtaining official aid and NGO grants for the projects they desire. The successful localities are, of course, those, which have influential and effective leaders.

Secondly, some of the local NGOs are themselves strong and effective. This includes, for example, the Catholic Diocese of Machakos. Some of these NGOs are participation minded and have developed means by which people can exercise influence over planning. Where, as in the case cited,

they cover the whole District, they are to some extent obliged to make decisions about allocations by geographic region and by priority sector. Co-operation with District-wide local NGOs is therefore one means by which outside agencies can assist local level adaptive planning.

- **Mary Tiffen,** Overseas Development Institute, Regents College, Inner Circle Regents Park, London NW1 4NS, UK.

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Lessons from the 'project centre d'alevinage lagdo' in North Cameroon

Henri Roggeri

The Project 'Centre d'Alevinage Lagdo' (Gounougou, North-Cameroon) aims at mitigating two of the adverse downstream effects of the Lagdo Dam: the decrease in fish production resulting from the absence of yearly floods, and the increase in water-related diseases. This pilot project started in 1987 with the creation of a fish-breeding station for the purpose of restocking remaining wetland patches, thereby introducing fish-culture, and conducting experiments on biological means to control vectors of water-related diseases. During the first implementation phases, the purpose of the project evolved towards the set-up of a water management system at the village level, thus illustrating the adaptation capacity of the project.

This adaptation capacity results from the project's general approach which can be characterised by these two simple statements: one, little is known about the ecological and socio-economic conditions that prevail in the project area (planning process in which 'ignorance' is taken into account) and two, if an action is undertaken, it must be perpetrated by the local population once the project itself is completed (self-help development).

A number of operational principles stemmed from this approach. Among these, the following deserve special attention:

- Take the time to acquire the necessary knowledge on technical and ecological issues, and insight in local socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions. It is only now, after two short phases (1 year each), that a detailed plan of activities is being developed (during a third one-year phase).

- Focus on practical problems, preferably those identified by the local population.

- Incrementally acquire the necessary (technical and ecological) knowledge through action-research in which researchers/extension workers and villagers learn from each others and from the activities carried out.

- The target group has the responsibility of the final decision.

Such an approach clearly requires both the actual participation of the target group and an adequate attitude of the project staff. To this respect, two lessons can already be drawn from the project's experience:

1. In ensuring participation, the organisation of the population is a crucial instrument. In Gounougou, where the population is characterised by ethnic diversity and a high percentage of immigrants, the organisation of villagers involves:

   - the establishment of a forum (weekly village meeting) for discussions on current activities and problems that arise, exchange of information, problem identification, formulation of new ideas (local initiatives that request assistance by the project), permanent evaluation etc.; and,

   - the creation of 'functional groups' consisting of individuals who share the same interests and are involved in a specific activity.

   Although these organisational structures are still being built, they already have proved successful in, for instance, providing the project with a valuable insight on some customary rights with respect to resource use, initiating activities

that help meet the actual needs of villagers, cancelling or postponing actions aiming at problems that were not experienced as such by the local population, strengthening relationships between the different groups of resource users, and establishing a close relationship between the villagers and the project.

2. The project staff must remain open to new developments, alert to events and incidents that occur in and around the village, and ready to show interest and provide assistance to unplanned activities. The staff should also constantly question the adequacy of on-going activities with respect to the villagers' needs.

- **Henri Roggeri,** Centre for Environmental Studies, Garen Market 1a, PO Box 9518, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands.

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RRA for local government planning in northern Nigeria

Robert Leurs, and
Mal B. Sumare, A. Andeley, Mrs. S. Ogede

• Introduction

The Development Administration Group, University of Birmingham, in collaboration with the Department of Local Government Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, is presently engaged in a five year training project in project planning and management for local government officers in the northern states of Nigeria. During the first year of this project (1989-90), it has designed and helped to run three project planning courses for a total of 76 heads of different local government departments (community development, agriculture and health) and training officers from the State Departments of Local Government Affairs. As such, we have trained representatives from about one quarter of all 300 or so local governments in the northern states of Nigeria.

One operational objective of these planning courses was to promote the generation of a poverty focussed grass roots information base through the application of RRA techniques. Course participants were therefore introduced to the philosophy and techniques of RRA, which they were subsequently expected to pass on to their extension staff. They were given a framework with which to generate initial checklists for subsequent use during course fieldwork. They were also familiarised with and asked to prepare some diagrams which could prove useful for project planning purposes, such as maps, seasonal calendars, transacts, historical profiles and impact diagrams. Finally, they were introduced to the poverty identification exercise, which was practised in mock workshop sessions.

The poverty identification exercise constituted the first fieldwork exercise and was also used as a purposive sampling technique to selecting the households to be visited. The sectoral checklists prepared were then applied by multi disciplinary teams in five villages of each of the three host local governments, in individual/household, group and community settings. Diagrams were also prepared by pairs of officers with small groups of villagers. Fieldwork reports were prepared on the basis of the information obtained during ten days of discussions and exercises and individual personal action plans were also developed, indicating to training team in Zaria, how each participant intended to train their extension staff in the philosophy and techniques of RRA. These personal action plans were seen as a crucial mechanism for replication of the training down to the operational level.

Both the fieldwork reports and personal action plans were then presented to local government secretaries, sole administrators and councillors, as well as state department officials at a two day follow up workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to seek support for the implementation of these plans, as well as to discuss the implications of attempting to institutionalise RRA practices within Nigerian local government. The implementation of these plans has subsequently been monitored three times by the project team based in Zaria. These follow up visits have revealed many problems with our efforts to institutionalise RRA in Nigerian local government. Before going into these, however, we would first like to itemize the positive achievements of our training efforts.

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- **Project achievements**

- The local government officers trained so far are interested in and receptive to the philosophy and techniques of RRA.

- The officers concerned are also enthusiastic about applying these techniques in villages within their local governments.

- About one third of the local government officers we trained (25) have now trained their extension staff in RRA.

- Similarly, two of the nine state training officers have trained further local government officers from their states in RRA. Two others are planning to do so in the near future.

- Those state and local government officials that have attended follow up workshops or that have been visited by our monitoring team in Zaria, have all responded favourably to the idea of RRA and the personal action plan as a mechanism for its institutionalisation. This has been reflected in the continued sponsorship of our courses and the financial support given to the subsequent participant training efforts at the state and local government levels.

- Most of the project planning course participants who have now also attended our follow on courses in project management continue to be very enthusiastic about RRA and what we are trying to achieve, despite the many obstacles which many of them have faced in trying to implement their personal action plans over the last eighteen months. The most important of these are outlined below.

- **Problems encountered**

- Most of our course participants continue to think of villagers as backward.

- Many of them still have a poor understanding of RRA philosophy and techniques, as well as how these apply to project planning. The application of RRA methods during our course fieldwork exercises failed to break through the common practice of villagers defining their needs according to what they knew local government traditionally provided. Combined with the problem of a general lack of probing, this led to the generation of superficial information about village problems and opportunities.

- Serious distortions have therefore taken place in participant's efforts to train extension staff. Furthermore, neither course fieldwork nor subsequent efforts by some participants and their extension staff to apply RRA methods have managed to initiate any process of participatory RRA within the villages concerned.

- The relatively few extension staff that have been trained do generally not appear to have applied RRA methods subsequent to their course and fieldwork training by their heads of departments. As such, the operational objective of generating a grass roots information base has yet to be realised.

- Lack of political and financial support has also severely restricted the amount of training that has taken place so far. Heads of departments are not taken seriously as trainers (or project planners) by their superior officers, nor do they see themselves as trainers or planners. This lack of support can be attributed to the poor attendance of senior local government staff and politicians at our follow up workshops and the lack of follow-up contact with these people by the project team and the state departments.

These particular problems, which are directly linked at our training effort, are aggravated by a number of other obstacles to institutionalisation, which are discussed below.

- **Obstacles to institutionalisation**

- Dialogue with villagers in northern Nigeria is mediated through the traditional village and district heads. Many villagers will not even talk to local government officials without the prior

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approval of the traditional authorities, who are usually represented at any village level discussions. In addition, extension staff and other local government officials also tend to limit their dialogue to a limited number of influential villagers when such dialogue does occur. Even then, these infrequent discussions tend to be superficial unstructured, in terms of project planning requirements.

- Lack of exposure to the philosophy and techniques of RRA by state department officials, councillors, senior local government officials and other heads of departments, as well as by village community development associations, district development associations and so on also prevents any widespread adoption of RRA methods, as does the general hierarchical nature of local government and prevailing attitudes towards the local population.

- More generally, the use of an RRA generated grass roots information base as a basis for participatory local level project planning within local government is likely to be constrained by the following additional factors, which determine present planning practices:

  - federal and state government policy priorities as laid down in 'call circulars' which are periodically sent governments;

  - federal and state directives to participate in certain projects or to implement certain projects on their behalf, with or without the help of specific grants;

  - the strong tradition of continuing to do what has been done the year before in the context of expected revenue and inflationary trends;

  - personal preferences of the heads of departments, in context of their knowledge and information, as well bureaucratic politics and personal relationships with treasurer, secretary, sole administrator or chairman supervisory councillors;

- a constant infrastructure bias, which rnaxirnises the opportunities for contracting out and which rninirnises the need for contact with project beneficiaries;
- political pressures brought to bear on chairmen and councillors (as well as on secretaries and sole administrators) by village and district heads (through the emirate council), village delegations, community development associations, task forces etc.;

- pressures by contractors on the head of works, treasurer and secretary, sole administrator or councillors;

- personal pressures from relatives and friends; and,

- in addition to these factors, extension staff are not seen as having important information collection functions, nor are heads of departments seen as project planners. This is hardly surprising in a situation where capital project expenditure typically does not exceed 10 or 20% of total local government expenditure, most of which goes on salaries and allowances.

All the above mentioned factors have implications for future training in RRA, which we have taken account of in the design of the next phase of project activities, described below.

- **Lessons for future training**

- More time has to be spent training local government officers in the philosophy and techniques of RRA, particularly in the development and application of checklists, greater use of the 'six helpers' and a better understanding of the operational significance of diagrammatic techniques and project planning oriented extension worker reports.

- More effort also needs to be made to encourage critical analysis and modification of our RRA materials. Our

RRA materials have been uncritically accepted during course work and mechanically applied during fieldwork so far.

- Similarly, more time and effort has to be spent encouraging on going participatory RRA by villagers themselves. This should become one of the future course fieldwork objectives.

- Future training will have to include an explicit training of trainers package to enable participant heads of departments to become effective trainers of their extension staff in RRA.

- The target audience for training also has to be widened. This will be done next year by developing teams of back up trainers consisting of the best of our ex-course participants and by decentralising future training to the state departments and local governments. Future monitoring and follow up support with the implementation of personal action plans will also be further decentralised with greater involvement of the back up training and monitoring teams.

- The best participants of these new field based training courses will also be trained at future training of trainer courses, so that state training teams can eventually cover all local governments in their states without the assistance of the present project team of trainers at Ahmadu Bello University.

- A new post course monitoring system will have to be devised, to analyse and resolve problems with the new phase of training, as well as to inform future project redesign.

We are confident that the incorporation of these lessons from experience to date will significantly improve the chances of successful institutionalisation of RRA in local government in northern Nigeria. However, the implementation and impact of this new training strategy will itself depend on a number of factors which are briefly examined below.

- **Future prospects**

The success of the proposed future training policy outlined above will depend on several factors:

- State and local government agreement in allowing their training officers and heads of departments to become trainers within and outside their own organisations. This represents a new role for these officers that will have to be added to their existing responsibilities.

- The ability of consultants and the project effectively train such future trainers.

- The development of local RRA materials, a good communications system and a post-course monitoring and evaluation structure that can feed back into the training project.

More importantly, any widespread application of RRA methods in local government in northern Nigeria will depend on the following additional changes:

- An acceptance by traditional village leaders of participatory RRA methods.

- An acceptance by councillors and senior local government officials of the legitimacy of a grassroots information base generated in this way, as a base for project formulation, selection and approval.

- Acknowledgement and respect of the planning responsibilities of extension staff, sectional heads and operational departmental heads.

- An acceptance at state and federal levels of a greater level of local government autonomy in formulating policy priorities and associated local government projects and programmes.

- Increased revenue for capital project expenditure, as well as for the costs of the project planning process itself.

We believe that a larger and more effective training programme can generate a

momentum, which will induce many of the required changes outlined above. The only major longer term constraints upon which training is likely to have relatively little impact are what levels of resources and autonomy future civilian federal and state governments in Nigeria are prepared to accord to local government. However, continued uncertainty about these questions should not stop us from continuing our efforts at introducing the philosophy and methods of RRA into Nigerian local government, as a basis for more particiative local level development planning in the future.

- **Robert Leurs**, Development Administration Group, University of Birmingham, PO Box 363, Birmingham B152TT, UK; **Mal B. Sumare, A. Andeley, Mrs S. Ogede**, Department of Local Government Studies, Ahmadu Bello University Nigeria.

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NGOs as brokers in agricultural R&E planning

Kate Wellard

Non-government organisations (I include here both local and international NGOs and local membership organisations) have moved away from exclusively relief functions and are increasingly involved in development and empowerment of their members or client group. Where NGO projects and programmes are planned in conjunction with local groups, a degree of participation in planning at local level may be achieved. If NGOs are able to represent the views of their members at national level, then potentially they can act as brokers between rural people and government planners, research and extension staff on a much wider scale.

Whether this potential is realised depends on certain factors, both exogenous e.g. the nature of interaction between government and NGOs, and the existence of donor pressure, and endogenous e.g. size and status of the NGO, the extent to which it is able to represent genuine interests, and its technical capability.

This summary addresses the last of these. Case studies of NGOs who have initiated agricultural and environmental research and extension (R&E) activities in response to an identified local need are examined. Many have gone on to address wider research questions, linking up with other organisations locally or nationally through networks, and collaborating with or lobbying government on policy issues or development programmes.

- Successful translation of local farmers' needs into practical R&E programmes is seen as dependent upon:

- NGOs' ability to identify these needs, design and appraise appropriate interventions and carry out participatory research.

- this in turn depends on their approach, technical expertise and other resources. Where they do not have specialist resources in-house, there may be a possibility of collaboration with government R&E services.

- the amount of professional interaction between NGO and government R&E staff.

- acceptance by government and donors of NGOs as legitimate contributors to their agricultural R&E agendas.

- **Kate Wellard,** Overseas Development Institute, Regents College, Inner Circle, Regents Park, London NWI, UK.

14

Planning rural development in local organisations in the Andes: what role for regional and national scaling up?

Tony Bebbington

Much of the enthusiasm for participatory grassroots level planning by NGOs and peasant organisations has often neglected the broader regional and national political economy with which these institutions operate. Yet this context has great influence over the opportunities and constraints that face non-governmental and peasant organisations. Moreover, many of the factors influencing the dynamics of these wider systems occur beyond the immediate influence of local organisations. It is perhaps the fact that the impacts of such wider processes and relationships are felt at a community level that has stimulated the search for local level diagnoses to the neglect of higher level solutions.

Nonetheless, diagnoses conducted only at a local level may fail to identify underlying causes of local problems. Land use degradation, for example, might be identified as a central problem for communities during the planning activities of local organisations, who may then embark on participatory soil conservation strategies based on local knowledge. But the deeper causes of that degradation, such as product prices and lack of off-farm employment in local labour markets, cannot be directly addressed by such local institutions; nor can they be solved inside the community.

Local organisations suffer further limitations. Their local focus frequently impedes information flows among different organisations, leading to the duplication of mistakes and the failure to multiply a successful innovation from one organisation to others. Similarly, a local orientation may be an obstacle to addressing problems which cut across the borders of several organisations (such as irrigation systems). While the socio-political orientation of many such organisations may play the important role of criticizing inappropriate government activities, it can also imbue excessively critical, and indeed mistaken, images of a monolithic government.

This may lead local organisations to overlook offices and individuals within the public sector who are broadly sympathetic to local NGO concerns. Consequently, potential complementarities and co-ordinators between the two sectors are not exploited (such as the technological contributions that the public sector could make to local organisations that frequently lack technological skills). This represents an inefficient use of resources. It is likely that such inefficiency will be the greater with the increasing proliferation of non-membership local NGOs.

There are good reasons why Andean non-membership NGOs adopted such strategies in the past. Having frequently been formed in resistance to non-democratic governments, a local orientation allowed them a closer contact with the bases, facilitating efforts to strengthen popular organisation. In addition, it allowed a more efficient (and adaptive) delivery of economic and social services, which in turn helped to strengthen the NGO's relationship to these popular organisations. Being critical of, and distant from, the public sector also helped NGOs to avoid co-optation and any implication in the policy failures and politicisation of government programmes, protecting the NGO from the loss of popular legitimacy that would automatically result from this.

Nonetheless, the last decade in Latin America has seen two changes of significance for such

NGO strategies. Transitions to electoral democracy have meant that states are not now so overtly repressive as they previously were. This change also presents NGOs with the difficult fact that government is now to some degree popularly elected whilst NGOs are not. Secondly, in recent years, governments have also been under the pressure of donors to reduce the size of the state, and collaborate with NGOs for the implementation of social programmes. While flawed in many respects, these policy orientations open channels through which NGOs may now have more opportunity to influence state policy and structure. This more favourable political environment has allowed both NGOs and some of their advocates to address more explicitly the limitations of local NGO projects in a way that would have been inappropriate in earlier, more repressive atmospheres. The issue of how NGOs should move from a hostile toward a more collaborative and influential relationship with the state is of especially increasing concern.

In this context the idea of "scaling up" takes on particular significance. While loosely defined, "scaling up" deals with strategies aimed at widening the impact of local NGOs. Many would argue that this ought to imply some form of relation between the NGO and the state. There are, however, several layers to the concept. Firstly, is the concern to replicate local innovations in other local organisations across a wider area. Replication, however, may not address the deeper causes of local problems, and other variants of "scaling up" strategies are concerned to identify how to move from a local project to a regional or national programme, and indeed how to move from the experience of a local project and local organisation to fora which achieve national policy reform.

These concerns suggest that it is timely to devise strategies that cut across spatial scales and institutional boundaries: strategies that think explicitly about the relationship of local projects to regional and national processes of social development, and that bring NGOs and the state together. Such strategies would also build practical bridges between recent work on participatory development and the contributions of earlier theories of regional underdevelopment.

These concerns are current among many Andean NGOs, and are the topic of a collaborative research project involving the Overseas Development Institute-London, the Centre for Tropical Agricultural Research-Bolivia, a Colombian NGO, Celater, and the author. A range of emerging NGO strategies have been identified, of which the following are some examples. One Ecuadorian NGO, concerned that its local activities have achieved few sustainable impacts over the last decade is now moving toward a multi-level research strategy addressing local, regional and national processes in an attempt to generate policy alternatives that embrace the three levels simultaneously. with the support of its foreign public sector donor, another Ecuadorian NGO has long sought to co-finance rural projects with the public sector. The NGO's and donor's goals are to influence the state's thinking and policy, and to achieve a wider implementation of the NGO's participatory approach to planning and administration in the state sector. In short, the aim is to change the state rather than simply criticise it.

In Bolivia, groups of NGOs have collaborated in co-ordinated agricultural research and extension projects, sharing information and this year beginning to address area-wide problems of water management. One implicit concern of the co-ordinators of these projects is that such integrated NGO projects could serve as a model for future state initiatives. Within Bolivia there is also a trend towards the formation of NGO co-ordinating networks at a departmental level aimed at improving collaboration and information exchange among NGOs.

A future goal of one such network is to develop agreed upon departmental policy alternatives to offer to the government. The network is also intended to provide a united NGO front around these policy alternatives when the government approaches NGOs for collaborative relationships in rural development programmes (as donors are currently encouraging it to do). In the process, the network aims both to influence policy and to press from the NGO sector for the decentralisation of government policy making processes in order to make them more relevant to local conditions.

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These strategies suggest institutional innovations in the non-governmental sector that donors could support in order to overcome the constraints of an excessively local focus. One or a group of donors could, for instance, fund similar programmes in both non-governmental and public sectors, and use this position to bring the two sectors closer together in a way that allows NGOs greater influence over public sector policy, and greater access to the public sector resources that NGOs lack. Such funding could also improve co-ordination between the two sectors and among NGOs. It may not be the role for large policy and programme lending agencies to fund NGOs directly, and many NGOs express great concern at being overburdened by such donors. Nonetheless, such large donors could still strengthen NGO influence over regional policy and programme reform by fostering NGO-state collaboration in both the administration and design of the programmes supported.

- **Tony Bebbington,** Centre of Latin American Studies, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK.

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What is different about managing non-governmental organisation (NGOs) involved in Third World development

Alan Fowler

The last decade has produced an increasing number of articles and studies dedicated to analysing and improving the management of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in socio-economic development in the Third World[1]. Frequently discussed in such writings are: a) the reticence of NGOs to accept that they have a management problem and, b) whether the (scientific) management techniques and methods used by other types of organisations profit-making enterprises and government bureaucracies in Western environments, have any relevance for NGOs. The workshops and courses on NGO management regularly noted in NGO periodicals and other publications suggest that NGOs now accept the need to improve their management effectiveness. This article, therefore, addresses the question of what is specific about the management of non-profit, value-driven organisations involved in social development?[2].

Many management development and training services available to NGOs are derived from experiences in other types of organisations in the context of the industrialised North. NGOs therefore rightly ask the question, "Is what's on offer suitable for who we are, where we are and for what we do?" But NGOs have a problem in answering this question because they don't find it easy to define the critical differences between organisations whose purpose is socio-economic development in the Third World and others whose purpose is profit or the running of a nation state. NGOs seldom have a clear idea of the necessary distinctions and demands-in management terms-between themselves and these other types of organisation. As a result, NGOs find it difficult to decide what is appropriate management for development and therefore how best to develop their management.

While theories of welfare management can help clarify some of the issues involved, I believe that almost thirty years of development effort provides grounds for identifying the necessary differences between the management of social development and other enterprises.

Analysis of contrasts between commercial, governmental and non-profit voluntary organisations can therefore help in (a) designing appropriate methods for improving NGO management, (b) determining the suitability of the management services already available, and (c) providing NGOs with insight and more self-confidence in arguing about what can or can't be learnt from the commercial and government sectors in the North.

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[1] The Management Newsletter published by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) is one reference for such sources, as are the Working Papers of the Research Program on Non-Profit Organisations of Yale University and publications of the Management Unit at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in London. Two useful books on NGO Management are (a) Charles Handy, Understanding Voluntary Organisations, Penguin, 1988, Harmondsworth, and (b) Peter Drucker, Managing the Non Profit Organisation: Principles and Practices, Harper Collins, 1990, New York.

[2] Increasingly, NGOs are being regarded as one type of organisation within the "value driven", or third sector. Value-driven organisations do not have profit (business) or regulation and control (government) as their primary purpose or reason for existence. Because organisations within the value-driven sector are so diverse it is still difficult to regard the sector as a sector. This brief paper is intended to be one small contribution to further

focus thinking about the third sector and its development.

With a focus on service NGOs involved in rural socio-economic development in developing countries, this brief paper describes reasons why their management must differ from the other two types of organisations if they are to be effective. Four factors are contrasted. First is the relationship between the producers and the clients of what the organisation achieves; second are the organisation's environmental relations; third is the source of an organisations resources; and, fourth are differences in regulation of organisational performance through client feedback. Hopefully, by understanding differences in these areas NGOs will be in a better position to decide how to tackle the development of their management capabilities; to select from the services on offer; and, most importantly, to realise that most of the learning about improving NGO performance will have to come from within the NGO sector itself.

- ## Relations between producers and clients

All organisations are created for a purpose, they are all meant to achieve or produce something. However, the relationship between the producers and clients or an organisation's 'product' varies significantly for commercial, governmental and voluntary agencies, creating quite different management demands. In commercial enterprise the producers are normally employees under a manager's direct control. What the organisation produces is sold as a material item or a service to a client, the buyer, who decides if he or she wants what competing organisations have to offer (monopolies aside). The buyer pays money, takes ownership and usually here the relationship between organisation and client ends. The producer is distinct and separate from the client. Interaction between client and organisation is self-willed, based on a transaction and more often than not momentary. A manager's span of control does not (need to) encompass the client, as the production process is internal to the organisation.

Governments have employees (civil servants) and clients (citizens). For the client, government's 'products' include: regulations, security, (the value of) money, plans, social and welfare services, infrastructures, legal controls and their enforcement. Again, the civil servant and the client are distinct, but in certain circumstances the client may be officially incorporated into what a government organisation produces. For example, Africa's farmers are often required to reach government targets in their agricultural production and sell only to parastatal marketing boards at fixed prices. So, in certain situations the client is tied into a government organisation's production process without being its employee. The relationship is often permanent and obligatory. The simultaneity of citizens being a client in one setting and producer in another is made possible through regulation and authority. Here, a civil servant's span of control does encompass the client and, because of the compulsory relationship provided by legal obligation, the production process is both inside and outside the public enterprise.

Experience has shown that it is rural people who produce their (self-) development, not NGOs and their staff. Rural people must own induced social development processes and benefits if they are to be sustainable. These facts dictate that NGOs relate to clients as the actual producers of the organisation's 'product', ie recognise that client and producer are one. Thus an NGO's influence has to extend beyond its organisational boundaries into communities because the production process is by the people, ie. outside the organisation itself. Unlike commercial business, NGO managers must bring the producer/client and only extend their influence through dialogue and negotiation. Further, involvement of an NGO with clients in their social development is not momentary, but nor should it be permanent if dependency is to be avoided. NGOs intervene temporarily but do not remain[3].

To summarise, in commercial business, client and producer are separate and the interaction is momentary based on exchange; with government, a citizen can be both client and a (tied) producer, in a relationship based on

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[3] For a detailed discussion of the concept of "intervention" in development see Alan Fowler, "Non Governmental Organisations: Achieving Comparative Advantage in Micro Development", Discussion Paper, No.249, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, August, 1988.

control; but, for NGOs the client is the producer, the duration of interaction is temporary, based on negotiation.

• Relating to the outside world

The three types of organisation -commercial, governmental and NGOs -tend to adopt distinctive strategies for relating to their external environments.

In order to protect themselves against adverse conditions in the outside world commercial businesses use two major devices. Firstly, they try and isolate themselves from external influences, for higher productivity is obtained when a production system is not disrupted. Building-up buffer stocks, forward contracts with suppliers to ensure inputs, and negotiating overdrafts with banks to protect cash flow, are all ways by which commercial organisations try to insulate production processes. Secondly, businesses try to condition the external world to their advantage - normally through advertising - but also by buying out the competition or market manipulation. They endeavour to create the right market conditions for their products and spend a lot of money doing so.

Governments, on the other hand, have the power to create much of their own (national) environments. Laws, regulations, standards, taxes, quotas, plans, incentives, and instruments for their enforcement are all at the disposal of a government whose primary strategy towards the outside world is usually one of regulation and control. And, while the degree to which governments try to direct aspects of economic, social and cultural life vary, control and regulation underlie the way they view and treat the outside world. Management internally and externally is based on authority, hopefully derived from some legitimate, popular democratic process.

Value-driven development agencies rarely possess legal instruments of control and, because it is the client who actually produces development, NGOs must seek to integrate themselves with external environment, normally through dialogue and negotiation with the community. The nature of induced socio-economic development by the non-

government sector means that NGOs must therefore do the opposite, they must listen, respond to, embrace and be absorbed by their operational environments. Their special challenge is to organise for and manage this necessity.

The contrast between the three type of organisations in their environmental relations are therefore ones of isolation or manipulation, authority or control, and negotiation or integration.

• Organisational resources

The third important distinction between businesses, governments and NGOs is source of the financial resources that they need to function and survive.
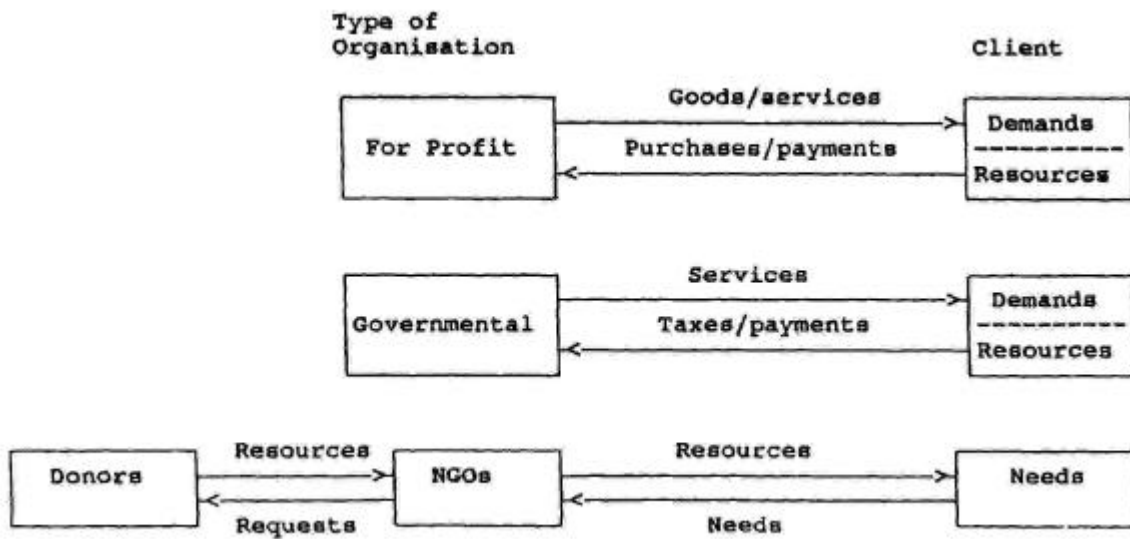
Commercial businesses derive their resources from clients who pay for their goods and services, ie. client and resource are coupled.

Governments obtain their resources from the populace through taxes and from payments for some of the services they provide, again client and resources are coupled.

For NGOs, the financial resources needed to function are derived, in a variety of ways, from donors and very seldom from the client, ie. the client and organisational resources are divorced.

The fact that the client to be served is not the source of the funds needed for an NGO to perform and survive is one important reason for differences in management between the three types of organisations. This separation - not to mention the project basis for financing - can be the source of many difficulties because resources play such a critical role in how an organisation develops and functions. Example of management and performance issues encountered by NGOs when resources are split from clients are: multiple, conflicting accountabilities; prevalence of inappropriate supply-driven services; maintenance of a self-perpetuating supply, unresponsiveness to changing demand; translation of client reality into the world of the donor; and, an NGO growth dominated by supply instead of need.

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Figure 1. Comparison of organisational resources and client relations

• **Performance control**

The dissimilarities described above impact on the way that the performance of an organisation can be assessed and regulated by clients. Feedback on client satisfaction with commercial enterprise is direct and usually quick. Loss of sales is a pretty good and clear message to a profit oriented organisation that something is wrong.

Citizens' ability to indicate (dis)satisfaction to governments can be immediate on specific issues, for example through public protests, or more structurally through widespread civil disobedience such as large scale tax evasion. Longer term, people's feelings about government performance can be communicated through the electoral process where this is fair and representative. However, usually such performance indicators are indirect expressions of performance, take a long time to affect bureaucratic change in democracies and usually fail to do so in autocracies.

The ability of clients to provide feedback to and through NGOs to donors is difficult at the best of times. However, it is severely impeded when the clientele reside in a different world hemisphere. In this circumstance the chance of any systematic inputs from those supposed to

benefit from an NGO's actions to the actual suppliers of resources the NGO relies on, the donors, is very limited, if not non-existent[4]. Hence NGO performance assessment and regulation via client feedback to the resource provider is seldom achieved[5]. Evaluation cannot adequately fulfil this function, yet it is the tool most used to appraise organisational performance. NGOs must create other mechanisms to provide this function[6].

All of the foregoing are an expression of the fact that a set of values provide the rationale and foundation for the existence of non-profit organisations. Values are critical because they provide the needed impetus, identity, direction, and staff unity required for effective work and determine which tasks must dominate, the skills required, the balance between trust and control, what decisions can be made by who at

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[4] 5. A major exception can be NGOs that raise their funds from the general public for expenditure with(in) an identifiable population in the Third World. Child sponsorship agencies would be an example.

[5] This point parallels current socialists' debates in European countries on the possibility of developing a social as opposed to an economic-market to regulate performance of state-provided services.

[6] Clients in development do, of course, eventually provide feedback by either supporting or rejecting an NGO intervention. An important indicator of people's feedback is sustainability of benefits.

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what levels, the limits of planning, how responsibility and authority are spread and who "owns" change processes.

Such contrasts, plus differences in the political, economic and social systems in Third World countries, all contribute to the unique challenges for NGOs managing socio-economic development which is intended to benefit the poor and vulnerable. NGOs should therefore look critically at the services now being offered to help them become more effective. They should try and find out whose experiences are being used, where they come from and how they have been tested. It now seems likely, for example, that using management methods proven by Southern NGOs may be more appropriate than those from the North.

Trying to improve NGO management by simply adapting and adopting techniques and designs from other types of organisations in Western settings has reached its limits; the differences involved are too significant. Time is ripe to accord the status of a sub-socio-economic development by the third sector in the third world. This requires that NGOs learn more methodically by analysing their actions. To do so systematically calls for a higher priority to be given to the allocation of funds for NGO self-reflection and sharing of experiences than has been the case to date.

Most significantly, however, the biggest challenge for those interested in improving NGO effectiveness is to be led by a vision of the value-driven sector in future society instead of being driven by poor NGO performance as is the trend at present.

Summary of differences in organisational characteristics

Characteristic feature	Commercial	Government	NGOs
Producer/client rel.			
- relationship	Separate	Tied	Identical
- duration	Momentary	Permanent	Temporary
- basis	Transaction	Obligation	Intervention
Relation to the outside world	Isolation conditioning	Control/authority	Negotiation/integration
Source of resources	Clients	Citizens	Donors
Feedback	Direct from clients	Indirect citizens	Missing

- **Alan Fowler,** Glenfinnan, Lewes Road, Ringmer, Sussex BNB SQD, UK.

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