

PN-AAY-438

16074

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
IN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS WORK

Presented at the Ninth Session of United Nations Commission on
Human Settlements (HABITAT)
Istanbul, May 5-16, 1986

Prepared for the Office of Housing and Urban Programs
U.S. Agency for International Development

May 1986

By Hortense Dicker, President
Resources for Action

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Specific Experiences	2
Upgrading Programs.	3
Honduras.	3
Panama.	4
Sri Lanka	5
Low Cost Shelter.	6
Panama Cooperative Projects	6
Integrated Urban Development Quito.	8
Conclusions and Recommendations	10

INTRODUCTION

The concept that individuals, communities and nations should assume an active and responsible role in their own development is central to the U.S. Government's development strategy. The Agency for International Development's goal is to help people to help themselves within the limit of the resources available to them, thereby fostering sustainable development, rather than dependency. This approach to development encourages greater reliance on private and voluntary efforts rather than public institutions, and supports decentralization of planning and decision-making, to allow those most directly affected to influence these processes.

Community and private sector participation is a key element in this approach, to ensure that local needs, constraints and priorities are factored into program development, and to promote investment of the energies and resources of these sectors in their own and national development. Corollary programmatic components to support AID's strategy are: the development of institutions that promote citizen participation, such as credit unions and other groups that provide avenues of private involvement in national development; training for effective leadership and management of such institutions, and the transfer of appropriate technology and methodologies to support local initiatives and strengthen their viability.

AID's shelter policy is based on this approach. It recognizes that population pressures, particularly the dramatic increase in the level of urbanization in developing areas of the world have resulted in masses of ill-housed people requiring basic shelter and ancillary services that, in terms of magnitude, are far beyond the capacity of already burdened governments and donor agencies to provide.

If any progress is to be made in this area, the resources of the people themselves, in partnership with private efforts, must be mobilized. The squatter settlements that surround many cities of the world, as well as rural shanties, are testament to the creative ability of the poor to provide shelter solutions for themselves--albeit minimal and lacking elemental services.

Given the limited resources of government and the proven self-help potential of low-income communities, the major focus of AID's strategy to improve human settlements is to assist governments to become facilitators rather than providers of shelter. AID believes that governments can make their most effective contribution to decent shelter for all of their citizens by providing those goods and services that people are unable to provide themselves, by removing constraints to private sector finance and housing production, and by facilitating self-help efforts. This can be accomplished by helping to provide safe drinking water and other infrastructure, secure ownership of land, and systems that provide credit. AID supports this approach through assistance to shelter and urban development projects that promote self-help efforts and strengthen institutional capabilities to help people to meet their basic shelter needs.

In the area of housing, AID-supported projects emphasize progressive self-help solutions that give beneficiaries broad options for decisions as to the design and cost of their homes, strategies and methodologies of construction, and time for completion. These solutions include upgrading of urban slums and squatter settlements, site and service projects and core housing. Self-help efforts in these projects may be supported through home improvement or building material loans, and training in construction techniques. In all three strategies the public or private developer provides basic infrastructure. Here too, communities may have a voice as to the specific infrastructure "menu" or mix that meets their limited economic resources and preferences, e.g., water connection in the home, or stand pipes, electricity or sidewalks and paved streets, etc. Experience has shown that such infrastructure projects act as a stimulus to community organization where none may have previously existed, especially in upgrading schemes, and to home improvement efforts by individual families. The needs, priorities, interests and socio-economic realities of individual families and communities are further reflected in shelter and urban development projects through preproject assessments. The data from these assessments are factored into project plans and designs.

Self-help solutions cannot thrive under rigid regulations that do not take the economic realities and needs of low-income populations into account. Too often, official housing standards limit rather than promote possibilities for the urban poor. AID therefore supports programs that demonstrate the feasibility of realistic minimum housing standards that permit affordable shelter for the widest range of low-income families and encourage financial self-sufficiency through the integration of home and community-based enterprise development into shelter projects.

Community and private participation is further encouraged through AID-funded support of cooperative credit institutions. Their involvement in shelter programs in addition to credit may include formation of cooperative housing groups who receive training in cooperative philosophy and techniques, as well as possible instruction in housing construction.

SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES

Specific programs implemented over the years serve to illustrate AID's development strategy for human settlements. Some programs and projects are completed and provide a retrospective view. Others are still in process or in their initial phases; however, their objectives, designs and current progress present examples of the kinds of activities and approaches that are possible in promoting community, self-help and private participation in shelter programs. While the principal means of enlisting and facilitating community participation in these projects has been through progressive housing schemes, other methods that have been used are socioeconomic surveys that include information on beneficiary preferences, self-help-aided construction, community manpower contributions to infrastructure projects, and provision of land titles to families in marginal communities.

Upgrading Programs

Upgrading projects, of necessity, require the acceptance and collaboration of communities, since they involve existing settlements. If these projects are to succeed, the beneficiary families must be consulted, and efforts made to help them understand the project objectives, the alternatives available to them, and implementation activities. If community organizations exist, they are the logical entry points to the identified communities, and can play an important facilitative role in representing the project to the community at the same time that they provide an organized voice for the community's opinions, priorities, desires, questions, doubts and complaints. Where no community organization or councils exist, upgrading projects offer excellent opportunities for promoting community organization that will strengthen communities' problem-solving abilities in many areas beyond shelter. At the same time, project costs to beneficiaries can be reduced through contribution of community manpower in the delivery of infrastructure.

Three AID-supported upgrading programs--two in Latin America and one in Sri Lanka--provide useful perspectives on community participation in this type of shelter solution.

HONDURAS: In 1980 U.S.AID concluded an agreement with the Government of Honduras to provide financial and technical assistance in the upgrading of marginal settlements in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, the two major urban centers of the country. More than half of the nation's urban population lived in these settlements under substandard conditions. Only 56 percent of the neighborhoods within these settlements had water; 51 percent electric power, and well under half had garbage collection or sewer service; only 13 percent had secondary streets, 10 percent storm drains and only 4 percent had paved roads. Almost half were without access to bus transportation and 23 percent of the communities received no services at all.

The project, as designed, provided for infrastructure services such as street paving, pedestrian walks, storm drainage, potable water, sanitary sewerage and street lighting. Considerable emphasis was placed on community participation, which was facilitated by the existence of community organizations (patronatos) that were able to negotiate alternatives for the marginal neighborhoods involved, with the respective municipalities. The project supported the participation of the patronatos through leadership training and the development of manuals on the concepts, objectives and methods of community development, the latter to strengthen the municipal offices that were to work with the patronatos.

The implementation of the project included surveys of the needs and priorities of the community and meetings with the patronatos, explaining project goals, criteria and cost recovery mechanisms, seeking to reach a consensus on subprojects and mutual responsibilities.

It is significant that although the project design clearly called for such active participation of the community organizations, in the initial stages the project teams conducted the needs assessments and engineering feasibility studies without consulting the patronatos, and then presented finished project drawings and a cost proposal to the community residents, illustrating the persistence of traditional methods of relating to target communities. The proposals were rejected out of hand by the communities.

The lesson for the project team was well-learned, and the process of consulting the community from the earliest phase of subproject design was initiated thereafter. Physical and socioeconomic surveys of the subject communities were only begun after the community made a tentative commitment to the cost recovery terms of the program, and learned of community preferences and ability to pay. As tentative plans took shape, the project team--usually community promoters and technical staff--then met with the community to apprise them of alternate solutions and costs, and learn their wishes on how to proceed. Construction began only after formal acceptance of the plan.

Both midterm and final evaluations gave the project high marks and stressed that the intense community development and participation processes were the keys to project success in identifying service needs and beneficiaries, as well as a vehicle to insure that cost recovery requirements were understood and accepted. It was noted that once the community became involved in project design, serious project delays or reduction or cancellation of benefits ran the risk of high political costs to the public and donor agencies involved.

The full involvement of the communities in decisions as to the types of infrastructure to be installed in their neighborhoods required maximum flexibility on the part of the implementing agencies, and in fact required additional financing for the project, since the communities by and large chose more expensive water and sanitation components rather than less expensive street lighting, drainage and paved sidewalks.

Development of institutional capacity to implement and manage this type of project took almost three years, much longer than anticipated, and this delayed completion of the project. However, once the institutional capacity was established, the project proceeded swiftly and effectively.

PANAMA: An AID-supported upgrading project in Panama dating from 1977 illustrates a variant with respect to types of community participation. The District of San Miguelito, covering some 51.3 square kilometers, is approximately 15 to 20 miles from downtown Panama City, and is the second largest urban area in the country, after the city of Panama, with 10 percent of the country's population. Much of the land had been purchased by the Ministry of Housing for projects under its housing construction program.

San Miguelito's growth, beginning in the 1970s, was uncoordinated and the living conditions of its residents were poor. The District lacked a focal point for commercial activity; while some large estates and middle-class housing existed within its confines, extensive squatter settlements were scattered in between them, frequently on steep, less accessible hillsides.

Two-thirds of San Miguelito had no access to sewers; septic tanks were badly contaminated; large sectors were without street lights, or house connections for electricity; streets were unpaved and muddy; almost one-third of San Miguelito residents received water exclusively by trucks--the rest made do with communal standpipes and wells. Public transportation was lacking, as were schools and health facilities. Shops and services were far away. The poor public transportation facilities were a serious problem for the approximately 50 percent of San Miguelito's labor force employed in distant Panama City and industrial areas bordering the highway to the airport.

In 1975, in response to the increasing problems of the area, the government of Panama announced an integrated urban development program for San Miguelito, including the provision of basic services. A High Level Commission was appointed to implement the program, from which a planning committee emerged, including representatives of the Commission, USAID, the municipality, the ministries of Planning, Housing, and Public Works, and the public electric and water utilities. On the basis of the committee's plan, AID authorized a \$15 million Housing Guaranty loan to support the upgrading of San Miguelito.

The USAID Housing Guaranty loan was authorized to support four basic infrastructure subprograms in the San Miguelito district: water and sewer, electricity and roads. A housing subprogram was included to accommodate those to be displaced by the infrastructure construction.

One of the stated purposes of the San Miguelito Upgrading and Improvement Project was to raise the residents' sense of social and civic responsibility. This was facilitated by the existence of many unofficial groups already organized to address a variety of perceived community needs. In addition there existed a system of geographically-based elected community groups within the municipality, which had worked to obtain basic needed services for the area prior to the upgrading project.

The San Miguelito project has, to a large degree, been successful in terms of meeting its upgrading objectives. Project-financed infrastructure was delivered in a timely fashion and a total of 260 serviced lots, 554 detached and 480 attached floor-roof units, and 120 core units were sold. A postproject evaluation noted that community participation was a catalyst for action in the project and a potent beneficiary resource. Community participation has been shared by residents working with the elected community groups, sometimes together with elected government representatives, to obtain benefits such as garbage collection, preschool programs for children, training for adults to set up productive enterprises, improvement of poor drainage, etc.

SRI LANKA: In Sri Lanka, AID is supporting an important government shelter initiative that has made community participation its central element. AID support for aided self-help and urban slum and shanty upgrading projects in Sri Lanka dates from 1980. A major goal of these projects, as their description suggests, was to give the families in low-income areas of Colombo an active role in improving their shelter situation, buttressed by broad-scale community organization activities. The collaboration of two Sri Lankan private voluntary public service organizations strongly oriented to self-reliance and collective action at the local level, was considered as available resources that could strengthen the project.

In 1984 the government of Sri Lanka expanded its shelter strategy into a major new effort entitled the Million Houses Program, clearly delineating a supportive rather than a directing role for the government in this effort and placing the focus for shelter improvement on community and individual initiative. This program embraces both urban and rural upgrading projects.

Key elements of the program are: organization of communities through the establishment of community development councils; emphasis on the use of

local materials and technologies; comprehensive orienting of public housing professionals in the philosophy and processes of community organization and the requirements of an active support role with respect to the community; training of community residents in home construction methods; strengthening of community problem-solving and decision-making capabilities through provision of information by housing officers on options and trade-offs in given shelter situations; training of trainers.

Experience with the program has shown that this highly participative approach has achieved significant decentralization of decision-making and implementation in the upgrading of low-income settlements. mobilized individual and community energies to improve rural and urban settlements, provided "learning by doing" training and income opportunities in the construction trades for many settlement residents, and provided a model of professional-community relationships that has potential for many areas of national development.

An important conclusion to be drawn from all three of the upgrading experiences discussed is the need to develop institutional as well as beneficiary capacities for community participation. This should be considered an integral component of shelter project development.

Low-Cost Shelter

U.S.AID has and is supporting a number of low-cost shelter programs in various parts of the world that lend themselves to promotion of community participation and private efforts. While a number of these are still in process or in formative phases, they illustrate a variety of approaches that have the potential to make important contributions in this area.

PANAMA COOPERATIVE PROJECTS. Cooperatives are participatory by definition, and U.S.AID supports a number of projects in which cooperative arrangements play either a central or contributing role. A cooperative shelter project in Panama, in the community of Nuevo Chorillo, has successfully integrated collective action into its efforts to create a better living environment for the members of the community.

The cooperative was created as a response to deteriorating housing conditions in a slum area of central Panama City in the 1960s. Mobilized by a local priest and a group of interested local professionals, including architects, engineers, and lawyers, residents of the slum area founded a low-income private housing cooperative in 1973. A site owned by one of the architects, 15 miles from Panama City, was made available at less than market rate, in exchange for employing the architect's group to design and construct the new community.

In 1976 AID authorized a Housing Guaranty loan to support what it saw as a pilot project that could help establish cooperatives as a channel for private sector involvement in low-income housing and contribute toward the goal of increasing the availability of housing units for low-income families in Panama.

A 1980 report on the project indicates that the mutual and self-help efforts of the cooperative families served to reduce the cost of the construction of the basic houses as well as to assure the gradual completion and improvement of the homes.

A grant from the Inter-American Foundation financed the construction of three cooperative factories which produced doors, windows and cement blocks for the houses, and this too served to reduce costs for the members' houses.

For purposes of organization and administration, the cooperative was divided into eight geographic sectors, each one having its own "chief of sector," an auxiliary chief and three or four assistants who have responsibility for helping to resolve problems that arise within the sector. Problems affecting the total community are taken to the central administrative body.

Periodic evaluation of the Nuevo Chorillo cooperative point up both the advantages and areas for concern in this type of shelter solution. Objective observers have noted the striking improvement in the quality of life of the cooperative's member families, and the comments of the residents of Nuevo Chorillo confirm this. Most are overwhelmingly satisfied with their present homes and community. A significant number comment on their pleasant neighborhoods and good neighbors, and feel that the community provides a safe and decent environment in which to raise families. Observers also noted a heightened sense of self-worth in the "Chorillanos," who feel a genuine pride of ownership in their mutual accomplishments.

At the same time there have been some difficulties noted by evaluators. Cooperative activity decreased once the community was established and the houses built. Interpersonal problems and issues of democratic management arose between the cooperative leadership and subgroups in the community. These suggest that the factors of group motivation, participation, shared leadership and decision making, problem solving, and communication between leadership and members were not adequately dealt with in the community, and point up the need for continuous vigilance on such issues by the leadership and members of any participative undertaking. This implies the need for periodic training of current leadership to renew and improve skills and the orientation and training of new leadership. Of equal importance, the development and active use of democratic problem-identification and problem-solving processes, and the maintenance of open, systematic communication between cooperative leadership and community members must be assured.

Recently AID has approved a grant for a major cooperative neighborhood improvement and jobs program in Central America that will have a significant participative and private sector component. The program, administered by an international cooperative housing organization, will support democratically organized self-help shelter and community improvement projects in urban squatter settlements and rural villages. The project is being carried out by private sector cooperative federations and other private nonprofit organizations in the six Central American countries where the program is being implemented. The program's fundamental objectives include equity and broad participation in development and the strengthening of participatory institutions.

Both technical and capital assistance will be provided to cooperative federations and other private nonprofit organizations with experience in shelter and community service for projects for the urban and rural poor.

The project will address a wide range of shelter-related problems, such as water and waste disposal systems, sidewalks, drainage and other services that will be identified by urban and rural community cooperatives forming part of the project. These cooperatives will take an active self-help role in installing the services they select. The formation of permanent community institutions within these settlements will provide the means for community members to participate formally in problem solving and decision making on issues that affect them and their community.

Special attention will be given to the needs of women in these communities, focusing on opportunities for income generation, child care resources, maternal health and skills training directed to employment. Small-scale enterprises for both men and women will be promoted and supported by loans for equipment and working capital.

Both the magnitude and focus of this project give it the potential for making an important impact in demonstrating the role cooperative organizations may play in providing credit and technical assistance to low-income families to help them secure improved shelter, and at the same time strengthen their ability to take responsibility for their further development.

Integrated Urban Development in Quito

Since 1981 AID has been supporting an integrated urban development project in Quito, Ecuador. The project is designed as a demonstration model for the evolution of a system for implementing urban development projects which combine low-cost housing, physical and social infrastructure, employment and training activities and community organization. The project provides a realistic example of the type of policy, and the institutional, technical and human resource problems, that must be addressed by urban development projects.

The project also demonstrates the feasibility of a partnership approach between public and private voluntary organizations, and donor agencies, to benefit the urban poor. The Mariana de Jesus Foundation, a private voluntary Ecuadorean institution, in concert with the Ecuadorean Housing Bank and the National Housing Board, with AID financial support, is constructing 4,500 low-cost housing units and complementary physical and social infrastructures. Employment and training programs to increase the productivity and income of the urban target groups will be implemented in conjunction with the construction activity. Explicit in the project is a commitment to minimum infrastructure standards and progressive housing solutions which can be improved or expanded through self-help construction. The target population for the project are those families that are at the lower end of the income scale. Families selected are to be those who are frequently unemployed or under-employed, who live in a variety of family structures, and who do not have access to basic services of the larger society, such as health, education and housing programs.

The Solanda project (named for the former estate which was donated by the Mariana de Jesus Foundation) represents a holistic view of human development, using the acquisition of improved housing as a vehicle to improve other important aspects of a person's life. Essential services, such as health, education and opportunities for increased income are integral elements of the project. The final objective is to create a community where people are aware of their own needs and are able to choose the alternatives they consider appropriate to meet those needs.

Community development is a key component of the Solanda project, and is organized in three segments:

- (a) pre-move preparation, which includes data collection, orientation of families to the objectives of the project and ascertaining their interest and willingness to cooperate in community activities and to move into a partially furnished house;
- (b) post-move intensive community organization in which residents are expected to participate in all aspects of the community's development;
- (c) post-move assumption of responsibility, at which time residents move into positions of policy and decision-making.

This comprehensive community organization effort is to be supported by equally comprehensive training for both community residents and project staff. Social workers attached to the program have been given intensive training to be sure they understand the difference between the Solanda project and other housing programs. Training for staff assigned from other ministries stresses their understanding of the special role of community organization as a mechanism to build community solidarity and participation.

The project calls for both staff and residents to be given training in motivation, group work, leadership development and human relations skills, to support the project's community organization components.

On another level the community development program includes major emphasis on vocational training and nonformal education for adults. This covers adult literacy classes and training in specific skills to increase employability.

As community groups gain experience and confidence in dealing with the administration and management of the various community facilities and activities, training will include consideration of transfer of legal ownership of the community facilities. The foundation is aware that the process of community organization and developing self-sufficiency may be a long one and is prepared to continue support of certain activities through technical assistance for up to five years after the project's initiation.

The Solanda project is especially sensitive to the effective participation of its future women residents. It is estimated that 23 percent of the residents will be women who are heads of households and responsible for their families' economic support. An additional 40 percent of the number of applicants are economically active married women; the project will, therefore, provide for commercial space in residential neighborhoods, where those women who wish to can work in shops or open small enterprises near their homes.

The project will also permit the operation of small enterprises or cottage industries in the homes, an important advantage for women with family responsibilities. The community development program will, in addition, provide the skills, enterprise development and small business management training to increase the ability of Solanda residents, men and women, to improve and stabilize their incomes. Economic security is essential to develop the self-confidence and self-worth people need in order to manage their own lives, and to participate in community and other civic responsibilities.

In addition, the project contemplates child care and child development facilities which will be staffed and managed by women from the community, who will be trained to take on these responsibilities.

While the Solanda project is still in its early stages, staff have already received considerable training in the areas identified above, and the first families are preparing to become part of this new community. Over time the Solanda experience, as a model for participative integrated urban development, will provide many learning opportunities that can be applied to the design and development of other projects to benefit low-income urban families.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The lessons learned from the foregoing projects indicate some answers to the principal discussion points posed in the report of the Executive Director:

1. What can be done to encourage and support community participation as a concept of human settlements management?
 - a. Promotion of a partnership approach between the public and private sectors.

The notion that communities should have a major partnership role in the development and management of their own settlements is a logical conclusion, given the experiences of many nations attempting to provide basic shelter for the most disadvantaged sectors of their populations. The limitations of the state's ability to address a problem of this dimension by itself has been amply demonstrated, together with the counterproductive dependency created in target populations by such a strategy. Yet in many instances newer participatory approaches run counter to the established policies and procedures in which public administrators and housing professionals may have a vested interest. In some cases populations accustomed to looking outside of their own resources for the solution of problems may be unprepared to assume the responsibilities of participation.

In these circumstances it is incumbent on national leadership to take the lead in enunciating and actively implementing policies and programs that place government in the position of supporting private and community initiatives to meet national shelter goals. Public and private institutions must be geared to carrying out such policies and provided with the facilitating resources to develop needed capabilities, where these are deficient. Among the cases we have cited, Sri Lanka's Million Houses Program illustrates this comprehensive national commitment to making the community and private sector major

partners in solving the nation's housing problems. The government in this approach, which involves upgrading, plays a facilitative role through technical and cost-recovery financial assistance.

b. Promotion and support of shelter cooperatives

Cooperative solutions to affordable low-cost housing have a long tradition in the shelter sector. Where the local environment is receptive, and cooperative institutional supports are available, this intrinsically participative approach can make a significant contribution to strengthening and institutionalizing the concept of community participation in human settlements management. The Panamanian experience in Nuevo Chorrillo, discussed earlier in this paper, illustrates the possibilities as well as the need for sustained technical assistance to cooperatives for a prudent period in order to ensure the viability of participatory processes, effective leadership and management capabilities. The Central American Cooperative Neighborhood and Jobs Program, also discussed above, has anticipated these issues in its design, which emphasizes support for sustained cooperative action.

2. What are considered essential modifications that governments could make to codes and regulations regarding land use, infrastructure and housing finance, in order to mobilize and guide the efforts of communities to participate?

a. Development of greater flexibility in housing codes and regulations to reflect real community needs and preferences, and achieve wider coverage of service benefits.

Throughout this paper we have urged the need for a reassessment of administrative codes and regulations to allow for greater flexibility in housing and infrastructure solutions. Such flexibility would lead to a broader coverage of services to those most in need of them, and respond to the target communities' real needs and preferences, given their economic realities and the costs of shelter and land. AID's Housing Guaranty Loan Program has actively pursued the promotion of realistic minimal adequate standards in programs it finances in settlement development. Such flexibility has made upgrading, sites and services and partial construction solutions possible, and greatly expanded the number of low-income families who now live in decent housing environments. It has also opened many options for income generation and employment, through the relaxation of limitations on home-based small businesses and community income-generation enterprise, where these are appropriate and feasible.

b. Promotion of financing of minimal adequate shelter solutions to low-income communities.

If flexible shelter and infrastructure approaches are to be realized, they must be supported by financing that is made available to low-income populations at terms that are both affordable and that also ensure cost recovery. This has been a basic element of AID's Housing Guaranty Program. Particular emphasis has been placed on the increased participation of private sector financial institutions in the low-income housing finance market, with technical assistance to both the financial institutions and beneficiaries to ensure the success of such financial ventures.

3. What kinds of administrative and institutional practices and structures would facilitate partnership with community organizations in developing human settlements?
- a. Establishment of community participation as a key element in both public and private sector low-cost housing and upgrading programs, with adequate allocation of resources to influence policy and implement activities.

While the need for community participation may be acknowledged in documents and public statements, it can only be operationalized at the community level if it has sufficient resources to put it on a comparable level with planning and other technical elements. The Solanda project, in Quito, Ecuador, is a private sector example in which the community organization component has a key location in the project's table of organization, and has comparable resources at its disposal.

- b. Orientation of implementing agency staff to the importance, purposes and objectives of a partnership approach, and provision of training, where required, in community organization techniques and skills.

Provision for such orientation and training is essential for all those charged with implementing a facilitative approach, particularly administrative and technical personnel who are unaccustomed to, and therefore may be uncomfortable with the premises on which the approach is founded. Such staff must also be provided with the skills to interact appropriately and productively with their community-based counterparts. Staff preparation for community participation was included in the Honduras upgrading project discussed earlier, and is in process in the Sri Lanka Million Houses Program and the Solanda project in Ecuador.

- c. Project design teams should include professionals with expertise in community participation, to ensure that this element is effectively included and planned for in the details of project design. Where possible, representatives of established community organizations should be part of planning teams.
- d. Technical assistance should be made available to community organizations and their leaders for sufficient duration to ensure that they not only acquire, but can use participatory skills, and that community organizations will survive and prosper after project completion.

Communities may not have experience in organization or in successful interaction with public or private agency officials, and need orientation and skill building for participation as much as the staffs of implementing agencies. A number of the projects cited in this paper, e.g., the Honduras upgrading project, the Solanda project in Ecuador, and the Sri Lanka Million Houses Program, all provide this type of support to make communities effective partners in participation.

Community participation is a process that is at once a function of and a promoter of human development. As with any development process,

successful community participation evolves gradually, as the result of preparation, support and opportunities for learning through experience. The Solanda project has recognized this in planning to provide technical assistance to certain community activities for a period of up to five years.

- e. Project planning should include margins of flexibility to allow for the democratic choice inherent in community participation, and for the time it takes for communities to arrive at consensus.

The value of community participation is that it promotes expression and seeks the fulfillment of the diverse needs and preferences of different people and communities. This runs counter to standardized approaches and top-down establishment of targets, and is a major reason why planners, administrators and other professionals responsible for meeting official goals and requirements find it difficult to work with a participatory approach. An effective partnership between public and private agencies and community-based organizations requires a reorientation of official attitudes and procedures to meet the requirements of an effective community participation strategy. The need for such flexibility was demonstrated in the Honduran upgrading project discussed earlier. This also points up the need, illustrated in the Honduran case, to include the community to the fullest extent, and at the earliest stages, in project planning and design.

- f. In working with communities, the widest number of community residents should be involved in planning and participation.

Community leaders alone may not always be representative of the diversity of opinions, priorities and preferences that exist in communities. Subgroups exist in all communities, and should be taken into account, as the experience in the Nuevo Chorillo cooperative in Panama illustrated. Project decisions based on narrow or superficial community interaction with outside implementing agencies may prove to be incorrect, and, in the long run unworkable.

4. What types of training are essential in making different forms of community participation effective in the planning, development and management of human settlements?

Training for implementing agency staffs, community leaders and community members.

The case studies and points raised earlier indicate a clear need for training of implementing agency staffs, community leadership and community members to make participation effective.

Implementing agency staff should receive orientation as to the purposes, value, and processes of community participation. Agency staff who work directly with the community should be given orientation to community culture, and training in the techniques of community organization, participatory needs assessment, community problem identification and problem solving, community motivation, shared management, etc.

Community leaders should be given similar training, in addition to management, negotiation and communication skills. Community residents

themselves should be given orientation as to the responsibilities as well as the advantages of participation, clear information on project purposes and conditions, information on the role and responsibilities of community leaders, and specific training to carry out the activities for which they are assigned responsibility. It is important that this orientation and training use methodologies and materials that are appropriate for the communities, and will enhance their learning and skill development.

The Agency for International Development is committed to the promotion of greater citizen and private sector participation in the process of social and economic development. This commitment is being actively pursued in the implementation of AID-supported shelter and urban programs.