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Decentralised Cooperation and Joint Action: Building Partnerships Between Local Government and Civil Society in Africa

Jossy Materu, Tony Land, Volker Hauck, Jane Knight

Policy Management Report 10

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Decentralised Cooperation and Joint Action

Building Partnerships Between Local Government and Civil Society in Africa

Jossy Materu, Tony Land, Volker Hauck, Jane Knight

*European Centre for Development Policy Management
Municipal Development Programme
Towns and Development*

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Acronyms

ACP	Africa, Caribbean, Pacific
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ALGAK	Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya
ANC	African National Congress
ARM	Annual Review Meeting
AULA	African Union of Local Authorities
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDP	Community Development Programme
CERUDEB	Centenary Rural Development Bank
CHOTFU	Chome Trust Fund
CSD	Child Survival and Development
DAC	District Advisory Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DBSE	District Based Support to Primary Education
DC	District Commissioner / District Council
DDP	District Development Plan
DFA	Development Facilitation Act
Dfid	Department for International Development
DfIDEA	Department for International Development Eastern Africa
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOPOP	Economie Populaire
ENDA	Environmental Development Action/Environnement et Développement en Afrique
EU	European Union
GOK	Government of Kenya
GPMC	Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IGP	Incentive Grant Programme
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
JA	Joint Action
K-OWL	Kenya One World Linking Forum
LA21	Local Agenda 21
LDO	Land Development Objective
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MCC	Mutare City Council
MDP	Municipal Development Programme, Eastern and Southern Africa
MIC	Municipal International Cooperation
NGDO	Non Governmental Development Organisation
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NPMLC	Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Local Council
NRM	National Revolutionary Movement

OCBO	Orphans Community Based Organisation
PAMNUP	Partnership Approach to Meeting the Needs of the Urban Poor
PCC	Pretoria City Council
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PSO	Private Service Organisation
PZF	Planning Zone Forum
RAIN	Regional Alliance for Information Networking
RDDP	Rakai District Development Programme
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SADEA	Same Development Association
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
SANGO	Same Association of NGO's
SCOC	Same Chamber of Commerce
SDPS	Same District Planning Support Programme
SNV	Nederlandse Ontwikkelingsorganisatie
T&D	Towns and Development
UCB	Uganda Commercial Bank
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlement
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WDC	Ward Development Committee
WDP	Ward Development Plan
WUG	Water User Group
ZDCP	Zimbabwe Decentralised Cooperation Programme



Preface to the 2001 Edition

There has been a great deal of debate over the past decade on the importance of good governance as a precondition for realising poverty reduction. Despite the fact that development actors interpret the concept of good governance in different manners, there is a growing consensus that it involves more than just the institution of government itself. The ability of governments to achieve sustainable development also depends on the extent to which they are capable of working together with other institutions in society. A more pluralistic institutional structure needs to be built that allows for a more decentralised way of promoting development and which offers a greater role for different forms of public-private and public-community partnerships.

It is through this way that more effective, efficient and equitable service provision to communities can be realised. Moreover, strengthening the formal democratic structures through which citizens interact with governments may not always be sufficient to counteract the eroded legitimacy of government's own institutions in developing countries. In addition, more direct forms of participatory democracy are required. Consultative mechanisms associated with 'joint action' could provide just that. This potential however has to be substantiated and tested through concrete experiences on the ground.

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation is the largest Dutch provider of technical assistance in development co-operation. SNV works in 28 countries in the area of capacity development mostly in combination with support to specific thematic working areas. The strengthening of Local Governance is one of the three specialised working areas of SNV. The experiences of Same, Tanzania reflects the work of SNV and its partners and features in this book as one of the case studies on joint action.

Sharing and learning across borders, requires often that experiences be first of all well documented. We are pleased that MDP, ECDPM and T&D jointly made the effort to bring the various actors together and collect the experiences in this

publication. We believe that the book has correctly anticipated the growing demand for information on how joint action type activities perform on the ground.

SNV is motivated to bring this debate on joint action further. Being an organisation that has made its capacity to build linkages between people and institutions at various levels as its trademark, we believe in the importance of sharing information. By supporting a reprint of this document we are pleased to have contributed in a modest way to this aim.

Anno Galema
SNV, The Netherlands



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Foreword

This book is a product of a consultative workshop on joint action that took place in Mombasa, Kenya from 25-27 November 1999. It was organised by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), the Municipal Development Programme (MDP) Eastern and Southern Africa, and Towns and Development (T&D). Six case studies from Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe were presented at the workshop. The aim was to draw lessons of experiences from the implementation of joint action between local governments and civil society organisations and to identify the priorities and needs of local stakeholders as a basis for developing a longer term programme of support.

There is increasing awareness that a balanced approach is needed to strengthen local government institutions and to promote the participation of non-state actors - non-government organisations (NGO's), community-based organisations (CBO's), the private sector - in the development process. Decentralised cooperation, in the Lomé Convention context, pays particular attention to the relationship between these development actors. It is equally an area of concern to other agencies working in the field of local development and poverty alleviation. Joint action between local authorities and non-state actors is seen as a way to realise horizontal linkages, to contribute to more sustainable development at the local level based on democratic participation and effective task division, and to more effectively use external resources. It can also help achieve greater policy coherence allowing local governments to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and enabling the participation of other actors. The challenge that confronts all the actors is to ensure that joint action benefits poor and vulnerable groups.

The widespread economic and public sector reforms of the 1980's and 1990's have enhanced the process of decentralisation and democratisation in Africa. Several countries introduced new laws and constitutional changes aiming at decentralisation and democratisation. However, despite a common sense of direction, countries have pursued different paths. In some countries, the decentralisation process is well advanced, in others, the process is gradually evolving or policy options are still under consideration. Similarly, there are many

disparities among countries in terms of the involvement of civil society in local development. In some, joint action has been embraced as a key strategy to maximise the use of scarce resources and to enhance local government capacities. It is even enshrined in the national constitution. In others, the notion of joint action is not yet shared by all or, while the principles of Local Agenda 21 have been acknowledged - reciprocity, equity, and participation - they are not yet committed to joint action in terms of processes and methods of work. The whole idea of mainstreaming non-state actors in municipal management is yet to be acknowledged.

The cases bring important messages and innovative practices concerning ways that non-state actors are working with local government. For example, as the case of Mamelodi shows, residents are willing to pay for services once they are involved in deciding how their money is spent. The Nakuru case shows that it is possible to design and implement unusual partnerships in waste management between the District Council and the community. In Rakai, the involvement of CBO's in various activities related to AIDS has resulted in innovative partnership approaches to support vulnerable children. It also shows that it is possible to work with the poor. The Tanzanian case shows that open channels of communication and dialogue, with shared accountability, can be used to establish an effective and realistic partnership in revenue mobilisation involving local government, the private sector and the community. The Vice-chairman of the Gwanga Primary School project in Tanzania illustrates how opinions and impressions can change once the Council and community are open to each other: "These days, the Council has changed. It is not like the old days when you would be told to come tomorrow. These days we get the lorry without wasting time. We can rely on the Council's support."

Overall, there is sufficient evidence from the case studies that joint action is a viable approach to local development. In all the cases, there are tangible benefits. For example, the credibility of local government has been heightened, resulting in improved revenue collection, effective privatisation of service delivery, and resurgence of the spirit of volunteerism and communal support which used to characterise African culture. Furthermore, bridges of confidence and trust are firmly emerging, attitudinal barriers that have traditionally strained relations between Councils and communities are gradually disappearing, and in some

cases, pooling resources has reduced donor dependency. In addition, there is increasing recognition of the comparative advantages and skills that each actor can bring to the relationship. While our cases show that poverty continues to be a serious problem, there is optimism that with the resurgence of democratic processes, the wider participation of beneficiaries will provide some of the answers to the problems of development.

However, the process of developing joint action as a strategy for development remains fragile and promoters of the concept need to invest more resources to ensure its full integration in municipal management and development. Joint action is vulnerable to many barriers. All the case studies cite clashes of organisation culture and interests, capacity constraints, infighting among civic groups, political interference, and mistrust as some of the factors influencing the proper functioning of civic groups. A remedy is to establish clear mechanisms that can systematically unravel these weaknesses.

Going beyond this report, the work involved in producing the case studies and the book itself have provided a unique opportunity for the three organising institutions to put into practice the principle of partnership. The European Centre for Development Policy Management, the Municipal Development Programme, and Towns and Development joined forces to maximise synergies in their missions and mandates as well as sharing of resources and approaches in capacity building initiatives and development assistance.

The process of preparing this publication has brought to the fore our own differences and complementarities and has demonstrated that, together, a lot more can be achieved for the benefit of the local government and development cooperation fraternities. The initiative brought together a mix of global personalities who participated in the Mombasa workshop and contributed immensely to the outcome of this book. As we get on with the new millennium we pledge our commitment to continue working together for the benefit of our constituencies.

This report was prepared by a team of scholars and development specialists under the leadership of Dr. Tony Land. The authors argue that joint action is an approach of development cooperation in which local partnerships are established among local government, civil society and the private sector. The aim is to achieve

common development objectives based on participatory decision-making, planning, execution and evaluation. The recipes for successful joint action include complementarity, ownership, genuine decentralisation and subsidiarity. The authors scrutinised each case study, examining the definition and the institutional frameworks that each country or local authority has adopted to foster joint action. They conclude that there is no single entry point to joint action: It could be at institutional, local, or national levels, depending on the circumstances. We congratulate the authors for the diligent work and commitment. Particular thanks are due to the researchers and authors of all the studies without whose support and commitment the report would not have been possible. I am confident that this report will contribute to the much needed knowledge and information in the field of decentralised cooperation, joint action and local development.

George Matovu, Director
Municipal Development Programme



Summary

Currently, the development community is seeking innovative strategies to address the challenges of local development and poverty alleviation, decentralisation and local governance, and improving the effectiveness of aid transfers.

In November 1999 therefore, in Mombasa, Kenya, a group of 70 persons came together to compare lessons of experience of applying 'joint action' as an approach to local development and poverty alleviation.

Put simply, joint action is about promoting partnerships between local governments and civil society to plan, implement and review development programmes and projects. This is more easily said than done. Local partnerships challenge conventional ways of doing business, demanding the definition of new roles and responsibilities, new management techniques and capacities, and moreover a change of attitudes.

A set of case studies was commissioned to draw practical lessons of experience from joint action initiatives in East and Southern Africa. The workshop was used to compare and contrast these experiences, particularly with regard to institutional and management dimensions. It also sought to define priority actions to support joint action in the field.

This report builds on the conclusions of the workshop. Drawing on the case studies and the rich discussions from the workshop, it provides an overview of the conceptual and operational issues pertaining to the practice of joint action. It seeks to provide both policy and operational guidance for good practice, which will be of value to local development actors, governments and the international development community.

It is however only a start. The workshop and this publication make it clear that further work is needed to understand how best to support and sustain partnerships between local development actors.

The report is divided into four chapters. First, joint action as a development approach is set in its historical and conceptual framework. Changes in development cooperation, aid management and the role of the State are reviewed, as well as the emergence of interest in new forms of participatory development, local governance and decentralised cooperation.

Second, the key conceptual and operational questions to do with the management of joint action, as identified from the case studies, are presented. The chapter examines the understanding of joint action, processes and structures for participatory decision making, implementation and review, results achieved, and assesses factors responsible for success and failure.

Third, six local joint action case studies from Mombasa and Nakuru in Kenya, Same in Tanzania, Mamelodi in South Africa, Rakai in Uganda, Mutare in Zimbabwe are presented. In addition, a case study on joint action in Pikine, Senegal is included showing that the issue is of equal concern in francophone Africa.

The final chapter presents recommendations for further work on joint action, focusing on both policy and operational questions.



Voices from Mombasa - The wisdom of an old man:

Interview with Mr. Odiambo Anacleiti

Trained as a primary school teacher, transferred to the Ministry of Culture as a researcher on traditions and customs, and then lecturer in Development Studies, Anacleiti worked for Oxfam from 1984 until his retirement in 1999.

Defining joint action

The concept of joint action (JA) was created during the Earth Summit in Rio (1992). It was thought to give an opportunity for the people of one district to pull together scattered resources (from NGO's, civil society, local government) to create common goods. Luckily, the argument was not popularised at the local level so nobody preached this idea as his own.

A difficult dialogue between hyenas (local government, NGO's, donors) and sheep (the citizens)

Hyenas and sheep cannot live together. Some NGO's (which I call Non Grassroots Organisations) may sometimes act as an interface, but they are often closer to policy makers. So, donors usually finance what they think is good because the people are never able to express themselves. There is a clear separation between policy makers and the consumers: The policy consumers are badly informed. Through this process, the people become sheep, and the policy makers become hyenas.

The ideal is to involve the poor in the policy making process. If true JA appears, the poor and their representatives (religious and traditional leaders) will say what they think should be done. But Tanzania and Kenya, for example, are now submitting documents to donors that their citizens have not even seen. For successful JA, you need a strong will of partnership!

JA in specific countries of Africa

JA is working well in some countries of Africa. For example, Zimbabweans understand the concept well but they have not succeeded in convincing the State. In some areas, JA is practised without the name being used.

An important point is how to set up JA when, for example, NGO's have a bigger budget than the Council. In my District, Oxfam can easily collect 5,000,000 shillings from different donors. This is almost half of the District's budget. So it is in the interest of the District to cooperate with NGO's.

JA will be successful if officials consider that they will have access to all the resources in the District: The skills, the abilities, plus the money of the NGO's, the church, the private sector, and the people. JA needs to be defined in these terms: It is about collecting resources and using them together. But it can give a false expectation to political leaders - they expect money from outside rather than looking at their own resources! In such cases, people interpret donor driven projects as donors' projects: As long as donors are giving money the project continues. A weakness of JA is that it is still a donor 'thing.' Pulling the resources of the district in one direction is required if you want to achieve a result. But as long as this is seen as coming from outside, it will fail.

The problem of development in Africa is that the poor have eyes and mouths, but the hyenas have no ears! Nobody is sensibilising the policy makers on what is available. We have to change the attitude of the dominating groups towards the dominated ones. We are not listening to the poor, nor respecting them, nor using their resources for alleviating poverty either. And when there is a forum it is generally the officials who explain why they are poor, while the other way around would be most interesting.

What about Northern NGO's?

Sometimes Northern NGO's do a very good job, for example when they are trying to explain to northern donors the roots of poverty. But when they come here, they turn into hyenas. When I joined Oxfam, they recruited me to go where the government was not going. Nowadays, NGO representatives are consultants or 'strategic planners' and sometimes they don't even go to the field.

As an old man, I prefer the NGO's when they do go to the field.



Chapter 1

Joint Action in Perspective: The Changing Context of Development Cooperation



Joint Action in Perspective: The Changing Context of Development Cooperation

Joint action between local government and civil society has the potential to make a positive contribution to poverty alleviation and sustainable local development. It also has the potential to strengthen local accountability and democratic governance, and in so doing, to reinforce wider processes of political and administrative decentralisation. The approach offers an operational framework to decentralise aid resources to the local level. In this respect, joint action shares many of the policy and operational characteristics of decentralised cooperation as understood in the context of cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States.

This report focuses on what joint action means in practice, by drawing lessons of experience from a set of case studies. An analysis of the cases is provided in chapter 2, while the cases are presented in chapter 3. Conclusions, as well as policy and operational recommendations are presented in the last chapter. The focus on 'how' joint action can be practised will help policy makers and practitioners translate policy into effective implementation strategies.

Before examining more practical dimensions of the topic, it is helpful to explain how the concepts of decentralised cooperation and joint action have come about, and to consider why they are relevant to the current priority concerns of development cooperation. The current interest in these approaches therefore needs to be seen within a wider discussion of the changing institutional and policy environment of development cooperation in Africa, and in particular, of the renewed interest in participatory approaches to development.

This chapter traces the evolution of participatory approaches in development and development cooperation, from the post-independence focus on centralist models of development to the search for alternative ways to address development challenges of economic decline, rapid urbanisation, deepening poverty, and environmental degradation.

It also introduces, decentralised cooperation, as a mode of development cooperation that repositions local government and its stakeholders to play a more active role in the development process. Associated with the Lomé IV Convention signed in 1989 between EU and ACP countries, decentralised cooperation was presented as a new approach that aimed to put actors (rather than projects and money) at the centre of development cooperation. This was seen to foster bottom up approaches to development, thereby promoting democratisation, local ownership, and ensuring greater policy coherence and sustainability of projects and programmes.

The last part of this chapter introduces 'joint action' as a concept and as a development modality, and considers its relationship to decentralised cooperation. This provides the basis and rationale for the presentation and analysis of the case studies in the following chapters.

Towards a More Participatory Development Paradigm

During the late 1980's and 1990's, Africa entered a far-reaching process of political, economic and institutional reform, which has transformed the institutional and policy environment within which development takes place.

These reforms were a response to a mix of internal and external pressures for change, representing an assault on the 'development State' which had, for nearly three decades, assumed the lead role in managing development, excluding other actors in society. This reform process, though far from complete, has resulted in the gradual dismantling of the centralist model of development, and in so doing has created conditions for a more participatory development approach.

From outside, structural adjustment programmes introduced by the IMF and the World Bank during the 1980's, as well as the ending of the Cold War and the discrediting of the socialist model in the 1990's, created space for neo-liberal and liberal-democratic ideology to influence the change process across the continent.

More generally, the external development community of multilateral and bilateral agencies which had privileged the role of the State in development,

started to question the validity of this approach. With growing evidence that aid resources channelled through central governments was not being put to best use, the expected impact of such assistance on addressing basic development needs, and, in particular, to arrest poverty had seldom been realised. Concern was expressed, for instance, about lack of local ownership and participation in development processes, inadequate attention paid to building capacities outside of the government sector, as well as to pervasive inefficient use and mis-use of aid resources by government bureaucracies.

The reform agenda that the aid community began to encourage also reflected new demands from domestic constituencies to demonstrate impact and value for money. The issue of aid effectiveness became an over-riding theme in assistance programmes. Alternative ways to channel aid were sought, creating opportunities for local governments, NGO's, the private sector, women's groups and other grassroots organisations to move to the forefront in aid delivery.

These external pressures coincided internally with growing public frustration with the failure of post-independent governments to respond to popular demands, to stimulate economic growth, to provide a basic level of development and embrace basic democratic rights. These concerns reflected a deeper crisis in governance, and calls for more open, accountable and effective government, and the creation of opportunities for more active participation by civil society and the private sector in the development process.

In terms of the economy, State control was replaced by greater reliance on the market. Privatisation, deregulation, and macro-economic adjustment redefined the roles of the public and private sectors in economic management. Politically, the single party or authoritarian State was disbanded to be replaced with various experiments with democratic government, often with mixed results.

Political reform also embraced a renewed interest in political and administrative decentralisation, with several countries moving to devolve powers to locally elected and accountable administrations. Decentralisation was also a consequence of a wider process of civil and public service reforms and of sector policy reforms.

In particular, these reforms (initially linked to programmes of structural adjustment in order to achieve fiscal savings) sought to redefine state responsibilities, clarify roles and achieve higher standards of performance.

These processes have included the shedding of functions to non-governmental actors, and have given rise to a wider recognition of the potential benefits of a more participatory approach to development management. The legitimate role of civil society and of the private sector in participating in the formulation and the execution of policy has been increasingly accepted.

The institutional context of development has therefore changed dramatically over the past decade, and new more participatory forms of governance are beginning to emerge. The role of the State in development has changed (less doing, more facilitating) and greater onus is placed on an approach which values the participation of different actors towards achieving common development goals.

As a consequence, the State 'formerly the exclusive recipient, partner and rationale for international aid lost its most favoured status' (Doornbos, 1990). To respond to these changes, and to support these processes, development agencies have been looking for new innovative modes of development cooperation. It is with this perspective that the discussion on decentralisation, decentralised cooperation and joint action can be examined.

A Renewed Focus on Decentralisation and Local Development

What have these changes meant for development at the local level? In both urban and rural environments, new opportunities have arisen for local actors to influence the development process.

In place of central government departments, new local administrations have started to enjoy varying degrees of administrative and political autonomy to attend to local development planning and service delivery. Compared to earlier attempts to deconcentrate central government departments, the recent wave of decentralisation has gone further to give discretionary authority to local governments, bound only by broad national policy guidelines, their own financial,

human, and material capacities, and the physical environment within which they must operate. There is an expectation that:

"well functioning, self sufficient local authorities can more accurately identify needs and mobilise people and resources on a sustained basis and thus better implement development strategies.....a tremendous potential exists for local authorities to provide a full range of services in support of national economic development " (World Bank, 1989)

Several arguments have been put forward in support of decentralisation and the strengthening of local government.

First, transferring governance to local government levels provides significant opportunities for popular participation and increased involvement by people and communities in decisions that directly affect their lives. Second, it is through strengthened local governments that municipal programmes, plans, and service provisions are likely to reflect local needs more accurately than in centralised systems of governance. Last, more autonomous local governments charged with service delivery and which are accountable to their local political constituency, will manage the local fiscal base and revenue collection system more efficiently and effectively than central administrations (MDP, 1991).

Experience shows however that the problems that characterised central government may be recreated at the local government level. Over-zealous support for decentralisation without careful attention to the necessary preconditions to implement it may do little to ensure a more effective and accountable development paradigm¹. There are no guarantees that local policy making will necessarily be more relevant than national or regional. Local governments stress that financial constraints caused both by a weak revenue base and a retention of resources at the centre, means that they lack the necessary resources and technical capacities to carry out their new responsibilities. Others point to the importance of local accountability and transparency, and of ensuring good governance. If governance is understood as the process of interaction between the public sector and the various actors or groups of actors in civil society, then, at the

1. See de Jong, Loquai and Soiri (1999) for a further discussion of this point in relation to poverty alleviation.

local level, governance is the relationship between the local authority and the civil society - the rate payers, the disabled and infirm, the private sector, women groups, and other community groups.

Different Forms of Decentralisation

Deconcentration refers to a system of government where selected functions are assigned to sub-national units within sector-specific national agencies. In a concentrated system, local governments do not exist as discrete entities, at least with respect to the specific functions for which central ministries are responsible. This means that with respect to those functions, Government exists at local levels in the form of discrete ministry offices, without any local mechanism for mandatory horizontal integration. The effect of this system is to centralize power within central government. This model of decentralisation, for example, was adopted by Tanzania after its Decentralisation Act of 1967. Central government functionaries were deconcentrated to the regional and district level, where democratically elected local Councils were abolished, to be replaced by committees dominated by officials.

Delegation refers to a system of Government where responsibilities for implementing or maintaining sector investments are assigned to parastatals and other semi-autonomous government agencies. Such bodies can in turn deconcentrate responsibility for internal management and administrative systems to its own sub-national units but this is not always guaranteed. In a delegated system, an enormous amount of power still remains with central government. This system was a feature of former socialist regimes in Africa such as Tanzania, Mozambique, and Ethiopia.

Devolution refers to a system of government where responsibilities and functions are assigned to local governments, sometimes with the necessary resources to carry out these functions. The essence of devolution is discretionary authority. So local governments have discretionary authority to do what they decide to do, bound only by a) broad national policy guidelines, b) their own financial, human & material capacities and c) the physical environment within which they must operate. This model of decentralisation is being experimented with by many African countries, and is being encouraged by the donor community.

Source: Silverman, 1992

International and local non-governmental development organisations (NGDO's) have traditionally had a strong presence at the community level providing support in the delivery of basic needs where the State had failed to maintain services or had been absent. As noted earlier, with the crisis of confidence in the State, many northern agencies re-directed resources via NGDO's and their numbers grew significantly.

These organisations continue to play a key role in supporting local development initiatives where local authorities are unable to provide support or where they are considered not to have a comparative advantage to offer. But there have also been concerns expressed that the actions of NGO's fall outside any agreed policy or planning framework, leading to possible duplication or conflict in service provision. There has also been concern that in their dissatisfaction with state performance, donors have perhaps gone too far in switching their support to non-state actors, and in so doing have undermined the credibility and legitimacy of state institutions at all levels (Bossuyt, 1994).

More generally, civil society organisations have grown in numbers and in strength over the last decades, and have claimed a more direct role in influencing the local development process. From a role focused primarily on service delivery, they have sought a role in programme design as well as in wider policy dialogue. This has raised new questions concerning their mandate, representativeness and legitimacy vis a vis formally elected Councillors and parliamentarians, and concerning the roles of different actors and stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation (Corkery et al, 1995).

Finally, the formal and informal local private sector is recognised as a stakeholder in the local development process and as a potential partner for local government and the not-for-profit sector. Increasingly, this sector is being encouraged to play a more dynamic role in stimulating local economic growth, contributing to the debate on local development strategies, as well as participating in the delivery of key services. However, it has probably the least experience in discussing and implementing local development policies, and, in general, is poorly organised to do so.

Development challenges at the local level have been perhaps most acute in the urban setting. Rapid urbanisation unmatched in the history of the developed countries has been a common feature in many developing countries especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. There are pressing demands to deal with deteriorating infrastructure and services, poor housing, environmental degradation, unemployment, and increasing poverty and crime. The plight of the urban poor has focused attention on ways to harness the capabilities of local actors to address these shared problems.

It is widely accepted that local municipal and district Councils cannot do the job alone. Moreover, they should not repeat the mistakes of central governments and try to monopolise the process. If properly supported, they can play the essential role of nexus between central government and local communities, providing an institutional framework that facilitates the participation of the different local development actors. Yet, this is no easy task. It needs to be recognised that the different actors have been 'reluctant partners' in the past and have all too often worked in splendid isolation. But given the pressing development challenges, resource scarcity, and the acknowledged inadequacy of previous development approaches, new options based on the mobilisation of all existing actors, resources and skills need to be explored. It is in this regard, that the concepts of decentralised cooperation and of joint action are of particular relevance².

Decentralised Cooperation and Joint Action - A New Framework for Local Development

Conceptually, joint action and decentralised cooperation are linked but are not the same. Joint action can be said to be complementary, giving precision to the practice of decentralised cooperation. Both emphasise the importance of addressing development challenges through partnership between local development actors, to draw on the comparative strengths of the different partners in terms of capacities and resources, and to reinforce processes of decentralisation. The two approaches provide a response to the shared concerns of the donor community and national stakeholders that the local development

² Related experiences of local partnership for urban management in the context of the Caribbean and Latin America are discussed in Fisbein and Lowden (1999)

process can succeed in institutionalising a more participatory form of governance, offer effective services and alleviate poverty.

Decentralised cooperation is probably the better known of the two terms. However, it tends to be used in different ways by different organisations. Two main trends are relevant to this discussion. The first relates to the use of the term in the context of European development cooperation, particularly with ACP countries. The second has its origins in French development cooperation, and is used by many European and North American agencies in the context of North-South twinning among local authorities. It is also referred to as Municipal International Cooperation³.

While decentralised cooperation offers an alternative mode of development cooperation between the north and the south, aimed at channelling funds towards and better targeting of local development actors, joint action particularly emphasises the importance of local actors working together. Understanding how this is being done and drawing lessons of experience can help ensure that decentralised cooperation is effective.

Before presenting the case studies, some further insights into the concept and practice of decentralised cooperation and joint action are provided here.

Decentralised Cooperation Within European Development Cooperation

Negotiations on a new partnership agreement between the EU and the ACP countries have recently been concluded. One part of the broad and varied discussions focused on widening opportunities for local governments, the private sector and civil society to participate more actively in the EU-ACP cooperation.

Whereas previous Lomé Conventions provided limited opportunities for the involvement of actors other than central government, the new Convention places more emphasis on development through non-government actors. A new chapter

³ See ECDPM (1999) (1999a), for a further discussion of the role of new actors in the context of EU-ACP relations

on 'actors of partnership' gives priority to participatory development strategies and recognises the complementary roles of the various actors. While ACP governments will continue to be responsible for determining the development strategy of their countries, non-governmental partners will be involved in consultations and planning of national development strategies, give access to financial resources and involved in the implementation of programmes, especially at the local level. Although decentralised cooperation was already introduced in the 4th Lomé Convention signed in 1989, it is the first time that the roles of the new actors are recognised in the texts and that a basis for dialogue has been formally established. Decentralised cooperation is not so much a new instrument as a different political approach to development cooperation, responding to the changing institutional context of partner countries, as discussed above.

The concept builds on the micro-project approach introduced under Lomé 1 (1975-80) to extend the idea of working with non state actors at the local level. In comparison with the micro-projects approach where the focus was on supporting a wide variety of small isolated projects, decentralised cooperation aims to promote a strategically planned process approach in solving local problems through joint action between all the local development actors (Bossuyt, 1994).

Decentralised cooperation is not simply another budget line to finance a multitude of stand-alone activities. The aim is rather to involve different actors (local authorities and other non state actors including various community groups, local businesses, trade unions etc.) in the formulation and implementation of development programmes while emphasising the roles and responsibilities of each of them, and in working towards policy coherence⁴. In so doing, it seeks to avoid the pitfalls of either concentrating just on local governments or just on non-governmental organisations.

⁴ This is discussed further in Materu (1998)

Essential Features of Decentralised Cooperation

Put the actors at the centre of EU development cooperation

- broaden the range of actors (not only NGO's but other decentralised actors or non-profit private sector organisations);
- decentralise actors are in the 'driving seat' (promoting ownership and responsibility);
- a special emphasis on capacity development (empowerment).

Adopt participatory and programmatic process approaches

- away from isolated initiatives in the form of micro projects;
- promoting a strategic and programmatic approach;
- fora for genuine expression/participation of actors ('neutral spaces');
- define respective roles and responsibilities of different actors (e.g. local authorities and NGO's);
- search for complementarities and joint action (i.e. different actors pooling roles, resources and capacities in a 'common basket'), both in formulation and implementation.

Improve the articulation between public sector and civil society

- put decentralised actors in the 'driving seat' while ensuring linkages with government policies and actors;
- search for new partnerships based on comparative advantages.

Introduce more flexible and decentralised management

- delegate management responsibilities (such as programme design and implementation) to decentralised actors with due respect to the principles of subsidiarity, governance and financial accountability;
- a strong focus on capacity development;
- plan and execute activities in an iterative way.

Ensure that the population remains the final beneficiary

- 'result-oriented' monitoring and evaluation adapted to the decentralised cooperation philosophy;
- focus on 'process' results such as improved organisational capacity of civil society or greater empowerment.

So far, however, decentralised cooperation has had a chequered history with difficulties encountered in moving from principle to practice. In part this has been due to unfamiliarity among local actors of opportunities available within the Lomé Convention. There was also no operational concept of what decentralised cooperation should be and how it should work. This led to many interpretations of the concept among delegations, governments and local development actors alike. No specific source or provision was set aside in the financing protocol to finance decentralised cooperation. The normal procedures for funding projects and programmes (laid out in articles 289 and 290) were, however, not suited for such a programme. Finally, central government authorities in most ACP countries have not particularly favoured the promotion of decentralised cooperation. A degree of mistrust and sometimes suspicion still exists between governments and civil society making collaboration in a decentralised cooperation programme difficult (Materu, 1998). For all these reasons, there is therefore a pressing need to draw lessons of experience on just how local partnerships can be built and sustained through joint action.

Decentralised Cooperation as Municipal International Cooperation

The term decentralised cooperation, was initially used in relation to an innovation in French development cooperation. Targeting decentralised actors in developing countries, especially regional and municipal governments, development resources were channelled through counterpart institutions in France. This practice of 'linking' or 'twinning' between northern and southern local governments has gained popularity across Europe and North America, and is commonly referred to as Municipal International Cooperation (MIC). Although the two terms 'linking' and 'twinning' are often used interchangeably, a distinction is sometimes made between the two (Nossier, 1992). Twinning refers to a formal relationship between two municipalities while linking refers to informal relationships between municipalities and between different entities within the municipalities such as churches, hospitals, schools etc.

The attraction of MIC is that it offers the possibility to provide long term technical and financial assistance to a municipal government in the spirit of partnership and global common interest. In particular, it has been seen to offer benefits over traditional forms of technical assistance in terms of its impact on capacity building and institutional strengthening. International organisations such as the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), as well as national associations of local authorities in the North have adopted MIC as their principal instrument for providing capacity building support to southern municipalities⁵.

MIC can be criticised for having too much of an exclusive focus on local governments to the detriment of other local development actors. However, drawing from this and other forms of decentralised cooperation and joint action, steps have been taken to broaden MIC to include and to benefit other local actors⁶. In this respect, Local Agenda 21 (LA21), which emerged from the Earth Summit in Rio has been an important exemplar, emphasising partnership both between North and South, as well as between local stakeholders in addressing environmental and sustainable development issues. The notion of joint action has become more familiar as a result of the attention given to LA21. Organisations such as the International Council for local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), the Municipal Development Programme, the Towns and Development Network, as well as ENDA in West Africa, are trying to apply these principles of combining North-South and South-South partnership in projects and programmes across Africa.

In a related context, multilateral agencies active in urban and city development, and in supporting sectoral programmes for health, housing and environmental sanitation, such as UNCHS, UNDP and the World Bank, as well as some bilateral agencies, are increasingly encouraging partnership between municipal authorities and the civic and private sectors. These are commonly referred to as public-private partnerships or 'smart' partnerships⁷.

⁵ See for example IULA (1998)

⁶ See for example Lenfant L. (1999)

⁷ Examples include UNDP, Public-private Partnerships for the Urban Environment and MAWAC; Managing Water for Africancities - A joint initiative of UNEP and UNCHS.

The Case for Joint Action

Since decentralised cooperation therefore encourages the promotion of partnerships among local development actors, joint action is then of particular relevance in giving conceptual and operational guidance on how this can be done.

Focusing on the establishment of equitable partnerships at the local level between local government, civil society and the private sector, joint action seeks to achieve common development objectives (poverty reduction, environmental protection, service delivery) based on participatory decision-making, planning, execution and evaluation. In so doing, it will result in greater aid effectiveness, policy coherence and good governance at the local level. Such an approach can also lead to better results in crucial poverty alleviation programmes.

There is, however, no such thing as a joint action 'blueprint'. It is an approach that can be characterised by a set of principles that need to be adapted to suit local contexts. A recent study on joint action contains a set of guiding principles that usefully round off this chapter (Bartholomeeussen & Dhaene, 1999):

- **Complementarity.** Joint action has to recognise the contrasting properties of public and private institutions. By bringing together mutually supportive relationships between public and non-state actors, the output is greater than could have been achieved by the public or private sector alone. Complementarity suggests a clear division of labour. It aims at a synergy that combines the strong points of the NGO and public sectors.
- **Ownership:** The argument here is that the permeability of public-private boundaries is essential to achieve developmentally successful programmes. Development is not only a result of a set of policies but also a proper combination of embedded civic cultures and public institutions that provide a framework conducive to building confidence and trust. Such a combination leads to a 'shared' project.

- **Genuine decentralisation and subsidiarity:** Genuine decentralisation requires that there is respect for the principle of subsidiarity. This means that tasks are performed at the most appropriate level and that the legitimacy of all actors (central state, local government, and civil society) is acknowledged and respected. The principle of subsidiarity encourages actors to take on responsibilities and to specify their comparative advantages. A strong state with a coherent bureaucracy is a precondition to implement the principle of subsidiarity because it requires among others, a clear legal framework, mediation and arbitration mechanisms, criteria for allocation of resources, and good statutes for officials.
- **The municipality as the 'crossroads':** The municipality is where decentralisation and decentralised cooperation join. As the level of government closest to the people it is the legitimate focal point for local development efforts. Local authorities can provide the legal and policy framework that enables different actors (the private sector, NGO's, CBO's, and other civil society groups) to plan, finance and execute development programmes. Furthermore, local authorities respond directly to the needs of the citizens and take up responsibility for primary stages of local cross-sectional and long term development programmes.

Now that decentralised partnerships for sustainable development and poverty alleviation are being accepted in principle by donors, central governments, business and citizens, the question is can it be done? And are there examples of how it is done? Attention can now turn to the presentation and analysis of practical examples of joint action from Eastern and Southern Africa.



Voices from Mombasa - Searching for the roots of joint action

Interview with Matthew Kibe, Community Development Officer, Kenya

Working in an NGO involved in community organisation and mobilisation, Matthew Kibe stresses the challenges facing local authorities in coping with urban issues like garbage-strewn streets, human waste, insecurity and training for self-help and community groups.

Joint action in Nakuru

While the Nakuru municipality has no formal framework for JA, certain activities are quite close to it. One is called 'Lake View - self-help women's group' and another 'Naroka.' Lake View started as an environment project, cleaning up the area, and filling up potholes. It works very closely with NGO's and the local authority and succeeded in making the environment quite clean through a typical JA approach. They built a container where city Council trucks collect the garbage.

Lake View is situated next to Nakuru National game park. It was found that some of the waste, especially plastic products, were thrown in the park. Some animals swallowed these and died. The people in charge of the park and the community cleaned the place and made the park safer for the animals. This is a good example of JA: Initiatives in which different agents or partners come together through a process of joint consultation and implementation.

The characteristics of JA include equality, justice, fairness, communication, a situation in which every party is regarded as an equal partner and where all ideas can be heard. One benefit is that everybody is involved. Another is linked to sustainability: When all the parties see themselves as equal partners then it is possible that they will sustain the project and consider it as their own. One of the major hallmarks of JA is the involvement of the community for the purpose of sustainability.

Nakuru-Leuven

Through linking, people are able to meet and to share ideas. One of the benefits is that people on either side may change their attitudes and certain perceptions. Even more important, a lot of learning take place. The people of Leuven in Belgium have, for instance, a very good public housing scheme. On the other hand, the local authority in Nakuru has a major problem in managing public housing. The houses built in the 1950's are now dilapidated and there is need for more housing.

Through the exchange, the people of Nakuru have learned how to manage a housing project so it becomes viable for the municipality in terms of income generation. The people of Leuven, having realised the shortage of proper houses in the low income areas of Nakuru, have raised funds with which they will build some houses to be used as a show case.

Role of the private sector

The private sector is usually one of the partners in JA and LA21. We are talking about business enterprises, institutions, and factories. Through JA they also participate in the identification and implementation of projects. The private sector actors give a part of their profits to the community because they understand that their survival depends on this community. The idea for them is to see themselves as part of the community and of the environment. The better the environment and the living conditions of the people, the better it is for business.

Joint action and future development cooperation

Past development planning was done by experts sitting in Europe or elsewhere, resulting in blueprints sent to Africa for implementation. These projects did not belong to the people. JA tries to overcome this by inviting all the actors (community, traditional leaders, private sector, NGO's, CBO's) to specify the priorities and identify the resources. Thus the project becomes really sustainable and addresses the real needs of the people.

In traditional communities, when an enemy threatened or when there was a risk of a disaster, the elders call the community together and ask for ideas to overcome the problem. The community would come up with ideas and strategies.

During the fight for independence in Kenya in the 1950's, my parents tell me that it was a real JA initiative. Everybody had a role to play: Men, women and children. People, mainly men, went into the bush to fight, women cooked food and sometimes carried bullets in their clothes. This is how our traditional societies already implement JA.

It is a concept that tries to go back to our roots and to rediscover our traditional ways of solving problems.



Chapter 2

Joint Action in Practice: Towards Effective Implementation Strategies



Joint Action in Practice: Towards Effective Implementation Strategies

This chapter provides the lessons learned from implementing joint action. It is based on the case studies presented in the next chapter. The lessons are presented under the following headings:

1. Understanding joint action;
2. Joint action operationalised;
3. Achievements - products and processes;
4. Challenges ... and success factors.

Understanding Joint Action

Conceptually, the notion of joint action is clear. It is about achieving common development objectives, and strengthening local democracy. Specifically, it challenges local governments and civil society organisations to work together on an equitable basis with participatory decision-making, planning, execution and evaluation. It emphasises capacity building and the importance of 'process' in developing new institutional arrangements. It should be understood as an approach influencing the way in which local development actors cooperate, and less as a blueprint methodology for project implementation. The main challenge it presents is to find ways for development actors who have traditionally worked separately, to work together around common interests.

What the Cases Tell Us

- Few programmes are guided by a clear conceptual understanding of joint action, and few actors - even within the same programme - share a common understanding of what joint action is. Moreover, few institutional actors have articulated a clear position with regard to joint action as a development approach.

- In practice, joint action is carried out in quite different and often ad-hoc ways to serve different purposes. These range from more restricted examples of community participation in specific projects, to more ambitious processes to re-define roles and relationships in development planning and decision-making. These are often part of wider institutional reform strategies.
- These differences are reflected in programme design in terms of duration (short-term versus long-term) dynamics of participation (superficial versus intensive), and scope (neighbourhood, municipality, district).
- What is practised is strongly influenced by local contextual factors (policy, institutional and physical environment, culture and traditions), as well as by the interpretations of key individual and institutional stakeholders which have championed the approach.
- Lead agencies and individuals have the capacity to impress a certain vision of joint action, but it is by no means certain that the view is shared by all. In several cases, the external agency that introduces the concept informed the debate, carrying strong conceptual and methodological ideas.
- An absence of conceptual clarity or agreement on some basic principles can lead to misunderstandings and raises different expectations among the stakeholders, with implications for project design, setting roles and responsibilities, and agreeing on expected results.

For analytical purposes, joint action experiences are divided into two categories. The first includes those cases where joint action represents a more institutionalised and political process seeking to bring local development actors to participate in structured dialogue and decision-making within a legally or geographically defined planning environment. The cases of Rakai and Same districts, and of Mamelodi township, apply here. The second category includes cases where joint action represents more focused project methodologies to bring local development actors to jointly plan and implement a more defined set of time-bound and issue-specific local development initiatives. The examples of Nakuru, Mombasa, and Mutare municipalities apply here.

Joint Action as an Institutionalised Process

In Same District, Tanzania, joint action is about strengthening policy dialogue between local development actors. Rather than being solely a mechanism to increase local community participation in project execution, it has set out to build a new partnership between business, the community and local authorities, with emphasis given to joint problem identification and planning. Joint action, as such, is defined as "*cooperation between different institutions in order to implement local level development activities in partnership*". It subscribes to principles of open dialogue, equal partnership and shared accountability. It uses a process approach, and recognises capacity building as a critical element.

However, the case author carefully points out that this notion of joint action is not necessarily shared by all, but rather reflects the vision of the principal external sponsor, SNV. For others, it is equated with traditional self-help projects, in spite of a number of sensitisation and training workshops on the subject.

SNV played a key role in promoting and institutionalising joint action as a development approach. It has provided intellectual leadership and methodological guidance over a significant time scale. But, the author also points to the comparatively unique community participation tradition in the district as a distinct feature that has facilitated the adoption of joint action.

Rakai district, Uganda illustrates how joint action combines political ambitions - nurturing democratic decision-making processes - pragmatic or managerial ambitions, and the development of effective service delivery strategies. Joint action is seen as a way to maximise the use of scarce resources and organisational capacities, to enhance outreach to the poorest, and to ensure stronger local accountability. This vision reflects the policy orientation of the principal funding agency, Danida. It is also consistent with official Government policy that encourages local government to address local development needs through partnership with local non-state actors. The author notes that these views are not necessarily shared among local stakeholders who are directly involved in joint action processes, and where entrenched views about the pro's and con's of partnership remain.

In Mamelodi, South Africa, joint action has emerged under quite different circumstances. It is essentially a South African experiment and experience which has comparatively little association with external initiatives. It is built on the legacy of political struggle against apartheid, and based on a commitment to build a new future characterised by tolerance and reconciliation.

Although the joint action 'jargon' is not used, the notion is reflected in the new constitution and prescribed by law. 'Planning Zone Forums' - so far tried out in Pretoria - aim to provide a framework for consultation between local government and community and business interests with a view to ensuring that the planning process is accountable and responsive to local needs and initiatives. It has far-reaching ambitions that go beyond the realisation of specific project results, to take on board processes of trust and confidence building, and raising awareness of the real-life constraints faced in re-building the nation. It has a clear political function in terms of re-connecting state and society, building respect for public goods, and winning support for taxation. Yet, it remains a novel and ambitious approach, and many local stakeholders harbour doubts as to its real benefits.

Joint Action as a Project Methodology

In Mombasa, Kenya, joint action has evolved over time through different experiences of associating community organisations with social development and urban improvement programmes. The participation of the municipality in a national network promoting joint action, and its participation in various international meetings has sensitised municipal leadership to the potentials of working through local partnerships. Nevertheless, there is no apparent Council strategy to support joint action. It has been used on an ad-hoc basis to mobilise local resources to address specific problem areas that the municipality cannot solve alone. The Council-initiated beautification project described in the case study provides a good example of this pragmatic approach geared towards getting things done in a cost-effective way. Joint action has now been adopted in a more structured fashion within the PAMNUP (Partnership Approach to Meeting the Needs of the Urban Poor) programme.

In Mutare and Nakuru, joint action pre-dates the LA21 charters programme and has been influenced by initiatives taken in the framework of a twinning programme with Haarlem, the Netherlands, and Leuven in Belgium to create multi-stakeholder 'environment committees' to address a number of local environmental concerns.

In both towns, joint action has been further encouraged through LA21 initiatives. With external facilitation, local actors have been mobilised to address selected environmental concerns. Councils have meanwhile signed LA21 activities or Charters prescribing the principles of reciprocity, equity and participation. Joint action is seen as a means to promote North-South partnerships and to encourage cooperation between local development actors to address environmental and sustainable development issues through local projects and public education. The LA21 programmes have remained the main influence on how joint action is understood and practised. At this stage, there does not appear to be a wider position or strategy towards joint action that has been adopted at the municipality level and developed out of the experience of these pioneer initiatives.

Joint Action Operationalised

How has joint action been translated into practice? Finding suitable ways to enable the different actors to participate as equal partners in policy dialogue, programme design, execution and review is the key challenge. This can entail carefully adapting existing arrangements, or creating new ones to allow for the discharge of new tasks and responsibilities.

Attention is given here to the structures, instruments and processes set-up or adapted to facilitate joint action. Equally important is ensuring that local partners are able and willing to engage in such new processes. This brings into question the circumstances and conditions under which joint action takes place and the pre-disposition of the different parties involved. Ideally, it should emerge through local initiative and processes, but often, the intervention of an external agency is critical to bring in new ideas, stimulate new processes and provide needed funds.

In this context, it is important to understand who is in the 'driver's seat' and what incentives there are for the different stakeholders to participate.

Financial management is a difficult area for joint action. Who should decide budgets and review expenditures, who can be entrusted to manage funds, and who accounts to whom? Lack of capacities often undermines confidence among external agencies to delegate responsibilities. In turn, both local governments and non-governmental organisations harbour reservations as to how far they are willing to pool resources and share responsibilities.

Joint action also encourages a participatory approach to monitoring and evaluation. Stakeholders need to agree on expected results and what needs to be measured. Appropriate indicators have to be selected. Mechanisms are required which address the needs of the different stakeholders and ensure that there is an adequate exchange of information.

What the Cases Tell Us

- The case studies reveal a range of experiences reflecting the different ways in which joint action has been understood and applied. Examples are provided of more institutionalised frameworks mainstreamed into formal decision making processes, and of frameworks set up to support specific projects.
- Whereas the cases provide insights into the types of decision-making and consultative structures put in place, issues concerning financial management and monitoring and evaluation have not been addressed in depth.
- It is evident that few if any of the programmes examined have built-in systems for monitoring and evaluation.

It is again convenient to divide the review between those cases reflecting institutionalised processes, and those reflecting project methodologies.

Joint Action as an Institutionalised Process

Same, Rakai and Mamelodi provide examples where joint action has been built on to existing policy-making structures of local government. Rather than representing parallel structures, joint action is integrated into what already exists.

In Same, a set of consultative and decision-making structures at village, ward and district levels feed the District Council's decision-making process. These provide opportunities for business and community representatives to sit alongside Councillors, Council technicians, and donors. A District Advisory Committee provides a forum for dialogue and advice to the District Council. Ward development plans have also been introduced where development priorities are identified and the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders are reviewed. Crucially, the process has fostered the establishment of two umbrella organisations: A business community association, and an association of civil society organisations. Both sit on the District Advisory Committee. Other committees have been set up to monitor the mobilisation and use of financial resources. However, it is noted that lines of accountability tend to be oriented towards Council and donors, and less toward community constituencies.

The Rakai District Development Programme (RDDP), financed principally by Danida, is aligned to the District's 5-year development plan. Provision for non-governmental participation (civic and private sector organisations) in the planning process has been created through the RDDP, and all active stakeholders may participate in an annual review process. Here, reports on activities are presented, and re-allocation of funds between activities can be agreed. A preparatory phase involves consultation among local actors and the preparation of a proposal by the District Council (on behalf of all parties) to Danida. On the basis of this proposal, Danida and the Council agree a work plan and budget, including, as necessary, any reallocation of resources. Thereafter, resources are distributed to the implementing agencies, whether Council or non-governmental.

On financial management, Danida has encouraged working through existing structures, procedures and capacities. Based on the work plan, participating organisations manage their own financial affairs and prepare accounts using

existing procedures. Local audit firms have been used with only occasional recourse to international firms. Copies of correspondence and disbursement details are provided to all parties. NGO's are also required to provide monthly reports to Danida which are also copied to the Council. This set up is described by the case author as an 'extreme case of donor trust'.

The Planning Zone Forum (PZF), Mamelodi, is an integral part of the new institutional landscape of local government in Pretoria providing the framework for participation in the preparation of Integrated Development Plans. PZF's are expected to hold quarterly meetings, and are composed of representatives of registered local organisations. This provides an opportunity for all strands of civic society to take part in the local planning process. Although the forums do not have decision-making rights, elected Councillors and officials are expected to heed their advice and to participate actively. Council has retained responsibility for financial oversight and takes decisions with respect to the award of tenders etc. There are indications that the decision making process is not considered sufficiently transparent, and some decisions taken with respect to the award of tenders have undermined confidence in the role of the PZF's. Some community representatives have argued that the forums be given legal status so they may then raise and manage their own funds.

Joint Action as Project Methodology

Nakuru, Mutare and Mombasa provide examples where joint action has been organised through parallel structures and procedures to facilitate the preparation and implementation of defined project goals, using a joint action approach.

In Nakuru and Mutare, the LA21 Charter and ICLEI's Incentive Grant Programme provide the policy framework, while the programme is organised through 'participatory' structures set up to support the design and implementation of a 'plan of action'. In Nakuru, four structures perform different functions - policy advice and evaluation, oversight, technical implementation and information dissemination. According to need, the composition of these structures reflects a different mix of stakeholders. While funds are disbursed to the local authority, budget approval and expenditure monitoring and review rests with the funder.

In Mutare, a multi-stakeholder Environment Committee created in 1993 provided the institutional base on which to build the LA21 programme and in so doing to strengthen the joint action process. Currently, it is guided by a stakeholder steering committee, chaired by the representative of civil society, and a secretariat provided through the local authority. There is also a coordinator to oversee the activities of the related twinning programme with Haarlem.

In Mombasa, a more ad hoc approach has been used. Decision-making and implementation structures have been set up by Council geared to the needs of each initiative. In the beautification project, a loose arrangement of committees was set up to follow through with the different components of project implementation. While these have been open to all interested stakeholders, roles and responsibilities, rights and obligations have not been spelled out. Nor does there appear to be an integrated budget for joint action activities.

In their other joint action activities, such as the CSD programme, joint action took place for specific components of the programmes where the Council needed community collaboration. This was true of solid waste removal in informal settlements and in the schools sanitation programmes as well as the income generation project for women. The benefit of all the Mombasa experience inside and outside the municipality has meant that it has succeeded in accessing DFID funds and a very comprehensive poverty alleviation programme for the next 5 years. Joint action has been the underlying mechanism behind the last 2 years of preparation and will be for its implementation.

Achievements - Products and Processes

The case made for joint action is that it can provide an effective and accountable institutional framework for addressing local development needs and, at the same time, contribute to strengthening local democratic governance. Putting the actors of development first through partnership can assure better priority setting, enhanced resource mobilisation, and more effective implementation. Through more intensive and systematic interaction between governmental and non-governmental actors, groups can hold one another to account, and build trust and better understanding. To what extent has this been borne out in practice?

The achievements documented in the case studies provide a range of insights based on informal discussions among stakeholders, and discussions during the consultative workshop, and in the main they remain impressionistic. In reflecting on achievements, account should be taken of the different histories of the experiences reviewed, and of the fact that some are comparatively recent initiatives, whilst others are much older.

A distinction is made between two types of achievements. First, 'products' - the realisation of policies and plans, and the delivery of services addressing the concerns of local stakeholders. Second, 'processes' - the development of structures, mechanisms and capacities, and the changing of attitudes and mind-sets to support more participatory development processes.

What the Cases Tell Us

Overall the balance sheet is mixed. There have been successes and failures, both in realising products and in evolving processes.

Products - Policies, Plans and Services

Through joint action, local stakeholders have been able to develop new local policies and plans, as well as to implement concrete local development activities. In Rakai, the contracting of service delivery functions to NGO's, including the private sector, has improved the quality and range of services to the district's population. In particular, new service areas (such as AIDS counselling and credit facilities) not traditionally addressed by local governments are now available. Other examples include road rehabilitation and business advisory services.

In Same, the 'pay off' from investing in such processes is starting to show through. Examples include revenue collection, privatisation of the local market, rehabilitation of low-cost housing, and primary schools. In so doing, the credibility of local government has been heightened. At the same time, it has demonstrated that no single actor can alone address local development challenges. The building of confidence has also proven to be an important factor in stimulating local

resource mobilisation. Although there are serious limitations here, it has meant some reduction in dependence on donor funds.

In Mutare, some significant environmental and housing related initiatives have emerged, although there is some concern that the overall portfolio of activities remains modest. Successful examples include securing land for squatter upgrading, new practices and facilities for the safe disposal of industrial waste (eg: sawdust), and new opportunities for solid waste collection for recycling and local income generation. More recently, in Mombasa, the beautification project has led to an assortment of upgrading and rehabilitation activities within different parts of the city centre with benefits accruing both to local residents and the business community. Other Mombasa achievements have been the informal school successes with disadvantaged youth and self help school latrine building.

In Nakuru, joint action has facilitated the preparation of a strategic structure plan, the first to be approved by central government, improved management of the bus park and market area, rehabilitation of low-cost housing, improvement of the water supply, and local solutions to solid-waste management.

Processes - Structures and Mechanisms, Attitudes and Capacities

In some ways the most significant achievements noted in the case studies and emphasised by participants in the regional consultative workshop, are those of a 'process' nature.

Although few would admit that joint action is running smoothly, emphasis was given to the progress that has been made towards building new working relationships among local development actors. Albeit in a slow and sometimes haphazard way, successes have been recorded in terms of bringing traditionally 'un-willing' actors around the table to plan and manage local development concerns. And in many cases, these developments have helped to realise the development plans and activities noted above.

While those impatient for quicker and more concrete results may remain less convinced, laying the foundations of, and building confidence in new

partnerships cannot be underestimated. These can be said to represent pre-conditions for effective and sustainable programme delivery. From an institutional and capacity development perspective, it is quite legitimate to highlight such achievements.

Specifically, three key process-related achievements may be noted: Creation and use of participatory decision-making structures and processes, improved working relationships between the actors, and ownership built and capacities strengthened. However, the cases also suggest the need to be modest and to exercise caution, as it is fully recognised that progress made remains fragile and can quite easily be undermined.

Participatory Decision-making Structures and Processes

Mamelodi, Same and Rakai provide examples where formal decision making processes have been opened up to non-governmental participation. Although in their relative infancy, new opportunities have been created for participation in local development planning and resource mobilisation. In Mamelodi, PZF participants contribute to the formulation of an integrated development plan while Rakai partners take part in the preparation of the District development plan. In Same and Rakai, this also extends to annual review and performance monitoring, thus enabling the different actors to hold one another to account.

The LA21 programmes in Nakuru and Mutare have also created institutional space for local stakeholders to dialogue, plan and execute local environmental projects. Thus, community groups and the private sector have joined the Councils to prepare a strategic plan in Nakuru, and to engage in a visioning exercise in Mutare.

Rakai has moreover been able to set up new delivery systems to take advantage of the comparative advantages of the different actors and to bring these together. An example is the partnership between the Council's Community Services Department, and various community-based organisations working with orphans.

Improved Working Relationships between the Actors

New structures, systems and procedures will only work if the parties are willing to participate. Traditionally, the relationship between state institutions (central and local), the private sector and civic groups has been arms length at best, and often confrontational. A number of institutional and attitudinal barriers therefore need to be addressed if joint action is to work on a sustainable basis. The cases highlight ways in which the experiences of working in partnership have started to break down such barriers.

Several cases report growing recognition of the comparative advantages and skills that each group can bring to bear. Nakuru points to the heightened awareness of what other actors can do, and acceptance by local government of the benefits of linking up. In Mutare, local NGO's are now working hand in hand with Council to encourage citizens to pay local rates, through public education campaigns. In some sector programmes in Rakai, such as in health, local NGO providers are working 'in close collaboration' with Council departments. In other areas, NGO's with specific skills are being used to train Council staff.

Other cases point to joint action helping to overcome mistrust and suspicion between the actors. From Mombasa, the experience of 'chipping in' to the beautification project has brought down traditional barriers and mistrust and created what is described as a sense of 'collective responsibility' to address local concerns. Given the historical legacy of Apartheid, and the confrontational relationship between State institutions and the community, the realisation in Mamelodi of development plans through consultative mechanisms suggests that a basis for trust is being built. The Same case reports on the impact of dialogue on building trust and confidence, easing tensions, helping to build consensus around policy issues, and new task divisions.

As significant is the impact such processes are having on the coherence of the civil society sector. Mutare, Nakuru and Mamelodi report that through joint action, civil society organisations have begun to cooperate among one another, and to provide mutual solidarity in a way that was not the case before. The Mamelodi PZF has succeeded in steering a disparate group of civic organisations to present a common voice before the Council. In Same, the opportunity to participate in the

Council planning process stimulated the business and community stakeholders to create representative bodies to interface with Council.

Ownership and Capacity Strengthening

Joint action has also helped strengthen local capacities and engendered confidence within the community in its ability to address its own development challenges.

The Rakai case underlines the positive impact of Danida's 'hands-off' approach on building confidence in the capacities of local organisations and professional services. The donor's approach towards decentralised financial management and in particular, recourse to the use of local audit firms, has enabled a closer trust relationship between Council and NGO's in this traditionally sensitive area, as well as building capacity through a process of learning by doing.

In a different context, the Mombasa study suggests that local stakeholders have more confidence in their own abilities to address local development needs. Moreover, the process was not donor driven although co-financing was received. The Mamelodi study points to the cumulative benefit to the community of working together to make joint action work. Thus, learning by doing, and accepting mistakes can be empowering.

In this respect, the Mamelodi case shows that joint action and related participatory initiatives need to be viewed as long-term processes of building new working relationships, and not as short-term projects with no institutional or capacity development outcomes. Time-bound projects can however provide important 'hands-on' learning experiences, which, when seen in a longer-term perspective, can contribute to longer-term institutional development processes. In this regard, the experiences of Nakuru and Mutare are important for new skills learned and methodologies introduced for participatory planning and management.

A Note of Caution! - Processes Remain Fragile

Reports of success inevitably have to be balanced by a note of caution with regard to the risks and failures that can be encountered in nurturing joint action processes. A number of concerns are raised across the case studies.

In Mutare, the process has become increasingly marginalised. The number of persons actively involved in the process has fallen, and it has not been able to make a wider impact on decision-making and planning processes, nor indeed to mobilise wider interest in the community. While in Rakai, the structures, systems and procedures are in place to facilitate civic participation, in practice, a lack of capacities, and sometimes an absence of willingness has constrained active participation. On the Council side, continuing mistrust of non-governmental partners, means that the opportunities for dialogue are not fully exploited. As a result, insufficient attention has been given to civil society inputs in the elaboration of the district plan. In the view of many NGO's, their level of involvement has been inadequate. The author of the Rakai case also notes the lack of formal organisation among non-governmental actors, and a high level of in-fighting among civil society organisations.

Finally, concern is expressed about the risks of dependence on external agencies. Whilst their presence as catalysts and facilitators of change and innovation is acknowledged, there is for the same reason a risk that processes are not adequately steered by local stakeholders, and that in the absence of external intervention, the processes may fall away.

The Mamelodi case demonstrates that notable progress can be made in the face of a turbulent past, but that it remains vulnerable in a fragile political environment. Success or failure will depend on the way in which inherited mistrust between government and community, blacks and whites can be overcome, and agreement reached on sharing resources.

Challenges . . . and Success Factors

In this last section, some of the more significant 'barriers' and 'success factors' drawn from the different case studies, and discussed at the Mombasa workshop are highlighted. Some of these are case specific, others are more generic, and may hold true across cases. These factors provide a basis from which to give strategic guidance on joint action processes. For presentation purposes, these have been grouped around thematic areas.

Barriers to Success - Why Joint Action is a Challenge

Clash of Cultures and Interests

Several cases suggest that local governments and community and NGO organisations remain 'unwilling partners'. While instances of improved relationships are reported, representing significant gains in themselves, the 'us and them' attitude represents a major challenge for joint action. This is reinforced by the legacies of centralisation and exclusiveness, privileged treatment, and competition between particular stakeholder groups. Political instability as societies grapple with processes of democratisation and decentralisation also contributes to difficult conditions.

In perhaps the most extreme cases (eg: Mamelodi), new trust relationships need to be built up between stakeholders who remain suspicious of each other. In Rakai, a certain incompatibility between the formal bureaucratic culture of local government and the comparative informality of NGO's is noted as a block on progress. These kinds of political and organisational problems are perpetuated by inadequate systems for institutional learning and for disseminating new ideas. They are also perpetuated by individuals and groups who seek to use the processes for their own advantage.

The cases identify a number of criticisms levelled towards the attitude and mind-set of local authorities.

- The bureaucratic tradition of local government, hierarchic and directive, rather than flexible and facilitative can undermine the commitment of other stakeholders when Council representatives are seen to drive the process.
- The perception of non-governmental actors as 'junior' partners, and a reticence to officially acknowledge their contribution partly reflects the sense of competition between Council and NGO's for scarce resources.
- Commitment to partnering can be undermined by certain actions or lack of action by Council officials and employees. For instance, it can be difficult to secure the interest and support of senior management to back joint action processes. Without this support, the position of Council remains ambivalent, and joint action remains marginalised. Confidence can be undermined where local politicians 'interfere' in initiatives for political gain. This practice has reinforced the suspicions of NGO's in Rakai towards Council. In Mamelodi, the lack of adequate transparency in decision-making within Council can also quickly undermine the 'goodwill' built up. Finally, the community can lose confidence in the process when their partners in Council fail to fulfil their commitments. In Mombasa, the reported non-cooperation of Council works and environmental health workers to supply materials and collect refuse led to recriminations and a breakdown of trust.

In turn, a number of specific criticisms are levelled towards the attitudes and functioning of civil society organisations, which also serve as barriers to joint action.

- With regard to attitude, several cases note that community organisations regard Councils with suspicion, concerned that their autonomy and freedom of action may be constrained should their relationship with Council become too close. This may be for good reason, as a result of bad experiences reflecting the points raised above. But it can also be for reasons of self-interest, and indeed self-preservation. International NGO's which are externally accountable, may have little incentive to invest in lengthy joint action processes when short term goals need to be achieved, and funding is already secure. Local NGO's funded by separate donors may see little incentive to sit down and seek compromises, either among themselves or with Council.

- There are also organisational difficulties, particularly to do with questions of representation and accountability. Councils face difficulties in finding acceptable and legitimate representative organisations to serve as interfaces. For civil society, this is indeed a challenge. While Same provided an illustration of what can be achieved, other cases noted some of the difficulties that can be encountered. Self-interest of community groups can frustrate efforts to build a common platform while the often transient nature of local communities can make it difficult to institutionalise a constituency for civic organisations. Organisationally, NGO's can often be dominated by a leader figure, which can weaken efforts to work on a team basis. Competition among NGO's for resources can undermine efforts to work jointly.

Capacity Constraints

Capacity constraints are also a barrier to joint action, affecting both local authorities and civil society organisations. Without ownership and commitment, there are limits as to what capacity building can achieve. Equally, without addressing some fundamental capacity constraints, it may not be possible to realise the full potentials of joint action. In the view of one case author, capacity constraints should not be allowed to undermine the potential of joint action. Instead, they should be viewed as a 'transitional challenge'. A distinction can be made between broader capacity constraints affecting the basic functioning of local institutions, and those which specifically impinge on joint action processes. In relation to local governments, the following is noted:

- Serious capacity constraints exist within local Councils as a result of ongoing decentralisation processes. Inadequate management capacities, fiscal constraints as well as other basic incentive factors affect the performance and motivation of local administrators. The challenge facing local governments in the wake of decentralisation cannot be underestimated. Work pressures are often such that it is difficult to find time to invest in innovative processes such as joint action. Low morale, rigid procedures, and resource constraints are also noted. Poor levels of remuneration has moreover led to a high turnover of staff, particularly among the more capable. In Mombasa for instance, the numbers in of people in key management and middle management jobs show a big deficit., whereas there is a surplus of unskilled employees.

- With respect to joint action, the most significant capacity constraints relate to the new roles that local stakeholders are called to adopt. In this regard, both new skills and aptitudes are required to enable Council officials to engage in a meaningful way in consultative and participatory processes. Skills in dialogue, presentation, negotiation, conflict resolution, consensus-building and compromise are needed to reinforce technical and managerial competencies. The Mombasa case notes that the Council simply did not have the requisite skills to engage in wider consultative processes.
- The workshop discussions, reflected in this report, also suggest a need to more widely discuss and disseminate concepts and practices of joint action among local politicians and administrators. The task includes awareness raising about the prospects and potential added-value of joint action, and about the capacities required.

Regarding non-governmental actors, several capacity gaps can be highlighted:

- Technical capacity constraints are noted in the Same study as undermining the confidence and ability of the community to engage with Council professionals. The setting up of representative institutions for the local business and community interests is however a significant step forward in terms of strengthening the capacity of non-state actors to dialogue with Council, and to improve coordination and consultation among themselves.
- The Rakai case also signals caution regarding civil society's capacity to participate. Aside from the lack of an institutional framework to coalesce interests, (as present in Same) the report points to further hindrances such as abject poverty, (also noted in the Mutare study), low levels of literacy and poor access to information. These wider constraints are also raised in the Mamelodi case and affect both the willingness and ability of local people to commit time and resources. High levels of poverty mean that voluntarism is not easily realised.
- The Mombasa case raises the issue of gender. More generally, the position of women in relation to decision-making is also raised as a constraint in ensuring adequate representation of their views in the community.

- The Rakai study reflects on why it has thus far proven difficult for community stakeholders to organise themselves. Efforts made in the past to create local platforms have not been sustained, in large part due to a 'looming feeling of competition' rather than of common interest among local community and NGO groups. This can in part be attributed to the questions of legitimacy, particularly of internationally supported NGO's accountable to external stakeholders rather than to other local stakeholders. There is also reference to undue 'politicking' among local actors, as well as to concerns about the legitimacy and credibility of individuals and organisations claiming to represent community interests. As suggested in Rakai and Mombasa, poor organisational capacities can make it difficult for non-governmental groups to maintain effective lines of communication and accountability with their constituencies.
- Elsewhere, there is also a view held within the community that it is the responsibility of local government to deliver development and that the community itself does not have a role to play. In the case of Rakai, this perception was fuelled by the initial enthusiasm built around prospects of decentralisation bringing development where the State had previously failed.

Success Factors - What Makes Joint Action Work?

Four key success factors are drawn from the case studies. Their relative importance will vary from situation to situation. They can be taken as necessary but not sufficient factors to initiate joint action, in large measure tackling the barriers noted above. They may serve as a useful 'checklist' in any preparatory design work.

An Enabling Environment

Several cases point to the importance of an 'enabling' policy and institutional environment to facilitate joint action. Supportive legislation, appropriate instruments, and evidence of political commitment at the national level have helped make joint action more than a residual activity.

Joint Action Barriers Identified by Workshop Participants

- Lack of awareness of roles and responsibilities;
- Absence of umbrella organisation to unify disperse interests of civil society;
- Mis-management and embezzlement can undermine the process;
- Pressures to work in a compartmentalised manner eg sectorally;
- Unsupportive legal and political framework;
- Activists are not necessarily representative within civil society;
- Lack of capacity to play role of advocacy and policy lobbying;
- Association of NGO's, in many minds, with the political opposition.

The legitimacy of the Planning Zone Forums in the Mamelodi case is strengthened by the wider supportive policy context on decentralisation and participatory development. This provides a basis to institutionalise joint action processes. The Same case points to the administrative and decentralisation reform programmes in Tanzania as creating a more supportive environment to engage in participatory processes. At the same time, the case study makes the point that Same remains something of an exception within Tanzania. The wider context is a necessary but not sufficient factor. Historically, the district has a strong tradition of self-help. It is also a comparatively prosperous region which may have helped the process. Likewise, in Rakai, the wider decentralisation policy framework provides opportunities for a more participatory approach to development which hitherto could not have been considered.

It may be going too far to say that an enabling environment is a pre-condition for success. The cases from Zimbabwe and Kenya suggest that local initiatives can record results even where the wider environment is less supportive.

Presence of Change Agent

An enabling environment cannot in itself make things happen. What is apparent from across all the cases is the key role played by a change or lead agent in fostering joint action initiatives. Change agents have taken different forms with consequences for the dynamics of joint action processes.

In a number of instances, the change agent has been an external development agency, Danida in the case of Rakai, SNV in Same, Leuven and UNCHS in Nakuru, and ICLEI in Mutare. In South Africa, by contrast, the change agent has been the State strongly in tune with and supported by most of the people.

Institutional change agents nevertheless require the support of key local individuals to make things happen on the ground, and it is clear that such policy champions have been critical to successes recorded. Alliances between the principal stakeholder groups are also important. One case demonstrates the impact of strong leadership in galvanising wider interest in the process. This has combined with the technical and policy guidance afforded by the external agency. But the lack of involvement of senior Council management in the process has limited the impact of the programme beyond the immediate project area.

Local political support therefore also needs to be nurtured. It is clear from Mombasa that the personal involvement of the Mayor was instrumental in making the beautification project work. However, this high profile involvement may have inadvertently discouraged more structured participation by non-state actors. With the other projects, there was no champion other than senior staff members involved with joint action experience elsewhere in Kenya and outside. PAMNUP is the culmination of the earlier processes.

From Rakai, it is reported that key committed individuals from Council and non-governmental organisations have achieved results ('islands of success') where others have remained sceptical and unconvinced.

But dependence on policy champions in the absence of wider ownership or 'mainstreaming' can undermine the sustainability of such processes. Several cases show that the turnover of supportive elected Councillors and technical staff can slow emerging processes. The risks are perhaps highest where processes have been catalysed by external agencies.

Clear Incentives - Pay-off'

Incentives are critical in drawing wider participation and commitment in joint action. Where change in routines is called for, and where risks and threats to

power and authority are likely, participants from all sides must be convinced of a pay-off. In other words, it needs to be worth their while in terms of practical outcomes and making their work easier and more satisfying. This element cannot be over-emphasised. It lies at the centre of the discussion on partnership, the success of which depends on the different participants finding a common interest and willingness to compromise for the greater good of them all.

The Mombasa case demonstrated that there was an opportunity for the business community to chip into the beautification process as they clearly saw themselves as net beneficiaries. For Council, it was the prospects of realising an ambition through local resource mobilisation. In Mamelodi, there are different incentives. At one level, there is common interest to rebuild trust in and among state and non-state institutions, as well as more concretely to win the support of local residents to pay their taxes. For the community, participation in the PZF offers the prospect not only to set local development priorities and access resources disproportionately spent so far on the more advantaged (white) communities, but to enable local entrepreneurs to bid for public works contracts.

In Rakai, the desperately under-resourced Council administration was anxious to find ways to fulfil its statutory responsibilities through partnership with local development actors. For NGO's, partnership provides prospects to influence Council decision making, to secure service delivery contracts, and to gain access to resources from the donor. In Same, the business community has learned that through structured dialogue with Councillors and officials, appropriate legislation and regulations for private sector development can be agreed. The Nakuru and Mutare cases demonstrate how a focus on local environmental challenges can result in significant local gains, both in terms of improved environmental conditions, as well as in income generating opportunities.

Adoption of a 'Capacity Development' Approach

A number of different strands are brought together here which concern the way in which joint action processes are supported. A capacity development approach which emphasises the importance of process facilitation to bring about change, working through local organisations, encouraging ownership through participation and providing a long-term perspective, is most suited. There is a

need to build confidence and get rid of prejudice through capacity building. As we have seen, joint action represents change, presents major capacity challenges and confronts many institutional bottlenecks. Facilitation of the change process is critical and is part of the role that the change agent needs to take on.

The time dimension involved in changing social and organisational behaviour and in setting out new rules of the game has to be acknowledged. Clear targets need to be set, new structures and procedures need to be created, training is required, but all these things need to be brought about in a consultative and iterative manner. The Mamelodi case makes this quite clear, as does Rakai where the donor made a long-term commitment to the district, seeing the first phase as an institutional and capacity development phase. Driven as far as possible from the bottom, but facilitated from outside, the cases demonstrate that many current successes are built on the mistakes of the past.

Participatory and consultative methodologies and techniques should be adopted. In particular, adequate up-front institutional analysis and diagnosis, done in a participatory manner is helpful. ICLEI among others has developed techniques for such work. The cases also point to the value of information exchange between stakeholder groups, and public information dissemination. This is traditionally a point of weakness and can often lead to accusations of non-consultation and under-hand techniques.

A balance has to be achieved between process dimensions and practical activities in order to maintain popular interest. Sustaining interest in long-term processes, and ensuring that participatory processes do not wither away, or lose their inclusiveness is an ongoing challenge. Early enthusiasm can turn to scepticism if relationships are not carefully nurtured. In this regard, joint monitoring by the different stakeholders can help sustain interest and accountability.

With respect to the role of external development agencies, the Rakai and Same cases provide lessons regarding their roles as facilitators of emerging processes. A process approach oriented towards building new institutional arrangements and supporting the emergence of new capacities, and local change agents is vital. The Rakai example stands out in this regard, in terms of the long-term perspective

adopted by the donor, as well as its commitment towards maximising the use of local institutions, processes and procedures.

At the same time, the risks of the donor remaining in the ‘driving seat’ even if inadvertently, are also noted. In this sense, there are concerns about the level of commitment displayed by some local stakeholders.

Other cases provide examples of donors supporting more narrowly defined interventions, supported by separate planning, management, accounting and reporting mechanisms. Questions can be raised as to the sustainability of such approaches, and in particular to the extent to which such initiatives can address wider challenges of capacity, attitude, mindset and ownership.

Success Factors Identified by Workshop Participants

- Commitment by all, going beyond lip service;
- Principles of consultation and dialogue need to be respected;
- Recognition of new roles and responsibilities;
- Capacity to compromise;
- Ensuring adequate information and accounting especially downward to constituencies;
- Knowledge of local dynamics in order to properly facilitate the process;
- Adequate explanation of what joint action is;
- Adequate dialogue to establish the rules of the game especially with the donors.



Voices from Mombasa - Leaders and people need to understand each other

Interview with Sam Chimbuya, ICLEI

Trained as a teacher and an ecologist, Chimbuya didn't like the way that ecologists emphasise natural resources more than people. If people are to benefit from natural resources, they must be taken into account. This is why he left his environmental work: To look for ways to improve the living conditions of the people.

As everybody knows, the people remain disadvantaged because the authorities, mainly local ones, do not listen nor take their wishes into consideration. His main job therefore is to bring citizens and local authorities together to improve mutual understanding.

Creating a productive dialogue

A large training job is needed: The authorities do not understand the citizens. They think that citizens are ignorant. So we try to show that skills and knowledge also exist among the poor. The entry point is to gather people from various sectors such as companies or local authorities to make them understand that they need to sit down for some training. The training deals with ways in which the rich perceive the poor, how the poor perceive the rich, how the poor are thinking, and methods that allow the poor to contribute to the debate, revealing their understanding of society. When you work in this way with the elite, they are able to appreciate what the poor have and who they are. The challenge is also that they accept that someone else leads the process.

Identifying local resources

After a community-based assessment, the professionals and the poor discuss together. We use a diagnosis, made by poor people. To succeed in this, it is important to come as a team including different actors, different abilities, and working on a large range of issues. When you work with a multi-disciplinary team, ready to take your time, you will be given a lot of information. For example, when we worked in a district on natural resources the people thought we wanted to build a dam and to develop a grazing programme. One week later, after they spoke about different topics, they wanted a technical school, not a dam.

In the training, we present our competencies and those of the people in a diagramme where: There is a place that we both know, there is an area that we both don't know, and there is a place where we are blind, another where they are blind. People are very shy, so our challenge is to open them up, to encourage their feedback, to promote what they know.

Context of joint action

A crucial aspect is that the partners have respect and consideration for each other. In Ginga in Uganda, for example, they have institutionalised decentralisation. An autonomous local authority creates a better environment for JA. A basic need to promote JA is to create a strong framework and political support for JA at the local authority level. In Zimbabwe, local authorities are not autonomous so we have not succeeded yet in establishing a strong political support for JA. Last but not least, the officials have to acquire skills to work with communities.

As this indicates, JA is more demanding from those who are in a position of power. It is true at the local level, where the authorities consider themselves as having the power. It is also true on a larger North-South scale where the North is the 'driver.' What is interesting in the Local Agenda 21 process is that governments have committed themselves to doing something. On its level, the local authority aims to be more transparent, more accountable, and to establish partnership with other actors. When all those agreements are finally signed, a favourable climate is set for further activities.

Conclusions

There is no alternative to joint action. Without JA there is no development. But to realise this you need different factors such as time and education for all the partners. The disadvantaged have to be aware of their strengths when working as a team. For those who are in power, survival will eventually depend on their abilities to deliver the goods and to open up. JA is also a time consuming process that donors rarely understand. In Nakuru and Ginga, it took more than three years to mobilise support for JA. Very few donors appreciate this need for time. While they are generally impatient, money does NOT seem to be an issue when it comes to get something done. It will succeed only if you have the political, the institutional and structural supports. Do the donors accept this?



Chapter 3

The Case Studies



The Case Studies

This chapter presents a set of seven local joint action case studies. Six of these were commissioned for the regional consultative workshop on joint action held in November 1999 in Mombasa. Case authors prepared the studies in close consultation with stakeholders from local government and civil society. The cases were then presented to the workshop by the authors and commented on by representatives of local government and civil society. The cases draw on experiences from Mombasa and Nakuru in Kenya, Mamelodi in South Africa, Rakai in Uganda, and Mutare in Zimbabwe.

The seventh case study was prepared by ENDA-Ecopop following the consultative workshop, and has used a similar methodology. It presents experiences from the town of Pikine in Senegal, and demonstrates clearly that the issues and challenges confronting joint action in Anglophone Africa are likewise pertinent in the Francophone African context.

The Cases:

- Same District, Tanzania.
- Nakuru, Kenya.
- Mutare, Zimbabwe.
- Mombasa, Kenya.
- Mamelodi, South Africa.
- Rakai District, Uganda.
- Pikine, Senegal.

Same Case Study

By Fred Lerise

Same is one of six districts in Tanzania's Kilimanjaro region. In the 1988 national census, the population was 170,053. In 1998, the District Education Department estimated it to be 220,000 people. Most people rely on rain-fed and irrigated agriculture. Some depend on livestock keeping. A very few obtain their livelihood from non-farming activities. Administratively, the district is organised into 24 wards made up of 72 villages. Each village is registered and is administered by an elected Council. An extensive road network constructed by villagers with support from civic associations, government and donors links the villages to the Dar Es Salaam - Arusha highway which dissects the District.

Same is one of the few districts in Tanzania that has adopted the 'joint action' approach for initiating, planning, executing and managing development projects. History, politics and economics are the main factors that affect the nature of joint action in Same District.

For example, Same District is famous for its tradition of self-help practices. The Pare people, who are the majority in the District, have a long history of communal efforts. They are famous for their construction of an irrigation infrastructure and roads in the difficult and mountainous terrain. That tradition provides a good environment in which joint action may be practised.

Other influences on joint action activities have been:

- the failure of the centralised government system. However, there is now a determined decentralisation programme which creates a conducive environment for joint action at local level;
- conflicts among different stakeholders e.g. business and the Council. However, there is also sufficient trust for them to engage in dialogue;
- poor access to community services such as education;
- availability of support from external institutions.

Origins

The local government reform process in Tanzania provides the institutional context within which joint action is practised. Like other local authorities, Same has experienced difficult periods. For example, two years after independence in 1963, native authorities including local chiefs were stripped of their powers. The District had relied on local chiefs to mobilise local manpower and resources in its community development projects. Consequence of this withdrawal was that communal input to development declined. This was further compounded after nine years when another change of government policy aimed to bring central government institutions closer to the local level. Local Councils were abolished and replaced by central government appointees. This meant that local level development planning and implementation in the region and district excluded other actors in the development process. In addition, development assistance from the donor community was channelled through the central government and its institutions. All this resulted in the public sector in Tanzania increasing in size, challenging the government capacity to manage and to finance development. Finally the government failed to make positive impacts on national or local development.

In 1982, crisis at local level resulted in the re-introduction of elected Councils. That structure has since remained in place. It is currently being reformed through central government as well as through local initiatives such as the joint action initiatives in Same, to suit the new policy of administrative decentralisation, trade liberalisation, and political pluralism. An important aspect of the local government reform programme with respect to joint action is the objective to create a system where powers, functions and revenue are decentralised to all levels of local government. International donor assistance has also been decentralised. It is no longer a monopoly of the central State. The wish to devolve powers to all levels of local government provides fertile ground for participatory democracy and decision making, which are important factors for sustaining joint action practice.

How is Joint Action Understood?

Joint action according to the philosophy of the Same District Planning Support Programme (SDPS) is defined as cooperation between different institutions in order to implement local level development activities based on principles of open dialogue, equal partnership and shared accountability. Three aspects are considered relevant in operationalising the joint action concept:

- Same District Council, NGO's, CBO's as well as the private sector jointly coordinate and implement specific development interventions;
- Recognition of the specific roles and capacities of the different actors as well as the need for their commitment to participate fully in local development activities;
- Capacity building to enable the individual actors to cooperate and coordinate effectively with each other.

Being a fairly new way of institutional integration, joint action requires different levels of capacity for each sector to be able to share responsibilities.

Added Value

Members of the District Advisory Group believe that strong civil society organisations provide effective partners with whom the government can cooperate and that this requires dialogue across the sectors. In that way the government is also strengthened. The Water Users Group and business associations also see it as a means to gain recognition. The Council sees joint action as a means to coordinate what is happening in the District.

Joint action ensures that available resources, including natural resources, labour, financial contributions from members, technical skills, and existing networks are fully utilised. The added value of joint action may encourage and sustain formation of more civil society groups which will not only improve development planning and implementation but make the whole process more democratic.

Past and Current Activities

Arrangements/planning Processes

The Same District Planning Support programme (SDPS), set up by SNV in collaboration with other decision makers in the District has made joint action practice a reality. The starting point to operationalise the concept was the creation of a District Advisory Committee (DAC)⁸ to facilitate cooperation and coordination between district level actors. The DAC provides a forum for cooperation between the District Commissioner's Office, (DC) the District Council, NGO's, donor-supported projects, CBO's and other actors. Through interactive and participatory planning at ward level, grassroots priorities are incorporated into the ward development planning process and later into the District plans and priorities and budgets. The SDPS and the DC's office argue that if the District is to become a focus of development, the regional consultation process has to include the District level. At present there is no link with the Regional Consultative Committee.

As a result of its composition and working approach, the DAC provides a forum for dialogue enabling various civil society actors to voice their views, interests and concerns. The DAC is also a tool for building and strengthening the existing government and civil society institutions in the District. The driving philosophy within the DAC is effective utilisation of scarce resources.

The Ward Development Plan - Mpango Kata

As well as assisting the District Council and civil society groups to gain access to funds and to manage development projects, the DAC has facilitated the creation of a suitable environment for joint action at ward level. This was done through a ward level planning approach, locally known as 'mpango kata.' This level of

⁸ The DAC currently includes the District Commissioner as the chairman, District Administrative Secretary as Secretary, District Executive Director, Council Chairman, two members of parliament, Chairman, Coordinator and Secretary general for SANGO (Same Associations of NGO's), Chairman, Coordinator and Secretary general for the Same Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, and advisors including District Planning Officer, SDPS coordinator, and SDPS counterpart coordinator.

planning prioritises ward development projects, indicating the availability of resources and taking into account local and external contributors. The plan indicates roles to be played by villagers, village Councils, CBO's and NGO's within the ward as well as the Ward Development Committee (WDC) itself and specific departments in the Council. This approach provides opportunities for all the actors to cooperate on agreed issues, participate in problem solving and in the execution of development projects.

The 'mpango kata' approach has been especially significant for enabling a maximum use of locally available resources as well as providing institutional capacity building. It has resulted in:

- Participation by ward residents by listing the projects they wish to implement but also by making contributions towards efficient utilisation of local resources;
- Strategic intervention for poverty alleviation at ward and village level.

An example of this approach is the extension of primary schools in Gwang'a village in Chome ward (see box).

The Gwang'a Primary School

The process of constructing two classrooms in Gwang'a primary school is an example of the joint action approach which has involved SANGO. Similar activities take place in three other primary schools under the joint action approach but the Gwang'a case is particularly interesting because the community and the DAC consider it a success. It is also a case where the role of Ward Development Planning under the 'mpango kata' approach is clearly seen.

The process through which the extension and improvements of Gwang'a primary school was prioritised was done within the Chome ward development plan by the Ward Development Committee (WDC). Before that, each of the three villages that make up the ward formulated their development plans and presented them to the WDC. The village level priorities were discussed and revised taking into account ward-level development issues. Gwang'a village Council succeeded through the 'mpango kata' approach in convincing the Committee and then the District Council and SDPS to place the extension of Gwang'a primary school at the top of the list of priorities.

One of the objectives of the SDPS programme is to facilitate the capacity building of local CBO's by encouraging learning by doing. It was thus decided to commission the management of funds and the execution of the project to a newly created - CHOTFU. It now plays a very important role in managing the funds, the construction activities, and is thus sustaining joint action at local level.

Project execution is managed by Gwang'a Primary School Committee with support from CHOTFU. At the District level, the SDPS in collaboration with the Council, SANGO and Same Development Association (SADEA), oversees the project through the DAC. In addition, the District Council provides transport as and when requested. CHOTFU members are happy that the Council has been very cooperative in making a lorry available whenever they ask for it. According to the CHOTFU vice chairman: "These days, the Council has changed. It is not like the old days when you will be told to come tomorrow. These days we get the lorry without wasting time. We can rely on the Council's support."

The day to day management of the project is carried out by Gwang'a Primary School Head Teacher and CHOTFU Secretary General. According to the latter, the management task is interesting but also challenging. Meetings are held according to need or on a regular fortnightly basis. In other words, the management is flexible.

Apart from managing the funds and the construction site, CHOTFU supports the village Council by mobilising villagers and parents to play their roles. Villagers contribute as agreed during village assembly meetings, that is every man and woman of between 18 to 70 years old, is expected to contribute TShs. 2,000 and labour for brick making, excavations and haulage of building materials. CHOTFU was also central to mobilising financial and material contributions from its members all over the country . Through their networking, they received corrugated iron sheets, cement and money to buy timber. According to the CHOTFU vice chairman, without the contributions from outside, they could not have reached the current stage of construction.

The WDC and other institutions in the village also had a role to play in executing the project. For instance the Ward Executive Officer provided administrative support, particularly for enforcing the law where necessary. The village Council and especially the vitongoji (cluster) leaders ensured that individual villagers made their financial and labour contributions. Village assembly and cluster meetings are used to inform villagers about their responsibilities and to discuss how to put them into effect.

Supporting Civil Society Associations to Facilitate Joint Action

SDPS support has enabled the formation of two umbrella organisations to coordinate and assist the setting up and running of civil society associations in the district. They are the Same Chamber of Commerce (SCOC) and the Same Association of NGO's (SANGO).

The SCOC was registered in November 1997 with only 70 members. Its membership has increased to 177 individuals, drawn from different groups of business entrepreneurs, ranging from large wholesale shop owners to food vendors. This association has worked on improving relationships between the District Council and the business community, and it has succeeded in replacing the earlier tense situation with a relationship of dialogue that benefits both the Council and business.

SANGO was initiated through the DAC, as a result of its members' concern about the increasing number of CBO's and NGO's being created and working in the district without proper coordination, proper addresses or even proper working approaches. SANGO was formed as an umbrella organisation made up of leaders elected from 24 civil society associations. It is not yet registered and members are working on a constitution that can facilitate cooperation, coordination and capacity building within the groups. SDPS supports SANGO by funding some of their activities as well as contributing to the running of their office. The District Council has seconded one of their experienced community development officers to work as a coordinator for SANGO and they pay the officer's salary.

Another umbrella association is in the formation stage. The Traditional Irrigation Programme has created a large number of water user groups (WUG's). The farmers from the sixteen WUG's in Chome catchment area were concerned about the capacity and powers of individual groups to manage water within the catchment area. They also wanted to secure credits and markets for their products, and were convinced that with a larger association they would have more negotiation powers. However their first step has been to strengthen the individual WUG's before they form an umbrella association for all of them. Unlike SCOC, and SANGO, the water users believe that strong sustainable individual groups will provide a sound foundation for the larger association.

The SCOC Achievements

Efforts made by a few members of the Same business community and supported by SDPS were important in initiating the process which led to the formation and rather fast registration of the association. According to the current chairman of the SCOC, the reason for creating the association was that employees are able to rely on their workers' associations in case of problems with the employers. But, if employers had a problem with the District authorities there was no obvious place to go for help. The idea of starting an organisation to link the local authority with the business community arose from this need.

Some members also felt that the setting up of SCOC was timely as they claimed to have been continually harassed by the District Council in various ways related to issuing licenses, tax and levy charges. For example the Council could order them to close their shops because of a political rally, or expect them to raise money to finance celebrations. The Council fixed the amount without any consultation or discussion, and all business owners had to pay. So the business community appreciates the new empowerment to fight for their rights and those of the community. One of the activities of the association has been to access the DAC and secondly, it has been able to advise and organise training for different groups, particularly to obtain loans.

With such strong motivation for the groups to organise themselves, it was easy for the SDPS to join in and provide a facilitating environment and enlist the association in joint action activities. In addition to giving advice on how to organise meetings and formalise the association, the SDPS provided funds for workshops and meetings. In its September 1999 report to the DC, the SCOC chairman outlined the support received from the SDPS as follows:

- assistance in getting the association registered;
- assistance in awareness creation among business owners in 24 wards in the district;
- providing an allowance to the SCOC coordinator from January to June 1999 and support for some office expenses;
- financing a seminar for SCOC members before the licence application period;
- financial support of TShs 2,050,000.00 to strengthen the association.

Once the association was up and running, other operators such as the market stall holders, bus stand ticket agents and guesthouse owners also organised themselves, elected leaders, and linked up with the district level leadership, through whom they access the DAC.

Despite some structural issues within the organisation of the association, SCOC has managed to ease the tension that existed between the Council and the business community. This achievement has created an environment conducive to joint action practices (see boxes).

Guesthouses and the District Council

A dialogue between the Council and the business community was triggered off by a Council directive to introduce levy TShs 50.00 per bed per night in hotels or guesthouses, even when the bed was not in use. The hotel and guesthouse owners failed to pay. Without customers they could not raise the required money. The amount of levy accumulated substantially as the Council was counting days and multiplying them by the number of beds in each hotel. The Council decided to pressurise the business owners to pay by combining the issuing of business licences with the payment of levies. Since the hotel and guesthouse owners could not pay the levy they were also denied licences. On their part, the business community did not sit back and wait for the Council to sue them and close down their businesses. Instead they organised themselves, selected a committee and presented their case to the Council. The SCOC district level leadership joined the negotiations to support their members. Eventually the Council relaxed its position and agreed to charge a levy only on those beds that had been sold to customers.

Although the outcome of the struggle was favourable to the business community, the Council also benefited because it was sure to receive an agreed level of levy. Collection has also become easier as some entrepreneurs are even willing to bring the levy money to the Council's Revenue Office. At the same time, the saga helped create a forum in which the business community continues to negotiate with the Council on ways to improve the business environment and revenue collection. Using this forum, guesthouse owners have initiated a process in which they are requesting the Council to lower the bed levy from TShs. 50 to 20 so they can meet other costs of running their business and maintain their properties. But as they prosper, more fees will accumulate for the Council.

Same Market

In 1998, the District Council decided to privatise the management of the food market in Same town. To implement the decision, the Council awarded a management contract to leaders of the market vendors group on the assumption that they would take account of their members' interests. In fact, the leaders ignored the members and took over the management task as their private operation. They decided to increase the stall charges paid by vendors. This was not acceptable, neither were the vendors happy with the way their leaders betrayed them, signing a contract with the Council without consulting them. They demonstrated their dissatisfaction by closing business at the market for a day. This had an impact as there is no alternative food market in Same town.

The leaders with the management contract reported the conflict. The Council called a meeting of the two groups where the increased stall charges were cancelled. After that, business resumed. The perceived outcome was a better relationship between the market vendors and the Council in which both groups ensure that the market is well managed. It also provided lessons for leaders who are not accountable to their members and use their positions to pursue individual or private interests. Although the conflict was resolved, a market group separate from those currently running it, is now preparing to apply for a contract to manage the market once the current agreement expires. The new group is also writing up a constitution to ensure that their leaders are accountable to the members. This unplanned joint action by a number of actors has been part of a process that has resulted in stronger capacities and confidence of ordinary market vendors.

Performance Measurement

In the case of SANGO and the CHOTFU project, progress reports are produced partly through DAC visits and reports. This monitoring approach is flexible and successful and construction is proceeding quickly. Recently, the DAC selected a team of six people to inspect the construction activities. Their report shows that the team was satisfied and they advised the SDPS to make the second payment to CHOTFU. In total the SDPS contributed TShs. 1,000,000 in two instalments. An additional of TShs. 250,000 was made available to the school to purchase teaching materials. The different activities are financed through bank accounts. Financial accountability is to the institution that provided the funds.

Project monitoring through site visits by DAC and SDPS also made a difference as the monitoring team was exposed to the actual field situation and become aware of the real problems in project implementation. However, limited resources might stop such visits. It is expensive to transport a team of experts from Same town to the wards if that expenditure is not included in the cost of project execution. Possibilities for ward-level project implementation monitoring teams could be considered in order to reduce the cost and the transport limitations.

Although trust among individual members of groups is developing slowly, it is still seen as desirable in the CHOTFU project to create a committee to monitor funds and their mobilisation as well as to control expenditure. Expenditure reports are also important to foster trust among contributors. A good performance in the project execution is also likely to boost the morale of all the actors, reassuring them that their resources are being properly utilised and encouraging them to contribute more.

Lessons Learned

Main Barriers

Although joint action in the District has met with some real success, there are still some barriers to overcome:

- Despite a strong institutional structure at ward, village and grassroots level, participation at District level is in fact supposed to be realised through DAC. But the composition of the DAC does not encourage direct contribution from Ward Level representatives.
- There is still a problem arising from the low level of skills and knowledge among some of the actors about writing up proposals. This can limit their involvement in the project identification and planning stage.
- There is a concern about the lack of financial reporting from leaders to the grassroots, especially in the case of SCOC. Lack of trust among the joint action partners is a barrier to some groups and is likely to continue acting as a barrier if not dealt with directly and deliberately.

- Management responsibilities have largely been transferred from the Council or donors and are shared among different actors. That sharing is between DAC members, WDC's in case of 'mpango kata', and the school committee in the case of primary school related projects. However the sharing of responsibilities is not yet fully institutionalised and practised.
- The political part of the Council is not active enough in the activities of the DAC. If possible more Councillors should be elected onto the DAC.
- The relationship between leaders and those they represent is improving but only slowly. Accountability to the grassroots is generally rather nascent. Time is needed for the relationships to mature and strengthen and become more effective.
- The vastness of the District and the distance from the wards to Same town is a barrier. In some cases there is public transport but it offers only one trip per day. This limits the effective functioning of the network created by 'mpango kata' between the Council and the wards.

Successes and Added Value

The most notable achievement in Same District has been the dialogue between government and community in the District. It is regular practice for the Councillors, DC's Office, Council staff and civil society groups to have frequent meetings to discuss development issues. Below the district level, the WDCs and village Councils have been strengthened under the joint action approach - a rare happening in the country.

Because of the good relationships, the Council has improved its performance in effecting and managing development. For instance, tax collection has improved. In most cases the Council has sub-contracted some of the business groups to collect tax on its behalf, such as levies from the market, bus stand and from business enterprises in the wards. The amounts raised are reliable and the Council can make a more realistic budget and contribute to development projects in the District. Specifically, road conditions and accessibility have substantially improved as the capacity of the Council to support villagers in road improvements has increased. The Council is now also able to maintain the trucks that are used to provide transport in various joint action activities in the wards.

In general, unlike most District Councils in Tanzania which use a lot of resources including force, to collect a relatively small amount of revenue, Same District Council has improved its capacity to perform both its supportive and execution functions and is thus slowly gaining credibility.

The partnership between the Council and the Traditional Irrigation Improvement Project has led to an increase in agricultural production. This means that many of the farmers are now less concerned about production and are addressing the issue of marketing agricultural produce. Their capacity to negotiate better prices at distant markets such as Kariakoo in Dar Es Salaam is a direct result of their improved production.

Probably more significant achievements can be seen in the education sector, where the Council has provided teaching materials, upgraded teaching programmes, and extended the capacity of primary schools in the districts. Teaching and learning have become more efficient. As a result of the success of this programme, the DAC has commissioned Same Development Association (SADEA) to coordinate the formulation of a district education policy.

Same is one of the first districts to benefit from District Based Support to Primary Education Programme (DBSE). The Ministry of Education, through the DBSE has supported the District Council in the establishment of three teacher's resource centres. Already construction of the main centre in Same town has started. Besides these activities, the SDPS and the Council support local initiatives for constructing additional classrooms in congested schools.

The SDPS together with the District Council has provided a considerable amount of teaching material including textbooks, exercise books, rulers, pencils, and models to various primary schools in the district. The District Education Officer is convinced that, in the long run, all the schools will receive such support.

Preconditions for success

The experiences of joint action in Same suggest that certain steps have to be taken to ensure it can be initiated, carried out and sustained. The following lessons were learned:

- Joint setting of priorities was an important step. Here, actors made contributions and thus were motivated to continue with the action. The 'mpango kata' approach made it possible to link the process of setting priorities right from the grassroots level to the District Council.
- The fact that one of the ward Councillors was both member of the District Council and chairman of the WDC made an important link between the village and the Council.
- Clarification of roles at the beginning of the project facilitated smooth implementation.
- The capacity of the actors must be sufficient for them to contribute according to their assigned roles.
- Once the roles are decided it is important that the relevant actors play them according to the agreed schedule.
- Accountability so that decision making is brought closer to the grassroots was an important issue at community level. The community through village assembly meetings has to be much closer to decisions. At least if they are informed and are allowed to approve decisions made by their representatives before they are required to contribute, there will be more cooperation. However, the joint action approach so far has not been able to demolish bottom-up accounting in project management in the District. Although leaders in the different groups talk about joint action and participation of stakeholders, they still tend to be accountable to the top more than to the grassroots.
- Frequent meetings among the project execution committees and a high level of commitment from leaders was important for successful project implementation. This was noted particularly in the primary school extension project in Chome.

Role of Donors and Intermediaries

Donors (mainly SNV) provide funds either in the form of contributions or advice about possible sources of funds. They help to identify and make available manpower. They also bring ideas and exposure to good practice from elsewhere. Finally, they provide administrative support such as registration and facilitating recognition by others, working out agreed procedures of work and reporting and giving guidance on the constitution for associations.

A notable threat is donor dependence. Although the objective of the 'mpango kata' and the joint action approach is to reduce dependence on external funding, the realisation of that situation is rather slow especially for the urban-based associations. To a larger extent SANGO and SCOC both depend on funds provided by the SDPS for their day to day activities but this is less the case for the WUG's and for the village based CBO's.

The Gwang'a primary school project demonstrates a declining role of donors and government in financing development projects. The SDPS support was neither the only financial support nor the main one. The capacity demonstrated by CHOTFU in mobilising support from its network and in managing the resources provided suggests that local communities are slowly acquiring capacity to carry out projects without necessarily depending on external donors.

Conclusions

Joint action has brought tangible improvements to Same including a new dialogue between actors and among institutions. With that has been created social trust for pastoralists, NGO's and the education department. They have also experienced better access to services. Business, the DC and relevant Council departments are happier about their business arrangements and the revenue collection situation. This means that the Council's capacity has improved. Joint problem identification, planning, implementation and monitoring at local community level has empowered the grassroots and restored their hope.

The main requirements to build on what has already been achieved are:

- More incorporation of relevant local level decision makers at the District level;
- Elected Councillors need to be more active in the joint action activities and in the DAC;
- Capacity development is needed for individual organisations to organise and secure funds.

Capacity development within different institutions is proceeding at a slow pace. Organisations have been formed but they seem to lack a full orientation to decentralised cooperation and joint action. Intermediary groups, for example the WUG's, the market vendors etc., which voice the needs and interest of the grassroots members, are not yet fully accepted and strengthened. While the WUG's would like to enable their individual members to be strong, the SCOC do not wish to have their groups even registered. Thus a diversity of approaches is developing.

The meaning of joint action is yet to be properly understood by the actors in Same. Although many workshops and seminars have been held, and most of the actors talk about joint action, some Council staff and leaders of civil society understand the concept differently. Some do not differentiate it from traditional self help practices such as 'msaragambo', used to organise labour for community work, 'lukunga' to mobilise security in case of a danger, and 'beria mbaha' used to mobilise assistance among clan women in case of big celebrations. Examples of good practice and of the benefits of joint action are required to convince actors how it can make working practices and results more effective. Finally there needs to be commitment, trust, time to grow, and publicity about other successful cases.



Nakuru Case Study

By Matthew Kibe

Nakuru is situated 160 km from Nairobi and was built as a railway outpost in 1904. It is located along the east-west transport route across the country, linking the Kenyan coast with the Lake Victoria region and Uganda. Lake Nakuru is famous for its rich variety of birds, particularly the flamingos. The lake is also a tourist attraction with great economic value for the country.

At present the town is the fourth largest in Kenya and the headquarters of the Rift Valley Province. The population is about 360,000 with a high growth rate of 7% in an area of 290 square kilometres. Its attractive climate and central location are important factors that have influenced the town's fast growth. Its economic base comprises of agro-industries, tourism, administration and it is an agricultural service centre. Issues of governance and development have to be seen within the overall context of local government system in Kenya and the general level of economic growth. These factors include a low level of skilled manpower, inadequate finances and operations, and general lack of accountability and transparency, which in turn has resulted in mismanagement of resources. Administrative costs including staff salaries and wages amount to over 70% of the recurrent expenditure of most local authorities, leaving very little money for operations and projects.

Origins

These factors coupled with the fragile ecological setting of the city of Nakuru induce severe constraints and calls to limit the growth of the city. Conversely, the population growth and the economic potential calls for enhanced urban development. The resultant complexity requires firm commitments and joint ventures towards achieving sustainable development. Towards this goal, with the support of the UNCHS (Habitat) and the Belgian Administration Development Cooperation, the process of addressing these urban challenges began with the implementation of Nakuru LA21.

Earlier initiatives started the links with Belgium. After the UNCED Conference in 1992, Leuven in Belgium wanted to respond to the Local Agenda 21 idea by working on it themselves locally but also by supporting Local Agenda 21 (LA21) activities in an African country.

Initially there was uncertainty about how to go about the process. After meetings in 1995, it was resolved that an exhibition be held in Leuven in which Nakuru would offer as much information on itself as possible, thus triggering the need and desire for cooperation. The same was held in Nakuru and as a result the people of Nakuru gained better understanding about the Leuven situation. The two events became the groundwork on which a linkage took root. In 1996 the Post Graduate Centre for Human Settlement requested that the city Council of Leuven also be a partner in the project.

How is Joint Action Understood?

Joint action is understood to mean that all stakeholders play their role effectively. The commitments of all stakeholders are synthesised into an 'urban pact' that specifies the development which they consider desirable for Nakuru, inter-related action plans, and the decision making structure.

The rationale for the content of the urban pact was that the Council and other government departments have technical expertise that can be utilised in community development which is lacking in the community based groups. On the other hand, it is recognised that community groups possess knowledge about local issues and work with the mandate of their members. Also NGO's have resources and specialised expertise in such areas as advocacy and lobbying.

By pooling all these resources it is expected that there will be successful implementation of the project activities.

The plan of action aims:

- To support the implementation of broad-based participatory action plans for environmental improvements. These were to focus on specific aspects of municipal planning and management, including ongoing settlement improvements.
- To reduce the burden of poverty of low-income communities and groups.

Past and Current Activities

Consultation/Arrangements/Decision Making/Planning Processes

In 1995-1996 two major consultative meetings and informal interactions took place. The objective was to bring together a cross-section of stakeholders and together to go through a process of brainstorming on the way forward and to set up a plan. The participants were Councillors, Council officers from the District and provincial administrations, research and training institutions, parastatals, NGO's, CBO's and private sector representatives. The meetings were important for the consensus-building process which took place, resulting in a commonly agreed action programme.

Participants stressed the need for environmentally appropriate development which would make Nakuru into a 'Peoples Green City.' They also mapped out the broad directions that the LA21 programme would take. There were a number of technical work sessions which did the 'fine tuning', identifying the following priority areas of intervention: Training for Council technical officers in management, preparation of a Strategic Structure Plan, administration of the bus park and market area, revitalisation of Council housing, inter-relating the park and the town, environmental upgrading in Nakuru west, solid waste transfer chambers in low-income estates, establishment of tree nurseries, protection of community based water boreholes, rationalisation of revenues and pricing of services, training of local leadership, creation of zonal development committee, setting up a municipal resource centre, dissemination of information and experiences to other local authorities, and building the partnership with the municipality of Leuven in Belgium.

The western side of Nakuru has glaring environmental problems resulting from volcanic faulting that causes deep gullies. Sand harvesting carried out by the residents as an economic activity also results in adverse environmental impacts. These problems prompted the community to enrol the support of the Council to design an environmental workshop to address the problems and come up with proposals to deal with them.

The decisions for the LA21 project are made at different levels:

1. The management team comprises heads of the municipality technical departments. They put in place project management procedures, information and communications flow, public awareness activities and integrate other activities within the initiatives.
2. The core team is made up of medium level officers of the Council. This team is responsible for project planning, implementation of day-to-day project activities, monitoring the projects' progress and preparations of monthly reports. It has links with grassroots communities.
3. The planning team is made up of 2 municipal Council officers, government departments (e.g. the physical planning department), the LA21 coordinator and an associate expert. The team is responsible for the preparation, in consultation with other partners, of the 'Strategic Structure Plan'.
4. The local advisory committee comprises representatives from the above 3 teams; the Ministry of Local Government, UNCHS (Habitat), private sector representatives, NGO's and community based groups. It provides policy advice about the project, evaluates progress, and where necessary proposes alternative approaches.

The work plan is derived from the action programme agreed in the 1995 consultative workshop. The management committee discusses all joint action projects and reaches a consensus on the work plan and the budget. Financial disbursements are received from UNCHS (Habitat) for project activities.

Review meetings have been held every 6 months with the advisory committee of the programme. These meetings bring together CBO's, NGO's, Council officials, UNCHS (Habitat) and other partners. Information on the finances and status of activities is given and discussed.

Financial Arrangements

The programme gets core funding from the Belgian Government and technical support from UNCHS (Habitat), the Government of Kenya and a consortium of Belgian Universities, NGO's, and the private sector.

Partnership Activities

Waste Management is one of the most-neglected local services. However unmanaged waste can become a source of contamination and disease, so its disposal has to be arranged. Part of the Nakuru joint action plan has been to encourage cooperation between the community and the Council. Six neighbourhoods went through community sensitisation seminars after which voluntary environmental committees are formed. These groups are now in charge of cleaning the neighbourhoods at set times and of depositing the waste in strategically located refuse transfer chambers. The Council vehicles collect and dispose of the same.

Sanitation is a major concern in the low income housing neighbourhoods, especially those constructed in the 1950's. There has been little maintenance of the sewerage systems over the years despite the increased usage due to population increase. The result has been frequent blockages, evidenced by the streams of raw sewage emanating from houses, non functioning communal bathrooms (partly due to vandalism of fittings), and tampering with the sewer lines sending water into the kitchen gardens. In the Council owned housing estate of Lumumba, a voluntary neighbourhood group has been formed to keep watch over the communal facilities for the benefit of all members. The group also reports any blockages to the Council and guards against artificial blockages by other members of the community.

Water is a basic need. However, providing a clean and adequate water supply is a major problem for many residents especially in peri-urban areas of Nakuru that are not reached by the main town supply lines. Communities have come up with ways to address this problem mainly by drilling water boreholes to supply water for their needs. However these are shared between families and their livestock

and this raises the possibility of contamination. Indeed outbreaks of cholera are not uncommon. The LA21 project has helped rehabilitate three boreholes and has provided cattle troughs for livestock. The Council has also joined with manufacturers to rehabilitate its boreholes in order to boost the quantity of water into the town.

Application of the Revised Building Bylaws. In 1995, the government revised the Grade II building bylaws especially the performance standards. In Nakuru, the Council adopted the bylaws in 1996 and certain areas were scheduled for their application. Such areas include Kiratina Lanet hill, Kaptembwa, Mwariki and Menengai. Through a partnership with Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), representatives of selected community groups have been involved in awareness building about certain provisions of the bylaws. Locally based technicians in the construction industry have been trained to do the designs and construction using appropriate materials. So far, three houses have been constructed to the new specifications.

Environmental degradation in Kaptembwa/Ronda neighbourhoods. These are the two most densely populated low income neighbourhoods in the south western part of Nakuru bordering the National Park. The neighbourhoods are poorly serviced and there is a geological fault line running through the area that causes soil subsidence in the rainy season resulting in the formation of deep gullies. The unsustainable sand quarrying activities in the area aggravates the situation. With the assistance of the Green Towns Project of the Ministry of Local Government, LA21 and the Council, a participative environmental planning workshop was organised and resulted in a plan of action for the area. This plan of action included a commitment package between the partners (CBO's, Council, Ministry of Local Government) spelling out the role of each.

Strategic structure plan. This is a tool to improve planning and management practices, especially in urban planning in Nakuru and its environs. It is the blue print for sustainable urban development for the town and is probably one of the most important achievements of the LA21 programme. It was put together through a multi-sectoral process that involved diverse stakeholders including the municipal Council of Nakuru, training institutions like the University of Nairobi's Department of Urban and Regional Planning, the Department of Architecture,

Housing and Building Research Institute, the Post Graduate Centre for Human Settlements (Leuven) and the government departments of Physical Planning and Urban Development as well as local NGO's and CBO's.

The Nakuru strategic structure plan will be the first to be approved by the Minister of Lands and Settlements under the new Physical Planning Act, 1996. An important aspect of the plan is the commitment package where after discussions and consultations, each partner will be expected to carry out certain activities and fulfil various expectations up to the year 2020.

Performance Measurement

Currently the beneficiaries have been monitoring the progress of the project through review meetings and workshops. A comprehensive evaluation will be done later. The following indicators have been used to assess impacts:

- cleaner neighbourhoods;
- availability of clean water and reduced distances to the water points;
- completion of the strategic structure plan;
- setting up the planning unit.

Lessons Learned

Successes and Added Value

While it is much too early to present a complete assessment of the impact of the Nakuru partnerships with communities and other partners, the following lessons have provided insights for a positive way forward.

- The improvement of the community managed water draw-off points from boreholes in peri-urban areas in Nakuru has had direct benefits for the whole community. They now have access to cleaner and safer drinking water. It is, however, difficult to measure the impact of these improvements on community health.

- The organisation of seminars to sensitise community leaders in Nakuru resulted in the creation of a number of environmental action groups. These further led to joint environmental action between CBO's and the municipality. This has impacted on the living conditions of the residents of the neighbourhoods that were sensitised during the seminar. Subsequent initiatives have been diversified to include income-generating activities for housing and small scale enterprises.
- The collaboration between the municipality of Nakuru and the universities and national government officials in the strategic structure planning has contributed to the collection of information and testing of ideas. It is also exposing future planners to an innovative planning methodology, and has given the Council a tool to guide urban design and development.
- A training manual for Councillors and guardians of the environment has been developed and is an example of an output which has can have a direct impact on other municipal Councils. It can also have a potential impact on Councillors world-wide when translated and adapted to local contextual conditions of other countries and municipal government systems.
- The exhibition on "Nakuru, an African town" and a range of related activities evolving from the partnership between the municipalities of Nakuru and Leuven have helped to sensitise civil society in Leuven about urban development challenges in the North and the South. These activities also paint a more balanced picture about life in Sub-Saharan Africa than is usually portrayed by most European media. The impact of these activities on public opinion is significant although measuring it is difficult.
- The collaboration of the Council, ITDG, and land owners gave rise to the implementation of the revised building bylaws and construction of houses using appropriate materials.

Main Barriers

- Institutional weaknesses mean that the recent change of Council members through elections led to changes of policies and a slow down of activities. During the last national and local government elections, the Council experienced a complete overhaul with only 4 out of 19 elected officials having served on former (or other) Councils. The new Councillors had no knowledge of procedures, or

operations or functions of Council. However this problem was solved by mounting induction courses for Councillors

- The Ministry of Local Government is in charge of recruiting and transferring technical officers. During the project period key, personnel have been haphazardly transferred to other local authorities, adversely affecting the smooth follow up of activities
- General laxity on the part of Council personnel slows down the implementation of activities. Delayed salaries, inadequate transport and lethargy are some of the factors that affect the project work and spill over to the community initiatives
- The low financial capacity of CBO's together with the very low skills of women, and the general poverty of the majority of the residents makes the process of participation difficult. Involvement of community groups takes time, energy and resources but it is still worth the effort and perseverance which is required.
- Misunderstanding among different community groups, and manipulation by community leaders sometimes results in frustrations and mistrust, and slows down the progress.
- The process of stakeholder participation is long and time consuming, making the coordination of a multiplicity of partners quite complex.

Role of Donors and Intermediaries and National Government

The main funding comes from the Belgian Administration Development Co-operation with technical inputs from UNCHS (Habitat).

During the preparation of Strategic Structure Plan, the Council received technical inputs from the national government through the Ministry of Lands and Settlement.

This partnership between Nakuru and Leuven has enabled the exchange of information between Councillors and the community at both ends. Leuven has encouraged Nakuru Council to enable civil society involvement in the LA21 activities. The Leuven children, working together with Nakuru children on greening projects, have contributed to their understanding of sustainability issues. It is indeed out of this friendship that Leuven students decided to help build a school for their poor counterparts in Nakuru.

Other partnerships and contacts have been made between the project and NGO's such as ITDG (low cost housing), National Housing Co-operatives Union (housing loans), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (solid waste management).

Conclusions

This section highlights some of the underlying factors for the success and failures of the Nakuru LA21 initiative and the way forward. They are external stimulus, training, collaboration, community empowerment, sustainability and coordination.

For the last 5 years, Nakuru has had interventions from a number of partners as well as the LA21 programme to pull it together. This has started to make some impact on the lives of the Nakuru people. Capacity building work has been done at 3 levels:

- elected Councillors having training on leadership roles and environment;
- technical officers having training on planning, environmental management, and how to work with and be involved in community based initiatives;
- community based groups having training on environmental management, sanitation and needs assessment.

Particularly important for the Council is that the joint action programme provided opportunities for various departments to work together. In this way they began to appreciate one another's roles and how they each fitted into the overall plans of the Council.

LA21 has shown Nakuru people that development means more than physical infrastructure. Many now realise that it can also include the ability of the community to mobilise its own resources to address the problems that affect them. The community has also learned that it has limitations and can succeed better by working in partnership with fellow CBO's, the municipal Council, NGO's and the private sector. It is this partnership that has, for instance, seen the construction of garbage transfer chambers within their residential areas.

Through the partnership, the people of the Lake View settlement will soon have a refuse collection truck donated by World Bank. They will also be able to service the other residential areas and earn some income for themselves.

In summary, the Local Agenda 21 programme is not just about products, but is a multifaceted process that endeavours to involve as wide a spectrum of actors as possible in pursuit of sustainable urban development. A major characteristic of the process is empowerment of partners, and particularly, the local level communities who after the donor support is ended will become the ultimate owners of development processes.

There is also need for the Council officers to cultivate and nurture the culture which the programme has introduced - that of true partnership with the community. The needs of the people include guidance and coordination. The issue of coordination is critical, as a number of organisations are now beginning to show interest in Nakuru.

A key issue facing the main stakeholders active in the Nakuru programme so far is whether the political will can be strengthened to support what is still seen as a quite new approach to development. The Councillors are key to this. They need to see their roles quite differently and to influence the rest of the Council to show them what benefits they can all get by working with the community. A priority is to allay the fear in the minds of some of Council representatives that an empowered community is a threat.

The way forward is to sustain the momentum which the programme has created. For those who are aware of the project, a lot of expectations have been raised. The challenge is how to deal with these expectations, given resource limitations.



Mutare Case Study

By Peter Nyoni

Mutare - the fourth biggest city in Zimbabwe is picturesquely situated in the foothills of the Eastern Highlands sprawling up the sides of Christmas Pass. Its wide streets are lined with flowering trees, and it has three public parks, a museum (1954), and the Turner Memorial Library (1902). In the mid-1970's, being a border town, Mutare became a battleground between Rhodesian troops and nationalist guerrillas operating from Mozambique. However, by the early 1980's, after Zimbabwe attained independence, Mutare resumed its role as a port of entry and the main rail and commercial centre for the productive eastern region (tea, tobacco, livestock, timber). The city's industries include automobile assembly, the manufacture of textiles, clothing, leather goods, pulp, and board, and oil refining and wattle (acacia) extraction. Tourism to the nearby national parks is an important economic factor.

Mutare is twinned with Haarlem in the Netherlands and with 10 other cities around the world.

Origins

Unlike other cities which are promoting joint action, the main trigger behind such activities in Mutare did not originate so much from geographical or historical factors as from external influences - starting with its twinning with Haarlem 1990-1991. The intervention of the International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) through its LA21 Charters programme, together with the Incentive Grant Project and Mutare City Council (MCC) were other encouraging agents to bring together a range of local stakeholders.

The linking relationship between Mutare and Haarlem started when the Director of Housing and Community Services visited Haarlem. In the Netherlands at that time, there was a highly developed national sense of solidarity with people engaged in struggles for justice and freedom. Twinning with people in cities and towns in other countries became an important form of expressing international

solidarity. In the case of Southern Africa, it was focussed around the struggles of the Frontline States against apartheid and racism in South Africa, and against the apartheid regime's destabilisation of the Frontline States.

These early developments with a global focus of contact and action were to gain a fresh impetus from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. LA21 emerged from Rio as a local programme to encourage citizen participation in development which is environmentally sustainable. ICLEI has been promoting LA21 world-wide and its charter/twinning programme encourages communities and local authorities engaged in Local Agenda '21 activities in the North and South to formally and informally encourage each other's efforts through twinning exchanges. Although in due course Mutare was to sign twinning agreements with over ten cities world-wide, it is the link with Haarlem which has endured and prospered and is now part of the Mutare Charters programme.

Joint Action as Understood in Mutare

The twinning with Haarlem and the LA21 Charters project has been the main source of impetus for joint action in Mutare. Joint action as understood within the context of the overall objectives of the Charters programme has the following overarching objectives:

- To promote public education and debate, through joint action, about the political, ethical and technical complexities of sustainable development.
- To encourage and promote active partnerships between the local authority and community sectors, and to develop and/or strengthen capacity at the community level to manage and sustain LA21 programmes and partnerships.
- The LA21 Charter should be based upon three fundamental principles of reciprocity, equality, and participation.
- For the local authority to implement LA21 plans and to provide both technical assistance and limited financial support for concrete, practical projects which meet the objectives and commitments in the community's LA21 programme.
- To increase international accountability in the local authority by addressing global challenges identified in Agenda 21, such as achieving greater equity in the living standards between rich and poor and protecting the environment.

As the twinning and later the LA21 Charters programme have developed in Mutare, a common understanding among those who are actively involved has been that joint action includes:

- Collaborative partnership;
- Thinking GLOBALLY, acting LOCALLY;
- Cooperation with and among a wide range of stakeholders in the city community and civil society, the private business sector and Mutare City Council (MCC);
- Community participation in local governance to promote common interest;
- Harnessing and coordinating external support/resources to maximum advantage for Mutareans.

Added Value

The general consensus about the benefits of such joint action is that in Mutare it creates a responsive, democratic local government, and at the same time leads to improved stakeholder involvement in and responsibility for local affairs.

Past and Current Activities

Decision Making, Planning, and Consultation Processes

The twinning activities were and still are coordinated by a joint action committee which has representatives from all stakeholders, i.e. local authority, private sector, NGO and community. It was set up by a very committed academic who chairs it. His inspiration has come partly from lengthy exposure to Haarlem people and their efforts to implement LA21. He was a member of an international group which did a 3 month audit of sustainable development in Haarlem in 1998.

A broad range of specific activities was spawned by the Haarlem/Mutare twinning which included a number of material donations and cultural exchanges. More recently, an ambitious project for the construction of a sports complex in Chikanga Township in Mutare and sports coaching has been initiated, to the tune of Zim\$17 million.

In 1994, a stakeholder meeting was held for the first time (inspired by Haarlem). Through the joint action programme put together by these various stakeholders, Mutare has witnessed a further wide range of practical activities. These include:

- access to municipal land for assisted housing construction for the poorest;
- decongestion of squatter settlers in some wards of the high-density suburbs;
- development of a sports infrastructure;
- safe disposal of industrial waste such as sawdust;
- collection of waste paper for recycling in a sustainable and economically beneficial way;
- the composting of organic waste from the city's disposal system so that it can be used to regenerate agricultural land.

According to the chairperson of the twinning group, who has since become chair and convenor of the Local Agenda 21 Committee, the joint action process started with the formation by the Council in 1993 of an Environment Committee. This brought together representatives from the Wildlife Society, from commerce and industry (particularly the timber industry), from the City Council's Health Department and from the university, among others.

The joint action process was to gain further impetus from the involvement of ICLEI in 1997, through the Charters project, and specifically its Incentive Grant Programme (IGP) which would provide some funding for community mobilisation and other practical activities.

The structure within which the Mutare activities operate now consists of:

- a stakeholder steering committee with a management board to coordinate and 'steer' the process;
- a secretariat to offer administrative support from and within the MCC. This came mainly from the Department of Health, especially the environment section;
- a Haarlem - Mutare link coordinator based in Mutare as part of the local management board.

The consultation process began with a launch and awareness-raising workshop for stakeholders. This was followed by training workshops such as an Environment Impact Assessment with 13 participants attending from the city Council and led by ICLEI Africa. They also had visioning and publicity workshops. A Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) was organised and involved wide community participation during an environmental assessment in Ward 4 of the city. Students from the Africa University in the community took part in the assessment.

One of the immediate concerns arising from the consultation was the uncontrolled disposal of sawdust being dumped by the local timber processing industry. Apparently, up to that point the timber companies were putting out contracts to anyone with a lorry to remove sawdust and dump it in the city refuse dumps. When the city Council closed access to its dump sites from fear that they would fill up too quickly, the removers went on to dump the sawdust in unplanned ways all over the city, and even into the rivers. This alarmed environmentalists in the city and spurred them to come together to influence the handling of this waste. The second area of concern for the group was the rapid deforestation of the Murahwa Hills around the city, where there was uncontrolled cutting of trees for various uses, including firewood, by residents of the city's high-density areas.

So, one of the first activities to sprout from the process involved a mushroom pilot project in which sawdust from timber processing was no longer just dumped but could be used for mushroom production. The other experiment involves the mixing of rock phosphate with organic waste for soil and environmental rehabilitation in the agricultural zones around the city. There is also an experiment reaching completion that involves the design and commissioning of a shredder of organic waste at the dumpsites to facilitate speedy decomposition. Further innovative schemes have taken place such as the manufacture of pushcarts for collecting waste paper in the city. Unemployed youths are being encouraged to participate in the paper collection project and to earn an income from it. Mutare Board and Paper Company is the purchaser of the paper for recycling. The composting boxes and the upgrade of toilets in Ward 4, following the community participatory appraisal, is another practical activity that has emerged.

All these activities were made possible by the use of some of the IGP US\$90,000 fund. ICLEI's role gave impetus and activity-content to a community mobilisation process which had thus far been spurred on by the Haarlem partners. For example, the Haarlem inputs into Mutare through a Housing Foundation had, over a long time-span, provided housing stands for the poorest of the poor in the high-density townships of the city. Now it has become possible to extend to a more ambitious sports development programme in the same focus areas in Sakubva and Dangamvura.

However, because the Charters programme involves a twinning arrangement as well as the objective of local partnership for sustainable development, much of the energy of the people involved so far has been used for the twinning activities. For example, in 1998 two representatives from Mutare took part in the 3 month joint action audit process in Haarlem with their LA21 committee. It had been expected that a Mutare audit would be facilitated with funding support from the Haarlem partners but so far this had not materialised.

Another example was the September 1999 participation of Mutare in the Haarlem municipal management training programme internship. This took place under the theme of sustainable cooperation: Mutare-Haarlem. It was Mutare's ambition that apart from their direct contribution to Haarlem in these and other exchanges, lessons from the experiences would be applied in Mutare as well. Unfortunately so far, the general impact of these experiences once back in Mutare was minimal. The board is looking more and more to ICLEI rather than Haarlem for such support.

The current projects being undertaken under the umbrella of the local joint action process in Mutare as listed above, are in a state of active implementation, and have engaged a growing section of the targeted population. However, only a small 'core' of stakeholders and process facilitators has remained active in the management of the LA21 joint action process. This has been a source of irritation for some of the institutional stakeholders involved in the development of the LA21 process who see it as a joint action collaborative initiative in the city. No performance measurement systems have been developed so far. Financial accountability is through the management board meetings and the city Council system.

Lessons Learned

Successes and Added Value

The Mutare case has proved to be adaptive and resilient, and to combine a fine balance between process and practical activities. The Council was open and ready to work with civil society, although the reality of other Council responsibilities and the various mindsets have tended to obstruct the full benefit of such good will.

The key success which has been achieved has been the emergence of the joint action committee with input from a range of actors which includes the City Council of Mutare, NGO's, community based groups, commerce and industry, private sector companies, informal sector economic operators, as well as academic and technical institutions. Their active chairperson who was interested in environmental protection and issues of sustainability of development initiatives in an urban setting, helped to spearhead their activities. He in turn was facilitated and encouraged in no small measure by the enthusiasm and support of the City Council, particularly its Health Department, which played host to the initiative so far.

The tangible benefits from the Haarlem connection, have been the capacity building for waste management. The plans, needs, and priorities are now worked out. There have been workshops on hazardous waste management. Participation in the community based audit in Haarlem was useful. School children have benefited from the school information exchange on a "wastepaper in the bin" analysis North and South. The internet exchange between a Mutare and a Haarlem school on environment issues as seen from their different life experiences, has had educational value. Haarlem has also helped to set up a revolving loan for housing stands, helped with housing development skills, and the decongestion of some high density settlements caused by the influx of migrants from Mozambique. But, when it comes to information exchange about the joint action process per se, there has been little exchange so far.

So, in some respects the Mutare case shows that progress has been made. Through its LA21 process, Mutare has begun to actualise the global Agenda 21 vision of Rio

at local level, particularly when compared with other Zimbabwe cities and towns. However, it also reveals aspects of persistent fundamental weaknesses, which need to be addressed imaginatively to ensure real success for the Mutare LA21 process.

Barriers

For example, there is still not a city-wide understanding - nor even among some of the current stakeholders - of what joint action is really all about. No specifically joint action projects are emerging so far. Although NGO's are trying to sensitise the public and urge them to pay local rates, they feel their cooperation with the Council is more parallel and supplementary than integrated into Council activities. NGO's and CBO's have also exhibited a lack of staying power in the joint action process.

From the Council's point of view, they are dealing with the deterioration of resources and services which has led to an attitude of pointing fingers rather than trying a collective approach to find solutions. They have still not shifted from focussing on problems to seeing and exploiting opportunities as they emerge in the new environment which LA21 can offer. This is partly because it is not the higher management level of Town Clerk which is involved but rather the lower seniority officers. Also communication systems generally are not effective. Furthermore, the Council is not sure how the joint action programme fits with its mandate.

The whole question of the participation of private sector businesses is still a new phenomenon especially when it comes to taking on board informal sector traders.

Over time there has been a gradual falling off of interest and involvement by many of the stakeholders. For most of the members of the steering committee, their involvement is voluntary. There is little paid work put into its operation. Successes have not been properly documented and incentives and motivation are not strong.

ICLEI has shown concern, and to some extent frustration with the current Mutare LA21 process, arising from the inevitable comparison of developments of the same process in the five other cities in sub-Saharan Africa in which it is involved. In that regard, Mutare appears to be too slow to concretise its process into actionable work plans with specific targets and time frames for the utilisation of the IGP resources. US\$35,000 out of a US\$90 000 grant has been used in 12 months. This compares with Johannesburg which has used USD 60 000 during a similar time period. ICLEI is also unhappy that reporting intervals and requirements are not being met. However the Mutare response is that they prefer to be cautious and prudent and not to spend money if they do not see a need for it.

Pre-requisites for Joint Action

Learning from what has happened in Mutare so far, what seems to be required is:

- a more effective mobilisation of popular participation to sustain the programme. It needs a wide cross-section of stakeholder representatives in the city engaging more actively with the 'grassroots' dimension. At the moment, much of the energy of the local community actors is taken up struggling with the question of how to participate with the City Council;
- a stronger effort to move on with the strategic planning process which is seen as an important ingredient for success;
- a public education and awareness drive about environmental issues and concerns in the city;
- action through new institutional arrangements to counter the current perception that much of what is going on in the city under the LA21 process, especially the decisions on the use of the IGP and the opportunities it represents, has remained in the hands of a few. The LA21 process is seen to be located in the city health department in the City Council, rather than being owned politically by the Councillors, and the general public has remained largely on the margins;
- a more autonomous coordination body located outside the Council and staffed on an independent basis. This would be more facilitative and confidence building for the general public and would counter the impression that the LA21 process has become a Council project rather than an independent process to assist and even make demands on the Council to ensure good governance in Mutare.

Conclusions

Role of Donors and Intermediaries

In Mutare, donors have been an essential source of support to put content into the processes and to address practical concerns of stakeholders in the city. On the one hand, Haarlem provided scope for initial experience and international exchange, as well as continuing support and engagement. On the other, ICLEI has taken primary responsibility for project content in the area of sustainable development planning and implementation. ICLEI also has the potential to technically support, monitor and evaluate the implementation of all related local sustainable development projects.

An effort to lessen the impact of the Haarlem link and its organisational framework on Mutare might take the pressure off the various Mutare stakeholders. If the LA21 process became the collaborative framework for all the initiatives for local action in the city, the question would be whether the Charters project could incorporate the twinning initiative without weakening it? It would also be necessary to make sure that there is a complementarity between the twinning with Haarlem issues and the LA21 IGP expectations.

Underlying these possibilities is the danger that the whole joint action process will be skewed and hampered by the 'donor - recipient' culture which is inevitably present with the history of external intervention in the city. In this respect, there does not seem to be any distinct difference between the public perception of the partnership relationship with ICLEI involvement and the Haarlem engagement.

The LA21 process should by now be exhibiting an all-embracing rather than piecemeal character as a city-wide local initiative regardless of who the donor/sponsor partners may be. Mutare should be seen to be in control of the process on a wide stakeholder-involvement basis to ensure ultimate sustainability. Capacity building for this to happen is required and could be done best through an independent / autonomous coordinating secretariat which itself may need help in establishing itself. Such a body would require expertise in community mobilisation strategies, on how to manage the process, develop

proposals, produce work plans, produce reports on time, be accountable and how to allocate responsibilities to facilitate effective action.

In short, it is time for review, adjustment, reorganisation, and commitment if Mutare is to make even greater progress through the partnerships it has attracted. Instead of focussing only on and cultivating the South-North relationship, Mutare might find some benefit from equally investing in South-South exchange of experiences, with for example, Johannesburg, Jinja and Mwanza which are Charter cities with useful experience to be passed on to younger participants.



Mombasa Case Study

By Pricilla Nyingi and Karanja Kinyua

Mombasa's history goes back 1000 years making it the oldest town in Kenya. Cut off from the interior by mountains the steep escarpments of the Eastern and Western Rift Valleys, until the building of roads and railways, people on the coast looked not to the interior, but across the sea.

The control of Mombasa passed from the Arabs to the Portuguese who brought Christianity, then the British up to the later days of Kenya's independence. Business in the area is mainly conducted by Germans, Italians, Asians and Arabs and, to a lesser extent, by Africans.

Mombasa (with its 900,000 inhabitants) was one of the busiest areas on the coast. It is now only disturbed by the annual arrival of the dhows and the hive of informal business activity behind the old facades.

Mombasa has a sizeable Christian and Hindu population in an otherwise essentially Muslim township. All these religions have their places of worship spread over the town. Mombasa is also the home of the Miji Kenda civilisation (the nine communities who inhabit the area) and whose dialects gave the basis of the Kiswahili language, Kenya's lingua franca. The island town of Mombasa is the main sea gate on the east African coastline and is Kenya's second major metropolis and cruise ship centre.

Mombasa's long history coupled with its influence on the coast and beyond, and the post independence rural-urban migrations presents the Municipal Council with a unique challenge. It needs to preserve the best of the past and its attraction for tourists, and to expand to cater for a fast rising population.

In recent years, Mombasa Municipal Council has been overwhelmed by the demand for its various services due to the increase in population. The Council has tried with its communities, private individuals and local and external NGO's to come up with various initiatives to supplement and complement education, health, garbage collection and other services. It has to be borne in mind these

efforts have been made against a backcloth of a country where decentralisation of government and politicisation of local government make any innovative measures particularly difficult to undertake.

Origins

The need for resources other than Council resources to deliver all the services and development required for Mombasa reflects a problem recognised in local government everywhere. This issue is increasingly being addressed by the concept of building local stakeholder partnerships to maximise available resources. However in the case of Mombasa, there has been additional impetus arising from the exposure of some Mombasa Council staff to international activities linked with joint action since 1992. The following events helped to develop awareness in Mombasa about new approaches to development and the various roles for the different stakeholders.

- A European Union decentralised cooperation workshop was organised by Kenya One World Linking Forum (K-OWL) in September 1992 in Mombasa with participants including Councillors, community leaders, community groups and CBO's from all over Kenya.
- Mombasa Municipality has since been represented in K-OWL and has taken part in trying to set up grassroots monitoring of joint-action initiatives in Kenya.
- Through representation by some of its top executives, Mombasa Municipality has participated in meetings and forums about decentralised cooperation in Britain and the Netherlands.

With all this exposure, the understanding of joint action which determines the partnership policy of the Municipal Council of Mombasa is that:

- the local authority, the community and NGO's work in partnership for local development,
- the partners should all be involved in the initiatives for development right from the beginning, i.e. in planning, decision making, management, financing, monitoring and evaluation of the joint activities.

Past and Current Activities

Early Joint Action Activities in Mombasa

Research based on the practical experience of joint action has shown that time is required for experimental work and to set up frameworks for partnership activities. Mombasa is no exception. Having recognised the potential benefits of working through joint action, the Council has tried a number of initiatives and has learned many lessons from its earlier experiences. The first of these was sparked off by a World Bank housing programme. Many of the pre-requisites for successful joint action were not then in place, but a number of lessons were learned. Now, the Council is entering into a more specific joint action programme supported by the British Department for International Development (DFID). This is being planned with a relatively new approach, trying to avoid the mistakes of the past. This is the PAMNUP (Partnership Approach to Meeting the Needs of the Urban Poor) poverty reduction project. It took 2 years of negotiation to work out a plan acceptable to all the stakeholders and is now starting implementation.

The earlier World Bank initiative (1980's), some of which has fallen by the wayside, was proposed as a housing project but the Council insisted it should be more comprehensive than that. They maintained that squatters, particularly women, who were meant to occupy the new housing, would require other benefits such as health services and income generating facilities. UNICEF worked with the Council to provide these through a Child Survival and Development (CSD) programme. Later a sanitation project was started and this was done by consulting with and working through residents who occupied housing which used sub standard means of solid waste disposal. The aim was to upgrade their sewage disposal.

Apart from the World Bank and UNICEF intervention, plus the Sanitation Project, there has been an initiative to 'beautify' Mombasa. At all these stages, partnerships were either tried of necessity or because of genuine interest in the possibilities of joint action but it was not a regular or formalised approach for other Council activities. Ownership by local citizens was also quite limited.

It is useful to look in more detail at the earlier projects to find out what lessons Mombasa has learned.

Child Survival and Development (CSD)

This project aimed to raise living standards in general through health, education, water and socio-economic packages. The child was expected to be the final beneficiary through empowerment of the community and the provision of the basic services. From its start, the project aimed to involve all the stakeholders in planning, implementation and monitoring. The project was funded by UNICEF (1989-93) and contained four main packages:

Health Package

Advocacy seminars were held for District Development Committee members, a District Health Committee and an intersectoral team were formed and trained, public meetings (barazas) were held, village health committees were set up, and 43 community health workers were selected and trained. In this way, community capacity was developed and district management systems to increase and sustain Public Health Care were improved. Essential drug supply systems were also improved through the building of eight village pharmacies.

The financing of recurrent costs was ensured through community funding and management. The community was expected to pay a minimal fee for the drugs , all the village health centres were expected to accumulate sufficient income from the initial sales to (a) continue replenishment of the kits and (b) start income generating activities to provide incentive payments to the community health workers. The health package received overwhelming support from the beneficiaries as it was affordable and the communities were able to identify themselves with it.

Education Package

The CSD programme included an education package because, despite the efforts by the Municipal Council to provide education services, there was a much greater demand than they could satisfy. This had resulted in a high number of untrained teachers and dropouts, illiterate adults and few places for pre-school education.

With funding from UNICEF, the Council involved the communities and other stakeholders under the CSD. By the end of the project, 120 teachers had been trained, 1000 community leaders had been sensitised, 120 women leaders had been trained and 22 non-formal community education centres had been established in various places with an enrolment of 840 youths. UNICEF provided books, chalk, textbooks and some teachers. The government also provided some teachers and assisted in the supervision of the centres. Communities were expected to contribute by paying minimal school fees and by providing labour. The non-formal centres that took care of out-of-school youth had voluntary teachers taken from the educated youth in the community.

Problems arose because account had not been taken of the need to create awareness of the importance of education for children, particularly for girls. Many parents thought that the Madarasas (Islamic education programme) was sufficient. For them it made sense for formal education to be integrated into the Madarasas. Many parents did not see the importance of pre-school education.

On top of these constraints, the Ministry of Education wanted to close the non formal centres citing non-use of the prescribed curriculum, uniforms and trained teachers as the justification. The communities together with the local authority however insisted that since at least the youth could get some education in the centres, after being pushed out of the formal schools, they had to be maintained, and they were. In fact the Kongowea non formal school has even completed a primary level programme of 8 years and is now recognised and registered by the education department.

Socio-Economic Package

A credit programme funded by UNICEF was established which helped many of the groups and individuals to start and run businesses. The main objectives were to encourage individual women to start businesses, operate group savings and secure individual credit. Training was provided to set up savings, business, and credit schemes and leadership. By 1993, 30 groups had been trained and over Kshs.1.2 million had been given out as credit. The programme was successful in that it assisted many women to save money and meet their daily needs. Other women who were not members of the clubs were encouraged and wanted to join.

The programme contributed to poverty alleviation and the loan repayment scheme worked well.

Housing Package

The housing project was supposed to provide improved housing for squatters. It was proposed by the Kenya Government and the World Bank who prepared a document which was then presented to the Housing Department of the Mombasa Municipal Council for implementation parallel with the CSD Project. Funding was given to upgrade urban structures in selected areas where most of the residents were living in squatter shelters. Four sites were selected but only three were eventually developed.

Existing structures were upgraded. All the displaced persons were allocated fresh plots. Small loans of Kshs.36, 000/- and free provision of services were also given. Under this project, the Council endeavoured to provide water, schools, social halls, sanitation and tree planting. Quite a number of families did manage to get houses. The Council eventually organised group ownership of plots to reduce the possibilities of immediate re-selling. This was a major problem as local squatters preferred to use the money to develop homes in the villages from where they had originated. They moved to Mombasa for work only and not to settle.

The general conclusion on the housing and CSD Project is that despite all the mistakes, the general standards of the urban poor in Mombasa were improved in the areas where the project was implemented. Its integrated nature touched on the whole fabric of the community. The Council was convinced after this experience that strengthening joint action in these activities would significantly reduce poverty. Planning the current PAMNUP programme was influenced by some of these findings.

Sanitation Project

Another experiment by Mombasa was triggered by opportunities provided from intervention from the regional water and sanitation group for East and Southern Africa. Although provision of sanitation services is one of the statutory responsibilities of local authorities in Kenya, this responsibility does not oblige

the Councils to be the sole service providers. In Mombasa, a new approach that combined a consultative process and collective action with sanitation stakeholders, managed to bring about some much needed change in Mombasa.

In 1997, a sanitation stakeholders' consultation was convened and was attended by the sanitation group for East and Southern Africa as well as 60 stakeholders including Mombasa Municipal Council staff and government representatives. Afterwards, because there was limited information available about solid waste management in Mombasa, a review found out that only 10% of Mombasa's population enjoyed sewerage facilities. 16% relied on septic tanks and 74% on pit latrines (or had no private facility at all). None of the sewage treatment facilities were working. Following the earlier consultations, action was taken to:

- Rehabilitate existing sewers as well as to establish efficient disposal mechanisms.
- Improve sanitation through modifying existing pit latrines, designing appropriate affordable facilities and creating awareness about the benefits of sewerage in informal settlements.
- Make a study of management of solid wastes.
- Institutional strengthening and sharing of responsibilities among the various stakeholders.

Beautification Project

In 1998, the Beautification Project was initiated by the Mayor of Mombasa who realised that the Municipality alone did not have the capacity to keep Mombasa clean and beautiful. He was a dynamic business person elected in 1997. He believed that by involving all the stakeholders, Mombasa would regain its lost glory. Council therefore solicited joint action, particularly with the business community and the general community.

The main objectives of this project were to work towards beautifying Mombasa town by setting up awareness campaigns, working with other stakeholders already in the process of beautifying and greening the town, identifying areas that needed rehabilitation, and creating a fund for the beautification activities.

When the Mayor called a consultative meeting of the various stakeholders, the response was overwhelming. A number of objectives were identified in order to create a beautiful Mombasa. The Mayor formed committees that embarked on a six point plan to wage war on garbage, to green Mombasa, improve the streets, provide brighter buildings and monuments, clean the port and beaches, and recycle and minimise waste.

This was an ambitious plan and the Mayor called for partnerships with the other stakeholders in the town in order to implement it. He received support from various individuals, business, companies and community groups who volunteered to take on sections of the town as their responsibility for all the activities required.

UNDP, ILO, the European Union, the Government of Kenya (GOK), and individual businesses provided funding (approximately US\$40,000 deposited into a fixed bank account). Other inputs were from the Council who bought 4 lorries, and some individuals who donated their lorries for garbage collection. The tree and flower planting was done through individual endeavours but the costs so far have not been communicated to the Council. The residents who collaborated were given a remission on rate-payment by the Council, which is very welcome to the community.

As a result of this project, there has been a build up of goodwill among business people and other stakeholders. The has demonstrated that with some cooperation between partners, the Council can produce results. The community now has very strong structures that are stemming crime and drug abuse and are increasing security, particularly for tourists. The beautification project has given limited benefits to all involved and a general sense of ownership. It helped to build trust and recognition of the valuable contribution of each of the parties involved and so far it has been sustainable even though the Mayor has left.

Performance Management

There was no formal framework for measuring and monitoring the progress of any of the above schemes. However, results which were observed in the case of the

earlier projects were disappointing because so little of what was set up was continued after the World Bank and UNICEF left.

It is also difficult to quantify accurately what the partners put into the beautification project as there has been no formal evaluation. However the partners are held responsible for the areas they have offered to work in, and their reports are forwarded to the appropriate committee convened by the Council for each section of the programme. It has also been seen as quite a breakthrough by the citizens involved that the Council has realised its limitations and decided to work in partnership with other stakeholders for the common good.

Proposed Poverty Alleviation Programme

The process started in 1996 when a consultative meeting was held on poverty reduction bringing together 105 stakeholders. The idea became so popular that before the end of the consultation, over 200 stakeholders had participated. The identification of the status of poverty in Mombasa was done and the following issues were seen to contribute to the level of poverty: Land, shelter, income generation, sanitation and water, education and health.

After that, a number of other consultations took place and eventually in 1997, the Council held a meeting with DFID. From then a poverty reduction proposal - PAMNUP (Partnership Approach to Meeting the Needs of the Urban Poor) - was developed which would last 5 years supported by DFID. The planning phase alone has been an intensive participatory and consultative process involving stakeholder groups represented through local steering committees. Various Council departments, such as local administration, children's department, probation, social services, plus NGO's such as the Women Network and clubs like Lottery and Lions, and finally central government were all included in setting up the project.

PAMNUP is designed to create an enabling environment whereby key stakeholders in Mombasa municipality act in partnership to mobilise and direct resources towards meeting the priority needs of poor and very poor residents living in informal settlements. The project will build the capacity of those involved to enable them to work together in a participatory, pro-poor and accountable manner in order that a sustainable partnership approach to reduce urban poverty is achieved.

Settlement communities will be supported through a participatory planning process to prepare community action plans, which will comprise cost-effective and sustainable interventions and activities designed to meet their practical and strategic needs. These will include access to water and sanitation, health care, education, employment and business opportunities, as well as knowledge about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The project will provide direct financial support for such interventions while, at the same time, assisting the Council to develop its revenue base so that it can contribute towards the operation and maintenance of these community interventions, and encouraging communities to mobilise their own resources to the extent possible.

The pilot phase will take place for the first 2 years in one community - that is Bombululu and later on in Likoni, Changamwe, Mombasa Town and Tudor. The donor, the project coordinator and one of the stakeholders who are all signatories to a special account will manage the funds. The funds go directly from the donor to the project account without going through the Treasury. An external auditor will audit the funds.

Lessons Learned

Successes and Added Value

Although none of the earlier projects claim to be town-wide successes, there have been pockets of benefit in various parts of Mombasa:

- Commercial benefits - advertising and more business;
- Women's income improved;
- Youth skills developed;
- Practical, visible end products e.g. housing, affordable medicines;
- More transparency among the partners and the Council;
- The initial blaming of one another is no more and people are willing to participate;
- The numbers of applications to be involved in the beautification project are continuing to grow.

Barriers to Progress

All the earlier initiatives described above were beset with difficulties. The new PAMNUP programme is not assessed in this case as it is only just beginning.

1. In the case of the health programme, the main problem was that while the Municipal Council was responsible for health care services, there was a lack of understanding of the basic health issues and their magnitude among the health workers, policy makers, traditional health care providers and the community - particularly about primary health in general and CSD activities in particular.
2. The whole project lost its impetus with the withdrawal of support from UNICEF. Some of the social and physical structures that had been put in place have since died or disintegrated. For example, the District Health Committee is no longer functional, the Intersectoral Committee has disintegrated and most of the 20 facilitators trained have left Mombasa.
3. It appears that the expectation of the community to sustain themselves after the initial funding was premature.
4. The education package had problems, but because of strong community involvement, they managed to provide additional services for the duration of the project. It also left a legacy of self-help activities (e.g. building latrines) in a number of schools, which is slowly being replicated.
5. The progress of the housing project was jeopardised because:
 - The initial feasibility study did not include the beneficiaries.
 - Most of the allottees were people with large families that could not fit in the initial structures.
 - Some tried income generation with the loans but when they failed, they were able neither to make money nor complete the structures.
 - Psychologically, many people only came to Mombasa to work. Their rural homes so there was a tendency for them to sell off their houses in order to be able to go and develop in their rural areas.
 - Many are still developing 11 years after the allocation.
 - Some richer people have bought the structures, defeating the original objective.
 - In retrospect, the standards set for the units were too high. The structure should have improved on the construction methods and materials such as stone, mud and wattle, commonly used by the community.

- Generally the women were not interested as they thought that construction was a male-domain.

6. In the beautification project, there were disappointments with the Council. For example while the arrangement for some of the work was that the community provided the materials and the Council provided the technical workers, this was marred by some Council workers who demanded further payment from the communities and provided shoddy services. Also when community groups managed to collect garbage and gather it at strategic points for the Council to collect, the latter often failed them and left the area stinking for days.

To summarise, the main barriers for all the projects described above included:

- Lack of ownership and responsibility by the majority of Mombasa's citizens;
- Not enough consultation and ownership e.g. it was decided to rid Mombasa of beggars to avoid the negative effects of their presence. However the Muslim culture of giving alms on Fridays encourages beggars to come to the town from far and wide and their presence is much wanted by the local Muslims;
- No laws to enforce action - it is based at the moment on goodwill. This is changing slowly;
- The partners depended on the Council to initiate discussions, as so far, they have no legal forum;
- Community disillusion with the Council workers who failed with their part of the job;
- Women have been left out of most of the thinking and planning and involvement in most of the programmes.

Many of these barriers are related to the performance of the Council. The PAMNUP analysis⁹ of the institutional framework in Mombasa gives a clear indication of the fundamental problems being faced by the Council and they explain to some extent how difficult it is for the Council to deliver as much as it would like.

Staff to fill senior and middle level posts used to be recruited directly by the

⁹ Much of this section is taken from the DFID memorandum on the PAMNUP project proposal 'partnership' approach to meeting the needs of the urban poor (PAMNUP) - Mombasa

Councils, but a recent amendment to the Local Government Act provided for recruitment by the Public Service Commission (PSC), which, together with the Ministry of Local Authorities, is now responsible for their deployment and promotion. The intention was to provide local officials with some protection against arbitrary actions and interference by Councillors, but this has been ineffective, and the use of the PSC for recruitment causes long delays in filling posts and increases the frequency of transfers. In Mombasa, Town Clerks (and their deputies/assistants) have held their positions considerably longer than has been the case in many other Councils. Local government salaries are insufficient to attract professional staff, and there has been considerable loss of such staff in recent years. Training budgets have been victims of the poor financial situation. None of the local authorities have training strategies, and they are all dependent on occasional training opportunities supported by donors.

Of the approved 4,346 establishment posts in Mombasa, 79% or 3,436 were filled as at 1996/7. However, about half the approved positions at the top management levels comprising chief officers, their deputies and assistants, were vacant with about a third of the posts for section and sub-section heads, who form the technical and supervisory cadre, being unfilled. The situation is worse in the education, health and Town Clerk's departments. In contrast, there is considerable overstaffing at the general staff levels. About 65% of the staff at these scales are general labourers, either in engineering (construction and maintenance) or in health. Attempts to reduce the size of the labour force at these levels are often thwarted as a result of 'political patronage'.

The Education Department is responsible for 284 pre-primary and 85 primary schools, and for supervising 45 private primary schools. The Municipal Education Officer is an agent of the Teachers Service Commission and supervises teachers and the inspectorate. The department has a high vacancy rate, approximately 37%, with the vacant posts including those of Deputy and Assistant MEO.

The PAMNUP project's capacity building programme will help to develop these comparative advantages within the Mombasa local authority which arise from its closeness to the community and resultant local knowledge. Finally, it is interesting to note that the PAMNUP preliminary research found significant factors which have to be addressed if the new partnership programme is to succeed.

NGO's

The preliminary appraisal of the capacity of some likely local partners in the PAMNUP project involved NGO's and religious organisations. In addition, the local Steering Committee and the appraisal team reviewed a number of NGO proposals for possible project components. The general findings were that:

- few large and well established NGO's are operating in Mombas;
- very few of the NGO's have programmes based on community action planning;
- as a result, many NGO's (and their proposed projects) are supply rather than demand drive;
- the best established and most competent NGO's tend to be the country branches of international NGO's;
- some NGO's operating locally are branches of national NGO's. Both they and the purely local NGO's are generally very small;
- many NGO's appear to have limited understanding of the broader context in which they are operating;
- cooperation between NGO's and between NGO's and the public sector is lacking. Some NGO's are unwilling to work with municipal Councils because of their bureaucracy and the risk of political interference, while others recognise the limits to what they can achieve by themselves and are prepared to try. Councils, for their part, are also somewhat suspicious of NGO's - they are thought to be 'too expensive' and non-accountable, while some are considered to be 'briefcase' NGO's, set up simply to get access to finance;
- NGO's do not have a coordinating body at the town level and the local authorities do not play this role. As a result, there is no complete picture of all NGO activity in urban areas (or within the informal settlements);
- NGO capacity to analyse problems and prepare appropriate project proposals appears to be, for the most part, very limited.

Community

In the case of community groups, the situation in Mombasa is that chiefs, and sub- or assistant chiefs, are staff of the Provincial Administration and are the lowest level of government appointees, with responsibilities for aspects of security, passing on government messages, etc. Their effectiveness and the degree to which they support community interests vary. Chiefs appoint leaders (elders, generally

men) who may or may not have legitimacy in the eyes of residents. Some are respected and have considerable influence. They are relatively well informed and used to being at the forefront of any development activity. However, they may also act as brokers controlling outside inputs, and their views and actions do not necessarily reflect the interests of the poor. Leaders are used to exercising power by filtering information and directing communities. Residents are used to them dominating community decision making. Indigenous residents still use clan and sub-clan structures for organisational purposes, for example, the organisation of events such as funerals.

In Muslim areas, the mosque is central to community life, providing welfare services and Koranic education. In other areas, churches may play an important role. Committees are established for various purposes e.g. to make demands on external agencies, to urge for general development purposes, regularisation, or health. The committees (which generally include the elders) are not elected. They are either selected by the chief and elders or selected at a baraza (community meeting). Some command wide support, but others represent particular interests. Women are often under-represented and the poorest and tenants are not represented. Self-help groups are formed and registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Heritage, Culture and Social Services - most are women's or youth groups and many are associated with churches.

Success Factors

Apart from building on the findings which have been part of the preparation for PAMNUP, the general findings from studying the joint action history of Mombasa indicate that the following factors are required for success:

- Careful identification of and agreement on joint action objectives and stakeholders;
- Sensitising wider community and stakeholders through consultation and citizens' meetings;
- Sensitising women through training programmes on the importance of their participation in joint action projects;
- Stakeholders should come together in a consultative meeting to clearly define

- roles and responsibilities and training needs;
- Sustainable leadership and commitment by the whole Council;
- Goodwill and understanding of joint action on the part of all stakeholders, especially government agents, politicians, and those who provide financial and human resources;
- Partners need to see the Council review its archaic bylaws. There is a move towards this;
- Sustainable methods of fund-raising;
- Training and capacity building for members of the appropriate Council departments for them to better undertake joint action projects;
- Attitude change by all concerned and willingness to listen, to give and take, and take on new responsibilities;
- Effective coordination and information spreading;
- Mutual trust, respect and willingness to solve collective problem.

Conclusion

After a variety of both negative and positive experiences of joint action over the last 15 years, the Municipal Council of Mombasa has learned many lessons. They have seen the potential of working in partnership and they are aware of the mistakes which can be made. Many lessons have been learned and the general view among those who have been involved is that joint action is a good thing. Some key Council representatives are totally committed to the approach in order to make their work more effective.

The latest plan for the PAMNUP programme has taken into account all this experience and has even taken longer than any previous plan, just in the preparation phase. It will be interesting to revisit PAMNUP in 5 years time to find out whether concrete benefits have been realised.

Mamelodi Case Study

By Aubrey Khumbane, Lolo Ditshego and Nthutu Ngobeni

To understand if and how joint action can work in any locality, it is necessary to view it in the light of national and local history and geography. Mamelodi is a township in Pretoria, Gauteng Province, which was established in 1945 to house black people. The history of South Africa over the last century and the politics that accompanied it has affected the potential for, and the shape of, joint action in the country and in this case, in Mamelodi.

Since the new government came to power, the role of the civics has had to change dramatically. People who were dedicated to the struggle and skilled in mobilising the community against the national and local government structures faced a new role. They have to address the development needs of the community and this requires different skills. Civic leaders were not trained to be Councillors. On top of that, the officers in local government structures are still those recruited during apartheid, the majority are therefore white and their skills are not orientated towards making proper provision of services for black communities.

Thus the relationships are quite sour at times because of continued political struggles between black and white, the unclear roles to be played by the civics and the transitional Councils and the lack of capacity all round. The fact that many of the civic leaders have moved on to be Councillors thus crippling the civics has made matters worse. However the civics did play an important role in setting up the transitional local Councils prior to the elections in 1994 and the relationship between them and the government is comparatively healthy.

So the joint action activities in Mamelodi are being developed against a backdrop of community and local government attitudes having to be transformed from the politics of struggle and destruction, to the politics of reconstruction and development. Mamelodi has 2 Planning Zone Forums which are working towards achieving precisely that.

Past Activities

Mamelodi is the biggest township in Pretoria, with a total population estimated at between 800,000 and 1,200,000 (no official figures are available). It is located about 19 km from the centre of Pretoria. The first houses were built in 1947. They started with the 'lapa' plan which was a replica of the rondavel huts discovered by a Pretoria Council delegation during a visit to Botswana looking for the cultural norm of black people. This was discontinued after an outcry from the community and the town was redesigned using the four room house popularly known as 'match box' houses. Most of the residents of Mamelodi were forcefully removed from mixed areas in Pretoria such as Lady Selbourne and Marabastad. As one study puts it "apartheid created Mamelodi as a bedroom community for black workers commuting to Pretoria". However, there had to be a special permit to stay in the township.

No housing development took place in Mamelodi after the late 1960's. It was only in 1982 that new housing development took place. By this time, the housing backlog had reached alarming proportions, fuelled by urban rural disparities and population growth from rural immigration. This housing development (1982) was targeted at high and middle income black people who were slowly emerging. They received loans to build as part of a policy to divide the black community. On the other hand people moving from rural areas to urban areas to find employment and stayed with their relatives in the township. Those who did not stay with relatives stayed in the hostels. To deal with this population explosion, the disadvantaged people who were not allowed loans to build, started to build back rooms using corrugated iron and other material. As one study puts it "in every third house there is a back-room with two to three families." During the late eighties and early nineties most black townships were faced with the so-called black on black violence, but fortunately in Mamelodi this phenomenon was non-existent. The relative peace attracted many people from violence stricken areas to resettle in Mamelodi. This made the problem of housing reach unprecedented levels.

In 1986, after the shock of the killing of 21 residents, the community - led by the Mamelodi Civic Association, declared a rent and service charges boycott. The intention was to bring the ineffective Mamelodi Town Council to total bankruptcy.

In this way it was hoped that the Council would begin to listen to the community and address the needs of the whole population and not just the chosen few. But the Council did not take them seriously. The bitterness of the community and its suspicion of local government have remained in the minds of many of the residents up to the present. There are now people who appreciate what the new government has achieved in the short time since 1994, but for many, the rising expectations were not and are still not being met despite efforts to build public confidence.

By the time the Council finally came to the table in the late 1980's, the legacy of arrears on taxes for services had reached alarming proportions and people were not able to pay them once the boycotts were officially ended. An agreement was reached to scrap all the tax arrears owed to the municipality in a bid to encourage people to at least pay rents. Land was also made available for low income earners. However, those who were not allocated sites began to invade municipal land in droves.

When the new government came in there was nothing that could be done because the housing backlog was more than 20 years long. So joint action between Mamelodi communities and the Pretoria Metropolitan and City Council has had to be developed against a raft of mindsets and huge problems on all sides.

Economically, with such a history of alienation and deliberate neglect, Mamelodi has inherited an unemployment rate of 60% against the national figure of 68% for blacks and 35-40% for whites. It is also estimated that 150,000 live in informal settlements.

During the struggle against apartheid, funds from international donors and solidarity movements around the world were available in Mamelodi, as in other townships to fuel the resistance movement rather than for pure development purposes. Now more than fifty political and civil organisations are operating in Mamelodi. A sizeable number of NGO's and CBO's are addressing issues such as education, training, job creation, legal aid, culture, sports, youth, HIV / Aids. Unfortunately, funds from the outside world have now shrunk and these NGO's and CBO's are struggling to survive. Small black businesses such as corner shops that were thriving in the seventies and early eighties are today also fighting for

their survival against heavy competition from supermarkets and multinational chains.

All ward Councillors in Mamelodi are ANC representatives and most of the residents support the ANC. The fact that only an insignificant number of residents support other parties explains the non-existence of political party violence in the area. This was especially so in the late 1980's and 1990's, when there was serious political violence especially between the ANC supporters and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporters in other parts of the country and region. So, Mamelodi is politically stable but economically it has enormous needs to be satisfied.

How is Joint Action Understood

In Mamelodi, where deliberate efforts are being made to promote joint action, the people responsible understand it to be a process that brings together local government, civil society and business in order to determine the development needs and priorities for the local community. However, for most citizens, joint action is unknown. As the concept is generally quite new and is still being formalised by the government into enabling legislation, there are few concrete examples to demonstrate to the local community that joint action is a good idea with practical results and not just rhetoric.

Added Value

From the government and Planning Zone officials' point of view, joint action through its participatory methods can be used to sensitise the community about the problems faced by government working on the task of alleviating poverty. It can also explain why they pay taxes. The South African government has recognised its added value in that once people know where and how their money is spent and they are party to these decisions, they will be willing to pay for services. In other words it could be a 'win win' situation.

Not only that, the community will be in a position to protect public property from whatever vandalism might arise, because of the feeling of ownership which grows with their involvement. It should be noted that during the struggle towards

democracy, State property was often vandalised as part of the strategy to bring the system down. The time has now come to reconstruct and change the mindsets, and involve the people from the planning stage to implementation. The government also recognises that continued boycott of payment of services would thwart its policy for poverty alleviation.

Current Activities

Institutional Arrangements

Pretoria City Council (PCC) comprises Pretoria, Atteridgeville, Eesterust and Mamelodi. The area is further demarcated into 19 planning zones - five in Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Local Council (NPMLC), eleven in the Pretoria City Council (PCC) area and three in the Centurion Town Council area. In addition to this, a Citywide Forum exists in each of the Metropolitan Local Councils as well as a Metropolitan Development Forum covering the whole Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Area.

Early attempts have been made in Mamelodi to bring organisations together to facilitate greater cooperation, to avoid duplication of service, and to share information and other resources in order to provide effective and efficient services. These attempts were made in the early nineties but were not successful. In 1995, a second initiative was taken to bring organisations together to facilitate delivery of services by government under the auspices of the Mamelodi Development Forum. But the forum was undermined by controversies because it was seen as a structure used by certain powerful individuals to bolster their political career. The problem inherited from these earlier attempts provided a difficult environment in which to facilitate a process where every organisation and individual would engage constructively in addressing issues that affected them.

With this as background, the GPMC resolved on December 6, 1996 and then again resolved at its meeting on May 8, 1997 that Planning Zone Forums (PZF's) be established. The actual implementation of the PZF concept in the Greater Pretoria area commenced during the 1997/1998 financial year and 22 forums were consequently established.

Financial Arrangements

The 1998/99 GPMC budget made provision for the 22 offices of PZF's. These offices serve as the administrative support to the planning zone forums. The GPMC together with the PCC finances the office of the PZF's i.e. accommodation, office equipment, office furniture and stationery as well as all workshops held under the auspices of PZF. The officer is an employee of the GPMC

Planning Processes/Consultation/Decision making

The action described above was the local response to government legislation. It is a special feature of joint action in Mamelodi that the trigger and champion is not an outside donor, or an isolated municipality as has happened in other examples elsewhere in Africa. It is the national government that has instituted a number of laws to provide an enabling framework through the tools of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and Land Development Objectives (LDOs).

The Development Facilitation Act (DFA) - an interim measure in 1995 - was significant because it called for public participation in development and established new planning procedures that were designed to encourage municipalities to develop their planning priorities in conjunction with civil society. Municipalities were to formulate statutory Land Development Objectives (LDOs) which were intended to work out clear development objectives for individual local authorities.

The Local Government Second Amendment Act (97:1996), and the Local Government: Municipal Systems Bill, (1999) require that the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council (GPMC) and the three Metropolitan Local Councils (City Council of Pretoria, Town Council of Centurion and Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Substructure) each prepare an integrated development plan (IDP). Included in the IDP is the design of the Planning Zone Forums (PZF's). IDP documents then have to be approved by the Minister of Local Government. Once approved, they will be used by the Council to formulate the local government budget. The IDP document is reviewed every year within a five year plan.

In keeping with the requirements of the above-mentioned Acts, the purpose of the PZF's is to enable participatory planning which ensures that both public sector resources and where possible, private sector resources, are targeted at development priorities. In addition, the PZF's are to be used to coordinate the inputs of the public and bring planning closer to the people affected by it.

The response of the Gauteng provincial government to the various acts was to set up regulations for LDO's to create a new system of planning for development at local authority level which:

- promotes and strengthens democracy.
- links public expenditure to financially viable development strategies guided by a vision and priorities which are determined jointly between the government and the general public.
- enables effective participation by members of the public and interested bodies in the setting of land development objectives and the building of partnerships and cooperation between government and civil society in order to implement their land development objectives.

The roles and responsibilities of PZF's are to consult and advise the Council. In instances where conflict arises between Council and PZF's, the Council will establish a conflict resolution committee to deal with the matter at hand.

The PZF's are given the latitude to deal with each directorate directly on issues relating to the directorate including the chief executive officer. The Mamelodi PZF's have also been allocated an officer (town engineer) who advises on technical issues.

In the PZF's each local organisation is represented by two delegates who in turn report back to their respective organisations and this structure meets at least once in three months or when necessary. The steering committee meets at least twice a month. Stakeholders invited to these meetings include political organisations, community based organisation (CBO's), non-governmental organisation (NGO's), the business community and taxi organisations etc.

Members of the steering committee are elected annually at a general meeting. The planning zone officer employed by the Council is stationed at the PZF office and is

also a secretary to the steering committee. Councillors are ex-officio members of steering committee and may attend general meetings of the PZF's.

Lessons Learned

Main barriers/Mindsets/Attitude changes

With the history of relationships with the Council as described above, it is not surprising that members of the community were very sceptical about yet again participating in a local government initiative. Most of the local authority officials in the eyes of Mamelodi people represent the old apartheid system, being predominantly white. However the government in the DFA emphasised the building of trust with the community as an element which is necessary in any joint action or partnership. So despite the concerns and scepticism of the community, they decided to give local government a chance to prove itself through the PZF's.

The process to establish a participatory structure in Mamelodi began in April 1998 through the initiative of the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council (GPMC). The first founding meetings were held early in May 1998. Mamelodi was demarcated into two Planning Zone Forums, PZF4 (Mamelodi West) and PZF5 (Mamelodi East). Stakeholder meetings were held separately for PZF4 and PZF5. The CBO's and NGO's make up the majority. The South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO, Mamelodi branch) also participated in the founding meetings. This shows how the role of civics has changed radically in the last 10 years. Although not all organisations were present at the founding meetings, over fifty organisations did participate.

Some of the factors which contributed to the strong move to participate were that through participation in PZF's local organisations might be empowered to access Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) funds. They thought they might also be involved in implementing some of the projects within their various areas of expertise. It was also hoped that there would be local economic empowerment for previously disadvantaged Mamelodi business communities. The CBO's and NGO's were struggling financially and they thought this would be a window of opportunity to broaden their funding base.

The first meeting of the PZF's also became the first encounter where the community began to identify the social ills of the community and identified projects that would address them. The first draft of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) was developed in the first meeting and it was comprehensive, covering issues such as infrastructure (storm water drainage, roads etc), social issues (Aids, skills training and job creation), economic issues and institutional arrangements.

The IDP document was further developed and refined by a consultant appointed by the Council and was finally adopted by the PZF in later meetings and eventually by the Council. The IDP was then sent to the Minister for Local Government for final ratification and eventually was assigned to law.

Unfortunately, although Mamelodi residents were willing to go through this procedure, they have little confidence so far in achieving their objectives. They are represented at political level on the Council but most of the Councillors are inexperienced and have low education standards. They have also been quite unenthusiastic about attending PZF meetings and in some cases have tried to undermine them because of the perceived threat to Councillor interests. On top of this, most of the Council decisions are taken based on the recommendations of officials (mainly white). The community is aware of this - hence the scepticism.

The Mamelodi PZF's are therefore starting with a mixture of hope and disillusion and events have not helped.

Small Scale Projects

To address identified needs in the IDP document, the Council decided to introduce small scale projects and allocated a budget to each planning zone forum. The purpose was for PZF's to identify community projects, which could be implemented at an allocated cost. Such projects should be agreed upon by the broader PZF structures. Once a consensus based on the criteria set by Council was reached by the stakeholders, the PZF was then identified possible implementers. Once Council was satisfied with the process, the implementer would be appointed.

The members of the Mamelodi PZF's saw this as the first opportunity to empower local businesses and organisations with appropriate expertise. So when they were asked by the Council to discuss how to spend a grant of R215,000 on a 'visible' project, it was agreed unanimously that all the money should go towards greening the Moretele River, which runs through Mamelodi. The agreed plan was to make it into a leisure attraction for the community and to stop the space being used illegally by drug taking youngsters. It was also agreed by the PZF4 members that local (emerging) contractors should be encouraged to bid for the contract. Plans were drawn up and 3 black consultants submitted bids to the Council.

Eventually, the proposals of the black consultants were rejected by the Council in favour of that of a white contractor. The PZF protested, criticising both the procedure followed and criteria applied which they saw as not being transparent and biased in favour of white contractors. The issue could not be satisfactorily resolved between Council and the PZF, and in the end, the time for allocation of the money elapsed before the conflict was resolved. All the money was lost and the whole programme was aborted.

During the budget planning for the following year 1999/2000, the PZF4 and 5 zones were allocated a budget. The Mamelodi citizens decided to spend the money on the run down, appalling living quarters of the hostels. They also suggested resurrecting a business service centre in Mamelodi to assist previously disenfranchised businesses with business advice, tendering skills, access to finance etc. This business centre had already been established by the GPMC but the project had fallen apart because of lack of proper inputs and collaboration by the PCC. Again PZF's have identified implementers of identified projects and they also wanted to create employment for the local community. All these proposals are being negotiated with the Council.

The PZF representatives particularly requested the conversion of hostels into family units, which is consistent with the national agenda informed by the historical background of hostels. They met with hostel residents together with the Councillor concerned and agreed any development to the hostel should focus on long term development. There is budget allocation from the provincial government and Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council towards conversion of hostels to family units.

However the Council has stepped in and only wants to repair the hostels. The business centre and hostels and even the continued existence of the PZF's have all become issues of conflict and uncertainty. Final decisions have still to be made. However, at the time of writing, the resolution of these issues has not happened and it is not clear what the outcome will be. The process continues.

Successes and Added Value

The PZF's are very young and have not had time for concrete results to take place. However projects such as the Solomon Mohlanga Heritage Centre and the Denneboom Public Transport Facility are examples of concrete action in Mamelodi. They have been implemented with full participation by the local civic representatives, cultural groups, taxi drivers, Council and other stakeholders to clean up Mamelodi and improve living conditions in the township. In each case, all the stakeholders meet regularly and progress has been made and continues.

Other successes are the Mamelodi Community Police Forums and the PZF's in Pretoria where white communities are in the majority and therefore where the question of white contractors for development is not so contentious.

Pretoria is seen to be one of the more successful metropolitans taking the lead in laying down policies for joint action in accordance with the South African constitution and in accordance with the local government white paper and coming up with the Planning Zone Forums. It is an excellent model and, given time, has the potential for genuine participatory decision making.

Pre-requisites for more success in Mamelodi

Where there has been success, it has depended partially on dedicated and committed individuals and the cooperation of the City Planning Development office, all of whom have battled on despite the problems. The practical ways forward to implement more successful joint action in Mamelodi agreed generally by the main actors will include:

- Changed mindsets;
- Good leadership by Councillors and officers;

- Public awareness raising;
- Capacity building of local authorities and communities.

Conclusions

The experience of joint action in Mamelodi in the past and now with the new platforms provided by the PZF's has been mixed. This is partly a reflection of the politics of the day. The GPMC and the provincial government were founded under the new government whereas Pretoria City Council under whom Mamelodi comes into direct control, has been there for years. This situation will only change after the 2000 local government elections when all local Councils in Pretoria will fall under one Mega City Council.

All of the above activities also happened in a space of about eighteen months. It is clear that the concept of joint action is still in its infancy. However there is no doubt that there is a great deal of determination from the community to build bridges. Those who are poor and unemployed have been prepared to put in their time and small financial contributions because of their interest in the process. Unfortunately there are also some people who wanted to use the PZF's to find employment in the Council, while others tried to launch attacks, sometimes unjustly, on Councillors.

The fears of officials have also to be understood given the transitional process towards the Mega City and the lack of security in their jobs. Most of them have been there for more than fifteen years and they are used to doing things in a particular way. Now they are being asked to be accountable to the community and to seek their approval before conducting their business. These fears and problems are being slowly addressed through confidence built through joint action itself. For example, joint consultations occur between the GPMC and PCC with the PZF members to discuss up coming projects and in some cases to establish acceptance of certain projects like cluster housing, and the demarcation of Pretoria in preparations for the Mega City. Slowly the various parties are getting to know each other and some of the attitudes are being modified.

The number of organisations participating in the planning zone forum meetings shows that the PZF's are representative of the community. For example, there are

local businesses represented by Mamelodi Chamber of Business, taxi organisations, NGO's and CBO's, political organisations, the health forum (constituted of local medical doctors, nurses and other health workers), political organisations, sports organisations, youth movements, student organisations and individual community members. The PZF's have provided a platform for these organisations to work jointly and be powerful in their efforts to alleviate poverty. By speaking with one voice, the PZF's have more chance of being listened to. It is also necessary that having been involved in PZF meetings, representatives should report back to their constituency to ensure that the wider community is informed about the activities of the PZF's and the Council. The potential is there - it is only a matter of using the opportunity.

The question of the attitudes of officials, Councillors and the community is a reconcilable one. These parties need to work together on the current issues of debt, infrastructure development, job creation, crime prevention, and poverty alleviation. The issue of decision making needs to be sorted out when on the one hand the community believes that their recommendations are not taken seriously by the Council, and on the other hand the Council has to recognise that the responsibility at the end of the day lies with politicians. It would certainly help if Councillors were made to attend PZF meetings as part of their mandate.

The State has set in motion the process of joint action through legislation. It is now up to the parties concerned to effectively see the process succeed. At least now the framework and procedures are in place. Additional procedures to streamline the process would be to establish performance management and evaluation of the PZF achievements. It is important that the capacity needs of all the actors are assessed and that the programme includes strengthening their capacity, whether it is training of Councillors or sensitising and building the confidence of community groups and PZF staff. This will then enable them to be involved effectively in advocacy, lobbying, planning, managing conflict, and fundraising (once the Council makes it legal for PZF's to raise their own funds).

Eighteen months is a short time for the effects of the past to be healed and for new relationships to be built up. At least the potential for success is there if everyone gives the PZF's and their joint action programmes a chance.

Rakai Case Study

by George Kasumba

Joint action has been undertaken in Rakai District to promote cooperation between the various actors as a test case under the Rakai District Development Plan (RDDP), supported by Danida. It was started to propagate new practices at the local level. However the sustainability of the process it has generated is not guaranteed. The situation is fragile and is threatened by a number of negative forces.

The context within which this experiment has taken place reflects the political history of Uganda and the associated laws. An additional influence on its direction has been the legacy of socio-economic ills such as Aids and poverty. Finally the major impetus for the actual development of the programme has been from an outside donor - Danida.

Decentralisation

Local authorities in Uganda were traditionally established to serve a highly centralised system of local governance inherited from the British colonial system. It was not until the early 1980's that a policy of decentralisation was developed by the guerrilla rebel movement - the National Revolutionary Movement (NRM). At this time, the policy was simply concerned with introducing political stability in the conquered areas, through a hierarchy of local Councils and committees. When the NRM came to power in 1986, they developed their decentralisation policy as a corner-stone for local development, introducing a number of innovations to try to make it more efficient and relevant to the country's changing situation.

The most fundamental of such innovations came in 1993 when the Government decided to strengthen political decentralisation by decentralising financial and administrative tasks to Districts and sub-counties. 13 Districts was selected to serve as pilot cases to exercise financial decentralisation. Rakai was one of them. So far all Districts and sub-counties in Uganda are autonomous local governments with a high degree of self-determination within the provisions of prescribed rules and regulations. Self-determination is understood in this context to mean:

- local people can elect their own political leaders at District, sub-county and other local levels;
- planning and budgeting independence, i.e. being free to mobilise resources and to allocate them according to local priorities;
- in the case of service delivery, being able to offer certain prescribed services to citizens according to the prevailing situation in each area.

Moving from a centralised system to a radically decentralised system with increased powers and responsibility for self determination in such a short time has created major challenges for all local authorities. Lack of knowledge, skills and experience in handling the new powers and responsibilities became the immediate hurdle to overcome. As if low capacity were not bad enough, these local authorities are now presented with an immediate increase in demand for quality services from their citizens. The situation is exacerbated by the poor infrastructure inherited from two decades of political turmoil and wars. Diseases, especially Aids and its far-reaching socio-economic impact, also made the transition to decentralisation a complicated process.

From the local government point of view, each year has brought fresh pressures. The community has been conditioned to expect almost everything from local government instead of the central government and this has subjected the District to ever-increasing demands for quality services. The other source of pressure is the increasing cost of running, maintaining and sustaining the physical investments that have been made. There seem to be only two options, either to broaden the District revenue base as much as possible, or given more time, for the District to pass on some of its responsibilities to the private sector.

The latter seems to be a more durable solution. However, it has to be long-term, because the private sector itself is relatively undeveloped and is not skilled to handle the programme's main focus on relief and social infrastructure provision. Because the problem of absolute poverty has got to be overcome as a priority, the District Council has only one option, which is to mobilise, motivate and encourage the contribution of all actors, especially non-state actors.

Donor Involvement in Decentralisation

With financial decentralisation in place, local government is expected to be responsible for the recurrent costs of service delivery. In the spirit of government policy changes, a number of donors undertook what seemed to them to be the risky initiative of devolving the operations of some of their development programmes to the District level. They saw it as risky because, although the decentralisation policy provided the overall legal framework for them to deal with local government, there were no established mechanisms to facilitate this kind of cooperation. Added to this that the contracting and management of donor resources was and still is highly centralised. The other risk was the limited knowledge and experience of local actors on how to handle donor-funded programmes.

The burden of responsibility that accompanied the devolved powers has brought serious fears to the local population whose excitement about decentralisation has slowly cooled off. Although ideally they should control every aspect of local government management according to the decentralisation framework, in fact, civil society is still uninformed, inexperienced, grossly illiterate, and poverty stricken. This impoverished civil society cannot be expected to control local administrators who are rich in comparison.

Given these limitations, donors that really chose to decentralise the management of their programmes had to be strongly motivated. Danida was one of the donors which strongly supported the decentralisation process, mainly because their Down tradition of well developed democratic civil society, and because it recognises the key role to be played by non-state institutions in providing checks and balances on government institutions. Their assumption was that after a long-term intervention by themselves, the local forces would embrace the initiatives and adopt joint action as a working practice.

How is Joint Action Understood in Rakai?

Joint action has arisen of necessity from the circumstances described above. It was within the policy of the national government although there was no

framework or mechanism to enable it. So, it was pressure from Danida to actually promote joint action that drove the RDDP. From the start, it was designed to be an experimental case to 'motivate' joint cooperation goals by influencing the attitudes, practices and behaviour of all local actors. The understanding was that joint action would:

- Encourage the involvement of NGO's and PSO's (Private Service Organisations), thus encouraging prudence in the use of local resources and liberalism and diversity in the delivery of social services as a long-term objective.
- NGO's/PSO's, which were already skilled and experienced, could help to enhance the capacity of local government departments.
- NGO's/PSO's could help to deliver products to the right targets on time.

Added Value

Danida agreed with the District and national government that a programme based on joint action would bring a number of benefits. They said that NGO's/PSO's could help to relieve local government of some of its burden. It was argued that by teaming more experienced NGO's/PSO's with the less experienced District institutions, an osmosis of skills, knowledge and working procedures would take place, building the capacity of District Council departments.

The growth of indigenous CBO's would also be supported through this approach. The involvement of local CBO, NGO, and PSO's was expected to enhance their capacity as development agents. Because of their direct interactions with the community, NGO's were seen to represent more effective methods of empowerment. A good example is the increased number of women politicians at all levels of local government and administrative units in Rakai District. From the villages up to the District level, the majority of women Councillors who were elected in the local elections at that time had, before coming into politics, an NGO or CBO background. Further advantages would be that:

- the lowest levels of the target beneficiaries would be reached;
- the traditional monopoly of delivering public services through government departments only would be broken, and

- increased competitiveness in the delivery of services would lead to more prudent use of resources.

Current Activities

In 1991, Danida agreed to finance the RDDP. Planning, design and implementation of this programme was so decentralised that it is widely regarded as one of the best models of donor support for decentralisation in the entire country. The programme was conceived with a multitude of development objectives (short, medium, and long-term). Some were remedial and emergency in nature and hence short-term, such as the case for the rehabilitation of the District's physical infrastructure and the Aids related social programmes. Other objectives that formed the main plank of the programme, included building the District's capacity to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development and improved living conditions for the people. Most of the programme's activities aimed to help the District cope with the challenges of decentralisation.

The recognition that programme objectives would take time to achieve was written into the contract from the beginning when the RDDP was given a 15 to 20 years time line. It was seen as equally important to recognise how the programme was operated as well as what was achieved. Designing the implementation approach of this programme was a very innovative venture because, as in other African countries, the working tradition of government was exclusive of all other parties. From the outset, the RDDP approach permitted maximum participation of all identifiable partners in the District, including local government, local administrative units, NGO's, CBO's, PSO's, and the general public.

Planning processes/Arrangements/Consultation/Decision Making

With so many actors in the District additional to the usual government actors the programme had to identify and use a number of strategies to achieve its overall objectives:

- a. **Joint programming:** The programme allowed for the involvement of NGO's in the programming of the various activities of the RDDP. However, District departments and NGO's did not sit together to carry out real joint planning as was originally envisaged.
- b. **Joint programme implementation:** This involved a two-pronged approach. Either the NGO's/PSO's were charged with full execution roles, or they served as contractors. In both cases, the NGO's/PSO's were required to work in close cooperation and collaboration with the respective District departments.
- c. **Joint annual review meetings:** A framework has been set up for joint annual reviews and reporting between the District departments and the NGO's/PSO's. These annual reviews provide opportunities to re-allocate funds from 'district activities' to 'NGO activities'.
- d. **Programme financial management:** A highly decentralised financial management approach has been adopted. The donor and the District Council have trusted and used the original financial administrative procedures of the NGO's/PSO's as long as those procedures guaranteed an acceptable degree of prudence. The programme has not demanded any special formats and standards of accounting. As a result, joint action has not resulted in extra and unnecessary demands on the NGO's/PSO's and it shows a high degree of trust with both donor and the local government handing over the control of resources to what may seem to be less efficient NGO's.

The programme has now been running for about 8 years and has gone through 2 phases.

The first phase (1991-1996) concentrated on relief support, infrastructure development, administrative capacity enhancement, and private sector development. In this phase, Danida's approach was probably the most advanced in the country. They displayed an unusually tolerant attitude towards local capacity problems and inefficiencies. This may have been because the same people who had participated in conceptualising the key RDDP objectives with a clear vision of the programme's objectives, were still present at the country mission throughout the first phase.

The second phase started in 1996 and is still in progress. Although much of the second phase activity is similar to the first phase, the programme this time tried

to align itself with the 5 year District development plan (DDP) making it an integral part. After the DDP was compiled, the District Council presented it to Danida and sought their funding. Danida responded by sending a Programme Appraisal Mission, which worked together with the different District departments and NGO's to produce the final version of the RDDP - phase 2. The process was reasonably decentralised and participatory involving all lower levels of local government.

However, the extent of participation by NGO's in planning the RDDP relates directly to the degree of their involvement in the DDP preparation. Although the DDP incorporated NGO activities in some of its key components together with District Council, central government and sub-county activities, most NGO's felt that their involvement in the planning process was inadequate. They were only called upon to provide projects for inclusion in the DDP depending whether or not they had secured or could secure funding for the projects, and not on whether their projects were poised to deliver products relevant to the people's problems. Consequently NGO's were not able to fully participate in the debates and preparatory activities which led to the production of the DDP with the result that NGO activities did not harmonise with the rest of the District activities. NGO project programmes ended up being included as annexes rather than integral parts of the DDP.

Those NGO's which are involved in the implementation of the RDDP activities were well motivated because they had already taken the initiative to contact the donor and had participated in the preliminary phase of the programme with Danida more than even the local District officials had. Despite the long period of NGO involvement in the initial planning and their experience of working with the donor, they had no visible influence on the subsequent planning activities of the District departments.

As part of the continuous programme planning strategy, an arrangement for annual review meetings (ARMs) was adopted. Under this arrangement all implementing parties can review programme performance and priorities and allocate resources on an annual basis to all the parties. The ARM process provides a good opportunity for initiatives to be taken to achieve durable cooperation between NGO's and the District Council. However, there is still a lot to be done to

build up a sincere desire for such relationships. There is still a noticeable sense of unease and reluctance by the District departments when allocating funds to NGO's. The donor still acts as the driving force for these interactions. Nevertheless, the ARM has, through time, become a significant avenue for enhancing effective cooperation between the NGO's and the District leadership. The preparatory processes are dominated by active interaction and lobbying by NGO's seeking the support of the District authorities for their requests to Danida. The last 3 ARMs have witnessed successive re-allocations made to NGO programmes from funds normally taken for programme components implemented by the District departments.

Occasionally Danida commissions its external auditors and evaluators to assess the performance of these NGO's and to give practical suggestions for activities needing improvement. These exercises are task-specific and are always organised with specific terms of reference jointly prepared by the NGO, the District Council and Danida.

The ARMs consist of two sessions. In the first, technical meetings about individual projects are held between the project implementers and the Danida delegation, looking at project implementation, constraints encountered, and the work plan for the new year. Prior to these meetings, the District Council compiles a programme status report including all these issues. Projects implemented by the NGO's are also discussed in the same way. The outcome of these preliminary meetings forms the main input to the draft ARM minutes which are compiled to feed into the second session.

The second session is the official negotiation between Danida and the top District leadership. The main purpose is to agree on the programme budget, to resolve big problems and generally to give direction to issues of strategic concern. An important matter normally handled in these official negotiations is the agreement about which programmes, short of funds, should be reallocated funds from programmes that have excess funds. All the key implementation issues including those concerning NGO activities are decided upon in these negotiations.

Financial Management

RDDP financial management is highly decentralised and represents an unusual case of donor trust. Funds from Danida are disbursed directly to the project implementers both to the District Council and to the NGO accounts. In each case, Danida follows procedures and guidelines agreed upon in the ARM. However for all NGO funding, copies of the disbursement letters are sent to the District Council for information.

At the project level, bookkeeping and other financial management procedures follow the original procedures of the implementing organisations. There are no special financial management procedures demanded by Danida. However prior to the start of the cooperation, Danida has to study and approve these. NGO's are required to submit monthly financial reports to Danida with copies to the District Council. As much as possible, the format of these reports retains the original structures used by each organisation.

At the end of each financial year, an audit exercise is carried out on the NGO's accounts, normally by an audit firm chosen by them. In situations where an NGO runs other activities funded by other donors, Danida demands that the annual audit exercise covers the entire range of activities. This is intended to give a more comprehensive view of the organisation's financial performance and hence offers more transparency. It also lessens NGO administrative requirements of making multiple audit exercises for each donor. Thus, Danida does not have to appoint its own auditors although in the funding contract this option is left open. Instead it relies on the report made by the NGO's own auditors as long as these auditors were appointed by their Board and not their management, and have a good professional reputation. Normally at the beginning of the cooperation, Danida approves the competence of the auditors used by an NGO.

The financial arrangements have worked well in a prevailing climate of negative attitudes and mindsets. It has contributed to a high degree of trust between Danida and the local NGO's. It has also demonstrated that even in areas that are regarded as highly sensitive by the NGO's, such as audit exercises, it has been possible to develop mutual understanding.

Programme Implementation

Two approaches to implementation have been used. The first was for NGO's/private sector organisations to implement directly. In this case the entire authority and responsibility to execute the programme were entrusted to these organisations to be run in the same way as their other activities. Examples included Aids education, counselling and patients care, credit programmes, business advisory services and orphans registration and support. NGO's were seen to have comparative advantages in particular fields.

The second approach was through sub-contracting through which District departments contracted out parts of their project activities to private sector organisations where they again had comparative advantage. The level of technical expertise and cost effectiveness were the leading factors governing the decision about who did what. Through this approach, when the choice of agency was made, the supply of goods and other specialised services for the projects administered by the District departments was contracted to the private sector organisations. If local district-based PSO's were preferred and they did not have the necessary capacity, sub contracting and twinning between the District based organisations and other national or international organisations was encouraged.

Capacity building for small private sector organisations was undertaken by the programme as part of this implementation strategy. This ranged from direct capacity building support like financial and administrative support of local NGO's, to indirect support like training and mobilisation sessions carried out by the programme in 1993. This was designed for individual artisans and builders to encourage them to organise themselves into small companies and to compete for some of the programme contracts. Unfortunately in some cases, the targeted capacity has not been adequately generated. For instance despite the six years of active cooperation between COWI Consult and the District Works Department, there isn't much visible change in terms of knowledge and skills of the people in the Works Department. Instead they have tended to sit back and relax because COWI - Consult was doing their job.

Lessons Learned

After 8 years of working alongside each other, the vision of joint action is not yet fully realised. However, many relevant lessons concerning the establishment of a durable relationship between NGO's and the District Council are being learned from the RDDP.

Successes and Added Value

There is no doubt that the innovative partnership approach has been successful as exemplified by the practical programmes on the ground. It has proved to be an excellent alternative avenue for channeling aid to the wider community in situations where the District Council department could not adequately do it. For example when CERUDEB was motivated to start its operations in the District, there was only one financial institution i.e. the State-owned Uganda Commercial Bank (UCB) which operated in a highly monopolistic manner. CERUDEB is now the biggest Commercial Bank in the District in terms of commercial banking operations for the disadvantaged.

The so called 'forced partnership' has in fact yielded many positive results and genuine relationships have started to grow. One such case is the partnership between the District Community Services Department and the Orphans Community Based Organisation (OCBO). In 1992, the two parties were put together to implement a programme for supporting vulnerable children in the district. Although the origin of this partnership was as induced as any other, the 'marriage' seems to have produced some promising practices. Besides implementing the children's programme, the two parties have since interacted on a more person to person level, and there have been a number of other activities where they have worked jointly. This positive outcome is attributed to the attitudes of the personalities involved, particularly a rather liberal minded department leader more than the policies of the two organisations.

Another benefit from the new way of operating occurred during 1997-98 when Danida suspended disbursement of its funds through the District Council. This was because of financial mismanagement incidents that took place in the 1996/97

financial year. So instead of punishing innocent citizens, it was agreed that the District Council would temporarily hand over key programme activities to NGO's/PSO's and consultants. This arrangement continued until 1999, when the District Council fulfilled the agreed conditions for Danida to lift its suspension. In this case, NGO's and PSO's played a crucial role preventing a complete halt in a programme that could have been wasteful as well as painful to the innocent beneficiaries.

Sub-contracting has proved to be very successful not least because it has helped create employment opportunities and enhance incomes. It has provided timely and quality delivery of road rehabilitation programmes through a joint action between the District Works Department - the client - and private road contractors and COWI Consult. Similarly, the construction of District Council offices was carried out by a number of local contractors. This approach also had secondary capacity building impacts. For instance, although some local contracting firms were organised purely for the purpose of participating in the programme, a good number still exist. In this case, the programme has yielded more than the targeted results.

Barriers/Mindsets

The success of the RDDP is much acknowledged by insiders and by outside agencies. However to be sustainable and to be more effective the barriers to progress have to be recognised and dealt with. For example, the attitudes of the District Council remain largely fixed and uncompromising. On top of this, a key result of the history of Uganda has been its effect on the people who are key stakeholders in any decentralised development practices and processes. In Rakai as elsewhere in the country the following general limitations exist:

- The civilian population still view the local administrators as having a 'glorified' masterly status;
- They are not very clear how the elected representatives are supposed to relate to them and what kind of feedback they should expect;
- They, who are supposedly the new controllers, look entirely upon the local administrators to tell them what they need to know in order to perform their controlling.

Empowering people to stand up and demand their rights and quality services is obviously a key way to prepare them to take up their new responsibilities. However local people are at a critical crossroads. Their voice is still too weak to influence the behaviour of the officers and to determine the direction of their decisions. The fact that their source of information is usually from government representatives and more often than not such information is to serve the interests of government is disempowering. Finally, poverty has made the people over-dependent on the District Council because of their inability to pay for the most basic services.

Attitudes of Partners

One of the Rakai experiences which illustrates the local government mindset has been the failure of District officials to adequately recognise the role played by NGO's in service delivery even though NGO's sometimes play a bigger role than the District departments themselves. A reason given for this has been that services delivered by NGO's were not traditionally mandated to be undertaken by the Districts before decentralisation and local leaders did not appreciate the excellent roles played by NGO's in these areas. Such services include relief services, orphans programmes, poverty alleviation programmes and programmes which relate to public awareness, human rights and community education.

This 'invisible' role of NGO's has been observed even when they have been operating directly in those sectors traditionally mandated for local government. The World Vision programme was an example. In the past two years, they funded the reconstruction of 16 schools in Rakai District, against nothing at all done by the District Council. Despite the size of this contribution, District officials claimed not to be aware of what World Vision was doing and not having been part of the decision making. They refer to it as a World Vision programme.

Streamlining cooperation and partnership between NGO's and local government is a two-way process. Unfortunately, most local government officials in the District do not see it this way. They see NGO's as minor partners who should come to them. On the other hand, since NGO's in most cases do not receive funds from local government, they also see no reason to bend, thus leaving no chance for compromise. What is agreed is that the onus to break this stalemate lies with both parties.

Even if attitudes were positively adjusted, the working methods of the District departments still reflect orthodox bureaucracy and rigidity, which make it difficult for skilled NGO's and PSO's to apply their innovative ways of handling things. Inadequate operational funding to the departments and low staff morale also contribute to this rigidity.

An example occurred in the aftermath of the cooperation between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the District Community Services Department. This was one of the most serious cases of active cooperation in the school rehabilitation programme. LWF was the implementing NGO and worked in close collaboration with the District community development assistants to mobilise community contributions to the project. Throughout the 4 years of project implementation, the joint approach yielded excellent results, especially motivating and giving job satisfaction to the community development assistants. In fact, as a result of this motivation, the District managed to recruit and retain community development assistants for all the 23 sub-counties. However, since the end of the project, the enthusiasm among these workers completely diminished. Already half have dropped out. The main reason for this disenchantment, as accounted for by some of the community development assistants themselves, has been inadequate facilitation by the District to complete their working programmes.

Conflicts

It has been shown that conflicts arise in the implementation of programmes because:

- traditionally, most NGO's are suspicious of governments, their relationships varying from neutral to outright hostility. Government is also suspicious of NGO's. These attitudes come from lack of common strategy, duplication of services, lack of transparency, inefficiency, communication gaps and personality clashes;
- conflicting interests and agendas within District departments or politicians make dialogue and consensus impossible, undermining the efficiency of the NGO inputs;

- different priorities and strategies on both sides and failure to identify common grounds;
- successful experiments by NGO's cannot be replicated because government structures lack the ability to quickly adopt new ideas;
- there is a fundamental need for NGO's to increase their development impact without losing their traditional flexibility, value base and effectiveness or being accused of developing political tendencies at the local level;
- the roots of NGO comparative advantage lie in the quality of relationships they can create, not in the size of resources they can command. Some NGO's appear to have lost sight of this fact in a headlong rush for growth, influence and status, forgetting that voluntarism and values are their most precious asset.

NGO's Together?

Another factor obstructing joint action, is the lack of a strong representative base for the non-state actors. This weakens their bargaining power and undermines their legitimacy as major development partners. Although Rakai District has a large number of NGO's and CBO's, they tend to exist as individuals rather than having a serious joint voice. As in other countries, NGO's/CBO's have distinct interests, aims and targets and an ongoing feeling of competition between them for precious funds. Very few of them see the need to work as a team. The interaction takes place between local government officials who are seen as the 'almighty', and individual NGO's or CBO's. The Rakai Joint Welfare Advisory Council formed in the early 1990's to serve as an interface with the District Council is too fragile to be effective and tends to be a routine talk shop.

Another major issue appearing in Rakai but which applies to many NGO's, especially the international ones, is their inadequate local mandate. Most either have foreign origins or have been formed by external agents. So their main pre-occupation is to fulfil short to medium term objectives for which they were created rather than to promote the development of strong institutional linkages which would guarantee their survival.

This does not mean that the local NGO's are any better. A look at the six local non-state actors that participated in the implementation of the RDDP since 1992 confirms this. Despite the long period of operating under one common

denominator, i.e. the RDDP, these organisations have never come together to discuss issues of common concern. Every year they all face the mighty Danida and the District Council in the ARM to lobby for funding for their activities, and they do it standing alone.

In 1998, two of these organisations, RAIN, and Kitovu Home Care, both working in the field of Aids treatment and community education and counselling nearly 'clashed' as a result of finding themselves working in the same geographical location. This matter, simple as it appears, could not be sorted out by the two organisations on their own. It took the intervention of the Annual Review Meeting and the mediation of the District Council before the two organisations could initiate meetings to work together. In the end, two meetings resolved everything.

Local Politics

As in many parts of Africa where local democracy is in its infancy, local politicians who are supposed to represent the people's interests and views, end up representing their own personal interests. There are no established mechanisms for two-way communication and feedback between the representatives and the people who elected them. They also sometimes try and pressurise NGO's to shift and work in their constituencies, which really puts off the NGO's.

This problem has affected all local NGO's especially those who receive their funding from Danida. It is cited as the main reason for NGO's to keep quiet about their activities and to act alone. They claim that whenever they try to open up to the local authorities, they become subjected to all kinds of political interference. Unfortunately, they claim most of the interference derives from the selfish motives of individuals wanting to benefit from NGO programmes.

Role of Donors

Throughout implementation of the RDDP, the approach has been pushed more from the donor's side than from the District Council. The District departments have continued to view NGO's as their adversaries competing for the same Danida resources. There have been many informal instances where NGO's have been

accused by the District technical heads of taking the biggest part of Danida money at the expense of the District departments. Arrogance on the District side has been cited by the NGO's as being the main reason for the failures.

What is observed is that District technical staff and politicians approve the funds for allocations to NGO's because Danida wishes to see continuation of their involvement in the programme. In other words, the issue of NGO's having a comparative advantage in certain fields was not a concept conceived by the District Council departments but rather by Danida. The District has as yet never been genuinely convinced about the legitimate need to work with NGO's. This has been compounded by control that has ultimately been held by Danida. So when Danida is happy, the programme has moved reasonably well despite the sort of problems described above. However when Danida is less happy, this puts a very difficult burden on the local actors.

The lack of growth of District capacity and that of the local institutions and organisations was accepted by Danida in the first phase during which they were willing to support programmes that aimed to enhance the operational capacity of these organisations. In the second phase to date, these limitations are now seen by Danida as threats to their continued operation in the District. This latest phase indicates a significant shift in Danida's attitudes compared with its original attitudes in 1991.

A lesson for donors from the Rakai experience is that they must persevere and look for remedies rather than threaten withdrawal. Listening to the community and allowing time for remedial processes to take place would seem to be a more positive way forward.

Conclusions

This case reveals that achieving the best from joint cooperation for effective decentralisation in Rakai District, or generally in Uganda, demands not only an enabling atmosphere to be created, but also that deliberate investments must reinforce these attempts, otherwise the impact is short-lived. The desired joint action goals cannot be achieved by just encouraging the two parties to work

together on one programme as was thought at the beginning of the RDDP. There has to be some deliberate action to propagate the desired relationship in the programme design. The induced cooperation has to be encouraged and supported until it brings spontaneous interaction between the various players.

Pre-Requisites for Successful Joint Action

The experiences of Rakai provide some valuable hints on what may be missing. The following proposals have been put forward to rectify some of the problems detailed above:

- a. *Citizens* should be educated about the local development process as part of the programme design which should also emphasise the role to be played by all the players, and need for equal relationships with each other. This would enlighten the citizens about their rights, duties and responsibilities. It will also mobilise the minds of common people to start owning the NGO activities in just the same way as they do for activities funded with their own CBO funds. Such interventions could make citizens strong enough to demand equal accountability from all development players. This will take time and is a long-term solution.
- b. *Constant consultations and exchange of information* must be initiated including both formal and informal contacts necessary to build up mutual trust. Both District officials and NGO's have weaknesses and experience failures of some sort. Linkages and collaborations between the District Council and NGO's will offer the means to address these weaknesses and to exploit the strengths of both to a greater effect. Encouraging constant dialogue in Rakai between the different categories of actors will gradually eliminate mistrust between them. NGO's and the District Council should hold a series of discussions specifically focused on how to minimise their differences. This same dialogue should be encouraged at all levels i.e. District, sub-county and community level. Initially this dialogue should be facilitated by a neutral non-governmental professional actor who can add expertise in fostering such partnerships.
- c. Facilitating the establishment of an *institutional framework* for the non-state actors. This will be done through, first of all, facilitating dialogue between the non-state actors themselves, and later between them and the State and donor

community representatives. The case of the Zimbabwean decentralised cooperation programme is an example that could be worth replicating in Uganda. Such a framework would include full and equal representation of local government associations, as well as NGO and CBO umbrella groups.

- d. Finally, politics and personal selfish motives should be separated from development. The District Council should endeavour to *understand* the missions, visions, goals and strategies of NGO's and try to marry them with the District aspirations and *cross-fertilise* ideas. They should also, with the NGO's, design an effective system to coordinate all of their activities, free from political interference and manipulation.
- e. Publicity about good practice of joint action elsewhere in Uganda and beyond would help to encourage local actors struggling with joint action.

The Donor

Danida is well aware that the level of capacity building for the NGO's and other civil society organisation at the local government level is very low. They should therefore continue to be tolerant of the problems arising from this and help to develop local capacity for all the actors. On the positive side, Danida has generally shown trust for the local actors which has been quite unusual and which has worked.

There are thus lessons to be learned by donors if they want to support successful joint action. They need to adopt a positive perception of the NGO's shortcomings in the same way as they have tolerated the weaknesses of local governments. Both donors and local government should perceive the capacity deficiencies of local NGO's/CBO's as transitional challenges and should cooperate with them to find ways to enhance their capacity.



Pikine Case Study¹⁰

By Nicolas Laurent

New forms of collaboration between municipalities and civil society are being experienced within different parts of the African continent. Joint Action is not unique to Eastern and Southern Africa but is also under exploration in Western Africa. This is evidenced by the 'Projet de Ville de Pikine' aiming at the initiation and execution of a participatory strategic planning exercise in the one million inhabitants town of Pikine, situated in the outskirts of Dakar, Senegal.

The origin of the project can be traced to a request of the mayor of Pikine to ENDA Tiers Monde (an international development organisation based in Dakar) to assist in the elaboration and implementation of a development plan for the entire city. The overall context for the initiation of this project was the new decentralisation policy of the Senegalese government in 1996 which attributed new roles and structures to the administration of the municipalities. Pikine received greater managerial and political responsibility, accompanied by a sub-division of its municipality into 16 districts ('communes d'arrondissement'), each with its own administration and mayor.

Conceptually, the 'Projet de Ville' constitutes a process of consultation and participatory planning between all actors involved at the municipal level. It embraces members of the municipal administration, elected politicians, non-governmental organisations (NGO's), community groups, associations and the private sector. The idea was born out of the partnership approach of 'Local Agenda 21', which aims to initiate an urban transformation process resulting in the betterment of living conditions of its inhabitants, but equally resulting in improved local governance and exchange between political leaders and citizens.

The overall objective of the 'Projet de Ville' was to support the city of Pikine to elaborate a strategic plan for municipal planning and management, which reflects local needs. More specifically, the project aimed to establish a series of strategic plans at the local level, to create a framework for managing participatory

¹⁰ This summary is based on a case study prepared by ENDA- Ecopop, Dakar, Senegal

local development and to realise a better coordination of activities between Pikine's individual districts and the central municipality. The project was designed through a consultative process between ENDA and the municipal administration of Pikine leaning on a four-pillar strategy. First, putting the actors at the centre, by way of providing opportunities for dialogue, negotiation and decision making. Second, with interventions at both the district and municipal levels. Third, focusing on different sectors (environment, health and education, commerce, etc.). Fourth, following a process approach allowing for learning and experimentation.

Implementation and Results Achieved

Although two years of implementation is a relatively short time span to validate and analyse the approach taken, the case reveals a first set of findings. Not surprisingly, participatory planning for municipal planning at the scale of a one million inhabitants town is difficult to realise. To officially launch the process, a set of preparatory meetings and a workshop with representatives of all stakeholder groups was organised. This was followed by a one-year period of consultation, diagnosis and planning involving stakeholders and resource persons, who engaged themselves voluntarily in the project.

Three channels were used to facilitate data collection and reflection. As a first step, consultation forums in each of Pikine's 16 districts discussed how to improve the local environment, economic and social development as well as culture and sports facilities. Second was the creation of district committees to elaborate an action plan based on recommendations made, to stimulate the execution of activities and to facilitate interaction and exchange between the district administration and the population. A third channel was the establishment of five thematic commissions at municipal level to provide frameworks for reflection and advice on environment, socio-economic development, local governance, public-civic communication and information exchange, as well as on the development of the education, cultural and sports sector.

This preparatory process was characterised by the active involvement of ENDA and the comparative absence of the municipal administration, as the case

critically remarks. NGO's heavily relied on community leaders as well as youth and women associations to start the process and to keep the momentum going. The presence of the private sector was relatively low throughout the entire period, which is partly attributed to a low institutional representation of the sector and to their lack of resources to get engaged on a voluntary basis. The case also remarks a hindering influence of the electoral system. Due to electoral considerations, there was political pressure to begin with the project as soon as possible and thereby prevent a solid preparation of the process.

Generally speaking, the three-tier mechanism to facilitate data collection and planning showed very positive results. The consultation forums provided space for the citizens to articulate needs and viewpoints and brought problem solving proposals to the surface. More important, however, was that for the first time ever, the population, the administration and the politicians could engage in a dialogue which was accepted by all parties concerned. The situation was slightly different concerning the functioning of the district committees. Only 10 out of 16 districts formulated action plans. Reasons for this relate to a lack of capacities of local functionaries to guide the process and - at times - to conflicting relations between members of the committees and local authorities, including the politicians. In the initial phase, a confusion existed about the role civic representatives and commune based organisations could take in the planning process and to what extent they could get involved in municipal management. But it is remarkable that in most districts this period transformed into a phase of open and constructive dialogue which elevated the role of the district committees from pure consultative organs to actors with decision making influence. Concerning the thematic commissions, around 100 persons from technical services of the state, research centres, NGO's and community based organisations participated. In these commissions, elected Councillors were largely absent.

Parallel to the work of the committees and the commissions, two training seminars were organised with stakeholder groups to enhance their dialogue and negotiation capacities. One was on local governance and civic participation for municipal employees and local leaders, the other on female leadership and local mobilisation for elected women and female leaders of community associations. This capacity building exercise was positively evaluated and contributed to the realisation of follow-up actions at the district level, such as sensitisation of the

communities to participate in the process, the initiation of cleaning and sanitation campaigns as well as an institutional regrouping, i.e. the re-composition and creation of community associations and collectives.

Concerning the management of the 'Projet de Ville', an institutional structure was set up with a steering committee presided over by the mayor and comprising Councillors and municipal functionaries, a technical commission and a technical support unit. This however, did not function in the envisaged manner. The steering committee only met occasionally, the other two organs never met and a process of letting ENDA - originally recruited to facilitate the project - move into the 'drivers seat' of operations was put in motion. Consequently, the reduced ownership taken by the municipal administration impacted negatively on the overall sustainability of the project.

This became evident concerning the financial management of 'Projet de Ville'. Although a co-financing arrangement with the municipal administration was agreed on, the town hall did not engage as foreseen and forced ENDA to pre-finance the execution of activities in order to keep the momentum going. This situation was prevalent during the entire first two years of implementation, caused by red tape from donors, as well as disagreement between one major donor and the Town Hall on the reduction of municipal staff resulting in the withholding of funds for social projects and infrastructure.

Impact

Two years is a short period to evaluate a process, which is entirely new to a town with one million inhabitants. Impact is certainly difficult to measure and can only be derived through indications reflecting progress or barriers of the process. The principal evaluation mechanism the project was constituted through a systematic participatory self-assessment, which was undertaken after each operational phase of the project (conceptualisation, mobilisation, consultation via forums and elaboration of action plans). In parallel, external evaluations were undertaken by consultants and researchers as well as a series of ad-hoc reflections and brainstorming between ENDA and local actors.

The overall picture emerging from the evaluation indicators, such as the number of persons mobilised, the quality of documents produced, and feed-back received via systematic and non-systematic evaluations, reflect impact in principally five areas.

First, and most measurable, was the initiation of a reflection process which allowed for the collection of data for planning and analysis, as well as the bottom-up gathering of proposals for municipal development. This helped to construct a shared vision among stakeholders on local development at the level of Pikine municipality.

Second, signs of a rising and active civic society could be noted, which is taking its role as a mature partner to assist the municipal administration in decision making and implementation. However, questions are raised to what extent this development can be sustained, in view of the limited time and resources available on the side of voluntarily engaged civic actors and a relative long transaction time to convert planning into immediate benefits for the population.

A third impact mentioned is the evolution of new dialogue patterns between different actors, notably also the re-creation of dialogue and interaction between different political actors of the municipality. These new habits of interaction seem to be sustainable - as it is perceived at this stage. But the case writer also expresses a word of caution, indicating that such successes were partially built on the strong presence in the process of ENDA. Moreover, the dialogue had created conflicts among associations, and between associations and the politicians, which at times were difficult to manage and which have not been solved in all cases.

Fourth, a positive impact on local management practices was recorded. The project permitted the creation of a platform for citizens to also exercise control on their district administrations. Concerning the district mayors, enhanced management capacities were noted and a better ability to interact with local representatives.

Finally, the project contributed to a remodelling of local leadership. Members of community based organisations took more responsibilities, resource persons emerged out of the consultative process and community based organisations - by

way of participating in the commune committees - changed their role from exclusive implementers to planning partners.

Lessons Learned

The decentralisation policy of the Senegalese government and the relative political stability had a positive influence on the initiation and advancement of the project. Without this overall framework, no such experimentation could have been undertaken on this scale. A further positive element was the presence of an impartial and neutral facilitating NGO, accepted by all parties, and able to mobilise a wide range of local actors.

An evident barrier and key to the advancement and sustainability of the project was the overall limited appropriation and ownership taken by local political actors, at municipal and at district level alike, despite the emergence of new dialogue dynamics in a number of districts. A good deal of responsibility was left in the hands of ENDA, based on an erroneous interpretation of the project by local politicians as a technical process rather than a political one. Moreover, political rivalries and confusion about new decision making mechanisms contributed to this.

Other factors impacting negatively on the progress of the project were the very large scale of intervention and the weak capacities of different local actors, making it at times difficult for the initiators of the project to adequately address the emerging dynamics in the various districts. In this context, the weaknesses of the elected Councillors was one of the main 'blockages', as was lack of understanding about participatory and strategic planning approaches. Additionally, the project was misused by the Councillors for campaigning and promotion purposes.

Finally, the difficulty to manage short-term expectations of the population with a lengthy planning process is a serious challenge for the sustainability of the project. The willingness of the population to engage in an extensive negotiation and planning process is limited if it does not result in tangible results at the

neighbourhood level within a reasonable time frame. Both the planning process and the mobilisation of funds have to be carefully managed by the municipality. The effects of lack of funding for social projects and infrastructure on the motivation of the population should not be underestimated.

After two years of operations, the 'Projet de Ville' is only partially anchored in the dynamics of municipal planning and management. In order to get this experiment beyond the present intermediary stage three principal points for action are identified:

- The politicians need to engage themselves in a constructive manner in the project in order to carry forward commonly agreed plans. Committed human and financial investments have to be realised.
- There is a need to realise projects at Pikine's district level. Action plans have been formulated and expectations have been raised to improve the environment, social services and the economic situation.
- To reinforce the ownership of the process, the population has to be better informed about the aims and characteristics of the project. To this effect, a communication strategy to better reach out into the communities, to raise awareness and to make the citizen a principal pillar of the project needs to be developed.

Conclusions

The initiation and implementation of the project has been relevant and innovative in the context of Senegal, in particular in view of new government policies to decentralise and democratise society. The creation of local partnerships to facilitate interaction and planning for the common good at the scale of a one-million inhabitant community, targeting various sectors and working through two layers of local government is a unique undertaking. At the same time, it aimed to surpass the level of a technical planning exercise and to transform it into a process for democratic learning and experimentation. After two years of operations, the project has shown very encouraging results in terms of civic participation and their interaction with local politicians. But it has also made clear how difficult it is to get mind-sets and attitudes of actors changed - in particular

those of Councillors, who have had considerable difficulties to adapt to this new style of public management.

The challenge for the project is now to follow up on the expectations created, to fully analyse the data and to finalise the strategic planning framework, and to get funding in order to realise tangible results at the ground. Moreover, those who are politically responsible have to carry this project forward. Otherwise, the momentum is likely to take a different turn, resulting possibly in a de-motivation of the population and their abstaining from the political process.



Voices from Mombasa

A local government perspective

Interview with Charles Katiza, Secretary General, African Union of Local Authorities

After obtaining a diploma in local government administration and finance, Katiza worked in Zimbabwe's local government for ten years. From 1976 to 1980, he was a student in the United Kingdom. He subsequently returned to Zimbabwe, working in the Ministry of Local Government. From 1984 onwards, he has been associated with the African Union of Local Authorities (AULA) becoming its Secretary General in 1992.

AULA's mission: Strengthen local government

AULA represents local governments on issues, trends and prospects. We express concerns of local government to various structures of governments and inter-governmental institutions. We gather, develop and disseminate information to our members, particularly on issues like decentralisation, democracy and good governance. We undertake research on topical issues which impact on local government. We facilitate linkages between African local governments and their counterparts in other countries.

Challenges for local governments

The major challenge facing local government is limited resources. There is also limited capacity in district Councils - few people are professionally qualified. The other challenge is that decentralisation undertaken in Africa tends to lack support necessary for autonomy to be meaningful. However, there we are seeing a change of attitude towards local authorities as it becomes increasingly appreciated that where local government is weak there is deterioration of infrastructure and services.

Some countries have gone further by including local government in their constitutions

There are variations among the countries in Southern, East and West Africa. While some countries include local government in their constitutions, others are yet to democratise the system. Others are still sceptical about the prospect of decentralisation and devolving power to local governments. Local authorities and central governments have to learn from each other in order to improve their local structures so as to improve service delivery. Exchange of information on best practices can assist local and central governments and facilitate transparency, democracy and good governance.

While local authorities in the North are more developed and perhaps more autonomous than in the South, they also have lessons to learn. For example, urban authorities in Zimbabwe generate more than 95% of their revenues from their own sources, in the UK, roughly 72% of local government budgets is probably funded through grants from central government.

Whatever the case, there are many people who still think that service delivery and development are a preserve of central governments. The reality is that when development programmes are handled by local authorities, more tends to be achieved. We need central governments to facilitate the work of local authorities. Local authorities are closest to the people and would always work within the macro economic development framework because they are the closest allies of government. They are governments at the local level.

For this reason, AULA supports a World Charter on Local Self-Government that could be adopted by the United Nations. It would encourage world governments to adopt universally accepted principles within which they can formulate laws governing local government institutions. Political will and commitment on the part of national governments is very essential.

The future of joint action

Like community development, joint action needs to take on board local authorities and their national associations otherwise its success will be compromised or limited. Joint action requires integrity. We have to remove personalities of doubtful ethics. Local authorities must be party to the joint action process.

National associations negotiate with central governments, provide inputs for policy formulation and coordinate the interests and challenges facing local authorities. It is important that each local authority should have a joint action office or desk that coordinates the efforts of NGO's and the private sector. This helps to ensure that local authorities take into account the needs of civil society as they develop their policies and subsequent development strategies and plans.



Chapter 4

Joint Action - The Way Forward



Joint Action - The Way Forward

The growing interest in joint action partnerships between local government and civil society reflects a wider concern to explore more effective ways to attack poverty, bring about sustainable development and strengthen local governance.

The 'rolling back' of the State's control over the development process, and the emergence of new actors in development in civil society, lower levels of government and the private sector has meant that new modalities are needed to manage the development process and development cooperation resources.

Decentralised cooperation is an emerging 'inclusive' approach to development cooperation which seeks to involve all actors in development policy planning and implementation. Finding ways to do this in practice is difficult. In this regard, joint action premised on the building of partnerships between local development actors is pertinent to the thinking behind decentralised cooperation and offers potentially practical lessons of experience to draw from.

Yet joint action itself is comparatively novel. In principle, it makes sense, and there is evidence that joint action can make a positive contribution to local development. Equally, there are indications that significant challenges in each individual environment need to be overcome before joint action is more widely adopted. This closing chapter presents key lessons from past experience. It also sets out guiding principles to implement joint action, and identifies a capacity building agenda to support joint action on the ground.

Key Lessons

A main conclusion is that joint action can indeed provide a viable and valuable new approach to local development. The seven different illustrations of ways in which the joint action concept has been applied in practice may not necessarily have been a representative sample, and there are surely many other examples of

the approach that could offer useful lessons. However, they provide a basis to compare and contrast concepts, approaches used, results achieved and to identify key factors which affect success and failure. Some of the key lessons are reproduced here.

How Joint Action is Understood and Operationalised

- Few programmes are guided by a clear conceptual understanding of how to approach joint action. In practice, it is carried out in quite different and often ad-hoc ways to serve different purposes. What is practiced is strongly influenced by local contextual factors, as well as by the interpretations of key individual and institutional stakeholders that champion the approach.
- An absence of conceptual clarity or agreement on some basic principles can lead to misunderstandings and raise different expectations. This has implications for project design, the roles and responsibilities of the partners, and the results.
- Two main approaches can be identified. The first is where joint action represents a more institutionalised and political process seeking to bring local development actors to participate in structured dialogue and decision-making. The second is where joint action is part of a project methodology to bring local development actors to jointly plan and implement a more defined set of time-bound and issue-specific local development initiatives. It is not necessarily linked into the wider policy making process.
- As an institutionalised process, joint action is usually built on local government structures that already exist. As a more narrowly defined project or programme framework, it is usually organised through parallel structures and procedures to facilitate the preparation and implementation of defined project goals.
- While insights are provided into the types of decision-making and consultative structures put in place, issues concerning financial management and monitoring and evaluation are not addressed in depth. Few if any of the programmes examined have systems for monitoring and evaluation. Yet these remain critical elements of any partnership, and can be the difference between

success and failure. In this regard, ensuring that lines of accountability are both upward and downward is important.

Achievements

- Through joint action, local stakeholders have been able to develop new local policies and plans, as well as to implement concrete local development activities. In Rakai, the quality and range of services such as AIDS counselling, credit facilities, road rehabilitation and business advisory services have been improved. In Same, there are reported improvements in relation to revenue collection, privatisation of the local market, rehabilitation of low-cost housing, and primary schools. In Mutare, there have been some significant environmental and housing achievements. Examples include securing land for squatter up-grading, new practices and facilities for the safe disposal of industrial waste, and new opportunities for solid waste collection for recycling and local income generation. In Mombasa, the beautification project has led to an assortment of upgrading and rehabilitation activities within different parts of the city centre. In Nakuru, joint action has facilitated the preparation of a strategic structure plan, the improvement of management of the bus park and market area, and rehabilitation of low-cost housing.
- Some of the most significant achievements are of a 'process' nature. Building confidence in new partnerships is a pre-condition for effective and sustainable programme delivery.
- The cases point to the progress made towards building new working relationships among local development actors. Successes have been recorded in terms of bringing traditionally 'un-willing' actors around the table to plan and manage local development concerns. The cases show how formal decision making processes have been opened up to non-governmental participation. Several cases also report growing recognition of the comparative advantages and skills that different actors can bring to bear. Others point to the need to overcome mistrust and suspicion between the actors. The positive impact of dialogue on building trust and confidence, easing tensions, helping to build consensus around policy issues, and new task divisions is also noted. Also

significant is the impact such processes have on the coherence of the civil society sector. In this regard, joint action has helped strengthen local capacities and has engendered the community's confidence in its ability to address its own development challenges.

- Reports of success have to be balanced by a note of caution with regard to possible risks and failures. The cases allow us to distill a number of barriers and a key success factors that can influence the way in which local partnerships between local governments and civil society are created and sustained. The key points are summarised below.

Barriers and Success Factors

The main barriers to success are conflicts related to organisational cultures and interests, and capacity constraints.

- Local governments and civil society organisations often remain 'unwilling partners,' suspicious of each other. Local authorities are criticised for being hierarchic and directive, rather than flexible and facilitative, and for not acknowledging the contribution that NGO's can make. Councils are also criticised for demonstrating a lack of commitment to partnership.
- Civil society organisations are criticised for being too concerned about retaining their autonomy and freedom to act. This may be due to bad experiences but it can also be for reasons of self-interest, and indeed self-preservation. They also face organisational difficulties, particularly concerning representation and accountability. Self-interest can frustrate efforts to build a common platform while sometimes the transient nature of local communities can make it difficult to institutionalise a constituency for civic organisations. Competition among NGO's for resources can undermine efforts to work jointly.
- Capacity constraints affect both local authorities and civil society organisations. A distinction can be made between broader capacity constraints affecting the basic functioning of local institutions and those that specifically affect joint action processes.

- Serious capacity constraints exist within local Councils as a result of ongoing decentralisation processes. Inadequate management capacities, fiscal constraints as well as other basic incentive factors affect the performance and motivation of local administrators. Poor levels of remuneration have led to high staff turnover, particularly among the more capable. With respect to joint action, new skills and aptitudes are required to enable Council officials to engage in a meaningful way in consultative and participatory processes. Skills in dialogue, presentation, negotiation, conflict resolution, consensus-building and compromise are needed.
- Regarding the wide range of non-governmental actors, technical capacity constraints can undermine their confidence and ability to engage with Council professionals. This is particularly the case for community-based organisations. For NGO's, poor organisational capacities can make it difficult for them to maintain effective lines of communication and accountability with their constituencies. Wider constraints such as poverty, low levels of literacy and poor access to information can affect the willingness and ability of local people to commit time and resources. The issue of gender and the position of women in relation to decision-making is also a constraint to ensuring adequate representation of their views in the community.

Four key success factors can be drawn:

- Cases point to the importance of an 'enabling' policy and institutional environment to facilitate joint action. Supportive legislation, appropriate instruments, and evidence of political commitment at the national level help make joint action more than a residual activity.
- All the cases point to the key role of a change agent in fostering joint action. Institutional change agents require support from key local individuals to make things happen on the ground, and it is clear that such policy champions have been critical to successes recorded. Building alliances between principal stakeholder groups is important, as is nurturing local political support. Dependence on key policy champions, in the absence of wider support, can undermine the sustainability of such processes. Risks are highest where processes are catalysed by external agencies.

- Incentives are critical in drawing wider participation and commitment in joint action. Where change in routines is called for, and where risks and threats to power and authority are likely, participants from all sides must be convinced of the benefits. Partnership depends on the different actors finding common interest and being willing to compromise for the greater good of all.
- A capacity development approach that emphasises process facilitation, working through local organisations, encouraging ownership through participation and providing a long-term perspective, is necessary. The time dimension involved in changing social and organisational behaviour and in setting out new rules of the game has to be acknowledged. Clear targets need to be set, new structures and procedures need to be created, training is required, but all these things need to be brought about in a consultative and iterative manner. Participatory and consultative methodologies and techniques should therefore be adopted. In particular, adequate up-front institutional analysis and diagnosis, done in a participatory manner is helpful. A balance has to be achieved between process dimensions and practical activities in order to maintain popular interest. Joint monitoring by different stakeholders can help sustain interest and accountability.

Implementing Joint Action - Guiding Principles

Building and sustaining local partnerships is complex and challenging, and requires that actions are taken at policy and operational levels. Here we present some guiding principles to implement joint action. These are followed by a suggested capacity building agenda.

Foster an Enabling Environment

The wider policy and institutional context needs to be reviewed in order to determine the extent to which it facilitates joint action and provides adequate margins for manoeuvre. As required, ways should be explored to secure political commitment, enabling legislation and policies and appropriate structures to facilitate the process.

Here there is an important role to be played by actors at national as well as at local levels.

- Particular attention should be paid to decentralisation laws and policies. This is important both in terms of the direction and opportunities it provides for local partnerships, (as in the example of the Tanzania Local Government Reform Agenda), and insofar as it provides the material conditions (human resources and finances) for local government and its partners to discharge their responsibilities.
- Without adequate attention to local government resources and incentives to perform, efforts to promote partnerships with other local actors are likely to be frustrated.
- At the national level, a parallel process needs to be directed by Governments and their partners to ensure that supportive framework are provided.

According to local context and priorities, an appropriate local institutional framework and related capacities need to be built or adapted to enable the participation of local actors in a structured and defined way, and in order to allow for synergies and the identification of 'win-win' solutions.

- The extent and level of participation cannot be pre-determined and should reflect local circumstances and priorities. In this regard, local legislation and opportunities afforded by existing decision-making, planning and consultative structures and procedures are important.
- The types of structures envisaged could include commissions, steering committees, consultative and advisory platforms and public hearings.
- Due regard should be given to the different characteristics and needs of urban municipalities, such as Mombasa, and districts such as Same, and possibly to the different needs of different sectors.
- Special attention must be given to strengthening the individual and organisational capacities of the different partners to engage in partnership.

Appropriate capacity assessments should be conducted. In this respect, assisting civil society and the private sector to create representative and accountable structures (such as in Same and Mamelodi) which can also serve as an interface with local governments and external agencies is especially important.

Seek Strategic Entry Points

Joint action processes can be introduced in different ways. Strategic entry points should be identified which take advantage of 'windows of opportunity.' These may arise at different institutional levels, or in relation to specific sectors or themes. 'Blueprint' approaches should be avoided in favour of more flexible and iterative approaches that respond to local circumstances and opportunities.

- A strong preference should be given to locally inspired initiatives. On the whole, these stand a better chance of being sustained and of responding to local priorities. In this regard, the issue of incentives for the different actors to participate should be carefully considered.
- In practice, an external impetus is often needed to trigger new processes and to propose innovative ideas and approaches. Donor policies or international conventions can provide a needed framework to get the process going, but they should not overwhelm local institutions and initiatives. Space should be left for adaptation and interpretation according to local needs.
- Special attention therefore needs to be given to the issue of ownership and care needs to be taken in the way in which external support is provided.
- Ideally, initiatives should be channeled through individual local governments facilitated through local government associations, and through them to other stakeholder groups. However, in the absence of a local institutional framework, or where these are still being created, alternative channels may be considered. These must assure transparency and accountability and foster information sharing. This is a sensitive issue where assuring dialogue among all the partners is especially important.

Adopt a Process Approach

External organisations, be they international development assistance agencies, government departments or local intermediary agencies, should adopt a 'process' approach that aims to reinforce ownership, capacity building and institutional development.

- The role of such organisations should be to facilitate a change process, not to direct or execute a programme. This may mean adopting new skills, adapting internal project management instruments and procedures, and treating processes as products.
- In particular, capacity building within donor organisations is emphasised so that they can adequately adapt to and respond to the dynamics of local development processes. This is especially important in relation to the points on 'ownership' and 'software' below.
- An appreciation of the time dimension needed to bring about new processes and ways of working is likewise required. But to avoid an ad hoc approach, the process should be structured and defined by a vision and a strategy, based on an up-front institutional analysis, and interpreted in a flexible way according to need and circumstances. In this regard, it is important to know where one is going even the exact modality is not yet clear.

Promote Ownership

A key priority of any joint action programme is to ensure that the process is locally owned, and that it responds to locally perceived needs and demands. The commitment of all actors and stakeholders must be secured. A shared vision and mission by all concerned is also essential.

- Ownership is fundamental to the sustainability of joint action processes. By virtue of its multi-actor characteristic, ownership needs to transcend organisational boundaries and embrace all the actors concerned. This is expressed by the notion of 'common interest.' It is also important to ensure that

there is a shared understanding of what joint action means and of the rights and responsibilities that it carries.

- Policy champions and leaders, whether individual or institutional, have a key role to play in providing vision and in building constituencies for change. It is important to ensure that new initiatives work with and through such individuals and institutions.
- The provision of feedback mechanisms that enable actors to express their views and to facilitate their participation is recommended and is more likely to assure wide ownership and to secure results. In this regard, special efforts are needed to ensure that information is disseminated and exchanged in ways that are appropriate to the local context.
- In order that local initiatives can flourish and that the interest and motivation of local actors is maintained, it is essential that the local institutional environment is supportive. The importance of an enabling environment is thus once more emphasised.

Focus on the Software

A strategic priority of any joint action initiative is to confront issues of attitude and mindset that typically represent the main barrier to progress. Bringing different organisational entities to work together inevitably highlights tensions related to questions of power and authority, norms and values, legitimacy and capacity, and methods of working and communicating.

- A critical role of the process facilitator is to 'broker' a new working relationship between the different actors. This requires different techniques to build trust and confidence and to raise awareness of the benefits that can accrue.
- Dialogue around policy and operational questions, and training in participatory methodologies for consultation, planning and monitoring and evaluation are especially valuable.

- Resources should also be set aside for capacity building, participatory consultations, and training of all stakeholders in order to create a 'level playing field.'

Ensure Performance and Accountability

Systems and procedures for performance monitoring and for financial accountability have to be adapted to the particular needs and characteristics of local partnerships. In this respect, deciding who is accountable to whom, who is responsible for what, and who needs to know what require careful consideration.

- Particular attention is needed to ensure that accountability flows upwards and downwards. Local partners should be fully involved in both the preparation and review of information pertaining to performance as well as financial matters. Issues of trust and confidence among partners in this regard are related to questions of disclosure, transparency, and information sharing.
- External agencies need to consider how far, and under what circumstances, they are willing to 'let go' in order to entrust responsibility for self-regulation within local institutions, and in so doing to reinforce confidence and capacities.
- Performance monitoring in the context of joint action should be a shared responsibility. This implies that there is agreement on objectives set, and that indicators have been jointly defined. The process of monitoring and evaluation should be participatory in order to facilitate (inter) organisational learning.

Six Guiding Principles

- Foster an enabling environment
- Seek strategic entry points
- Adopt a process approach
- Promote ownership
- Focus on the software
- Ensure performance and accountability

Supporting Joint Action - A Capacity Building Agenda

Capacity building support needs to be provided on a continuous basis to joint action processes. It can take many forms depending on the needs to be addressed. External facilitators have a particularly important role to play.

What in particular can intermediary organisations do to support the promotion of joint action on the ground? How can such organisations respond to the expectations at the local level for support and guidance, and what can be done to provide a bridge between the local national and international levels? The capacity building agenda presented below provides some options that intermediary organisations can act on. In this regard, the national frameworks described in the accompanying box illustrate the kind of intermediary structure that can support such an agenda.

Lessons of Experience

- The lessons and experiences presented in this book are based on a broad sweep of issues concerning joint action. Further empirical research is needed to draw more in-depth lessons of experience and best practices on specific issues. In particular, it would be helpful to draw experiences from other parts of the continent, such as West Africa. This kind of information can be a resource for training, drafting guidelines and to feeding into the policy level among governments and external assistance agencies.
- It can also be used to develop new methods and systems to support local partnerships. Examples include participatory management techniques, institutional capacity assessments, monitoring and evaluation systems, and innovative accountancy evaluation mechanisms.

National Frameworks for Joint Action

In Mombasa, experiences from 'national frameworks for joint action' in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Kenya were presented. National Frameworks are arrangements and networks to support, coordinate, strengthen and assist local actors to engage in joint action activities. Moreover, they are meant to enable participation by local actors in dialogue and decisions about the use of funds from donors and government and to provide a feedback and consultation mechanism for lessons learned concerning the implementation of decentralisation policies. All three examples indicate that the creation of such frameworks - all strongly influenced by donor organisations or facilitating agencies from outside - was highly appreciated by local activists who strongly defended them.

In *Kenya*, a series of local workshops in 1992 aimed to build the capacity of communities so they could act as equal partners with NGO's, community workers and other local government officials. In 1996, these activities were abandoned in favour of the Community Development Programme (CDP), a channel to finance micro projects to communities. Although the CDP has built capacity for community groups, it did not include local government in its activities. The Kenya experience did not go beyond financing and did not fully establish a national framework to facilitate the involvement of local actors in decision making on policies and funding.

In *Zimbabwe*, similar efforts were made in 1993 to set up a national framework under the Lomé Convention to coordinate action at all levels, to decentralise EU funds, and to make them available to a collaborating group of local stakeholders including local government. It took 6 years of discussion to agree on the Zimbabwe Decentralised Cooperation Programme (ZDCP). Members are the Government of Zimbabwe, the EU delegation, decentralised actors, and people's representatives from district, provincial and national levels, including urban and rural Councils, women's groups, farmers unions, trade unions, consumer groups, NGO's, research and teaching institutions, churches, cooperatives and community organisations. The framework aims to build the capacity of non-state actors to enter into national level agreements, to meet the accountability and administrative requirements for the European Development Fund and to procure resources relevant for local needs and priorities. It also seeks to be a platform for policy dialogue on programmes falling under Lomé. An institutional framework with clearly defined roles of actors has been set up including the stipulation of structures and processes for accountability. Finally, performance indicators for poverty alleviation have been agreed.

In *Tanzania*, attempts to establish a national framework were made in 1995. After consultations on potential joint action between local authorities, NGO's and community organisations, a national steering committee was set up. Chaired by the Association of Local Authorities in Tanzania, the aim was to coordinate joint action activities, to exchange information and experiences, and to stimulate the adoption of joint action policies by NGO's, local authorities and central government. Despite the declared commitment and accepted responsibilities of the various actors, capacity constraints have delayed the operationalisation of the national framework.

Efforts and approaches to set up and effectively use national frameworks for joint action in each of the three countries showed similar difficulties in getting off the ground. The rationale for each was similar: To support, promote and coordinate local joint action activities. Of the three, the Zimbabwean framework seems to be in the best position. However, using any of them as 'models' needs to be examined in detail and in relation to local circumstances and conditions. Some argue that local authority associations would be the ideal focal point to guide the process. But this requires institutional capacities, as evidenced from the Tanzania example and a willingness to acknowledge the equal contributions that civil society can offer.

'Rio', 'Istanbul' and other international conferences, agencies and organisations call for local joint action partnerships. Although some results in the three countries have been achieved, it would be useful to look at national institutional frameworks as stepping stones to bridge the gap between the international rhetoric and the local realities.

Action-Research

- Probably the most effective way to advance the practice of joint action is to engage in action-research. This requires that projects and programmes include a practical research component to monitor progress and to feed lessons into practice. Ideally, this should be a participatory activity, involving joint action participants in the action-research.

Dialogue

- Policy dialogue among different stakeholder groups should be encouraged at local, national and international levels to mobilise wider interest in joint action and decentralised cooperation. At the local level, this should include mayors, community-based organisations, the private sector and local administrators. At the national level, local government associations, national NGO associations, and Ministries of local government are 'targets.' International workshops should bring local, national and international stakeholders together. Consultation can be organised through neighbourhood forums, city consultations, public hearings, using local radio, and in some cases through electronic and media programmes.
- Workshops and seminars can be used to discuss both policy and operational questions among different stakeholder groups. Documented lessons of experiences can be shared at such events, and can serve to address issues of mindset and attitude, and to find practical solutions to policy and implementation bottlenecks.

Training and Process Facilitation

- Training in skills and techniques for participatory planning, consultation and monitoring and evaluation are required for decision-makers, planners and other technicians who, through partnership, have to work across organisational boundaries. Training can also help develop new organisational aptitudes and abilities for dialogue, networking, and participatory management.
- Process facilitation is required to ensure that new skills can be applied within working environments, and are supported by appropriate systems and procedures. Process facilitation can also help to encourage new working relationships between the different actors, to moderate local policy dialogue, as well as support the emergence of new organisational structures such as representatives bodies for private sector and civil society organisations.

Voices from Mombasa - A support agency viewpoint
Interview with Guido Ast, Programme Leader, GTZ Kenya

As a GTZ team leader, Ast is in charge of the financial component of the Small Town Development Project in the Ministry of the Local Government in Kenya. From 1976 until 1982, he was a researcher and then senior lecturer at the University of Nairobi's Department of Architecture Design Development. He has worked in housing and urban planning in Algeria, Yemen, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Kenya.

Personal considerations concerning joint action

JA is another term for 'community participation' or partnership approach. Apparently JA results from the Local Agenda 21 conference. JA is not only focused on environment and sustainable development but also on poverty alleviation. JA is expected to come from the North and the South and, within the South, from various partners, and to stop environmental degradation caused by poverty and leading to unsustainable development.

Joint actions are an acclamation to a noble human motive, assuming that joint undertakings will serve collective objectives better than individual action. GTZ emphasises the need for community participation in development. In practice, we observe that partners' commitments vary in interest and motivation, in particular over long timeframes. What can we expect from various actors in reality?

The Kenyan case

Kenya has the longest history of this region when it comes to JA. A motto was put on the national emblem of Kenya in 1963: 'Harambee' meaning, 'let's do it together'. But when we look at the history of these 36 years of independence we get a mixed picture. On one hand Kenya has been one of the most stable countries of this region. On the other hand, we can see disturbing things such as a lack of transparency and accountability, and corruption at many levels. We wonder if this low morale and poor professional ethics cannot damage or even destroy JA.

A GTZ position on JA

Recently we had a workshop at the GTZ Headquarters on decentralisation and democratisation in technical cooperation projects. We are highly interested in supporting all efforts that lead to better governance, to more transparency in the government systems and we are also willing to integrate other partners into these programmes. We are keen to get involved in projects that are poverty

alleviators through good governance. We insist on quality improvement and sustainability in project implementation and it is a major request from the real funders of our operations, the German taxpayers. Our partners in the various countries must be conscious that 'time is money'. While we are investing considerable amounts of funds in our projects, we find out that our partners contribute almost nothing in terms of finance. While we have to account for the money we spend, the partners do not act in the same way with their own governments. We must convince our partners to produce results faster. We must prove that our target group, the poor, is reached and that the money doesn't go into the pockets of some mediators at any level.

Time framework of JA

It is not acceptable for us to have a preparation phase of three or four years before starting a project. This is a loss of time. We heard of some cases in our workshops that are unacceptable: Most of the initiators of those projects dropped out along the way and the newcomers have forgotten what JA is about. We cannot tolerate such fluidity in our partnership: We must work with stable partners who are convinced that any programme that overstretches its time allocation will lose momentum.

Community involvement

We need professional facilitators, resource persons and coordinators, particularly in poorer and sometimes illiterate communities. Instead of a few bureaucrats invading our workshops, we want the target groups and their leaders to be actively involved in planning and implementation. Any project is planned in a workshop held at the local level. Let's take as an example the Small Town Development Project involving sixteen partner-towns, ALGAK - the national association of local authorities - and the Ministry of Local Government. Within the partner towns, projects address Councils, residents and market committees and other local associations involved in local development. These must be involved when planning strategies and measures targeting sustainable development.

The future of JA

Programmes should be demand-driven and not donor-imposed: Local actors must take responsibilities and control. It may be a positive sign that AULA and national associations of local government authorities such as ALGAK are now taking the lead in promoting joint action. GTZ does wish to increase their interest and commitment to JA.

Local Agenda 21 should now move from a pilot stage to a continental program for Africa. AULA should request all countries to adopt this agenda in all African towns.

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Annex 1:

Partner Profiles

The **Municipal Development Programme** for Sub-Saharan Africa (MDP) is a regional initiative covering all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Becoming operational in 1991, its mission is to support the process of decentralisation and to strengthen the capacity of local governments. The programme is organised in two modules: the Eastern and Southern module based in Harare, Zimbabwe, and the Western module in Cotonou, Benin.

MDP's Eastern and Southern module operates in 25 counties, providing African institutions and researchers with the information and resources they need in order to analyse, debate, and advance policies and practices aimed at fostering responsive, democratic, and transparent local government. MDP's core clients are local governments, their elected officials, and technical and administrative staff. The programme supports central institutions responsible for decentralisation, institutions that provide training and support for local governments, and non-governmental and community-based organisations. Its projects are conceived and managed by African experts. More information is on the Internet: <http://www.mdpesa.co.zw>

Towns and Development (T&D) is an international network of local authorities, NGO's, and community groups. Its prime objective is to promote joint action between local authorities and NGO's and CBO's in the North and South for sustainable development. The main focus of these partnerships is on poverty alleviation in the South. Within this framework T&D has also built up considerable experience of how to promote successful local North-South partnerships. Since its establishment in 1985 it has recognised the benefits of, and documented and facilitated, joint action between local authority, NGO, and community based groups as well as seeking the involvement of the business sector.

T&D is legally constituted as a Foundation under Dutch law and is an associated organisation of the International Union of Local Authorities. It is governed by an international board with a balanced representation from North and South and of

local authorities and NGO's. T&D's regional programmes generate and disseminate good practice with regard to local joint action partnerships for sustainable development between local government and civil society, involving North-South cooperation when it is appropriate and where the South has an equal voice in such partnerships. T&D is active in Southern and Eastern Africa, South Asia Latin America, and Western Europe.

The **European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)** was created as an independent organisation by the Netherlands Government in 1986. ECDPM aims to improve international cooperation between Europe and countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP). It does this through capacity building for policy management, the promotion of policy dialogue between ACP countries and Europe, and the provision of information and facilities for knowledge exchange.

The Centre's objectives are:

- to strengthen the institutional capacities of public and private actors in ACP countries to manage development policy and international cooperation
- to improve cooperation between development partners in Europe and the South

More information is on the Internet: <http://www.oneworld.org/ecdp/>



Annex 2:

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