

VI. WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SLUMS

This session brought to the fore issues related to land and security of tenure, modalities of slum improvement, operational constraints, and potential for replication. Cross-sectoral viewpoints from a public agency's perspective and an NGO's standpoint were presented, followed by an overview of slum improvement programs over the last three decades, and the lessons that we have not learnt from them.

Dr. Pongsak Semson outlined the common characteristics of slums in Bangkok, the problems, experiences, policy, practice, and solutions. The Fifth Bangkok Metropolitan Development Plan states clearly that the focus in slum development must be on establishment and networking of community organizations, reengineering of community and official administrative structures, and development of information systems. Implementation of these policies has already been initiated. Dr. Semson concluded that people in slums are most critically affected by lack of opportunities, and need support in this respect. All efforts to assist them must eventually help them become self-reliant.

Mr. Arif Hasan described the famous Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) established in 1980 in Karachi, Pakistan. The objectives of the OPP are to understand the problems of slum settlements in Orangi and their causes, and develop solutions that people can manage and afford. The OPP has developed models to overcome the constraints that governments face in providing development to informal settlements. Mr. Hasan's presentation

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focused on the scaling-up process of the pilot program that is now underway. He elaborated on the achievements of the project and concluded that development does not take place with funds only, but through development of skills, self-reliance, and dignity. The three are closely interlinked and make relationships within community, and between community and government agencies more equitable. This change in relationships is the key factor that brings about changes in government planning procedures and ultimately in policies.

Dr. Emiel Wegelin of the Institute of Housing and Urban Development Studies, Rotterdam, presented an analytical overview of slum improvement programs over the past three decades. He described the nature of evolution of slum improvement initiatives, beginning from primarily physical interventions toward low-cost housing. The approaches have been modified over the years, from a housing orientation to one of poverty reduction, from projects to programs, and from being based in specialized housing institutions to local government.

Dr. Wegelin highlighted the critical factors for success in any improvement activity: political commitment, mobilization of communities to enhance demand-responsiveness and cost effectiveness, formal security of land, and sensitization to the long-term perspective. He also outlined the policy perspective required to make improvement programs work. Integration of slum settlements in the broader city economy and recognition of improvement as a process of facilitating poor households' shelter, employment, and income-generation activities were key issues.

The discussions centered on the theme of community organization, which emerged as probably the only way to make effective interventions in slum areas and informal settlements. Poor communities are engaged in solving their day-to-day problems on a full-time basis and require

technical and managerial support to improve their solutions. They are, however, averse to "owning" plans developed by others. A shift from a project-based approach to an integrated program for poverty alleviation is urgently required.

PONGSAK SEMSON

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Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, is a port as well as a financial, business, and industrial center, and tourist area. The official number of Bangkok residents has doubled since 1971 to 5.6 million, but it is estimated that the daytime population may now reach 9-10 million.

Slums in Bangkok

The Housing Authority of Thailand has defined "slum" as a congested community where sanitation is substandard, water is polluted, and surroundings are damp and dirty—conditions that may harm the health, safety, and morality of people. Generally, slums are low-income housing arrangements in the informal sector.

There are 1,300 slum communities in Bangkok inhabited by 880,000 people, comprising 210,000 families in 180,000 houses. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration spends US\$7 million annually on slum improvement.

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Profile of Slum Communities in Bangkok

Education: one third of the population in the communities has lower than primary school education.

Employment: 82 percent of people in the communities are employed.

Social Aspects:

Crime: 79 percent of all communities have no serious crimes.

Disaster Prevention Training Course: 81 percent have been trained.

Fire Extinguishing Equipment: 61 percent of communities have adequate fire extinguishing equipment.

Primary Education: 100 percent of children aged 7-14 are educated.

Birth Certificates: 100 percent of children 15-years old and lower have birth certificates.

Care of Disabled: 85 percent of the disabled are cared for properly.

Social Activities: 80 percent participate in social activities.

Public Health:

Baby Weight: 90 percent of newborn babies are within the standard weight range.

Vaccination: 96 percent of children below 6-years old are vaccinated.

Sanitation: 5 percent of the population have diarrhea, which is below the health standard.

AIDS Information: 90 percent of families have been informed about AIDS.

Clean Water: 93 percent of families can access clean water.

Public Sanitation: 84 percent of the communities take part in the Public Sanitation Campaign, which is lower than standard.

Narcotics: 56 percent of all persons have no narcotics problems.

Gambling: 59 percent of the communities have no gambling.

Religion: 94 percent of all families participate in religious activities.

Slum Improvement Policy

Although Bangkok needs the cooperation of the national Government to reduce the severity of slum problems, the city has carried out a number of slum improvement programs on its own. In the Fifth Bangkok Metropolitan Development Plan (1997-2001), the following policies are stated.

- The establishment of slum community organizations should be accelerated.
- The knowledge and skills of communities' voluntary committees will be upgraded.
- Development activities for agricultural groups, occupational groups, and other workers will be carried out annually.
- Networks of child care centers and nurseries are to be promoted.
- Five fundamental services are to be provided.
- Networks of organizations working to minimize the incidence of narcotics, AIDS, and crimes are to be supported in 300 communities each year.
- A housing development fund is to be provided.
- Coordination and public relations are to be promoted for issuance of house registration and birth certificates in 1,200 communities.
- Vocational training, including agricultural knowledge and skills, is to be ensured for 15,000 people.
- Two more vocational training centers are to be established.
- Twelve centers for agricultural studies are to be established with one vocational network group in each of the four districts, and four vocational groups in four communities.

- Suburban markets and stores in communities will be organized.
- The agricultural environment will be improved and the use of chemical substances in agriculture reduced.
- Community and official administrative structures are to be reengineered.
- The information and database systems have to be improved, including establishment of an information center for community development.

These policies have been acted on through the following projects:

- *92 million Baht Project*, to buy land that was taken back by landowners.
- *Phan Din Thum Phan Din Thong Project (Moral and Golden Land Project)*, to develop communities on the basis of the morality of the people.
- *Civic Society Project*, to get communities involved in public activities.
- *Youth Project*, to give youth the opportunity to have a place where they can share their problems and identify solutions.
- *Children's and Women's Rights Project*, to protect the rights of children and women.
- *Community Fund Project*, to provide funds for lending to community members for investment purposes. Community members manage the funds.
- *Occupational Training and Job Creation Project*, to train and create a job market for the unemployed.
- *Three-utility School Project*, to use schools in Bangkok not only for education but also for sports and recreation for people in slum communities.

- *Narcotics Prevention Project*, to prevent narcotics problems in all possible ways. For example, a narcotic prevention center has been established in each community and is managed by community members. Seminars about narcotics are regularly organized.

Slum Improvement: Problems and Critique

Many people migrate to Bangkok because it has more incentives and opportunities than rural areas. Improving the incentives and opportunities in rural areas is one way to reduce this migration. There should be a policy that links incentives for individuals to remain in rural locations with incentives for targeted industries to move into those areas. It has been suggested that industries could support training centers in the north and northeast areas where they wish to relocate. The policy could provide a sufficient density of skilled workers, available at lower cost than in Bangkok, to allow industries to relocate. Infrastructure and tax privilege systems should also be designed for industries as another incentive to relocate.

Industries could also be relocated at the outskirts of the city, in which case these areas must be developed as subcities or subcenters with adequate infrastructure, education, public health, housing, and other primary facilities including businesses and services.

While slums expand naturally and need support, this support has to be limited or it will be seen as a welfare incentive for rural people to migrate. There are many examples where public officials and politicians pander to slum dwellers for political reasons, which only worsens and extends the problem.

Support should also be provided systematically. For example, the Government can strengthen groups in slums through professional

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training. However, these courses will be worthless if the trainees do not have a job prospect or capital for investment. Government may need to assist in these matters and tap the private sector for support. But more importantly, slum dwellers should learn to be self-reliant—to understand their problems and solve them by themselves.

ARIF HASAN

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The programs of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) are well documented through books, reports, and monographs. These programs have influenced a number of government and donor projects, and CBOs and NGOs in Pakistan, which are in the process of replicating them. The OPP, on the basis of its 20 years of work with communities, has become involved in developing city-level alternatives to government plans and is pressing for these alternatives to become policy.

The Karachi Context

Karachi requires about 80,000 housing units per year. Building permits are issued for no more than 26,700 units per year¹. It is estimated that 28,000 new housing units per year are developed in *katchi abadis* or illegal subdivisions of state land². Additional units on existing lots have not been estimated. Meanwhile, most of Karachi's inner city has been taken over by the grain, chemical, and metal markets, the solid waste recycling industry,

¹ *Karachi Development Plan 2000*. Karachi Development Authority.
² Estimates of the author/Urban Resource Centre, Karachi, quoted in Hasan, Arif. 2000. *Understanding Karachi*. Karachi: City Press.

transport and cargo activities, and housing for male laborers.

It is estimated that more than 50 percent of Karachi's population live in about 700 *katchi abadis*. Of these, 539 *abadis* having 386,000 housing units can be regularized. An ADB and World Bank loan of Rs427.1 million was provided in 1984 for the implementation of a *Katchi Abadi* Improvement and Regularization Program. This loan was meant for 101 *katchi abadis*. Work has been completed (residents say it has not) in 33 *abadis* and leases have been issued to 108,245 housing units³. Meanwhile, new *abadis* are being created every day.

The Orangi Context

Orangi lies in District West, Karachi City. It has a population of more than one million (more than 10 percent of Karachi's population) and covers an area of about 3,200 hectares, 500 of which were developed by the Karachi Development Authority (KDA). Apart from this formally planned area, the township consists of *katchi abadis* developed through the informal subdivision of state land. The settlements began in 1965 and expanded rapidly in the mid-1970s. Most of the population is working class and belongs to different ethnic and linguistic groups.

The Orangi Pilot Project

The OPP was established in 1980 by Akhtar Hameed Khan, the renowned Pakistani social scientist. The objective of the Project was to understand the problems of Orangi and their causes, and develop solutions that people could manage, finance, and build. To achieve this objective, people would

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³ Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority. 1999. 21st Quarterly Progress Report. March.

require technical guidance and managerial support to implement the solutions, backed-up by technical and social research.

After years of work, the OPP identified four major problems in *katchi abadis*: sanitation and housing quality, employment, health, and education. People organize themselves to try and overcome these problems but in the absence of technical and managerial guidance and credit support, their solutions are usually substandard or unsuccessful.

In 1988 the OPP was upgraded into four autonomous institutions:

- i) the Orangi Pilot Project-Research and Training Institute (OPP-RTI) dealing with sanitation, housing, education, research, and training;
- ii) the Orangi Charitable Trust (OCT) dealing with microcredit;
- iii) the Karachi Health and Social Development Association (KHASDA) dealing with health; and
- iv) the OPP Society, which channels funds from the Infaq Foundation (a Pakistani charity) to the other three institutions.

Orangi Pilot Project Programs

The Programs of the OPP institutions are described briefly below. Of these, the sanitation and microcredit programs have expanded into other cities. The sanitation program has had a major impact on donor, government, and NGO projects.

Sanitation Program

Sanitation was the major problem identified by Orangi residents. OPP-RTI held meetings in the lanes of Orangi and informed the people that it would

provide them technical assistance in building their underground sewage system if they formed a lane organization with an elected or nominated lane manager. Financial and health-related advantages of the system were also explained.

Once the lane organization was formed, the OPP-RTI technical staff surveyed the lane, established benchmarks with the help of the lane manager, and prepared a map and estimate for the work, which was handed over to the lane manager. The lane manager collected money from the people and organized the work while OPP-RTI supervised it but was not involved in financial matters. Since a lane consists of only 20 to 40 houses, there were no major problems of mistrust or disagreement.

Initially, only those lanes near a natural drainage channel applied for assistance. Later when other lanes applied, the OPP-RTI identified the location of collector drains. It was hoped that the local government would fund these but it refused to do so. Subsequently, a confederation of lanes using the collector drains was formed to finance and build the collector drains with technical advice from OPP-RTI.

OPP-RTI tapped the assistance of students and staff of technical and professional academic institutions in doing a survey to identify secondary sewers in Orangi. This developed a closer link between OPP-RTI and the academic institutions, which transformed the curricula of these institutions, and as their graduates join government agencies, it is hoped that government attitudes will also undergo a change.

There are 7,256 lanes in Orangi containing 104,917 houses. Of these, 6,082 lanes containing 91,531 houses have built their sewage systems. The houses have also built their latrines and 409 collector sewers have also been built. The people have invested Rs80.7 million (US\$1.50 million) in this effort. If the government had done this work, the cost would have been at least seven times more.

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The reason for the success of the OPP-RTI sanitation model was that the cost per household of Rs900 (US\$16.50) was affordable to the beneficiaries. The cost was made affordable by carrying out technical research, modifying engineering standards, and making procedures and methods of work compatible with the concept of community management of construction and self-finance.

The OPP-RTI identified four barriers that communities face in adopting this model:

- *Psychological Barrier:* communities feel that infrastructure development is the work of government agencies. This barrier is overcome once communities accept that the lane in front of their house belongs to them.
- *Social Barrier:* this is overcome once a lane organization is formed and is able to identify clearly its immediate objective.
- *Economic Barrier:* this is overcome once the cost of development becomes affordable.
- *Technical Barrier:* this is overcome by availability of designs, estimates, tools, and training.

Based on its work, the OPP-RTI developed the "internal-external" concept for sanitation, in which there are four levels of sanitation: a sanitary latrine in the house; underground sewer in the lane; neighborhood collector sewer; and trunk sewer and treatment plant. The first three constitute "internal" development that low-income communities can finance, manage, build, and maintain. The fourth item constitutes "external" development and can only be carried out by government agencies or NGOs, if they are wealthy or have access to donor funding.

The OPP-RTI has prepared plans and estimates for the conversion of Orangi's natural

drains into box trunks. With the support of its lane organizations and community activists, it has lobbied with the Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) and the District Municipal Corporation for financing this conversion. As a result, in this financial year the KMC has financed the building of two box trunks at a cost of Rs14.3 million (US\$0.26 million). These trunks will serve 850 lane sewers to which 17,000 houses are connected⁴. The land reclaimed by this conversion and the slab of the drain itself are already being used as a community space.

There have been many spin-offs of the OPP-RTI sanitation model. An ADB-funded project (PAK-793, 1990) was modified after the OPP-RTI lobbied for its "internal-external" concept to be made part of the project concept. As a result of this OPP modification, a project that was to cost Rs1,300 million was modified to cost Rs36.2 million. Lane activists, trained by the OPP-RTI, supervised the construction of the trunk sewers and did not permit the contractors to do any substandard work as is normally done in government contracts. In addition, infant mortality in areas that built their sanitation systems in 1983 fell from 128 that year to 37 in 1993. The lanes have been turned into places of social interaction and children's play areas. Values of properties have increased and people are improving their homes.

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Housing Program

OPP-RTI research established that almost all Orangi houses were substandard because their building materials were of poor quality, skills were inadequate, and the contractor and mason relationship with the house owners was inequitable.

⁴ OPP. 1999. 80th Quarterly Progress Report. December.

The study identified the local building-components manufacturing yard (called a *thalla*) and its owner (*thallawala*) as the most important actors in the housing drama. The *thallawala* provides building materials, skilled labor, and often credit for house building. As such he is also the architect and housing bank of the Orangi residents.

The program has upgraded the quality of concrete blocks by mechanizing their production at the *thallas* and by introducing the manufacturing of cheap pre-cast concrete roofing elements at the *thallas* to replace tin sheets. In addition, advantages of proper curing of concrete and good aggregate were also explained to the *thallawalas* and the house builders. The new houses can now carry a second floor. *Thallas* were given credit (an average of Rs75,000 or US\$1,400) and advice for mechanization and improvement.

So far, 54 *thallas* have made use of the OPP-RTI package. In the process they have more than tripled their production, increased employment and financial returns, and Orangi has become a major exporter of machine-made concrete blocks and roofing elements⁵.

Ninety-six Orangi masons have been trained to use the new technologies and they in turn are training their apprentices. Technical guidance is being provided to communities on design, costs, and the nature of the relationship they should have with the *thallawala* and skilled workers whom they employ. After failing to get regular architects to set up practices in Orangi, OPP-RTI initiated a two-year program for training educated young men from the Orangi communities as para-architects. The first team of two para-architects has developed a substantial clientele, most of whom want their homes improved. Approximately 4,000 units per

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⁵ Alimuddin, Salim, and Hasan, Arif. 1997. The Housing Program of the OPP-RTI. Unpublished report.

year benefit from the housing program's technical research and its extension.

Orangi Charitable Trust (OCT) Microcredit Program

According to the Karachi Development Plan 2000, 75 percent of Karachi's labor force is employed in the informal sector. The major problem of this informal sector is that it has no access to credit. Credit from the informal market carries an interest rate of 8 to 12 percent per month. OCT estimates that there are more than 23,000 small businesses in Orangi employing more than 120,000 persons.

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The OCT's microcredit program lends to people already running businesses. It also considers lending to people who wish to establish new businesses provided they are employed in those businesses. So far, 6,921 units have benefited from the OCT program and Rs133.944 million (US\$2.25 million) have been disbursed. Recovery rate is 92 percent. The overhead recovered at 18 percent per year is Rs24 million (US\$0.44 million).

The program has been replicated by 38 NGOs and CBOs outside Karachi. The OCT has provided these organizations with a credit line and training. The program has also had a major influence on the concept of the microcredit bank being promoted by the Government of Pakistan.

Education Program

There are 682 private schools and 76 government schools in Orangi⁶. Entrepreneurs, community organizations, and public-spirited individuals have put up the private schools. The OPP-RTI supports these schools by putting them in touch with government support institutions, relevant NGOs,

⁶ OPP. 1999. 79th Quarterly Progress Report. September.

This project identifies young people who wish to open a school and provides a start-up grant.

and resource professionals. In addition, the OCT provides loans for the physical upgrading of the schools while OPP-RTI provides technical and design guidance. So far, 399 loans totalling Rs12.5 million (US\$0.23 million) have been provided for upgrading 151 schools⁷.

In 1995, the OPP-RTI school project was started. This project identifies young people who wish to open a school and provides a start-up grant of Rs3,000 to 12,000 to open a school in a rented room or a shack. When the school stabilizes, credit from the OCT is provided for its expansion and construction of classrooms. The school initiator is helped in acquiring a plot of land for the school. So far, 45 schools have been built in this manner and the program is expanding rapidly.

Because of the OPP-RTI education program, Orangi has a higher literacy rate and its schools are better in physical and curriculum terms than is the case in other *katchi abadis*. Many Orangi schools have now acquired computers and are training students in information technology. Young Orangi residents are becoming white-collar workers, college teachers, corporate-sector employees, and formal-sector entrepreneurs.

Health Program

KHASDA's health program initially consisted of creating a women's organization in lanes that had built their sewage system. A mobile health team visited the women's lane organization every week for a period of six months, after which the visits were phased out. The team also arranged visits by government agencies to the lane for immunization; introduced population planning concepts and supplies; and gave advice on nutrition, child-care, and kitchen gardening. Although successful, the

⁷ Ibid.

program only reached 3,000 families and was far too expensive to expand to all of Orangi.

A survey showed there were 647 private clinics in Orangi and a number of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) as well. The present health program consists of training TBAs (377 have been trained) and vaccinators (148 have been trained) from the community. An extension program has been initiated with the private clinics, which are encouraged to employ the TBAs and vaccinators. Links between the government's health department and agencies and the Orangi clinics have been established through KHASDA. The clinics were unaware of government support programs and these programs before had only targeted CBOs and NGOs (many of which had no experience in health issues). As a result of the modified health program, 102 clinics now receive vaccines and 124 clinics receive family planning supplies. These clinics now employ the trained TBAs and vaccinators.

Scaling-up the OPP-RTI Sanitation Model

Attempts to replicate the OPP-RTI sanitation model have been made since 1983 in various locations in Karachi. However, it was soon discovered that this was not possible without a local organization taking over the responsibility of social mobilization and technical support. This realization led to the training of local activists and technicians and the mobilization of community organizations. After this, replication within Karachi posed no problems because OPP-RTI staff and expertise have been available.

The most successful replication in Karachi has been that of Manzoor Colony where 153 lanes containing 2,950 houses now have underground drainage along with 36 collector drains. This entire system disposes into a natural drain that joins the sea. With the help of OPP designs and estimates,

the community lobbied successfully with the administration for converting the open drain into a box trunk. The conversion is now complete and carries with it the affluent of 1.5 million persons, not only of Manzoor Colony but also a large planned area of Karachi. Plans to install a treatment plant at the end of the box trunks are underway.

Of 13 NGO/CBO attempts at replicating the sanitation program outside Karachi, five have been failures, two have been remarkably successful, and four show signs of promise. In all cases except one, the NGOs and CBOs that replicated the program set up a small unit whose administrative and overhead costs were paid for by the OPP-RTI through its own resources or by arranging funds from WaterAid, a UK-based NGO. These costs have varied from Rs150,000 (US\$2,750) to Rs450,000 (US\$8,350) per year.

Wherever local initiatives have been successful, they very quickly establish a dialogue with local government in charge of sewage systems and press for the acceptance of the "internal-external" concept. Local governments are under pressure to perform and as such they informally accept this concept and support the communities. However, the provincial planning agencies do not accept this concept and its implementation takes place in violation of their standards, procedures, and plans. This violation is helped by the fact that the plans of these agencies do not get implemented; with the expansion of settlements and ad-hoc laying of infrastructure, the agencies' plans very soon become redundant.

NGOs and CBOs that successfully replicate the OPP-RTI model are flooded with requests from other settlements to assist them in solving their sanitation problems in a similar manner. There have been failures and successes. The failures of some NGOs and CBOs to replicate the OPP-RTI program have been as follows.

NGOs and CBOs that successfully replicate the OPP-RTI model are flooded with requests from other settlements to assist them.

- Failure to develop a technical-cum-motivation team, because the technical people do not come from within the community and leave whenever a better opportunity is available.
- Acceptance of large sums of donor money for expansion, because some NGO/CBOs do not have the capacity or the capability to expand their work accordingly. Accepting large sums of money has also led to financial mismanagement and in one case to the cancellation of funding.
- Subsidizing lane development, because where cost sharing takes place, there are invariably disputes, higher costs, and less empowerment of communities. Greater resources, that are not normally available, are then required and in their absence the program fails.
- Absence of patience, because the OPP-RTI sanitation model requires patience and time. NGOs/CBOs without such patience discontinue the program.
- Failure to keep in touch with the OPP-RTI and seek its advice.
- Failure to share accounts of the NGO/CBO with the community, which makes the community feel that the NGO/CBO is making money from foreigners or government agencies.

NGO/CBO successes in replicating the OPP-RTI program occur when the above situations have been avoided and where there has been availability of a map of the area or the expertise to prepare such a map; and regular weekly meetings to review progress, take stock, assign responsibilities, and identify weaknesses and the processes to overcome them.

New Issues for the OPP-RTI

With the expansion of the work of the OPP-RTI and the increasing number of communities and city governments (not provincial planning agencies) from all over Pakistan that wish to replicate the work of the OPP institutions, a number of new issues have surfaced. These are listed below.

- i) *The scale of work has become too large for the OPP-RTI to handle alone.* OPP-RTI's work is no longer with communities only. It is also doing advocacy and getting support of communities from all over Karachi for its methods. In addition, many students from universities and professional colleges visit the projects for orientation and research. To overcome this pressure, the OPP-RTI has established close working relations with other NGOs and CBOs. For example, through such collaboration, an ADB-funded US\$100 million sewage project (Korangi Waste Water Management Project) was modified and the ADB loan cancelled.
- ii) *Policy issues.* NGOs and CBOs replicating the OPP model very soon come in conflict with rules and regulations of government agencies or with the methodology of internationally funded projects. To overcome this, the OPP-RTI is proposing the holding of an annual congress of all its partners and making it a high-profile affair, which will present policy alternatives to the government.
- iii) *Community leaders turned mafia agents.* Some OPP-RTI community activists who helped the neighborhoods build their sewage systems, became involved with contractors and land grabbers when the

natural drains were turned into box trunks. To counteract this, the OPP-RTI has begun a lecture series to give the communities a broader vision of development.

- iv) *Donor funding.* Organizations and individuals who come for training to OPP-RTI use this association for acquiring funding from foreign donors but do not implement the OPP-RTI model or follow its methodology. OPP-RTI feels that it is being abused and is considering steps, including a change in its training procedures, to stop this from happening.
- v) *Professional staff.* OPP-RTI has no problem training and recruiting para-professionals, technicians, and social organizers from within the community. However, professional staff are difficult to recruit. This is caused by the big gap between conventional professional training and the manner in which the OPP-RTI functions. It takes a long time for a trained professional to unlearn what he or she has learnt and very few have the patience to go through with it. Increasingly, universities and professional colleges are associating the work of their students with the Orangi programs, which will hopefully overcome this issue.

Conclusions

Communities are already trying to solve their problems; if technical advice and managerial guidance are provided, their solutions will improve. However, before one can support community efforts one has to understand the actors and factors involved in development-related work; their relationship with each other; and their social, economic, and technical strengths and weaknesses.

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Development does not take place with funds, but through the development of skills, self-reliance, and dignity. The three are closely interlinked and follow each other in the order mentioned. They make relationships within communities, and between community and government agencies, more equitable. This change in relationships brings about changes in government planning procedures and ultimately in policies.

Capacity and capability building of government agencies can never be successful without pressure from organized and knowledgeable groups at the grass roots. Such groups can only be created by trained activists who are supported financially. Formally trained professionals and technicians are not an alternative to such activists. The formation of such groups forces transparency in the functioning of government agencies. The most important aspect of transparency is the printing of accounts and their availability to community members.

One of the major reasons for disasters in government planning is that ideal plans are made first and finances sought later. Often these finances do not materialize. Things would be very different if planning were done on the basis of a realistic assessment of available funds; if an optimum relationship can be arrived at between resources (financial, technical, and others), standards, and demands; and if planning recognizes that all three are dynamic and can change over time.

Finally, to promote Orangi-type programs and make them a part of government policy, it is necessary to restructure the curriculum of professional colleges, universities, and institutions that train public servants.

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Nature and Evolution of Slum Improvement

Historically, slum improvement was seen primarily as a low-cost alternative housing policy option, with the notion being that it would be more cost effective to upgrade substandard housing environments than to demolish them and rehouse the residents. If one looks at slum improvement in that way, it will also come as no surprise that the emphasis initially was primarily physical, focusing on public action in providing/upgrading neighborhood infrastructure and services, leaving private household action on structural improvement/extension to the residents themselves. This approach fitted well with the emerging notion that the State should move out of its role as a housing provider and become an "enabler" in support of private household and community action⁸.

In the early years, slum improvement was conceptualized in the form of unconnected projects at neighborhood level in those neighborhoods that qualified on a score of physical degradation, more than as a policy approach. Over the years, the emphasis in slum improvement strategies has shifted from a housing orientation to an urban poverty reduction orientation, and a redefinition of the

⁸ Early references to this notion are found in the classic "Man's struggle for shelter in an urbanizing world" by Charles Abrams; it became mainstreamed in the 1970s by the World Bank (Housing Sector Policy Paper, 1975), based on the pioneering work done in the 1960s by John F. C. Turner and associates in the slums of Lima, Peru.

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institutional anchor point from specialized housing institutions to local or municipal government⁹.

On a somewhat different institutional note, in some countries the State defaulted not only as a housing provider, but also as an enabler. Whole neighborhoods were left to their own devices and in a number of instances CBOs emerged that effectively assumed the enabling role by default; the Orangi Pilot Project in Karachi is a classic example.

This brought into sharp focus the need to determine which agency could best play the enabling role, a recognition that this role could well be different depending on the support element concerned, and that perhaps different actors were required for different support actions, even though the need for an orchestration mechanism would remain. Consequently, a wide range of arrangements in slum improvement planning and management emerged.

Lessons of Experience

Slum upgrading programs have generally comprised neighborhood infrastructure upgrading, including the provision and/or upgrading of walkways, microdrainage, neighborhood water supply distribution, solid waste collection, and sometimes communal sanitation. It is often complemented by legalization of land tenure, and sometimes dovetailed with a home improvement loan and/or small business development loan scheme and capacity building/training support.

⁹ Many of the elements identified in urban poverty reduction strategies for local government are components of what has variously been included in slum improvement strategies. See Vanderschueren, Franz, Emiel Wegelin, and Kadmiel Wekwete. 1996. Policy Program Options for Urban Poverty Reduction – a Framework for Action at the Municipal Level. Urban Management Programme Policy Paper No. 20. Washington DC: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

Slum improvement programs have expanded significantly over the last 30 years. Supported by the international development community, upgrading of slum areas has emerged as one of the two main prongs of the enabling approach to improving the environmental conditions of the urban poor¹⁰. Following are some of the major lessons from these programs.

Upgrading slum/squatter areas is a highly politicized activity and requires a sustained level of political commitment, active mobilization of communities, and sensitization to long-term sustainability issues. Often, upgrading is still carried out as an ad hoc and short-term project activity, and therefore does not sufficiently address the larger problems of supply and demand of shelter and services in the broader urban setting.

There is a need for a more comprehensive approach to upgrading, including social (particularly primary health care and education) and economic services. Yet where this has been attempted, additional complications have often arisen. For instance, where provision of small business development loans is included in the upgrading program, there is often a coordination problem between the agencies involved (usually the municipality and one or more financial institutions). Similarly, where programs have included explicit measures to legalize land tenure, the complexity of managing this alongside services and infrastructure tends to increase.

The environmental benefit of isolated neighborhood upgrading has been shown to be

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¹⁰ For example, slum improvement programs have been supported in their own right by the World Bank and the ADB, and have also comprised major components in more broad-based urban lending operations by these institutions. Slum improvement has been recognized as a core feature of the urban policy of both institutions. See ADB. 1999. Urban Sector Strategy. Manila:ADB; and World Bank. 1999. A Strategic View of Urban and Local Government Issues: Implications for the Bank. Washington DC: World Bank.

limited due to problems at the trunk end of the municipal infrastructure provision, for instance in organizing safe, final garbage disposal sites, and in developing effective city-wide drainage and sewerage systems with adequate treatment facilities.

Direct full cost recovery of public investment in slum improvement programs has been problematic, considering the need to keep solutions affordable for the urban poor, but also from the conceptual and operational perspectives. Programs that do not have a land tenure regularization component have generally relied on indirect cost recovery through local (mainly land/property) taxation, and/or have accepted that neighborhood infrastructure is a part of the wider urban infrastructure network and its associated financing problems. The implication of that view is, of course, that direct cost recovery in the narrow context of slum upgrading is not appropriate, and that there is a need to "unbundle" municipal services also at the neighborhood level in order to achieve any measure of cost recovery.

Direct cost recovery in the narrow context of slum upgrading is not appropriate.

The broadening of perspectives on slum improvement has led to a move away from specialized housing-oriented implementation agencies, and in many countries, municipalities have become the lead agencies in implementing slum improvement schemes. This, however, begs the question of which is the most appropriate institutional location within the municipal organization for integrated program planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring of what in essence is a multisectoral program with widely differing (public-private) implementation arrangements.

All these issues can be dealt with more easily if there is a high level of participatory "ownership" among the residents of both the process and (by implication) its outcome. Yet, it must be emphasized that such stakeholder processes are neither easy nor

quick in their organization and management, even though they provide a much better chance of ultimate sustainability of the effort.

What does it take to make it work?

Three decades after the initial embrace by the international community of slum improvement as a major focus in shelter policy, there is now a rich and diverse store of lessons from experience, as summarized above. All of this suggests that we can do it, but that the appropriate mixture of ingredients varies significantly from place to place.

The starting point must be a perspective on why slums are there in the first place, namely as a result of market and public policy failure for a significant segment of urban society. This is undesirable, inefficient, and dangerous for the city as a whole. The objective of public policy must therefore be to integrate slum settlements into the broader city economy in the interests of all, not only of the slum communities themselves. This perspective is increasingly shared by urban policymakers the world over.

A second important policy perception to be clear about at national and local levels alike is that the bulk of housing for the urban poor will continue to be built by the urban poor themselves. The overwhelming evidence is that slum improvement schemes have led to a moderate acceleration of the normal organic process of low-income settlement formation and consolidation, including the provision of neighborhood infrastructure. It is important to view public action in slum upgrading as an ongoing process of assisting households' shelter-, employment-, and income-generating opportunities.

An overriding requirement for success is sustained political commitment to the above underpinnings of the approach. Such political commitment is most important at the local level,

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where the locus of the action lies. Therefore, at this level municipalities must not only continue to initiate and support slum upgrading schemes, but should also perceive such schemes as a standard feature of municipal services delivery.

Increased cooperation with neighborhood associations and other CBOs and NGOs will be necessary in making such schemes more demand oriented and cost effective. Priority setting and financing of infrastructure investments must be done through shared responsibility with the community, instead of for the community. Municipalities need to perceive communities and NGO/CBOs as potential partners in the planning and programming process, i.e. to help the search for innovative solutions.

For the approach to be successful, municipalities need to ensure adequate security of land tenure, in order to avoid eviction/displacement of low-income residents and to safeguard the sustainability of the physical investment both in households' shelter and in infrastructure.

Municipalities need to enhance the intrinsic cost effectiveness of slum improvement schemes by ensuring that such neighborhood schemes are adequately linked into major trunk infrastructure. Therefore, at the city level also, municipalities must increasingly plan and program the development of municipal services in an integrated and participatory way, with the maximum extent of community participation possible.

To handle all the above effectively requires very careful consideration of the institutional location of slum improvement responsibilities within the municipal government structure, in order to reflect adequately the political commitment, to be able to forge effective partnerships with communities and their support organizations, and to effectively interlink with other municipal service departments and organizations.

Planning, programming, and budgeting capabilities of municipalities will often require to be enhanced in a major way to ensure that the processes are handled effectively and professionally. Integration of slum upgrading into the mainstream of municipal services delivery cannot be seen as an add-on job for a municipal engineer or town clerk. To do this well often requires major investments in municipal reorganization, and in augmenting and upgrading the quality and skills of municipal staff.

It is clear from the above that a long-term perspective is needed—there is no quick fix. International support institutions such as the development banks must be ready to support long-term programs by committing themselves not only to cofinancing slices of physical investments, but also to supporting capacity-building investments of the nature described above.

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