

Experiences and Challenges of Community Participation in Urban Renewal Projects: A Case of Johannesburg, South Africa.

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Abstract

Urban renewal and inner city regeneration have become critical for the South African government which has invested in several structures to stem the tide of decline in its nine major cities. Commitment to the alleviation of poverty is a focal point of the renewal and regeneration agenda and will remain so in the future. This is motivated by the fact that, currently around 24% of the population lives on less than \$1 a day, below the poverty line defined by the World Bank. The Central Government has made numerous public commitments to development, a part of it concerning extensive infrastructure investment and service delivery. Communities are supposed to participate fully in the planning and implementation of urban renewal projects. Participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them. Community participation should be aimed at empowering people by ensuring that skills are developed and that employment opportunities are created. This paper will firstly explore the concept of community participation. It will then look at some past experiences in relation to community participation in urban renewal projects. Furthermore the paper will outline the challenges and problems of community participation in urban renewal projects in Johannesburg. Finally, it closes with some recommendations for the future.

Keywords: community participation, urban renewal, poverty, unemployment

Introduction

In South Africa, the levels of unemployment and poverty are extremely high and remain two of South Africa's most pressing problems. The unemployment rate, which has been rising steadily over the years, is an extremely important indicator of economic and social health. The level of unemployment was 9.18% in 1972; 7% in 1980; 10% in 1985; 15% in 1990; 22% in 1995 (Human Development Report, 2004); 30.2% in 2002; 27.4% in 2003; 25.6% in 2004; and 26.5% in 2005 (Labour Force Surveys (LFS) 2000 – 2005). The unemployment rate rose rapidly over the 1990s, then fell in 2003 and 2004 and rose again in 2005. This is due to the drastic fall in the demand for unskilled labour in the formal sector caused by structural changes in the economy as a result of a decline in the importance of the primary sector. The high unemployment rate is also a direct contributing factor to inequality and poverty in South Africa (Labour Force Survey, 2000-2005).

Although the proportion of people living in poverty is shrinking, high population growth in poor countries means that the absolute numbers of poor people is rising. In addition to high levels of unemployment, there is also a widely acknowledged need for housing and municipal infrastructure (water supply, sewerage, streets, stormwater drainage, electricity, refuse collection). But most importantly, it is crucial to realise that there is a great need for physical infrastructure in both urban and rural areas. This problem of infrastructure backlog is aggravated by the apparent lack of capacity and skills at institutional, community and individual levels. According to the World Bank (1994) infrastructure can deliver major benefits in economic growth, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability - but only when it provides services that respond to effective demand and does so efficiently.

According to Thwala (2007) over the past 25 years several projects have been initiated in South Africa to counter unemployment and poverty. It is envisaged that there will be others in the future. From a theoretical perspective supported by experience elsewhere in Africa, there are reasons for considering that properly formulated employment creation programmes based on the use of employment-intensive methods could be established to construct and maintain the required physical infrastructure, thus creating employment, skills and institutional capacities. The Urban Renewal Infrastructure Projects have the potential to redress this problem of high unemployment levels and skill deficits in disadvantaged communities. Among other things, these may be achieved through an efficient institutional set up, effective community participation, and construction technology that is pragmatic and innovative in nature.

Structure of the Paper

The paper will firstly explore the concept of community participation. The paper will then look at some past experiences in relation to community participation in urban renewal projects. Furthermore the paper will outline the challenges and problems of community participation in urban renewal projects in Johannesburg. Finally the paper closes with some recommendations for the future.

Community Participation in Urban Renewal Projects

The World Bank (1994) defines participation as “a process through which stakeholders’ influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them”. The concept of community participation originated about 40 years ago from the community development movement of the late colonial era in parts of Africa and Asia. To colonial

administrators, community development was a means of improving local welfare, training people in local administration and extending government control through local self-help activities (McCommon et al., 1993). However, during this era, the policy failed to achieve many of its aims primarily due to the bureaucratic top-down approach adopted by the colonial administrations (Ibid). Out of these experiences various approaches were developed that have been more successful and have gained broad support from all the major players in the development field (Abbott, 1991).

According to Beider (2007) in public policy debate in the UK the term community is used in three general senses:

- Descriptive: a group or network of people who share something in common or interact with each other.
- Normative: community as a place where solidarity, participation and coherence are found.
- Instrumental: community as an agent acting to maintain or change its circumstances; the location orientation of services and policy interventions.

Communities are often defined or described in terms of common characteristics. These may be personal characteristics, common beliefs, activities and users or providers of services. It is important to understand that common characteristics do not necessarily mean that people sharing those characteristics would identify themselves as a community; this requires that they have a common interest around which they can mobilise (Beider, 2007).

Community participation generally is more successful when the community takes over much of the responsibility than when higher level public agencies attempt to assess consumer preferences through surveys or meetings. In order for community participation to work, projects must include special components addressing it. Villagers can be recruited to help in all phases of designing, implementing,

maintaining, supervising, and evaluating new water supply and sanitation systems, but only if the time, effort and money is spent to do it right. Special attention must be paid to the development of local committees and governance structures that can adequately oversee local participation. The direction and execution of development projects rather than merely receive a share of project benefits. The objectives of Community Participation as an active process are: empowerment; building beneficiary capacity; increasing project effectiveness; improving project efficiency; and project cost sharing. The framework identifies four levels of intensity of participation, namely: information sharing; consultation; decision making; and initiating action (Abbott, 1991).

This framework has been largely accepted by development agencies worldwide. However, a criticism of the model is that it is "project based" and does not include the full spectrum of Community Participation approaches. As such, the framework can be defined in planning terms as "means" orientated (Ibid, 1991). The "means" approach views community participation as a form of mobilisation to achieve a specific, generally project related goal (Moser, 1989). The alternative paradigm is the "ends" approach. This approach views community participation as a process whereby control over resources and regulative institutions by groups previously excluded from such control is increased namely by the legitimacy of the authorities and the nature of development.

In other words, situations in which the legitimacy of the authorities is in question will result in projects where participation is identified as an "end". Situations in which the development of services and housing is the main objective and require meaningful participation at a grassroots level are more likely to adopt the "means" approach. It is also possible that a situation will require a combination of the two approaches; such as in South Africa prior to the democratic elections in 1994. The government was not seen as legitimate by the majority of the population. However, the provision of services and housing

were key issues to be addressed; (since South Africa now has a legitimate national government it is now moving towards a means approach, but this is still complex at the community level).

The Theoretical Base of Participation

A proper evaluation and understanding of public participation can be better achieved when it is viewed against a theoretical framework built on decision-making. The background includes social organisation, political process (which includes decision-making), planning theories, urban management and ideologies in light of society. Planning theory is perceived as the vehicle through which planners engage in introspection about what they do as planners. Planning theory focuses on the very nature of the planning process. It examines what distinguishes planners from other fields that also deal with public policy issues, and it entails a continuous search for ways to improve planners' effectiveness in society (Hemmens, 1980).

Currently planners are suffering from the scarcity of compelling and useful theories of planning processes. The rational comprehensive planning model has been attacked from all angles, though it remains intact because of the absence of a competitive set of ideas that can attract sufficient support to supplant it (Ibid, 1980). This does not mean, however, that the rational comprehensive planning model was or is anti-participatory. As a matter of fact, participation goes hand in hand with the concept of "public interest" upon which the rational comprehensive planning was based. Planners, prior to the 1960's, were concerned with helping to guide urban decision-making to reflect "community values" through rational planning (Oosthuizen, 1986). This was based on the assumption that the public interest was the embodiment of community values and that the public interest could be identified.

Locally based community participation in policy and decision-making processes has become a central tenet of government policy (Beider, 2007). In addition Beider (2007) emphasise that importance of community participation at different scales of decision-making can be seen as a reflection of the move by central government, at least in rhetorical terms, from a centralist approach to policy and decision-making to a 'new localism' that devolves power to regional and local levels and enshrines the participation of local stakeholders and communities in the process.

The Principle of Empowerment

In order for rural communities to participate meaningfully in projects initiated to improve their lives, it is imperative that they are empowered. The principle of empowerment states that people participate because it is their democratic right to do so (Wignaraja, 1991) and participation means having power (Tacconi and Tisdell, 1993). According to this concept, participation is the natural result of empowerment. Empowerment is not a means to an end but is the objective of development. Empowerment entails more than having the power to make decisions. It demands the knowledge and understanding to make correct decisions. Communities cannot make wise decisions if they do not have the required information. The support organisations are required to be sources of information and should be a channel of information to the communities so that they will be able to make right and informed decisions.

There are developmental organisations, agencies and government departments that regard local people as a good source of information. These organisations may limit the people's participation to an advisory role. If this does happen, we cannot talk of participation. According to El Sherbini (1986), power must accompany participation. Arnstein (1969) declared that participation without power "is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless". Swanepoel (1997) alluded that

worse can happen under the banner of participation; people can be used as cheap labour. Decision-making and planning are regarded as being outside the ambit of ordinary people because participation is seen as interfering with the effective provision of basic needs (Spalding, 1990).

Yet empowerment entails more than having the power to make decisions. It demands the knowledge and understanding to make the correct decisions. The development practitioner has a special task in this regard. People cannot be expected to make wise decisions if they do not have the necessary information. The development practitioner must be a source of information or must be a channel to sources of information. Ultimately, people must make informed decisions.

According to Kilian (1988) empowerment can be misused; it can become a radical cloak hung around conservative ideas. Empowerment does not mean giving people facilities that were previously denied or were not available to them, or giving them skills that they lacked. In its purest form, empowerment means the acquisition of power and the ability to give it effect. Such power is not an amorphous or undefinable entity. According to Kent (1981) it manifests in groups of people working together.

Infrastructure and Development

Infrastructure can deliver major benefits in economic growth, poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability – but it can only do this when it provides services that respond to effective demand and does so efficiently (World Bank, 1994). Until the end of the 1980's, infrastructure was neglected as one of the factors in economic growth. Since then, the effect of public infrastructure on the long-run performance of an economy has been debated in the academic literature and public policy circles. According to Aschauer (1988) and Munnell (1992), additional

infrastructure investment has a significant positive effect on aggregate and regional economic activity. Other scholars such as Hulten and Schwab (1993) argue that not only that infrastructure influences growth, but that other factors are correlated as well. Although correlation does not imply causality, it is significant that economic development and infrastructure are closely associated (Queiroz and Gautam, 1992). While there is no consensus on the exact nature of the impact of infrastructure on growth, many studies on the topic have concluded that the role of infrastructure in growth is substantial, significant, and frequently greater than that of investment in other forms of capital. A shortage of infrastructure services puts pressure on the public sector for more infrastructures. A capable and willing public sector is essential to decide whenever and where infrastructure is expanded. A strategy where infrastructure leads growth also requires policy makers to make spatial choices about which areas and regions are to receive additional infrastructure. When infrastructure follows growth, the choices are more sector than spatially orientated. Political choices under such conditions are more likely to involve economic sector interest groups than spatially orientated ones (Thwala, 2008).

Overview of African Experiences in Public Works Programmes and their Shortcomings

The use of employment-intensive public works programmes is not new to Africa. In the 1960s, three countries in North Africa, namely Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria experimented with such programmes. Although it started initially as emergency relief works programmes, especially in rural areas, they gradually came to acquire a development orientation. The Moroccan experiment, known as National Promotion was launched in June 1961. This large-scale programme was aimed at enhancing opportunities for the rural unemployed in productive works and slowing down the rural exodus and associated problems. According to one estimate, the programme provided

employment for 85 000 workers per month during the peak season and increased GNP by 3, 6 percent (Jara, 1971).

During the period 1959-1960, a large Tunisian works programme, known as Worksites to Combat Underdevelopment was carried out with 80 per cent of the cost being borne by Tunisian authorities and the remaining 20 per cent in the form of food aid from the United States. The employment created was equivalent to an annual average of 20.7 days per head of Tunisia's labour force. Similarly, the publicly-sponsored works programme, known as Worksites for Full Employment (Chantiers de plein emploi (CPE)) began operating in 1962 as a relief operation in Algeria. It soon acquired a strong development orientation to maximise employment in a project of economic interest, namely reforestation work to fight the severe erosion problem. In 1965, the Peoples Worksites Reforestation (Chantiers populaires de reboisement (CPR)) was created as a statutory body attached to the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. Since then, the World Food Programme has provided assistance and the scope of projects were increased to include land reclamation and other infrastructural works.

A variety of employment-intensive works programmes in other countries consisted of limited experiments with local self-help projects. In such cases, the projects were proposed by local communities and the state made its technical assistance conditional on their execution by the local population. The intention was to get the work done as cheaply as possible, but more especially to ensure that the people viewed the projects as their own so that they paid more attention to their maintenance. In Kenya, over 12 000 kilometres of rural access roads was constructed and over 80 000 man-years of employment were created. The Kenyan Rural Access Roads Programme is the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Transport and Communications but operates within the national District Focus policy which gives great autonomy to the local level. According to

McCutcheon and Talyor-Parkins (2003) the methods were considered so successful that they were introduced in the secondary roads network (the Minor Roads Programme).

In Botswana a national programme of labour-intensive road construction units was set up within District Councils which are semi-autonomous bodies under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Local Governments and Lands. This programme has resulted in the creation of over 3 000 jobs (total employment within the public sector is only 20 000) and the construction and upgrading of nearly 2 000 km of road. In Malawi the programme is part of the Ministry of Works and Supply. Since its inception, over 3 845 kms of district road were upgraded in 16 of the country's 24 districts. The Labour Construction Unit in Lesotho was attached to the Ministry of Works since 1977. By 1985 about US \$3 350 000 had been expended on various road construction works (Ibid, 2003).

Thus, within different institutional and organisational frameworks, a wide range of techniques of labour-intensive road construction and maintenance has been extensively tried and tested over the past 30 years. Despite their valuable contribution to rural employment-generation, many of these earlier experiments in employment-intensive public works in Africa suffered from one or more of the following short-comings: the *ad hoc* nature of schemes, lacking spatial focus and often without any links to national rural development and infrastructural planning systems; the makeshift administrative arrangements and failure to inject sufficient managerial and engineering skills and technical competence into project selection and execution, as well as choice of technology, resulting in poor project planning, programming and manpower management; the lack of balance between centralisation and effective involvement of local administrations and popular bodies in crucial programme decisions, planning and implementation; the failure to adjust programme operation and intensity to seasonal labour demand for agricultural operations; the lack of precision about target

groups and programming on the basis of inadequate information about beneficiary groups; the lack of adequate and sustained political commitment and allocation of public funds for the programmes; inadequate post-project maintenance arrangements; and inadequate emphasis on, and arrangements for, reporting cost-benefit studies and general performance evaluation.

Employment-Intensive Approach

According to Bentall et al. (1999), the “employment-intensive approach” is defined as an approach where labour is the dominant resource for carrying out works, and where the share of the total project cost spent on labour is high (typically 25 – 60%). The term “employment-intensive approach” indicates that optimal use is made of labour as the predominant resource in infrastructure projects, while ensuring cost-effectiveness and safeguarding quality. This involves a judicious combination of labour and appropriate equipment, which is generally light. It also means ensuring that employment-intensive projects do not degenerate into “make-work” projects, in which cost and quality aspects are ignored. The employment-intensive approach is otherwise called the “labour-based approach”, indicating that labour is the principal resource, but that appropriate levels of other resources are used in order to ensure competitive and quality results.

The International Labour Organisation (1999) had undertaken comparative studies of employment-intensive vs. equipment-intensive projects which have shown that the employment-intensive approach: has a higher absorbency of unskilled labour (direct and indirect employment); improves income distribution; contributes to an increase in household income and consumption, thereby leading to an increase in national income; saves foreign exchange and thereby does not increase debt; is based on demand from the community level, and thus enhances democratic participation; is more cost-effective in low-wage labour surplus economies; and is more environmentally friendly. Using a

macro-economic model to measure the impact of labour-intensive investment projects on the economy of Madagascar, for example, a study estimated the differential effects of employment versus equipment-intensive approaches on the principal economic variables, i.e. production, consumption, employment, public finance, foreign trade. The analysis clearly shows the superiority of the employment-based approach, which is 30 to 80% less costly, creates 2.5 times more jobs, increases national income and household consumption 2.5 times and requires only 30% of foreign currency used by equipment (McCutcheon and Taylor-Parkins, 2003).

The main objectives of the use of maximum employment in construction and maintenance can be divided into long-term development and short-term objectives. Long-term development objectives focus on higher level productive employment with sustainable growth to match an increase in working-age population, spurring economic growth and alleviating poverty (De Jong, 1995). The choice of employment-intensive technology for accomplishing project objectives needs careful consideration. Special attention must be paid to several factors: the suitability of the design and the possibility of changes in the design in favour of employment intensive technology; the suitability of site conditions; the appropriate mix of labour and equipment; the availability and motivation of labour; the wage rates and incentive schemes; and the achievement of production targets. The technical feasibility also has a major impact on the decision.

Urban Renewal Infrastructure Programmes in Johannesburg, South Africa: Experiences, Problems and Prospects

Public works programmes have a long history in the industrialised countries as an economic-policy tool, both as a fiscal measure to expand or contract public spending in periods of unbalanced

domestic demand as well as a short-term measure to alleviate unemployment. In recent years, they have formed important components of special job-creation schemes launched by many industrialised countries in response to either economic recession or rising unemployment among youth (Thwala, 2008).

The challenge of reversing the effects of decades of social exclusion and economic marginalisation in South Africa's townships and informal settlements is a formidable one. A large percentage of the populations residing in the nodes live below minimum subsistence levels. Unemployment levels are very high and income levels very low. This in turn is linked to factors such as poor education levels and lack of skills, lack of formal employment opportunities and the continuing spatial separation of the nodes from the resources of the urban core of most cities.

The spread of HIV/AIDS, which threatens to weaken and then eliminate a very large proportion of their populations of economically active age, is estimated to peak around 2010, though its effects will continue for at least a generation thereafter. Thus the URP, which has a planned seven-year life, will come to an end at about the time when the HIV/AIDS epidemic reaches its peak. The implication is that a very basic challenge for the URP is to help re-establish the social stability, security and solidarity needed to tackle problems of this nature which provide fundamental hurdles to achieving the broader goals of development. A more specific challenge lies in economic development. The eight urban nodes have a miniscule formal economic base, and what activity does take place is largely restricted to the retail sector. Most of the people employed in formal work commute to the industrial and commercial areas outside the nodal areas. The Johannesburg Alexandra Renewal Project has made a start to such initiatives with its multi-faceted Local Economic Development (LED) programme focused both within and outside the area. In terms of programme design, an important challenge of the URP is to ensure that development in these nodes

does not simply consist of a list of add-on projects. The challenge is to go beyond the fragmented physical delivery paradigm that has prevailed in most areas since the mid 1990s.

Urban renewal and inner city regeneration have become serious for the South African government which has invested in several structures to stem the tide of decline in its nine major cities. Other cities like Cape Town, Durban are currently engaged in urban renewal projects as well. The City of Johannesburg is currently busy with the Alexandra Urban Renewal project. The Alexandra Township was established in 1912 and is close to the centre of Johannesburg. It covers an area of over 800 hectares and its infrastructure was designed for a population of about 70,000. Current population estimates vary widely and have been put at figures ranging from 180,000 to 750,000. There are an estimated 34,000 shacks of which approximately 7,000 are located in “backyards” (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2004). The significant unplanned population has overloaded the infrastructure such that water pressures are low and sewers frequently block and overflow. Maintenance of such systems is very difficult because the high densities and congested nature of the backyard shack development makes access for maintenance very difficult or impossible.

At the official opening of Parliament in February 2001, the State President announced a seven-year plan to redevelop Greater Alexandra in Johannesburg. The estimated budget for the Johannesburg Alexandra Renewal Project is R1, 3 billion over 7 years (Ibid). The Project is one of the eight original nodes forming part of the Government Integrated Sustainable Rural Development and Urban Renewal Programmes. These programmes are one of the main vehicles through which the Government is implementing its objectives of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The projects are intended to be labour-intensive in their nature so that more people can be employed and at the same time build new infrastructure for the community.

The Johannesburg Alexandra Urban Renewal Project seeks to fundamentally upgrade living conditions and human development potential within Alexandra by substantially improving livelihoods within Alexandra and wider regional economy; creating a healthy and clean living environment; providing services at an affordable and sustainable level; reducing levels of crime and violence; upgrading existing housing environments and creating additional affordable housing opportunities and de-densification to appropriate land (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2004).

The following are the problems that hinder community participation in the Johannesburg Alexandra Urban Renewal Projects which must be avoided in order for future projects to be successful in South Africa: there has been a lack of clear objectives linking the short and long-term visions of the programme; there were no pilot projects with extensive training programmes or lead-in time to allow for proper planning at a national scale. This should have allowed sufficient time to develop the necessary technology, establish training programmes and develop both the institutional and the individual capacities; the project has seldom been scaled to the magnitude of national manpower needs. Very often they have been introduced in an unsystematic and fragmentary style. This often led to technical hastiness, which was compounded by incompetence and inappropriate technology selection; there have been organisational infirmities and inappropriate administrative arrangements; there has been an imbalance between centralisation for higher level co-ordination and decentralisation for local decision-making and execution of works; inadequate post-project maintenance arrangements often undermined the efficacy of the projects (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2004).

This is largely attributed to the failure to ensure there would be an authority with a sufficient stake in the projects and in their continuing effectiveness (that is lack of community participation and

ineffective local government); the projects have been over ambitious. This was a result of the lack of appreciation of the time it takes to build the necessary individual and institutional capacities at various levels; there has been a lack of clearly defined and executed training programmes that link medium to a long-term development plan; individual skills were not improved. Training, where present, was not particularly appropriate or focussed and has not shown it to be carried through into project employment.

Yet another problem is the lack of commitment from other community members. It must be emphasised that the Alexandra community is not homogenous and this lead to different views on how development should be undertaken in the area. There are those members who view the development in the area as a necessity and others as unnecessary. This poses a challenge to the Urban Renewal project as it is not accepted by other community members.

Another challenge is that the community of Alexandra is constituted by both local residents and migrant workers. Some of the migrant workers do not stay for a long time in the area and migrant to another place. As a result new community members must be introduced to the project so that they may be involved in the project. The process of community participation thus becomes expensive as it will take longer than the time agreed upon.

Another challenge was poor communication on the community participation process and this led to poor meeting attendance. Methods of community participation employed must be appropriate to the Alexandra community. It was imperative for the affected communities to assist in deciding on the appropriate methods of community participation. It is important to have an idea from the community which methods of communication and participation were currently effective in the

Alexandra community. In addition which structures are effective for community participation to be success?

Lessons and Recommendations from the Johannesburg Urban Renewal Projects

One of the most important contributions of the Johannesburg Alexandra Urban Renewal Project is that it resulted in an improved awareness of the role that must be played by the Alexandra community in the development process. In the past the community of Alexandra had rejected developmental projects because they were not properly involved from the project initiation stage. A number of key components had been identified in the research as important for the successful implementation of Urban Renewal programmes. There is a need for targeting the poor; targeting women; institutional training; appropriate technology; community participation; community management; and cost recovery.

Much of the success in the Urban Renewal Projects was achieved by using appropriate technologies and community-based approaches to projects. The conventional approach to infrastructural development adopted from urbanised, western, developed countries was found to be unsuitable because it was overly centralised and did not reflect local traditions and the needs for community participation.

The Johannesburg Urban Renewal experience found that one of the main issues relating to project sustainability is the management of the projects after completion, and not just involvement (or participation) in construction. As an attempt to articulate the responsibilities and management requirements necessary to promote local management of projects, the community management approach was developed. In practice, and for a variety of reasons, planning cannot be left totally to officials, specialists, administrators or experts. Some form of community participation in planning

is essential (Atkinson 1992). Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive community, it is about active involvement and growing empowerment. Development is satisfying basic needs such as housing, water, health care, jobs and recreation in a way that changes economic, social and power relations ANC (1994). Community participation has proved to be a success in a number of countries such as in Kenya, Botswana and Ghana where community participation was promoted in roads constructing, stormwater drainage, etc McCutcheon (1995). In Tegucigalpa (the capital of Honduras), the community is involved in planning to meet their own needs and then take on a management function which ensures that the neighbourhood has safe water at a price they can afford (Choguill 1994). Therefore community participation in South Africa would also play a major role in alleviating the enormous lack of services such as sustainable clean water to rural communities.

It is argued that conventional services have not been or cannot be extended to the poor, as quickly as required. Therefore communities will have to organise to meet their own needs (Crook 1991). If participation is pursued there will be greater possibilities for self-reliance, which will lead to the self-perpetuation of initiating projects. In addition, participation means services can be provided at a lower cost (Ibid, 1991). Therefore, community participation should be promoted, especially for poor communities who have nothing to offer but their labour. The study has shown that decisions arrived at in boardrooms and applied at grassroots level are not usually received positively by target communities.

Based on the results of the study conducted that was undertaken it can be concluded that some of these problems in Urban Renewal Projects in South Africa might be avoided by a careful approach to community participation. Community involvement must be based on community members who share the same common interest and goal. The Alexandra community constitute of permanent local residents

and migrant workers who are mainly tenants. It is imperative to involve both permanent residents and migrant workers in local developmental issues. However, the permanent residents must be at core of the Urban Renewal project as they will derive long-term benefits from the project. The validity of claims to be representative must be tested as early as possible. All interest groups in the community should be identified and consulted. Holding public meetings or advertising in newspapers may do this. Publicity material about a proposed programme can be distributed at public meetings. It should not be assumed that spokespeople at public meetings represent the majority or all of the community. Spokespeople may also say what they think outsiders want to hear in order to further their own positions or to be polite.

What must be realised is that in practice, planners may find that they play both roles interchangeably, depending on where they are in the planning process. Linking learning situations to the planning processes is one way in which one can ensure that what people learn is relevant to their situation and to ensure that what is learnt is applied and reflected upon as something that can be adapted or re-applied. Friedmann (1993) believes that social learning approaches are appropriate to community self-empowerment since they require substantial departure from traditional planning practice which is typically imposed from above rather than generated within the community. This has been evident in the kind of planning practiced during apartheid. The problems which are faced by the Alexandra Renewal Project are also facing cities such as Cape Town and Durban in the implementation of the Urban Renewal projects.

It is important for consultants to first analyse carefully what approach to follow for facilitating or initiating a public participation process. The following factors may be taken into consideration:

- the number of people to be involved
- how will the people be employed

- the location of the project in relation to the affected community members
- the resources available the community participation process
- the level of education of the people who will facilitate the community participation process
- the role of women
- the role of Non-Governmental Organisations found within the community
- the involvement of community representatives
- the role of the youth
- the way in which community participation had been undertaken in the past
- the role of local Councillor
- the role of different stakeholders.

Another important lesson from the Alexandra Renewal project is that effective participation in planning and decision-making is an iterative and time-consuming process. Poor planning on the methods of community participation to be employed may lead to increase project cost and delayed project completion. Proper planning and efficient decision-making process are imperative for community participation to be successful.

The URP is intended to fill this gap, but the nodes chosen are themselves very large, containing hundreds of thousands of people, which make it difficult to secure either deep community participation or real economies of proximity in planning and implementation. What is needed is to create governance structures at a level closer to communities and their organisations. It may be difficult to determine whether an individual or organisation is representative of the community. A community organisation which is unrepresentative can cause resentment and conflict which may curtail a programme. Alternatively, a development committee may be formed. Problems may also arise if the leadership of organisations representing the community changes or if other organisations become more powerful during a programme.

Conclusion

Communities should participate in the assessment of its resources and subsequently in the choice of technology. Communities are highly complex and not single cohesive units. In the absence of legitimate and effective local government, other representatives of the community have to be identified. Over and above the ideals of integration, a test for the URP will be to move from the existing emphasis on physical development to human development in terms of individual and institutional capacities. The capacity of residents of poor communities to break through economic exclusion and participate effectively as economic operators or as skilled workers in the formal economy will be a particularly difficult but important challenge. The success of the URP will depend upon whether local government is able to play an effective role in mobilising other actors and their resources around the urban renewal challenge, generating wide commitment to and involvement in the programme.

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