

PART C: IMPLEMENTATION

CHAPTER 11: BETTERMENT PROGRAMMES

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- 12.3 Community ownership

11.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The goal of Betterment is to enable residents of informal settlements to succeed in life (see 3.3). This can be facilitated in many ways, ranging from conventional knowledge-based programmes to inspiring interventions.

Some of the programmes and initiatives commonly used are listed below:

- Literacy programmes
- Trades and skills courses
- Leadership development programmes
- Sports coaching courses
- Programmes for home-based carers
- Team building programmes
- Visits to inspiring people & places
- Home improvement courses
- Competitions
- Information manuals
- Health programmes
- Language courses
- Organisation development programmes
- Adult education courses
- Entrepreneur development courses
- Conflict management courses
- Volunteer programmes
- Youth leadership courses
- Motivational presentations
- Gardening programmes
- Cultural programmes
- Neighbourhood improvement programmes
- Committee training
- Pre-school programmes
- Sport & recreation programmes

These and others are worth exploring. Funding and information may be accessed through the appropriate departments in provincial and local government - and there are many NGOs and training organisations able to facilitate capacity building.

There is, however, another way in which people learn and grow - through their integration and involvement in the processes and networks that are a characteristic of successful societies. The result is "learning on the job". Ways in which this can be achieved include:

- Membership of teams
- Membership of project committees
- Employment
- Participants in market mechanisms -
- Membership of voluntary associations
- Membership of joint ventures
- Membership of cultural organisations
- e.g. traders, manufacturers, producers

We sometimes make the mistake of dividing our society and economy into “formal” and “informal” as if everything is either one or the other and that they are completely separate. The reality is that there are networks and chains that operate right across our society in many kinds of ways.

The object of this section of the Handbook is to encourage the identification or creation or reinforcement of really productive networks in which residents of informal settlements can participate. We all know that Employment is almost always associated with growth and development opportunities, and it is the preferred network because it also yields a regular income. However, jobs are often in short supply - and it is increasingly other networks that have to be explored for growth (and income) opportunities.

A useful target might be to ensure that every adult in a community is a link in at least one network or association, and to make a particular effort to promote and facilitate networks and linkages that could create an economic benefit.

Examples of economic chains that typically operate in an informal settlement are:

Manufacturing: e.g. sewing, craft making, baking, block making, wrought ironwork

raw materials > transport > manufacturing > transport > retailing > customer

Trading: e.g. groceries, clothing, fresh food, frozen food, timber
producer or wholesaler > transport > trader > customer

Service: e.g. hairdresser, mechanic, battery charger, appliance repairer, builder
raw materials/equipment > expertise > customer

These networks can be attached to much bigger external networks by creating trading, purchasing and marketing links with the formal and even international economy. “Township tours”, promotion of indigenous crafts, art exhibitions, “twinning” of schools and churches, business mentoring and the establishment of business promotion associations linked to chambers of commerce are some ideas.

Be creative - and determined!

11.2 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

11.2.1 Sharing Responsibility

The simplest way for leaders to improve their ability is for them to be involved in structures (committees, task teams) in which they must share responsibility for delivering some results. By this means the community leadership will learn how,

for example, the local authority takes decisions and makes things happen, and at the same time the local authority leadership will learn how the community takes decisions and makes things happen.

As responsibility is shared so a partnership is developed and capacity is increased. There are often considerable leadership resources within informal settlements - and plenty of people who are able to take initiative. After all, the act of urbanisation and thereafter getting established and succeeding in an informal settlements requires significant initiative.

All of the structures discussed in 5.3 and 5.4 provide opportunities for the development of everyone involved. Constant advantages should be taken of these to stretch the experience and understanding of the participants.

11.2.2 Developing Trust

Participation requires trust, and trust is grown from experience of doing things together. We live in a society that has been very polarised - which produces the very opposite of trust. We can only trust people whom we have got to know - especially when we come from a legacy of not trusting people simply because of their group identity.

Trust does not just happen - it has to be worked at. This requires making decisions that will bring people together in ways that will develop relationships. For example, don't just have business meetings - build in some social time - have a meal or a drink together. Visit the settlement or project or other projects together. Arrange for people from different backgrounds to work together.

Furthermore, trust emerges when people need each other. Try to structure roles so that everyone has a real and necessary function. Need will produce appreciation, which will lead to trust.

Remember that you are not only running a project - you are building a new community.

11.2.3 Mandate to Manage

A vital part of leadership development is the exercise of accountability to the people who are being led. Leaders must consult with their constituencies, and they must do it effectively and not just in a token fashion. It is possible that leaders will require assistance to communicate certain issues - and their associates in leadership must be willing to help them. Officials and consultants may also be required to help communicate technical matters.

The product of consultation is a more informed community and mandated leadership. As a result leaders who are involved in development structures can participate as real agents of their constituency, and do so with confidence and authority. This gives the whole process strength.

It is therefore of value to monitor the quality of consultation being undertaken, because if it is inadequate the whole process will be vulnerable. It should be standard practice for the local authority to be able to observe community meetings and *vice versa*, just to ensure that there is real representation and that "leaders" are not just speaking on their own behalf.

11.2.4 Informing good decision-making

Good decisions are based upon good information. In informal settlements issues decision-making requires a constant flow of relevant technical information and a constant flow of information from and about the community. All the parties involved in development structures have some information to offer, and this must be encouraged.

Information about community attitudes and dynamics is no less important than technical or financial information. Therefore information must be sought, encouraged and valued. Everyone must be seen to be "bringing something to the party".

11.2.5 Decisions vs Recommendations

As we have seen in Ch. 5, some structures are designed to create decisions and some to create recommendations, which are then passed to "higher bodies".

It is good management to have decisions made at as "lower" a level as possible, but there are many decisions that can only legally be made by, for example, a Town Council.

How can this distinction be followed without discouraging the "lower" structure? Discouragement causes a reduction in trust and possible polarisation and fragmentation. The answer is usually that the "higher" body places confidence in the "lower" body and demonstrates that by making a practice of endorsing and accepting the "lower" body's recommendations. Under such circumstances there is no need for the "lower" body to feel inferior, because it feels that it has *de facto* authority and that it is valued and appreciated.

There is no point in a Town Council appointing a joint Steering Committee to consider informal settlement issues and then continually refusing to accept its recommendations. There must be a constructive relationship between all

structures if progress is to be made.

11.3 COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Ownership can generate responsibility, pride, maintenance and investment. Ownership is therefore an asset or attribute that has huge potential to drive the process of betterment within a community.

For this benefit to be optimised the community must be enabled to own not only the product (e.g. a plot or a dwelling) but also the process that leads to it.

Ownership of a product is easily understood - a property is transferred by contract from Owner A to Owner B.

Ownership of a process, especially when the process requires a partnership, is more difficult to ensure, because it refers more to a *"sense of ownership"* than to legal title.

How can the community of an informal settlement "own" the process of upgrading the settlement when it does not own the land, does not have the required finance, lacks technical and financial expertise, has no means to appoint consultants or contractors, and has no statutory authority to approve or reject plans or land usage proposals? The answer lies in the practical adoption of the Guiding Principles of Integration, Participation, Communication and Minimum Relocation (see Ch.2). The community is part of the society that the local authority is required to serve.

The implementation of this requires that the community be fully involved in the planning of any initiative (see Participative Planning 10.2), in deciding how it is to be implemented (see Service Delivery Methods 10.6) and operated & maintained (e.g. see Maintenance 10.5).

A sense of ownership in a process can only be derived from the integrity of the relationship. All parties must take the trouble to listen to and understand each other. That might require, for example, officials and consultants to be educated about some community issues and perspectives - and for community members to be educated about some technical and financial issues. That should be expected - we are on a journey of cooperation in this country, and every project or programme, particularly related to informal settlements, must be a cooperative venture if it is to have any chance of success.