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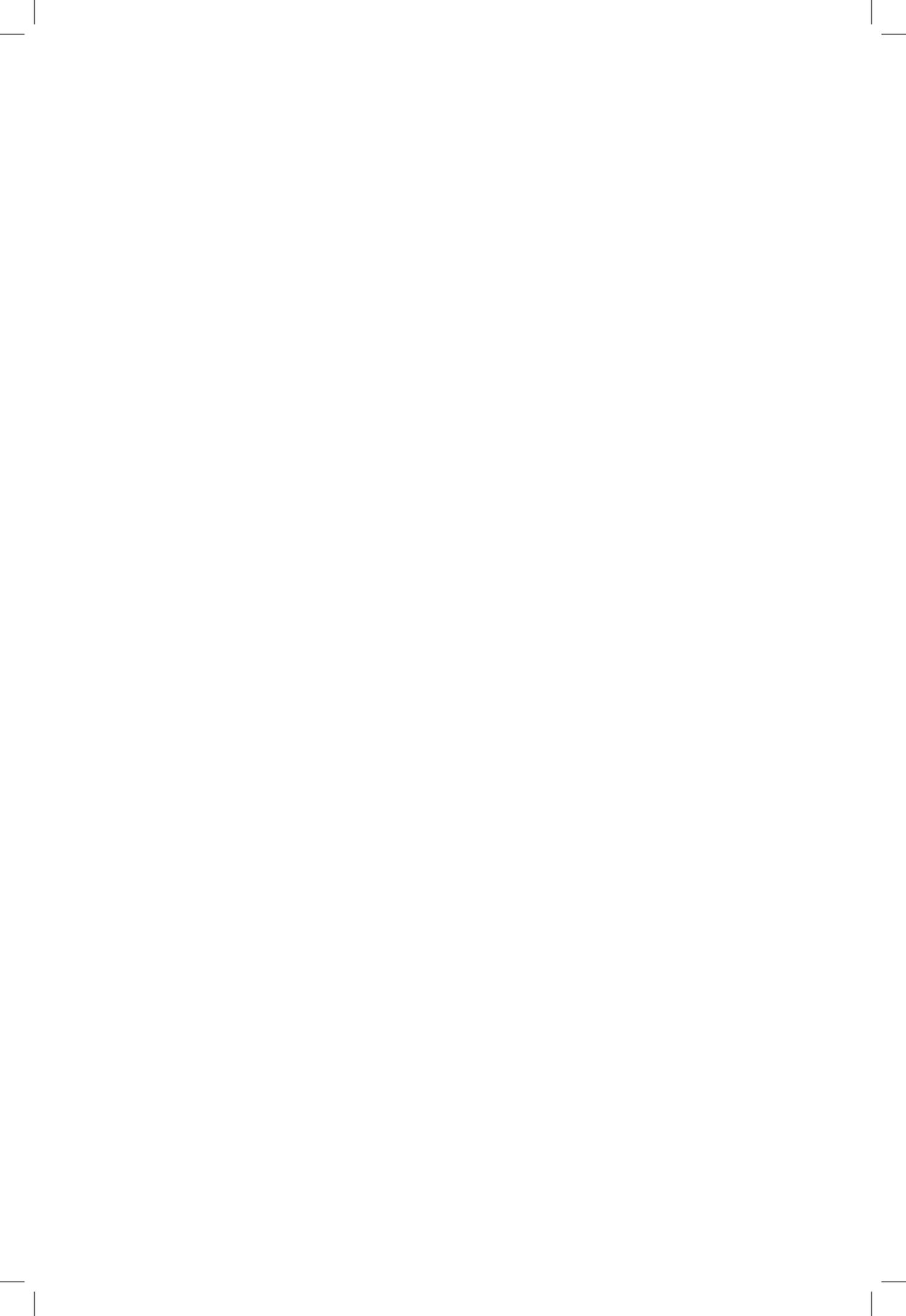
Special Paper No: 17

**When Bottom-Up
Meets Top-Down:
The Limits of Local Participation
in Local Government Planning
in Tanzania**

**Brian Cooksey
&
Idris Kikula**

**RESEARCH ON POVERTY
ALLEVIATION**

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THE LIMITS OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL
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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDO	Community Development Officers
CSDP	Child Survival and Development Programme
DMT	District Executive Director
DPO	District Planning Officer
ESRF	Economic and Social Research Foundation
GOT	Government of Tanzania
HESAWA	Health Sanitation and Water
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDM	Institute of Development Management
IRDP	Institute of Rural Development Planning
LADDER	Livelihoods Research Project
LGA	Local Government Authorities
LGRP	Local Government Reform Programme
LGRP	Local Government Reform Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
O&OD	Opportunities and Obstacles to Development
PEDEP	Primary Education Development Project
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PO-PALG	President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government
PP	Participatory Planning
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRS(P)	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSSS	Policy and Service Satisfaction Survey
REPOA	Research on Poverty Alleviation
TASAF	Tanzania Social Action Fund
TEHIP	Tanzania Essential Health Interventions Project
TOT	Training of Trainers
UAPP	Urban Authorities Partnership Programme
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VEO	Village Executive Officer
VPO	Vice President's Office
WDC	Ward Development Committee
WEO	Ward Executive Officers

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is based on a tracer study of participants attending REPOA training workshops on mainstreaming concerns with poverty and gender in district planning that took place between 1999 and 2001. Of the 106 trainees attending the workshops during this period, completed questionnaires were received from 55. The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire is the most important component of this report. We would like to thank those participants who took time to complete the questionnaire, and hope that the report reflects their views and concerns.

SUMMARY

This report discusses issues that concern planning at district level as perceived by representatives of different districts in Tanzania. In the context of this report planning is taken as a process of choosing or making choices/priorities of interventions in pursuits of sustainable development in general and more specifically in addressing the Millennium Development Goals. The developmental issues will most certainly vary from one place to another even within the same local area like a ward and even in the same village for that matter. Thus the administrative level where the identification of the developmental issues and prioritisation is done becomes critical. Where and how this is done distinguishes between the top-down from the bottom-up approaches. There is confusion, particularly among district staff on these approaches. This confusion or lack of clarity and many other related issues are discussed in this report.

In the traditional top-down planning approach this identification and prioritisation of development issues is done at the district by the different heads of departments and compiled into a district plan by the District Planning Officer. Often times such plans have no relevance to the felt needs of the grass root communities. They instead, indicate what the district officers think the grass root communities need. As such there is poor ownership of not only the process but the outcome as well. This is what makes participatory planning approaches much more palatable to rural or even urban development practitioners. This is because the process of identification and prioritisation of development issues is done by the people themselves but facilitated by district and other staff. The communities themselves also do the implementation of the plans. Such implementation is done parallel to the central government support programmes that are of national priority in the form of what is known as basket funding.

In this report local level problems and constraints related to planning and implementation are discussed and synthesised. Local level planning has been of interest to REPOA since 1999 when it (REPOA) started running a bi-annual training programme for local government staff involved in district development planning. The objective of the training was to attempt the mainstreaming of poverty concerns in district level planning¹ in order to address issues of sustainable development as an overarching framework. The seventh workshop was held in October 2002.

Subsequent to the October 2002 workshop, REPOA commissioned a tracer study of the training programme. A short questionnaire² was specifically designed to capture the prospects and constraints of participatory planning that has greatly gained prominence particularly with the 'resurrection' of the Local Government Reform in 1996.

The questionnaire was sent to the 106 trainees from the first five workshops conducted between 1999 and 2001. Essentially the respondents had been asked to reflect on planning in the context given above. Out of them, fifty-five questionnaires were returned, an impressive response rate (52%) for a postal survey.

Nearly half the respondents said they used participatory planning approaches in preparing the district plan, and almost as many said they used a mix of bottom-up and top-down methods. This is

¹ References to 'mainstreaming poverty' in the following text are shorthand for 'mainstreaming concerns with the reduction/eradication of poverty'.

² The questionnaire was based on various brief surveys of participants attending the REPOA workshop, with additional inputs from members of the Local Government Reform Team.

the lack of clarity that we referred to above (we go into details latter in the report). At the same time, respondents indicated that the more successfully implemented components of the district plan were those benefiting from central government programmes - basket-funded sectors (education and health) and the Road Fund (an earmarked tax) for district road maintenance and repair. Thus implementation of the centrally financed programmes is done parallel with the district plans. In most cases there is a convergence of the two.

Most respondents declared various factors constraining effective planning at the district level. They mentioned lack of resources particularly transport, unmotivated and under-trained district officials, serious staff shortages, "unenlightened communities"³, of politics and corruption. Most of the respondents thought local revenue raising practices discouraged local-level initiative and discriminated against the poor, and that both council staff and councilors were guilty of 'unbecoming behaviour'⁴.

These findings support the view that district-level planning is a relatively weak resource allocation mechanism. The capacity to set and finance priority investments is seriously undermined. The weaker resource base at district level compared to that of the central level, the unsustainable parallel structures set up by donor agencies and the practice of political patronage at all levels are some of the factors that impact on the planning and implementation of sustainable development initiatives at the district level.

The current policy thrust in favour of participatory district planning does not address these underlying constraints. To contribute to poverty reduction within a 'decentralising' local government system, there needs to be much more grounded and reflective political and institutional realities, and more modest in its ambitions. Effective participatory planning presupposes effective devolution of power. This means elected local governments enjoying certain autonomy from the centre, and accountability to the local populace for the use of resources. The latter has been demonstrated by participatory planning in parts of Mbozi and Sengerema Districts (Kikula, 2004). Ultimately, devolved local government goes together with democratisation, a plural society, and a viable civic culture. For the moment, the dominance of patrimonial politics continues to limit reform efforts.

This report is structured as follows: In Section 1 we describe the background to the tracer study of district staff. Section 2 gives a brief sketch of the current status of decentralisation under the Local Government Reform Programme. Section 3 reviews the planning concept and the legal framework. Section 4 presents an overview of planning in Tanzania. Section 5 presents the tracer study results. Section 6 discusses the limits and prospects of participatory planning, and Section 7 draws together the main conclusions and policy implications of the study.

³ Most district staff are not trained in community mobilization and facilitation and tend to look at local communities as a hindrance rather than a resource (Kikula, 2004).

⁴ This situation may have contributed to the scrapping of nuisance taxes in 2003.

1. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report grew out of a tracer study⁵ of the training programme 'Mainstreaming Poverty and Gender in District Plans' which REPOA has been running since 1999. REPOA commissioned the tracer study to gauge the success of the programme. The tracer study consisted largely of an analysis of a questionnaire sent to workshop participants. It was clear that the tracer study had produced some rich data on problems of integrating ('mainstreaming') poverty issues into local government planning, and that a more systematic analysis was called for.

This report attempts to deepen the analysis contained in the tracer study in a number of ways. First, responses to the quantitative questions have been computed, allowing for a more extended analysis, including the disaggregation of responses by the sex, location and occupation of respondents.⁶ Second, the addition of a detailed quantitative analysis allows for a more in-depth presentation of the qualitative results. Finally, putting a more analytical gloss on the report involves an extended literature review and deeper discussion of concepts and issues than was appropriate for the tracer study. This report consists of a detailed analysis of the results of the tracer study. It is not based on original research or fieldwork.

This report expresses the experiences and opinions of district staff and other district officials on the planning processes in which they are involved. The advantage of this approach is that it is based on first-hand experience. The disadvantage, of course, is that the respondents' subjective views are not counter-balanced by any other, less subjective, sources of data. From the survey, we have no means of comparing or contrasting the respondents' views with anyone else's. This could be considered a serious constraint, but we do not think it invalidates the results of the study or the utility of the findings. We are, of course, at liberty to interpret the respondents' views from an independent and critical perspective, drawing on what is already known about the subject. For example, since participatory planning is official policy, backed by legislations (see latter for details), planners would be reluctant to state that they still practice top-down planning. Since we know this, we can interpret the respondents' responses accordingly.

We also cite some recent research that investigates the planning function from the citizen's point of view. Despite the limitations mentioned above, it turns out that the survey results constitute quite a rich data set, allowing us to draw relatively unambiguous conclusions on the degree of effective local participation in district planning, and drawing considerably from the respondents' own, often frankly expressed, views on the subject.

We have also extensively used field experiences from the UNDP funded Tanzakesho programme that ran between 1999 and 2004. The programme was essentially about building capacity for Participatory District Development planning. One of the authors of this report had the rare privilege of being involved from the stage of programming and being an advisor to the programme throughout its implementation period. Such freshly acquired field experience has greatly helped to interpret the responses. Sections 2 and 3 respectively describe Local Government Reform in the context of district planning in the Tanzanian local government system.

⁵ REPOA (2002)

⁶ The small sample size puts limits on the depth of analysis that can be attempted, however.

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM IN TANZANIA⁷

This section gives a brief sketch of current local government reform efforts. Launched in 1996, the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) has just entered its second phase (2003-06). The government originally initiated the reform in 38 districts, intending to roll it out to the remaining districts in subsequent phases. This strategy proved impracticable, and the second phase covers all 120 districts in the country. The LGRP aims to 'improve the quality of and access to public services provided through or facilitated by Local Government Authorities.' Component four of the six components of the programme is 'to establish broad based community awareness of, and participation in, the reform process and promote principles of democracy, transparency and accountability.'⁸ Democratically elected local government authorities will receive enhanced funding for service delivery, gradually increased autonomy in deciding on how resources are to be allocated, and additional human resources and training to manage the process.

The additional funding for basic social services comes from both local and external sources as a result of the Tanzanian government's successful negotiation of debt relief with external aid agencies under the HIPC/PRS(P) process. The main 'pro-poor' sectors that are to benefit from debt relief and additional aid transfers are: basic healthcare and education, agriculture, rural roads, and the judiciary. 'Basket funds' exist for education, health and roads, and are in preparation for the other sectors. Road maintenance and repair are funded out of the Road Fund. LGAs have discretionary powers on spending locally generated revenues.

The focus of national policy on poverty reduction, as contained in the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), was only recently incorporated into the second phase of the LGRP (2003-06). The PRS focus on enhanced spending on basic health, HIV-AIDS, basic education, water supply, agriculture and roads is close to the LGRP's focus on improving the quality and quantity of basic services. In other words, poverty mainstreaming under PRS is the rough equivalent of general service upgrading, the main objective of the LGRP.

Decentralisation is a key component of the LGRP. The concept is not new in Tanzania. The decentralisation policy of 1972 was intended to increase 'peasant'⁹ participation, increase bureaucratic efficiency, and facilitate planning.¹⁰ Under the policy, 'elected local governments were replaced by locally-based arms of the central bureaucracy.'¹¹ Dubbed 'administrative deconcentration', peasant participation did not increase, but, according to Holmquist, the power of local civil servants did, at the 'expense of both TANU and elected officials.'¹² Decentralisation turned out to be 'extraordinarily complex, tedious, time-consuming, and centralized.'

Dependence of regions and districts on the central government increased as local authorities had their revenue collecting function removed. 'The difficulties of communication rendered genuine participation almost impossible.' Service provision deteriorated so rapidly in urban centres that urban councils were restored in 1976. In 1982, local governments were revived in rural areas too.¹³

As mentioned above, the local government reform has a strong component of planning. There is, however, a lot of confusion on what planning for rural development is all about. It is, therefore, important to set the scene by providing a brief overview of the basic concepts. This we do in the next section.

⁷ This section draws heavily on the civil society presentation to the 2002 Consultative Group Informal Session, 2-3 December, 2002 (NGO Policy Forum 2002), which contains unacknowledged references to Clegg and Lemoyen (2002).

⁸ Prime Minister's Office (1988:4)

⁹ Since the demise of Tanzanian Socialism, 'peasants' have become smallholders, small farmers or small holder farmers.

¹⁰ Holmquist (1979:144).

¹¹ Coulson (1979:12). Like many subsequent policies, decentralisation was formulated by expatriate consultants.

¹² Ibid, page 145.

¹³ World Bank (1992:11)

3. THE CONCEPT OF PLANNING

3.1 An Overview

There are certainly many different ways of looking at the concept of planning. The theme and objective of the planning exercise largely influence these variations. Conyers *et al*¹⁴ defined planning as a continuous process that involves making decisions or choices about alternative ways of using available resources, with the aim of achieving particular goals in the future.

The word 'Process' (or *Mchakato* in Kiswahili) is key in this definition of planning. Collins Pocket English Dictionary¹⁵ defines process as a method of doing or producing something; handling or preparing by a special method of manufacture; involving a series of actions. In other words, if a process of producing a product is evaluated, it should be possible to trace down what has taken place and how the product came about.

Thus planning for rural development is about choosing or making choices/priorities. In other words to plan is to make decisions about which problems (out of a large array of problems) should be tackled and in what order of priority. Planning is about consensus building among the stakeholders. Consensus is required in making priorities because not all problems or needs can be met at once given that resources are always limited. Decision making in planning is also about alternative ways of achieving the objectives or meeting the needs or goals.

Whether goals are clear and adequately defined is part of the planning process. According to Conyers *et al.*, and from experience of the authors of this report, more often than not, planning in developing countries focuses on vague goals and do not provide adequate guidance in terms of resources required, their sources, responsibilities of ensuring that the resources are available, etc. At times goals are unrealistic given the resources availability to achieve them or are contrary to the interest of the majority of the targeted population. There are numerous examples of such cases.

Planning is also about scheduling of activities in terms of the sequence of events of what should be done to achieve a particular goal. Equally important is that the time horizon in which the future extents for the plans has to be considered and specified. The above are the main aspects of the concept of planning. As alluded above there is a variety of ways of implementing the planning process. In the next section we will review the two main approaches to planning for rural development.

3.2 Approaches to Planning

No matter where you go in Tanzania you are bound to come across planning that is Top-Down, Bottom-up or a mixture of the two. As we have mentioned earlier, the extent of community involvement during planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a programme or a project distinguishes the top-down from the bottom-up; commonly referred to as participatory planning. Let us briefly review these planning approaches.

3.2.1 The Top-Down Approach

This is the predominant and most common development planning approach. The approach has dominated in the planning cycles for a long time not only in Tanzania but also in many other parts of the world. This has been the case for both government and donor funded programmes. Generally, one of the main reasons for this dominance of the top-down planning approach is that it is seen to allow rapid, large scale spending of budgets in accordance with pre-established timetables. Also it gives government planners, donors and the bureaucrats an illusory feeling of control and efficiency.

¹⁴ Conyers *et al* (1984).

¹⁵ Collins Pocket English Dictionary (1992:390).

According to Rudquist ¹⁶the approach is a derivation from technical people who tended to see technical solutions to every problem. The most extreme features of the top-down approach are those discussed by Korten, ¹⁷ Rudquist and Burkey ¹⁸. In summary the main features of this approach are as follows:

- Planning decisions are **centrally made** by organizations that are remote from the project area. Participation of stakeholders is only limited to provision of data or approving and adhering to what has already been planned.
- Planners and bureaucrats proceed as if they were writing on a **clean slate** and possessing all the knowledge for improving people's lives. In reality, they are making interventions in a well-established community social system, which has survived over generations of struggles and interactions with the local environment.
- Plans are generally based on quantitative data or numerical estimations collected through **rapid diagnostic feasibility studies or project formulation missions**.
- Planning (as well as implementation) follow a pre-conceived project design (a master plan type), fixed time schedule leading to rigid interventions having no respect and consideration of environmental changes, local initiatives and development choices.
- The approach follows a predetermined project design usually based on assumptions of uniformity and cost-effectiveness regardless of area specific conditions where the project is implemented.
- Top down planning is usually based on poor assumptions of social and environmental behaviour often proven to be incorrect as locality and social formations differ.

3.2.2 Participatory Planning

This section briefly describes participatory planning (PP) and its status in Tanzania.¹⁹ It also provides a brief overview on the Government's commitment to participatory approaches. A number of types of participatory planning can be identified. Table 3.1 below summarizes the main ones.

¹⁶ Rudquist (1992)

¹⁷ Korten (1980)

¹⁸ Burkey (1993)

¹⁹ PRA approaches to poverty reduction are also being mainstreamed in the PRS.

Table.3.1: Main Typologies of Participatory Planning

Typology	Characteristics
1. Manipulative Participation	Participation is simply pretence
2. Passive Participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. Information belongs only to external professionals.
3. Participation by Consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. No room for shared decision making between the stakeholders and the professionals. People's needs and priorities are ignored.
4. Participation for Material Incentives	People participate in 'work for food' arrangements. They may also participate for cash, or other materials incentives. The activities and the participation end when the material incentive stops.
5. Functional Participation	Participation is seen by the external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined project objectives.
6. Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation or strengthening of local groups or institutions that determine how available resources are used. Learning methods are used to seek multiple viewpoints.
7. Self Mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice but retain control over how resources are used.

Source: Based on Pretty, (1993)

Many more examples from different parts of Africa covering different "planning" scenarios are contained in Kikula et al.²⁰ It should be added that there is also forced participation. For example, during the colonial administration, people were forced to participate in different activities including road construction, clearing vegetation during the tsetse campaigns, environmental conservation initiatives, etc. A similar type of forced participation was practised even after independence. People have been more or less given instructions to participate in carrying out an activity that has already been decided upon by higher authorities²¹.

It is interesting to note that the different types of participatory planning approaches given in Table 3.1 above can still be found operating in many different parts of the country. This may explain the essence of the title of this report. It will be noticed in the table that typologies 1 to 5 are not true participatory approaches. For all intents and purposes, they are as good as top down approaches. This is a point that we carefully watched while making analysis of the results of our survey.

Participatory Planning in Tanzania has a long history. A survey by Kikula et al.²² shows that there have been many variations of PP, ranging from minimal participation to something approaching 'true' participation.²³ The survey by Kikula et al; was commissioned by the GOT in collaboration with UNDP and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in an attempt to standardise PP in the country. Subsequently,

²⁰ Kikula et al; (1999).

²¹ Kikula et al; (1999).

²² Kikula et al; (1999)

²³ Kikula et al; (1999)

guidelines were developed which eventually led to the adoption of Opportunities and Obstacles for Development (O&OD) as the blueprint for PP in Tanzania.²⁴ Thus in 2001, PO-RALG adopted O&OD as the planning framework for the country. Its use was first piloted in Hai in 2002 and has subsequently been adopted in many other areas of Tanzania.

O&OD is a bottom-up planning methodology based, like other PP methodologies, are based on Participatory Rural Assessment (PRA). The main distinguishing feature of O&OD is the entry point. O&D starts by identifying the opportunities or attributes inherent in a community environment that can be effectively deployed to address the obstacles to development. O&OD starts with the opportunities rather than the obstacles. Thus the approach is an attempt to change the peoples' mind sets that development is possible by using the resource endowment of the local environment.

3.2.3 Policy and Legal Framework of Participatory Planning in Tanzania

It is important to note here that participatory planning (we refer here to true participatory planning!) has a political and legal backing. The local government policy²⁵ commits the Government of Tanzania to devolving powers and responsibilities to the local governments (Urban Authorities, District Councils and Village Governments). We briefly outline this commitment below²⁶.

There is a clear commitment by the Government to the adoption of participatory planning as a means of empowering people to determine their own destiny of development. In this regard the Tanzania Development Vision 2025²⁷ provides a national level guidance of the development processes. The Vision 2025 clearly states that:

"Deliberate efforts must be made to empower the people and catalyze their democratic and popular participation. The strategy should entail empowering local governments and communities and promoting broad-based grassroots in the mobilization of resources, knowledge and experience with a view to stimulating initiatives at all levels of society."²⁸

The political and policy commitments to participatory planning also have legal support:

There is a clear legal and policy basis for the national introduction of planning for overall development at district level, through genuinely democratic and participatory processes. The legal basis for participatory planning is determined from the following paragraphs from various Acts of Parliament:

The Local Government Acts No. 7 and 8 of 1982 and Regional Administration Act of 1997 provide a legal basis for participatory planning. Accordingly (Para 32 – (1)) the Ward Development Committees (WDCs) are directed and empowered to be responsible for:

- Initiation or formulation of any task, venture or enterprise designed to ensure the welfare and well-being of the residents of the Ward;
- Planning and co-coordinating the activities of residents of the Ward engaged in any activity or industry of any kind; and
- Initiating and promoting participatory development in the Ward.

The Local Government Act includes the following aspects as a basic function of the Local Government Authorities (LGA):

- Promoting and ensuring democratic participation in, and control of decision making by the people concerned (Para 111A-(1)); and

²⁴ O & OD (2004) Rural Process, Urban Process, Training Manual and Hand Book

²⁵ MRALG; (1998).

²⁶ This summary is based on study commissioned by JICA (2003).

²⁷ URT; (1998), Tanzania Vision 2025.

²⁸ URT, (1998).

- Formulating, coordinating and supervising the implementation of all plans for the economic, commercial, industrial and social development in its area of jurisdiction (Para 118 – (1)).

The Local Government Act empowers Village Councils to plan and coordinate the activities of and render any assistance and advice to the residents of the village engaged in the development initiatives (Para 142-(2)).

There are also directives contained in the Local Government (District Authorities) (Councillors Code of Conduct) Act that provide support for decentralized planning. The most specific is contained in Para 13, which directs that:

- Every councillor shall promote a broad and consultative process in enhancing development at grass-root level within the area of jurisdiction of the council;
- //....., the councillor shall in discharging his duties and responsibilities endeavour to ensure that every activity is performed in a democratic and participatory manner and by involving the grassroots community;
- It shall be the duty of every councillor to promote and ensure democratic participation and control of decision making by the people within the area of jurisdiction of the council; and
- Formulate, prepare and implement economic and social service delivery plans which address local needs and priorities in their areas of jurisdiction.

The participatory planning guideline (PO-RALG, 2003, Kikula et. al; 2003) and the Opportunity and Obstacles for Development (O&OD) manual (PO-RALG, 2004) rationalizes a participatory planning approach and provides details of how to practically demonstrate the value of the participatory planning approach. Chapter Three of the O&OD manual provides exercises to familiarize the participants with the concept of planning.

The Local Government (District Authorities) Act empowers the Ward Development Committees to promote participatory development in the Ward (Para 32 – [1]). PO-RALG has facilitated a wide based consultative process to formulate guidelines for district level participatory planning. There are also directives contained in the Local Government (District Authorities, Councillors Code of Conduct) Act, which provides support for decentralised planning. The most specific is in Para 13, which directs that ‘... the councillor shall in discharging his [sic] duties and responsibilities endeavour to ensure that every activity is performed in a democratic and participatory manner and by involving grass root community.’

The O&OD envisaged training district teams so that by 2003 all 13,300 villages in Tanzania should have gone through the O&OD planning process.²⁹ This was over ambitious. This goal has not been attained. Nevertheless, the draft Training Manual on Participatory Community Based Opportunity and Obstacles for Development Planning (O&OD) targeted the training of district and ward facilitators in using participatory tools to enable communities to formulate participatory plans. The Regional Secretariats have been mandated to supervise and coordinate the implementation of the O&OD planning approach.

A number of donor agencies, including the UNCDF and bilateral donors have supported integrated district development programmes in different parts of the country.³⁰ A form of participatory planning has been a feature of most of these. In a brief summary, the Joint Review of the LGRP notes that district planning is constrained by the time it takes to come up with a plan and plans have sometimes (often?) ‘not been used to guide the implementation of programmes.’³¹ The more inclusive and participatory the plan, the more time-consuming and expensive it is to prepare. Only districts with

²⁹ po-ralg 2001.

³⁰ Including, the Netherlands, Finnish, British and Irish, with Sweden a late arrival.

³¹ Joint Review of the LGRP, Technical Paper No. 6, pages 87 - 88. The separation between planning and implementation is a frequently repeated reason why planning fails.

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donor support can 'afford' such a planning process. To an extent this is partly true. This is because in many cases the "high" costs of the PRA exercises include overheads such as meals for everybody in the meetings and the bloated up number of days for the facilitation teams. With strategic planning of the exercises, the costs are bound to be reduced. Furthermore, an additional counter argument would be that expensive as it may sound, participatory planning instils local ownership of the plans and the outputs and therefore, their sustainability. Thus while the exercise may seem "expensive" to conduct, but in the long run it will pay dividends that will, most certainly, off-set the investments.

4. PLANNING IN TANZANIA

4.1 An Overview

This section gives a brief sketch of the history of planning in Tanzania, and outlines the main features of district and participatory planning. Constraints on effective participatory planning are the main focus of the tracer study, to which we shall now turn to.

Central planning was a core component of Tanzania's post-independence policies, which lasted until around nineteen-eighty. The five-year public investment plans were the basis of the economic development strategy until the mid-seventies. The government adopted integrated regional development planning in the nineteen seventies as a means of financing decentralisation, discussed below. Foreign consultants (with little or no experience on local conditions) with the expectation that aid would finance their implementation drew up ambitious regional development and water master plans. Neither central nor regional planning was successful.³²

4.2 Local Government Planning

Until fairly recently the District Management Team (DMT) that is made up of all heads of departments in the District Council did not operate as a team. Each department came up with a list of activities that were submitted to the District Planning Officer (DPO) for consolidation into a 'District Plan'. Planning was, therefore, a stand-alone function with its own department in municipal and district councils.

Although Planning Departments continue to exist, under the Local Government Reform with its PP Initiative, the planning function is now the joint responsibility of the DMT, chaired by the District Executive Director (DED) an appointee of the Central Government. Thus the transition from planning as a stand-alone activity to planning as a joint responsibility of the DMT has obvious implications to the DPO, the heads of departments and their staff (the latter are the ones who attended the REPOA training course and hence the main subject of this study).

The report does not investigate the transition to collective planning or the impact of this transition on the role of the different players at the district, it may be useful to point out a few things here. First is the need for reorientation of the whole district team particularly the DPO. Most of the DPOs and members of the DMT, even the recently trained ones, have scanty knowledge of participatory planning approaches. This is because such approaches are not seriously taught in their formal training. There could be a few lectures on the subject and not a fully-fledged training in its own right. One has to be lucky to have attended a workshop or a short training course that is oriented towards such approaches. Practical experience shows that even then many of them still remain sceptical on how members of the local community, some of whom have never been in a classroom, can effectively be involved in such technical activity as planning.³³ Thus there is obviously a need for change of mind-sets. After such reorientation they definitely need to be trained on the approaches and the various tools. This is the approach that has been adopted by the Local Government Reform Programme with its O&OD initiative.

³² Hyden (1980), Kleemier (1982)

³³ This observation was especially obvious during the early days of the Tanzakesho programme in Mbozi and Sengerema districts.

5. TRACER STUDY RESULTS

Here we report the main findings of the tracer study. A short questionnaire containing a mix of closed and open-ended questions were sent to the 106 participants from the first five REPOA poverty mainstreaming workshops (August 1999-October 2001). Fifty-five completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 52 per cent, which is very high for a postal survey.

5.1 Description of the Sample

Those who responded were disproportionately male (71 per cent of the sample, 78 per cent of the completed questionnaires). Half the respondents were district planning officers, followed by community development workers, very similar to the distribution of questionnaire recipients.³⁴ Respondents were from districts throughout the country. Table 5.1 describes the sample.

Table 5.1 Description of the Sample (n)

	Male	Female	Total
Type of district			
Rural	27	6	33
Urban	12	4	16
Total	39	10	49
Occupation			
Planning Officers	26	2	28
Community Development Officers	9	6	15
NGO/faith based / other	8	4	12
Total	43	12	55

N=55

Source: Tracer study results,

District Council employees outnumbered urban (municipal and town council) employees by a factor of about two to one. Most trainees described themselves as District Planning Officers (DPOs)³⁵ and Community Development Officers (CDOs). But in practical terms there is only one DPO in each district. The rest of the staff in the various sectors are named in accordance with the scheme of service in that sector. It is therefore possible they labelled themselves as planning officers to accommodate themselves in the training and tracer study initiatives. Thus for the purposes of this report the term "Planning Officer" is used to cover both the proper DPOs and the other sectoral staff other than the Community Development staff who have a separate category. A few trainees worked for local or international NGOs or faith-based development organisations. The 'other' category includes three economists, a trade officer, an agricultural extension officer, a District Executive Director and a lecturer from Cooperative College, Moshi.

Educational backgrounds were not reported in the questionnaire, but we know from the training workshops that the majority have diplomas and advanced diplomas in planning and rural/community development from former IDM (Mzombe) and IRDP (Dodoma), with the next largest group holding

³⁴ Conclusion: the sample is quite representative of trainees, though male respondents are slightly over-represented.

³⁵ The rather ominous job description Planning and Control Officer is still widely used.

degrees from the University of Dar es Salaam and Sokoine University of Agriculture. Most of the sample had some experience of participatory planning and PRA. Ten respondents (18%) had studied participatory planning in some of their courses at degree level, 35 (64%) in short courses and 14 (25%) through on-the-job training. For training in PPA, the comparable figures are 2 (4%), 32 (58%) and 16 (29%).³⁶

5.2 District Planning Processes

The questionnaire was designed to produce information on the nature of planning at the district level and below. Respondents were asked what kind of planning was practiced, how much of the district plan was implemented, which parts of the plan were more successfully implemented and which parts less, what were the reasons for the patterns of performance described, and the constraints on effective planning. Below we summarise the responses to these questions. **Table 5.2** describes the type of planning respondents said they practiced.

Table 5.2: Type of District Planning

Type of planning	Frequency	Per cent
Participatory	26	47.3
Elements of both	25	45.5
Top down	1	1.8
Total	52	94.5
Missing	3	5.5
Total	55	100.0

Source: Tracer study results

Nearly half said they use participatory planning in preparing the district plan, and a similar proportion used a mix of 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' methods.³⁷ Only one (rural) respondent admitted using traditional top-down planning techniques. This is an interesting set of results. In view of the low level of the practical details of participatory planning one is left to wonder how so many responded as using participatory planning. It may be noted here that top-down planning approaches have for sometime been frowned upon as old-fashioned. No one (except one respondent) in his/her right mind would want to expose his or her backwardness. The results in Table 5.2 are useful but have to be interpreted cautiously. It is likely that the distinction of the types of district planning at the time of the survey might not have been that distinct.

Nevertheless, respondents were requested to explain their answers. Appendix 1 lists the participatory planning and 'mixed' options responses in full. Many responses to the 'participatory' option indicate that planning processes at the grassroots (creating village and ward plans) are the basis of the district plan.³⁸ Typical responses regarding this option are in Box 5.1.

³⁶ Some respondents included REPOA training in the short courses.

³⁷ All urban planners said they used a 'mixed' approach, compared to only half the rural planners.

³⁸ One respondent admitted the existence of influences from 'above' in the statement: 'the work of the District is to integrate the plans with the policies from different sectors and ministries.'

Box 5.1: Participatory Planning as Defined by Planners

- 'The District uses plans from Ward Development Committees to prepare District annual plans.'³⁹
- 'Communities participate in discussing their problems and arrange the priority problems.'
- 'Proposals from the villages were scrutinised and compiled by the ward Development Committee. The district compiled its report basing on the proposals of the WDCs.'⁴⁰
- 'I am doing community based planning through PRA process, which is piloted in 22 villages of the district. The villagers have come up with three year action plans, addressing their real needs in poverty alleviation.'
- 'The district development plan has been typically prepared by using ward plans which were prepared by the community at sub-ward and village level by using O&OD planning model.'

Source: Tracer study results

In regard to the 'mixed' option, respondents mentioned the district management team, district officials, central government, Vision 2025, and international NGOs as influences on the district planning process. Some representative responses are in **Box 5.2**.

Box 5.2: 'Mixed' Planning as Defined by Planners

- 'Our annual district plan uses ideas developed by ward development committees (WDCs) and some ideas from district management team focusing on the national Vision 2025⁴¹ and other national policies.'⁴²
- 'In [the] case of bottom-up/participatory approach: The community through PPA identify their most felt needs. ... Their plans are further submitted to the Council through ward development committees where they are scrutinised into the district plan. In case of top-down approach we consider only areas which through research have most impact [on] poverty alleviation.'
- 'We request plans from ward level. Some of their plans are just shopping lists ... but some could be used as a demand from the lower level and considered as plans.'
- 'Although the plan contained much input from the local communities (key stakeholders); some input from the district/national level was necessary, especially in regards to policy developments/ changes.'
- 'District and Dutch-funded programmes managed fully by the district were bottom-up planned. But those from ministerial level e.g. the Rural Water and Sanitation Programmes are to a large extent top-down!!'

Source: Tracer study results

A few responses indicating that the district practiced participatory planning would be better classified as 'mixed', for example:

- 'The district plan has incorporated the village action plans (through the wards), the district priorities and national priorities.'
- 'Our district plan is a participatory one because most of the plans come from the villages and

³⁹ Even the traditional top-down plans have to go through the Ward Development Committee (WDC). Thus, the passing through the WDC should not be a criteria for labelling the process participatory.

⁴⁰ The traditional top-down approach used the same approach. Therefore, from the respondent's own definition, only a few criteria seem to indicate a participatory approach.

⁴¹ Very few districts have used the vision 2025 as a planning tool. In fact in Mbozi and Sengerema districts none of the staff had seen the document before it was presented to them in 2002.

⁴² From experience, national policies rarely trickle down to the districts.

these plans are the priority needs of our people. The work of the district is to integrate the plans with the policies from different sectors and ministries.’

One quote stands out for its challenging frankness and cynicism, suggesting that there may sometimes be a lack of substance in the ‘participatory planning’ approach:

‘Guidelines and funds come from above. We put answers into their mouth to pretend that it is their idea of implementing certain projects.’⁴³

To further probe the issue of the nature of the participatory planning approach, respondents were asked to describe how the department in which they work has been involved in participatory planning in the LGA. We have put the responses into loose categories (**Appendix 2**): ‘bottom-up’ processes (34 responses) and PPA/PRA with donors (15 responses).⁴⁴ Examples of ‘bottom-up’ processes are in **Box 5.3**.

Box 5.3: Some Examples of ‘Bottom-up’ Planning Processes

- ‘We visualise, analyse existing problems together, chart out possible best solutions, weigh ability to act collectively, and set SMART action plans which are usually implemented, followed up and monitored by responsible community leaders.’
- ‘We involve local communities by building peoples capacity to analyse their problems and finding ways to tackle those problems. Our main tool is PRA and now I’m using PRA to analyse the problem of poverty.’
- ‘22 out of 125 villages in the district are practicing participatory planning through PRA.’
- The Community Planning Teams have been formulated and trained on how to prepare Community Level (Village and Mitaa level) Plans. More than 60% of the municipal development plan is from CLPs.

Source: Tracer study results

Box 5.4 gives some examples of planning activities involving donors. The most frequently mentioned donor funded projects were TASAF (6 mentions) and CSDP (UNICEF) (4), with half a dozen other activities receiving one mention each.⁴⁵

Box 5.4: Some Examples of Planning with Donors

- ‘All donor projects e.g. TASAF, TEHIP are carrying out participatory planning in their programmes.’
- ‘We incorporate the NGO’s budget in our plans.’
- ‘I have been involved in participatory planning of a World Bank financed project (TASAF).’
- ‘My department is involved in participatory planning in several activities: PRA under Ireland Aid which led to Community Initiative Support Programme, and CSDP.’
- ‘The department facilitates and enables other development agencies in the district to involve or participate fully during planning process.’

Source: Tracer study results

Recent household surveys indicate substantial participation in the planning process. For example, a study by REPOA asked household heads in seven regions whether they or any other household

⁴³ This frankness and cynicisms is also true even in some of the so called “true participatory” planning approaches if they are not facilitated by a true believer of participatory planning.

⁴⁴ The third group describes essentially district council activities.

⁴⁵ HESAWA, school mapping (JICA), TEHIP, ICT, Capacity 21 and Ireland Aid.

member had ever been involved in village/ward planning. Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) answered in the affirmative. Participation was lowest in Dar es Salaam and other urban centres (17% and 15% respectively) and highest in rural areas (24%). Male heads of household were much more likely than females to answer positively (25% versus 14%). It is worth noting that the poorest quintile had a similar participation rate to the richest (19% versus 18%) with the middle quintile participating most (27%). Since poverty was concentrated among farmers and livestock keepers, the poverty dimension is also a reflection of occupation and rural residence.⁴⁶ Nygaard found similar rates of participation (20%) among a smaller household sample covering four LGAs.⁴⁷ The results show that participatory planning approaches are increasingly getting used in the country. This could be a combination of efforts by the central government and donor agencies.

The REPOA survey also found quite large numbers of householders who had served as village, ward or district councillors. This varied from 14% in Dar es Salaam to 26% in rural areas. Men were significantly more likely to have served in these capacities than women (25% versus 19%).⁴⁸ Both surveys suggest a high level of participation in planning and local government, particularly in rural areas, and among men.

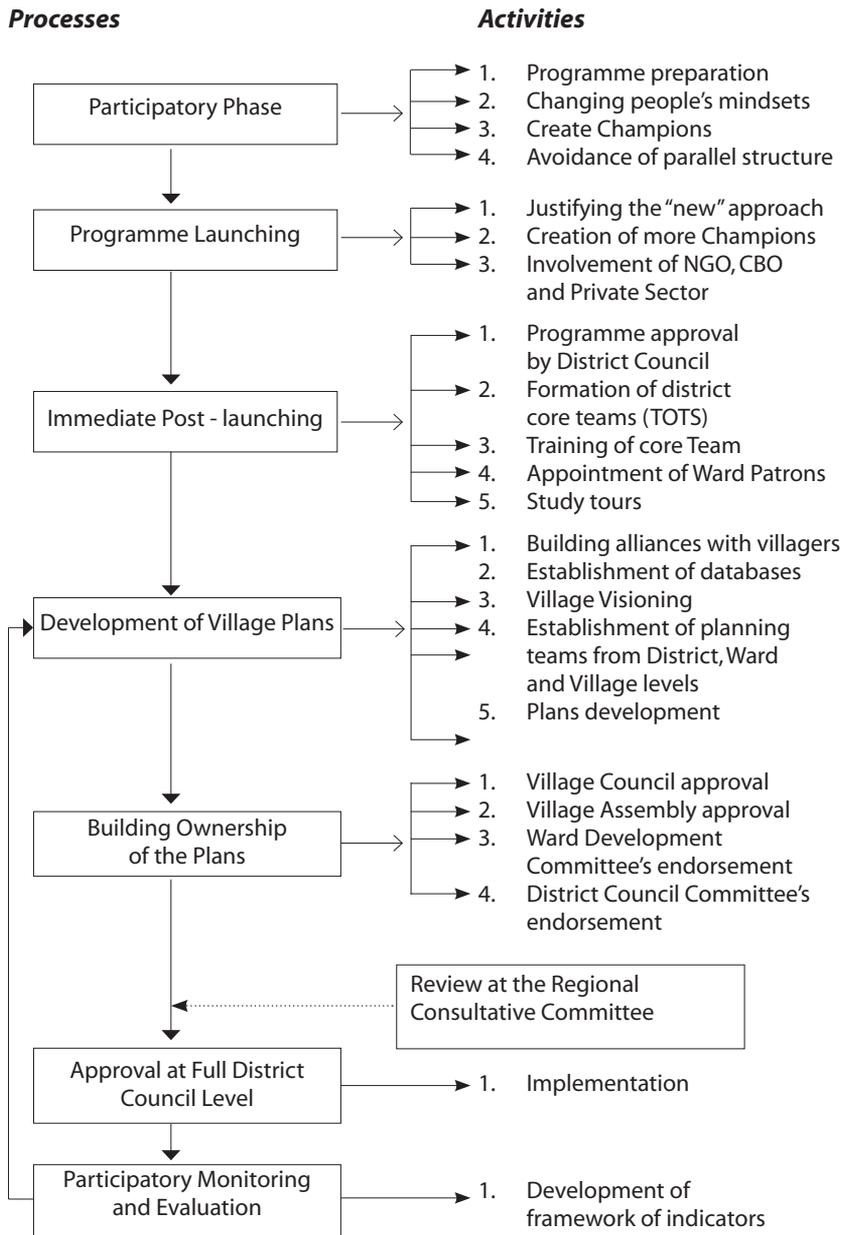
⁴⁶ REPOA (2003:13) plus additional analysis.

⁴⁷ Nygaard(2003).

⁴⁸ REPOA, *ibid*. One possible interpretation of these high levels of participation of these high levels of participation is that the sample is biased towards local elites, particularly in rural areas.

⁴⁹ The range was 1 to 9, with a mode of 8

Figure 1: The Participatory Planning Process Used by Tanzakesho



Source: Prof. Idris S. Kikula

The above summarises the nature of the participatory techniques used by the planning and other departments at district level as well as in villages and wards. Respondents indicated that LGAs use participatory planning techniques, as do national programmes and NGOs. In addition, DMT in the production of the overall district plan for approval by the higher organs. Similar processes have been recorded elsewhere as is the case with the Tanzakesho Programme (see Figure 1) elements of which have been adopted in the O&OD Programme.

Participation seems to be quite high, particularly in rural areas, and especially among men. It is perhaps safe to conclude that participatory techniques are used to complement the elaboration of the district plan, which in turn reflects various influences from the council, sector ministries, donor

agencies, and local and international NGOs. In this sense, it is unlikely that a 'pure model' of bottom-up, participatory planning can be identified, although the rhetoric of district plans being largely based on village plans (aggregated at the ward level) is often presented as the reality on the ground. The above provides an important lesson. If the responses given are genuine then there is a serious problem of lack of conceptualisation and understanding of participatory planning.

5.3 District Planning: Implementation and Performance

A number of questions probed the issue of district plan implementation. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their plans were implemented, on a scale of 1 (minimal implementation) to 10 (full implementation). Respondents gave an average score of 6.7, indicating a perception of considerable implementation success.⁴⁹ Planners and CDOs were equally upbeat. Women (8.3) were significantly happier with plan implementation than men (6.3). Most respondents indicating high levels of implementation (scores of 8 and 9) claimed to use participatory as opposed to 'mixed' planning methods (6 cases versus 2). To probe implementation success, respondents were asked to indicate which components of the plan had been more or less successfully implemented. **Table 5.3** gives the breakdown.

Table 5.3: Implementation Performance of the District Plan (%)

Component of the District Plan	More Successfully Implemented	Less Successfully Implemented
Basic education	96	4
Basic healthcare	89	11
Roads	63	37
Water supply	48	52
Agriculture/livestock	36	64
Natural resources	31	69

Source: Tracer study results

Almost all village plans have education and health as a priority. In most of these cases, natural resources and environment come last. This is reflected in Table 5.3 if the success in the implementation of the components can be taken to reflect their prioritisation. The results in Table 5.3 may also be reflecting that the more successfully implemented parts of the district plan are those that benefit from national basket-funded programmes (education and health) or earmarked taxes (roads through the Roads Fund) or large donor project support (major roads and water). No such funding exists for agriculture/livestock development or natural resources. The result is that little moves unless there is a central or donor involvement.

It would appear then that the source of funding rather than the extent of participation in planning makes the difference between implementation and non-implementation of district plans. There was no significant difference between levels of success in plan implementation and whether planners used participatory or mixed planning methods.⁵⁰ Most certainly the difference will be reflected with the level of ownership as manifested by local level maintenance. Experience has shown that this is likely to be the case where participatory planning methodologies are deployed. Otherwise every thing is left to the government or donor who is supposed to 'own' the particular infrastructure.

This picture of variable success in sectoral plan implementation is in part corroborated by household survey results, and partly challenged. The implementation of Primary Education Development Plan (PDEP) and the abolition of school fees in the year 2000, have led to rapid rises in school enrolments

⁵⁰ Health and education plans were said to be successfully implemented in both urban and rural LGAs; road's planning was more successful in urban than rural LGAs.

and a high degree of satisfaction with the results. Nationally, 58 per cent of respondents in the Policy and Service Satisfaction Survey (PSSS) had heard of PEDP.⁵¹ Nearly three-quarters (73%) knew that the government was committed to a capitation grant of US\$ 10 per pupil, and two-thirds (67%) were aware of the official policy of providing textbooks and exercise books free. Large majorities of respondents thought that the quality of school buildings and number of classrooms was improving, (as can be testified by Plates One and Two taken in Sengerema district) and the cost of education was going down.

Photo One: Old Classrooms



Photo Two: New Classrooms



Photos by: I. S. Kikula

⁵¹ REPOA (2003:19). More men than women knew of PEDP (59% versus 52%) and by slightly more rural than urban respondents.

Household survey results depart from the planners’ script in regard to healthcare. The majority complained about the cost of healthcare, and minorities saw improvements in the politeness of staff, availability of drugs, length of waiting time, and the closeness of facilities. Moreover, only 38 per cent knew the official policy of extending cost sharing to the dispensary level.⁵²

In terms of road maintenance and repair, only a third of rural respondents saw an improvement over the last three years, compared with 46 per cent in Dar es Salaam and 43 per cent in other towns.⁵³ Responses on trends in the quality, cost and availability of domestic water varied from location to location, reflecting the presence or absence of a donor programme. Both TASAF and HESAWA were mentioned as sources of assistance for well construction.⁵⁴

In summary, the planners’ views are supported in the cases of household perceptions of basic education, water supply and roads, but not in the case with healthcare. It is a matter of major concern to policy-makers that significant increases in health expenditures are not apparently leading to better outcomes.⁵⁵ It is quite remarkable that such a large proportion of planners see successful plan implementation in healthcare and so few service-users. It is tempting to extrapolate that planners see increased inputs as the indicator of progress, but service users are finding healthcare increasingly inaccessible, with no evidence of changes in the quality of health facility management or the attitudes and rent-seeking practices of health providers.⁵⁶

Respondents were presented with a number of possible explanations of the pattern of more/less successful plan implementation. The responses indicate that donor support is key to project implementation and that participation in plan preparation and central government funding are also very important. Those who claimed to use mixed planning methods were less likely than those who used participatory methods to say that participation in plan formulation was an important determinant of successful plan implementation. This clearly reflects the old thinking that it is the “Planner” who knows what needs to be done and that nothing can be done without central government or donor support. This way has been proven wrong in many areas throughout Tanzania where participatory planning has been tried out. Also, more of those working in rural districts stressed the role of participation compared to the urban planners (81% versus 67%).

Table 5.4: Reasons for Successful Plan Implementation (per cent)

Reason for Successful Plan Implementation	An important reason %	Not an important reason %
Donor projects were implemented because they were well funded	81	19
Successful components of the plan were formulated in a participatory manner.	78	22
Central government components of the plan were implemented because they were well funded.	71	29

Source: Tracer study results

These results provide an insight into the current status of participatory planning. Meaningful participatory planning requires competent and focused facilitation. Such facilitation is bound to come up with much more realistic issues. The contrary will always come up with shopping lists elements that may not be realistic and able to be implemented. Clear priorities that are agreed upon

⁵³ REPOA, *ibid.*, page 36

⁵⁴ REPOA, *ibid.*, page 34

⁵⁵ Studies have shown large leakages in health sector spending and a perception that the Ministry of Health is particularly corrupt. See ESFR/FACEIT.

⁵⁶ Nearly a quarter of respondents knew of people who had been refused medical treatment through inability to pay ‘unofficial payments’ to health workers.

by the communities, clear budgets, sources of funding and timeframes need to be articulated in the plans. Typically, construction projects stand out in most village and district plans, and environmental activities normally receive the lowest priority.⁵⁷

Experience from community-level projects suggests that participation is particularly important for post-construction maintenance. Communities will feel more responsible for monitoring and maintaining infrastructure if the project is jointly conceived. Otherwise, the feeling is that the project belongs to the government/donors and that they are responsible to come and fix whatever goes wrong. Who *owns* the facilities is, of course, the underlying issue.

The 'other reasons' listed for success were community initiative (two mentions), community contribution, labour, qualified personnel, income raising through economic groups, community self-help spirit, community development, community participation during implementation, strength of supervisors and coordinators, cost-sharing (of an NGO project), more transparency in the whole process, and pro-poor and more women-orientation (one mention each). One respondent said the council implemented activities that were well funded, which is our own overall assessment.

Reasons for non-implementation mentioned were: lack of adequate funds (three mentions) and logistics, poor local revenue collection (of which more below), and high cost (in one district Shs 700 million was required to build two dams).

The above findings serve to challenge the idea that the grassroots concerns informing the planning process through PPA/PRA make a significant difference in determining outcomes in the allocation of development or recurrent resources within the district. As is well known, and discussed above, only a small proportion of expressed 'needs' in district plans are ever funded, and the lion's share of available funds are the result of large government/donor initiatives, with NGOs in second place. Thus, though the majority of respondents claim that some successful projects are developed in a participatory manner, we conclude that the availability of funds from donors and central government is a far more important factor, given the patterns described in Table 5.4. We do not necessarily subscribe to it use local resources has proved to make important contributions to local level development.

5.4 Constraints on District Planning

Respondents were then asked to list the main constraints on planning in their LGAs. The question was posed as follows:

'Lack of financial resources is frequently cited as a major constraint on district plan implementation. Apart from finance, there may be other constraints that you experience in implementing your plans. If so, please list them below.'

Experience from the training programme allowed us to anticipate the likely response to an unqualified question on this topic: planners consider lack of funds and the resources they command as the major constraints on implementing district plans. Respondents were asked to mention up to three constraints. When all constraints are summed, the pattern that emerges is as follows:

⁵⁷ In response to the 'other' category the following were listed as 'more successfully implemented' (one mention each): secondary education, culture, TASAF, environmental sanitation, gender issues, administrative superstructural development, community development projects, the informal sector and HIV/AIDS control. The following were 'less successfully implemented': administration, community development, social welfare, HIV education, management capacity building, construction of ward offices.

Table 5.5 Constraints on Planning, Excluding Finance (per cent)

Constraint	No.	Percent
Human resources	34	23
Motivation and management	29	20
Transport/communications/materials	28	19
Politics/governance /corruption	19	13
Community constraints	19	13
Other, including economic/financial constraints	17	12
Total	146	100

Source: Tracer study results

Human resources, motivation and management in the Local Government Authority, and material (especially transportation) constraints each account for about one fifth of all constraints on planning, as perceived by planners.⁵⁸ For the interested reader, the breakdown of all responses for the categories in Table 5.5 is presented in Appendix 3.

Human resource constraints refer mainly to staffing shortages and the lack of adequate training among existing staff. Lack of commitment and motivation among council staff are the most frequently mentioned constraints within the LGAs, accounting for a third of all mentions. Low levels of motivation and inadequate transportation are, of course, products of inadequate finance/under funding, the issue that was specifically excluded from the questionnaire. Inadequate staffing and training levels can also reflect financial constraints, though there may be other considerations. If we consider broad institutional constraints, we are left with LGA management, governance and community-related issues.

It is interesting to note the mention of political interference as a constraint, bearing in mind that the answers to this question were not prompted (except by excluding financial issues). Some examples:

- Misuse of funds;
- Unfulfilled/unmet political promises;
- Political interest and pressure; and
- Corruption and misuse of resources;
- Constraints mentioned at the community level include these examples:
 - Lack of seriousness of the community...;
 - Low pace of community contributions;
 - Lack of commitment among the targeted beneficiaries;
 - Identifying the problem at the grassroot level;
 - General ignorance among the community;
 - Lack of community participation;
 - Low awareness among the people; and
 - Poor organisation/leadership at community level,

A follow-up question asked respondents to name the greatest single constraint on effective district planning, excluding lack of finance. Table 5.6 presents the results, which are reported in full in Appendix 4.

⁵⁸ Rural respondents were much more likely than urban to mention transport/ communication constraints.

Table 5.6: Greatest Single Constraint on Effective District Planning

Constraint	Mentions	Percentage
Human resources	12	24
Motivation and management	11	22
Community	8	16
Politics, governance, corruption	7	14
Transport	5	10
Other	6	12
Total	49	98

Source: Tracer study results

While human resources, motivational and managerial constraints still rank first, community constraints, political interference and corruption move up the list at the expense of transport and other material constraints. There is a widespread view that the government of Tanzania tends to stress material constraints on effective public administration, rather than institutional issues, as a means of attracting donor assistance. However, while our planners have certainly stressed material constraints, they have also raised key institutional issues.

A further related question explored the respondent's perception of his/her freedom to exercise the planning function. The question was posed as follows:

Do you consider that you are allowed to exercise your planning functions effectively in the district, or do other factors—such as political interference or inadequately motivated LG staff, lack of resources, poor internal and external coordination, corruption—undermine the planning function?

Table 5.7 Respondents' Views on Constraints to Effective Planning

	Frequency	Per cent
I exercise my planning functions effectively	8	-16
Other factors undermine the planning function	43	84
Total	51	100

Source: Tracer study results

Only eight respondents agreed that 'I exercise my skills effectively' while the rest agreed that 'other factors undermine effective planning'. Only one urban LGA employee gave a positive response, compared to four from rural LGAs. Women account for less than a third of the sample, but for half of those giving a positive response. There was no significant difference between planners' and community development officers' responses.

Most respondents claimed that their plans were relatively being well implemented, yet a large majority also maintained that their planning functions were being frustrated by exogenous factors. How do we reconcile these conflicting claims? The components of the plan that, according to respondents, were 'more successfully' implemented - basic education and healthcare, roads - benefit from strong central government and donor support, and less successful sectors - natural resources, agriculture, water - do not. However, we have already argued a more nuanced view from the 'demand side', suggesting that there is more to improved service delivery than the commitment of additional resources.

Respondents also claimed that grassroots participation in plan formulation helped explain the pattern of success and failure. To claim that centrally funded programmes are successful in part because they are the result of participatory planning leads to another question: what kind of planning

could that be? Very likely, the participatory component that is built into programmes such as PEDP, and social funds like TASAF. We remain agnostic on the question of the extent to which participation makes a critical difference to such initiatives. Fragmentary research and much anecdotal evidence also suggest that the ‘informal’ politics and cronyism surrounding the spending of any major development credit line is likely to carry more weight than ‘planning’, however participatory. Both government and donors have strong incentives to ignore such sensitive issues and claim success for their programmes.⁵⁹

LGA own finance. We briefly investigated the LGAs’ own revenue collection performance to look into the question of whether collecting additional revenue enhanced the planners’ ability to plan. The assumption is that fiscal decentralisation, by increasing the discretionary resources available to LGAs, would give the planners more opportunities to exercise their skills.

Table 5.8 Locally Raised Revenues for 33 Sample LGAs

Financial year	Local revenue collected (m shillings)
1999	250
2000	280
2001	290

Source: Tracer study results

Altogether, data were obtained for 33 LGAs. Revenues rose by 18 per cent from 1999 to 2001, which is more than the average inflation rate for these years (6.3%). The amounts of money collected in most LGAs were modest, as shown in Table 5.8. Spread evenly over the LGA services, the amounts available per capita of the district population have been trifling. Even so, there are indications that little of this additional local revenue goes into additional services.⁶⁰ The issue was posed as follows:

Research shows that in many districts, most extra council income from local sources is spent on allowances for councillors and council staff rather than improving or expanding services. Is this also true in your district?

Only 43 per cent of those responding agreed with the statement, with the majority (57%) disagreeing.⁶¹ There were no significant differences in responses between urban and rural districts. If the districts in the sample were representative, then the response of the planners could be questioned on the grounds that they might be among the beneficiaries of the evident misuse of local revenue revealed by research.

Whatever the case, most respondents were not convinced that the practice of local revenue collection was either fair or efficient from the point of view of the poor. The issue was posed as follows:

Many observers consider that the recent expansion of local revenue collection is proving counterproductive in that many taxes are ‘nuisance’ taxes, providing disincentives to business activities and farmers, and the poor are taxed excessively. What is your opinion?

⁵⁹ Similar observations were made by the Mbozi and Sengerema District Staff during the SWOT analysis of the traditional planning methodologies and the participatory planning that was being introduced by the Tanzakesho (See Kikula et al 2000). A recent international evaluation of the World Bank’s investment portfolio covering 15 ongoing or recently completed projects awarded them all ‘satisfactory’ ratings.

⁶⁰ Ilala and Kindondoni Municipal Councils (not included in the above computation) are outliers. Ilala collected Tshs. 4.3 billion, 5.0 billion and 6.2 billion local revenue in 1999, 2000 and 2001 respectively, and Kinondoni collected Tshs. 3.9 billion in FY 2001

⁶¹ One respondent who disagreed stated: ‘15% of income from local sources goes to development expenditure (projects) The rest is for office management.’

Three-quarters of those offering opinions agreed that local taxes were a disincentive to enterprise and an excessive burden on the poor. There were no significant differences in responses between urban and rural districts or between professional groups.

As discussed in the introduction, local taxes are widely avoided. Respondents were asked whether they thought tax evasion was the result of 'unbecoming behaviour' by council staff and councillors and other elected leaders. Three-fifths (60%) of those offering opinions (n=33) agreed with the 'unbecoming behaviour' statement relating to staff, and over three-quarters (76%) agreed in relation to councillors and other elected leaders (n=37). CDOs were *much more likely* to complain about councillors than were planners. All but one of the CDOs (94%) complained about councillors' behaviour, but only half the planners (54%). Perhaps CDOs are frustrated by elected officials' lack of concern with their departments' budget, a part of which depends on earmarked allocations from locally generated income. Planners have other concerns. The response patterns of planners and CDOs are similar in regard to the behaviour of LGA staff. There were no significant differences in responses between urban and rural districts.

Finally, three-quarters of the respondents considered themselves inadequately trained to mainstream poverty concerns in district planning. Of course, government officials do not have a strong interest in claiming adequate competence if by so doing they would seduce further training opportunities. On the other hand, it may well be that former REPOA trainees do suffer from a feeling of being 'under trained' for the job they perform.

We are not in a position to make a judgement, but it is worth reflecting further on the training issue, for the poor performance of government, especially local government, is often explained in terms of lack of adequate training among staff. Indeed, the reader will recall that survey respondents substantially (and spontaneously) offered this explanation. One critical view, that is also supported here, is that training may indeed be an issue affecting the quality of service delivery, but there are other limiting factors that need to be addressed if headway is going to be made in performance, including district planning.

In summary, there is little to suggest that increasing local revenue collection is either pro-poor or empowering from the point of view of planners exercising their planning function more effectively.

In the 2003/2004 budget speech, the Government of Tanzania, removed some of the taxes, levies and fees such as shown in Box 5.5 below:

Box 5.5: Some of the Taxes Removed by Government

- Development Levy
- Livestock taxes
- Taxes related to bicycles equipment
- Taxes related to vegetables
- Taxes for hides and skins
- Taxes related to permits for livestock movements
- Taxes related to livestock slaughtering
- Taxes related to dip services
- Taxes related to subsistence fishing
- Fees for burial permit
- Pupils' transfer fees
- Taxes related to dip services
- Taxes related to subsistence fishing
- Fee for burial permit

'Political' issues again seem to undermine the planning function. Workshop participants admitted that pet projects sponsored by the RC, the DC or any other local VIPs were sometimes hurriedly integrated into district plans even though there was no semblance of participation in their elaboration.

Half the respondents said they used bottom-up planning in preparing the district plans, and almost as many use a mix of bottom-up and top-down methods. They indicated that those components of the district plan that were more successfully implemented than others benefited from central funding, basket-funds in the cases of education and health and the Road Fund for district road maintenance and repair. This leaves us with a contradiction: if money from the centre drives implementation of district plans how and where does the desirable ('bottom-up') objective of stimulating community-level resource mobilisation interact with this 'top-down' process? What mechanisms have the central and even the local government for that matter put in place to facilitate such an interaction without enhancing and consolidating the donor syndrome?

Most trainees admitted that various factors generally prevented them from performing their planning function effectively. They complained of lack of resources, transport, unmotivated and under trained district officials, of politics and corruption. Most thought local revenue raising practices discouraged initiatives and discriminated against the poor, that most local revenue was consumed by the councils, and that both council staff and councillors were guilty of 'unbecoming behaviour' that led citizens to avoid paying taxes.

6.0 THE LIMITS OF PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

The principle that the intended beneficiaries of state investment in service provision should be involved in the planning of those investments is widely accepted. This has been articulated in the introductory part of this report. Additional observations are that according to advocates, the virtues of bottom-up development *planning and budgeting* include: getting priorities right; 'helping target groups to explore their potential for development ... and devise strategies for dealing with their problems/constraints'; facilitating 'self-help initiatives and reduce dependency on external assistance'; mobilising local resources; leading to empowerment to demand accountability; and providing a 'basis for coordinating the development initiatives at LGA level.'⁶² Yet while the objectives of participatory planning as embodied in O&OD are most laudable, our findings challenge the claim that the nationwide⁶³ propagation of O&OD methods can provide a viable basis for district level planning and budgeting.

The three words in italics above are critical in that the planning and budgetary functions are often separate in practice, making planning a largely symbolic activity. As we know, most of the funds LGAs receive and spend are the result of national level prioritising, with donor aid a key component both in terms of providing large resources (approaching half the national budget) and having a big say in how they should be allocated.⁶⁴ ⁶⁵So how does 'bottom up' influence 'top down'?

Below we briefly examine the range of PRA approaches that practitioners habitually employ in order to address this question. In terms of *purpose*, PRA can be the *technical* basis for preparing village/ward/district plans and interventions. It can also provide a *strategic entry point* for preparing project or programme related interventions at the community level and above. It can be part of the *preparation* and *monitoring and evaluation* of national strategies like the PRS. Finally, it can be used to raise grassroots awareness and understanding of the causes of poverty and possible solutions through organised *empowerment*.

As regards the *source of funding*, PRA may focus on the mobilisation of local financial and human resources to solve problems. Alternatively, a donor or an international NGO, or a central government programme may provide funding. Matching funds arrangements are combinations of two or more of these sources of funding, for example, donor+LGA, donor+community. The source of funding backing up the PRA will be directly related to the purpose for which it is undertaken.

Funding matters because PRA techniques 'can be expensive' hence difficult to replicate depending on the approach adopted. Failure to finance investments identified through the participatory process is a great disincentive to planning.⁶⁶ Kikula argues that participatory planning has often served as a means of programme development, but not programme implementation. Rather than constituting a key activity, 'planning is seen as a way of getting money from external sources. The role of plans could end when the goal of getting money is achieved.'⁶⁷

As regards *scope*, PRA can cover an entire district, sample wards or villages, or the area covered by a specific intervention, such as a donor-funded area-based programme or sectoral project. The scope will reflect the purpose and the funding.

⁶² Joint Government /Donor Review of the Local Government Reform Programme (2001), Technical Paper No. 6, p. 86.

⁶³ Or at least rural nationwide. There is little talk about 'participation' and 'empowerment' in urban LGAs.

⁶⁴ At least formally: there is evidence that aggregate spending since 2000 is not noticeably more pro-poor than it was before PRSP. See PER Joint Evaluation Report by Development Partners, URT (2003), in particular Fig. 10, p. 27

⁶⁵ UAPP argues that both 'traditional' and participatory planning and budgeting methodologies suffer from lack of standardisation, leading to 'confusion and occasionally competition and duplication.' Donors have contributed to this confusion by 'insisting on adopting their own systems and supporting their own parallel structures, mindful as they might be of financial leakages.'

⁶⁶ Joint review of the LGRP, Technical Paper No. 6

⁶⁷ Kikula et al. (1999, vol. 1: Sect. 4). This source also critiques district plans for not being integrated or comprehensive, and donors for setting unsustainable parallel structures

Finally, who *does* the PRA? If the PRA initiative comes from central or local government, local government personnel or their agents may perform the actual PRA. A donor or NGO funded activity may involve LGA staff and/or consultants (local and/or external) hired to do the job.

Given the above variety of objectives, sources of funding, scope, and practitioners, it is not surprising that there is considerable conceptual confusion over what precisely is meant by 'participatory planning'. Kikula identifies seven types of participatory planning, ranging from passive participation at the low end of the scale to self-mobilisation at the top (See section 5). Self-mobilisation occurs when:

'People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice but retain control over how resources are used.'⁶⁸

This rather radical view of participation informs the O&OD process, which:

'... empowers communities to control their own development process [through] prioritizing ... socio-economic opportunities, setting of objectives, identifying obstacles and plan[ning] interventions/ activities and budgets for implementation, supervision and evaluation.'⁶⁹

The 'community development plan' resulting from the O&OD process 'would enable the Local Government Authority – supported by the Central Government and other development partners – to respond to community priorities and needs.'⁷⁰ So in terms of purpose, O&OD is designed to help communities identify priority investments that can be financed by the LGA and other sources of support. O&OD is designed to give meaning and substance to the term 'bottom up planning.' Below we look at some of the problems that are likely to occur with O&OD implementation.

First, O&OD seems to divorce planning and budgeting. When our respondents were asked to give examples of participatory planning, many mentioned working with NGOs and funds such as TASAF. They also indicated that the sectors with the best implementation record were education, health and roads, where central government budgets make things move in the LGAs. It is difficult to envisage how one would privilege a participatory planning *and budgetary* process in LGAs where the real action comes from the central government, aid agencies and NGOs.⁷¹

Second, numerous practical constraints undermine the feasibility of bottom-up planning. Constraints mentioned by survey respondents include lack of transport, poor communications, and unmotivated and untrained staff. How could a bottom-up approach to planning and budgeting that covers an entire district be realised, irrespective of the size of the incentive coming from central government? Councils, particularly those in resource poor districts with scattered populations, are understaffed and their staffs are under qualified.

In such circumstances, it is optimistic to envisage a comprehensive participatory village/ward planning process that feeds into a district plan, and that is implemented according to identified priorities. Few districts could produce such a plan in a timely manner (PRA is time-consuming) even if such a process made sense in terms of budgeting and implementation. The better-off LGAs are likely to attract more resources than the worse-off by virtue of preparing better district plans.

If the counter-argument is: 'yes, but O&OD is designed to help people help themselves, help the poor identify and solve their own problems' then we are no longer talking about a *district planning* scenario under PRS and LGRP. The more probable scenario is continued major dependence on government/donor resources for district investment and social sector spending.

⁶⁸ Kikula et al (1999:812) Section 6 contains a discussion of different participatory planning scenarios

⁶⁹ PO - RALG 2001

⁷⁰ PO - RALG 2001:5

⁷¹ O & OD also implies steep recurrent costs for LGAs

Third, the issue of empowerment as an objective of O&OD also seems problematic. Effective O&OD implies popular pressure for accountability, which can easily provoke a backlash from officialdom. The reality of local government relations with communities is often the reverse of participation and empowerment. For example, in a recent study Kawa⁷² describes the roles of Village and Ward Executive Officers in Kondoa as 'oppressing the people, denying them basic rights ... by abusing state powers...' (See **Box 6.1**).

Box 6.1: Local Accountability in Kondoa

Attempts by Mirambo villagers in Kondoa district, Dodoma region, to oust the village government for incompetence and corruption were resisted by the WEO and the DEO, who used procedural technicalities to frustrate the attempted ouster. PRA results revealed that the village government met only sporadically and did not keep proper minutes, and tax income and expenditures were kept secret. WEOs and VEOs were seen as 'oppressing the people, denying them basic rights ... by abusing state power conferred upon them.'

WEOs and VEOs are considered to be corrupt and arrogant, they 'embezzle funds earmarked for productive and social services', they 'raise taxes indiscriminately and/or enforce tax collection ruthlessly using mgambo [local militia].' Their allegiance is to the District Development Director, who pays their salaries, and not to the villagers. 'Relations of subordination and suppression dominate the [relationship] between the people and the WEOs/VEOs. 'Top down managerial type supervision dominates at the expense of bottom up political governance.' Attempts by villagers to remove their leaders 'were suppressed by the District Authorities in collaboration with WEOs.'

'The Village Council has the role of an executive body taking instructions from district authorities but is not subordinate and accountable to the village assembly, whose statutory powers and functions remain largely consultative.' 'Hence the continuity in top down approach.'

Source: Kawa (2003)

Although the village assembly is theoretically the sovereign oversight body at the village/hamlet level, the village council is ultimately accountable to the district through the ward, and WEOs/VEOs are seen as primarily tax collectors and enforcers.⁷³ Experience suggests that, when petty bureaucracy comes into conflict with locally expressed preferences, the former is likely to prevail. This does not mean that communities are simply the passive victims of petty officialdom, tax collectors and the forces of law and order. Examples of protest and resistance against local level extortion and corruption are numerous, though underreported.

Shivji points out that the main focus of decentralisation policy is the relationship between central government, the region and the district. Downward relations between districts, divisions⁷⁴, wards and villages are seen more in administrative than in political or governance terms. Village democracy remains chimerical.⁷⁵

We should not underestimate the continued central resistance to further decentralised local government - that could facilitate community empowerment, including planning and budgeting - on the grounds that the LGAs are corrupt and lack skilled and adequately motivated personnel.⁷⁶

School committees manage the World Bank funded classroom-building programme, but there

⁷² Kawa (2003:39).

⁷³ Kawa, *ibid*.

⁷⁴ According to some, the division is an irrelevant level of local government and should be abolished.

⁷⁵ Shivji (2000).

⁷⁶ Both claims have substance, but central government needs to address such issues, not use them as pretexts for ending the decentralisation project. (See Crooke and Sverrisson 1999)

are lots of 'local politics' involved that influence the planning process. The decision to construct classrooms in the PEDP was generally not the result of bottom-up planning. A critical recent review observed as follows:

It seems that the programme for constructing classrooms has resulted in more confusion than empowerment among the people living in rural communities of Masasi area. Lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms, rent-seeking coalitions, politically made choices in the selection of beneficiaries and a lack of attention to quality of the service all undermine the intended benefits and rationality of financial decentralisation.⁷⁷

The point is not that such development activities should be based entirely on community-level decisions, because clearly the central and local governments need to be involved *ab initio* in planning investments in social infrastructure. Otherwise there will be more schools without teachers and dispensaries without staff or drugs. The issue is getting the balance right between local and higher-level decision-making. Currently, the balance is still tilted upwards.

James and Mdoe challenge the current practice of participatory planning:

'Participatory planning is frequently more rhetoric than reality and consequently programme and project designs are frequently unsustainable.'⁷⁸ 'Participatory planning and budgeting in a framework of earmarked funds is an academic exercise, especially when there is no requirement to derive sectoral investment priorities from the development plans.'⁷⁹ '... despite the façade of 'bottom-up' planning, district plans are still largely determined and strongly influenced by administrators.'⁸⁰

It could be observed that the reflection of frustration is an outcome of the use on non-participatory approaches in the name of true true-participatory approaches. The above is a strong indicator that there is a strong sense in which the discussion of district planning needs to be grounded in the political economy of the district. We learn from our survey that local spending priorities can be strongly influenced by local elites of politicians and bureaucrats. The presence of donor projects and programmes offering patronage opportunities to the same elites distorts the rational allocation of resources to poorer parts of the country, or the district. Though popular among the politicians and government officials, activities designed to help the poor – credit, community development funds, service-oriented NGOs, seed capital for women's and youth groups – are perceived by many to be vehicles for elite capture and self-advancement.⁸¹

Finally, we should treat the concept of 'community' with care. O&OD seems to view a community as a relatively undifferentiated entity, united in its poverty, and capable or presenting a single development vision for all its members. In reality, all communities are the site of both consensus and conflict, reflecting different interests and ideologies based on gender, ethnicity, religion, age and class. Well-conducted PPA/PRA routinely produce different priorities for men and women.⁸² Village officials can be petty despots as well as 'representatives' of the 'village voice', as shown in Box 6.1 above.

A village plan that fails to reflect these inherent tensions and conflicts is unlikely to serve the

⁷⁷ Gould and Ojanen (2002:112).

⁷⁸ Kikula et.al. 1999 Volume 1, Executive Summary.

⁷⁹ Joint Government/Donor Review of the Local Government Reform Programme (2001), Technical Paper No. 6: Participatory Planning and Budgeting Procedures in the Context of Local Government Reform, Dar es Salaam, June, (page 90).

⁸⁰ James, Robert, Ntengue Mdoe and Fulgence Mishili (2002). 'Tanzania Rural Livelihoods: Towards a More Enabling Institutional Environment', LADDER Working Paper No. 13, Norwich, March, (Page 17).

⁸¹ According to Gould and Ojanen (2002:112) 'Aid is an important resource in the maintenance of clientelistic bonds. Politicians are quick to take credit for bringing public services or donor projects to their local area and portray these services as personal favours to their political clients. Such 'ownership' of development projects also extends to the work of independent NGOs.'

⁸² See for example, Booth et. al. (1993), Narayan (1997) and the work of the Rural Food Security group (Mbilinyi et.al. (1997) Institute of Development Studies, UDSM.

purposes of the poor. Worse, projects that claim to represent 'community consensus' may force the poor (and the less poor) to contribute labour, materials or money for objectives that they did not endorse and that may bring them few benefits.⁸³ One evaluation of an integrated rural development programme found that 'Conceptualisation of community participation ... is rather poor and mainly interpreted as community contribution in labour and cash. Consequently less powerful members of the community tend to bear most of the workload. Existing differences in power relations based on differences in class, ethnicity, gender and age were taken for granted.'⁸⁴

The scope for local-level planning is strongly influenced by the degree of decentralisation. It is worth remembering that decentralisation is both an administrative and a political process. Understandably, it is the administrative dimension that policy makers focus on most. But political factors can undermine decentralisation, and therefore, undermine the planning function.

A comparative study by Crook and Sverrisson argues that the success of decentralisation policies requires, *inter alia*, that central 'governments ... support the decentralised system with adequate administrative and financial resources and legal powers' and must 'have a capacity and willingness to control and monitor financial probity and accountability for the implementation of policies, particularly when these relate to poverty alleviation.'⁸⁵ A second set of factors influencing the success of decentralisation is central-local political relations.

Success reflects a central commitment to pro-poor policies plus central government preparedness 'to engage actively with local politics (even if for its own politically self-serving reasons), to challenge local elite resistance if necessary and to ensure implementation of policies.'⁸⁶ Is there any evidence in Tanzania that these pre-conditions for successful decentralisation obtain? One opinion from a civil society perspective urges caution:

'In any change situation there is bound to be winners and losers, those for and those against. This is particularly important to remember in a resource poor environment where rules of bureaucratic hierarchy are reinforced further by a pervasive 'big man' culture. In colloquial terms: the big shots have a lot to lose; and they are not used to losing. The challenge should therefore not be underestimated, and the actions needed must be cognisant of the magnitude of the task.'⁸⁷

There are numerous constraints on the implementation of the LGRP. Some inherent in central government processes and central-local relations. For example, central and sector ministries continue to impose multiple and overlapping reporting requirements on LGAs. Sector ministries make their own administrative demands directly on LGAs, without effective coordination with the President's Office, Regional and Local Government (PO-RALG).⁸⁸ For example, questions of performance measurement and national minimum standards have yet to be answered through agreement between PO-RALG and sector ministries. The lack of clearly defined roles for PO-RALG, the Local Government Service Commission and the Civil Service Department – at times in addition to pressure applied by politicians – severely undermines accountability. This reflected in what Kikula has called 'missing links' in the governance structure particularly with regards to resource management and poverty eradication (See Fig. 2). The essence is that the linkages between the different levels of the governance structure are not clearly spelt out.

⁸³ Maia Green (2001?), page 7: 'The real poor are invisible. They don't come to meetings.'

⁸⁴ Government of the Netherlands (1994). PRA/RRA were seen as solutions (page 8).

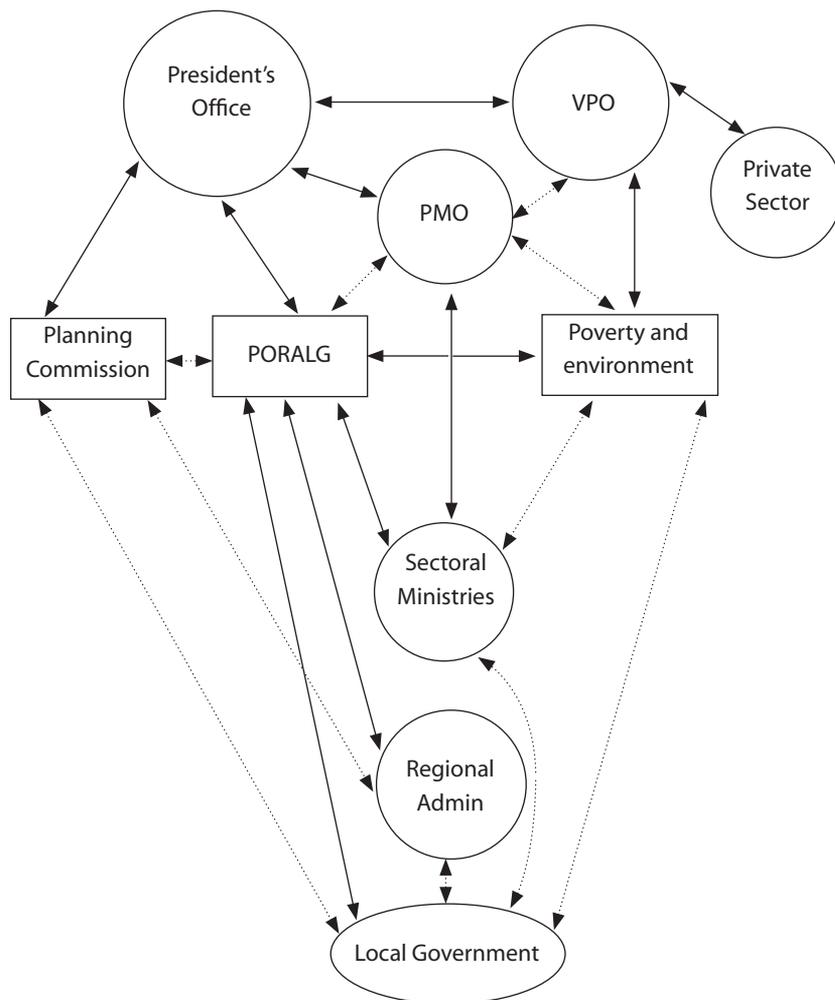
⁸⁵ Crook and Sverrisson, (1999:37).

⁸⁶ Crook and Sverrisson, *ibid*.

⁸⁷ NGO Policy Forum (2002:10). The quote reflects the arguments of Clegg and Lemoyen (2002).

⁸⁸ The PO-RALG is the parent ministry for the LGRP. Previously, local government was the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office.

Figure 2: Missing Links Between Different Levels of Governance



Source: Designed by Prof. Idris S. Kikula⁸⁹

Although LGAs are theoretically mandated to hire and fire officials, in practice this is not happening very much. For example, DEDs, DPO, and some department heads are still routinely appointed by central government. In many cases department heads continue to be much more royal to their professional department in the sector ministries. All these undermine the ‘authority’ of local authorities.

LGAs receive numerous planning and budgeting guidelines. Sector ministries, PO-RALG, and donors issue guidelines, with different reporting formats. According to the 2002 Public Expenditure Review: ‘The concept of LGAs being autonomous institutions is watered down by too many directives from central government. It leaves the LGAs with very little funds to plan and utilize for their priorities.’⁹⁰ Some large donor projects still come on stream without reference to the reform programme and with major implications for LGA capacity to manage them. This goes even for participatory planning.

⁸⁹ This diagram was drafted by the authors after listening to many presentations during a national development forum in Dar-es-Salaam. The authors felt that one of the stumbling blocks to development was inherent in the governance structures. The draft diagram was presented at the forum and many participants agreed with the observation.

⁹⁰ URT (2002). Public Expenditure Review for FY 02, PO-RALG, Dar es Salaam, 9-10 May, pages 5-6.

Central government and different donor agencies operating in the same area demand PP to address their own specific concern making the whole exercise completely uncoordinated thus wasting a lot of resources and placing unnecessary demands on people. This has a potential of making a particular authority quite unpopular.⁹¹

Additional funds have begun to flow to the LGAs as a result of PRS, highlighting problems of financial accountability. Numerous cases of the misuse of education and road funds have come to light, supporting the case for caution in increasing the volume of funds transferred to districts in the absence of tight budgetary and accounting procedures. According to the NGO Policy Forum:

'Financial transfers for health, education and roads are now significant, but issues of accountability linger. Internal audit is weak,⁹² further illustrating the issue of lack of capacity that local government reformers have tended to underestimate. More serious, external audits deliver generally negative assessments, but little seems to be done to recover missing funds and hold those responsible to account. A particularly difficult challenge here is to examine the levels and timeliness of transfers from district to facility level accounts. Recent studies suggest that fungibility is commonplace and reveal large discrepancies in transfers, problems that can undermine the overall reforms altogether. We applaud the Government's publication in newspapers of transfers to districts. But these now need to be made widely available at local levels, and similar information about disbursements from districts to facility levels need broad publication. The Government's intention to undertake expenditure tracking is also important in this regard, but it should be deepened with a commitment to promoting full transparency of information at community levels.'⁹³

The Guardian of Thursday, 15th July, 2004⁹⁴ reported that 50bn TShs from the World Bank meant to support the third phase of the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDEP) had been withheld because the local authority had failed to account for funds provided for implementation of the second phase.

Implementing the LGRP, which receives financial support from a consortium of donor agencies, has been much slower than anticipated. Given the ambitious nature of the reform, and indeed of the entire PRS initiative, there are risks that targets will not be met on time, and that institutional constraints and conflicts will stall the process of policy implementation.

⁹¹ For example, PADEP, a large World Bank agricultural project, requires 26 rural LGA's to initiate and coordinate a matching grants scheme for about 850 communities and farmers' groups. See World Bank (2003) for details.

⁹² One recent source cites a figure of less than 10 clean audits out of 240 district audits. See Holton (2002).

⁹³ NGO Policy Forum (2002) *ibid*. The recent decision by the government to ban most of the 'nuisance taxes' is extremely welcome. The impact of this will need to be monitored on the ground, using the PRS M&E mechanisms.

⁹⁴ The Guardian, Thursday, July 15, 2004: Punish culprits in PEDP mess.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR PRO-POOR DISTRICT PLANNING

The clearest conclusion of this study is that participatory planning at the community level has the potential of providing the basis, through aggregation of village/ward plans, for district development planning. However, in order to realise this potential, a number of issues need to be addressed. Among these issues is the relationship between PRA-based participatory planning and budgeting at village/community level, and the overall district planning and budgeting.⁹⁵ We may summarise the reasons for this conclusion.

Financially, the major social investments channelled through district councils result from central government/donor agency sponsored initiatives. Education, health and rural roads are the main examples. Other major investments are the result of projects and programmes such as PEDP and TASAF, and agricultural projects financed by the World Bank and other agencies. LGAs and lower administrative levels react to these initiatives the implementation of which may not be based on priorities derived from the participatory planning approaches.

Village plans must be based on village resources if the plans are not to be frustrated in implementation. Yet the local level finances that could help implement local plans are limited. Such an implementation requires a strong financial base of the local authorities. This means, among other things that taxes, cesses and levies must be addressed and streamlined.

Lastly, PRA may be seen to be expensive and time-consuming⁹⁶ but the spin-off effects of the process include the enhancement of ownership of the programmes and their outcomes, therefore, higher chances of sustainability.

Administratively, there are too many villages and wards in the average district for the LGA to handle 'bottom-up' planning effectively, assuming the latter is the basis of the district plan. Reporting on the parliamentary debates, the Daily News of Thursday, July 15, 2004 a figure of 10,200 villages was given⁹⁷.

The tracer study confirms that LGAs are generally understaffed and many staff are under qualified; the transport they have is generally used by top officials for official trips, usually outside the district; LG staff lack incentives, many work only part of the time; there is a lack of data and existing data are generally unreliable; computers and other work tools are lacking. LGAs are more responsive to the region and to central ministries, to donors and international NGOs, than to villages. Half a dozen overlapping national reform initiatives and programmes impinge on LGAs, stretching capacity and creating *ad hoc* priorities and confusion.

Politically, the discourse of participation and empowerment contained in PRA contrasts with the reality of the dominance of the political-bureaucratic class over economic and civil society actors and organisations. It is true that the bureaucratic mindset is slow to change and strongly influenced by a recent past of state-led, comprehensive development planning. More significant are the vested interests of the politico-bureaucratic class to retain central control of resources that devolution would put into the hands of others. A number of planners and other respondents mention corruption and politics as factors undermining the planning function.

How can the tools of participatory planning and budgeting be put to good use? One option is that PPA/PRA techniques are employed to generate local awareness of how community resources, both human and financial, can be used to solve community problems. In this limited scenario there is no expectation that external resources will be forthcoming. Such an approach could be linked to a

⁹⁵ We often assume a rural context for district planning, but Tanzania is increasingly urban. Planning in urban area has not been addressed in this study.

⁹⁷ According to UNCDF experience in Mwanza region 'PRA is very expensive and difficult to replicate.' Joint Review of the LGRP, Technical Paper 6, page 87.

⁹⁸ Daily News: Thursday, July 15, 2004: Over 16bn Sh. Required for Village Leaders.

governance agenda, in which empowerment is taken to mean availing communities the means to know their roles, responsibilities and rights.

We argue that the term 'empowerment' can only be used in relation to PPA/PRA-based initiatives in the sense used here. Indeed, one of the key constraints on participation is that it is '*directly linked with equity, which threatens the existing hold of elites upon wealth, power and influence.*'⁹⁸

PRA can raise expectations that villagers and communities have more 'voice' in planning and budgeting than previously. This creates the risk that expectations may be frustrated at the implementation stage. For example, the experience of UNCDF in Mwanza leads to the conclusion that 'failure to finance investments identified through the participatory process is a great disincentive to planning.'⁹⁹ Perhaps as a result of experience on the ground, UNCDF stated bluntly that 'Participatory planning and budgeting can only, to *a very limited extent*, be improved through PRA type of facilitation.' If the objective is to improve 'LGA accountability and transparency in development planning and management' then publishing indicative budgets for ward/village spending and communicating council decisions to the public are preferable options.¹⁰⁰

We have summarised the financial, administrative, and political constraints on participatory planning, and by extension the constraints on PRA as a means of 'democratising' the district planning process. PRA is not a magic bullet that can address all the factors influencing the planning process. Our planners are quite clear on the constraints facing them when it comes to the exercise of their planning functions: they are largely constrained by factors outside their control. For decentralised planning to be effective, there must be a commitment from the central government, backed up with actions devolving responsibilities to the local authorities.

⁹⁸ Kilula et. al. 1999 (Volume 1, Section 3.7). Emphasis in the original.

⁹⁹ 'Despite the fact that UNCDF facilitated villages to identify their priorities, to date it has only been able to facilitate district level projects.' Joint Review *ibid*.

¹⁰⁰ UNCDF (2002:6). Emphasis added.

APPENDIX I:

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: “HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE PREPARATION OF YOUR MOST RECENT DISTRICT PLAN?”

Respondents claiming to exercise a **participatory approach** to planning answered as follows:

- ‘The District uses plans from Ward Development Committees to prepare District annual plans.’
- ‘From 1996, the council invited facilitators from Ushirika College [Moshi Cooperative College] to train its staff how to apply participatory methods/techniques in the workplace. The district plans were prepared by following ward planning (mpango kata) to HQ.’
- ‘All our planning now is bottom-up and not top-down. In so doing the plans are of a participatory nature.’
- ‘The district plan has incorporated the village action plans (through the wards), the district priorities and national priorities.’
- ‘Our district plan is a participatory one because most of the plans come from the villages and these plans are the priority needs of our people. The work of the District is to integrate the plans with the policies from different sectors and ministries.’
- ‘Because the District uses the village proposals to prepare her comprehensive plan. It is comprehensive because the stakeholders were fully involved.’
- ‘Involving the grassroots in the most pressing problem identification and ways of solving in the service of priority.’
- ‘Communities participate in discussing their problems and arrange the priority problems.’
- ‘The District plans according to community priority problems.’
- ‘People from grassroots level discuss their problems. How to solve them and to plan the implementation of the solution from bottom to top.’
- ‘District Development Plans originate from sub-village, village and then ward levels. In these levels, the community identifies the problems, prioritized them and then formulating solutions.’
- ‘Proposals from the villages were scrutinised and compiled by the ward Development Committee. The District compiled its report basing on the proposals of the WDCs.’
- ‘I am doing community based planning through PRA process, which is piloted in 22 villages of the district. The villagers have come up with three year action plans, addressing their real needs in poverty alleviation.’
- ‘Participatory approach is used to increase governance and ensure greater participation from all groups of society in programmes/projects to reduce poverty in councils (sic).’
- ‘Participatory approach is useful to enable the community rank their priorities.’
- ‘We’ve been collecting village plans through the respective wards which have been approved by the WDC under the participatory way from each village. Then each ward plan is discussed by the DMT and brainstormed by the department.’
- ‘District budget involves the community participation depending on their priority.’
- ‘The participatory approach is applicable in all plans in [the] district, thus all plans originate from the community.’
- ‘The district development plan has been typically prepared by using ward plans which were prepared by the community at sub-ward and village level by using O&OD planning model.’

- 'The communities were able to single out the most touching problems, prioritise them and sought solutions for themselves and put into annual plans.'
- 'The District Annual Plans are of a participatory approach whereby we receive plans from the village level, we discuss according to sectors concerned and then we integrate into district planning for the year concerned.'
- 'We are conducting rural participatory approach financed by TASAF.'
- 'Community members are used to analysing the existing situation, identify and agree upon priority problems, develop action plan to address the priority problems, they take charge of implementing their action plan.'
- 'Tabora Municipality is among the districts which are in the reform programme hence it discourages top-down planning which, makes the project planned to be sustainable and useful to the people.'
- 'Before starting plan preparation for 2003/4 all stakeholder councillors, WEOs, CDOs at ward level and Heads of department got the tool of participatory planning using opportunity and obstacles to development, which was used at the preparation of the stated budget [when] each ward developed its plan.'

Those who chose the '**mixed approach**' option argued as follows:

- 'A part of an annual plan based on people's demand and other part of the same annual plan based on management ideas.'
- 'Our annual district plan using ideas developed by ward development committees (WDCs) and some ideas from district management team focusing on the national Vision 2025 and other national policies.'
- 'Some activities on annual plan are being posed by international NGOs and central government and therefore its implementation must be based on top-bottom approach.'
- 'Some projects were initiated by villagers and incorporated in the district plan and others by district officials and sent to villagers.'
- 'From surveys made in districts and views on their plans.'
- 'In case of bottom-up/participatory approach: The community members through PPA identify their most felt needs. It is from this point of view that they plan according to priorities. Their plans are further submitted to the Council through ward development committees where they are fitted into the district plan. In case of top-down approach we consider only areas which through research have most impact to poverty alleviation.'
- 'Guidelines and funds come from above; we put answer into their mouth to pretend that it is their idea of implementing certain projects.'
- 'Hanang DC receives a few development projects from WDCs. Planning Department compiles these projects and become ward development projects.'
- 'Although most of the projects originate from them, in some projects we give them ideas. If they accept then we include in the plan.'
- 'Most of the projects were from the community but some which are almost technical were from the departmental level which cannot come from the grassroots.'
- 'We request plans from ward level. Some of their plans are just shopping lists which could not indicate anything but some could be used as a demand from the lower level and considered as plans.'

- 'Although the plan contained much input from the local communities (key stakeholders); some input from the district/national level was necessary, especially in regards to policy developments/ changes.'
- 'The WDCs prepared and submitted the development plans to the district HQ. The district compiled the wards plans and finally the district prepared its plan basing on the priorities of the wards, district and central government.'
- 'Some decisions involve ... the councillors but to some extent there was an element of the top-down approach.'
- 'District and Dutch-funded programmes managed fully by the district were bottom-up planned. But those from ministerial level e.g. the Rural Water and Sanitation Programme are to a large extent top-down!!'
- 'Participatory planning has been done to a small extent because the knowledge and skills for participatory planning are not adequate at all levels.'
- '70% of the plans nowadays are emanating from the bottom. 30% from top-down approach because there are some funds which come straight from central government – BUT the projects are very useful to the people, i.e. Road Fund, basket fund, education fund.'
- 'In planning the villages bring up their plans to the district but when the Heads of Department see the importance of some of the activities, these activities are incorporated in the plan.'
- 'We have got several roads initiated by the district management and some projects like pipe water, rural roads and bridges are initiated by the villagers.'
- 'The plans come from the grassroots after they are scrutinised by the relevant committees before approval by the council. Also there were plans which were from the centre e.g. education.'

APPENDIX II:

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: "HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY PARTICIPATORY PLANNING IN YOUR LGA?"

'Bottom-up' process

- 'All 70 villages in Chunya District have been taught how to develop their plans basing on their most felt needs. This knowledge was imported through the so-called micro planning. Planning unit played a great role on it.'
- 'We have involved all leaders of sub-villages, suburban (streets) then Ward Development Committees through Ward Executive Officers who submit to the Council.'
- 'It involves facilitating the village level planning so as to come up with village/ward priorities.'
- 'We visualise, analyse existing problems together, chart out possible best solutions, weigh ability to act collectively, and set SMART action plans which are usually implemented, followed up and monitored by responsible community leaders.'
- 'My Department was involved in "mpango kata" where the department played the role of a consultant in formulating plans.'
- 'We involve local communities by building people's capacity to analyse their problems and finding ways to tackle those problems. Our main tool is PRA and now I'm using PRA to analyse the problem of poverty.'
- 'Planning in LGA starts in July each year. Before planning we are supposed to inform the communities to prepare their plans and submit to the district. And this was done through ward development committees.'
- 'In order to get problems of the people, we had to visit each village, ward, facilitating them to identify their problems and prioritise them. Then pass to village government, ward planning, then full council before preparing district development plan.'
- 'My department is the coordinator of all development plans in the district. The department has a programme of selecting Village Development Facilitators and provide them with facilitation skills. Every year the team usually facilitates villages/wards development starting at the sub-village level. 26 out of 45 villages have already trained.'
- 'Involved in District PRA team of 12 members (were 3).'
- 'In the two water schemes carried by the Mto, the community raised the problem of the WCTO to be their pressing need. They were sensitized how to raise funds, formation of leadership, how to implement and the use of resources.'
- 'My department participates in loan reimbursement for youth and women groups; to mobilise people and other departments to succeed their plans.'
- 'Beneficiaries are supposed to contribute towards the implementation of the plans and have to contribute either financially, materially or through their labour. If there is full participation in projects it will make it easy for projects to deliver an appropriate level of benefits for an extended period.'
- '22 out of 125 villages in the district are practicing participatory planning through PRA.'
- 'Initiation of community capacity building through training community leaders.'
- 'Development of micro-projects by means of local resources available in the area.'

- 'We have involved the communities to prioritise their needs according to their problems, which enables us to plan according to their requirements.'
- 'The department has been assisting the local communities in formulating their plans at ward level (Mpango Kata), aimed at reducing poverty among communities in the district.'
- 'Participatory planning is starting from the hamlets, ward level up to the council level.'
- 'We enabled the villages to prepare participatory planning from the village level, ward and district.'
- 'We have involved in Good Governance; training of street leaders and WDCs in facilitating their abilities in planning for development.'
- 'Every project/plan originated from the people themselves. All process of planning M&E are done through participatory approach.'
- 'The Community Planning Teams have been formulated and trained on how to prepare Community Level (Village and Mitaa level) Plans. More than 60% of the Municipal development Plan is from CLPs.'
- 'I'm a gender officer working with irrigation programmes. We normally involve the local community from the time of introduction of programmes to implementation and evaluation of programmes.'
- 'The department was involved in the exercise of 'participatory planning i.e. Community Needs Assessment.' My department as a Coordinating unit supervised the exercise whereby District Participatory Teams were used.'
- 'By allowing the community to identify what their problems are and by allowing them to make priorities in the planning process.'
- 'In identifying and prioritising their needs and contributing positively/participating in planning and implementation processes.'
- 'Involving in planning and budgeting.'
- 'We ask our sub-wards (mitaa) and wards leaders to convene people's meetings to propose projects to be undertaken in the budget year. So far people are asked to contribute toward that budget.'
- 'Communities plan and put their priorities according to their needs and problems facing them.'
- 'The department is the trainer of participatory methodologies in the wards, villages within the Municipality. Secretary of PRA/PUA Municipal Team.'
- 'Development plans come from communities and approved by the council given the budget allocated to the development programme for the year.'
- 'My department acts as coordinator, coordinating and facilitating village/community plans.'
- 'WEOs, CDOs at ward level and Heads of department got the tool of participatory planning using O&OD which was used at the preparation of the stated budget [when] each ward developed its plan.'

PPA/PRA with Donors

- 'In a few villages especially where donors finance the exercise.'
- 'We have done PRA under the following programmes: TASAF, HESAWA, School Mapping, CSDP.'
- 'All donor projects e.g. TASAF, TEHIP are carrying out participatory planning in their programmes. All district plans of Local Government are implementing participatory planning.'
- 'The department facilitates and enables other development agencies in the district to involve or participate fully during planning process.'
- 'Participation in preparation of NGO's plans.'
- 'We incorporate the NGO's budget in our plans.'
- 'The Community Development Department has been involved in water and sanitation programme, TASAF programme implementation, and in the implementation of community based wildlife management.'
- 'Our organisation has done participatory planning in Kagera on the ICT project and Bugabo environmental management project.'
- 'I'm personally a member of a district multidisciplinary team which facilitates plans for sustainable development in villages under the programme called Capacity 21. I am also the coordinator of the strategic Urban Development Plans for Vwawa and Tunduru towns in Mbozi District.'
- 'I am among the PRA team member of TASAF.'
- 'Involved in planning for participatory hygiene and transformation programme and TASAF funded activities.'
- 'Some members of the Sengerema team have been part of the national team formulating national planning circulars through O&OD.'
- 'One staff attended a TOT on PRA training and coordination for TASAF activities, and one for O&OD under UNICEF support activities.'
- 'All activities to be implemented by our department are planned by ourselves and forwarded to the LGA for preparation of district plans. Also we are involved in the planning of other department activities which require our support in their implementation.'
- 'Each department prepares its budget and being collected to form one council plan.'
- 'The work plan or district plan was planned together with the councillors who have the problems of villagers or communities so we come together.'

APPENDIX III:

CONSTRAINTS ON DISTRICT PLANNING

(All responses by category)

Human Resources (32)

- Lack of qualified/competent personnel (8)
- Lack of staff (7)
- Manpower / human resources inadequacy / misuse (4)
- Lack of technical personnel to facilitate implementation (4)
- Lack of effective planning skills (technical know how) (2)
- Poor management (2)
- Skilled and professional workers
- Training problem of LGA staff, especially Land, Natural Resources, Planning and Administration
- Poor knowledge/understanding of implementers
- Low implementation capacity at departmental level
- Limited time to supervise projects

LGA Constraints (30)

- Level/lack of motivation of LGA staff (6)
- Absence of current data (4)
- Lack of commitment among the implementing agents / partners (4)
- Inadequate tools of analysis
- Some heads of department lack knowledge of the plan
- Less committed District Council staffs and elected officials
- Lack of coordination between district level and grassroots
- Less participatory planning approach
- Poor project implementation plan
- Professional misuse
- Inferiority complex [among] those staff who are not highly educated
- Lack of vision and trust among implementers
- Poor monitoring of activities assigned to extension workers
- Delay in starting planning
- Priorities
- Failure of some departments to honour the planning timetable
- Lack of bylaws of the councils
- Implementation of policies from different ministries
- Low % of women leaders/heads of department

Transport/Communications/Materials (26)

- Transportation (11)
- Communication (roads/infrastructure) (3)
- Lack of working equipment/tools /computers (3)
- Physical resources, facilities (2)
- Poor transport supervision for extension workers
- Transport to reach target groups in villages
- Poor infrastructure
- Lack of proper working facilities
- Lack of new/modern equipment technology
- High price of building materials (remoteness)
- Lack of site for building construction

Community Constraints (19)

- Lack of awareness/ education of the community / councillors (3)
- Lack of commitment (3)
- Lack of community participation / involvement
- Resistance to change
- Ignorance of people
- Cultural behaviour / local beliefs
- Low community contribution
- Lack of seriousness of the community concerned
- Poor leadership/organisation at community level
- Lack of localised projects agenda
- Top/down projects
- Identifying the problem at the grass-root level
- Laziness of the youth
- Lack of facilitation capacities at local leadership
- Insufficient community contribution

Politics (19)

- Corruption (3)
- Misuse of funds (2)
- Political differences/interests (2)
- Political interference. (This leads to inequitable allocation of resources).
- Conflict of interest
- Unfulfilled political promises

Economic/Financial Constraints (8)

- Poor collection of own sources (unable to meet target) (2)
- Lack of cost sharing
- The decline of coffee prices
- Low price of cotton/farm products
- Financial resources
- Unstable cash flow from own collection
- Appropriate market groups products

Other (12)

- Weather (rainfall/drought) (3)
- Most NGOs not transparent especially on financial matters
- Some NGOs implement a lot of activities but don't give their reports
- Failure to use existing organizations/leaders (especially for donors)
- Two financial year calendar
- Lack of gender knowledge
- Technical assistance
- Dependency syndrome
- Poor planning (lack of priorities) at all levels
- Acceptance of government institutions by outsiders

APPENDIX IV:

MAIN CONSTRAINTS ON DISTRICT PLANNING

LGA (26) Human Resources (17)

- Inadequate qualified staff (4)
- Shortage of competent personnel (3)
- Inadequate motivation of LG staff (2)
- Most departments are very poor in planning (2)
- Low capacity in planning and implementation at departmental level
- Lack of proper/committed carriers / project implementers (2)
- Selfishness of some staff, especially those who are not educated. So there is tendency of 'mine'
- Inadequate skills in participatory planning (2)

Administration/Management (9)

- Lack of basic data (2)
- Poor management
- The planning unit is given little chance to play its roles
- Poor sectoral coordination
- Undermine the planning function
- Poor monitoring
- Central government an obstacle for the development of planning in councils
- Lack of planning guides

Political Considerations (9)

- Political pressure / interference (3)
- Political conflicts
- Political issues may affect the whole system of project implementation especially when the project is not the need of the community.
- Personal interest and conflict of interest
- Priorities on implementing projects as opposed to other expenditures
- The head of department provides jobs to those who are known (technical know who)
- Corruption

Local Community Issues (8)

- Ignorance
- Lack of facilitation capacities at the local leadership on the grassroots
- Low capacity in planning and implementation at local community level
- Poor knowledge/understanding of community and implementers at village level
- Poor usage of participatory methodologies at initial stages of planning at grassroots level
- Unsustainable plans due to lack of real community participation during the planning process
- Community compliance to participate in developing planning
- Cultural behaviour and the HIV AIDS diseases

Transport (6)

- Lack of transport (3)
- Transportation and poor/lack of tools
- Transport to reach any angle of the district in order to educate the people, to find research, to know their problem, to participate in planning from level of the village
- Poor infrastructure/remoteness of villages

Other (5)

- Dependency syndrome
- Lack of project proposals
- Lack of cash crops
- Market for crops
- Poverty

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