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Note argumentaire de la contribution

Ce livre décrit les percées majeures dans le domaine du logement, réalisées par les "pauvres" des pays du Tiers Monde. Vivant sous des gouvernements qui n'ont pas les moyens de les loger et qui ne peuvent pas se permettre les prix du marché, ils doivent construire leurs propres communautés. Entre la moitié et les trois quarts de tous les nouveaux logements dans la plupart des villes du Tiers Monde sont construits par des personnes à faibles revenus. Lorsqu'ils ont accès aux ressources disponibles et sont libres de les utiliser à leur manière, les gens et leurs organisations communautaires peuvent construire plus que leurs propres gouvernements.

Le livre montre comment les gens peuvent gagner leurs droits aux ressources pour le logement et la liberté d'agir pour eux-mêmes; comment les gouvernements peuvent permettre aux gens en soutenant l'initiative locale; et comment les changements essentiels dans la compréhension peuvent se produire.

Les 20 cas de ce livre couvrent un large éventail de conditions géographiques, sociales et économiques. Les projets sélectionnés montrent également des manières très différentes de faire des améliorations environnementales des vecteurs de développement social et économique.
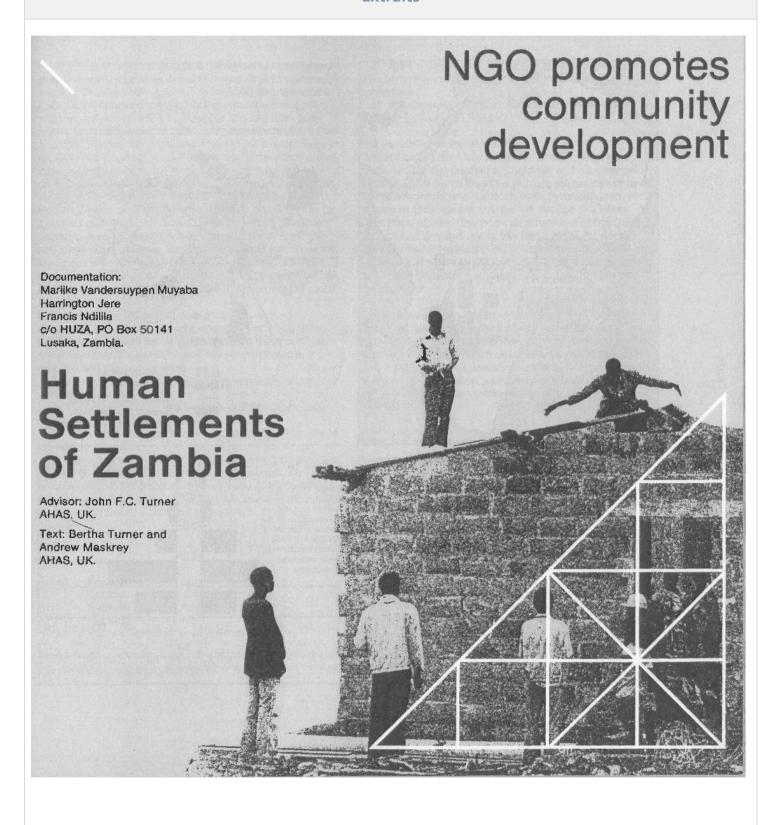
Mots-clés

HOMELESS - HOUSING AND LAND RIGHTS - RIGHTS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING - HOUSING AND TARGET PEOPLE - PEOPLE'S HOUSING PROCESSES - PLANNING - TECHNICAL AREAS OF HOUSING
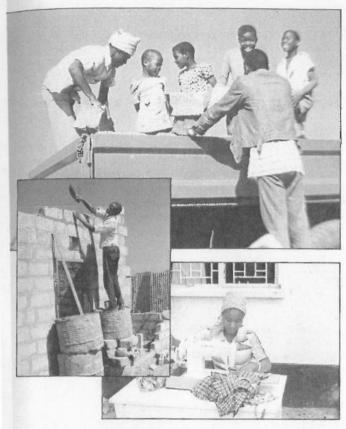
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Involving the community

Public meetings using oral communication along with films, radio spots, posters, music groups and visits to completed areas gained support for the project. Evening and week-end meetings were held at Section level to accomodate working people, over a period of 5 months. Everyone was informed directly instead of getting second-hand messages through Party leaders, which, like most word-of-mouth messages, are subject to distortion. At Section level, layouts of resettlement blocks and the location of standpipes was decided. Face to face, direct local communication at meetings allowed the different interests to reach consensus and encouraged leaders to develop a more responsive attitude toward the community. Section leaders then took their proposals to Branch level meetings.

RPGs: a forum for community decisions

The Road Planning Group (RPG) was the main body for making community decisions. RPGs included community leaders and party officials. With the help of HPU and by 'road walks', physically marking the area with pegs, they planned the layout of road routes, school sites and decided which houses were in the path of works. If families could not afford to move, alternatives were worked out.

Limitations and unfulfilled expectations

The HPU had made tremendous efforts to involve the residents of up-grading areas in the planning and project implementation. As a result, residents' expectations were and continue to be that other local authorities in the country would follow that example. Accordingly, in 1976 the National Housing Authority drew up another proposal for a second World Bank-assisted urban improvement project for six other areas.

Despite substantial time and effort put into the programme, external, uncontrollable factors caused the economy to be weakened. Reduced employment and inflation had their effect on the programme, causing it to slow down and eventually to be suspended indefinitely. The programme was based on the principle of full cost recovery and on unrealistic assumptions about low-income people's priorities. Private renting and resale of houses was restricted along with other ways in which low-income people earn their livings. The collapse of world copper markets and the decline of national and personal incomes accelerated the inevitable paralysis. By 1986, Zambian currency was devalued by 250 per cent. In 1973, 80 per cent of residents were owner

ssues and Conclusions

Main Conclusions

The cases reported through the HIC Project, together with others which are well documented, lead to three basic conclusions:

a) that there is a grossly underestimated and underused potential in non-commercial, community-based and non-governmental organizations (CBOs and NGOs) which assist and support the people who already build the great majority of homes and neighbourhoods in low-income countries;

(b) that government policies which attempt to compensate for the market's failure to provide for lower- or even middle-income households by building housing projects must change from supplying ready-made housing from a central source to supporting the efforts of self-managed, community-based organizations and their helpers in producing their own homes and neighbourhoods;

(c) that in addition to their roles as community developers, innovators and motivators, NGOs have an essential role to play as third-party mediators, in the development and implementation of such supportive and enabling policies which involve changes of relationships between people and government.

Changing Over from Supply to Support Policies

The Necessary Order of Development

The change-over from 'supply' to 'support' policies demands that we recover the traditional order of development to modern conditions wherever it is practical and demanded: the authorization of land uses by local government, the self-organization of future residents who are able and willing to take responsibility for the works and their implementation. This is precisely what many national and international NGOs, bi- and multi-lateral agencies and even an increasing number of national and state governments are now promoting, stimulated by the direct action of low-income people who find themselves excluded by regulations and market prices. In five of the six 'resettlement' cases (Villa El Salvador, the Village Reconstruction Organization programme, Yayasan Sosial Soegiyapranata, Saarland Village I and the Centro Co-perativista Uruguayos projects), land was obtained before the residents organized for building. And where people organized before land was obtained or its use authorized, as in the abortive land invasion that led to the Villa El Salvador success and in the long-term development of Palo Alto, severe conflicts often arise involving avoidable suffering and even loss of life. Other serious social and economic losses result from centrally-administered housing projects which reverse the traditional or historically normal order by building before the residents are even known. Since this procedure eliminates personal and local initiative in the planning and construction stages, a vital contribution is also lost: that of the people most concerned and highly motivated, who collectively possess the most resources.

Three levels of action

The necessity and nature of the changeover from supply to support policies can be clearly seen when the three levels of government intervention are identified and the potential values added by the other sectors are recognized. There are no abrupt divisions between the three levels described below; they are clearly different levels in a spectrum in which one level shades into another (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Increasing the Returns on Public Investment

housing provision
ASSEMBLIES (turnkey projects)

threshold projects (eg sites & services)

service provision
COMPONENTS (eg settlement upgrading)

threshold programmes (eg co-operatives)

access
to resources
ELEMENTS
(eg land reform)

public input

private output
(by the private commercial and third systems)