

# DECENTRALISATION AND COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING

# Overview: Decentralisation and participatory planning

**Caption: villagers from Dour Yarce village present their plan to visitors from different African countries, including Ian Goldman, Hans Binswanger from the World Bank, and Jean-Paul Sawdago, PNGT**

by IAN GOLDMAN and JOANNE ABBOT

## Introduction

This issue of PLA Notes focuses on community-based planning (CBP)<sup>1</sup> – planning by communities, for their communities, which is not isolated from but links into the local and national government planning systems. Thirteen years on from the *RRA Notes* theme issue on Local Level Adaptive Planning<sup>2</sup>, it is interesting to review where debates and experiences have and have not moved on compared to those in the early 1990s. A review is also timely given the increased emphasis on decentralisation in many countries throughout the 1980s and 1990s. We also consider the relevance of community-driven development models, including the participatory poverty analyses, being promoted by parts of the World Bank over the last five to ten years, which typically have included a CBP component. The issue draws from an action-research study in Africa on community-based planning, known as the CBP Project, undertaken in South Africa, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Uganda, and outlined in article two. It also includes other



Photo: David Vannier, World Bank

examples, outside of the four-country CBP Project, from Francophone Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

We believe CBP is important as it attempts to make planning and resource allocation systems more responsive to local people's needs – improving the quality of services, while deepening democracy through promoting community action and involvement in planning and managing local development. It thus aims to improve both governmental and other services as well as to empower communities. However, different CBP processes have different objectives. Some focus more on community mobilisation, others on improving participation in local government planning or emphasising participatory forms of information gathering

<sup>1</sup> Note that we use CBP to refer to community-based planning in general. Elsewhere we refer specifically to the CBP Project (a four-country action research project in Africa – see articles two to six).

<sup>2</sup> *RRA Notes 11*, Proceedings of the Local Level Adaptive Planning Workshop, London, 1991. In this issue, adaptive planning refers to planning that takes account of basic needs and promotes integrated development through appropriate technologies.

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to inform national or sectoral policies. This theme issue tries to separate out the different approaches and highlights their objectives so that useful comparisons on methodology, scope, and scale can be made.

In the overview to the *RRA Notes* issue on adaptive planning, Pretty and Scoones (1991) provide a good starting point for the current issue. They discuss some of the issues around adaptive planning, highlighting that traditional land-use planning has tended to:

- focus on narrow technical issues with little use of local knowledge;
- be data and information hungry;
- result in maps or other outputs that local people may not understand; and,
- fail to tease out complex problems, such as vulnerability.

In discussing the institutionalisation of adaptive or participatory processes, they highlight:

- that local people may be involved in information collection but not decision-making;
- that politicians may accept participation but not democracy, whereas effective participation implies the devolution of the power to decide;
- the importance of local accountability;
- the need to sensitise bureaucrats to be adaptive planners, how to use the methodologies, and to how to use local information and link it to the formal planning system; and,
- they ask whether adaptive planning can revitalise the processes of government, encouraging an active bargaining process for external support.

The earlier issues of *RRA Notes* had a natural resource bias, perhaps reflecting the emergence of adaptive planning from a rural appraisal origin. However the point of departure for this issue is communities planning in an integrated way for their future, which will include natural

**People from Ward 19, Mangaung, South Africa vote for their preferred outcomes**



Photo: Ian Goldman

resources but also many other sectors, as part of holistic and integrated planning for an area.

### **The drive towards community-based or driven planning**

In the move towards decentralisation there has been a tendency to promote holistic development planning at local government level, such as Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) in South Africa, district plans in Uganda, and municipal rural development plans in Brazil.

These plans are meant to be integrated and multi-sectoral, and supposedly guide spending allocations. However in many countries there is inherent conflict between a planning system driven through local government, and sectoral planning aligned with national ministries. Indeed many countries have multiple planning systems that are not readily integrated or synchronised. For example, Zimbabwe’s planning systems include the following plans: development, physical, environmental, land-use, water catchment, national park, and forest area, and this is by no means uncommon<sup>3</sup>.

So challenges remain in how to develop a vertical planning system, which effectively integrates plans at community, local government, and national government levels – as well as horizontal integration across sectors at all levels. Starting at the local level, CBP may offer some ways forward for overcoming these challenges.

### **End uses of and approaches to community-based planning**

CBP can be undertaken for the following reasons:

- to improve the quality of integrated plans by incorporating perspectives and understanding from local communities;

<sup>3</sup> PlanAfric (1999), “Rural Planning – Zimbabwe Country Study”, produced as part of an IIED study on Rural Planning and Sustainable Livelihoods.

- to improve sectoral plans and so the quality of services, once again by incorporating information generated by and with local communities;
- to promote community action, sometimes as a means of releasing latent energy of communities or to reduce the demands on government by shifting responsibilities to communities (e.g. for maintaining infrastructure in countries where government is seeking to reduce its responsibilities);
- to promote community control over development, either in improving local influence over decisions, or in managing development directly; and,
- to comply with policy or legislative directives for public participation in different types of plans and planning processes.

The current issue focuses on approaches that attempt to integrate a number of these objectives, i.e. where plans are linked to higher level systems, whether local or national government or sectoral departments, but also on empowering communities to control their own development. Table 1 shows some of the characteristics of the articles included.

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One tension in the different approaches lies in the trade-offs between depth and scale. Shorter, quicker approaches can be applied and replicated more widely, and offer opportunities for roll-out within the resources (human, financial etc.) of government without high levels of external support (beyond initial training). But they are inherently less intensive and so less transformational than those that involve much higher levels and longer processes of facilitation, support, and input. In this edition an example of the latter is that from Brazil (see article 12), while the community-based planning (CBP) project and the examples from South

**Table 1: Some characteristics of the examples included in this theme issue**

Case studies	Community planning unit (nos of people)	Integrated community level plan	Relatively short process in community	Long intensive process	Contribution to high level plans
CBP project		Yes	4–5 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		Local government
South Africa	Ward (10–15,000)	Yes	5 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		
Zimbabwe	Ward (6–8,000)	Yes	5 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		
Ghana	Area Council	Yes	5 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		
Uganda	Parish (5,000)	Yes	3 days planning, plus preplanning/ follow-up		
Uganda/ Tanzania participatory poverty assessments	Community	In some cases	2 weeks		National plans
Brazil	Município (municipality) <20,000 <sup>4</sup>	Yes		Several months, with on-going support	Local government
Philippines	Barangay (village)	Yes	3-4 week profiling		Intended
Vietnam	Commune (3–5,000)	Yes	10 days PRA training; followed by 12-day training in modelling		District
Burkina Faso	CVGT (1000+)	Yes			In future
India	Gram Panchayat (1,000–5,000)	Yes	Series of planning events and workshops at different levels over several weeks		District and State

<sup>4</sup> Although some municipalities can have millions of people, e.g. Sao Paulo

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Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Ghana are closer to the former. The more intensive transformational approaches often build on Freire’s work, and in Africa these include the Training for Transformation work originating in Zimbabwe, and the Development Education and Leadership Training for Action (DELTA) approach, both described in *RRA Notes* 11 (Leach, 1991).

Another tension linked to the depth and scale relates to the end use of the process, whether community planning is more closely linked to community and local government plans (most examples in this issue) or informing national planning processes (e.g. the Participatory Poverty Analyses (PPAs) or Poverty Reduction processes). Ehrhart (article eight) outlines some of the challenges associated with PPAs where the participatory analysis has more national than local benefit and where any policy outcomes of CBP may or may not be experienced in the communities where the assessments were undertaken. In the evolution of the CBP Project in South Africa over 2003/4, the importance of linkages to local government planning are emphasised, and new tools have been developed to assist with this.

Across all the examples in this issue, some key themes emerge for comparison:

- approach taken and methodologies used;
- evidence of impact;
- replication and scaling up.

### Approach and methodology

Key to the success of CBP is not just the planning itself, but the whole system around it. We focus here on a few key elements: the planning methodology, the facilitation, the training, the link with community-managed funds, accountability/monitoring and evaluation, and the linkage to the local government planning system.

**Participants attending a planning workshop for the CBP project in New Edubiase, Ghana**



Photo: Tay Awoosah

### Methodology

The different models all use a variety of PRA tools. The major difference is between those taking a long-term approach, focused on a small number of communities, which is the case in the Philippines and Brazilian cases, and those deliberately compromising on the depth of the methodology with the intent to have the resources to cover many communities, perhaps an entire unit of local government (e.g. municipality, district etc.). The contrast between these two approaches, related to their differing objectives, is highlighted in article two, and how approaches were developed that could be empowering and yet not too costly.

Most methodologies involved a classic situation analysis, development of objectives, planning for action, typically using PRA tools. In the case of the CBP project, the methodology was based on livelihoods analysis with social groups (focus groups), specifically seeking to identify and build on the diversity in the community, and use understanding of people’s livelihoods, and their preferred outcomes to drive the planning. The use of a strengths-based approach to developing preferred livelihood outcomes, and not problems, is one of the most innovative features of this methodology. In Tanzania, the emphasis was on focus groups and not community-wide meetings, and the Brazil paper points to a diversity of participatory events and processes, community-wide and more focused.

In the Brazilian case study, a three-part PRA process was used, followed by participatory formulation of a municipal rural development plan (MRDP). Note that in the Brazilian context, the municipalities have small populations, equivalent to or slightly larger than the wards/parishes in the other countries. The three elements of the PRA process included mobilisation, typical PRA, and lastly the deepening and developing of proposals, such that the overall process takes

many months.

In the PPA, the use of the participatory tools was primarily to improve understanding of the context, and in Uganda a community action plan (CAP) was also developed in response to priority problems. In Tanzania the decision was taken not to have a CAP, as without this being linked to the formal planning system, it was difficult to support implementation in the communities which had been included.

The paper on Vietnam highlights one particular tool, a form of mapping using a scaled and geo-referenced 3-D model, which provides the basis for a broader participatory planning framework. Many of the different approaches described in this edition, including the India example (article nine), have incorporated a mapping or transect tool. In the Vietnam case, the mapping has been made three-dimensional, and seems to have had a positive response from communities.

### Facilitation

The use of facilitators varies. In all cases communities were directly involved in the planning process, usually assisted by external facilitators. To promote replication, within the four countries involved in the CBP project, the external facilitators have been municipal officials, local NGOs, and other local service providers. In Burkina, facilitators were from the PNGT programme. In South Africa, ward committee (WC) members were not initially trained directly, but in the rolling out this year, one WC member has been trained per ward and first indications are that ward committee members are very positive and in most cases have had good capacity to undertake the planning.

In Brazil, rural workers unions (STRs) played a key role, as well as farmer groups, which later broadened to include the municipal councils and other municipal-level groups. In Burkina Faso, initial work was facilitated with farmer groups, and this later expanded to village committees. In Vietnam, Village Protection Teams formed as 'legalised' wardens, now control illegal access to resources. As in the Philippines case, an NGO provided the support for a more

#### Box 1: Pillars of the community-driven development approach

- empowering communities (with an emphasis on community plans, and community-managed funds);
- empowering local governments (through fiscal, administrative, and political decentralisation);
- realigning the centre;
- improving accountability, downwards and upwards; and,
- capacity-development at all levels.

**“One of the key motivating factors behind CBP is to improve accountability between local government and communities. A key weakness in many attempts at decentralisation is that there is little pressure from below for performance at local government level, often undermining decentralisation processes”**

intensive empowerment process. In many cases an initial change agent facilitation role of an NGO (e.g. CARE Uganda), company (e.g. Khanya), or project (e.g. PNGT) was critical in introducing the innovative approach.

Many of the examples suggest that local service providers and municipal officials can facilitate a CBP process (e.g. the Core Facilitation Team at ward level in Zimbabwe, or sub-county staff in Uganda) following initial training and support.

### Training

A variety of training of facilitators can be seen. In South Africa, this started as a pure learning-by-doing experience, supplemented by a two-day PRA training. This has now evolved into a two-week theory and experience-based training, during which facilitators work in a community to draw up a ward plan. Uganda also found that the initial training was insufficient, and is now experimenting with an experience-based training model. Clearly if this is to be carried across a whole district (for example in Uganda covering 170 parishes in the pilot district, Bushenyi), some cascade model of training has to be used. With the Tanzanian PPA, a three-week training was conducted, as well as a one-week training so that facilitator/researchers understood the policy-making process. The SAPIME methodology in the Philippines used five days of training. In Burkina, villages were not trained to undertake the planning, but village officials have had training to assist with implementation (e.g. in procurement and financial management).

### Community-managed funds

A complementary aspect to community involvement in planning is the ability to make decisions about the use of real money. This happened in Burkina, in the four-country CBP Project, either through funds provided by the municipi-

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pality (SA, \$1,500–8,000 per ward), or through the use of local revenue (Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana). This element is stressed in the community-driven development approach (see Box 1) and is a key characteristic of many of the large community-driven development projects such as in Guinea (World Bank, 2003), or Burkina Faso.

In Brazil and Uganda, as also in Bolivia (CBP, 2002), the planning related directly to the municipal or district plan, and so to the municipal or district budget. In the CBP Project work in South Africa, Ghana, and Zimbabwe, the planning sought to link the community plans with the local government plan, and indeed in the elaboration of the project in 2003/4, specific methodologies and training have been developed for municipalities so they can incorporate and use information from the community plans. In Vietnam, the planning process allows the community to influence decisions about the use of resources, especially in the allocation of district and provincial funds to locally identified priorities.

#### Accountability and monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

One of the key motivating factors behind CBP is to improve accountability between local government and communities. A key weakness in many attempts at decentralisation is that there is little pressure from below for performance at local government level, often undermining decentralisation processes. Improved accountability was a key element in the Brazilian example, and in the CBP project this aspect has been emphasised in the scaling-up. Uganda offers good examples of simple mechanisms for improving accountability. For example, all funds available to communities and different levels of government must be publicly displayed, typically on flip charts on the walls of local government offices.

Just the presence of a plan can provide a clear direction for political representatives, and for which they can be held accountable. The Araponga case in the Brazil article

**A resident presents goals and strategies to deal with crime in Mantshali, South Africa**



Photo: Ian Goldman

provides a good example of this. Another interesting aspect of the Bolivian experience is the use of civil society structures to hold the municipality to account (Vigilance Committees), made up of representatives from grassroots organisations (OTBs), and these participate in the planning process. In Vietnam, support is required to ensure the accountability and collaboration of the local authorities, upon which the communities rely for processing cases against those who infringed the law in community-controlled areas.

Beyond these examples, accountability is an area where considerable work is needed to assist in developing good practice models and approaches. Improving accountability can also be viewed as part of ongoing support for the implementation of community-based plans, and support to the community structures during implementation.

#### Linkage to local government and higher-level plans

In Brazil and Bolivia, the community plan developed is the municipal plan, i.e. the plan for the lowest level of local government. In the CBP project there was direct impact on local government plans in Uganda, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Over the last six months, the deepening of the methodology in South Africa has included developing a methodology for the local government to incorporate and use the information generated from the CBP project in the local government plan. In the Philippines, this is highlighted but does not seem to have happened yet while in Burkina Faso, this should happen as communes are created next year. The PPA process is explicitly designed to inform national planning processes, and concrete examples from the more advanced Uganda process are illustrated. It would be useful to see how CBP in local government contexts could also lead to the benefits of the PPA, where detailed snapshots are used to inform higher-level decision-making and policy-setting.

Impact	Evidence of impact
Quality of plans at:	
Community level	In most cases there were no plans previously.
Local government level	In South Africa, the IDP was informed and reoriented by the inputs from CBP, as were the sub-county and district plans in Uganda and district plans in Zimbabwe. There is a need to strengthen this, which is happening at present in South Africa and Vietnam. CBP provided a model for developing more participatory forms of local government plans in Brazil (MRDPs).
National level	From Tanzania and Uganda, PPAs seem to have promoted decentralisation, and in Uganda an increased emphasis on water and sanitation.
Quality of services	There is little evidence around this, except the evaluation in South Africa showed that there was an impact on the quality of services where service providers participated in the planning (e.g. police).
Community action	In Burkina Faso, there seems to have been extensive action resulting and a major community contribution. In the four CBP project countries there does seem to have been significant impact on community action, at least while implementing the community-managed funds. However it is not clear this is sustainable without an ongoing system, as in Burkina, or which is emerging in South Africa and Uganda.
Community participation and control over development	
Control over use of funds	Communities have had control over the use of funds allocated to the plan in many of the cases, even if these have been very limited in Ghana and Zimbabwe.
Capacity-development	There has been evidence of significant capacity development in many of the examples, both in community and their service providers, e.g. evaluations in Burkina and Mangaung (South Africa). In South Africa and Vietnam, there is increasing emphasis on training the ward and district committee members respectively, and greater emphasis on training in Uganda to promote wider replication.
Accountability of local government and community representatives	Largest impact seems to be in the intensive examples such as Brazil. Should emerge in others if the work with the community is sustained as intended.

## Impact

On pages 6-7, we suggested a number of possible impacts on:

- the quality of plans at different levels;
- the quality of services;
- community action;
- community participation and control over development; and,
- fulfilling government requirements for participation.

What evidence do we see from these examples? Independent evaluations have been conducted in South Africa and Uganda, and a multistakeholder review in Brazil. Table 2 summarises some impacts that seem to be emerging.

One of the objectives of CBP was to change resource allocations so that they are more responsive to people's priorities, including that for poor people. There is evidence

of that happening at municipal level, e.g. in Mangaung in South Africa. In Uganda, the evidence that emerged from the PPA process led to an increased emphasis on water. In Bolivia, a decision to create (very small) municipalities was accompanied by massive resource shifts from urban to rural areas (Khanya, 2002). However we are yet to see system-wide changes which can be linked directly to CBP, as in terms of widespread rollout these are still at early stages.

In terms of policy impacts, CBP has been incorporated into new national policy, e.g. in the rollout of the Harmonised Participatory Planning Guidelines (HPPG) in Uganda, the addition of a performance indicator for the South African Department of Provincial and Local Government, and the addition of a community-empowerment pillar to the decentralisation approach in Zimbabwe.

**Table 2: Impact of CBP**

Issue	Examples from case studies
<p>1. Strong political commitment to decentralisation and empowerment is vital. Donors should support local champions of community-driven development (CDD)</p>	<p>National rollout programme (PNGT, Burkina).                      Involving national departments and local governments in the learning process (South Africa).                      Selecting local governments, which are committed to empowering citizens (South Africa and Vietnam).                      Making the plan obligatory for accessing local budgets (as suggested in Philippines).                      Empowering poor groups to negotiate more effectively using the information from the plan (Brazil, Philippines).</p>
<p>2. Successful scale-ups put money in the hands of communities and local governments, to harness their latent capacity through learning-by-doing. This is supplemented by relevant capacity building.</p>	<p>CBP in South Africa, Uganda, Burkina Faso.</p>
<p>3. Best practice in one context can be poor practice in another. Field-testing through pilots reveals problems and suggests adaptations that can be crucial.</p>	<p>Pilots in all cases.</p>
<p>4. Stakeholders require context-specific manuals, procedures, and training courses at different levels (national, state, local government, community). These need constant revision in the light of new experiences and contexts.</p>	<p>CBP manual developed, tested, adapted for each country. Revised versions being produced in South Africa and Uganda, fully integrated with local government planning system.                      Training manuals developed (Uganda, Philippines, South Africa).                      Guides for district planners developed (South Africa).                      Comprehensive manuals, documentaries, and toolkits, in English and Vietnamese, accessible both in printed, CD, and downloadable electronic formats (Vietnam).</p>
<p>5. Good systems for sharing and spreading knowledge help inform different stakeholders precisely what their roles are, and help create common values.</p>	<p>Training in all cases.</p>
<p>6. Incentives for stakeholders should be aligned with programme objectives.</p>	<p>Ensuring that production of CBP part of incentives for local government (Uganda).</p>
<p>7. Physical scaling-up (mass replication) needs supplementation by social scaling-up (making the process more inclusive) and conceptual scaling-up (moving beyond participation to embedding empowerment in the entire development process).</p>	<p>Social scaling-up – using social groups as basis of planning (CBP). Empowering groups to negotiate (Brazil).                      Conceptual scaling up – widening the CBP agenda to include community funds, implementation (South Africa, Uganda).</p>
<p>8. Success depends on training tens of thousands of communities to execute/manage projects/accounts. Good scaling-up logistics lower costs and improve community ownership, and hence sustainability. So do community co-financing and contracting.</p>	<p>Developing community financing mechanisms (Burkina, South Africa).                      Using local officials as facilitators as part of their normal job (Uganda).                      Using community representatives as part of their responsibility (South Africa).                      Developing local trainers to support facilitators (Uganda, Zimbabwe).</p>
<p>9. Scaling-up is a long-haul process that can take as long as 15 years.</p>	<p>Building a long-term agenda including CBP, e.g. Uganda Local Government Development Programme, PNGT in Burkina.</p>
<p>10. Ease of replication is key to rapid scaling-up. Rules and procedures must be carefully designed, yet be so simple and transparent that they can be replicated easily in tens of thousands of communities with limited skills.</p>	<p>Improved emphasis on documentation could promote more systematic learning. Multi-language toolkits, use of the local media, and cascade training proved useful in Vietnam.                      CBP examples highlight potential trade-off between depth and scale i.e. tensions between Issues 1 (empowerment) and 10 (replication).</p>

## Upscaling

In order for CBP to have an impact, the approach needs to be deepened (to increase the effectiveness of the approach), as well as widened, so that it can have a larger-scale impact. There does seem to be early evidence of effectiveness, and some areas of how the approach can be deepened are drawn out in the CBP project paper (article two), including:

- improving linkages to the local, national, or sectoral government planning systems and developing tools for analysing information from the community plans (deepening);
- improving the quality with which the methodology is applied (for example in some places the use of preferred livelihoods outcomes was not systematically applied, leading to a reversion to a problem and infrastructure-based approach);
- a recognition that the use of community-managed funds is an essential component, either through a direct funding allocation (as in South Africa or Burkina Faso), or through local revenue raising (such as Uganda), which should be linked to knowledge of the funds available;
- strengthening local government's support for implementation and plan follow-up;
- improving the use of monitoring tools, and accountability mechanisms by community structures as well as local government;
- developing a mechanism for promoting budget allocations for disadvantaged groups whose priorities can otherwise 'get lost' when plans are aggregated; and,
- effective integration of traditional leaders, opinion leaders, civil society organisations and service providers (including the private sector) in the planning process.

This sets an agenda for the deepening process, and work on this has started in South Africa for example. The Brazilian example also shows a more political agenda, around the solidarity of worker groups.

Another challenge is how CBP can be achieved at scale, so that impacts are significant in country terms. Table 2 draws out critical issues proposed around upscaling community-driven development (Binswanger, 2003), which are relevant to CBP. Some highlights from the CBP examples are included. These did not necessarily happen in all cases, but illustrate examples that could be followed elsewhere.

## Conclusions

The articles in the current issue show examples of attempts to develop participatory planning systems that will empower communities, but are also linked to government planning systems. In many ways the debates that arise from this issue are similar to those from the earlier RRA *Notes*. We see a similar range of concerns about quality and training, and similar methodologies, all using PRA-type tools.

What appears to be different is the intention for systemic effects, to influence at scale, and to ensure that the priorities of poor people are integrated effectively into the government planning system. A key point of departure is the focus on the decentralised planning system as well as the planning methodology – the latter was often the only emphasis in many early examples of RRA and PRA. All the examples in the current issue emphasise an improved institutional analysis and understanding, positioning planning within a governance arena rather than a toolbox, and recognising the importance of mainstream government planning processes. The emerging decentralising contexts offer new and exciting opportunities for local participation, and much of the impetus for CBP seems to be both driven by, and drives, democratic decentralisation which reaches to communities. A new political literacy transcends many articles – obvious in many ways (as the Brazil article suggests) but a missing piece in many early PRA processes. While there is still room for innovation in the development of tools (as the Vietnam case illustrates), the way in which participatory approaches are used, facilitated, sequenced, analysed, and linkages are created between different stakeholders seems more important in determining the outcomes of the CBP than the exact tools themselves.

A challenge is to see how CBP can be deepened and widened, so that the methodologies have local benefits in community-driven development and empowerment, but also can be applied at a sufficient scale to deliver significant benefits to significant numbers of people. The upscaling happening in Uganda and South Africa, and others community-driven development (CDD) projects such as PNGT2 in Burkina, would seem to provide emerging lessons for how this upscaling can happen.

So in these articles we see examples of participation and participatory methodologies being integrated into mainstream government processes, which is a major step forward on a long journey to improved local governance.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

Dr Ian Goldman, Khanya-managing rural change cc, 16A President Steyn, Westdene, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa. Tel: +27 51 430 0712; Fax: + 27 51 430 8322; Email: goldman@khanya-mrc.co.za

Dr Joanne Abbot, Programme Coordinator, CARE South Africa – Lesotho, 23 Jorissen Street, 8th Floor, Braamfontein Centre, PO Box 221 WITS 2050, South Africa. Tel: + 27 11 403 3288; Email: joabbot@caresa.co.za

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Ian Goldman is the Executive Chair of Khanya-managing rural change, an organisation working on community-driven development and sustainable rural livelihoods in Africa. He is the project manager for the four-country CBP project.

Joanne Abbot is Programme Coordinator for CARE South Africa-Lesotho. She was also involved in the CBP Project, notably in Uganda.

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