THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY BASED HOUSING

ORGANIZATIONS IN HOUSING THE LOW-INCOME PEOPLE

By

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study explores the extent to which community based housing organizations can be considered for housing delivery. Community based housing organizations have emerged mostly in the developing world as agents of development and housing delivery. They challenge the conventional methods of housing delivery. Community based housing organizations have emerged out of realization that the state and the market cannot meet the people's needs and they try to fill the gap.

Community based housing organizations work on a mutual help basis. They raise funds for house building and mutually they work together to build houses. Although community based housing organizations have generally prominent leaders being manfolk, they are generally women's organizations.

Community based housing organizations are considered by the researcher as potentially key agents of a housing delivery system. The question is how best to respond to them and to facilitate their growth and activities. This question is at the core of the study. It must be pointed out at the outset that this study is sympathetic to the cause of the community based housing organization. This of course does not mean that community based housing organizations will not be subjected to critical evaluation in the study.

This study is not of the hypothesis testing sort. It is instead an exploratory study which draws on a particular case study - the Homeless People's Federation.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Community based housing organizations are perceived as having potential in helping solve the housing problems of the poor. The question is how best should a government policy respond to them. The aim is to arrive at an informed conclusion about the most productive role that can be played by community based housing organizations towards helping the poor access housing, and how best to respond to them.

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

As previously noted community based housing organizations arise out of the perceived failure of the state and market to adequately address the housing problems of the poor people. This is despite the great technical and scientific progress which we see in our time. The problem of lack of housing has been exarcebated by rapid urbanization which is occuring at an alarming rate, mostly in the less developed countries (Abrams 1964:8).

Shanty towns and run-down tenements dramatically demonstrate the poverty of shelter of much of the urban population of the developing countries. Not much attention is being paid to housing in the developing countries. Investment in industry and agriculture are given much higher priority, because, so the argument goes, it is important to become economically independent of other countries and to create more income for the local

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people. Once they have more income, they will be able to afford a decent house. This line of argument, Jorgensen (1989:29) maintains may be responsible for lack of policy and planning in housing in most developing countries.

The state and the market have not addressed adequately the housing needs of the poor. But the poor themselves have made sure that houses have appeared. The houses that the poor have built are not enough, they are not in the right places and most of them are of a standard officially unacceptable for human habitation. The so called "shanty towns" or "uncontrolled urban settlements" are well known the world over. Furthermore, as these uncontrolled settlements grow in size they become more and more difficult to improve, let alone to remove (Jorgensen P.29).

Apart from lack of sound policies on addressing the housing needs of the poor, shelter poverty in the developing world is also attributed to the low rate of industrial development in the cities of the developing world (Darin-Drabkin 1977:84). There are not enough jobs for the new immigrants of the cities of the developing world. Many at best find a part-time job which does not provide enough money to pay for even low standard housing. A large part of the urban population must provide for itself on areas of vacant land outside the city erecting shacks, huts, tents, etc., without essential services.

However, the very existence of these shacks, huts, tents, etc, reflecting diversity of economic activity, perseverance and entrepreneurship, points to methods which these positive factors can be utilized to produce far more and far better houses over a given period of time and at no higher cost to the public than is at precent expended on

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inspection, demolition, removal and compensation (Jorgensen P.29).

It is argued in this study that self-help holds out the promise of lowering the cost of urban housing. Self-help has the potential of helping solve the housing problems of the poor. Over the last decades the movement in favour of self-help housing has found widespread support. The most important achievement of its advocates has been to dissuade governments from indiscriminate eradication of squatter settlements, unauthorized structures and slum areas. Turner (1967) played a leading role in this movement.

In recent years, particularly since the launching by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), of the Global Shelter Strategy (1990) and the World Bank's development of its management strategy (1991) there has been much emphasis placed by scholars, policy makers and practitioners on the importance of alternative methods of housing delivery (Vakil 1995:2).

Historically, this stems from a recognition that direct involvement on the part of the government and aid agencies in housing construction has not represented the best use of limited resources in addressing the housing problem. Along with this has been the acknowledgement that most housing for low-income families in the developing world is built by people themselves (Vakil P.2).

Although the quality of houses built is questionable, it is true that the poor build for themselves an enormously greater number of homes and neighbourhoods than can ever be provided by public welfare and the private formal sector. Between half and three

quarters of all urban settlements and home building in the rapidly growing cities of the Third World are built by the poor themselves. This majority, usually four fifths of the population have no access to housing supplied by commercial developers or public agencies (Turner 1988:14).

Only through government policies which enable people can the potential for development by people be realised. The study argues. Current policies usually disable people. Neither bureaucratic mass housing nor the uncontrollable market can build communities and eliminate homelessness. Those who sacrifice people on the alter of the market place or the state can no longer claim that happiness tomorrow depends on frustration today. In fact policies that inhibit personal and local initiative abort the community building on which our very future depends (Turner P.14).

Private institutional housing finance is a practical and efficient tool in the field of housing finance in developed countries, because it has established itself over a long period of time and is protected by a well understood system of legal procedures. But in the case of housing needs in the poor people in the developing world, the private housing finance has a problem. In the developing world, the poor have no proper security to pledge and as a result they cannot get mortgage loans from the private financial institutions and are thus prevented from improving their housing situation - and income from subletting - thus remain poor and without security to pledge for finance (Jorgensen P.57).

The inability of the poor to access finance for housing, lies at the root cause of housing poverty amongst the poor in the developing world. Conventional financial institutions

have a limited role in financing housing for low income household. A record of regular saving in a formal institution is necessary. Regular employment of the borrower is a prerequisite. Conditions of loans from formal sector also exclude the poor. Such conditions refer to the sum lent, the date by which it has to be fully paid back, the specific rate of interest, the pattern over time of repayments of principal and payments of interest, any indexing arrangements, and action to be taken if the borrower defaults or falls into arrears on the loan (Merrett and Russell 1994:60).

Mortgage instruments need profound changes to be effective in addressing the housing needs of the poor and something other than the institutions in their present shape is called for (Jorgensen P.73). Non-conventional finance can help house the poor people. Non-conventional finance can be provided by the rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs); and by financial cooperatives, including credit unions (Merrett and Russell P.61).

Since the Homeless Peoples Federation bears more similarities to the Credit Unions than the rotating and savings credit associations (ROSCAs), the form and organization of the Credit Unions will be briefly looked at below.

The Savings and Credit Unions is a group of 50-150 people who get together and start to save on a regular basis. They are all members with one vote regardless of the size of their deposits and they are all responsible for the liabilities of their society. A committee is elected and runs the administrative side of the affair, including granting of small short-term loans to members. A clerk may be employed to run the day-to-day accounting, but

initially depending on the size of the Union, all work may well be done voluntarily (Jorgensen P.73).

Two important characteristics of such credit unions are, firstly, the common bond between members (workers from the same factory, members of a religious congregation, inhabitants of a village or members of the same tribe living in the same city). Secondly, the members are from low-income groups (Jorgensen P.73).

These two traits tend to be less conspicuous as the union grows. The purpose for which members save is not necessarily housing. In fact, credits are given for house repairs, cattle, seed, land, school fees, bride price, bicycles etc. and on short term such as 6 months to 2 years and interest rates on the order of 6 per cent for deposits and 12 per cent for loans (1% per month).

There is no need for a mortgage document and therefore no need for a title deed. The reliability of the member is all that counts and the committee is the sole judge of that. Housing loans are normally extended up to five years and may cover the total cost of the structure depending, of course, on the amount of the cost and the standing of the member. In some unions the committee has established a condition of consistent saving during a certain period, before it will grant a loan, and at that time the loan will be proportional to the saved amount, say twice to four times as much (contractual savings) (Jorgensen P.74).

The spread of interest rates also reflects realistically the expenses (including losses) of running the Union and the ability and willingness of members to pay for the services. The

fact that many unions make surpluses and build up reserves to pay dividends to both savers and borrowers is an indication of low default rates rather than economies of scale within the administration

The critical phase of a saving and credit union's life is the time just after the initial enthusiasm has subsided, or the time when the common bond has dissolved for some reason or other (Jorgensen P.74).

The national and regional unions into which this movement is organised are able to provide simple educational aids for unskilled bookkeepers and committee members, just as they have funds for support in the form of training courses and visiting consultants. The significance of these unions in the field of housing lies in the suitability to the lowest income group and through their geographical spread. As far as can be ascertained, mobilizing funds in this way has been a net addition to the flow of savings

The steady growth of the credit unions has encouraged and been assisted by support from both national and international institutions.

The strength of the rotating savings and credit associations are also their limitations: the rotating savings and credit associations allow for the collection of money only from a small group of individuals known to each other and living and working in mutual proximity. At the same time these modest arrangements illustrate a more general lesson applicable to other formal and informal institutions: given a secure and accessible framework for savings the propensity to save rises even amongst those whose incomes are

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low (Merrett and Russell P.61).

Cases of the poor people mobilizing finance to help house themselves are found throughout the developing world. Such self-help has potential for generating more resources and a large sense of participation in community affairs. These community based organizations usually do not operate automously, but are assisted by non-govenmental organizations.

1.4   MAIN ARGUMENTS TO BE MADE IN THE STUDY

The study argues that community based housing organizations can be used as vehicles to help the poor access housing. Apart from having the ability of helping the poor access housing, they also constitute viable entities for development and empowerment. Community based organizations need to have their capacity developed so that they play an effective role in the society. A proper governmental response to community based organizations need to be developed and adopted so that their potential is realised to the full.

It is further argued in the study that if provided with the right stimuli and incentives, people organise and accomplish tasks of common interest. Rather than organizing people for purposes which are beyond their comprehension and interests, it is argued here that focus should be on factors which help local effort grow on its own. What is needed is a supportive structure which will enable the local communities and their organizations to flourish on their own.

A hospitable climate for growth even in circumstances that are otherwise adverse is to be provided. Rather than implanting organizational models, irrespective of whether or not they fit the local environment, it is argued here that the starting point should be what exists on the ground. Organizational development should be encouraged from below or from within. Progress is to be accelerated but only on the basis of what the local community offers.

Although the Botshabelo Housing Accord (1994) acknowledges the role of the poor themselves in the housing delivery process, it does not give details as to how to involve them. The study argues for clear contours in this connection.

1.5   KEY CONCEPTS

Key concepts that are relevant to the study are:

1.5.1 Community Based Housing Organization

This is an institutional arrangement for collective non-profit housing. This concept also is used to refer to the ways in which individuals come together collectively to improve their housing on a non-profit basis. A community based housing organization is also described as a collective self-help, social housing or housing co-operative (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements 1989:4).

1.5.2 Mutual assistance associations

This is an association in which membership is related to the place of work: the members are employees of the same industrial or commercial company, municipality of other organization. The members have frequent contact at work and the association tends to provide benefits in addition to those relating to housing. Since associations provide a broader range of services, their technical and administrative organization tends to be more complex than that of civic housing associations. It is also more important that they be legally registered, both to protect the members and to allow for government supervision (Arrigone 1994:4).

1.5.3 Housing delivery system

This concept refers to the way in which housing production is organised. It is a system of arrangements between people (the beneficiaries) on the one hand, and many other people that have access to housing resources, whether they be land, finance, materials, permits, contracts or simply information (Angel 1977:1117). A housing delivery system can be seen to focus on the processes engendered by the inter-relationship of the three important components of housing provision namely, activities, actors and premises. Housing delivery is essentially about how these three factors are brought together in order to deliver housing (Walker 1994:3).

1.5.4 Housing

The word housing is used both about process and the product of creating shelter(s) for humans. Normally shelter consists of a one-family dwelling. If this dwelling is a flat or in a row of houses it is referred to as a housing unit or dwelling unit. In official terminology a house is not a house unless it is approved under existing laws. Housing also refers to a legal, finished and a permanent structure (Jorgensen P.12).

1.6   ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis will have eight chapters including this introductory chapter which is chapter one.

Chapter two looks at the emergence of the People's Development Movements within the arena of global changes. Arguments by Eduardo Anzorena on housing low income people are presented.

Chapter three explores the key issues and debates that inform the design of a housing delivery system. Two paradigms discussed are the product versus the facilitator paradigm. Linked to these paradigms are the product verses process approach to housing delivery. Finally, the part that is to be played by a community, a government and the formal lending institutions in a process approach to housing delivery is also explored.

Chapter four describes the method followed in the collection and analysis of data.

Chapter five paints a picture of the Homeless People's Federation. The conceptions of the Homeless People's Federation on housing and housing delivery are compared with John Turner's philosophy.

Chapter six provides an analytical report on the interviews.

Chapter seven provides a concluding summary.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The next chapter explores the processes that might have led to the People's Movements and thus to Community Based Organizations. This will be done in order to understand what community based organizations actually are.

THE EMERGENCE OF PEOPLE'S DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENTS

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the emergence of social movements within the context of global changes. Understanding the rise of social movements and popular mobilization processes throughout the world will shed light on community based organizations. Community based organizations are a reaction to the global processes taking place today. The chapter will end up by looking at Anzorena a leading figure in the popular housing movement today.

2.2   WHAT GAVE RISE TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS?

The incidence of popular mobilization showed a marked increase in the 1980s. This mosaic of forms of popular mobilization was so diverse that it was difficult to attach a single label to them all (Escobar and Alvarez 1992:2). Such mobilization ranged from squatters to ecologists, from popular kitchens in poor urban neighbourhoods to Socialist feminist groups, from human rights and defence of life mobilization to gay and lesbian coalitions. The spectrum of collective action covered a broad range (Escobar and Alvarez P.2).

The incidence of popular mobilization also included, as well, the movements of black and

indigenous peoples, new models of worker's co-operatives and peasant struggles; middle and lower middle-class civic movements; the defence of the rain forest; and even cultural manifestations embodied for instance in incipient antinuclear protests in some countries. This rich mosaic of identities represented a changed social, cultural, economic and political reality in the world (Escobar and Alvarez P.2).

Popular mobilization reached its peak in the 1980s. But the conditions that precipitated popular mobilization began at the end of World War II. Since the end of World War II, the world has exprienced profound transformations. One of the greatest changes that occurred in the last four decades has been the increasing complexity of the societies. This complexity resulted in a multiplicity of social demands, most of which were neither heard nor processed and which usually had a common end point, the state. It is from this central fact that one of the most severe social tensions in recent history arises (Calderon et al. 1992:24).

Popular movements imposed demands on the state. The emerging demands - regardless of which actor, sector or segment of society voiced them - could not find accommodation within the prevailing institutional scheme, thus demonstrating the inability of today's state to respond to these demands. It is from this tension that social movements arise and multiply independently whether they involved old or new actors, old or new demands (Calderon et al. P.24). This of course is not to say that all unsatisfied social demands necessarily evolve into social movements.

The rise in social movements is a search for autonomy in a context in which autonomy is

undoubtedly limited or relative. The social movements are a manifestation and a reaccommodation of society, its action and its sectors regarding the sorts of changes that the state propitiated through the projects of modernization, industrialization, education and so on (Calderon et al. P.24).

The state, more successful in some cases than in others, implemented all these projects, some of which turned against the state itself. The state "trained" the society in new forms of social life only to show its inability to assimilate new groups when they became effective. The tension is between an ageing state and a society that wants to grow. Essentially, there is terrible tension between society and the state which necessarily entails the germination of a new power structure that, for now, is more latent than manifest.

The tension between society and the state affects existing political systems whether or not they contain real elements of representation. Social movements challenge the monopoly of representation, indicating, as much as the obsolescence of parties does, the need for new forms of representation, where state and known systems of authority, parties, representation appear to be at a crossroads. There is a crisis of political representation and a desperate, though often fruitless, search for new forms of representation, while existing forms are being rejected. For now social movements allow us a glimpse of this process; in their newly created spaces, they attempt to nurture the seeds of their own forms of representation (Calderon et al. P.25).

Social movements form a segment of society that instead of getting close to the state attempt to keep a distance from it in order to reaffirm their identity and find their "small"

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representativity within their own space. Thus the state is faced with a significant breakdown and fragmentation of society. These phenomena might spawn a new society that will eventually reconstruct its own state. It is within this tense relationship that we can find an explanation for the diversity and plurality of social movements that flourish today in all the parts of the world (Calderon et al. P.25).

2.3 TAKING NOTE OF GLOBALIZATION TRENDS

What are the implications of global trends to social movements? The forces of international domination have a profound effect on social movements? The forces of international domination are generating important transformations regarding relations between capital and technology, in which capital productivity becomes increasingly decisive (Calderon et al. P.26). These forces are also bringing about changes at many levels, including, among others, the cultural homogenization of the market, due to increased pervasiveness of mass media; the political victories of conservative forces in various developed countries; the loss of development vision and the destruction of the welfare state; and finally external debt and the central role of finance capital in the economy.

These transformations are perhaps most clearly reflected in the increasingly crucial role played by information technologies in organizing relations of domination and of daily life; in other words, they are manifested in the growing concentration and centralization of decisions in the hands of "phantasmagorical" elites (Calderon et al. P.27). Continuation of the tendency towards global integration might have its own social costs in that it could

cause acceleration of social exclusion and growing deactivation of incipient social movements (Pieterse 1995:5).

Amongst the most salient political implications of globalization trends of the last two decades has been the implementation of the harshest economic adjustment policies under pressure of the International Monetary Fund. Adjustment policies, in turn, have led to new forms of insertion in international markets, usually under the imperative of the new technologies. Social actors of all types are now forced to pursue their actions within the context of this internationalization, even if from the platform of the national economy and society (Pieterse P.3).

Globalization processes have important ramifications for localities (Pieterse P3.) The flaring global trend at the moment is that the gap between the rich and the poor is steadily widening. The situation for the poorest of the poor is not even stagnating but deteriorating. This tendency is continuing apace not withstanding economic growth in a number of regions in the world, the globalization of the democratic ideal, the general agreement on the need for sustainable development and the emergence of a global consensus on the need to protec the environment and raise the standard of living for the poor (Pieterse P.3).

With the collapse of the Socialist block, the liberal democratic systems of the West have undoubtedly become hegemonic. The proliferation of multiparty states and democratization initiatives in recent years are evidence of the globalization of this system. However, it is critical to note that this is intimately linked with the growing power of

transnational institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which has included the democratization of politics and liberalization of economies as conditionalities for continued credit and technical support. In other words, the form of democratization which is being globalised is very particular and clearly linked to the stringent economic measures, commonly known as Structural Adjustment Programmes (Pieterse P.4).

The rationale behind the policies, is that Third World states need to implement a multiparty system, exercise fiscal restraint and discipline, create an investment friendly economy to spur economic growth, build the local managerial and entrepreneurial capacity in both the private and public sectors and to vigorously participate in the global economy through trade. However it is not just these policies which are being globalised, but also their consequences (Pieterse P.4). Thus far, their consequences have not resembled the promises of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. On the contrary, the poorest are even more excluded while the rich increase their welfare, their economic, political and cultural power.

The Structural Adjustment Programmes have been dramatic in the poorest countries, fiscal balance not reestablished, increase of debt, disorganised material and social infrastructure, investment slowed down or stopped and above all very high social costs - a growing part of the population no longer has access to basic necessities and social services. Structural Adjustment Programmes are the latest manifestation of economic imperialism: the poor must adapt to the conditions and criteria of the rich countries (Pieterse P.5).

The poor countries do not have the means. Structural Adjustment Programmes are hard to reconcile with the objectives of the struggle against poverty and for the improvement of the people's living and learning conditions the basis for social development (Henriot et al. 1996:28).

This then raises very important challenges for the Community Based Organizations. It underlies the importance of entering global networks which are actively seeking to address these crises.

The rise in social movements is in part a direct outflow of a growing local civil society voice and pressure, which is articulating the interests of local communities beyind their nation state because they identify the source of the problem at the global level. It is opportune for South African civil society formations to take cognizance of these developments and seek entry points to make their contribution (Pieterse P.5).

The state is required to cut back on its role as provider of social and welfare under the ideology of neo-liberalism which insists on a clean and minimalist state. This usually means that social services are commercialised and or privatised. Brecher and Costello (1994:5) maintain that the current trends in the world constitute what they refer as the "race to the bottom." According to their view globalization represents a complex process involving virtually every aspect of global life and unambiguously at the detriment of ordinary people because the process is being driven by transnational capital.

In order to counter-act the "top down" globalization (its current form) "bottom up" globalization which entails grassroots efforts through trade unions, environmental groups, human rights activists etc. has to be put into place (Brecher and Costello P.6). The pressure falls on the shoulders of the Community Based Organizations to be active role players in translating globalization into localization (Pieterse P.6).

To translate globalization into localization, the CBOs are to have skills to (Pieterse P.7):

* engage with the government and the private sector within these institutions as equals;

* manage various development initiatives which emanate from negotiations;

* forge a strategic policy which allows CBOs to participate but simultaneously retain a critical and alternative vision to the narrow developmentalism which will inevitably be promoted by the private sector and the government; and

* survive and sustain strong links with the constituency and members of the organization to avoid elitism, and facilitate accountability.

Community based organizations hope to make an impact in the global arena by challenging what Brecher and Costello call the "race to the bottom" through projects which promote "bottom up" globalization. The discussion that follows below explores how local initiative can be organised to help deliver on housing. The arguments below are based on the work

of Eduardo Anzorena a leading figure in popular housing movements in the world.

2.4 ANZORENA'S CONCEPTION OF THE CBOs ON HOUSING

Anzorena spends most of his time travelling throughout the world promoting the efforts of the poor people to access housing. In his book: "Housing the Poor: The Asian Experience" (1993), Anzorena maps out how the poor through their grassroots initiative can access housing.

Housing is a basic human right, argues Anzorena (1993:a). It is an essential requirement to a life of dignity for the person and peace and economic prosperity of the nation. Decent housing is wantonly denied to a large number of people all over the world. The situation is getting worse primarily due to land speculation, the evergrowing foreign debt and the trends towards privatization.

The urban poor, Anzorena (P.1), argues, are not receiving services from the government. The law of the society punishes more than supports them. In the bureaucratic system in whose name power or bribery often reigns, they are too weak to be considered. They are denied the chance to be human. The only way in which the poor can be heard is when they are organised.

Anzorena strongly believes in the power of the poor people to solve their own housing problems. Anzorena (P.1) maintains that the efforts all over world which promote

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housing for the poor present a beacon of hope that decent shelter is indeed possible for all. Community based housing organizations, are to help the poor communities find ways with which to handle the problems by themselves. Poor people need to escape from the feeling of helplessness. They are to solve their own problems. Poor people are to become self-reliant.

Anzorena believes in the process that delivers housing. Processes not products create change (Anzorena P.14). Although the public and the private sector do build houses, it is not possible to provide houses for millions of slum dwellers with a system which does not provide the resources required to build for those with limited income and little or no savings at all.

Population growth, rising cost of land and housing have physically and financially outstripped the ability of governments and private industries to meet the shelter needs of the general population. Houses in the open market are often priced beyond the rich of most low income people. Public housing has also proven too expensive to the government, making it unaffordable to the buyer - beneficiary of requiring subsidies unaffordable to government.

Although Anzorena believes in people driven processes, he does recognise the role of the non-governmental organizations to help the poor access housing. The ability and success of various non-governmental organizations in the developing world to develop innovative ways to house the poor with the use of very little resources provide positive results in this direction (Anzorena P.40).

The state too has a very important role to help the poor access housing. Government programmes which include organised communities, the non-governmental organizations and local authorities in the planning and execution of the projects are likely to be successful (Anzorena P.40). The role of the state is to facilitate and support both the individual homebuildsers and communities. The state has to provide land and loans and training. The individual families are the builders and the decision-makers. The state is to promote peoples participation. Slogans such as minimum intervention, maximum support and maximum involvement of the builder need to be adopted by the state (Anzorena P.41). Great progress can be attained if public institutions, non-governmental and community groups, rather than individuals are provided with loans.

Mutual help programmes have an important role to play in the housing delivery programmes. Mutual help can also provide an important resource in housing the poor. Mutual help reduces the cost of housing by allowing the members of the housing co-operative to contribute in form of labour. For mutual help to work well, it is necessary to organize the poor into groups. Co-operative training is then provided amongst the members. Training can lead to the strengthening of the co-operative to a point that they could no longer be manipulated by politicians (Anzorena P.50).

Professional people also have a substantial role in the world of low income housing. They can give a special quality to a project and show some innovative approaches that would reconcile the seemingly contradictory concern for both the city and the urban poor. People-oriented and committed professionals are very much needed in helping the poor. But the professionals who want to work for the poor must realise that the architects are

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trained with standards suited for only a small sector of the population. The scarcity of resources does not allow formal housing for all the people. The people-oriented professionals are to be humble enough to learn from the people and work with them (Anzorena P.55).

Committed professionals, the public sector, community based organizations and non-governmental organizations have demonstrated positive approaches and implementation in bringing the government programmes to the poor. All these actors in the housing delivery system are to work together and secure resources for the poor and manage the technically complex processes of resettlement (Anzorena P.123).

Finally, Anzorena (P.123) sees housing the poor as being a process not only of providing houses but also of building communities.

Popular housing movements are found throughout the developing world, in Sri Lanka there is the Women's Bank which offers credit for housing. In the Philippines the Foundation for the Development of the Urban Poor, and Freedom to Build work towards helping the poor access housing. In Pakistan there is the Orangi Pilot Project; in Venezuela there is the Federation of Urban Communities Association; in El Salvador there is the FUNDASAL; in Colombia there is the SERVIVIENDA; in India there is the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and its sister organization called Mahila Milan.

In Argentina housing policies of the Provincial Housing Institute (IPV) have promoted the active participation of the non-governmental organizations as well as community based organizations. In Mexico there is the Union Popular Revolucionaria Emiliano Zapata (UPREZ); in San Fransisco in the United States, there is the Low Income Housing Fund (LIHF); and in South Africa there is the Homeless People's Federation and its sister non-governmental organization the People's Dialogue (Arrigone 1994 (a); Anzorena 1994; 1995; 1996).

There are three strategies followed by these organizations as they help poor people. Some of these organizations, work on a strategy which is based on the realization of the people's rights including a strong focus on evictions, land rights and mobilization around such issues. Some of these organizations focus on the strategy which is concerned with people centred development involving activities which increase self-reliance, often through the more efficient use of existing resources and the building of strong community organizations, for example through savings and credit programmes. Some of the organizations follow both the above strategies.

Popular housing movements as personified by Anzorena may be criticised for being too populits. They remain ideas their ability to deliver housing at scale is questionable.

They call for maximum support by the state of the people's housing programmes. This contradicts the autonomy and self-reliance in which one is made to believe, the community based organizations try to promote.

Granting loans to the groups as Anzorena believes should be done, might crack the common bond which keep the mutual help groups together.

Another criticism of the ideas on community based organizations specifically those concerned with housing, is that if they were depended on to deliver houses, there is a real possibility that many neighbourhoods that have dire housing problems, but lack organizational capacity would be completely left out (Bratt 1986:170).

Critics of community based effort on housing delivery, have also charged that they do relatively little toward addressing fundamental causes of housing problems. They do not, by and large, attempt to alter institutional relationships or to change traditional business patterns within the private housing industry (Bratt P.172).

On the strength of the community based housing programmes, Bratt (P.170) writes that they have the ability to yield positive impacts, not directly related to housing, that can improve the overall living conditions.

They produce significant psychological benefits for the individuals involved. Although there is very little systematic evidence, community based housing programmes should provide participants with increased enjoyment, security and a sense of empowerment (Bratt P.171).

Community based housing programmes can also heighten the political awareness of the people as they "fight the system" to institute change and create new programmes.

Launching any type of housing initiative requires participants to learn a great deal about banking, finance, and local codes and regulations. This type of education is certainly related to building a political consciousness that would be needed for a more fundamental agenda for change (Bratt P.171).

2.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter has traced the Popular Housing Movement. Global processes that could have led to its emergence have been highlighted. The chapter has ended by looking at Anzorena who is a leading figure in popular housing movements. Anzorena puts the ideas of the popular housing movements into practice.

The next chapter looks at debates that inform housing delivery systems.

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1   INTRODUCTION

One of the major components and sometimes the key element of the housing policy is its delivery mechanism. The challenge for policy makers, given the many ways in which delivery can be organised, is to design a delivery mechanism which is appropriate to people's needs and is socially, economically, politically and environmentally sustainable (Walker 1994:1).

In most parts of the world, there is a broad agreement that the existing housing policies and more specifically, current approaches to housing delivery are flawed and urgently need to be reworked. What new policy framework should replace the existing policies is, however, less clear (Walker P.1).

This chapter seeks to contribute to the debate on housing delivery. Critical issues and debates which should inform the design of delivery systems are identified.

3.2   DEBATES THAT INFORM HOUSING DELIVERY SYSTEMS

In recent years the focus of debate around housing delivery in developing countries has centred on the transition from conventional housing policies to self help housing policies and the implications this has for housing delivery and the end user (Walker 1994:6).

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In the discussion that follows below, the study will look at the debates on conventional and non-conventional housing delivery systems.

3.2.1 Conventional housing delivery systems

Conventional housing delivery systems are based on the belief that the public sector and the market can provide fully serviced and completed dwellings for the vast majority of the population. Hamdi and Goethert (1989:19) categorise this system of housing delivery under the provider paradigm. It would appear that the provider paradigm is the one still most practised. Although it is progressively falling out of favour with the academics, most governments and housing managers still believe in it.

Those who subscribe to the provider paradigm argue that large numbers of houses can best be delivered by speeding up the construction of houses which only industry knows best how to do. Providers look to industrialised or mass-manufactured housing systems as a way in which modern technology can serve unmet housing needs - especially of low income families.

Industrialization has led to immense increases in the production of almost all material goods: clothing, vehicles, appliances, books, medicines, household wares, and even food (Terner 1972:199). It was considered impossible that housing would be the perverse exception (Abrams 1964:165).

Those who subscribe to the provider paradigm, called for various forms of mechanization,

notably the prefabrication of houses, the industrial production of housing components - the Henry Ford syndrome of standard parts of mass production. All these things usually demand heavy plants, sophisticated organization, large amounts of upfront capital and large markets to guarantee economies of scale (Hamndi & Goethert P.19).

Providers argue that scale through mechanization is best achieved if production is brought to the centre where resources can be concentrated and properly managed. When resources are at the centre, it becomes easy to control production processes in ways which facilitate the management of supply which control quality and cost (Hamdi & Goethert P.20).

The argument goes further, to mass produce effectively is to standardise and to standardise effectively is to control quality, quantity and cost. For providers to build fast is to build instantly; to solve problems of housing is to build large numbers of houses (Hamdi and Goethert P.20).

Providers present themselves as pragmatists whose prime interest is getting the job done quickly, efficiently and cleanly. For providers the slums represent a national failure something to be eradicated. To do this providers suggest two approaches. The first is the technological fix with heavy emphasis on professional and managerial expertise. The second approach is to bring in the consultants, sort out priorities, put a figure and a time limit to the job and then throw in the task force.

Terner (1972: 201-207) presents a case study where the provider approach to housing

delivery is put in practice. The case was set in Latin America in the late 1960s. The identity of individuals, the company and the country involved is not revealed, to maintain confidentiality of the case.

This case is presented to unmask the myth that industrially mass-produced housing modules can significantly lower costs, and can somehow reduce the deficit in the world's supply of safe and decent dwelling accommodation. Instead the case shows that the opposite is true in that industrially mass produced housing may lead to a worsening of housing conditions.

The case as presented by Terner (P201-207) goes like this:

After an optimistic feasibility study conducted by a European industrialized housing manufacturer, negotiations were concluded for the importation of a highly sophisticated plant, valued at approximately $1 million. For this investment, which required considerably more than $1 million worth of local currency at the official exchange rate, plus outgoing royal payments based on volume of production, the investment consortium purchased a patent licence, production equipment, and ongoing technical services from the European franchiser.

The first problem that the company encountered is the "down time". From the moment of the initial payment of the franchiser, the company began a frantic race against "down-time" or periods without production. Once initial payments were made, the costs of interest and loss of liquidity on the capital investment became strictly a function of time,

regardless of output quantities. A series of initial mistakes and bad luck, however, conspired to handicap severely the company's race against time.

The second problem encountered is concerned the building process of the plant. The construction of the plant dragged beyond its scheduled nine month period to fourteen months. Bureaucratic snarls delayed import permits. Finally when the plant was ready to begin production, the technical assistance team from the European franchise was engaged in the opening of a plant on another continent because of the scheduling difficulties caused by the company's five-month construction delay. Thus nearly a month passed before the team arrived and test production could actually begin.

The plant also experienced managerial problems. Early in the process, the firm also began to develop serious management problems. In a move that is not atypical in developing nations, the investor-owners of the company hired engineers to fill the company's three critical operating positions - general manager, plant manager, and sales technical service manager. None had previous corporate management experience. Only the manager worked out well. The general manager, the chief operating officer of the company proved to be a total failure.

Expanded repair facilities also beset the embattled company. Normally minor repairs caused long periods of down-time. Weeks and occasionally months, were involved in ordering critical spare parts from Europe or to the United States.

In view of the shortage of repair facilities, the company started to adopt a policy of

becoming self-sufficient, attempting at great unanticipated costs to reproduce in miniature the supporting elements of the society around it - most of which were found to be unacceptable and unreliable. Unavoidably these costs added to the corporate overhead and were directly reflected in increased prices.

Labour troubles also plagued the new plant. The workers were not unionized; and because management wanted to preserve this situation, wages paid were slightly higher than prevailing rates, partially off-setting the labour-saving features of the plant. Also, productivity appeared to be quite low, and it was later learned from one of the workers that they deliberately decided to work slowly because it was rumoured that sales were poor and they feared lay-offs.

Strikes among dockworkers and other related industries also caused delays and stoppages at the plant as various supplies failed to meet commitment.

Other minor irritations caused a complex of unanticipated problems. For example, telephone service to the suburb location of the plant was so bad it became impossible to conduct business there.

Poor technical service from the European franchiser, who never seemed to overcome the language barrier led to numerous, costly cables and transatlantic phone calls, all of which added to the financial burdens of the company.

The final straw was when the nations currency was devalued, slashing the worth of the

meagre remaining capital reserves, the company was finally bankrupt, psychologically devastated, and had to sell its assets at a tremendous loss.

This case shows that looking to industrialised or mass-manufactured housing systems as a way in which modern technology can serve unmet housing needs - especially low-income families, is fallacious.

3.2.2 Non-conventional housing delivery systems

A subset of the non-conventional approach to housing delivery, is the support paradigm.

The support paradigm shifts attention away from a focus on public and private providers to a focus on partnership between public and private sectors and between the centre and the periphery. The support paradigm calls for greater community autonomy. It builds co-operation. It is a means to empowerment through the transfer and distribution of resources from central to local levels (Hamdi and Goethert P.20).

Those who subscribe to the support paradigm point out that speeding production through large scale industrial processes has been less than effective in increasing volume, because volume depends more on the total resources devoted to building.

Supporters (Hamdi and Goethert P.20) therefore, argue that the management of resources is more critical in increasing supply, and that rather than worry about the means of production, it may be better instead to improve the means by which the hundreds of small

builders, manufacturers, suppliers, both formal and informal can gain access to essential building material, cheap credit, better utilities, large markets and easier transportation.

The large scale production of houses in other words can best be achieved by increasing the participation of small builders and ordinary people, by building their capacity to deliver houses, services and even some utilities. For supporters, the question, therefore is not whether government and industry can provide more houses, but what help they can give, so that those who already produce and others who want to but cannot, can produce more effectively. For supporters, building houses, whether through government or formal market channels has little to do with solving the housing problems.

Rather than controlling standards or quality or normalising production processes, supporters tell us that the more diverse ways you can follow in order to achieve your objectives, then the more likely that you will find one that fits your needs and your budget. Variety is a prerequisite to efficiency, to quantity and to cost-effective production (Hamdi and Goethert P.21).

In contrast to the instant delivery of houses, supporters argue that going to scale without risking bankruptcy, and without displacing whole populations, means building incrementally. It means cultivating an environment in which housing, small business and communities will grow, consolidate and change, and where production and building can connect with opportunities for employment, for accumulating wealth, and for promoting health. Housing is an integral part of a larger system of urban development and can not be "sectoralised" (Hamdi and Goethert P.21).

Supporters maintain that most solutions to problems exist in everyday practice, if only they could be recognised and then built on. They exist not as government and professionals mights like, nor might they be working as effectively as we need, but they exist nevertheless.

Like the provider paradigm, the support paradigm has also been criticised. Critics maintain that their "lets do it with the people because they are always right" (which of course they are not), is time-consuming, academic and therefore irrelevant to the real world (Hamdi and Goethert P.21).

Supporters are also criticised because of their radical belief that nothing can be done without changing the whole system. Other supporters are regarded as radical populists, who believe that professionals are in a conspiracy against the public and that "the only going thing in the professions life is to keep the professions going."

The provider-supporter debate has irony in its plot. Hamdi and Goethert (P.21) point out that what puzzles supporters (whose open intentions are to serve people) is that people secretly prefer providers. People like finished houses, offered with heavy subsidies, to much higher standards than they could hope to achieve any other way, and where defaulting on payments is unlikely to lose you your house.

And what puzzles providers (whose intentions historically have been to serve the government and industry in the interest of the national economy) is that governments and industry increasingly like supporters because as it turns out, supporting is as profitable as

providing for industry and even more when the formal economy is weak.

3.3 PRODUCT VERSUS PROCESS ORIENTED APPROACHES

3.3.1 The product approach to housing delivery

The product approach treats housing as a product, which although fixed in space can be delivered in the same way and produced according to the same logic as any other product.

The product oriented approach is most closely associated with housing strategies that emphasise, above all else, the rapid delivery of housing on a large scale. This approach to housing delivery is most evident not only in state initiated mass low-income housing scheme that characterise conventional housing policies around the world, but also in housing provided by the private sector developers (Walker 1994:11).

Other features of the product-oriented approach are that decisions are not taken by the end-users, but by the provider relating to the buyer/recipient on an individualistic basis. Within the private sector, the nature of the product is determined by the market forces, consumer preferences and considerations of affordability. The product is then distributed through the market, its success or failure being measured by the market response.

In the public sector, the product is determined by officially determined definitions of what socially, politically and culturally constitutes an adequate housing product, being initially defined as a conventional family house. This housing is allocated according to

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bureaucratically defined allocation criteria and usually involves some form of contractual agreement between the state and the householder.

3.3.2   The process oriented approach to housing delivery

One of the best known promoters of the liberal approach to housing delivery is John Turner. Turner and Fichter (1972), Turner (1972) and (1988) give direction to the process approach to housing delivery.

The basic principle of the process approach to low income housing is summarised by Fichter et al. (1972:241) that, "When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contributions in the design, construction or management of housing, both their process and the environment produced stimulate individual and social well-being. When people have no control over responsibility for key decisions in the housing process, on the other hand, dwelling environments may instead become a barrier to personal fulfilment and a burden to the economy."

Turner (1972:151) argues that the concept of housing should be viewed as a verb rather than as a noun: housing is not just shelter, it is a process, an activity.

The house as a result should not be seen simply in terms of its physical characteristics ("What it is") but in terms of its meaning for those who use it ("What it does"). By implication, the material values of housing should be substituted for human values of which the material value is only one amongst many indicators (Nientied and van der

Linden, 1988:133).

Another important point for a process approach to housing delivery as put forward by Turner, is that since housing needs change, for example, according to family cycle or according to stages in the migrant's life in the city, and since there is an endless variety of individual needs, priorities, and possibilities among the users, large organizations can never adequately cater for all these.

Large organizations such as the state or municipality, always have to standardise procedures and products and thus fail to respond adequately to the majority of individual and changing needs and priorities. In other words, the main components of the housing process have to be left to the users. Turner hastily, points out that this does not necessarily imply that dwellers should build their own houses, but that they are the one's who should judge and decide about housing, individually or through decentralized local institutions.

Nientied and van der Linden (P.140) point out about Turner's ideas that they do not do away with the role of the government either at the municipal or national level. Only the government can enable the users to become involved in housing activities, for example, planning, organizing, building and maintenance.

First certain elements such as main roads, sewerage treatment plants, cannot and should not be planned, built and maintained by the community, let alone individually. Second,

the government has to formulate the proscriptive laws that define the limits to what people and local institutions may do (rather than prescribe laws that tell them what they should do.) Third the government has to provide and actively protect access to the elements of the housing process for the users. These elements include land, laws, building material, tools, credit and know-how etc.

Many of Turner's ideas are based on what he has observed in autonomous settlements. As a result Turner propagates autonomy in the housing delivery.

3.3.2.1 Autonomy versus dependency

Fichter et.al. (1972:245) argue for autonomy. Autonomy is associated with freedom of action in a variety of senses. Autonomy is viewed as a pragmatic answer both to the shelter deficit and to the frequent mismatch of shelter and essential life needs. Autonomy further refers to the opportunity to do for oneself what one is able to do.

Dependency on the other hand is viewed as being destructive when those in need do not enjoy a reciprocal relationship with those who supply their needs. In the housing situation, an undesirable dependency means that those who supply shelter are also the ones who decide how much shelter there should be, where it should be, and how it should function in the lives of essentially passive users.

In an open and healthy exchange, decisions are made on both sides: those with wants specify their needs; supplies indicate how well they can provide for those wants according

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to considerations of costs; and by compromise on both sides, an exchange is effected.

Autonomy, therefore, entails the ability to enter into reciprocal relationships, to exercise both control over essential life needs and discretion in the trade-offs which establish priorities. Autonomy means power to bargain, the ability to get what one needs, the capacity to pay in one way or another for what one gets. Autonomy is synonymous with substantial freedom of action.

Autonomy does not imply unqualified licence. It signifies rather a freedom of action constrained by costs. Thus autonomy represents a measure of obligation and responsibility as well as the power to satisfy one's wants.

Finally, autonomy as seen, by Fichter et.al. (P.246) is that it implies a levelling out of consumption, a more uniform distribution of power, wealth and responsibility. For the poor, autonomy signifies greater access to goods and services than is available to them at present, that this access should be determined by individual needs and that it should be obtained through greater inputs of time, labour and collective bargaining power on their part.

Although one might have some misgivings about Turner's ideas, what is positive about them is that they empower and build the capacity of the poor.

Turner (1988:13) is vociferous about his ideas in that he points out interestingly that those who sacrifice people on the alters of the market place or the state can no longer claim that

happiness tomorrow depends on frustration today. Policies that inhibit personal and local initiative abort the community-building on which our future depends.

3.4 THE ROLES OF THE COMMUNITY, THE FORMAL SECTOR AND THE GOVERNMENT IN A PROCESS MODEL

The product approaches to housing delivery have not recorded any major successes. It is for this reason that policy makers on housing now opt for process approaches to housing delivery.

In a process approach, the importance attached to the per annum numerical output of housing is not as great as in the product oriented approach. A long term view of housing delivery is adopted and the importance attached to putting into place the conditions which will facilitate the widespread fulfilment of the peoples housing needs on a substantial basis over a period of time (Walker P.12). The delivery of a product, namely, housing is seen as a means to other things, for example, community groups, the confidence and skills to, on an ongoing basis, negotiate with those in control the resources and amenities they need.

Vakil (1995:25-29) discusses the roles of the community, the government and the formal sector in a process oriented approach.

In as far as the government is concerned, at National level, policies should directly acknowledge the role of housing CBOs in contributing to meeting the demand for low income housing. At local level, policies are to ensure that collective forms of ownership

are recognised and that serviced land is made available to housing CBOs in addition to what is provided to individuals.

Lack of recognition by local authorities and financial institutions act as major constraints to the capacity of the CBOs to build houses. The CBOs can act as major vehicles for domestic savings and they can have a contribution on the housing problems of the low income people.

Housing CBOs require access to adequate financing in order to be able to build houses. Housing is an economic activity that requires large amounts of up-front capital. With the traditional financial institutions unwilling to lend to the CBOs, it is virtually impossible for these organizations to carry out their mandate. Major reforms are needed to ensure that the capital required for housing construction is provided to CBOs.

There are several ways in which this can be accomplished, the first being that governments should provide small loan guarantees to housing CBOs.

Secondly, governments can put pressure on the financing community to establish lending schemes to housing CBOs. Finally, governments can be instrumental in creating new financial institutions (modelled on the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh or the Women's Bank of Sri Lanka, for example) that they employ lending policies more conducive to the needs and capacities of housing CBOs. However, it should be emphasised that whatever financial assistance is given to the CBOs by the government, care is to be taken that it does not crack the common bond that keeps the members of the housing CBOs together.

Big financial assistance can surely do this.

Housing CBOs in order to be more effective need technical support and training. The value of training to housing CBOs outweights the funds which could be granted to help them.

3.5   CONCLUSION

The process approach to housing delivery has been presented as a more efficient way to helping house the poor than the product approach. In the next chapter methodology followed in this study is discussed.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the method of collection and analysis of data is discussed.

4.2   A SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK

With a couple of exceptions, there has been little development of a viable analytical model that can be applied to the study of Community Based Organizations (Vakil 1996:4). However, Brown and Covey (1987:59-87) maintain that the systems framework can be a useful tool in the understanding of the development organizations, that is, the Community Based Organizations and the Non-Governmental Organizations.

Harvey (1973:451) sees a system as constituting:

*   A set of elements identified with some variable attributes of objects;

*   A set of relationships between the attributes of objects; and

*   A set of relationships between those attributes of objects and the environment.

Important internal attributes that distinguish development organizations, such as, the CBOs and the NGOs from large public and private sector organizations are a loose form

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of organization, the embodiment of certain values such as participation and empowerment, and most importantly, dependency on the internal environment (Brown and Covey P.67).

The external environment of the CBOs and the NGOs is constituted by the government and funding organizations. These external elements have an impact on the access of housing CBOs to resources (Vakil P.4).

So in order to understand the Homeless Peoples Federation, its internal and external attributes, use will be made of an "overlapping systems" model.

4.3   **DATA AND METHODS**

Using the systems framework described above, questions addressed in the study centred on gaining a better understanding of the Homeless People's Federation as an organization that caters for the shelter needs of the poor, and how the activities of the Homeless People's Federation might be better facilitated through policy means.

Several techniques were used to collect data on the Homeless people's Federation:

Interviews using an open-ended interview schedule with Piesangs River Regional Federation. Interviews were conducted on two occasions to determine reliability and validity of the response.

Use was also made of the talking Newsletters radio cassette recorded workshops on the activities of the Homeless People's Federation were studied.

Analysis of existing material on the Homeless Peoples Federation was undertaken. Newsletters released by the organization were studied.

An open-ended interview with the provincial Housing Department was conducted.

Useful documents on the agreements between the National Housing Department and the Homeless People's Federation were studied.

The research represents an attempt to study housing CBOs using a systems framework.

4.4   THE CASE STUDY

The Homeless Peoples' Federation is used as a case study. A case study allows one to probe deeply and analyse intensively the phenomenon which constitutes a case. Through the case study, generalizations about the wider population to which the unit belongs can be made (Cohen and Manion 1989:125). Through the study of the Homeless People's Federation it is hoped that other community based housing organizations in other parts of the world will be understood.

Although the case study is adopted, one cannot fail to take cognisance of the problems of the case study. Critics of the case study method maintain that it lacks rigor. There is

lack of reliability in case studies, another researcher might come to a differing conclusion while studying the very same case (Anderson 1990:61). Another problem with a case study approach is that there could be a tendency to oversimplify or exaggerate a situation leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs (Merriam 1988:33).

Anderson (P.158) further points out about the case study approach that it does not permit generalizations. To this, Merriam (P.33) adds that readers may be seduced into thinking that case studies are accounts of the whole when in fact they are a part - a slice of life.

Another most important criticism of the case study approach is that case studies present problems of ethics - an unethical case writer could so select among available data that virtually anything he wishes could be illustrated (Merriam P.34).

Case studies require time and money to be undertaken. The product of the case study could be too lengthy, too detailed or too involved for busy policy makers (Anderson P.159).

Inspite of these problems, the case study was used in this study. Based on interviews, written documents and observation, the findings presented in the next chapter were arrived at.

Problems with documents as sources of data for research purposes were kept in mind throughout. It may be difficult for a researcher to retrieve all the necessary and important

information from a document. There could also be a bias in the selection of the documents. Bias in the selection of the documents may be reflected in reporting where one finds that a research reports on what he/she wishes to report on. Another very important problem with documents is that access to the documents may be deliberately blocked, thus compromising the findings of a study (Yin 1994:80).

The next chapter presents the case study history and its method of operation.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY HISTORY AND ITS METHOD OF OPERATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a brief historical background to the People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter and the South African Homeless People's Federation. Processes that led to their formation are explained. A brief comment on their methods of operation is also given. The chapter concludes by comparing Turner's and the Homeless People's Federation thinking.

5.2 THE WITWATERSRAND NETWORK FOR THE HOMELESS

The grouping of poor people for housing and to fight evictions started in 1986. The Witwatersrand Network for the Homeless which was based at the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre in a residential area of Roodepoort west of Johannesburg is the first recorded grouping of poor people to fight evictions and to mobilise for housing the poor. The Wilgespruit Fellowship centre is an ecumenical church organization (Architecture South Africa 1988:21).

The convenor of the Witwatersrand Network for the Homeless was Ismael Mkhabela. Ismael Mkhabela had established contacts with people who are squatters in various parts of the Witwatersrand. Mkhabela and his Network for the Homeless had entered into a

dialogue with the poor homeless people to find out what could be done to address their plight.

Through the interaction with the squatters, Mkhabela established that the squatters wanted to be left where they were, not to be moved and to be provided with essentials such as water. The shack dwellers also requested that they be provided with skills and advice in order to upgrade the existing accommodation. Shack dwellers were also making demands on community service agencies like the ecumenical church to which Mkhabela belonged. There was a need to organise public utility housing schemes (Architecture South Africa P.21).

Together with the shack dwellers, the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre was aiming at the schemes that would help the poor people access land and housing. The schemes would not be motivated by profit. The users of the scheme would be the owners of the scheme. This of course was not to absolve the state from making its own contribution in conjunction with the people involved. The ideas which were developing were strongly marked by participation in decision making at all levels.

At another level of taking initiative, the network for the Homeless evolved some thrift clubs which operated as revolving loan schemes. Through these, the Network for the Homeless had assisted some of the inhabitants of Soweto purchase their own houses. The homeless had to be organised into viable communities that can articulate their interests (Architecture South Africa P.22).

Through the efforts of the Network for the Homeless, the homelessness issue was becoming a priority on the agenda of many organizations. Through the Network, the people were attaining educative processes. This led them to making informed decisions. The Network for the Homeless was receiving professional assistance from the Black Sash, the Legal Resource Centre and certain architects. Those provided input of special skills. Out of this, the need for a wider dialogue became apparent (Architecture South Africa P.22).

The homeless people were becoming more articulate. However, the Network for the Homeless had a problem of land and that of finance. Their intention was not to ask for money as this would turn the whole initiative into an association of beggars. Outside funding would be welcomed but this would not be relied upon. The idea behind the Network for the Homeless would be a network of resources, where information would be shared, and a basis for the pooling of all different resources with regard to the accommodation problems would be provided. Financial assistance would be welcomed as this would give leverage. A bank loan at a favourable interest rate could be raised.

In housing the poor, there was a need for a conscious effort of poor people themselves, participating in the effort. People had to be involved in any effort to house them. This would create a sense of ownership by the people who lived there. It was important to realise that there was a lot to housing other than just the creating of a structure (Architecture South Africa P.22).

Without the actual participation of the people affected, and without their control of their

own situation, the problem would never be resolved. The poor people themselves were to call the tune based on the understanding of the issues.

The Witwatersrand Network for the Homeless valued people with know-how. The poor people believed that they could draw on the expertise of any professionals. But solutions to problems were not to be technocratic, or imposed on poor people without any consultation. The poor people wanted to keep their power and influence. They were not to become guests in their own houses. Issues of major importance had not to be surrendered to other constituencies and other groups. The Network for the Homeless people had to work participatively with experts, and with the homeless, in consultation together (Architecture South Africa P.22).

The Witwatersrand Network for the Homeless marked the first initiatives by the poor to take control of their own lives through housing and land issues. These initiatives were to develop into the People's Dialogue on land and Shelter and the Homeless People's Federation.

5.3 THE PEOPLE'S DIALOGUE ON LAND AND SHELTER

The People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter is a network which links together representatives from illegal and informal settlements and which they themselves direct. The People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter is an autonomous sub-committee of the Southern African Catholic Development Agency (SACDA). It supports a network of informal settlements throughout Southern Africa. Settlements linked via the network

include squatters settlements, backyard dwellings, hostels and formal dwellings that are grossly overcrowded (Bolnick 1993:91).

The People's Dialogue was formed in response to a strongly expressed need for a system of networking at the informal settlement level. This need was expressed at a workshop that was facilitated by the SACDA and held in March 1991. This gathering was attended by ninety five people from informal settlements throughout Southern Africa, and it was the first of its kind in this part of the world, this meeting was regarded as the formal beginning of a process (Bolnick P.91).

Ever since 1991 this grassroots process continued. People from the informal settlements have been coming together to share experiences and to strengthen positions. Innumerable ideas, concepts and processes emerged from such sharing. The most powerful, the most demanded and popular were Housing Savings Schemes and a community driven shelter training programme.

By the beginning of 1994, there were over 175 informal settlements linked together in a loose affiliation and held together via exchange programmes, workshops, newsletters, community driven training exercises and meetings. Eighty five of these settlements had set up housing savings collectives. The housing savings collectives numbered anywhere from twelve to five hundred members. The vast majority being women had by the beginning of 1994 savings in excess of R60 000. Some groups had initiated loan schemes as well (The People's Dialogue and SPARC/NSDF 1994:3).

5.4 THE SOUTH AFRICAN HOMELESS PEOPLE'S FEDERATION

The debate around a Homeless People's Federation was pursued vigorously in the People's Dialogue programme since the first hour of the very first workshop which took place in Broederstroom in March 1991 (Utshani Buyakhuluma September 1992 to August 1993:13).

At the beginning opinions were divided. Some homeless people were concerned that a Homeless People's Federation would divide the liberation movement. Others felt that as soon as there was an elected government, the problems of land and shelter would be addressed. However, delegates were soon to realise that experiences in every other Third World countries have shown that national and local governments including progressive ones had failed to provide land and shelter for the poor. Only where the people themselves, those who experienced the intolerable pressure of homelessness and poverty, had seized the initiative had there be results.

The visits by members of the programme to India enabled the entire network to see for themselves how necessary it was for homeless people to mobilize themselves around the needs that they themselves had prioritised. It was agreed that the best chance of solving the problems of the homeless was to enable the homeless themselves to discover and implement solutions themselves, with professionals and government functionaries responding positively to community based initiatives (Utshani Buyakhuluma P.13).

In late 1993 the leaders of the People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter decided to call a

conference of homeless communities. The twofold purpose of the conference was to draft a People's Housing Policy and to formally launch the South African Homeless People's Federation.

The South African Homeless People's Federation was not formally launched until the 21 March 1994. On this day more than a hundred and fifty homeless people arrived in Johannesburg to attend the People's Dialogue Housing Policy Conference and to formally celebrate the launch of the South African Homeless People's Federation (Wat Ons Wil Hê! :1994:3).

The delegates came from informal settlements throughout South Africa to represent their Housing Savings Schemes. These housings savings schemes had combined under the banner of the People's Dialogue. The People's Dialogue brought people together to share ideas and experiences.

The People's Dialogue maintains that the overall development of the informal settlements is best undertaken by the homeless themselves.

In order to gain confidence and the ability to drive their own development programmes, the homeless people are given support to learn from one another's extensive experience. This exchange of experiences, lessons learnt and development strategies in general takes place within informal settlements at local, national and international level. In the process, dependency on formal institutions is minimised. The formal institutions are often costly and unclear of the actual priorities of the poor communities.

The South African Homeless People's Federation is rooted in the spirit , the hard work and the commitment of rapidly growing numbers of poor people, mainly women, who have discovered a common identity based on the immediate material needs (Wat Ons Wil Hê! P.4).

5.5 THE UTSHANI FUND

The Utshani Fund is a revolving fund providing low-cost housing finance directly to the Housings Savings Schemes affiliated to the Federation. It is not available to non-Federation members. It is able to provide loans of a much smaller size and at lower interest rates than formal lending institutions, primarily relying on the organization, capacity and relational capacity of homeless communities (People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter 1994:3).

The basis of Utshani Fund's operations is the network of Housing Savings Schemes affiliated to the Federation. Utshani Fund makes loan finance available to the Housing Savings Schemes directly, on the basis of affordability assessment and building plans undertaken by their members in accordance with the Federation methods. The Housing Savings Schemes then distribute these funds to members who wish to build, are able to do so, and who undertake to make regular payments (Utyani Luyathetha 1995:21).

Evaluation of the application of a Housing Savings Scheme for a loan is based on the following criteria, namely,

track record of savings and borrowing of the Housing and Savings Scheme;

maximum participation of women;

security of tenure;

house model and design;

costing;

members income levels and affordability; and

capacity to source and produce materials.

The uTshani Fund has a small professional management team that manages the Fund on behalf of the Federation. The team is accountable to a Governing Body which is made up of one elected community (Federation) representative from each region. The management also supports the uTshani Loan Teams, one of the components of the Federation with representation in every region (Interim Guidelines For the Provision of Housing and Consolidation Subsidies 1996:6).

5.6 PERCEPTIONS THAT SHAPE THE THINKING OF THE PEOPLE'S DIALOGUE AND THE HOMELESS PEOPLE'S FEDERATION

Failure of the governments to provide shelter in developing countries has convinced the leaders of the Homeless People's Federation and the People's Dialogue that the government which is in power presently, would not provide land and shelter for all. This very fact has led to increased awareness of the need for the poor people to unite, strengthen themselves and constitute a consciousness whereby they are aware and confident of their capacity to manage their lives and development priorities (What are

those bastards up to now? 1996:6).

The philosophy of the Federation is to keep professional intervention to a minimum. Both the Homeless People's Federation and the People's Dialogue (collectively called the Alliance from now onwards) share the understanding that training is not a top-down process in which the experts educate the uninformed. In the Alliance terms training is a process whereby people's organizations unearth or rediscover available knowledge and experience within themselves. In this way the gathering and sharing of information is not only a knowledge building exercise but also a powerful mobilizing tool.

The Alliance, which is constituted by the Homeless People's Federation and the People's Dialogue, look with suspicion at the highly trained professionals or bureaucracy-bound officials, as it believes that these are inclined to minimise the knowledge and experience that the grassroots people are able to generate. What is more, the alliance believes, knowledge from within a people's process is usually more appropriate to the people's needs and priorities than externally devised strategies and programmes.

The alliance has community based training exercises, which have the following purposes. Firstly, they provide control in areas in which poor people evolve their own understanding of their social and economic environment, not only at the settlement level, but via exchange programmes in the national, continental and global arenas as well.

Secondly, they also equip the participants, who are all impoverished inhabitants of formal settlements, with the ability to drive their own experiential learning programmes and their

own housing development.

Moreover, the alliance has come to believe that land and housing in South Africa has followed the same trajectories of almost all the Third World countries. Firstly, there is a shift from public regulation of the built environment and government provision of housing stock towards "deregulation," allowing market forces to dictate access to land and shelter.

Secondly, a change in attitude towards squatters from objects of scorn to be evicted and harassed to "economic refugees" unable to find market solutions to their housing needs and requiring the provision of basic services, to be delivered by private contractors, sometimes paid for by the state (What are those bastards up to now 1996:14).

The primary action of the Homeless People's Federation is to show the government the methodology of people's housing provision. This does not only mean that the poor people are able to build decent and affordable houses but also to show how it is done, how communities are mobilised by and for themselves, with minimal help or interference from external agents.

The alliance recognizes and acknowledges that the government is committed to redistribution of resources, and recognise that this can most effectively be done through people centred development. However, when it comes to designing policy and creating an enabling institutional framework within which government support to people's organizations can be maximised it runs into serious structural constraints.

Some of these constraints are part of the nature of political power, the alliance maintains. It is difficult for politicians and officials to legitimate their positions of power and simultaneously seek ways to transfer this power to the people. Some of the constraints, come from the broader attitudes of politicians, officials and development professionals who refuse to acknowledge that common people are better equipped than they are to solve problems of land and housing.

The Alliance believes that the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the community based organizations CBOs should not wait for policy to be made and implemented before attempting to influence it. Especially in the case of community-driven development activities, it is better for the NGOs to help CBOs show what they can achieve in practice and then force these achievements to the attention of the government.

Mainstream housing policy proposals in South Africa have taken an "interventionist" approach, attempting to "push" the private sectors reach downwards into lower income communities. The goal is to "comodify" shelter downwards by expanding the market. Capitalists have come to realise that a house too can be produced, packaged, marketed and sold like any other commodity.

The notion of a house as a commodity has come to be seen as "natural," the Alliance says. People have accepted that housing of an acceptable standard - formal housing - was the exclusive preserve of professionals, businessmen, and governments. By contrast any people built extra-market shelter came to be seen as a problem - "informal" housing, or "shacks".

The Federation and the People's Dialogue are well aware of the fact that the present institutional framework is geared to their exclusion rather than their participation. They are well aware of the fact that by making housing into a commodity, a product to be purchased for individual family consumption via the open market, the private sector automatically excludes the poor. As a result, the Federation and the People's Dialogue have conceived, out of practice, its own mechanism for people centered housing development.

In their working with the low income people, the Federation and the People's Dialogue follows a strategy which focuses on people centred development involving activities which increase self reliance, often through the more efficient use of existing financial resources and the building of strong community organizations.

Self-help "informal" housing process has not been recognised as legitimate, and this rediscovered housing process was again actively discouraged. It was accepted that housing had to be provided by the authorities and not by the people themselves. This paradigm places the government and private institutions - such as banks and contractors - at the centre of the process.

The housing problem in South Africa can not be solved unless the process is handed back to the people. In order to do this, it has to be affirmed that housing is fundamentally a process of the people - not the state, local authorities, developers, and non-governmental organizations ("The People meet the People's Minister 1994:6).

The time had come to take the process a step further - to obtain explicit government recognition of the centrality of the people driven approach to the housing process and to support it with appropriate institutional and financial structures managed by the people themselves.

The essential element of the approach favoured by the Federation and the People's Dialogue is; firstly, provide the homeless with access to finance in order to undertake their own housing initiatives. Secondly, utilize and develop the untapped power of the homeless poor to manage their own housing process. Finally, to develop lost or suppressed skills and capacities which can only contribute to the development of the broader South African society (The People Meet the People's Minister 1994:9).

5.7 TURNERS AND THE HOMELESS PEOPLE'S FEDERATION THINKING COMPARED

Community Based Organizations are inclined towards the left of the political spectrum. Many of them have a traditional Christian background. Because of their Christian inclination one often finds a number of priests, former priests and nuns, and other professional people, active in them or if not active in them, they began as a result of their effort.

Many similarities between John Turner's and the Homeless People's Federation thinking can be easily detected. Indeed, there is no doubt that the "Turner school" has influenced the Homeless People's Federation Policy to great extent

To start with, both the policies regard housing as a tool for development (Turner 1976:91; and The People meet the People's Minister 1994:4). Both believe that the solutions they propose will provide satisfying and culturally meaningful environments. Both pholosophies also view housing as a result of institutional problems.

The starting point for both philosophies is that conventional solutions do not work. Market forces cannot be relied upon to drive the process of housing, as the market excludes poor people. Both Turner and the Homeless People's Federation believe that a proper division of tasks between public, private and community sectors - in which the last sector has a main say in planning, construction and management of housing - is the only solution to the housing of any class of people in any place of the world.

Both philosophies call for autonomy. People's housing organizations are to be autonomous with as little government interference as possible. Communities are to be presented with an opportunity to do what they are able to do best. The housing process is a process through which the poor set free their frustrated human aspirations. The poor's efforts to house themselves, is a logical, natural expression of the recognition that housing is a process.

House building is seen by both philosophies as a way of empowering the low income people. When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contribution in the design, construcion or management of their housing, both their process and environment produced stimulate the individual and the social well being (Fichter et al. 1972:241).

Both philosophies emphasise self-reliance often through the more efficient use of existing financial resources and the building of strong community organizations. In case of the Homeless Peoples Federation, the communities are built around the concept of the Loans and Savings collectives. Turner (1988) shows how community organizations are built around housing processes.

The Homeless People's Federation takes its cue from Eduardo Anzorena. Anzorena's thinking is to a large extent influenced by Turner. However, the Popular Housing Movement personified by Anzorena goes a step further than Turner.

The Popular Housing Movement into which the Homeless People's Federation belongs is built around a people's approach to mobilizing end user finance something which Turner does not emphasise. In fact the Homeless People's Federation is very suspicious of outside "support and interference" from the state, local authorities, developers or Non-Governmental Organizations. Whereas, although Turner accepts the need for autonomy, he advocates government support.

As far as the Homeless People's Federation is concerned, the role of the government in their structures is only limited to providing institutional and financial support, beyond this, the process is to be left to the poor people themselves as they are best equipped to do the job. Financial support by the state, is the basis of success of the activities of the Federation. Although the Homeless People's Federation would deny this, but this is what one would conclude from reading on their interaction with the government.

The Homeless People's Federation believes that the people have a democratic right to be at the centre of their development. Turner does not emphasise this.

Thus in many respects the Homeless People's Development - with its emphasis on the need of the poor people to do things themselves without any outside interference - and Turner with his acceptance of the outside interference in the poor peoples programmes - really have different views.

5.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown what the Homeless People's Federation is, what inspires it and how it differs with its source of inspiration. The following chapter, presents a report on interviews.

CHAPTER 6

AN ANALYTICAL REPORT ON THE INTERVIEWS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The interviews described below were held with the Piesangs River regional Federation and the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Housing Department. Two interviews were held with the Piesangs River regional Federation. The first interview was held with the Homeless People's Federation National convenor Patrick Hunsley. The second interview was held with the following National Team Leaders: Shoes Mbanjwa who leads the Building Team, Thembelihle Mkhize who leads the Enumeration and Makhosi Nzama who leads the Training team. All these team leaders are based at Piesangs River regional Federation. One interview was held with Seymour Beddersen of the Provincial Housing Department in Kwa-Zulu-Natal. Transcripts of the interviews appear at the appendixes.

In the description of the interviews, internal attributes and external attributes that distinguish development organizations are used as basis of analysis.

6.2 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE FEDERATION

From the interviews with Shoes, Thembelihle and Makhosi, it became clear that the Homeless People's Federation has a clearly defined hierarchical structure. Ten fully-fledged regional Federations combine to form the South African Homeless Peoples

Federation. A regional Federation needs to have a minimum of five savings collectives in order to become a member of the Homeless Peoples Federation. In every regional Federation there is a minimum of seven convenors who are chosen from the membership of the savings schemes.

The seven convenors keep the activities of the regional Federation going. These are networking, training, housing savings scheme support, shack counting and enumeration, technical building, land unit and housing loans. Every housing savings scheme elects three treasures who are responsible for collecting money and keeping the financial records of the group. The ultimate authority of the Federation are the three national convenors who serve as a kind of secretariat. They are ultimately responsible for the smooth running of the Federation.

Leadership of the Federation is elected rather than being based on merit. There could be a problem with this as people might be called upon to take responsibilities which are beyond their ability.

The Federation embodies such values as development and empowerment. The Federation believes that through the activities of the savings and loans collectives and its seven programmes, the poor are empowered. Patrick maintains that through the exchange programmes the poor visit one another to share knowledge and information. Apart from this, the poor learn skills. Skills such as house building, conduction of surveys, financial management, etc. are acquired These are acquired in it is the poor themselves who are involved. The culture of taking responsibility for one's own life is inculcated through the

Federation.

Through the Federation, poor people learn to be assertive. Patrick points out that the state has to recognise that the poor are homeless but not hopeless. The poor people can do things on their own.

Patrick maintains that the Federation aims at making the poor to be self-reliant. On the other hand, the Federation calls for support from the government. One is left wondering if this is not a contradiction. Heavy reliance on the support from the government might compromise the position of the Federation on self-reliance. The Federation depends on outside funding, daily savings of the member are not enough.

The Piesangs River regional Federation has built thirty eight houses in the Piesangs River regional Federation since 1992. This comes to about eight houses per year. In quantitative terms this is not much. But Patrick maintains that this is not slow delivery. He points out that the Federation is not a house delivery organization. The Federation builds people so that the people build houses. The researcher has a problem with this as eight houses a year appear to be too little.

Active participation in the structures of the Federation such as regular attendance of meetings, daily savings and the quality of being known are important qualities for a housing loan. These conditions appear to be working very well at the moment. The Piesangs river regional Federation maintains that default on loans are very rare. If the Federation grows and becomes big, there could be a problem with this as loyalty to the

organization might dissolve.

From the interviews with Shoes, Thembelihle and Makhosi, it became clear that the Federation depends heavily on group pressure. They point out that repayments are policed by the members of the housing and savings collective to which a borrower belongs. Should a member of a housing and loans collective default on his/her payments, the whole group of the collective is entered into the bad books of the Federation. For a member of a housing and savings collective to be granted a loan, it is important that those who are the first to be granted loans repay their loans regularly. Defaults on repayments affect the chances of all the members of the group of a housing loan.

The Federation does not have to have sophisticated management to run smoothly. Patrick maintains that the Federation believes that the poor people will grow with its activities. The Federation processes are driven by the need. He adds that the poor will grow with the need. In case of complicated technical problems, the Peoples Dialogue is there to offer technical assistance. The Peoples Dialogue is based in Cape Town. The Federation operates almost throughout the country. It is important to point out that what the People's Dialogue can do need not be exaggerated.

The Federation appears to be disillusioned with the non-governmental organizations. This disillusionment is attributable to the perceived failure of the NGOs to deliver on the needs of the poor people even if they have resources at their disposal. These organizations misuse the resources meant for poor people. The Federation is also disillusioned with the

ability of the government to deliver on housing. Patrick maintains that the conference of the launching of the Federation gave them the opportunity to learn that even after fifty years of democracy, poor people are unable to access housing.

Poverty, aspirations for housing and common interests keep the members of the Federation together. Shoes, Thembelihle and Makhosi say that even if the government does grant subsidies the bond that keeps the housing and savings collectives together is not likely to be compromised. Savings for house will still be made, it is the savings that make the Federation what it is. Subsidies are not just offered to any individual for one to be granted a subsidy, one has to save and be an active member of the housing and savings collective.

As soon as an individual house has been completed, that individual is free to begin staying in the house. A member whose house has been completed is not likely to withdraw from the group as fines are imposed to those who absent themselves from group work, Shoes, Thembelihle and Makhosi point out. Once again it must be pointed out that the effectiveness of this measure is doubtful more especially if the membership of the Federation reaches a certain critical level. A level at which the bond that keeps Federation together is compromised.

The Federation appears to be transparent. Savings and expenditures are laid out on the walls of the offices of the housing savings collectives and on the walls of the offices of the regional Federations.

Although the Federation appears to be quite vigilant against being hijacked by politicians, its heavy reliance on the support of the government might mean reduced autonomy.

The Provincial Housing Department in KwaZulu-Natal appeared to be adopting a policy of providing housing support centres, for example, the Building Information and Training Centre to the Piesangs River regional Federation. This might be a correct approach, provision of subsidies might have undesirable results.

6.3   CONCLUSION

This chapter has given a report on the interviews. The final chapter present a conclusion.

CHAPTER 7

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

7.1   INTRODUCTION

Using the systems framework, the study was able to simultaneously investigate both the internal functioning and the external environment of the Federation. In the discussion below, conclusions reached on the internal attributes and the external environment of the Homeless Peoples Federation are described.

7.2   CONCLUSIONS ON THE INTERNAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE FEDERATION

The importance of group pressure and belonging to a group in the Homeless Peoples Federation cannot be overemphasised. Through group pressure almost a hundred percent loan repayment is secured. Through group pressure individuals work together in putting up a fellow member's house. It is also a group that decides if one is eligible for a loan. Failure to repay a loan by an individual results in the whole group being entered in the bad books of the Federation. A group is the building block of the Federation. It is important therefore that any measure designed to help the Federation should not destroy the group.

The Homeless Peoples Federation is held together by a common bond. This bond secures loyalty for the group. The hundred percent loan repayment as presently is the case, can be attributed to the common bond that holds the Federation together. Again, it must be

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pointed out that any measure designed to help the Federation should not break the bond that keeps the Federation together.

The Piesangs River region Federation builds about eight houses per year. It is difficult to dismiss this as being a very slow rate of delivery. Some of the contributions of the Federation cannot be measured quantitatively, as it is the quality of the lives of the members of the Federation that improves. Through the Federation, members maintain that they acquire skills and psychological satisfaction.

Community based housing organizations, use a "non-project approach" with no blueprint or strict timetables to deliver houses to the poor. Thus, using a project approach to measure if the Housing CBOs will deliver on housing can be misleading.

7.3 CONCLUSIONS ON THE EXTERNAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE FEDERATION

It is apparent in the study that the environment on which the Federation operates does influence the Federation in one way or the other.

Performance of the Federation will depend on whether the government grants subsidies or does not grant subsidies. Whatever route is taken by the government towards helping the Federation, it is important that that route does not crack the common bond of the Federation.

There might have to be flexibility on the part of other non-governmental organizations and

the formal finance institutions so that Community Based Organizations such as the Federation are able to access help.

People's mutual help organizations have a very important part to play in the housing delivery system. Internationally they are being recognised as part of the joint venture between the government, development foundation, the private sector and the NGOs. Owing to limited time within which to conduct this study, it has not been possible to assess successes or failures of the housing CBOs in different parts of the world. Therefore conclusion based on international experiences can not be reached. Having said this, it is important to point out that the housing CBOs need to be helped. Literature studied shows that the CBOs in other parts of the world do get help of some sort.

The housing CBOs may be helped in two ways. Subsidies may be granted to them, just as the Eastern Cape Housing Department is doing. Alternatively, space for them to work can be provided. This can be done through providing training programmes and facilities, and technical assistance. The best option is that which will not lead to the cracking of the common bond that is important for survival of the CBOs.

7.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

The South African Homeless Peoples Federation is an umbrella body of the Regional Federations. Each Regional Federation is made up of local Housing Savings Schemes. The study recommends that research be undertaken to compare how each Housing

Savings Scheme of the Regional Federations works and how it compares with the others. Each Regional Federation can further be compared with other Regional Federations. This could be done to facilitate their activities.

The study further recommends that research be undertaken to determine to possibility of accommodating the self-help approach of the South African Homeless People's Federation within the existing government policy so that a division of labour could emerge, for example, with local government providing layout, infrastructural services, professionals offering appropriae inputs and the Homeless People's Federation doing the building of houses.

The study also recommends that a housing policy should accommodate Community Based Housing Organisations. A hospitable climate for them to work is to be provided. Community Based Housing Organisations are vehicles for housing delivery. Care, of course, has to be taken that whatever help is offered to the housing CBOs the bond that keeps their members together is not cracked.

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Transcript of interview with Patrick Hunsley

Question:

Could you provide an overall overview of the Federation activities countrywide?

-       How many savings?

-       How many people?

Patrick

There are over a 100 000 people who believe and support the ideas of the Homeless Peoples Federation. But there are 25000 active members of the Federation.

Question

How well do you think the programme is working?

Patrick

The Federation is about five years old, although it had been called the People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter. The Federation was formally launched in March 1994. The Federation has grown faster than we expected. Right now the Federation has seven programmes. There are the Housing Savings Schemes. The Housing Savings Schemes are the engine of the Federation. Through the Housing Savings Schemes, the people's capacity to save is built. The capacity that is built, is the capacity to save, manage and control development finance. So once people save they start to manage development finance and end up controlling their own lives.

There is also the Community Based Training. Because we save to build our houses, there is information that we would like to have such as knowledge around land, sizes of sites. We measure, do our own community based surveys, socio-economic surveys so as to have

thorough information about our own selves where we live.

We have also the section that deals with enumeration. Our enumeration is based on development. Knowledge of the number of people who live in a shack is important. How many people need houses. This information is used to influence and formulate housing policies in the housing forum.

The fourth component is the exchange programme. Members of the savings schemes, visit one another to share knowledge and information. Skills are exchanged horizontally in this component. People, (ordinary) people give one another knowledge based on experience. This is done on a daily basis. Right now we have members from Lindelani, Lamontville and Dunbar Road. They are here to learn how houses are built and how savings are conducted. They are also going to pay visits to the members who are saving in the schemes.

The fifth component is the Land Unit. Right now we have our colleagues from Johannesburg who are here at Mayville. They have come to determine a title of the land in which our members are interested. They will also determine if the land is suitable for building. They will also fight evictions. Although our organization does not condone land invasions, we regard evictions as a violation of the human rights.

Another component which we have are the Building, Information and Training Centres (BIT Centres). These offices give information about all the facets mentioned above.

The last component is the uTshani Fund. This is one of the most important components. The word uTshani comes from the word grass. This fund is a grassroots fund. Through this fund, our subsidies will be channelled. This fund is governed by the poor people themselves. The criteria for granting of subsidies are formulated by the members of the housing colelctives themselves. This fund helps us to avoid the government bureaucracy and red-tape.

Question

What is the vision of the Federation for the future? Could you please sketch out?

Patrick

Through the Federation the culture of taking responsibility for one's own life should be inculcated. Each person is to understand clearly that for them to get a house they are to save, manage money, borrow money and have the capacity to pay back. Finally the state has to recognise that poor people are homeless but not hopeless. They can think and do things on their own. It should be known that housing delivery will be speeded up by the poor people themselves. The private sector works for a profit. Although the private sector has an important role to play, the majority of poor people do not have access to development finance. Poor people find it difficult to work through the banks. The Federation will end up being a vehicle through poor people access development finance without any of strings attached. The Federation is a social housing movement. At the end of it all poor people must be able to build their own houses.

Question

What obstacles do you see in the way of attaining your vision.

Patrick

The main obstacle is trust, formal institutions do not want to trust poor people for a simple reason that they are frightened of loosing control of finances of development. Out of fear of loosing control, formal institutions discredit the poor peoples initiatives through statements like, they are not organised. Poor people are deprived of the lobbying power.

Another obstacle are some community structures who do not see themselves as supporting the poor peoples intiatives. They have not come to grips with democratic development processes. They are gatekeepers. They see themselves as custodians of the poor people's development processes. They are there to decide for the people what is good and what

is not good. These organizations which act as gatekeepers, frustrate and destroy the poor peoples initiatives.

There are also structures who bring in private organizations to profit on por people. The private organizations brought come with temporary jobs such as building toilets for three months, building a road for one month. The result is that the private sector thrives on poor people. The private sector do certain jobs such that they will be able to come back to upgrade. With the poor people's initiated development the poor people are not controlled by private sector.

Another obstacle is the role that **the c**ommunity should play in relation to the local government. Councillors tend to make **people depen**dent as one would h**ear peo**ple saying, since there is a cou**ntillor such a** project will be carried out. Councillors make promises, thus making people dependent.

Question

From where does the Federation get its inspiration for what it does?

Patrick

The Federation grew out of frustration. When the Federation was started in 1991, there were **funds** from donor organizations overseas to improve the peoples conditions after the 1987 **floo**ds. People ended up not benefiting out of those funds. In 1991 Non-Governmental Organizations such as Independent Development Trust and Operation Jumpstart announced that houses would be built, instead what sprang up are the toilets. The**reafter,** the Bishops conference convened a gathering of the people from informal settlements. There were re**presentatives from oversea**s in that conference. Representatives were from such countries as India, Pakistan, Latin America, Zimbabwe, Namibia, the Philippines etc.

From that conference we learned that even after fourty years of democracy poor people have not been able to access housing. Governments do not actually build houses. Many

governments create space so that the poor can act on their own. From that time onwards, it has become clear to us that the poor people can be more helpful to the government by promoting the poor people's initiatives. Rather than wait for governments to do something. Out of frustration, people revolt against their governments, for being frustrated with the failure of the government to deliver. Poor peoples initiatives if promoted inculcate self-respect and self-reliance. The Federation is demonstrating that with R15 000, a house can be built.

Question

Would you say that the continued and growth of the Federation depends on outside funding?

Patrick

The Federation started its activities through funding from Germany. Even the first conference was convened by the Bishops Conference. The Federation does not depend on outside funding. The people themselves can sustain the movement.

Questions

What would you say is the bond that keeps the members of the Federation together?

Patrick

People are bound by poverty, one goal housing and common interest, not political but focussed. The Federation is a home for poor people.

Question

Do you see yourself working with the formal finance institutions?

Patrick

Banks can create funds to support initiative of the Federation. But the problem that I foresee is the failure of the poor people to afford interest as formal finance institutions work at a high interest. They strangle poor people. Some people even leave their bonded houses for shacks because of high interest rate. The Federation on the other hand on a loan of R10000, an interest of one percent per month is charged and a 12 per cent interest per year which is about half of what the formal financial institutions charge. What we are fighting for at the moment is to have the 12 percent interest subsidised.

Question

If the Federation grows in size and in scale, don't you think that it will require skilled manpower?

Patrick

The members of the Federation will grow as the Federation grows. The process is driven by the need. When the need comes the people will grow with the need. Right here loans to the value of about R5000 000 are being handled. In case we have a problem the People's Dialogue is there to help us. The People's Dialogue our professional wing is engaged when we have problems.

Question

For laying our infrastructure, don't you need expertise of a qualified engineer for example?

Patrick
People's Dialogue is there to help us in case we have problems. We also utilize expertise of people who work on contracted jobs.

Question

What relationship do you have with the government?

Patrick

We have a unique relationship with the government. We are an independent movement and yet we interact with the government at many levels. Some of the members of the Federation will sit on the Joint Working Committee on National Housing. The Federation influences the thinking of the government to a large extent. We also have our three members who sit in the National Housing Task Team. Another member of ours, sits in the National Housing Board and another member of the Federation sits in the National Housing Finance Coproration.

We also have a relationship with the Land Ministry. We have a Working Committee with the Land Ministry where we explore ways of getting title easily. We also intend to have three members sitting in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Housing Board.

Question

Don't you think that if the government becomes heavily involved in the activities of the Federation, it will end up dictating the method of operation.

Patrick

The government is unlikely to succeed as decisions are taken by the collectives. The government may wish to monitor how funds are used. If the government may become overly involved, the whole process of the Federation may end up becoming their own process. We have structures who are there to see to it that the process remains a people driven process.

Question

How would you wish to see yourself working with other Non-Governmental Organizations such as Built Environment Support Group (BESG)?

Patrick

Patrick

We have built 38 houses in Piesangs River Regional Federation.

Question

Would you wish to see housing delivery occurring at a faster rate?

Patrick

Yes, would like to see the housing delivery rate being speeded up. One of our problems are the suppliers of building material, where one finds that they take a very long time to make deliveries of ordered material.

We are not slow at housing delivery. What one has to understand is that the Federation is not a delivery organization. The organization is based on mobilizing people so that they realise their capacity to manage and control finance so that they eventually build their own houses. The Federation build people so that people can build their houses. Housing delivery will come out of the needs of the people. The people will move at their own pace.

scheme. Bankings are also monitored by the regional Federation. Bankings and savings are transparent. Charts on savings are displayed on walls in the office of the savings scheme. All monnies collected are recorded. Each member of a savings scheme also keeps his/her savings book.

Question

How many houses has the Piesangs River regional Federation constructed?

Response

There are 38 houses.

Question

How long does it take to complete a house?

Response

A number of houses say three, are put up at a time. Building occurs in stages. For example, slabs are laid out for all the three houses at a time. Once slabs have been laid out, building of the walls commences for all the three houses. Building progresses at the same rate. Once slabs have been laid out, it takes about five days to complete a house.

Question

Who monitors the actual house construction?

Response

Building is monitored by a qualified bricklayer. The People's Dialogue also provides assistance.

It does not happen that demand for funds exceeds the funds that the housing and loans scheme has. At the moment there is more money than the members require. Some loans have not been granted because before one is granted a loan, one is to be really prepared.

Question

When does a person whose house has been completed begin to live in the house?

Response

As soon as the house is completed.

Question

Does it happen that once a persons house is completed, he/she withdraws from the group and not help in the construction of other houses?

Response

A person who absents themselves is fined. Should a person have other commitments, such that that person is unable to attend to the group work, they are to find a replacement.

Question

What keeps the members of a housing and loans collective together?

Response

The members of a housing scheme are kept together by the fifty cents that are paid daily. Each member would like to see that the fifty cents will do for themselves. What actually keeps us poor people together is an aspiration for a house. Each member would like to see themselves if the fifty cents saved daily will help one access a house.

Question

Would you say that members of the savings schemes would continue to save even if the government grants them subsidies?

Response

It happened in the Easten Cape Province after the M.E.C. for Housing Mr Mamase had granted subsidies to their region Federation. In about three weeks, people not known to the Federation came to the regional Federation of the Eastern Cape to claim cash, saying the subsidies are grants given to them by President Mandela. Those people were told that they would have to claim their cash from the National Government because the subsidies that the Federation has are for the members of a Federation only. We always tell the people that even if subsidies do **come, it is the Federa**tion members who will decide allocations. It is for this reason that **we al**ways emphasise to the members that meetings be attended and savings be made regularly. The group and not an individual decides allocation of subsidies. Even if only one member is granted a subsidy in a savings scheme. We do not say that such and such a person got a subsidy but we say the whole savings scheme was granted a subsidy. We do not say so and so does not repay their subsidy but we say the whole group does not pay. This then eliminated the chances of other members from getting subsidied.

Question

Would you say that the Federation is a success?

Response

The Federation is a success, but it needs a lot of support.

Question

How much support would you wish to receive from the government. Would you wish for

ninety percent support, fifty percent support or ten percent support?

Response

We need a lot of support. We need equipment for building such as cement mixtures, soil binders, delivery truck etc. We are unable to quantify how much support we need as we need a lot of support. We could be grateful if we could have a support centre.

Question

Would you say that the Federation has the necessary skill to manage books involving large sums of money?

Response

The People's Dialogue is there to help us in case we have problems. (It happened that this interview was conducted when the members of the People's Dialogue were there to balance the books). The People's Dialogue organises workshops for treasurers every month. People's Dialogue is our supporting non-governmental organization. People's Dialogue helps us a lot. We also get a lot of experience through international workshops and networking. We share experiences. The Federation is known throughout the world. We work as a group in the Federation. Some of us have not built houses for ourselves, but it is a very fulfilling and exciting experience if another member's house is completed. It is as if it's your own house.

Question

Even if the government grants you subsidies you will continue to save?

Response

The subsidy will be used to pay the balance on the loan. The rest can be pocketed by the

borrower.

Question

Can you work with other non-governmental organizations such as Built Environment Support Group (BESG)?

Response

We failed to work with BESG. Having said so, we are prepared to work with any NGO. We would like to have a relationship with them where we use them as areas of reference. We do not have money to pay for services of NGO. Any NGO should be driven by the Federation. In our interaction with BESG, we differed because they wanted detached toilets. The houses we build have toilets right in the house.

Question

If the government grants you subsidies, will the Federation not become dependent on the government?

Response

We do not want to be dependent on the government. If we become dependent on the government, it will mean that as soon as the government in power goes we are finished. Even if we are granted subsidies, we are not going to be dependent on the government because we believe that in order to get something do something. The government must see what we are doing.

Question

Politicians are very cunning and sly, they can use your organization for their own ends. How do you guard against this?

Response

We have told politicians that we are apolitical. Some have tried to gain something out of us but they have failed because we are on the lookout for that.

Question

Would you not agree with me if I say that the Federation revolves around one person, Patrick, for example?

Response

All the members of the Federation are treated as equals. Experiences are shared equally.

Question

Will it not happen that the government co-ops some of your members?

Response

There are three members from the Piesangs River Federation whom the government wanted to co-opt to its structures. Shoes has been offered a **position** in the Public Works Board, Patrick has been offered lots of money, but all the attempts have up to now failed.

In the final analysis, what will happen is that as the Provincial Housing Board, as a financier and the Department as an adjunct to the Provincial Housing Board, will be providing financial support to the Homeless People's Federation for the continuation of their house building activities that they have at Piesangs River. They are one of the candidates who have submitted an application for financial assistance, to enable them to continue with their B.I.T. Centre at Piesangs River. We know of them, we have given them moral support. We support the people's process of housing. What the Provincial Housing Board has said via the National Housing Boards is that they have sums of money that they are making available to various Regional Provincial Housing Boards to them to make available to such institutions such as the Homeless People's Federation.

Question

So your view is that the Federation has potential?

Seymour

Yes. What one should point out again is that housing is not the sole responsibility of the government. For housing delivery to become a reality, it has to be a joint venture between many people, the government, local authority, community structures such as CBOs and NGOs and development foundations. Unless there is this joint venture, the high rate of housing delivery will never be realised.

Question

How soon can we see you actually helping the Federation?

Seymour

A decision will be made, but it is difficult to posite a time frame, but definately within this year, a decision will be taken on the CBOs, the NGOs, the local governments etc. that have applied for money will be successful for financial help.

APPENDIX 3

Transcript of an interview with the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Housing Department

Question

Is the Provincial Department Housing Department aware of the existence of the Homeless People's Federation?

Seymour

Yes we know about them. The Housing Promotion Section has a fruitful relationship with them. They are on our list of possible candidates for financial assistance for their Building Information Centre (B.I.T. Centre).

Question

So you are providing support to the Federation, what form is your support?

Seymour

At this stage, we have not got to the stage where we have kicked money out of our system to actually support their B.I.T. Centre, they are one of the applicants that are being considered for financial assistance. This fits in with our policy of housing support centres.

Question

Your support is only for training centres and not actually for house building?

Seymour

Question

I presume that your selection will be based on certain criteria. What are the conditions that the Federation needs to meet to qualify for financial support?

Seymour

There are two ways in which we can help them. To support a B.I.T. Centre is one. Secondly, an application for subsidies that the government may grant is being formulated in Cape Town. The Federation to get financial support has to be seen as a developer, where they are seen as a prime mover of development anywhere in the Province.

Subsidies will then be kicked out to the end-user but the process will be led by the Homeless People's Federation. Or they can be assisted in their capacity as facilitators for housing whereby they teach people to do brickmaking, and certain building skills and educate them in terms of home ownership.

Question

The Federation does not believe in the conventional ways of doing things, for example, using engineers, accountants etc. Don't you believe that there could be some mishandling of funds if you simply grant them subsidies?

Seymour

Yes, it is human to be concerned about that. I cannot give you a definite viewpoint about that, but what I can say is that recently at National Housing level they were given a grant of R10 million. I do not believe that if there was any fear with the Homeless People's Federation mishandling and squandering that money that the Department of National Housing would have made that grant available. Working on that premise we must assume that they have a good track record, that their bona fides is good and that there are certain mechanisms that will be put in place to ensure that there is careful management of state

funds. I do not know the basis of this R10 million that they have been granted. What I know is that one of the conditions is that at the end of every year there has to be an audited statement given by acceptable auditors to both parties. Both the National Housing and the Homeless People's Federation. The Federation has not been perceived as people who are squandering money.

Question

Since, it appears you have trust in the Federation, how come that the White Paper on Housing does not make mention of the role of the CBOs in housing delivery?

Seymour

The Botshabelo Accord does make mention of the fact that housing is not the sole responsibility of one authority but a responsibility of all parties, private sector, government, all levels of government and the CBOs. The NGOs were signitories to the Botshabelo Accord. Although the White Paper does not make specific reference to the Federation, but it does refer specifically to the role of the NGOs and the CBOs.

What I must point out is that we must not romanticize the role that the CBOs and NGOs can play and believe that they can do far better than anyone else. We must accept that they have an important role to play, just like the local authorities, the government as well as the private sector. I refute the statement that the CBOs can deliver housing so that the housing problem can be resolved.

Question

So you will not be putting conditions to the Federation for you to grant a loan, they must do this and that?

Seymour

Yes our grants will be conditional in terms of this and that heppening. Obviously they will have to have some bookkeeping as we would like to see how the money is being used.

Question

You will not be concerned about the structures that they will be putting up?

Seymour

We will not be saying to them that you must build 45 m² houses, fo example. That we will leave to the people to decide.

Question

So, there is a change in the policy of the government towards the CBOs. I used to believe that the government was negative tiwards the CBOs?

Seymour

It depends how far back you are talking about. In the pre-election period housing was a top-down process, now housing is a bottom-up process. Whilst the bottom-up process is accepted, the Ministry is aware of the impediments. We have fund that in some instances, people involved in housing, have some specific agendas, I am not saying that the Federation has an agenda.

Question

Don't you believe that the activities of the Federation disturbs market operation. Usually, it is the banks who grant loans to the people etc.?

Seymour

In a way one would say they are acting against the market forces. Their activities might have an influence on the market but the impact is not direct.