

PCR TOOL 7

Planning with the People

Introduction

Working with affected communities to plan their rebuilding and co-ordinate the response effectively, according to the expressed needs of the communities, is one of the guiding principles of PCR outlined in **Tool 1, People-centred reconstruction (PCR) : An Introduction**. This tool looks at this element of people-centred reconstruction in more depth.

Levels of participation

There are different levels of participation by people in planning, representing different levels of engagement with the process (see Table below). Conventional urban planning often only involved participation up to level 2, 'therapy'. Professional planners would draw up maps and models of proposed developments: a blueprint – so called because they were usually drawn up using blue ink. The plans were based on quantitative data, rather than talking with local people. If they were informed at all, it was after the plans were already approved. There was no scope for dialogue, and any complaints had to be pursued through the courts.

Similarly, a lot of post-disaster reconstruction in the late 20th Century, has operated at levels 1-3 of the table below. Donor-driven approaches in which donors and governments work with large building contractors to rebuild settlements, and force people to relocate to them, operate at the level of 'manipulation'. The problems with this approach were outlined in Tool 1, PCR: An Introduction.

Levels of Citizen Participation, Arnstein (1969)	
1. Manipulation	Non-participation
2. Therapy	
3. Informing	
4. Consultation	Tokenism
5. Placation	
6. Partnership	True participation
7. Delegated Power	
8. Citizen Power	

Participatory Planning outside disaster contexts

Ideas of participatory planning of urban areas date back to North America in the 1950s and 1960s. They were a response to a situation in which neighbourhoods were highly differentiated from each other in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic status. Each group needed, and was demanding, an opportunity to present its requirements to planners. Some level of public participation in planning became more common in Western countries during the 1970s and 1980s. The **Planning for Real initiative**, for example, was developed in the UK by Dr Tony Gibson and others in the 1970s, and disseminated through the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (see resource list).

These practices, however, have taken far longer to be taken up by planners in developing countries. One notable exception was the Million Houses Programme in Sri Lanka (1984-1989). Here, facilitators were trained in **micro-planning** of new neighbourhoods with groups of 60-250 households. See **Tool 5: Learning from the Housing Sector** for more details, and also Goethert and Hamdi (1988).

Participatory tools are commonly used by development practitioners worldwide today. Both communities and facilitators find they learn a lot through the process. Some of those useful in reconstruction situations are outlined



With high levels of participation in planning, people can feel empowered and confident

in **Tool 4: Assessment of Reconstruction Needs and Resources**. Care needs to be taken with all participatory approaches that they are done well and in the right spirit. If development organisations do not commit enough time, use inexperienced staff as facilitators, or do not build the findings into their programmes, communities can become very disillusioned.

Communities in developing countries, particularly in rural areas, already have long traditions of planning and carrying out work for the benefit of the community as a whole. This requires co-operation and agreement. It has been given a special word in some countries, for example *damayan* or *bayanihan* in the Philippines, *Shramadana* in Sri Lanka, or *Gotong Rojong* in Indonesia.

Community Action Planning

The best participatory tools for settlement development, and practices from experiences such as micro-planning and Planning for Real, have been brought together in the **Community Action Planning (CAP)** methodology. Much of this is available online on the **communityplanning.net** website and in the handbook (Wates, 2000)

The application of CAP to post-disaster reconstruction dates largely from the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and even then it was not widely used. It has wide relevance at all stages of the reconstruction process, and can cover a broad range of issues including livelihoods, raising awareness of disaster risks, and disaster preparedness.

The main differences in applying CAP in a disaster context (compared to 'normal' development contexts) are:

- The existence of greater and more urgent needs. Instead of prioritising only 2-3 activities, as many as 10 might be given priority.
- The difficulty of using participatory methods effectively, as the communities are often traumatised and need more time to re-establish their social relationships and networks.
- The availability of more resources, so larger scale activities can be carried out
- The presence of more development agencies in the area, which can make planning and co-ordination between all the stakeholders more complicated
- That a higher priority may be given to disaster mitigation measures such as flood defences

In terms of Arnstein's levels of participation, CAP is usually around level 6: partnership. This is probably an appropriate level to aim for in terms of post-disaster reconstruction. The levels of delegated power (the best known example of which is participatory budgeting, used successfully

in Brazilian cities such as Curitiba); and citizen power where people take charge of their own resources, can be considered long-term objectives of development. Aiming for partnership among the reconstruction stakeholders including communities, NGOs, local authorities, the government's reconstruction agency, architects, building materials suppliers etc. would make a real difference to the quality and sustainability of the reconstruction process.

What can be covered in CAP?

CAP can cover many of the key elements necessary for successful and sustainable post-disaster reconstruction. Its overall aim is to assist communities to **plan** their rebuilding, ensuring that the response from development agencies is in line with their expressed needs. Within this, it can:

- Ensure the active participation of **vulnerable groups**, giving special attention to the disabled, and to those who were tenants or squatters.
- Include a thorough **assessment** of risks, damage, needs and resources, as the basis on which plans can be built
- Tackle the issue of **relocation**, ensuring affected communities have the final say about whether and where to relocate
- Address the issue of **future vulnerability** to disasters through the reconstruction process, and through developing contingency and preparedness plans
- Identify opportunities for rebuilding **livelihoods and local markets**
- Prioritise **environmental sustainability** in recovery and reconstruction
- Be the basis for participatory **monitoring and evaluation**, and allow for flexibility in the implementation of the plans

Principles for CAP

The basis of CAP is to achieve consensus about what needs to be done, and a sense of common purpose in implementing the plans. The planned actions need to be achievable with the resources available. Everyone needs to approach the process knowing they have something to contribute, and something to learn. If carried out in this spirit, it can be the basis for good collaboration and partnerships between communities, NGOs and local authorities.

In applying the kinds of principles common to participatory approaches (see box page 3), it is important to recognise that inequalities can still distort the process. Those with most authority, power and resources can become dominant in driving the agenda and producing the outcomes most favourable for themselves. This can include

Principles to remember in CAP

About 50 principles relevant for CAP are given on the communityplanning.net website. They are simple and easy to understand. A few examples include:

- Accept different agendas
- Be visionary yet realistic
- Go at the right pace
- Involve all sections of the community
- Process is as important as product
- Respect local knowledge



photo © Practical Action / Lucy Stevens

Community representatives are trained before carrying out planning activities in Sri Lanka

donors and government agencies, NGOs and local authorities, as well as powerful local people. CAP processes include some safeguards to reduce the risks of this. However, the best safeguard is skilled facilitation which ensures that these groups or individuals are not able to exert undue influence.

How to apply CAP in reconstruction contexts

In post-disaster contexts, it is expected that CAP will follow a participatory assessment of needs and damage (see **Tool 4: Assessment of Reconstruction Needs and Resources**). It may lead to one or more community contracts for reconstruction.

It can be used in the following contexts:

- Reconstruction on the same site, with the same or similar plot sizes and boundaries as before the disaster
- Reconstruction on the same site, but with significant changes in layout to improve and regularise plots and infrastructure
- Reconstruction where people are being relocated to a new site

A first step in the process is to define the boundaries of the community. A 'community' can consist of anything from ten to a few hundred households. Larger numbers can be included, but then the process becomes more difficult to manage. It helps if the people know each other and have some social ties. Where these are weak (perhaps in an urban context), it can still be used and can in fact help to build social cohesion for the future.

A second step is the selection of community representatives to participate in the CAP. There should be at least 5 representatives. The upper limit can be flexible, but it can be difficult to run the workshop if there are more than about 30 community representatives. It is best if the community selects their own representatives, unless there are good reasons not to, for example

if it is known that a particular person will be disruptive. Care needs to be taken to achieve a balance of age and gender. It is important to select people who stand out as community leaders, but also those who are less dominant but may have important views. This could include, for example, those who showed an in-depth knowledge of what the settlement was like before the disaster during the needs assessment exercise. Where leaders are very dominant, it may be important to brief them about their responsibility as representatives before the main CAP workshop.

Organising the CAP workshop

Once these steps have been completed, the main CAP workshop can be organised. This involves:

- *Inviting participants.* As well as the community representatives, other stakeholders should be invited. These will probably include staff from: NGOs, local authorities, the government's reconstruction agency, and international donor and aid agencies active in the area. It is important that those who attend are not just junior staff without decision-making authority. There is a risk their managers will ignore or overrule them once the plans have been made. Professional town planners, engineers and architects from the public or private sector can also contribute usefully, especially in terms of designs, specification and quality. However, they need to be ready to listen: being 'on tap' rather than 'on top'.
- *Pre-briefing of participants.* If community representatives are not confident, they could observe another CAP workshop before taking part in their own. This could be through watching a DVD of a workshop if none is taking place close to their area. For professional staff not used to participatory methods, it is useful to

brief them in advance to explain their expected role in the workshop.

- *Time required.* It is possible to complete a CAP workshop in one day, especially where communities are already quite well organised. This was the case in Sri Lanka, for example. If communities are less cohesive, two days may be required.
- *Venue.* If the weather allows (without rain, high winds, high heat or scorching sun) the CAP can be held outdoors. Otherwise, a suitable building will be required which can comfortably hold 50-60 people. If schools and community halls have been too badly damaged, a tent or marquee might be needed. The comfort of the participants needs to be ensured for the whole day to allow them to participate freely. This means providing food, drink and washroom facilities, as well as places to sit.
- *Materials.* Several flipcharts and a plentiful supply of pens, pencils, paper, scissors, tape or blue tack, and card of different colours will be needed.
- *Facilitator and Rapporteur.* One facilitator and one rapporteur can run a workshop of up to about 25 people. Larger groups would need more facilitators.
- *Languages.* Ensure that everyone can follow the CAP workshop and its important steps. If the community has different ethnic groups, ensure that translation is available and that minorities speaking other languages don't feel excluded.

The role of the facilitator is critical to the success of the workshop. They need to be impartial, and focused on guiding the process towards its goal of producing a plan of action. The facilitator's role, therefore, is to introduce each part of the process, act as an information point about the process, keep an eye on the time and schedule, and ensure that discussions do not become too sidetracked. S/he will monitor the dynamism of the workshop and help re-energise participants. S/he also has a role in ensuring everyone is encouraged to participate, and to support those who are finding the process difficult or whose confidence fails them. It takes time and practice to become a skilled facilitator. Working as a rapporteur or assistant initially can help to develop the necessary skills.

The role of the rapporteur is to ensure all the necessary materials are on hand and distributed when needed; to make notes about the discussion; to assist and encourage participants (especially community members) to take part; and collect and collate the written contributions, plans and drawings at the end of the workshop. They may also be responsible for compiling the report and draft plan.

Types of infrastructure that can be planned in a CAP workshop

- Housing
- Local roads
- Paths and tracks
- Harbours and jetties for small boats
- Boreholes and wells
- Water reticulation
- Sanitation
- Drains and culverts
- Slope stabilisation
- Electricity supply
- Fuel supply
- Schools
- Health centres
- Community buildings
- Space and services for small shops and stalls
- Wholesale and retail market buildings and warehouses
- Disaster protection infrastructure e.g. sea walls and flood barriers
- Tree planting
- Improvements to agricultural land

Topics for which CAP is particularly useful

CAP workshops will usually help develop plans in the following areas:

Layout of plots and infrastructure. This might be necessary if some land regularisation is going to take place, or if a new area of land is going to be developed. It can help to ensure that houses and other buildings can be better serviced by infrastructure such as roads, water reticulation and drainage. Some informal settlements can be particularly cluttered, and post-disaster reconstruction can provide an opportunity to rationalise. However, this should only be done if it is prioritised by residents themselves. There are often important cultural or livelihood reasons why settlements are organised in a particular way, and CAP can help to identify these. Professional engineers and planners need to learn to listen and respond to these reasons and not impose their idea of 'order'. It can be a complex issue, and may add time to the workshop.

Small or medium-scale infrastructure. Examples of the types of infrastructure that can be covered are given in the box above. They generally cost well under \$100,000 each, and cover users in a single or small number of neighbourhoods. They can be undertaken using community labour through

community contracts, or cash-for-work programmes. Larger-scale projects such as highways, airports and hospitals are too complex and affect too many people to be designed using this type of CAP.

Outline of a CAP workshop

Only a very brief outline of the process is presented here. For further information, please refer to the resources below, in particular the UN-Habitat *People's Process* manual. The overall output of the 1-2 day workshop is a reconstruction and development plan for the neighbourhood containing drawings, models and decisions taken. The plan needs to be in a format that can be used by the Local Authorities and development agencies to draw up specifications and assign budgets.

Workshop sessions can include:

- *Opening.* Introductions of all participants and brief explanation about how the workshop will be conducted, and what it expects to achieve.
- *Social mapping* showing the plan of the settlement before (from memory and old photographs if available) and after the disaster. The map can show who owned what, who lived where, and who did what where (livelihood activity). If the map was already done as part of an earlier needs assessment, then the information just needs to be clarified and confirmed. Satellite or aerial images, if available, can also help with this.
- *Problem identification.* Small group discussions of the problems faced in building back from the disaster. The groups report back, and an overall list is made of problems, and for whom the problem is applicable.
- *Problem prioritisation.* The whole group together discusses which problems should be prioritised and therefore included in the plan.
- *Identifying strategies* to address the prioritised problems. Small groups suggest activities to address the problems. The objective is to brainstorm a large number of activities.
- *Options and trade-offs.* To reduce the number of activities, the whole group assesses each one in terms of how realistic it is given the time and resources available.
- *Planning for implementation.* Each small group is given a set of activities, as agreed in the previous session. They discuss who does what, where and when.
- *Monitoring plan.* The whole group together discuss how the implementation of the actions will be monitored, and by whom.
- *Settlement map.* If desired, this is a good point in the process for participants to produce a final map of how the settlement will look after the agreed activities have been completed.



Social mapping exercise, Bangladesh

photo © Practical Action / Bangladesh

- *Presentation to the wider community.* The facilitator and community representatives explain to the wider community what they have done, what was agreed, how the list of agreed activities was decided, and what happens next. If the audience raise significant objections, or provide additional ideas, a shorter meeting of the workshop participants might be needed the following day to incorporate these ideas into the plan.

As with all participatory processes, there is room for flexibility. In *Planning for Real*, participants build a scale model of the settlement using coloured cards. In the post-disaster situation this could show destroyed or damaged buildings and infrastructure. People then individually, or in small groups, place suggestion cards on the model of what they want to see improved at what place. People are encouraged to discuss these ideas as they work on the model and decide which ones to keep and which to discard. The agreed activities are divided into those which should be tackled now, with others tackled 'soon' or 'later'.

After the workshop, timely follow-up and communication is important. The community representatives need to act as a channel for information between communities and development agencies. They also need to keep the momentum and enthusiasm going if things seem to go quiet after the initial workshop. Messages posted on community noticeboards and short meetings can keep residents informed on progress.

- Before construction work starts, other meetings can be held to explain to residents about the process for community contracting or cash-for-work. Community contracting works best where community groups are already well organised and have a diversity of skills. If this is not the case, cash-for-work is a better option. For more information on cash-for-work see Tool 6: Integrating Livelihoods.

Examples

Experience with CAP, especially in Europe and North America, is now quite extensive. Information from post-disaster contexts, however, is much more limited. Three examples are discussed below: one from a village context in Aceh, one from an urban context in India, and one from a particularly challenging context (post-tsunami in the Maldives).

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Post-earthquake reconstruction in the city of Bhuj, Gujarat, India

In 2001 an earthquake in Gujarat caused widespread devastation. The city of Bhuj was badly damaged, with its historic walled centre being particularly hard hit. Housing, commercial and public buildings were all damaged or destroyed, and infrastructure was disrupted or broken. After the quake, an estimated 100,000 people continued to live in the city.

Government and institutional stakeholders decided that a comprehensive development plan was needed in order to guide the city's reconstruction, relocation for some, and to make provision for future expansion. It was decided that this plan should be developed and implemented through a participatory process. This presented a great challenge given the huge numbers of people affected. The walled city presented even greater problems because it served as the commercial and cultural heart of the whole city, was densely populated, and had suffered the worst damage. The details of the plan were to be produced by a planning consultancy company, EPC; and the Gujarat Urban Development Company Limited was appointed to manage the plan's implementation.

Steps in development of the plan included:

- Stakeholder analysis to identify the main community leaders, public sector officials and other key resource persons in the city.
- These people were invited to discuss how the participative process should be undertaken. They also helped to provide a situation analysis and a SWOT analysis of the planning process. A Vision Statement for Bhuj was drawn up, and they formulated objectives, strategies and proposals. These were brought together as a draft 'Conceptual Development Plan'.
- The draft plan was taken to a series of ward meetings and focus groups meetings for consultation and comment. The meetings were widely advertised. As part of the meetings, a series of maps showing the proposed reconstruction were exhibited for public comment.
- Based on the public consultation, the Plan was modified, and more detail was added to the proposals. A draft Development Plan was put together.
- The draft Development Plan was again widely advertised for comment. A final version of the plan was then produced including maps of how the city would be reconstructed and developed.
- A special plan was produced for the walled city. As well as the inputs of local people, the Bhuj Development Council and various NGOs contributed to this plan.

To support the process, a Study and Action Group was formed consisting of key local resource persons identified earlier. The group helped to inform the process, provide information on the local context, assist in resolving disputes, and to produce proposals and policies.

In the walled city an even more intensive process was used. A Core Committee was formed with similar objectives, to the Study and Action Group, which interacted very actively with residents. Rehabilitation committees were formed at the *falia* (neighbourhood) level. The BDC set up decentralised offices, where the latest drafts of the plans were available, and staff could provide information to residents on the plans and helped them to comment or contribute ideas.

The commitment of the government and institutional stakeholders to the idea of participation in planning for reconstruction and development, was followed through in establishing the structures for participation. That enabled many local people to contribute their ideas to the final plans.

For more information see: Environmental Planning Collaborative (2004).

Post-tsunami reconstruction in villages near Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Six months after the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004, CAP workshops were organised in 3 villages near Banda Aceh. A team of Indonesian planners and development workers facilitated the workshops, led by Dr Reinhard Goethert, an internationally renowned expert in community-based planning. The villages had been affected to different extents, and one was semi-urban with quite a diverse population in terms of income levels and housing types. Two of the villages were almost completely destroyed. The work was supported by GTZ and the German Development Bank KfW.

CAP workshops were organised and attended by 50-60 village representatives. The villagers were initially sceptical about the intentions of the CAP team, but became more enthusiastic as the process went on, and eventually it became quite difficult to accommodate the number of people who were observing and participating. The CAP process tapped into traditional practices of holding village meetings to deal with local problems, known as musyawarah.

During the meetings, participants:

- Produced models showing standing and destroyed houses, buildings and infrastructure
- Produced a vision for each village
- Made an inventory of village facilities and infrastructure according to whether they were intact, damaged or destroyed
- Drew up a list of problems, prioritised the list, and agreed a set of actions
- Assessed whether the actions could be carried out by themselves or not
- Decided where the planned actions should be carried out
- Built models of how their houses might look
- Set up a Village Development Committee to take the actions forward.

Important decisions were made such as the need to keep escape routes to the hills clear in case of a future tsunami. At the end of the process, a folder of the materials produced was made for each village leader to keep. They presented the folders to the government's reconstruction agency, so that development could be done according to the community's plans.

After the pilot, the Indonesian facilitators formed an NGO called Yayasan Cipta Aksi Partisipatif (Foundation for the Creation of Participative Action) to disseminate and implement CAP in other reconstruction projects across Aceh. The NGO went on to do more CAP work supported by the German Red Cross, German Caritas, and UNDP.

For more information see summary in GTZ Aceh Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Programme (2009); and process and outcomes described in Goethert, R (2006).

Post-tsunami resettlement of displaced people, The Maldives

When the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami hit the low-lying islands of the Maldives, some of them were completely submerged and, after the waters receded, a number were left uninhabitable. 12,000 people were internally displaced and were housed in camps or with host families on neighbouring islands. Some would eventually return to their original islands, while others would need to settle on another island.

There were barriers to introducing participation in the reconstruction process. The tsunami was an unprecedented event in the Maldives. Communities did not know how to deal with it, many felt powerless, and most expected the government to provide for their needs. At the same time, engineers and architects felt they lacked the skills to support participation, or felt that it had political overtones.

Despite this, limited amounts of participation were used and had beneficial outcomes.

The IFRC together with the local Red Cross recruited a team of 10 local enumerators to assess people's entitlements to assistance. This team got a lot of useful help from the chiefs of the displaced communities, even though they had not expected or requested this. During the surveys, the teams were able to answer a lot of people's questions about the reconstruction process. It became clear that the community were poorly informed, and false rumours were circulating.

The IFRC, local Red Cross, island chiefs and displaced communities decided to produce a Community Involvement Plan, outlining how they would like to be consulted about the reconstruction and resettlement process. Initially the team arranged for videos and photographs to be sent to the displaced community of the new island where they would be moved. Later on some members of the community visited the site. They provided feedback through a satisfaction survey. Informal visits were made to community members and a dedicated phone line was set up for people to raise concerns and obtain information. A particular concern for the displaced community was beneficiary selection, and who would qualify for a house. A simple visual aid was produced to show this.

Author's note: The level of participation in this example might seem modest – perhaps in the category of 'informing' on Arnstein's ladder. The new settlements were contractor-built and not designed in collaboration with the community. However, the participation did help to address people's main concerns about which families would qualify for a house, and how construction was progressing. The project helped people to get the information they needed, despite the very challenging reconstruction context.

For more information see: Environmental Planning Collaborative (2004).

Resources

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- Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, *Planning for Real*, Birmingham, UK, <http://www.nif.co.uk/>
This site provides an introduction to Planning for Real together with links to priced publications and other resources that show how to carry out Planning for Real or to use during the event. For information and review on Planning for Real, see also Wratten (1994) and Gibson (1991).
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