Development is commonly taken to be the responsibility of national governments. After the ex-colonial powers let go, it is the planning offices in the national governments, always located in the capital cities, which prepare and publish the formal National Development Plans. Even where there is extensive participation from 'below'—from individuals, communities, and possibly regional planning offices—the function of development planning is understood to belong to the national government. The others are helpers.

But why? Why should local people be the beneficiaries, but not the producers of their own development?

Planning by ordinary people can be a major instrument not only for their community's development, but also for their personal development and for the development of their nation. Ultimately it can serve the development of the overall global system. The purpose of this essay is to explore the potentials and the methods of community-based development planning.

Community-based here refers to face-to-face groups within communities working essentially at their own initiative. Planning means deliberate analytic efforts designed to guide future decisions and action. The distinction between planning for action and the action itself is important here. Some community-based development activity is based on plans formulated elsewhere. Some activity is unplanned. The focus here is to be on planning itself, on the process of reflection which precedes and guides action.

The meaning of development here, as in the current development literature, is amorphous. It derives from traditional interpretations concerned with increasing levels of industrialisation and from modern conceptions centred on fulfilment of basic needs, but the meaning here looks more toward the transcendent interpretations based on ideas of human dignity and fulfilment. The formulation that 'development is the process of people taking charge of their lives' captures the meaning to be used here. To develop is to gain increasing power to define, to analyse and to solve one's own problems. In these terms, community-based planning can be seen as a direct means of development, not for the product it yields, but in its process. It is this direct developmental value of planning that motivates this inquiry.

Participation

The idea of involving ordinary people in planning is well established in the literature, even if it is not so well established in the practice of planning. Typically, popular participation
is advocated virtually without limit; the populist reaction against elitism is total.

Despite the enthusiasms of its supporters, however, it must be acknowledged that popular participation has its disadvantages and its limits. We may wish to consult broadly on whether a bridge should be built, but gladly leave its technical design to experts. There is a place for experts.

Moreover, many people simply do not want to participate. The populist's posture may suggest that non-participants are somehow defective, or have been lulled into apathy by malicious politicians but their remedies can be oppressive in themselves. In some countries, the failure to vote is a punishable criminal offence. Wherever the line may be drawn, it seems that people should have some right to become disengaged from public issues to tend their own gardens.

By any realistic appraisal, then, the objective cannot be to maximise public participation. More moderately, the hope is to somehow optimise. The crucial point to be accepted from the advocates of public participation is that, while it is not unlimited, public participation does have intrinsic value. As Arnold Kaufman put it, 'the main justifying function of participation is development of man's essential powers—inducing human dignity and respect, and making men responsible by developing their powers of deliberate action.' As a consequence, at least some costs, in terms of delays, risks and inefficiencies, should be tolerated in exchange for the benefits of public engagement.

As Mary Hollnsteiner recognises, participation yields important benefits not only for individual but also for community consciousness. This benefit from participation '... derives from the very process itself. For if it is genuinely mass-based, it builds up the self-enabling character and cooperative spirit of the community. Facing common problems as a solitary group and finding solutions collectively leads to great self-assurance and pride over the groups' ability to act productively. Consciousness of a larger whole whose welfare is every individual's concern is more likely to evolve in organised participating groups. . . .

Further, when people learn to operate and even manipulate the institutions of modern urban society, to interact as peers with its technicians, managers, and government officials, and to grapple with technological problems and complex bureaucratic structures, they grow as individuals and learn to cope with modern urban life.'

There are some very important advantages to broad participation beyond these intrinsic benefits to the participants. Full engagement of local people in the planning process can lead to better outcomes for three major reasons.

First, planning is always contextual; it cannot be done at a distance or in the abstract. Local people always know the local context better than any outsiders. Thus, in some respects local people are in fact better equipped to undertake planning than professionals who have come in from the outside.

Secondly, broad participation in planning expedites the implementation of plans. There is a new and growing literature on the problem of implementation agonising over the fact that, repeatedly, plans which appear to be technically sound are not carried out successfully. It seems to me that the core problem is simply that people do not like to carry
out schemes devised by others—regardless of their merits. In contrast, when plans are generated by the people who are to act them out, so that the goals and the motivation are wholly internalised, implementation becomes much less problematic.

Thirdly, there is the issue of justice. Oppression and other kinds of injustice arise out of displaced decision-making—situations in which one group makes decisions affecting others. When people plan for themselves, they may make mistakes and they may harm themselves, but they will not normally be unjust to themselves. Thus, community-based planning has the quality of assuring that decisions will—at least in this sense—be just. It does not risk the injustice which can arise from displaced decision-making.

Public participation in planning is advocated in many quarters, but most advocates support a very constricted form of participation. It is generally assumed that participation means some public engagement in planning activities initiated and undertaken by planning professionals. The argument here, however, is that we should go much further to support local initiative and local control of the planning process. I am arguing that, so far as possible, planning should be based in the community, rather than in the bureaucracy. The professional planner’s role should be redefined, so that his task is understood as being that of a facilitator. In this perspective, community-based planning engages people much more deeply than the usual forms of public participation.

Just as there are limits to the extent to which the public should be expected to participate in governmental planning, so are there limits to which development planning ought to be community based. But we should not go to the extreme of assuming that it cannot ever work. As I have argued, there are important intrinsic values to community-based planning. Where it can be used, it should be used, and where its effectiveness is uncertain, we should work at making it work.

It is not a matter of comparing the proven methods of centralised planning with the uncertainties of community-based planning. Many argue that it is by now evident that centralised planning does not work very well. It certainly has not solved the problem of development. 

Power

It may be objected that it is foolish to advocate planning by local communities where those communities do not have the power to act out their plans. The formulation of ends without control over the necessary means can only lead to frustration. Where control is tightly held by the central government, any local planning that is allowed is likely to be only a mirage, an exercise designed to appease, fostering an illusion of shared power.

Surely it is foolish for planners at any level to propose actions which are manifestly impossible. But it should be appreciated that power is not a tangible commodity, to be passed around or divided up or captured like so many melons. People become weak by acting weak. In much the same way, people can gain power by acting as if they had power. A village may not have direct control over its nation’s budget allocations, for example, but if it begins to formulate clear analyses and demands in the light of its interests, it will in the process manifest power, and it will gain influence over those allocations. The power derived from the active challenging of authority is not received as a gift nor is it seized.
from that authority. Rather, it reflects an inner strength which had lain dormant, an independent, self-created source of power.

Arnstein argues that 'participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless' and that 'in most cases, where power has come to be shared it was taken by the citizens, not given by the city.' 

6 In this view the issue is cast in terms of power-as-dominance: the city struggles to prevail over the citizens and the citizens struggle to prevail over the city. As Berenice Carroll has argued so cogently, it is far more constructive to think in terms of power-as-competence. The term refers to 'the idea of power as independent strength, ability, autonomy, self-determination, control over one's own life rather than the lives of others, competence to deal with one's environment out of one's own energy and resources, rather than on the basis of dependence.'

7 The distinction is the same as that described by Johan Galtung in terms of power-over-others and power-over-oneself. Power-over-oneself corresponds to autonomy 'the ability to set goals are one's own, not goals one has been brainwashed into by others, and to pursue them. A person, or a nation, may be lacking in power-over-oneself not only because it is the object of power-over-others—but also for lack of internal development, of maturation into autonomy.'

8 It is the empowerment of people out of their own resources which constitutes the fundamental value of community-based development planning. This empowerment is the basis of development in its deepest sense.

Real political power arises, not out of the barrel of a gun, but out of social organisation. Social organisation refers to groups of people working together, in a coherent and systematic way, to achieve common goals. The most effective social organisations do not derive their effectiveness from formal hierarchical structures. Their effectiveness derives from sharing of the goals of the organisation. Members all internalise the common purpose and share responsibility for its achievements. If the values are not internalised, organisations degenerate into ineffective bureaucracy.

It is not only goals, but also the appreciation of obstacles and other considerations which are shared in effective social organisations. These common understandings arise out of continuing dialogue among the members of the organisation. That dialogue helps to build increasingly effective task orientation. Dialogue also helps to build the sense of community in the organisation.

The enhancement of a community's power-over-oneself could be seen as threatening to the community's central government, and it could lead to repressive action by that central power. However, while increasing power in the periphery may lead to increasing resistance to that power from the centre, that is not a necessary and inevitable result. Many local communities, like many individuals, do not fully use the opportunities they have. Local communities sometimes can do a great deal for themselves before they even begin to antagonise their central governments. Often they do not fully use the 'space' they have available to them to exercise their own discretion.

Moreover, there are some central governments which are benevolent and which are politically secure, and which therefore would be pleased to find local communities enhancing their capacities to act for themselves. Some central governments may view the enhancement of community power not as a challenge but as a contribution to their own
strength. Thus, the possibility that locally based planning could lead to a clash with central power should not be exaggerated and escalated into an assumption that it necessarily would lead to such a clash.

There is the possibility. In some cases the national elite may see its interests as contrary to those of local communities. In such cases the empowering of local people through community-based development planning may be viewed as a subversive act, one contrary to the interests of the centre. Thus, central powers (or rural elites) may resist community-based development planning. Their resistance may take the form of outright prohibitions. More commonly, however, their resistance is like to take the form of tokenism, of appeasement. They are likely to advocate it in form, but do whatever is possible to empty it of substance. Community-based development planning can be domesticated and tamed by a variety of techniques. The central powers might allow some limited local participation to appease critics. Extensive programmes of decentralisation or 'devolution' may be more cosmetic than real in that they may provide for decentralisation of implementation but not of planning. Central governments may establish localised planning boards, but give them only a very narrow scope of responsibility, or make them dependent on government funding, or bind them with government-imposed rules on how they are to operate. There can be no doubt that, because of the subversive potential of community planning, that sort of planning may itself be subverted.

Members of the local community, anticipating resistance, may be fearful, and thus they may choose not to pursue community-based planning. The grounds for that fear should be examined within the community. The outside planner may feel that the effort only becomes worthwhile when it presses its limits, when it begins to be risky. In the final analysis, however, the outside planner, as a facilitator, should respect the local people's judgement and decision on whether to undertake community-based development planning. They will have to live with the consequences of this decision; the outside planner will not.

**Tools for Planning**

Characterising comprehensive planning as 'the most advanced form of development planning', Albert Waterston describes it in this way:

'It begins with the projection of a specific rate of increase in income or production over the planning period as the prime target. . . . The formulation of a comprehensive plan then involves the construction of a growth model for the period of growth on such aggregates as public and private consumption, savings, investments, imports and exports, employment . . . calculations are made to relate inputs . . . and the resulting outputs . . .

Comprehensive planning includes both the formulation of an integrated public investment plan and a plan for the private sector which have been reconciled with each other and with the over-all targets'.

This is surely unrealistic for poor countries, especially small poor countries. The technical difficulties of completing these tasks are immense—as acknowledged by Waterston and as
demonstrated so effectively by Caiden and Wildavsky in *Planning and Budgeting in Poor Countries*. More importantly, comprehensive planning and many of the sophisticated technical instruments of planning are not very effective, in rich countries or in poor countries. They may be intellectually elegant, but they also tend to be of very limited use in concrete situations. As Denis Goulet remarks:

'In general, models are too aggregative and systematic to be translatable into practical national planning strategies. Even when models include participation or local values in their designs, the notion of problem solving they express is too highly intellectualised.'

Goulet continues:

'And at least implicitly, they suggest that only systems specialists or global experts properly know how to diagnose the people's developmental ailments. This is misleading, however, inasmuch as true alternative strategies, on the contrary, seek not only development for the people but by the people as well.'

To insist on the use of, say, the critical path technique to manage farms would be to render the ordinary farmer incompetent. In much the same sense, to insist on sophisticated, technical planning methods renders many local governments and local people incompetent to plan, and forces them to rely on outside 'experts.'

Many modern planning techniques need to be augmented or replaced by an appropriate technology of planning. Just as high-technology hardware is generally imported, requires outside experts for its operation, and often is alienating, the same is true of much of the software of planning techniques. Too often, the 'sophisticated' methodologies become instruments of mystification, expanding the influence of the outside planner or expert while shrinking the influence of the purported beneficiaries. Technique can thus serve as an instrument of dominance.

This quality of technique has nothing to do with its effectiveness. It has been argued that the factory system was introduced during the Industrial Revolution not so much to increase productive efficiency, as it has been touted, but to increase the degree of control over workers. Similarly, it is plausible that governments and others might adopt exotic planning techniques not so much because they work particularly well, but to retain and enlarge their own control over the planning process.

A comparable analysis can be made of much of the applied social research intended, with all good will, to help in the formulation of policy. The common complaints about gaps in the data base required by planners and the calls for more systematic research generally reflect the conventional view of research as something done out in the field, by experts from the centre, to facilitate planning and decision-making in the centre. In this light, research is a means of separating people from the making of decisions which affect them. In the alternative approach advocated here, that of facilitating local people in the making of their own analyses and their own decisions, there is far less need for systematic, formalised social research. By and large, people know their own situation, and if they are to make their own decisions, there is little need for formal research about that situation.
research is needed, local people may be able to do it themselves. Formal social research by ‘experts’ often serves to strengthen the centre while weakening the people in the periphery. Local people often become the objects of research just as they become objects of planning.  

Community-based development planning can take place autonomously. At times, however, there may be interventions by outside agents, whether government officials, professional planners, development experts, or others. What is their proper role?

Intervention by outside agents is filled with difficulties, especially in the ethical dilemmas it raises. Some critics, reflecting on the checkered historical record, argue that the only workable solution is to cut off intervention altogether. I argue, however, that any such indiscriminate rejection is irresponsible, just as indiscriminate acceptance of interventions is irresponsible. That outside agents can do harm is very well known, but at the same time it must be acknowledged that they can do some good. The benefit which outsiders can bring should not be cavalierly denied, especially in the face of real needs.

Moreover, the denial of all interventions denies the humanity of the intervention agent. There is not only the benefit to the receiver of assistance, but also the benefit to the giver that is at stake. If service to others, in the Christian sense, is central to human growth and fulfilment, then the prohibition of all intervention denies that fulfilment.

To take the question of intervention seriously, then, is to ask under what terms and conditions, and by what guidelines, should service be rendered?

At the minimum, it is clear that interventions must not be dehumanising for any of the parties to the transaction. There must be a deep mutual respect. Just as the expert would like to have others acknowledge his or her special capacities, so too should the expert acknowledge the capacities of those with whom he or she is working. Mutual respect arises out of working with, rather than for others.

Concretely, this means working to reduce the distinctions between the expert and the non-expert, the planner and the ‘plannee.’ This can be accomplished through the sharing of planning tools. Edward Gerlock, in describing methods by which ordinary people can undertake their own research (‘folk research’), has suggested that the proper role of the social scientist is not to do research but to suggest research tools. Similarly, the role of the professional planner should perhaps be understood as being not so much that of doing planning for people, as that of bringing tools and facilitating the work of people planning for themselves—folk planning.

Ordinarily, methodologies for planning (or for research) take the form of specific rules and tools. It is impossible, and probably undesirable, to provide that sort of detailed guidance for the conduct of community-based development planning. In an essay like this, or in the field, it may not be very useful to provide abstract theories and models. Perhaps the best approach is simply to provide examples which tell how people elsewhere have dealt with similar problems. That is, it may be that the development agent facilitates best simply by conveying other experiences—by telling stories.

These stories should be accounts of concrete experiences, and not simply the insights and lessons the agent has drawn from these experiences. This task of interpretation should, as much as possible, be left to the people themselves. They can supply the lessons to be derived, the specific meaning of these stories for them. They then become enriched by that interpretative activity.
Experience

There has been a great deal of community-based development planning, most of it ignored by modern, technique-orientated, centrist planners. Gandhi advocated and implemented village-based development in India, now manifested in the ‘panchayati raj’ system. Mao mobilised the peasantry in China. Self-management at the factory level has been the major feature of Yugoslavia’s development. The ‘ujamaa’ programme in Tanzania was based on village-level development. The Israeli kibbutzim provide an important model. The Sarvodaya Shramadana movement in Sri Lanka has grown in scope and effectiveness since its inception in the 1950s. The Institute for Cultural Affairs, based in Chicago, has operated community-based development programmes in more than thirty countries. Planning at the local level has been a major element in some programmes of decentralisation within nations. Not all community-based development efforts have been successful, but every one of them adds to the record of valuable experience. A full exploration of the potential and methods—and limits—of community-based development planning would call for a close examination of this wealth of experience. For now, however, it may be useful simply to offer a few suggestive examples.

In one case a procedure was formulated by Bruce Etherington, an outside intervention agent, to help residents in squatter settlements in the Philippines to formulate their preferences in relation to land-use planning, and thus to be able to participate more fully with government agencies in determining the uses. Following a briefing, groups of squatters were given a cardboard sheet divided into one-inch squares, and a number of cardboard squares to represent single family units. The people were asked to ‘Arrange the dwelling units as you would like to see your new community planned. You may combine the dwelling units into high rises by stacking them, into row houses by placing them side by side or you may assign separate dwelling units to each 90 sq. meter lot. You may make arrangements... in any combination you think desirable.’ Significantly, many groups asked to take the game back to their own communities where, over a number of days, virtually all community members participated in arriving at their proposed solutions.

Etherington concluded that ‘it may be argued that planning at the community level... does not fall readily into the commonly accepted concept of planning. It is nonetheless, an essential element within the planning process. In fact, within the hierarchy of planning techniques, it could be the basic element or building block upon which urban, regional and national social and physical planning policies may be built.’

Another good example of community-based development planning is provided by the way an organisation called the Economic Development Bureau (EDB) defined its role in helping the people of Tanzania to deal with their problem of enormous grain losses due to mildew, vermin, and insect infestations. Previous consultants had recommended highly mechanised, expensive silos which would have required more foreign consultants to design them and foreign technicians to run them. In contrast

... the EDB decided to attack the problem at the village level and in such a way as to ensure the direct control by the villagers throughout the project... The villagers formed a storage committee. The team initiated a discussion in which the participants worked together to gain an understanding of the forces that were oppressing the villagers, preventing them from adequately handling and storing their grains...
Through the dialogue and the work on modifying storage structures, the villagers came to realize that they had knowledge where they had thought they had none; and they experienced the collective power they have to change their own lives. A great deal of effective technology already existed with the people. Through sharing experiences, the people became conscious of the richness of their varied knowledge and experience.

Rather than the introduction of any foreign technology, the successful storage system that evolved through this process turned out to be a recombination of the best elements in the traditional storage methods of the village. The people were part of a dynamic unfolding of events rather than on the receiving end of a technical exercise. They also generated something that even the best outside designers could never accomplish: an ongoing process of redesign.

The grain storage problem was approached as a social problem that could be solved by the villagers. A technical solution was only part of the project as conceived by the EDB. Integrated into, and more important than a technical solution, was the facilitation of a process of problem definition, exploration of local material resources and limitations, and the design of effective action that could be used by the villagers to attack future obstacles.

The project reflects the EDB's underlying philosophy about economic development in the Third World: In order for development to liberate people from the causes and substance of their poverty, it must involve a process over which they have control.

The theme of the innate resourcefulness of ordinary people is the basis of the work of the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) in Latin America and the Caribbean. Mandated as an experimental foreign assistance project by the United States Congress, the IAF spent $40 million on 305 projects between 1971 and 1976. 'No grants are made directly to foreign governments, just to poor people who wish to help themselves.' The programme has been built on the 'conviction that the people whose lives will be directly affected by development efforts know best what they need and want and how to do it', and five years of experience have confirmed the hypothesis.

The Rural Work Programme, originating with the YMCA in Fiji and now also operating in Western Samoa, is also based on local initiative, but it gives more focussed attention specifically to the importance of local planning. Out of a concern for the 'culture of dependency where many people believe they have the right to depend on others to plan their future,' the programme has established as one of its guiding principles the premise that 'the main actors that make the plans and work the action should be the people with the problem.'

The value of community-based development planning can be illustrated by reference to food-related issues.

While most national development plans place great emphasis on the agricultural sector, few give much attention to the problems of basic nutrition. This is part of the common pattern by which governments give much more attention to the production sectors than to people's needs. In many places, however, the food needs of the people are far more serious than the business-support needs of the agricultural and other production sectors.
To address the problem of nutrition planning, a joint committee of the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Health Organisation prepared a study on *Food and Nutrition Strategies in National Development*. It was assumed throughout that food and nutrition planning originates in the central government and filters down from there. The perspective follows conventional thinking on development planning based on the premise that people must be planned for, and are not to plan for themselves.

Nutrition planning can proceed from either of two very different premises. The more traditional view is that the hungry need to be fed, and thus there is a need for food assistance programmes and the like. An example of the grimmer sort of assistance programmes is provided by United States federal programmes to provide free food to citizens of Micronesia, programmes which critics said were demeaning and likely to increase the dependency of the islanders on the United States. The other view, pressed in Lappé’s and Collins’ *Food First*, is that, given the opportunity, people will feed themselves. The task, then, is mainly to help remove the obstacles which get in the way of people’s taking care of themselves.

The argument is readily generalised beyond nutrition: ‘A Basic Needs approach which merely seeks to satisfy basic material needs may still leave some groups without the possibility of determining the course of their own lives. Therefore, participation in the identification of ways and means to satisfy basic needs and participation and planning in the solutions should be included in the list of such needs.’

People may have all their physical needs fulfilled, but if that is worked out for them by others, they remain underdeveloped. By the conventional view, development planning means doing things for people. But often that does not work very well. The argument here is that development planning should increasingly be understood not so much as something done for people but as something done by people for themselves. The function of the development agent is to facilitate their planning for themselves.

### Alien Values

Comprehensive planning as described by Waterston is unrealistic because of the difficulty of doing it. There is another, far more serious, sense in which such sophisticated planning techniques are unrealistic: they are designed to achieve goals which are totally removed from the genuine concerns of genuine people. Who, when asked about their most troubling problems and their deepest aspirations, would answer in terms of heartfelt hopes for achieving specific national economic growth rates? Rather than being the highest stage of development planning, comprehensive planning, may be not only impractical but also undesirable in all countries, developed or undeveloped. In Ivan Illich’s terminology, comprehensive planning is not a convivial tool. Such sophisticated planning instruments tend to be instruments of alien values, partly because they are designed in that way, and also partly because they require the importation of alien experts to use them.

The focal objective of most development planning, economic growth, is commonly advocated as a response to poverty. This view should be met with two major objections. First, as is well known, it is highly questionable whether economic growth is in fact effective in reducing poverty in the distributional sense—that is, in reducing the number of poor people.
Second, and of greater interest here, is the objection that increasing wealth, as such, is not always the central goal of poor people. Of course poor people, like rich people, would like to have more money. But the poor may not be so avaricious as the projections of rich people suggest. Many people with low incomes are well adjusted to their material circumstances, and instead focus their hopes and aspirations on other values. The imputation that the central development objective of most people is to increase their wealth is to say the least, an untested hypothesis, an assumption that is made but not explored by development planners.

Hugh Drummond, addressing prevailing views on poverty, returns us to our fundamental understanding of the basis of development:

'What, after all, do we mean by poverty? The income and the possessions of an American, unemployed, inner-city resident on general relief would be like a king's ransom to a member of a thriving hunter-gatherer tribe in the Kalahari Desert. And yet the former is seen as impoverished and the latter (to anyone who has observed the quality of such a person's life) enormously rich. Poverty is not so much a matter of possession in itself, but of a more subtle and significant affair: power. The poor have no control over the events of their lives.'

The purpose of development should be understood not simply in terms of achieving economic growth or in terms of alleviating poverty. More fundamentally, we should see that true development means the alleviation of powerlessness.

If development is defined in terms of autonomy—an increasing capacity to identify, analyse, and solve one's own problems—then achieving economic growth, as such, does not constitute development.

Much too much of the value set which motivates development planning is framed in terms of economic growth rates, foreign exchange balances, employment rates and other comparable abstractions and aggregations. Values based on abstractions and aggregations may be authentic if they are drawn from systematic inquiries among ordinary people—the supposed constituency and beneficiaries of these development plans. More commonly, however, these are the terms of discourse learned by central planners as the basis for appealing to their effective constituencies—other bureaucrats, especially bureaucrats in international development agencies. Many development planners are in fact more responsive to potential funding agencies than to those whose development they purport to promote. The advocacy of alien values by central planners is thus sustained and reinforced by the attitudes of development agencies.

In much the same way, when central planners visit a village and suggest funding for this or that project, the local people say they want it. And if the central planners ask the people what they want, of course they ask for this or that project. They, like the visiting planners, know the game and its circumscribed rules. Just as in the relationship between central planners and the international lending institutions, they negotiate proposals of a very limited variety. In these transactions, each party programmes and rewards the other to remain within the confines of the usual game.

Insistence on the primacy of economic wealth as the measure of development is not simply a matter of bad judgement. It has the profound effect of affirming that those who are...
poor are defective: they are underdeveloped. Poor people may be enormously successful in their own terms—in maintaining strong communities, for example—but these achievements may be simply overlooked by those who insist on defining worth in terms of wealth. It is no accident that those who get to define development choose to define it in terms by which they are already successful. One of the most important privileges of the powerful is that they get to define success.

We do choose how we will define development. The character of development is not something that simply 'is'—out there to be discovered. It may be helpful to think of people's development as being measured in terms of that which serves as a source of pride to them. Then the importance of accommodating diversity becomes very clear. It also becomes clear that imposing your standard on me—e.g., how fast you can run a mile—makes me deficient and violates me. I can respect your running speed as a source of pride for you, but I want you to respect the importance of, say, achievement in wood carving for me. Insistence on any common standard creates deficiencies, denies diversity, and manifests disrespect for people. In contrast, respect for indigenous values honours local achievements and thus shows respect for local people.

These observations bear on the argument for increasing self-reliance as a means to development. The function of self-reliance is not only to reduce material dependency on others and to reduce vulnerability in certain kinds of crises. Another major function of increasing self-reliance is to help assure responsiveness to indigenous rather than alien values.

**Development Planning Through Dialogue**

One view of the role of dialogue in planning is that it is something that needs to take place among the concerned professionals—planners, experts, specialists, policy-makers. For example, one group recommends the creation of government food and nutrition units which 'should be in a position to require the various ministries to join a dialogue and provide information on the nutritional impact and costs of their activities.'

Several observers have discussed the importance of dialogue between professionals and local people. Some, like Max Millikan, see 'planning as permanent dialogue among political leaders, technical elite, and populace over goals, targets, costs, and programs.' This is the dialogue of consultation advocated by proponents of public participation in planning. One of its strongest advocates is John Friedmann.

Another quite different view of dialogue is that it is fundamentally something that should take place among ordinary people themselves. This is the basis of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Working through literacy training programmes, originally with peasants in the northeast of Brazil, Freire formulated methods for facilitating people in analysing their situations, and in recognising their capacity to act on those situations. He called this process one of conscientisation, or consciousness-raising. Dialogue within the group provides the basis for the liberating praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.

The natural method of development planning among ordinary people is dialogue. Planning at the community level thus necessarily entails a group of people arriving at their own analysis of their situation, including a confrontation with the conflicts they have
among themselves and with others. It is a process of joint reflection providing a basis for
action which will transform their situation. Thus, development planning is itself a form of
liberating pedagogy. Moreover, it is likely to serve the purposes of liberation in a wider
range of contexts that the literacy training framework. Where basic literacy has already
been achieved, community-based planning may be used as the basis for the work of
consciousness-raising.

Thus, distinctions should be made among three types of dialogue, that among
professionals, that between professionals and ordinary people, and that among ordinary
people themselves. If development is understood in terms of the liberation of people, the
highest priority must be given to facilitating the planning dialogue among the people
themselves. Planning can be liberating, but only for the planners. So long as people remain
marginalised, without communication (and communion, and community) among
themselves, dialogue among professionals, or the dialogue of consultation between
professionals and isolated individuals, cannot be very fruitful.

People cannot become fully developed until they undertake their own development
planning. They need to do that through dialogue among peers. Neither planning nor
development can be completed by individuals acting alone.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Lappé, Frances Moore and Joseph Collins, Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity, Boston, Houghton-
Mifflin, 1977, p. 369. The focus of this essay is not community development as treated in studies such as Lees,
and Harry Berndt, New Rulers in the Ghetto: The Community Development Corporation and Urban Poverty,
takes the problem to be that of advancing particular communities which are set in developed nations. Here,
however, the concern is with less developed countries and with the ways in which local planning and action
can serve not only the community but also the nation as a whole. Of course there are no solid boundaries: the
distinction is mainly one of emphasis.

2 This problem of optimising participation is discussed in Goulet, Denis, The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in

3 Kaufman, Arnold, 'Human Nature and Participatory Democracy' in Connally, William (Ed.), The Bias of
Pluralism, New York, Atherton, 1969. Also see Kaufman's 'Participatory Democracy: Ten Years later' in the
same volume.

4 Hollnsteiner, Mary Racelis, 'People Power: Community Participation in the Planning and

for Contemporary Studies, 1976; Wildavsky, Aaron, 'Does Planning Work', The Public Interest, No. 24
(Summer 1971), pp. 95–104.


7 Carroll, Berenice, 'Peace Research: The Cult of Power', Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. XVI, No. 4

8 Galtung, Johan, The European Community: A Superpower in the Making, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1973,
p. 33.

9 Waterston, Albert, Development Planning: Lessons of Experience, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University
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10 Caiden, Naomi and Aaron Wildavsky, Planning and Budgeting in Poor Countries, New York, Wiley, 1974


15 The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement has established an associated Sarvodaya Research Institute, at 41, Lumbini Avenue, Ratmalana, Mt. Lavinia, Sri Lanka. Its publications include *Collected Works*, Vol. I of the movement’s founder, A. T. Ariyaratne; *Community Participation in Rural Development* by Nandesena Ratnapala; *Sarvodaya and World Development* by Nandesena Ratnapala; and several others related to the movement. Another perspective is provided in Macy, Joanna Rogers, 'Shramadana—Giving Energy', *CoEvolution Quarterly*, No. 25 (Spring 1980), pp. 77–81

16 Etherington, A. Bruce, *Advocacy for Squatters: A Social Planning Measure for Developing Countries*, Honolulu, Department of Architecture, University of Hawaii, 1977


19 Oliver, Dennis J., *Rural Youth: A Description of the Development of the Rural Work Program of the YMCA of Fiji*, Suva, YMCA of Fiji, 1976


22 *Re-Thinking Food and Nutrition Education Under Changing Socio-Economic Conditions*, Report from IUNS Workshop, p. 10


25 FAO/WHO Committee, op. cit., p. 45

26 Cited in Goulet, *The Cruel Choice*, p. 65. Also see pp. 153–169
