Issues and Conclusions

Main Conclusions

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

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

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

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

Changing Over from Supply to Support Policies
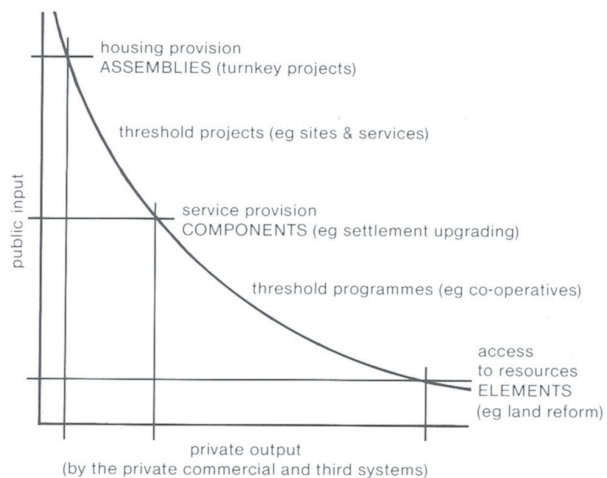
The Necessary Order of Development

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

Three levels of action

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

Figure 1
Increasing the Returns on Public Investment

housing provision
ASSEMBLIES (turnkey projects)

threshold projects (eg sites & services)

service provision
COMPONENTS (eg settlement upgrading)

threshold programmes (eg co-operatives)

access
to resources
ELEMENTS
(eg land reform)

public input

private output
(by the private commercial and third systems)

CONCLUSIONS

(a) Housing provision or **assemblies**:
An 'assembly' is used to indicate a completed project, an assembly of the components that make up a habitable place. In order to live somewhere, there must at least be a site, access routes connecting the site to the other places on which the residents depend for their livelihood, a water supply, and shelter. This is the absolute minimum of four components, but each can take many different forms, so that the variety of even the simplest settlements is immense. Modern urban developments, tending to be much more standardized than traditional settlements, can still have over seventy components, including telephones and cable television networks, nursery schools, dental clinics, and swimming pools, and a wide variety of dwelling types. These components can range from primitive shelters to North American-style ranch houses with three-car garages or penthouses in multi-storey blocks of flats. Assemblies or housing developments are local by definition and, with rare exceptions, are of neighbourhood scale or smaller. Residential developments are complex and, over time, they change, usually a great deal when their forms allow. Every assembly is a unique complex of physical structures and infrastructures, sustained by invisible social and economic structures. The provision of a ready-to-occupy or turn-key housing simply cannot be afforded without a subsidy by low-income people in low-income countries. Housing supply policies, based on intervention at this level, are clearly ineffective in low-income countries where the governments have very low per-capita budgets. Saarland Village I is the only case in this book where minimum, modern-standard homes are provided before the land is occupied. While it illustrates the economic and social advantages of NGO promotion and management, Saarland Village I also demonstrates the impossibility of NGOs substituting for government action on a significant scale.

(b) The provision of **components**.
A component is used to indicate an independently variable part or sub-assembly, such as water and electricity supply systems, drainage sytems, roads and public transport, fire protection, health services and so on. They are also simpler than whole assemblies, of course, and most are extensions of larger systems. A component can generally be modified or replaced without major changes to the other components. Some components, such as dwellings or parts of dwellings and other buildings, are complex sub-assemblies, not extensions of larger systems. But, as long

as their design and construction permits, even large components such as dwellings can be altered, demolished or replaced without major disturbances to the rest of the development. Although relatively large, the number of (independently variable) components is limited and, with the partial exception of dwellings and other buildings, their forms do not vary anything like as much as those of whole assemblies or developments. Settlement up-grading programmes provide services and stimulate investment, as illustrated by the cases of Ganeshnagar and Kampung Banyu Urip. Sites-and-services schemes, which often accompany settlement upgrading in order to accomodate those displaced by the improvements, may also generate high levels of housing investment by low-income people, as in the case of Klong Toey. High levels of private (or third sector) investment do not always follow, however. When such schemes are administered to provide only one choice of location, restricting eligibility to narrow categories of users, or imposing costly procedures or standards, investment may be long delayed. This has occurred in the case of the Karachi Metrovilles (government-sponsored and managed sites and basic services schemes), which are developing at a far slower rate than the unauthorized 'katchi abadis' or self-built settlements, such as Baldia and Orangi.

(c) Increasing access to resources: the **elements** of building. This term 'elements', is used as in chemistry, to designate the parts common to all components and, therefore, to all assemblies. No component or assembly can be built or even modified without using space, and therefore, land; working time and skills; materials, tools and energy and unless their users have sufficient control over them, whether *de jure* or *de facto*. Compared to the number of possible components, elements are very few, and their natures are identical or similar, even in very different contexts. When elements are subject to national law (as in the case of land) or to markets and exchange systems, they can be seen as extensions of very large, even worldwide systems, as in the case of a material like cement or a fuel such as oil.

Essential elements for building exist in all contexts
Constraints on building and maintenance are rarely due to absolute shortages of basic resources. They are primarily due to social and institutional constraints: mainly to the structure of authority, to the law and its administration and to the exchange system, usually finance. Ignorance of

locally available alternatives or unwillingness to use them are also common constraints, especially where social values identify more costly forms and technologies with modernity. All the significant and affordable improvements achieved in the cases documented have been due mainly to institutional changes, often provoked by direct action. Few or no major community-building improvements have been due entirely to the increased supply of funds, to the introduction of innovative technics, or to the streamlining of conventional, centrally-administered programmes.

Increasing the effectiveness of public investment

Most government housing policies are identified with public housing projects and, therefore, with a top-down, directive approach. At this level of intervention, the per capita costs are high and the returns are low or even negative: 'good money' is only too often thrown after badly invested money, in vain attempts to solve the consequent problems. A more effective level of government intervention is the provision of infrastructures and services that facilitate building. Sites-and-services and settlement-upgrading projects, providing essential components, cost governments substantially less per capita served, and the returns can be very much higher, especially if the value and returns on private investments are added.

Even more cost-effective is the removal of institutional constraints on the investment of available material and human resources. The most important is generally the provision of secure tenure, where low-income people are able and willing to invest in improvements, as in the programmes in which HUZA operates, in Ganeshnagar, Klong Toey, Guerrero, Palo Alto and Villa Chaco Chico. Providing alternative sites for those willing and able to move away from locations where they cannot improve their living conditions or realize their expectations, is the necessary complement, as in the cases of El Augustino, HUZA and Klong Toey. The simplification of regulations is important in all cases and vital in most. The only cases where official standards were adhered to are those that were either subsidized or undertaken by relatively high-income groups: Saarland Village I, the Centro Co-operativista Uruguayo and Guerrero projects.

The geometric increase of cost-effectiveness sketched in Figure 1 does not automatically follow from the shifts of public investment from one level to the next, however. Sites-and-services projects can fail to serve their intended beneficiaries for the same reasons as many turn-key

projects also do: they are unaffordable; too far from workplaces and sources of livelihood; imposed mortgages have undermined security of tenure; building design and use regulations inhibit future improvements or income earning uses.

Maintaining the continuity of a community is important, especially for the poorest whose survival is most precarious. But the provision of secure tenure only for individual building plots can be counter-productive, especially when land values are rising more rapidly than the incomes of the residents. There are fears that the exceptionally strong Klong Toey community, highly supportive of its most vulnerable members, will be broken up, as residents sell off to new, higher-income residents at inflated prices, or rent their land, charging high costs for the improved environment. The members of the Palo Alto, Guerrero and Urugayan co-operatives have ensured the survival of their existing community through shared ownership and management, but possibly at the sacrifice of transferability.

The assessment of returns on investment in publicly-funded projects is conservative, as they are often negative, even though the unit cost is very high, usually higher than the majority of the population can afford and out of reach to low-income people, even with substantial subsidies. Experience proves what common sense suggests: that as the level of public investment penetrates more deeply, first with the provision of infrastructures and services and then to change the invisible structures of the controlling institutions, there is a proportionate increase of production. Some may suppose that this would be socially regressive, but evidence shows that this policy would be progressively redistributive and far more supportive for the poor than conventional policies of supplying housing. Even tentative steps toward this policy, such as the sites-and-services or settlement upgrading programmes, have led to significant benefits to low- and very low-income people in many countries: many more were served than could have been housed in earlier conventional projects. Where government intervention has provided community-based organizations with rights to land, to control of their own development programmes and/or with infrastructures they can pay for, but cannot install themselves, the cases show how much more can be achieved with available funds. Villa El Salvador and the Baldia and Orangi sanitation programmes show that when communities are in charge of their own development, the financial costs of direct

provision can be reduced by as much as 80 per cent.

Thresholds of policy change
Only by radically changing the distribution of government investment between these 'levels of action' can a quantum improvement of low-income housing conditions be achieved by governments with limited and inelastic housing budgets, as illustrated in Figure 2. If governments are to make effective use of their limited budgets for housing, then they must minimize expenditure on direct construction, increase investment in the provision of infrastructure and services, and give the highest priority to institutional changes that increase local access to resources and which guarantee personal and local freedom to use them properly.

A start has been made with the introduction of sites-and-services and settlement up-grading programmes endorse sites-and-services projects, residents control the construction of their own dwellings, but little else. External agencies usually make the key decisions on location and selection of residents, the forms of tenure, land-use and infrastructure planning, and financing. The provision of

Figure 2
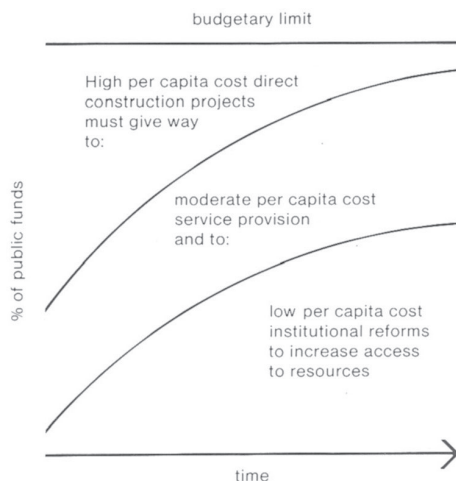**The Changing Distribution of Public Investment**

'sanitary cores' or even complete core units for future extension is sometimes compulsory, leaving little to the initiative of the occupiers, as in the case of Saarland Village I. The threshold between providing ready-made assemblies pre-packaged by the suppliers, or providing components selected by the users is crossed when up grading programmes for established communities are carried out in close co-operation with the residents through their own organizations, as in the case of Kampung Banyu Urip.

Recent evaluations of World Bank assisted sites-and-services and settlement up-grading programmes. In typical this analysis. In general, the latter have proved to be substantially more cost-effective, even though they tend to reduce rather than increase the overall housing stock. This is a limitation that need not apply when land for those displaced, as well as for the increasing population, is made available concurrently, as in the HUZA case.

Crossing the main threshold between centrally-administered housing supply policies and support policies for locally self-managed development demands major changes in institutions, attitudes, and in the relationships of the essential partners. On the one hand, central authorities and the professionals who serve them must recognize the relative capacities and limitations of their own government- and market-based organizations and those of local communities. Respect must be mutual, based on a recognition of mutual dependence. Due mainly to the highly visible and massive evidence that governments are unable to house significant numbers of their low-income people have attitudes begun to change. People who are forced to house themselves, unsupported and often harassed by government, are well aware of their need for assistance. It is mainly in the higher-income countries that many people are unaware of their own capacities for self-management. Authoritarian decision and control systems, legislation that protects material property rather than human rights, exchange systems based on financial rather than social capital: all these combine to suppress and even pervert the use of essential and renewable resources.

Once strangers meet and begin to know one another, they begin to develop a relationship. As this is the starting-point for institutional change, attempts to ignore and jump over the first threshold may be counter-productive. As the analysis below suggests, the relatively paternalistic projects managed by external agencies for people may be

the only socially practical and politically feasible way in which well-intentioned but culturally-distant professionals can learn how to work as enablers. The increasing emphasis on social and economic development, reflected in the Yayasan Sosial Soegiyapranata and Saarland Village I cases, highlight this point. Cases differ greatly when the NGO has assumed a governmental role or when CBOs are in charge, as in Ganeshnagar, Ukanal Fé and Villa El Salvador. The case studies summarized in this book can only indicate what the detailed background materials confirm: that the key mediators are experienced individuals who understand the difference between directive and non-directive approaches and who are able to bring about the necessary negotiations between the CBOs and authorities willing to support local initiatives.

NGOs in the Third System

Defining NGOs and CBOss

The conventional, two-dimensional splitting of society into 'public' and 'private' sectors leads to confusion in defining and understanding the term 'NGO'. As the Introduction states, it is much easier to see and to understand changing reality in a three-dimensional perspective. When the semi-autonomous existence of non-governmental and non-commercial motives and activities is recognized, the meaning of non-governmental and community-based organizations becomes clear. 'NGOs' and 'CBOs' may seem esoteric terms or jargon to the general public and can be especially confusing to the people of planned or command economies and many one-party states. Confusions are compounded by the wide variety of types and scales of organization which are non-governmental and non-commercial. It is not unusual that well-informed people from African and Asian countries often identify NGOs with Christian churches or with foreign organizations. There are also many overlaps between governmental, commercial and community-based organizations. This is especially so at the local level, where many community-based organizations, although oriented mainly to locally self-managed self-service, overlap with decentralized political structures, as in the cases from Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia and by Kampung Banyu Urip in Indonesia. Most local artisanal enterprises are commercial, even if organized co-operatively. Nevertheless and as long as it is accepted that motivation and the scope of an organization are the main

determinants of its social value and resource economy, it makes sense to include them in the 'third system', whether they are technically legal or not.

Readers will notice that the term 'informal sector' is not used. In this context, it is not a helpful concept, as it is too closely identified with illegality, often in grossly unjust legal systems, and all too often assumed to be synonymous with poverty. While the 'third system' is naturally stronger in contexts where centralizing institutions and technologies are weaker, it is vital everywhere. As suggested in both the Preface and the Introduction, the recognition and strengthening of the community base is a universal necessity, and a more difficult task in urban-industrial countries, where it has been so badly eroded.

CBOs and NGOs are the principal types of third system organization, as suggested in the Introduction. At the Limuru Symposium in Kenya, where the Declaration included in this book was formulated, it was agreed that NGOs of the kinds most commonly referred to are supra-local organizations working for or with people locally, either directly or through their own CBOs. These are not only another kind of third system organization, but also provide the basis of NGO authority and their potential for influencing policy change. This dependency of NGOs on CBOs is obvious, in the worldwide view of what people do without the help of NGOs. In Indonesia, for instance, with exceptionally few NGOs, people and their CBOs have built about 90 per cent of all homes and neighbourhoods, largely to acceptable standards, with little or no intervention by NGOs.

CBOs are distinguished by the important fact that they are self-organized by local residents, whereas NGOs are organized by outsiders, usually from higher-income social sectors based in major cities and often by foreigners. At the NGO Workshop during Habitat Forum Berlin in June 1987, it was recognized that CBOs can federate and provide the same kinds of services as do NGOs organized by outsiders. The Duang Prateep Foundation, based in Klong Toey, is a case in point.

The sizes, scopes, scales of operation, and the nationality of NGOs are major factors in their relationships with other organizations. Therefore, it is essential to know in particular situations, whether the NGOs are local, national or international. 'Nationalizing' international NGOs or their branches, as in the case of the American Friends Service Committee of Zambia which handed over to

Zambians to become Human Settlements of Zambia (HUZA), is a precedent of increasing importance. In most cases, the cultural or political affiliation of an NGO must be taken into account: whether it is of or sponsored by a religious body, a secular charity, a university, or other institution; and what political associations the NGO or its parent body may have.

When applying any set of categories, there are always overlaps and marginal cases, as well as a wide variety of types within the category, as indicated in Figure 3. Local authorities are at times classified as NGOs, or as state organizations or institutions. Which is most appropriate depends on the scale of the authority in question and its relative autonomy. Swiss communes, New England towns in the United States, or exceptional municipalities in more centralized states, like that of Villa El Salvador, are local, direct democracies. Most local governments in most countries are decentralized branches of national or state governments, however, and cannot therefore be described as NGOs.

Figure 3
NGOs Scope for Roleplaying by Level of Intervention

DIRECTIVE ←——— ROLES ———→ NON-DIRECTIVE

Relative potential for NGO roles:
+ + = Very high
 + = High
+ − = Fair
 − = Low
− − = None

LEVEL OF INTERVENTION	Surrogate	Manager	Community Developer	Community Organizer	Consultant	Mediator
ASSEMBLIES (turnkey projects)	+ −	+ −	−	− −	− −	− −
threshold projects (eg sites & services)	+ −	+ −	+ +	+ −	−	−
COMPONENTS (eg up-grading)	−	−	+ +	+ +	+	+
threshold programmes (eg co-operatives)	− −	− −	+	+ +	+ +	+ +
ELEMENTS (eg institutional and financial measures to increase local access to resources)	− −	− −	+ −	+ +	+ +	+ +

The overlaps with the second, market system are evident at the local level of commerce, especially in the so-called 'informal sector' or 'petty commodity production'. The point or scale at which a local or community-based enterprise is seen to move fully into the commercial sphere, where increased profits are the aim, rather than the support of home and neighbourhood life, depends on the circumstances and viewpoint. One suggestion is that a self-managed activity, dependent on a local clientele and not owned by shareholders (i.e. non- or pre-capitalist formations) should be considered as a predominantly third-system organization. In a debate over qualifications for membership of the newly re-structured Habitat International Coalition in 1987, it was agreed that while commercial real estate firms should not qualify, their not-for-profit associations may. Similar discussions will take place, if they have not already, over the place of political organizations. In reality, motives, relationships and the systems they generate are mixed and the balance is often difficult to assess especially when it is a dynamic equilibrium in constant change.

NGO tasks and roles in human settlement
As the HIC project cases show, CBOs and NGOs are contributing more than any other kinds of organization to the key task identified by Dr. Arcot Ramachandran: '. . . to find the necessary capacities to apply these (above defined) enabling strategies . . .' which can multiply the cost-effectiveness of public investment. NGOs and federated CBOs can make a strong contribution to this essential policy change. To clarify this potential, identification must be made of the kinds of NGO, together with a simple, useful definition of the range of actions and positions taken by them: their basic relationships with CBOs on the one hand and with supra-local organizations of state and market-based, national and international kinds, on the other. This basic range can be infinitely elaborated if the different kinds of local or supra-local organizations are taken into account, along with the kinds, scales, or levels of action with which they are involved.

What NGOs can or should do in particular circumstances to develop enabling strategies is influenced by several factors relating to the NGOs scale and level of action: involvement in building or improving homes and neighbourhoods as a whole, with groups of people and relatively small organizations; or with infrastructures at a larger district or municipal level; or at regional or national

levels with those responsible for institutional changes affecting local access to resources. NGO activities, roles, and relationships vary according to their involvement with central state or large-scale commercial organizations, local government and commerce, people in their own communities and their own local NGOs, therefore, have three key tasks.

(a) At the local level, to assist people in the management of their own home and neighbourhood development programmes, supporting the structuring of their own community-based organizations where necessary, and often in co-operation with the local authorities.

(b) At central, national or international levels, NGOs can promote support policies in every way possible, from protesting the abuse of power, as in the still frequent evictions of low-income communities, to advising governments on ways and means of implementing support policies.

(c) The third and most important task is carried out by NGOs acting as mediators between the conflicting interests of central and local organizations, a supporting role that is frequently needed by CBOs in their negotiations with government.

The scale and influence of NGO programmes

The cases in this book illustrate the ways in which NGOs assist in local projects, from highly managerial to consultative roles. Where CBOs already existed or where they initiated the projects, NGOs have also supported their development. But the majority of NGOs working in the settlement field concern themselves only with local projects, for which criticism is often voiced, as at the Limuru Symposium, the Berlin Forum and other meetings. While some hold the opinion that great achievements start from small beginnings, there is a common concern that many NGOs aim only to produce an inevitably limited number of dwellings and/or to develop selected communities.

Limiting one's aims to exclude the relation to a broader societal change might be reasonable if NGOs were able to succeed where governments have failed, by increasing the subsidization of low and very low-income housing to the required scale, within existing institutional frameworks. Collectively, NGOs do contribute a significant proportion of external development aid (US\$2.9 billion in 1985 or 10 per cent of the total contributions of the OECD countries). But even if a much higher proportion were invested in

housing, it would make very little difference and would still be insignificant compared to the aggregate investment made by unaided, low-income people. The main value of the NGO contribution is in the leverage it provides for increasing pressures for policy changes, leading to far more cost-effective uses of the limited amounts of financial aid that can be obtained.

The focus of the issue for NGOs, along with international agencies and national governments should be on their longer-term objectives and the ways in which they are carried out, rather than on the inevitably limited scale of their projects. One participant aptly quoted a traditional English saying 'Great oaks from little acorns grow.' But this only happens if live seeds fall on fertile ground. When small, experimental seed projects are carried out, only when the experimental stage has passed as a demonstration of alternatives, can the seeds then take root and reproduce. The constraints that NGOs have to overcome in order to realize their full potential are discussed on page 178.

Innovation and Promotion vs. Housing Provision by NGOs

NGOs increase the housing supply in three principal ways: through housing provision programmes of various kinds; through projects or programmes testing or demonstrating innovations for adoption by other kinds of organization; and through motivating those who have underused capacities. Some large-scale quasi non-governmental organizations or quangos, as they are called in Britain, are major housing suppliers in some European countries. The state-funded British housing associations, for instance, are providing a growing proportion of subsidized housing in much the same way as government agencies. Although these quangos could use their powers to support and work through self-organized co-operatives, few yet do so. Ever since the suppression and co-option of the little-known but widespread housing co-operative movement in Austria and Germany by the Nazis in the 1930s, European co-operative housing organizations have tended to be excessively large, centralized and more like state agencies than CBOs of the kinds presented in this book.

When NGOs assume responsibility for the supply of housing, as an alternative to the market or the state, they inevitably inherit many of the limitations of corporate organization. Even when organized co-operatively, large NGO housing ventures relate to their tenants in much the

same way as public and corporate private landlords —
usually limiting tenant responsibilities to the care of their
own private space and expecting hired management to
cope with everything outside the tenant's own space,
including minor repairs. Supra-local NGO developers and
builders may be more efficient than government agencies
who are subject to direct political pressures and
administrative discontinuities. Depending mainly on fiscal
policies and subsidies, quangos may also reach much
lower-income levels than commercial builders and
developers. But the evidence does not suggest that they
can compete economically, let alone socially, with large
numbers of smaller community-based building
organizations when the latter have access to sufficient
resources or are adequately supported by NGOs or
government.

If the long-term goal of constructing or improving homes
or neighbourhoods is to build a supportive community,
then the achievement of locally self-managed projects is
even greater. The quality of peoples attitudes and
relationships is apparent to an observer, though it may not
be explicitly stated or accurately measurable in formal
surveys. Few would deny that the sense of community is
far more commonly built and maintained in environments
where residents are responsible for them, than when the
environments are provided for them, whatever the material
standards. Mutually supportive personal relationships can
be more important than material conditions for those who
depend on family and neighbours for social or emotional
security, and take precedence over any social status
which higher standards might confer. It could even be
argued that if the sense of community is not built along
with the material improvement, then the latter is
meaningless.

In low-income countries, the purpose of NGO direct
intervention in low-income housing should be to innovate
or motivate in economic ways, maximizing opportunities
for community building. The direct provision of houses for
passive consumers is more expensive and socially
detrimental. NGOs should avoid building for people
wherever more creative and participative options are
available. Some building must take place, in order to
demonstrate innovations that might be taken up by
organizations with greater capacities for production. But
the quantitative aspects of projects: numbers of units
produced or people housed are not ends in themselves.
Constructing dwellings or installing services should be

used as means to introduce more effective approaches or
policies. This is clearly shown by the impacts of the initially
small sanitation projects in Baldia and Orangi towns in
Karachi, the experimental land-sharing projects in
Bangkok, the participatory Kampung Banyu Urip
improvement project in Surabaya and most of the NGO
initiatives documented in the HIC project.
all have different scopes and limits. The following overview
focuses on the common denominators, making only
passing references to these important variations.

The principal advantage of all NGOs is their third party
status in relation to people, government and other
corporate organizations. Being detached from state and
market interests, NGOs are well placed to communicate
and to stimulate communication, to mediate and,
occasionally, to co-ordinate the sectoral activities of
government agencies. Principal constraints on realizing
these potentials are lack of public awareness and of self-
awareness by the NGOs, their dependence on limited
voluntary funding and, sometimes, their own constrained
policies.

NGOs possess four intrinsic advantages, whether they
make use of them or not:

(a) **Communication**

The 'communicator' role is not included in the descriptions
and tabulation of roles above. This is because NGOs are
less constrained and suspect than either state or market
organizations and they generally have access to modern
means of communication and the media. Within limits set
by censorship, the laws of libel and extra-legal political
threats, NGOs are relatively free to say and publish what
they will, whatever roles they play. With the partial
exception of the surrogate position, described above,
NGO staff are not constrained by the necessity to justify
public policy; as they are not generally party to internal
government affairs, they are not usually subject to official
secrets acts. As literate individuals, they often have
personal contacts with journalists, broadcasters and
publishers NGOs have far greater opportunities to
disseminate. When they are able to afford postal charges
and have access to electronic communications, they have
extraordinary possibilities for sharing experience and
information.

Apart from the costs of communication and travel, and
the high cost of modern time, other major constraints on
communication and dissemination by NGOs are their own
policies. The HIC project team, while gathering the case

materials used in this book, was refused information by at least one NGO on the grounds that money spent on documenting their experience fully (with warts and all) would mean a reduction in the number of houses they could build. Since the NGO in question distributes copious amounts of expensive, glossy, public relations literature, the real reason for refusal probably has more to do with an intrinsic constraint on charities. Most are dependent on voluntary contributions, motivated by pity rather than by understanding. Another larger NGO with many years of worldwide experience to its credit, makes very limited efforts to record and share it, even with its own staff. This is partly due to the NGO's focus. The pressures of dealing with emergencies distracts attention from both the causes of disasters and the longer-term consequences of short-term actions.

Political constraints deserve special attention. Sharing information can endanger lives where political violence is widespread, and it can endanger personal freedom, where paternalistic states attempt to monopolize communications. As lightweight, electronic communications (telematics) become widely available, it is debatable whether policing may become more easily evaded, or information exchange may be more easily monitored. But even without constraints of this kind, few are yet aware of the actual potential for networking and information exchange — internal constraints that must be rapidly overcome.

(b) **Networking**.
NGOs have a relative freedom of communication, making it far easier for them to identify and contact individuals, groups and local organizations with similar aims and views. NGOs can organize meetings of people they want to meet, rather than having foisted upon them selected representatives chosen by authorities. This comparative advantage enables NGOs to generate far more exchange at much lower costs than organizations which have to work through governments. Large and costly international meetings are occasionally necessary, but a consensus is growing that more is learned at lower per capita cost through small exchange visits between practitioners. Reports of exchange visits by local community members from different continents suggest that language difficulties are greatly overcome when they can show each other what they do and how. Smaller, regional meetings of people carrying out NGO and CBO projects and programmes are increasingly common and effective ways

of strengthening mutually supportive networks. Jorge Anzorena, a roving networker circulating his reports among the practitioners he visits, has probably done more to stimulate and generate local initiatives than any other individual. NGOs circulate many networking publications such as the SINA (Settlements Information Network, Africa) Newsletter of the Mazingira Institute in Kenya. Those who speak one or more languages in international use usually have access to the rapidly developing telematic systems of electronic communication through which they can or soon will communicate instantaneously, and at much lower cost than travelling or communicating by mail.

Most NGOs make too little use of their advantages for networking. Over the past 11 years, inter-regional meetings have increased since the first global meeting of NGOs at Habitat Forum in Vancouver in 1976, but there are still far too few exchanges. Although less costly and easier to arrange, little effort is made in most countries by neighbouring NGOs and CBOs to exchange experience and ideas and to co-operate on joint campaigns. The common preference of re-inventing the wheel instead of making efforts to learn from ones colleagues, especially if they are close neighbours, may be difficult to overcome. As the efforts of some networkers and NGOs show, a great deal more can be achieved at low cost when exchanges take place free from the other main constraint: attracting unwelcome attention from hostile political forces. Shortly before going to press, it was reliably reported that about 600 local community leaders have been murdered by politically motivated gangs in Colombia, a country where CBOs are particularly strong and from which many who actively support them are fleeing in fear of their lives.

(c) **Mediation**
NGOs are in a far better position to be trusted by those suffering from oppression or poverty, given their relative independence from both state and market forces. Besides their access to communications, most NGOs are sponsored and staffed by individuals with more than average access to the corridors of power, to financial institutions and to commercial corporations. Bi- and multi-lateral NGOs which predominate often have even greater influence when based in a country on which the nation is dependent for trade, aid or political protection. Whether foreign or national, NGOs are uniquely placed to act as mediators between sectors that distrust or fear each other

CONCLUSIONS

and which, coming from different social strata, are often mutually ignorant and hostile.

As for communication, a major constraint on networking by NGOs are their own policies. While they are changing, stimulating those of governments, the overall impression may be over-optimistic. Even though there is a strong and general trend away from directive approaches, many NGOs still continue to promote them. This is not due only to conservatism and the outdated but still strong paternalistic tradition of elitist charities. It is also because most NGOs depend on voluntary contributions from the general public — the wealthy of poor countries and the general population of wealthy countries. Donors and their agencies want to see results: the material products which they deem to be solutions to the problems or crises that move them. There is a long jump to make, maybe through years of public education, before there is sufficient understanding that people must have a meaningful input in working out the solutions to their own problems, the only way to finally resolve them.

(d) Co-ordination

The advantages of NGOs in communication, networking and mediation can make it possible for them to achieve the elusive: co-ordination of public agency roles in project development. This can be done directly when NGOs act as managers or as community developers, or indirectly, when they act in the non-directive, consultative and mediating roles. Unlike government ministries and agencies, NGOs are free to act in different sectors and are therefore able to respond more rapidly to the different demands and activities of a local community, such as generating employment; education and health care. Once again, NGO policies are a major constraint on their own realization of their potential for co-ordination. Although they are not locked into the administrative divisions of labour by sectoral ministries of state, NGO policy makers generally share the Cartesian view. This maintains the theoretical separation of activities that are not separable in real life. Building or improving a house does not have a lower priority than health care, or food production, especially if either releases and leads to the investment of otherwise wasted resources: to the regaining of health or of self-confidence and initiative and to personal investment in income-generating demands for local goods and services.

NGOs' Comparative Disadvantages

NGOs suffer from three main current disadvantages largely beyond their control:

(a) Low Profile

NGOs are principally limited by the fact that, as Third System organizations , they do not have the status or visibility of the other two. Quangos, such as British housing associations, are seen as extensions of the private sector or some combination of commerce and government. Self-managing, autonomous NGOs and CBOs do not belong to a commonly recognized category. Without a public face as familiar as that of the state or the market, their direct influence on policies is reduced, however great their actual contributions to society may be.

(b) Low level of political participation

When the identity of the Third System is not clearly recognized, NGOs are at a disadvantage in competing for access to the corridors of legislative and financial power with national political parties or industrial and commercial corporations. This weakness exposes even federations of NGOs and of CBOs to the natural tendency of the other powers to co-opt them for their own agendas. When NGOs and CBOs are effectively taken over, they lose their Third System identity or membership, further weakening their status, influence and potential.

(c) Limited and insecure sources of income

Until public demands and awareness bring about the restructuring of policies, currently preoccupied with centralizing power in the state, the market or in an exclusive alliance of the two, NGOs and CBOs will remain dependent on the donor public and the generally marginal contributions from central and local government budgets. As economies and budgets shrink, governments pursue conventional policies, naturally giving priority to their own, and sacrificing the 'troublesome' people and organizations of the Third System. These constraints can only be countered if NGOs make fuller use of the advantages summarized above: by using their access to communications and the media and their capacity for networking. Through their own national and international coalitions, together with CBOs and their coalitions, a great deal more can be done to raise public consciousness of facts such as those published in this book, by closer co-operation for lobbying for peoples rights while protesting evictions and other abuses by the market or the state.

Key Positions and Roles for NGOs and Specialists

This paper identifies three key positions occupied by enabling NGOs in relation to government and to people in their own localities. Each provides NGOs with a major advantage over other kinds of organization:

(a) as **enablers** (whether community developers, organizers or consultants) alongside self-managing groups;

(b) as **mediators** or advocates between the people and the authorities which control access to resources or goods and services which they need; and

(c) as **advisors** or consultants to the controlling authorities on ways and means of changing decision-making structures, rules, finance systems or other uses of government authority that increase local access to resources and their freedom to use them in locally-determined ways.

This interpretation assumes the repeatedly observed necessity of separating responsibilities for programming projects (i.e. working out courses of local action) from responsibilities for enabling them to take place through the institutions of government.

Three Priorities for Action

In November 1987, shortly before going to press, the three priorities for action set out below were agreed by the International Workshop on a Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. The workshop, convened by the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) and Habitat Forum Berlin, was attended by representatives of 35 NGOs who are members of Habitat International Coalition, from 27 countries on all continents. The outstanding but under-used advantages that NGOs have for communication and networking, together with the increasing frequency of emergencies and the escalating necessity for enabling policies, indicate the three priorities for action outlined below.

Information and networking

The clearest advantage that most NGOs and/or independent specialists have worldwide is their capacity and freedom to communicate with each other and on behalf of people who have little or no access to the means, however skilled or articulate they may be. Communication is the key denominator of all three of the above-mentioned programmes and, as information is power, HIC's influence depends, above all, on networking,

exchanging and disseminating experience and knowledge.

There is a lack of exchange between communities and their CBOs, even when within easy reach of one another. As it was accepted that NGOs' influence rests on the communities that they serve, the strengthening of that base through local inter-communication and the growth of associations and coalitions of CBOs is vitally important.

This summary of issues and conclusions reflects the growing awareness among NGOs of their wider roles and potential for path-finding exploration and innovation. Many NGOs still assume the sterile and ineffective role of surrogates for state or market provision. As most of the cases in this book and the Limuru Declaration confirm, there is a wide and growing recognition of the fact that NGOs are not very useful as pseudo-state agencies or pseudo-commercial developers; that their potential can only be realized when the necessity of enabling policies is generally accepted and the role of NGOs in the change-over is clearly understood.

In order to contribute effectively to the search for enabling strategies, the first priority of NGOs is to build up national and regional coalitions. This demands greatly increased numbers of exchange visits by local practitioners and of regional meetings; it also requires a tiered and decentralized database for the deposit and dissemination of information at all levels; it demands the widespread publication of materials for practitioners and, therefore, a great deal of translation. And, finally, an emergency communications network must be set up in order to assist members confronted with crises and disasters.

A campaign against evictions

Overt and covert threats of eviction, as well as actual displacements and dislocations, create more suffering and do more damage to low-income people, their communities and fragile economies than anything else. It is the most common catalyst for community organization and, therefore, the most frequent opportunity for community-building and for generating effective demands for policy change. Evictions also generate public sympathy and support through media coverage, providing excellent opportunities for consciousness-raising and public learning and even policy changes.

This urgent need must be seen as part of a campaign for the right to habitat: the right we share with all creatures to an environment in which we can thrive.

Strenuous efforts must be made to protect people from perverted interpretations of this right, by those who would exploit it for commercial or political ends. It must be understood that people have a right to house themselves, and a right not to be housed by powers over which they have no control. It must be understood as a right of access to resources and enabling services, rather than a right to receive identical manufactured products, as indistinguishable from one another as a row of army barracks. The right to habitat must insist on the essential characteristics of a home and neighbourhood: affordable; access to sources of livelihood; the requisite security and transferability of tenure and, of course, sheltered space and privacy adequate to maintain physical and mental health.

By highlighting the issues of residential displacement and dislocation, whether from disasters, wars, rural impoverishment, commercial or political exploitation, a campaign against evictions will increase awareness of the broader and deeper issues.

Eviction takes many forms. Residential displacement and consequent social and economic dislocations are suffered by refugees from wars and other disasters, as a result of rural impoverishment; and from specious relocations as well as blatant evictions by commercial or political interests. All these undermine household economies and break up flourishing communities. And the threat of eviction can be as damaging as the reality. Anxiety resulting from deliberately or unnecessarily sustained insecurity of tenure often has disastrous effects on hope and health; when these are undermined so is initiative and investment. The most effective defence of individually powerless people is collective action, as shown not only in the Latin American experience, but also in Thailand in the case of Klong Toey and others. Current events in Colombia remind us that even where traditions of community action are well established, the defence of these rights is urgent. The fact that 600 Colombian activists, mainly local community leaders have been assassinated during 1987 should be headlined worldwide. As NGOs influence rests on the base of community organization, active defence of people's rights to organize and to protect themselves from overt harassment and assassination, as well as from covert disruption, is a prerequisite for the right to the traditional and necessary custom of incremental building and local improvement.

The search for 'enabling strategies' will get nowhere without the active defence of people's rights to habitat and self-defence.

Promoting Support Policies

Campaigning against evictions will make no headway against the perpetrators without putting forward practical alternatives. All the issues raised underline the need to both anticipate and rapidly react to emergencies, in ways that stimulate structural change. Although campaigning against evictions may be seen as negating a negative action, and therefore positive, it will only appear negative to those who implement policies that involve eviction. Whether sincerely or hypocritically, the interested parties will defend evictions in the name of progress. Alternative kinds of development that minimize eviction and ensure viable relocation must, therefore, be part of any effective campaign.

'Enablement' is a new and apparently threatening concept for many on whom its implementation depends. It is therefore essential to promote the precedents and their advantages. This book and the HFB wallnewspapers provide a nucleus of well-documented precedents for alternative and enabling policies, as well as illustrating the barriers that have to be overcome. They provide powerful arguments for the changes needed as long as they are properly used.

There is, however, a dangerous and counter-productive tendency by NGOs, as well as by government and international agencies: to search for the 'magic bullet', a programme which can be replicated wholesale, adopted and imposed. To redirect efforts in the search for 'the necessary capacities to apply enabling strategies', a clear understanding of the need for devolving decisions and controls over local projects to local communities is required. A clear understanding must also evolve of the complementary roles and responsibilities of government: the provision of utilities and services that local communities cannot provide for themselves.

The twin hazards of abstract generalization by harping on principles, and the vain search for the 'magic bullet' replicable programme, can be avoided by focussing on methods, that neglected link between general theories and particular practices. Top priority must be given to identifying transferable, adaptable community-building methods or 'tools', the means by which the principles of enablement can put into practice and become better understood.

What can one do
Finally, there is one activity in which all concerned citizens
can and should take part, whether employed by
government, industry, NGOs or oneself: the promotion of
enabling policies and the defense of the millions
threatened with eviction whether by market- or state-
based interests. Everyone in almost all countries can form
or join pressure groups and ensure that these associate
with regional organizations forming the global Habitat
International Coalition.

John F.C. Turner

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CONCLUSIONS