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THEIR CHOICE OR YOURS

GLOBAL FORCES OR LOCAL VOICES?

edited by Krishno Dey
and
David Westendorff

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Preface

As one of their contributions to preparations for the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, March 1995), UNRISD and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) undertook a project on **Volunteer Contributions to Social Integration at the Grassroots: The Urban or "Pavement" Dimension**. Its purpose was to survey and highlight the current and potential contributions of volunteer effort towards social integration at the local level. The project emphasized two elements: to hear from the volunteers, as far as possible, in their own words; and to provide an urban "pavement" perspective from marginalized communities in large cities around the world.

The project was implemented quickly, with much of the survey work completed between July 1994 and March 1995. In this short span, field visits were made to 16 cities on four continents; in each city local researchers prepared several case studies of innovative or especially instructive efforts by community organizations and volunteer groups to combat grave urban social problems. With some 40 case studies under way, the project's researcher-activists and supporters met in Cyprus in late November 1994 to discuss the main themes raised by their studies, as well as to plan a series of short-term exchanges between community groups participating in the project and to formulate recommendations for strengthening community and volunteer action for inclusion in the Social Summit's Plan of Action. At the Summit itself, UNV and UNRISD organized a series of roundtable discussions to present the early findings of the project. Some of these findings are contained in the present document, **Their Choice or Yours: Global Forces or Local Voices?**, an early version of which was distributed at the Social Summit. A revised and expanded version was distributed at Habitat II, and now with a few additional changes, it is appearing as the second UNRISD Discussion Paper on the theme of Community Perspectives on Urban Governance.

One of the findings to emerge most forcefully from the UNV-UNRISD project was that community responses to urban social problems could achieve much greater impact if they occurred in a context of genuine support from a stronger, more open local government. Taking the latter theme as a point of departure, UNRISD and UNV have embarked on a new project, **Volunteer Action and Local Democracy: A Partnership for a Better Urban Future**, to understand better the successes of and constraints on collaboration between community organizations (including volunteer groups) and local authorities. Preliminary findings from eight cities were presented at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul in June 1996. A number of the reports from this project will be published in 1997, also as UNRISD Discussion Papers on the theme of Community Perspectives on Urban Governance.

This paper brings together the findings of the Cyprus meeting, extracts from the case studies and some of the most pressing concerns expressed by the groups and individuals that participated in the project. The introduction highlights the findings of the meeting, focusing on the internal and external forces tending to limit the success of community action in the project cities. It also outlines some broad strategies for overcoming these. Part I sets the

context of the project, describes the process of case study selection, and attempts to clarify the concepts of "community" and "volunteer action" that undergird the project. Part II consists of extracts from the case studies. Together they demonstrate an extraordinary range of community action in the face of deep and complex crises that disproportionately affect residents of low-income urban neighbourhoods. In their diversity and innovativeness — often predicated on the absence of external assistance or resources — these responses to crisis cast volunteers of the 1990s in a very non-traditional light. Fortunately, it is one that provides hopeful glimpses of solutions to modern-day sources of marginalization and social exclusion.

A list of acknowledgements is appended at the end of the text to recognize the many persons whose judgement and knowledge were tapped in formulating the project.

Krishno Dey was the Principal Officer of UNV until late 1994. He now operates independently from his home in Shantiniketan, West Bengal, India. David Westendorff co-ordinates research on **Community Perspectives on Urban Governance** at UNRISD.

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October 1996

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KEWWO: The Kenya Women Workers Organisation, Nairobi
JANAM: Jana Natya Manch (People's Theatre Forum), Delhi
SAHMAT: The Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust, Delhi
Mothers of Acari, Rio de Janeiro
WHE Act: West Harlem Environmental Action, New York City

Confidence Building through Self-Help Enterprise
Self-Managed Community Kitchens, Lima
SMS: Sramajivi Mahila Sangha (Working Women's Group), Calcutta
WIPNO: Winstanley/Industry Park Neighborhood Organization, East St. Louis, Illinois
WEP: Women's Empowerment Project, Chicago, Illinois

Social Organization for Negotiation and Power Sharing
SPARC: Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres, Mumbai

YUVA: Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action, Mumbai
PDO: Foootpathvashi Nagrik Sanghatana, Mumbai
Unnayan: Social Action Group, Calcutta
AIDWA: All India Democratic Women's Association, Delhi
The Bengal Social Service League (Mass Literacy Campaign), Calcutta
MKSS: Workers and Peasants Movement, Rajasthan
Volunteer Artisan Trainers, Nepal, India, Bhutan and Sri Lanka

Alternative, Volunteer Models of Social Organization
FDAH: Front for the Development of Human Settlements, Lima
Central de Comedores de Tahuantinsuyo: Tahuantinsuyo, Lima
WBTMU: The West Bengal Tannery Mazdoor Union, Calcutta
MFCS: Mudiali Fishermen's Co-operative Society, Calcutta

Conflict Resolution through Attitudinal Change
Peace Committees/Peace Secretariat, Johannesburg
Rah-e Haqq: "The way to our rights", Mumbai
WLA: Women Litigants' Association, Mumbai

Innovative Models of Service Delivery, Justice and Crime Prevention
Ex-Cola (Ex-Glue) Project, Rio de Janeiro
CDCJD: Centro de Desarrollo Communitario Juan Diego, Mexico City
AMAI: Residents' Association of Arco Iris, São Paulo
BREM Social Ministries, North St. Louis, Illinois
The Centre for Peace Action, Eldorado Park Township, Johannesburg

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United States of America

Acknowledgements

Despite being able to rely on operational and research contacts in the project countries, the task of identifying community (grassroots) organizations whose activities and capacities fit the criteria of the project was far from straightforward. Grassroots or neighbourhood organizations, and even many NGOs working closely with them, often operate below the visibility of our local contacts. Such organizations rarely attend national or international conferences, almost never receive grants from international agencies, and even more rarely leave a written trail of their efforts and achievements. Many have no permanent address or staff members. Our task was thus to uncover the persons who could lead us to organizations that knew of groups that should be of interest to the project. These are the persons listed below. We are grateful to these colleagues for advising us about what to look for, who to contact and how to approach our work in the project cities. We sincerely regret any inadvertent omissions.

Additional thanks must also be extended to Mr. Glafkos Constantinides, who helped co-ordinate the project in its initial stages and organize the workshop in Cyprus; to intern Mike Nicoson for assistance in organizing and staffing the Cyprus workshop; to Miguel Peirano for his telecommunications expertise and contacts throughout the project and long hours as the Spanish/Portuguese/English interpreter during the Cyprus workshop; and to Patricia Ramirez, for her persistence and good cheer in handling so many of the internal administrative tasks of the project. Thanks also go to Sylvie Brenninkmeyer-Liu, Erika Drucker and George Reid for their assistance with production of earlier versions of this paper.

And, finally, we express our thanks to the heads of our two organizations, Brenda Gael McSweeney of UNV and Dharam Ghai of UNRISD, and to the many colleagues in each agency who provided valuable advice throughout the project.

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INTRODUCTION AND AGENDA FOR ACTION

Whose Voice at the Summits?

This report is about social integration, as seen from and by local urban groups living in the slums and squatter settlements, and on the pavements, of big cities around the world. They constitute a large and growing segment of humanity and of the national population in countries rich and poor. It is for their voices to be heard at the global summits such as those sponsored recently by the United Nations in Copenhagen, Beijing and Istanbul. These 50-odd views from the pavements of 16 big cities, across the four continents of Asia, Africa, Latin America/Caribbean and North America, are essentially those of the socially marginalized and excluded. Yet these are not people who have lost hope or ceased to struggle. They belong to local groups who have demonstrated their ability to fight tremendous odds, and to come up with innovative approaches when dealing with enormously complex social problems.

Pavement views on social problems are concerned mostly with practical issues of survival. Even for those who live there, however, a host of social issues has been added to their age-old concerns of finding employment, fighting evictions, and meeting basic needs from tiny incomes. Insecurity, violence, fear, crime, drugs, police brutality and harassment, HIV/AIDS and other epidemics — all these have reached such levels that they are crossing the limits of tolerance, even for people who do not have the luxury of choice. A new factor is that the hope of positive government intervention on their behalf, never very strong, has virtually disappeared. Political parties continue to exploit them as vote-banks and cannon-fodder in the fight for power. Support from NGOs, whether local or international, hardly reaches them. International organizations do not know how to deal with them. Fending for oneself and finding solutions have acquired fresh urgency.

This paper focuses on volunteer contributions. Despite the vicious and precarious conditions, or perhaps because of them, examples of social solidarity abound in slums and squatter settlements. It is the description of these efforts that forms the core of the present paper. Actions for group or social benefit, mostly unpaid, find a huge variety of expression. Some of the outstanding examples are those involving women and mothers. It is a matter for celebration that there are many instances of volunteer solidarity from outside the ambit of the pavement. People from more privileged circumstances bring great commitment to making common cause with the "squatter citizen", sometimes from positions of influence in the country, occasionally from abroad.

The Case Studies in 16 Cities

The richness of diverse local experience is found in the individual case studies. This paper contains some excerpts of more general interest. The participants in a workshop in Cyprus in November 1994, at which the case studies were discussed, found common issues and drew conclusions with broad applicability for future action at the community level. These fall into four categories: the power and empowering of volunteer action in the 1990s (successes achieved); external challenges; internal weaknesses and constraints; and actions required to permit community and volunteer groups to meet the formidable challenges of the future. The main observations under each of these categories are the following:

The power (and empowering) of volunteer action in the 1990s

1. **There is a new-found liberation through self-confidence that is born out of the experience of having made concrete gains, however small.** Those who have participated in running a school, acquired skills in constructing a sanitary facility, or achieved success in forcing local government to provide land, will not be part of the degrading "victim" mentality that use of the term "poor" produces. The strength and community identity gained through working for improvements together, as a volunteer initiative, takes this confidence still further.

2. **Community groups are learning how to deal with power-holders on their own terms** (and thereby transferring some of that power), whether the power-holders come from political parties, municipalities, private sector corporations, or the national government. Knowing the procedures, where to look for corruption, above all how to bring pressure to bear on power-holders, and organize for negotiation — all these are crucial to the process of presenting a common front and obtaining concessions.

3. **Local volunteer groups have displayed great ingenuity and intelligence in finding appropriate responses to social problems**, particularly in areas such as social organization and conflict resolution where the state or market have no answers. The same is true of obtaining or delivering basic services, and discovering tiny niches for employment and income. Generated by their own conditions and resources, these responses have considerable value to the groups themselves as models for adaptation, in the same country and abroad. They also have a vanguard role for the whole society.

4. **Realistic in understanding local power relations and structures, local volunteer groups are increasingly aware of their rights and of the root causes of their problems**: that these are man-made and can be influenced and changed, not acts of destiny and supernatural forces. This makes their input to policy formulation far more valuable. (The groups retain, perhaps, an exaggerated view of the power of the nation state, given its recent rapid decline, and have an inadequate understanding of the impact of global forces on their everyday lives.)

5. **Most of the groups have discovered the importance and value of creating links and networks with other groups**, and with volunteer supporters from wider circles. There is a growing thirst for information, contacts, and the exchange of experience.

The contributions of these voluntary efforts should be looked at from three levels of perspective:

- The personal or individual level, where the emphasis is on influencing values and attitudes;
- The group or community level, where solidarity leads to new forms of social organization;
- The national and market level, where they provide fresh alternatives for meeting needs and creating institutions.

External challenges to be addressed by volunteer action

A review of this kind must conclude, with some anxiety, that even the best of local volunteer initiatives cannot be sustained indefinitely, or withstand the destructive power of the global market juggernaut. They will therefore need to plan to deal with some of the following issues:

1. The retreat of the state and its abdication from responsibilities for development, employment, social services and wealth transfers, and as a guardian of human rights;

2. The now dominant, and still increasing, economic and political power of transnational corporations, banks, media conglomerates and informal groupings of powerful cartels and criminal groups;

3. The erosion of cultural, ethnic, and knowledge diversity and the moral values they represent and support;

4. Relative to the need, the dearth of social institutions based on values of solidarity and caring;

5. The so far limited use of technology, information, and communication for social solidarity ends;

6. The general unwillingness of wealthy populations to husband environmental resources through different models of consumption and production;

7. The shortage of ideas on how to overcome the fortress barriers to population movement and social interaction, and how to replace them with humanist values and concerns.

Internal weaknesses and constraints to be overcome

If community groups are to realize their full potential, with their experience being shared much more widely for policy impact, then the following shortcomings need to be addressed:

1. Limited analytical capability and information about the larger national and, now, global environment;

2. Relative isolation and lack of resources, making them more reactive than proactive in their responses, and therefore vulnerable to the current rapid pace of change;

3. Inadequate attempts to build alliances and networks, and to overcome suspicions that such linkages may compromise independence;

4. Insufficient focus on how to influence local government, and to obtain representation and power at that level;

5. Inadequate understanding of the ability (sometimes unconscious) of global forces to negate the impact of group efforts;

6. Little energy and imagination devoted to ways of campaigning and lobbying at national and international levels.

Actions required to meet the formidable challenges of the future

Taking into account these internal and external challenges to community-based and volunteer action, participants saw an urgent need to work towards parallel forms of collaboration, global integration between local groups for social inclusion across national borders, and for dealing with the state, market and the new international order. This has to be based on:

1. Better and more sophisticated **understanding** of the forces at work, their strengths and weaknesses, and how these may be influenced or handled: *action research and analysis, diffusion and communication of information*;

2. Building up **social cohesion and social defence mechanisms**, laying utmost stress on collective self-reliance and eventually taking the lead in promoting positive social change rather than reacting to imposed changes: *experimentation and exchange of experiences*;

3. Planned attempts at developing **alliances** with concerned, influential supporters, sympathizers and professionals in strategic positions, willing to commit themselves to helping on a volunteer basis: *systematic networking and organizational/institutional development*;

4. Working in favour of constituting and strengthening **democratic and participatory local government** to the lowest possible neighbourhood and village levels, and the progressive devolution of state authority and

finances to that level; ensuring that these local groups and communities can **associate and unite** in larger groupings and collaborate internationally, dealing from a position of power, with global economic and political forces: *joint workshops, training seminars, and new-vision political movements and participation by local group representatives*;

5. **Campaigns, public information, advocacy and policy formulation**, at all levels from local to international, conducted as a race against time and total domination/subjugation by the forces listed above: *the development and dissemination of coherent strategies, in turn based on extensive use of new data bases, communication networks, volunteer interchange, publications, and alternative media coverage* — for all of which new forms of international co-operation will be needed.

The above observations may be taken as recommendations to the international community, national governments, well-wishers, and other volunteer supporters who believe in the worth of local community and volunteer action. The two organizations that have taken the first step by helping to "collect these voices" (UNV and UNRISD) should themselves take the lead in following up where they can. These are areas where support can be readily absorbed by the groups without taking away their leadership and self-reliance.

PART I: GLOBAL FORCES, VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITIES

Global Forces or Local Voices?

This paper attempts to highlight a set of perspectives on social problems and ways of dealing with them as they are seen from the urban pavement: from the viewpoint of the people who are born, live and die in the slums and squatter settlements, and on the sidewalks of large cities in the world today.

The UNV/UNRISD project on **Volunteer Contributions to Social Integration at the Grassroots: The Urban Dimension** covered the experiences of people working with local groups who are operating in this urban context. The overall project involved 55 case studies in 16 cities — many of them "mega-cities" — in the Americas, Africa and Asia. This paper features only a number of them, giving a perspective as told by local group representatives or by those supporting and studying their work.

The context of the socially excluded in cities is one shared by a very large and growing part of humanity. Nevertheless, their voices are rarely heard at gatherings such as the United Nations global summits, and much more has been written about deprivation and social organization in rural areas. This paper deals with people living in city areas, but its purpose is not to single out the problems of urban development, since the choice of the urban setting was dictated by the observation that major social problems — and attempts by affected people to resolve them through volunteer effort — are to be found in a concentrated manner among marginal urban populations. In other

words, the experience of life in today's cities for deprived groups not only brings out acutely-felt concerns of social exclusion and integration, but also gives rise to innovative responses of broad significance.

While participating in the preparation process for Habitat II, The Fourth World Conference on Women and The World Summit for Social Development, two organizations of the United Nations system — UNV and UNRISD — agreed to bring together, quickly, information from a range of local volunteer experiences and to make this available as documentation for Summit participants. What this paper reflects, therefore, are the views of the groups' representatives, or of spokespersons drawn from their local NGO supporters and academic community.

The Selection of Case Studies

The selection of local group experiences was determined by a number of general criteria relating to the community-led, volunteer and sustainable nature of the groups' activities, as well as by the constraints of time and the accessibility of contacts available to the two organizations. There can be no claim, therefore, to having made a thorough, comprehensive, scientific review. Nor can the project provide independently verifiable evidence for the accuracy or impact of the work and views obtained, beyond the impressions and judgements offered by a sample of experienced observers in each city.[1]

An important element and stage in this "culling" process was a one-week workshop in Cyprus in November 1994, which allowed social activists and others who had written up their experiences to discuss each other's case studies. This interaction proved indispensable for the clarification of ideas and the establishment of findings relevant to the theme of social integration. It also created a dynamic in favour of a more permanent relationship between the groups in 16 cities, stretched over 10 countries and four continents. This commitment emerged from the realization of how much could be gained from making common cause on a whole range of social concerns in which their work coincided. The extent of shared interest proved surprising to the participants themselves, given the tremendous diversity of socio-cultural contexts represented at the meeting. Most of all, it stimulated discussion of the global tentacles in which community life and social relationships are grasped, right down to basic values at neighbourhood, household and individual levels. The more general conclusions presented in this paper reflect the conclusions of such workshop discussions.

Volunteers and Community

Two terms require elaboration and clarification here because of their central role in this document: "volunteer" and "community".

The concept of volunteer continues to be much abused and misunderstood in many countries, where it is often equated with amateur, unpaid effort on a

[1] A partial list of "observers" who helped with contacts and advice about group selection is contained in the acknowledgements.

casual, charitable basis. Popular thinking about international volunteers frequently equates the concept with youthful idealism from rich countries, in the service of the poor in far-off societies.

Similarly, the concept of community — while it has its supporters — is often dismissed as confused romanticism because of its loose usage across all kinds of group bindings: temporary or permanent, with levels that may vary from family to humankind, together with the fact that it can refer as much to "bad" communities (racists or criminals) as to "good" communities. The term may also appear naive by seeming to preclude the likelihood of intra-group conflict, or anti-liberal for those concerned to promote and protect individual freedoms. Without entering into such philosophical debate here, this paper is concerned with actions where "community" has two principal meanings: one is local group action, where people make common purpose in a limited geographic space to carry out a specific task or set of tasks. It does not presuppose jointness or harmony of views in all spheres. The other sense of community is that of shared identity (perhaps through facing a common problem) which encourages group solidarity and helping one another — especially weaker members — and may eventually strengthen broader humanitarian ideals. In cases where the joining together is purely opportunistic, the term "local group" is used in preference to "community".

Volunteer Effort and Volunteer Action

The use of "volunteer" is advisedly more conscious and pervasive, and is a key element of this second sense of community. The case studies that follow clearly show how important and widespread volunteer practice is; without it, many of the achievements could not have taken place. Volunteer effort is referred to hereafter as a form of social behaviour that is present in all societies, rather than to volunteers as special kinds of people belonging to a distinct occupational category. Volunteer action — as a form of social activism — is seen to have far wider relevance and potential. In representing essentially a non-market response, volunteer action is eminently suited to the triple theme of the Social Summit: social conflict, poverty, and unemployment are deeply rooted in problems of power and structure, where markets function poorly or have negative impact.

For the purposes of this paper, volunteer contribution is defined as non-profit, non-wage and non-career action for the well-being of the community and of society-at-large, usually focused on the excluded and marginalized. While it springs from spontaneous individual motivation and free choice, its expression of solidarity usually involves joining together for collective action.

Forms of Volunteer Action

As the case studies illustrate, volunteer action takes many organizational forms, from traditional customs of mutual help to community survival and coping responses in times of catastrophe and crisis. It is at the forefront of relief efforts, and of attempts at conflict resolution and peace-building. It is the basis of much of the activity of professional associations, NGOs, trade unions and political parties.

Many campaigns for development — such as literacy, immunization from disease and environmental promotion — are crucially dependent upon volunteer effort. It is a driving factor in most political struggles for rights and recognition. As government services have crumbled, and more and more ground in the so-called social sectors is left to market forces, there has been an explosion in the numbers and categories of marginalized and excluded people. In consequence, volunteer responses have increased by default, as acts of survival.

The current document represents a summary of the findings from individual case studies and from the joint discussions at the 1994 Cyprus workshop. It is written in the language, and from the perspective, of the local communities and groups themselves. Extensive quotes and paraphrasing from the case studies provide the flavour of their own thinking. Footnotes and citations have been avoided to maintain the flow of the text; quotes are from the relevant case studies unless otherwise noted.

The Reality of Street Life

The evidence of social disintegration is present in cities everywhere, in countries rich and poor, North and South. It takes the forms of violent conflict and random violence, social polarization and confrontation, widespread insecurity and instability, increasing psychological stress and disorders, the explosion of criminal activity in all spheres, rising narcotic and alcohol consumption, family breakdowns, alienation from politics, and loss of faith in legal, educational and health systems as well as a collapse of moral standards and basic values. Money, power, corruption and the survival of the predator constitute the order of the day.

Social disintegration and exclusion: The forms and the causes

Social disintegration is all too close to home for families and children living in the *favelas* of Rio, in Kingston's shacks, Chicago's downtown tenements, Nairobi's slums and Calcutta's *bustees*. While decent housing and clean drinking water are scarce, there is no shortage of guns or heroin in Karachi. In many of these areas, the police do not dare to patrol; if agents of government are present, they frequently inspire fear or become the symbols of corruption. Social disintegration is the ubiquitous reality of luxury high-rises surrounded by fetid slums, beggars outside fancy restaurants, families who have known no home apart from the pavement, dowry-deaths of new brides by burning, the murder of street children, the rise in numbers of teenage mothers, and the takeover of neighbourhoods by gangs. **The Economist** of 17 December 1994 had this to say about America's cities:

> *"A survey by the National Institute of Justice in 1992 found that the police knew of nearly 5,000 gangs with 250,000 members in America's 79 biggest cities. . . . America's cities witnessed more than 1,000 "gang-related" murders in 1991. . . . Four gangs in Chicago account between them for half of the city's 50,000-odd active gang members (the Gangster Disciples and the Vice Lords, the Latin Kings and the Latin Disciples). . . . Gangs are strong and thriving institutions in a part of the world where every other institution — family, school, church — has crumbled virtually to dust. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that children who are poor, ill-educated, and, typically, raised by a single parent (of whom a depressing number are unemployed, alcoholic, drug-addicted or some mixture of the three) should flock to gangs. . . . The unduckable truth is that the gang crisis is deeply entwined with America's most intractable social failure: the entrenchment of its underclass".*

And on 9 February 1995, **The International Herald Tribune** reported:

> *"In Karachi, where political violence has claimed 1,000 lives in the past year, 94 per cent of those surveyed in a recent opinion poll stated that violence had forced them to change their lifestyles. Forty per cent said they know someone who was killed, and more than half said a friend or relative had been robbed. . . . The army, which had been ordered into the city two and a half years ago to help control political violence, pulled out in December, saying the situation had become too dangerous for its troops. . . . One of the biggest problems, according to many observers, is the absence of a city government. . . . Because Karachi is also under the thumb of the provincial government, the administration has little power. That vacuum has opened the door for political, religious and criminal gangs, well-armed with weapons left over from the Afghan war, to step up their battle for control of the city. Intelligence agencies estimated that at least 1,000 guerrillas and snipers with ties to six major political and religious organizations are waging most of the warfare on the streets".*

Social disintegration is seen, therefore, to be closely linked with social exclusion, the often deliberate, sometimes unconscious, marginalization of large population segments on grounds of income, status, ethnicity, race, religion or social affiliation. Social exclusion has many insidious roots, manipulated by power-seekers under the cloak of democratic politics, religious revivalism, modernization and technological progress, or the free reign of market forces. Cultures of poverty, unemployment and backwardness are reinforced and explained away as part of the natural order of inherent inequalities in enterprise and ability.

Many of the local groups see the fight against social exclusion as their main *raison d'être*. They themselves are often made up of the excluded, as with the blacks of Rio de Janeiro, the inner-city inhabitants of East St. Louis, Illinois, or the pavement-dwellers of Mumbai (formerly Bombay). Consequently, their activities aim at establishing their identities and fighting for their rights. In other instances, volunteer alliances consciously strive to overcome the examples of social exclusion they see around them. One such case is the Jana Natya Manch of Delhi, where the power of street theatre is used to illustrate the problems of working women, or to address the violent confrontations provoked by Hindu-Muslim communalism.

These examples of community-based volunteer action contrast positively with the methods of most governments, whose concern with remaining in power limits their ability to confront the root causes of exclusion. Nor are governments — dependent upon legal or administrative fiats — able to display the same degree of imagination and creativity as community groups.

The new international (dis)order and its impact on pavement communities

Most community groups and volunteer activists continue to see the state as the main determinant of socio-economic conditions and possibilities at pavement level. While most have become thoroughly disillusioned with the past performance of public institutions, services, ruling régimes and political parties in carrying out populist promises, it is only now that some are beginning to realize that the nation state is rapidly becoming an "emperor without clothes" — and that the real strings are being pulled elsewhere. The importance of the new international "order" for their everyday lives is beginning to become frighteningly apparent.

The pavement has never been a bed of roses. Those who live there have had to cope with the worst forms of human callousness. In the twentieth century, however, the rhetoric of state welfare, equity and socialist ideals provided some hope and a platform for rights movements to take shape. Now the fashionable rhetoric of competitive market ideology makes it ruthlessly clear that pavement dwellers have only themselves to blame for their current fate, that money power is the only power worth having. Public intervention in favour of the disadvantaged, and actions for social inclusion taken by the state, are henceforth considered wasteful and inimical to growth. The new global money-lenders will only allow pavement communities to cling to the tatters of social "safety-nets", hastily erected in the interests of averting anarchy or overthrow of the system.

The social costs of global integration: Economic growth and social dislocation

In the pre-revolutionary period, Shanghai's social problems were widespread and severe. In the period after the Communists took power in 1949, however, the city government eradicated starvation, drug abuse, prostitution and a host of diseases of the poor. All this was achieved at a very low level of per capita income. With the exception of a period of politically inspired disorder during the Cultural Revolution, the resulting level of social stability and welfare could only be dreamed of by other huge Third World cities with similarly limited resources. Such social progress was achieved largely on the basis of full employment policies, nearly universal access by the city's residents to a social safety net — composed of housing, health and education benefits, widespread and effective public health measures — and high levels of public participation in, and awareness about, activities that would strengthen webs of social responsibility and solidarity.

Since 1985, the pace of China's self-imposed transition to a planned market economy has increased, and the impact is increasingly noticeable in the city. The reforms cannot be faulted for spectacularly improving Shanghai's rate

of economic growth, or for the enthusiasm with which it is integrating with the world economy. But such a process has its costs. Social problems are mushrooming as unemployment rises, while social support is being cut back drastically. Conservative estimates suggest that at least 10 per cent of the state sector workforce — about 400,000 people — must be laid off in order to return poorly performing enterprises to profit. At the same time, nearly three million migrants from the countryside have poured into the city in search of work. Escalating numbers of the elderly are barely surviving beyond the pale of family or community support. Between 1992 and 1993, the income gap between the poorest and wealthiest 10 per cent of the population increased by 66 per cent. Serious crime is up dramatically...

The poor: Reliance on their own resources

It has gradually dawned on local groups that the present international order is characterized by ever-greater concentrations of wealth and power in the hands of a minority of rich countries, corporations and population groups, which seek to promote "global integration" on their terms through market and non-market mechanisms. With this understanding comes the sobering realization that, even more, the poor will have to fall back on their own ingenuity and resourcefulness, and also on whatever volunteer alliances can be built with influential persons and organizations, both at home and abroad.

From this pavement perspective, globalization is hardly seen as a benevolent phenomenon. It is already clear that this enforced integration is bringing about deep social transformations even in their own marginalized communities. This has had a major impact on social and individual values, attitudes, responsibilities and relationships. The rise of unbridled consumerism and acquisitive individualism, aggressively promoted through the media and advertising, is rapidly leading to a crisis of identity, and loss of cultural and ecological diversity, and of indigenous knowledge and skills. As former peasants or artisans, many of the urban poor came to the city as landless labourers, already having lost the security and control over resources, employment and food that their small plots of land or craft activities had afforded them. In the city they received some compensation for this loss by at least improving their access to jobs and services such as education and health, and by having increased hopes for their children's future. Today, even these opportunities for the "squatter citizen" are disappearing.

For the urban poor, it is hard not to feel that structural adjustment measures and public investment programmes target for dismantling "their" institutions and services, and encourage the state to limit its policing functions on behalf of the owners of private property and transnational enterprises.

PART II: THE CASE STUDIES

Perceptions from the Pavement

In this section, local community groups and social activists speak in their own words of what their experience has taught them about how to address

some of the major problems of social conflict and exclusion. For reasons of brevity, excerpts from the relevant case studies have been selected according to issues and lessons of general interest. Citations are drawn from the corresponding case studies listed in Annex 1.

Case study excerpts have been grouped under seven general headings. Each highlights a field of activity in which the community-led and volunteer response has made important, if not indispensable, contributions. Space limitations dictate that we highlight only limited aspects of the groups' work. Taken together, however, the excerpts demonstrate the broad range of situations in which community action makes its contribution. From our case studies, these are:

1. ***Awareness Raising and Community Empowerment***
2. ***Confidence Building through Self-Help Enterprise***
3. ***Social Organization for Negotiation and Power Sharing***
4. ***Alternative, Volunteer-Based Models of Social Organization***
5. ***Conflict Resolution through Attitudinal Change***
6. ***Innovative Models of Service Delivery, Justice and Crime Prevention***
7. ***Volunteer Responses to Social Needs and Problems***
8. ***Perspectives on Urban Governance***

An example of a group where action takes place simultaneously on several different planes is the Ex-Glue Project in Rio de Janeiro. In its work with and on behalf of homeless children, the Project comprises systematic efforts to:

- Develop a public consciousness that actively rejects the marginalization and exploitation of children (awareness raising);
- Provide a kind of education to children living in the streets that enhances their capacities, not only for survival but for physical and social development as well (confidence building);
- Elaborate, through action research, more appropriate tools and techniques for assisting children on the streets (innovative model of social service delivery) by adapting services to local needs and resources;
- Formulate new institutional mechanisms for providing assistance to the children as an alternative to assistance provided through large, inflexible, bureaucratized institutions (addressing social needs), filling in where neither the state nor market is offering an adequate response to the problem.

Summary of Cases and Content

1. Awareness Raising and Community Empowerment

- ***KEWWO (The Kenya Women Workers Organisation), Nairobi, Kenya***
  unionism for women, women's rights and empowerment
- ***JANAM (Jana Natya Manch), Delhi, India***
  awareness through theatre
- ***SAHMAT (Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust), Delhi, India***
  cultural activities in support of secularism
- ***Mothers of Acari (Maes de Acari), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil***
  human rights, legal process, discrimination and corruption
- ***WHE (West Harlem Environmental Action) Act, New York City, United States***
  "environmental racism", legal action, community education and empowerment

2. Confidence Building through Self-Help Enterprise

- ***Self-Managed Community Kitchens, Lima, Peru***
  basic needs, personal fulfilment, solidarity and gender awareness
- ***SMS (Sramajivi Mahila Sangha), Calcutta, India***
  personal security, self-improvement and HIV/AIDS training
- ***WIPNO (The Winstanley/Industry Park Neighborhood Organization), East St. Louis, United States***
  community development, university-based technical assistance and participatory action research
- ***WEP (Women's Empowerment Project), Chicago, United States***
  self-confidence building through training and collective action

3. Social Organization for Negotiation and Power Sharing

- ***SPARC (Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres), Mumbai, India***
  networking and supporting actions of poor communities and groups
- ***YUVA (Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action), Mumbai, India***
  advocacy on behalf of the poor, women, legal assistance and anti-communalism
- ***PDO (Pavement Dwellers Citizens' Organization), Mumbai, India***
  housing policy (anti-evictions) and basic human rights of pavement dwellers
- ***Unnayan, Calcutta, India***
  alternative development, human rights, housing rights, livelihood benefits
- ***AIDWA (All India Democratic Women's Association), Delhi, India***
  entry of women into decision-making fora
- ***The Bengal Social Service League, Calcutta, India***
  campaigning for mass literacy
- ***MKSS (Workers and Peasants Movement), Rajasthan, India***
  advocacy in public hearings

4. Alternative, Volunteer-Based Models of Social Organization

- ***FDAH (Front for the Development of Human Settlements), Lima, Peru***
  development of human settlements
- ***Central de Comedores de Tahuantinsuyo (The Kitchen Federation of Tahuantinsuyo), Lima, Peru***
  kitchen federation engaged in micro-enterprise development
- ***WBTMU (The West Bengal Tannery Mazdoor (workers) Union), Calcutta, India***
  tannery workers union, education and worker's rights
- ***Mudiali Fisherman's Cooperative, Calcutta, India***
  environment, sanitation and co-operative fishing

5. Conflict Resolution through Attitudinal Change

- ***Peace Committees/Peace Secretariat, Johannesburg, South Africa***
  conflict prevention, intervention and education
- ***Rah-e Haqq ("The Way to Our Rights"), Mumbai, India***
  women's rights, conflict resolution and prevention
- ***WLA (Women Litigant's Association), Mumbai, India***
  legal rights and education for women

6. Innovative Methods of Service Delivery, Justice and Crime Prevention

- ***Ex-cola (Ex-Glue) Project, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil***
  street children, education and influencing public opinion
- ***CDCJD (Centro de Desarrollo Communitario Juan Diego), Chalco, Mexico City, Mexico***
  education, health, sanitation and the environment
- ***AMAI (Residents Association of Arco Iris), São Paulo, Brazil***
  acquisition of construction materials for housing and innovative construction programme
- ***BREM Social Ministries, East St. Louis, United States***
  community organization and development, crime prevention strategies
- ***Center for Peace Action, Johannesburg, South Africa***
  training and assistance to reduce level of violence in South Africa

7. Volunteer Responses to Social Needs and Problems

- ***Nagarik Mancha, Calcutta, India***
  schemes for saving sunset industries
- ***Housing Works, New York City, United States***
  multiple services for homeless people with AIDS
- ***Seivwright Development Project, Kingston, Jamaica***
  community self-provisioning (health, education, skills training)

8. Perspectives on Urban Governance from Shanghai and Karachi

economic reforms and the crisis of governance

Awareness Raising and Community Empowerment

This section highlights activities that seek to change the perceptions of people — their prejudices, preconceptions, and attitudes — through media, lobbying of politicians and bringing of law-suits of major public interest for political reasons. The goals of such action are change in politics, culture and economy, leading to a more just society. In this section we review five cases of community action, ranging from education on women's rights in the workplace and politics; to street theatre in Delhi that addresses issues leading to social conflict, and encourages marginalized people to demand basic human rights; to a legal action in Rio de Janeiro that revealed the connections between the military police, corrupt municipal officials, and human rights abuses against the people of the slums; and, finally, to a legal battle started by a small environmental group in New York City that resulted in the founding of an institution to combat "environmental racism".

KEWWO: The Kenya Women Workers Organisation, Nairobi

KEWWO emerged in 1993 after a largely unsuccessful 10-year struggle by a group of activists within the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU) to upgrade the status of women in the trade union movement and to improve conditions for women workers in general by creating awareness of their special needs. Their actions grew out of women having been largely shut out of leadership positions in the union and denied access to formal training programmes at the Labour College, despite the fact that women comprised 20 per cent of the union's members and a rapidly growing segment of the overall workforce.

By 1993 the activists, working as an action committee of COTU, had tired of their purely advisory role within the union and took the controversial step of registering themselves as an independent organization, KEWWO, in order to pursue research, planning and action that served the interest of women workers across Kenya. In the words of Kathini Maloba-Caines, Secretary-General: "The goal was to get women fully involved in union affairs from the grassroots to national offices".

KEWWO's first act was to chart a strategy to reach a wider audience. Women were now free to take advantage of advanced workers' education that broadens their horizons, giving them a whole new dimension of social consciousness and a more ambitious approach to improving the social and economic status of women workers.

A major challenge was the need to overcome the social conditioning and ignorance that resulted in women not supporting women in elections at all levels. In consequence, the organization's agenda now spreads well beyond giving women their rightful place in trade unions. To quote Sarah Chitavi, national chairperson of KEWWO: "We want enlightenment so that we can

join in decision-making bodies. We want to be secretary-generals of trade unions. We want to enter the world of big business and not be restricted to selling peanuts and ice water... "

This concern extends to the general democratic process in which women perform dismally despite being the majority 52 per cent of the population. There are only six elected women among Kenya's 200 members of parliament, and no more than 45 women councillors in local authorities in the whole country. Women are particularly vulnerable to selling their votes cheaply to election candidates, who often "bribe" them with tokens as small as a kilo of sugar or a bottle of soft drink. Says Chitavi: "Women don't know their rights. We don't know the laws of Kenya. Yet women need to be taught the law so that they know how, for example, family laws affect their lives".

With the support of the Swedish Council of International Trade Union Co-operation, KEWWO has held a number of grassroots seminars throughout the country. Two hundred and four women have been trained in such subjects as the democratic process, economics and the environment, trade union structures, collective bargaining, labour laws, and the impact of structural adjustment programmes. Particular attention has been paid to gender issues. At the end of each seminar, participants are asked to recruit friends and relatives (600 new members to date), and to devise a plan setting out how they can "move from a state of dependence to independence".

A survey conducted by KEWWO into the problems of working women shows considerable discrimination both in the workplace and in the trade union movement. Collective bargaining agreements rarely take note of women's reproductive role, and most women are entitled to only two months of maternity leave — including their one month of annual leave, which they have to forfeit. Training opportunities are limited and so is upward mobility. As for sexual harassment, no collective bargaining agreement tackles the issue, and KEWWO reports that union officials tend to brush aside such complaints as "inconsequential".

KEWWO is now extending its objectives to cover the interests of self-employed women. In urban areas, these are usually hawkers of vegetables, second-hand clothes and handicrafts. The organization is exploring the problems they experience because of lack of credit and business knowledge, harassment by the civic authorities and exploitation by intermediaries.

Despite COTU's stiff opposition, KEWWO has held its own national convention pledged to "further and defend women's rights in national development". The organization seeks the establishment of social centres, including day care centres, for recreation, skills learning and the fostering of better social relations at community level.

JANAM: Jana Natya Manch (People's Theatre Forum), Delhi

JANAM was set up in 1973 by some Delhi University members of the Student Federation of India, to re-activate the then 32-year-old Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). It initially received support from the

trade union movement and has maintained good relations with political parties of the left, while keeping its independence. It took some five years for JANAM to evolve from traditional to street theatre as its main form of expression.

JANAM's principal objective has been to take theatre to the people, in a number of different ways. First, the subjects of its plays are the daily social problems of the person-in-the-street: bureaucratic evils; corruption of major aspects of life, including politics and public administration; communalism and ethnic conflict; the male-dominated nature of society; the anti-social behaviour of police forces; the élitist orientation of many national policies; the importance of mass literacy and awareness. Not only do they focus on the issues themselves; the plays also provide the socio-economic and political perspective and causal analysis in simple terms that make them powerful agents of change. Second, as street theatre, the plays are themselves performed in the midst of the people and their daily activities: at street junctions, in front of factory gates, in open markets, in residential areas and working-class colonies. Most members of the audience tend to be poor, whether factory workers or the "unorganized sector" of slum dwellers and squatters. Third, the performers are of the people, all of them volunteers in JANAM but with other occupations that provide their livelihood. They are a mix of professionals, students and participants drawn from the audience. JANAM fully covers the costs of the group's activities and performances from the spectators' modest contributions.

JANAM's 40-odd plays (all less than a half-hour in duration) have been through more than 5,000 performances, most of them in the Delhi area, but also elsewhere in India and in the region — in particular, in Pakistan. The plays are estimated to have been seen by more than 3.5 million people in over 125 cities, towns and villages. This work has inspired many other groups to start up all over the country, making street theatre one of the most widely diffused and powerful forms of mass communication and education. It has made wide use of workshops and lectures to explore links with other performing arts and modes of social activism. Throughout its history, JANAM has taken the initiative to mobilize artists and intellectuals on vital social issues.

Its first street play was **Machine** in 1978, a 13-minute production on the relationships prevailing in an industrial system, centred on an actual incident of exploitation experienced by the workers. Another, entitled **Gaon Se Shahar Tak (From the Village to the City)** portrayed the plight of landless peasants, urban workers, students and the middle-class, calling for solidarity in a united struggle. A range of plays dealt with communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims, often focusing on the political and economic factors that create antagonisms and disrupt the traditional co-existence of the two communities: **The Killers**, **Arise Braves**, **The Abduction of Brotherhood**, and **Do Not Divide the People** are some of the performances staged in the thick of disturbances and riots, in the middle of troubled areas inhabited by affected minorities.

One play that won special acclaim was **Aurat (Woman)**, seven episodes in the lives of women showing that their struggle for equality is an essential

part of the larger struggle of all workers: a young girl forcibly kept from school by her father, and her marriage and life as housewife and working woman; another girl seeking admission to college, her harassment by anti-social elements, and her search for a job as an educated, unemployed woman; finally, a woman industrial worker being discriminated against because she is a woman. A series of plays — **The Face of the Police**, **The Press and the Police**, **When Thieves Become Law Keepers** — attacked the present state of the country's law enforcement machinery, highlighting police involvement in rape and the sexual harassment of women. **Samrat**, on political corruption, has enjoyed popularity throughout the region. In general, the plays are produced at short notice, in response to particular conjunctures and crisis situations, as a conscious part of popular movements, protests and mobilization. One of the most recent plays, **Aye Khak Naschino Uth Baitho**, performed in August 1994, opposed structural adjustment policies implemented by the government.

The JANAM Theatre Group is consciously political and partisan, believing it necessary to take a position in favour of the disadvantaged in a system which perpetuates gross inequalities. In consequence, it has often had to face violence, threats and attempts at repression. Its convenor, Safdar Hashmi, died from injuries in 1989 when the Group was attacked while staging a play in support of a wage increase for industrial workers. Artists, writers, teachers and public figures then formed a memorial trust, SAHMAT, dedicated to the values of secularism and cultural pluralism.

> *"The police does not disrupt the quack who sells spurious medicines, it does not prevent the* bandarwala *("monkey-man") from showing his tricks, nor the snake-charmer and what have you. The police objects to street theatre not because it holds up traffic, which it does not in any case, but because it is political in nature. It suppresses it and attacks it because it takes up topical issues and analyses them scientifically for its audiences".*
>
> *Safdar Hashmi*

SAHMAT: The Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust, Delhi

The country-wide condemnation of the murder of JANAM's convenor, Safdar Hashmi, led to a wave of protests and demonstrations of solidarity by theatre activists, film-makers, lawyers, writers, journalists, teachers, and a host of intellectuals and public figures. A number of them decided to give more permanent expression to his ideals by forming SAHMAT in February 1989.

Two of his initiatives were also further developed: The Committee for Communal Harmony, to counter the rise of communal, fundamentalist and divisive forces; and the organization of a *janotsav* ("people's festival") to promote a nationwide democratic cultural movement. SAHMAT's overall objectives are to use volunteer effort to protect the right of freedom of expression in India by: (1) initiating community-based activities to strengthen the interaction between artists and local populations, and (2)

providing avenues for interaction between artists and the intelligentsia in different media, in order to strengthen aesthetic values and activities.

Within three months of its formation, SAHMAT organized a massive five-day Safdar *samaroh* (festival) in Delhi, bringing together poetry readings, theatre performances, art, photograph and sculpture exhibitions, performances by Pakistani groups, dance and puppet shows, and books for children. Similar festivals were taken up in other Indian cities. Stimulated by SAHMAT, a National Street Theatre Day has been celebrated every April 12 all over India, with over 20,000 performances on the day alone. Committees, programmes and *samarohs* have been organized in Mumbai, Cuttack, Varanasi, Kanpur, Lucknow and Silchar. A community-based cultural camp, called "Janotsav", was also organized, where over 50 artists worked in communities — including the slums — for over a month, establishing workshops with both children and adults.

Another major line of activity was started in 1991, called "Artists Against Communalism", to bring out the composite and pluralist nature of the Indian cultural tradition. Through their own work, artists — many of whom are household names in the country — are able to emphasize the non-communal character of Indian art, with open-air performances lasting for more than 12 hours. On a similar platform, an exhibition, also entitled Artists Against Communalism, and involving over 400 artists, travelled to more than 30 cities throughout India from March 1991 to April 1992, and then to 40 schools in Delhi. It again provided graphic expression of the notion of cultural plurality contributing to secular ideology and practice.

SAHMAT functions as a loosely knit, non-hierarchical volunteer organization of artists and intellectuals from all over the country, bound together by shared cultural and social (but not necessarily political) objectives. "All those who take active interest in its work meet frequently (weekly if possible) at the SAHMAT office. A bulletin is mailed to around 3,000 persons to keep in touch with all those who are interested in the activities. There is no formal structure, no defined hierarchy, no constitution nor rules, no defined membership nor obligation for those working in it. It only has an open core group with a shared perspective".

SAHMAT's achievements include: the formation of a major platform for cultural and intellectual forces to intervene effectively in social issues of national importance; a large body of highly appreciated audio-visual and published material produced and disseminated for the cultural elaboration of secular ideology; a powerful force to defend the cause of freedom of expression; and a unifying role in establishing street theatre as an effective means of protest and resistance and as an integral part of the country's theatre tradition.

Mothers of Acari, Rio de Janeiro

In July 1990, 11 young people from the slums of Acari were taken from a small farm house outside Rio de Janeiro by an unknown group of heavily armed men. They were never seen again. Subsequent investigations revealed that three of the 11 had been involved in cargo pilfering and that some local policemen were extorting large sums of money from them not to report the

theft. At the time of the disappearance, the three had gone to the countryside after receiving a death threat from a member of one of the most feared elements of the local military police. They were accompanied by their girlfriends and five others who, though not involved in the cargo pilfering, were also abducted. No one has been convicted of any crime in the case, and there is little doubt that the 11 are all dead.

One positive outcome was that the mothers of the "disappeared ones" have never ceased in their efforts to discover the truth, to expose the web of relations that has protected the murderers, and to help other powerless people find ways to protest against, and work to change, an inherently unjust system.

Press reports no longer talk about the disappearance of "petty criminals" from the slums of Acari but of the disappearance of 11 "citizens". Residents of the slums of Acari have developed a clear appreciation of their rights, and their community has become a symbol of resistance to arbitrary state rule.

The Mothers of Acari have now expanded their network and became a reference point for the struggle for human rights in Rio de Janeiro — against the extreme corruption of the police and their abuses, connections to organized crime, and exterminations; and against the absolute violence aggravated by poverty and the nefarious consequences of drug trafficking. Currently the Mothers participate in meetings on the root causes of violence and in actions developed by other groups who have lost their children through exterminations or trafficking.

Gradually they are beginning to have an impact on the values and actions of more powerful sectors of Brazilian society. The Mothers participate in the Movimento pela Vida (Action for Life), originally a middle class attempt to confront hunger and poverty in Brazilian society. Initially the Movimento called for the police to repress crime by invading the slums, but Mothers of Acari argued successfully that such an action would have no lasting results. Similarly, they have participated in another movement, Action for Citizenship, also formed by upper middle class mothers. As a result, this group has now broadened its views to include actions proposed by the Acari mothers, such as the demand to place the military police under the common criminal justice system and thereby make them more accountable to the public.

WHE Act: West Harlem Environmental Action, New York City

West Harlem is a predominantly black and Hispanic low-income neighbourhood in New York City afflicted by environmental problems that are all too typical among urban communities of colour in the United States, most of which are also low-income. West Harlem endures two major kinds of environmental stress: foul and noxious odours from the North River Sewage Treatment Plant and a heavy air pollution burden from the highways, commuter rail lines, and bus depots that converge on this gateway to Manhattan's business districts.
The neighbourhood is also angry about the faulty development of their new and badly needed recreational space, Riverbank State Park. The park is "sort

of" on the bank of the Hudson River. Actually, it is on the roof of the North River Sewage Treatment Plant. When the plant smells, the park smells. Parents worry that it cannot be healthy for young children to breathe these horrible odours too often, so they limit playing time in the park.

New York City's decision to site a major sewage treatment plant in West Harlem was made in the 1960s, and from the beginning the community saw injustice in the placement of the plant on their waterfront instead of locating it in the more affluent and politically influential neighbourhoods to the south or north. Construction of the plant began in the late 1960s and was completed in 1986, though modification work has continued since then. The plant, one of 14 in the city, serves most of the West Side and carries out both primary and secondary treatment of sewage as mandated by the US federal government. The plant is designed to handle 170 million gallons (638 million litres) of waste a day, but the present flow is 182 million gallons (683 million litres).

In a remarkable case of determined volunteer action, a small community-based organization, WHE Act, successfully coerced the city into redressing some of the reversible impacts of environmental degradation caused by the plant. This they accomplished through two major legal actions against the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which administers the North River Sewage Treatment Plant.

In the first of these, New York City DEP agreed to a consent order to establish an Environmental Benefits Program (EBP) in West Harlem and to fund the programme with US$ 1.1 million. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has jurisdiction over local sewage treatment plants because its State Pollution Discharge Elimination System issues permits to allow the release of a maximum quantity of effluents in a given time period. Because the North River Plant exceeded the limits in its permit, the State DEC sued the City DEP. This was the second instance in which New York State sued New York City to pay fines in order to redress harms to the community resulting from poor management of the sewage treatment plant.

The consent order also required the City DEP to correct numerous violations related to running the plant over its design capacity and the emission of "significant detectable odours...of such quantity, characteristic and duration as to have unreasonably interfered with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property of the neighbourhood residents".

A community advisory committee established to determine how the EBP resources were to be used mandated that they be spent on impact and risk assessments, community-based environmental education, development of "green businesses", and enlargement of open spaces. The community has progressed well in operationalizing these programmes.

WHE Act scored its second major victory in late December 1993, when the outgoing administration of Mayor David Dinkins agreed to pay an additional US$ 1.1 million in damages to a group of plaintiffs including WHE Act, the National Resource Defense Council (NDRC), the Hamilton Grange Day

Care Center, and eight West Harlem residents. In a lawsuit filed on 22 June 1992, these plaintiffs charged that "odours and emissions from the city-owned North River Sewage Treatment Plant were interfering with...use and enjoyment of their homes...threatening their physical and emotional well-being, as well as public health generally".

This second settlement establishes three major benefits: (1) it gives WHE Act and NRDC the right to enforce portions of certain agreements with the City DEP and State DEC; (2) it requires the City to conduct several studies and to take steps to remedy the odours at the plant; (3) and it creates the US$ 1.1 million Settlement Fund to be administered by WHE Act and NRDC.

Proposed disposition of the Settlement Fund has recently been approved, and includes the following expenditures: (1) an operating grant to WHE Act of US$ 200,000 over two years; (2) US$ 20,000 a year for two years for a technical consultant; (3) US$ 100,000 seed money for a West Harlem environmental health survey, (4) US$ 55,000 a year for two years to support and expand Earth Crew, a youth employment programme including urban gardening and other environmental activities; (5) US$ 100,000 toward the purchase and renovation of a building to become the "West Harlem Environmental Community Center" housing WHE Act and related non-profit organizations.

The potential impact of these initiatives for the neighbourhood and for WHE Act is substantial. Money is now available for the technical expertise the community needs if it is to monitor the City DEP's adherence to promises to improve conditions at the plant. The environmental health study with Harlem Hospital will yield some hard data on the impact of living among environmental hazards, which may lead to increased health funding and other remedial action. Earth Crew will be able to continue its efforts to provide employment to some young people in a neighbourhood where youth unemployment is a huge problem, and to undertake environmental projects of benefit to the whole community. The West Harlem Environmental Community Center will not only put a roof over WHE Act, it will provide a place where related organizations can grow.

In the late 1980s, WHE Act found few allies in the white environmental community, a situation they have gradually changed by calling attention to the issues of race in the siting of toxic and hazardous facilities, and by heightening awareness of urban environmental issues. Describing the early, difficult efforts to grab the attention of the environmental community, Vernice Miller, a volunteer activist crucial to the founding of WHE Act, said: "I don't think we have enough green stuff — trees and all. We don't have any birds except pigeons. Maybe we could get them to deal with us if we declared ourselves an endangered species".

WHE Act's success is the result of a number of factors, including clear analysis of an issue that outraged the community, building bridges to mainstream environmental groups while keeping the theme of "environmental racism" in the forefront, skilful advocacy and litigation, and passionate leadership.

In eight years WHE Act has had phenomenal success. In addition to winning two major lawsuits against New York City, they have caused powerful national environmental organizations to put urban issues on their agendas. By redefining environmental degradation of poor communities of colour as a human rights issue, they have raised awareness about the degree to which environmental hazards are reserved for the poor.

Confidence Building through Self-Help Enterprise

The importance of these case studies is to show how all kinds of programmes can be major learning experiences for self-reliance, self-confidence and a move away from the "victim" mentality of poverty, as a result of people having "done it themselves". These therefore include what might appear to be "standard" income generation, or community development programmes, but which are community led and produce stronger forms of social organization, policy awareness, and cross-community movements. While most of our case studies touch on this possibility for growth, we examine some of the more conscious mechanisms that make this happen: in the self-managed community kitchens of Lima; within an association of illiterate prostitutes in Calcutta; among the black, low-income population of East St. Louis; and in homeless shelters for single mothers in Chicago.

Self-Managed Community Kitchens, Lima

In 1991, 2,000 community kitchens supported by some 40,000 women volunteers prepared daily meals for 200,000 persons in the mostly low income neighbourhoods of metropolitan Lima. The origins of the community kitchens date from the mid-1970s, and the kitchens are now well known for the important role they played and continue to play in bringing affordable, nutritious food to large segments of the population, reducing household burdens that may otherwise keep women from working outside the home and providing an organizational space for other community activities in health, education and child care. They have also been a base for income generating activities. Less well known is the importance of the processes of mutual learning, self-confidence building and awakening of political consciousness that have become associated with the community kitchen "movement". The sources of these gains are described below after a brief description of the functioning of a typical self-managed community kitchen.

The operation of the kitchens is relatively simple. A group of approximately 20-30 women with close ties — neighbours, family relations, members of the same mother's club, church group or other social organization — agree to cook meals for their families in a collective fashion. In weekly rotations, five women share the daily shopping and preparation of the meals. Usually there is a fixed location for food preparation, and a set of cooking utensils for the use of the collective. Decisions about what to cook and how much to charge for meals are taken by the group as a whole. Some of the ingredients are sometimes donated by government, church or philanthropic organizations, but such donations have been decreasing over time. To a

large extent the groups are self-provisioning, and this is a source of pride to them and a starting point for many of the other gains they achieve through collective action.
The founders and participants in the earliest community kitchens were women often associated with church groups, who engaged in a range of activities to counter the drastic reductions in incomes and living conditions among the poor caused by economic policies adopted since 1976. Their central preoccupation was "to aid in the search for concrete solutions to the basic needs of the population without falling into paternalistic attitudes or clientelistic forms of assistance that promote passive attitudes of simply receiving donations and that do not contribute to incorporating the population into resolving, at least partially, their own needs. This pastoral work was marked by an educational preoccupation that sought to unfold personal initiative and deepen the awareness of the individual's dignity and social and political responsibility".

In participating in the work of the kitchens, the women achieve personal fulfilment through solving critical problems for their families, and discover their latent talents for organizing themselves to achieve broader social goals. They also begin to fathom the unequal relations between men and women, and the other cultural, racial and economic inequalities that have an impact on their daily lives.

The acquisition of a sense of individual and collective self-worth is often cited as the first benefit to accrue personally to the women working in the kitchens. Such sentiments reinforce, and are reinforced by, the movement's fierce pursuit of autonomy. This is reflected in the kitchens' proven record of not being manipulated by other organizations or put at the service of other interests. It is also reflected in the fact that neither the movement nor its members are to be humiliated by the situation of poverty in which they find themselves. The readiness of the women to operate the kitchens in complete independence is their insurance against "mistreatment" or "humiliation" by those willing to donate provisions, equipment and contacts without paying due heed to the kitchens' work plan, rules and regulations, and agreements regarding decision-making.

Leaving the house to assume tasks and responsibilities in the organization leads the women to a process of reformulating their female identity. The recognition of the shared nature of needs gives rise to a popular consciousness, not exactly in the classical sense of class, but in interpreting the causes of these needs. The women reflect on cultural and racial discrimination, and work out explicitly in their statutes and rules a reinforcement of the principle of not making distinctions on the basis of differences in religion, race or political affiliation.

SMS: Sramajivi Mahila Sangha (Working Women's Group), Calcutta

In one of the principal "red-light" areas of North Calcutta — Sethbagan Lane in Sonargachi — prostitutes have come together since 1986 in a rare display of volunteer solidarity. SMS now has 190 members. Their sense of community started as a vigilante response to an immediate problem of personal and group security: a reaction to being terrorized by a notorious

neighbourhood "tough" who benefited from high level patronage. Success in dealing with this menace gave them the confidence to embark on new ventures for collective self-improvement.

The first initiative was a crèche for their infants, followed by a health clinic. Facing the growing threat of HIV/AIDS, they were helped by a local specialist under a WHO-funded project on AIDS prevention to act as community trainers and counsellors to other prostitutes in the city. While the women receive a daily allowance for this work, the experience itself has made a major contribution to their sense of self-worth and dignity, and given them the confidence to switch to other means of livelihood. The programme has been so successful that the Sethbagan prostitute trainers have been used as volunteer trainers with prostitutes in other states, including Goa. Before this, the government in Goa had tried without success three times, with the help of the police, to begin an intervention programme.

Asha Sadhukhan, the leader of the Group, says that the problem "cannot be solved by simply assisting two or three women at a time to change their status. It has to be addressed through a collective effort to undertake an economic and social programme for livelihood improvement. If no obstacles are put in our way, we can make the necessary efforts ourselves". And on the AIDS training programme: "We made it possible because we spoke the same language as the other 'sex-workers'. After all, the problems we face are similar...

"All we need is an initial push — only because we are poor and illiterate and society forced us to become what we are. If we don't get the help we need, SMS will revert to becoming a sex-work sponsoring organization. We will pay the police, the pimps and the local political cadres, and start sex-work to raise money for our children, our older women and colleagues infected with AIDS. . . . we will wait for another two years and see what happens..."

The case study notes that there are no societal safety-nets to accommodate women who have been, or are, involved in what has been called the oldest profession in the world — because "sex-work" is an illegal profession. The women in SMS are poor, illiterate and have been completely shunned by mainstream society. Despite these handicaps, they have proved their mettle. The AIDS intervention programme has been their first contact with mainstream society where they have talked openly about their profession. Participation in this programme has given the women immense self-esteem, and a sense of doing something valuable for society by helping prevent AIDS. "But they have fought their other fights alone..."

WIPNO: Winstanley/Industry Park Neighborhood Organization, East St. Louis, Illinois

As the 1990s began, East St. Louis was increasingly viewed as a "terminal" case of urban decline, where successful economic and community development intervention were viewed as impossible. The "taken for granted" assumption among many otherwise progressive regional and state officials was that East St. Louis was a unique case of municipal failure caused by a distorted "civic culture" that promoted self-destructive

underclass behaviours among citizens and self-serving "machine" behaviours among public officials. This widely accepted belief led many county, regional, state and federal officials to withdraw their agencies' resources from the city. Such disinvestment by the public sector's major housing and economic development agencies only served to reinforce the downward spiral the local economy originally set in motion.

In an effort to find out what could be done to halt his community's slide into oblivion, Reverend Gary Wilson, a newly appointed pastor of a Methodist Church in East St. Louis, contacted the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Illinois, which operated a community development assistance project in East St. Louis. Professor Ken Reardon advised Reverend Wilson to contact fellow pastors at nearby churches to elicit their views of the neighbourhood and its problems. In a subsequent meeting, the pastors agreed to work together to develop a community organization capable of solving the major employment, housing, safety, environmental and service problems facing the neighbourhood. Each then recruited several well-respected members of their parish to serve on a Sponsoring Committee for a Winstanley/Industry Park Neighborhood Organization. Professor Reardon agreed to recruit for the fall of 1991 a small group of university students to help these leaders conduct a systematic needs assessment for their community, as a prelude to formulating a five-year community stabilization plan for the area.

The Sponsoring Committee urged the University to involve neighbourhood residents in each step of the planning process so participants would acquire the knowledge and skills needed to carry out future planning activities. They also asked the University to continue working with them until their proposed neighbourhood organization had the capacity to implement successfully its own community development projects. The University responded by proposing the use of a participatory action research (PAR) approach to developing a community stabilization plan for the Winstanley/Industry Park neighbourhood.

In the fall of 1991, eight members of the Sponsoring Committee and eight university students met once a month to design the instruments needed to collect baseline data to determine the relative strengths and weaknesses of the community. They also worked together to collect and analyse the data. Throughout the winter and following spring, 25-35 local residents met regularly with the Sponsoring Committee and the students to review the preliminary findings from the research project.

In May 1992 the Sponsoring Committee held a neighbourhood meeting, attended by 100 residents, during which residents were urged to develop a detailed community stabilization plan. The Committee's recommendations included 19 separate programme proposals aimed at enhancing public health and safety, stabilizing the existing stock of residential buildings, improving the appearance and functioning of the neighbourhood, expanding local business activity and employment opportunities, reducing alcohol and drug abuse and related criminal activity, pursuing efforts to make governmental bodies more responsive to the needs of residential neighbourhoods, and empowering local residents to address pressing economic and social

problems facing the community, principally by establishing a permanent neighbourhood organization.

Residents attending the meeting adopted the plan and voted to reorganize themselves as a non-profit community development corporation and to request the University to provide ongoing assistance in preparing the detailed five-year stabilization plan. A second group of four students was recruited to help with this process in the fall of 1992. With the help of community and campus volunteers, the students surveyed more than 550 households to determine which of the 19 programmes proposed by the Sponsoring Committee research project ranked highest among local residents. Analysis of the data revealed strongest support for: (1) an aggressive community outreach programme aimed at increasing resident involvement in neighbourhood improvement projects; (2) a comprehensive strategy for improving the basic housing stock of the community; (3) an ambitious programme to expand employment and business opportunities for unemployed residents.

The Sponsoring Committee then formed task forces of interested residents to propose detailed programmes on Community Organization, Housing Improvement and Economic Development. Members of the task forces spent the fall and winter months of 1992 developing a clearer sense of the neighbourhood's needs in these areas.

While these planning activities were under way, the Sponsoring Committee decided to take on a small project to show the community residents that they were interested not just in talking, but action. The Committee took up a request from a group of local senior citizens to build a playground for local children. Over the course of a year, the Committee acquired land for the park, organized community and university volunteers to prepare it for construction, worked with university students from disciplines in planning, architecture and landscape architecture to produce formal plans and technical drawings, and raised funds for construction materials. In May 1993 more than 150 community and campus volunteers, working under the direction of local contractors, erected the 2,100m^2 Illinois Avenue Playground. A unique feature of the design process was to adapt the playground layout according to the suggestions of neighbourhood children, whose main concern was that they would not be allowed to use it unless their parents and/or grandparents were able, for security reasons, to supervise their play. Contrary to the architects' suggestions, this meant putting benches and tables for the adults in the midst of the children's main activity space.

The Community Stabilization Plan was finalized early in 1993 and WIPNO was incorporated as a non-profit community development oganization. Efforts since then have focused on community organization, physical upgrading of the neighbourhood and labour market development. The community organization effort aimed at increasing resident involvement in local neighbourhood improvement projects. Recommended activities included establishing a neighbourhood-wide anti-crime watch; developing additional playgrounds for local youth; and organizing a volunteer housing maintenance initiative. To improve the quality of the existing housing and

streetscapes, the plan proposed holding a home maintenance education seminar; creating a low-interest home improvement fund; organizing a volunteer home repair programme for low-income elderly residents; and implementing a street beautification programme. The labour market-oriented programme proposals included the development of a fruit and vegetable market; organization of a construction skills training programme; and establishment of a revolving loan fund for small business expansion and development.

The success of this strategy was expected to result in the expansion of the neighbourhood organization's activities into other residential neighbourhoods or the development of similar community-based, community-controlled organizations in these areas. In the long run, local leaders and the University planners hope to foster the development of a city-wide movement aimed at promoting more redistributive policies and participatory processes on the local, regional, state and federal levels of government.

By end-1994 WIPNO and the University had for the most part delivered on their promises. After four years of intense technical support to WIPNO, the University plans to redirect some of its local technical resources to a nearby neighbourhood facing many of the same problems that confronted Winstanley/Industry Park. WIPNO's leaders have been supportive of this shift and look forward to the day when they can work on city-wide development issues as part of a coalition of strong, independent, community-based development organizations.

WEP: Women's Empowerment Project, Chicago, Illinois

Adequate, affordable housing for low-income single mothers with children is in acutely short supply in many cities in the United States. In Chicago, single mothers and their children comprise the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. Unlike single homeless men, single women with children have little choice but to stay in public shelters, which are known to be dirty, violent and inappropriate environments for children. The Women's Empowerment Project of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) is attempting to find sustainable solutions to the housing problem for such families. The WEP, which is the only programme of its kind in the United States, believes that by creating the opportunity for homeless women to shape their present environment, they will develop the self-esteem and skills necessary to regain control of their lives outside the shelter. WEP trains homeless women to advocate for themselves, allowing them to regain control of their own lives and establish permanent self-sufficiency. To date, over 1,000 homeless women from 20 shelters have worked with the Project in many different capacities. In addition, WEP has developed strong women leaders who have successfully advocated for services and policies to address the problem of homelessness.

CCH employs two community organizers who work to develop relationships with homeless women based on common goals and respect for each person's opinions and concerns. The CCH organizers work together with homeless women to determine issues to be addressed in bi-weekly training sessions,

which aim to assist the women to develop strategies to gain access to goods, services and power.

The Women's Empowerment Project believes that homeless families must be involved in the process of identifying the issues that most concern them. To that end, residents of each shelter democratically choose two women they feel represent them to serve on the Empowerment Project's Coordinating Committee. The Committee, made up of about 40 women, meets with the Project's community organizers every fortnight to plan and implement the day-to-day work of the Project, and to give feedback to CCH and to the support groups that have been established as a part of the overall project. The representatives report back to the residents from their respective shelters.

The WEP Advisory Committee — a sub-committee of WEP, comprised of service providers, homeless women, and representatives of the support groups — provides resources and technical assistance to the Project. The Advisory Committee, which has tripled in size since its formation, gives guidance and assistance to the overall project on a regular basis.

Because of the overwhelming numbers of homeless women who have taken an active part in the Advisory Committee and the Empowerment Project, CCH has made the Advisory Committee a standing committee of its Board of Directors.

Social Organization for Negotiation and Power Sharing

These activities seek to build and strengthen links between smaller organizations and to represent their interests in a unified way. Organizations of this kind typically assist grassroots/community groups in dealing with local and municipal government and/or other large corporate bodies. Building alliances among peoples' organizations is an important function of these groups. Two organizations in Mumbai have encouraged the growth of partner bodies at the community level, one of which is an association of pavement dwellers. A Calcutta-based resource centre is another example. All of them are developing wider links with organizations in other cities and countries. A pan-India women's organization explicitly tackles macro-policy issues and their impact on poor women.

SPARC: Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres, Mumbai

"Area Resource Centre" (ARC) is the term used to define a space or place where people who are poor, who have common problems and concerns, come together to share their problems, to analyse why they face these problems, and to seek ways to change their present situation. The founders of SPARC, who came together in 1984 as a mix of professionals in social work, social sciences, research and activism, believed that the organization could act in partnership with the communities and organizations of the urban

poor. The ARCs linked communities together, strengthened their efforts, and enlarged spaces for the participation of women. The ARCs also helped the poor to establish their own information bases, from which to start dialogue, planning and action for change.

SPARC's two partner organizations from the urban poor are Mahila Milan (Women Together) and the National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF). The former is a network of women's collectives, set up in 1987 to help women gain better access to public services, and to develop strategies to run self-help programmes. One cornerstone is a "crisis credit" scheme, based on daily collections from members, to reduce vulnerability and dependence on money lenders in times of emergency.

Projects range from credit and savings groups, to obtaining ration cards, vigilance over the operation of fair-price shops, and representing the views of women before the police, municipal and state officials. Each slum settlement has a project manager whose capacities are constantly upgraded to train others and create a cadre of women leaders who can participate in the NSDF.

Although the NSDF became a SPARC partner in 1986, it — and its member federations in different cities — had already been in existence since 1976. The Mumbai membership of its constituent bodies totals some 315,000 families. The capital of NSDF consists above all of the stock of skills, capacity and experience in mobilizing communities. In the working partnership between SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan, SPARC provides research, training and back-up services to the direct community organization work of the other two bodies. It also promotes the equality of women in decision-making.

Pavement dwellers were the first focus of SPARC's activities, starting with a study that was used to halt imminent large-scale eviction, obtain a stay order from the Supreme Court, and change public perceptions concerning a major social problem. More recently, SPARC and its partners have entered into a contract with the consultants to the Mumbai Municipal Corporation in order to ensure community participation in planning and implementing a programme to build 20,000 community toilet blocks in the slums. SPARC is also helping slum communities to seek housing loans from HUDCO (Housing and Urban Development Corporation) and to design plans for resettlement that actually respond to community needs.

WHAT SPARC SAID...

ON VOTES IN THE SLUMS: "In Indian cities, slums are perceived by political parties as vote-banks. They garner support with populist promises to waive the recovery of dues, or offer political backing to prevent the demolition of slums. In the absence of alternative structures of support, slum-dwellers link up with those parties that promise some short-term gain; the fundamental issues of land tenure, basic amenities, housing finance and poverty continue to stare them in the face. These issues do not have immediate solutions but require community mobilization and a long-term vision of the future of the urban poor. . . . The role of the poor in the city's economy as producers, traders, providers of a myriad of services, and as workers, is, quite simply, ignored".

ON MARKET FORCES: "As India opens up its economy and market forces are unleashed, the plight of the urban poor is likely to worsen. Real estate prices in Mumbai, which even earlier rivalled those in New York or Tokyo, have been rising rapidly. The philosophy of the free market does not offer hope for the poor even as the notion of the social responsibilities of the state is gradually being stripped of content. However inefficient the centralized economy might have been, there was, at the very least, a commitment in principle to meet the needs of the poor. But it is in the nature of the free market that questions of equity recede into the background, and the on-going debate about privatization of municipal services scarcely touches upon it".

ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE POOR: "One of the principal means of capacity building is to arrange exchanges among community

Continued on next page

women and men — within a city, between cities in a country, and between cities of different countries. Horizontal or peer learning seems to be a powerful pedagogical tool: it is not the expert or consultant or activist who talks down to the community but, rather, it is the sharing of experiences and ideas that leads to new understanding and insight. Though we arrange for translation, it would appear that the language of the poor is common, built as it is upon the experience of deprivation and the denial of basic needs".

ON THE MEANS AND THE END: "The poor will not be taken seriously if the level of engagement with the state is only confrontational or ideological. No doubt advocacy is important, but it must be rooted in the practical difficulties that the poor face daily: poverty, homelessness, lack of access to services, education and health. . . . All our activities, like savings and credit groups, or exchanges, or training in construction of community toilets and houses, are only a means to an end: the awakening of the poor with a focus upon the women amongst them".

ON THE SOCIAL SUMMIT: "How problems affect the immediate neighbourhood has been the groups' major concern. Some of them have basically lost faith in government structures, procedures and mechanisms. They were also unsure of the outcome of the Summit... of how this forum is going to be of any benefit to the small groups in the country, their own neighbourhoods and their communities".

YUVA: Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action, Mumbai

In 1978, a Youth Placement programme of the College of Social Work, with a focus on providing para-professional training for youth in slums (initially in Jogeshwari), started the process that led to the establishment of YUVA. It aimed to take the issues that concerned the most marginalized sections of society from the pavement to the policy levels. The motivation was that youth and women from underprivileged social groups could themselves become leaders, with training support in skills, personality and leadership from YUVA.

Since then, YUVA's work and approach, based on the principle of responsiveness, has evolved from projects undertaken to meet specific needs expressed by people facing problems, to mobilization around major events, to building specific capacities within YUVA in order to provide the required support to marginalized groups. The first category included "Intervention with Youth in Jogeshwari", the "Inter Community Youth Organization" (to build a movement of youth from pavement and slum communities across the city and provide a platform for their cultural and educational activities), and "Voluntary Intervention with Deprived Children" (which began with recreational/educational activities as an entry into other pavement community problems). The second included "Involvement in the Housing Struggle" following the crisis provoked by the Supreme Court judgement in 1985 to allow evictions: campaigns, lobbying officials and parties, conducting awareness seminars and workshops, and international

networking. The third is typified by the "Legal Resources Centre", aimed at forming a panel of volunteer, socially committed lawyers for litigation, and providing legal education and research/documentation facilities. A particular focus on women has been achieved though the "Street" project, undertaking links with women's organizations, running programmes designed specifically for women's issues (e.g. domestic workers, single women), and providing advice on legal and housing rights. A similar project, "Street Children and Youth", addresses concerns such as shelter, drugs, police and remand home approaches, and employment.

This evolution has resulted from a collective decision within YUVA to discard the project approach, and to evolve into a structure capable of being proactive in dealing with major issues of national concern through long-term programmes. The concept of the "Mumbai City Project" emerged out of this analysis, where the following set of issues was identified for priority attention: the Rights of Housing, Women, Children, and Youth. Health, the Unorganized Sector and Consumerism were also considered important for further exploration. YUVA defines its characteristics as follows:

- Rootedness in the field — relevance of all policy and programme decisions to the field.
- Timely responses to issues and concerns.
- Work culture and infrastructure that enable it to respond to issues at a city level.
- Emphasis on process and process goals rather than quantifiable results — impact seen in terms of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Involvement in important national movements — Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement), Housing Struggle, etc.
- Combination of professionalism and activism, institutionalization and organizational work.
- Consciousness in focusing on issues of the most marginalized sections of society.
- Multi-level (from local grassroots level to national policy makers) and multi-action (confrontational to reformist) strategies
- Collaboration and networking.
- Willingness to take stands on broader political issues.
- Emphasis on investment in building human resources for change — both internal and external.

At the end of 1990, YUVA promised to observe the following four principles:

- To work with the most marginalized populations — women, youth, *dalit* (untouchables), minority groups, rural poor — through awareness, political education and people's organizations, to realize their rights and struggle for them.
- To link more closely with social movements dealing with environmental protection, women's liberation and those against communalism, to make a more humane society in which all people can live securely and with dignity.
- To hold a sharp political ideology and actively participate in political processes using democratic platforms, spaces and positions to achieve the rights of the poor.

- To align itself with all progressive forces to build a strong political movement in the struggle for people's rights.

WHITHER THE PEOPLE?

"Development is a continuous struggle to build a new humane society free from exploitation, based on equality, that promises a harmonious relationship between nature and society, and that maintains feminist principles as central".

"The play of market forces has sidelined humanitarian concerns as government progressively abandons the role of the Welfare State. Simultaneously, communalism stymies peoples' movements as it forces a wedge between communities. As GATT is ushered in, issues like street children and child labour are in danger of becoming entwined and distorted in the human rights and trade imbroglio. The City Project's objective of the empowerment of people to fight for their rights will therefore prove crucial in the coming phase".

"The City Project has failed to the extent that the unit remains underdeveloped, even as its experiences allow policy-level initiative. The sheer scope of the structure exhausted staff as they scrambled to deal with a plethora of issues. It is the external atmosphere that hobbled the City Project structure. Policies are being made and unmade at a frenetic pace. Acronyms like SAP, GATT, MNCs have become household words. The very landscape is altering rapidly under the onslaught of capitalism and urbanization. As the state withers, the question arises, Whither the people"?

Statements from YUVA members

PDO: Foootpathvashi Nagrik Sanghatana (Pavement Dwellers Citizens' Organization), Mumbai

Formed in late 1990 with the help of YUVA, PDO now has about 1,000 members and works with 41 pavement settlements along all three railway lines of Mumbai city (there are an estimated 600,000 pavement dwellers in Mumbai). YUVA has had contacts with pavement communities since 1985, when it began its Open Pavement School Programme and anti-eviction efforts. YUVA's present role is limited to one of facilitator: providing guidance, training, access to resources and information, and minimal administrative backup.

PDO has three main objectives. The first is to influence government policy in a more constructive rehabilitation direction rather than repeated, brutal evictions and demolitions. The second is to struggle for the basic human right of women, men and children of pavements to live in security and with dignity. Formed after a spate of evictions, PDO has lent mass support to

expose and rectify rights violations by the police — such as helping pavement dwellers retrieve confiscated belongings and take legal action against beatings. PDO has also helped dwellers obtain access to the public distribution system, e.g. ration cards, birth certificates — which also help establish legal proof of residence. The third objective, developed during the 1992 parliamentary elections, is that political parties are invited to state their position on pavement dwellers at open public meetings, with PDO members bargaining to place their charter of demands within party manifestos. A woman candidate has also been fielded in one ward.

Mass strength is demonstrated to party representatives at PDO-organized conventions, but individual lobbying also takes place with important bureaucrats and elected representatives. Transformation from a mentality of acceptance — that they, as pavement dwellers, are somehow outside the law, obtaining favour only through bribery or cajoling for handouts — to one of seeking entitlements as citizen's rights, is one of the group's main achievements. In the same vein, PDO is propagating a scheme for resettling pavement dwellers on land acquired by the government under the Urban Land Ceiling Act. The public is reached through a systematic press campaign, in which PDO members obtain the support of sympathetic reporters to write on their issues and struggles. Exchanges with pavement dwellers in other cities have also broadened their horizons.

> *"The vision of each pavement community — seeing its issues as isolated problems — has broadened to encompass a macro-vision that sees pavement settlement as a city-wide issue, with linkages to the land market, new economic policies, and communalization of society. Hence demands are also being articulated to encompass policy changes, versus accepting land for rehousing as a gift to protesting communities, or broadening the demands from housing-related matters only to issues affecting other spheres of living such as work and health. The issues to be taken up were decided in the community meetings".*
>
> *Conversations with PDO members*

PDO sees, however, many challenges for the future: involving many more women (now only 10 per cent), increasing outreach, facing threats from vested interests. Above all, PDO is conscious that "the present economic situation, worsened by the structural adjustment programme, will make survival more and more difficult for people. The welfare state's transformation means that the demands of marginalized people will receive even less attention".

Unnayan: Social Action Group, Calcutta

Unnayan describes itself a social action group, established in 1977 to provide professional services designed to "strengthen the struggles of communities of the labouring poor in Calcutta for their rights and development". An underlying premise of Unnayan's work is a critique of prevalent planning and development thinking, and a search, together with others, "for an alternative paradigm of development — one based on the

principles of social justice, and on the aspirations, skills, identities and cultures of different peoples which it helps to regenerate; and which is harmonious with the environment. Our work may be viewed as essentially 'human rights' work, but where this is redefined from a pluralist and development-oriented perspective".

Unnayan started through research and evaluation of post-disaster housing construction in the flood-stricken areas around the Bay of Bengal; it then provided support to the struggle for recognition of an important category of Calcutta's poor — some 75,000 hand-drawn rickshaw pullers. From the early 1980s, its activities "focused on the issue of housing rights: especially by supporting community organizations in unrecognized settlements in different parts of Calcutta; mobilizing such communities for gaining civil rights and services; campaigning against evictions; public interest legal action; research, documentation and publication; and supportive advocacy and networking, nationally and internationally".

As part of this latter work, Unnayan acted in the late 1980s as Secretariat to the National Campaign for Housing Rights, "to raise popular awareness about housing conditions and alternatives, and to build solidarity between different streams of social struggle and movements". With the same objective, it also became a member of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), helped to launch the Global Campaign for Housing Rights, and contributed towards an International Charter on Housing Rights.

An example of Unnayan's work in this area was in the aftermath of the nationwide Hindu-Muslim rioting that followed the razing of the mosque in Ayodhya when many Muslim huts were burned in Tangra (East Calcutta). Unnayan was among the first organizations on the scene to demonstrate solidarity with the victims and to help with practical reconstruction. In providing housing or livelihood benefits to specific poor urban communities, Unnayan works through projects and programmes that are funded either through the Indian government or foreign NGOs, while its modest operating budget has been largely subsidized by an international NGO (NOVIB).

AIDWA: All India Democratic Women's Association, Delhi

AIDWA is headquartered in the city of Delhi, but its 3.7 million members are spread throughout India in both rural and urban areas. Two thirds come from the single state of West Bengal, followed by Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Tripura; these five states, out of India's 18 states, account for 96 per cent of the AIDWA membership. AIDWA is affiliated to parties of the Left, and its presence is correspondingly stronger where their influence is greater.

It represents the concerns of poor and working-class women, and helps them in their struggles. In West Bengal, for instance, 30 per cent of the membership comes from the middle class, and 55 per cent of its members are poor peasants or agricultural labourers. The weight of the organization, therefore, is rural rather than urban.

The activities of AIDWA have tended to concentrate on campaigns about the major social issues affecting women, on organizational support and training, and on promoting the entry of local women directly into decision-making fora and positions. Some 24,000 women, a large percentage of whom belonged to the rural poor, backward castes and minority communities, stood for *Panchayat* (local government) elections in West Bengal, and a full third of those who were successful came from the AIDWA membership.

In Andhra Pradesh, AIDWA members effected a huge mobilization of women against alcoholism (the anti-*arrack* movement), which was partially successful in terms of legislation passed. National and country-wide campaigns conducted by AIDWA, together with other women's bodies and like-minded groups, have focused on anti-communal solidarity, and demonstrations against the government's New Economic Policies (NEP) of structural adjustment, liberalization, GATT agreements and privatization.

"We believe that our movements are basically political because they challenge the status quo: Therefore we have to see our movements in a particular context. How did these developments impact on women?"

In a bold self-critique, AIDWA looked at its own flawed experience in dealing with issues such as the New Economic Policies. Because it is geared to conducting general campaigns, and therefore concentrated on macro issues, AIDWA concedes that it has not focused adequately on the specific needs of specific sections of women. "For instance, in the urban slums where we work, a very large section of women are doing home-based work. In the context of the NEP, this type of work on a very low piece-rated basis is going to increase, with big firms farming out such work in garments and electronics. Although many surveys have been conducted by us among these sections and there is a clear idea of their position, no attempt has been made to organize them. Similarly, many self-employed women live in the areas where we have units, but we have not tried to address their specific problems such as loans and police harassment".

As part of its general assessment, AIDWA says: " There have been no big united struggles of women anywhere in the country in which AIDWA has not been an active participant. However, it needs to be reiterated that many other groups are heavily funded. On many occasions, having established contact with our activists at the grassroots in joint struggles, they offer them money to work with them. Out of economic necessity, there have been cases when our members join other groups who can pay them salaries. It is important to educate our activists of the different trends in the movement. Given the totally counter-productive influence of heavy foreign funding, a committed political consciousness is required to sustain voluntary work".

As volunteer-based organizations, there are some similarities between the AIDWA and important human rights organizations such as the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and the People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR), both of which are all-India bodies that span the concerns of urban as well as rural populations.

The Bengal Social Service League (Mass Literacy Campaign), Calcutta

The Bengal Social Service League (one of the country's oldest NGOs, started in 1919), is the designated State Resource Centre (SRC) in West Bengal for the preparation of materials, training courses and guidance to the volunteers who constitute the backbone of what has recently been termed the Total Literacy Campaign. It has spearheaded one of the most exciting developments in the Campaign, especially in the rural areas.

SRCs are a direct consequence of the depressingly slow spread of mass education, especially for women and girls, in the half-century since Independence. Over a decade ago, the government decided that — while education programmes must remain a state responsibility — major inroads could not be made purely through the bureaucracy and public system, and that people's involvement was needed to a much greater degree. The Total Literacy Campaign has encouraged much innovation and experimentation in the approaches adopted, and has led to an exchange of experiences between states. Most of the SRCs are NGOs, and their responsibilities have grown or shrunk with the relative degree of conceptual and implementation capacity they have displayed.

The Bengal Social Service League has given much emphasis to awareness raising and critical analysis of the environment. Over 100,000 volunteers are engaged in training the population, and even those administering the programmes are either volunteers or delegated staff from the district administrations. In fact, district civil services have been a major moving force behind the whole campaign, committing themselves and their staff to it wholeheartedly.

The *Panchayats* in the villages have similarly felt a large degree of "ownership" in the literacy campaign. This has been one of the rare examples of an effective alliance between committed volunteers, NGOs, public administrators and local government, which — if extended to other areas — has very significant potential for the future. Part of the reason for a poorer performance in urban areas is the lack of strong public counterpart structures at the community level, of either local government or local administrative authority, parallel to what now exists in the countryside.

MKSS: Workers and Peasants Movement, Rajasthan

The MKSS workers and peasants' movement developed, with the support of volunteer social activists, as a people's organization in a poor rural district of the most feudal state of India — Rajasthan — less than a decade ago. Starting with campaigns to ensure the payment of minimum wages in the so-called poverty alleviation and employment generation schemes of the government, the MKSS moved to establishing co-operatively run food and ration shops to break the power of exploitative intermediaries, and is currently engaged in a highly promising initiative for empowering people.

MKSS is committed to the holding of public hearings in people's courts on the mismanagement of public schemes — on how money meant to provide

services is being siphoned off by so-called public servants and politicians — and on bringing cases of corruption to light and holding individuals and institutions accountable. The opportunity this has created for people to come forward and speak out for the first time has enormous scope for renewing their faith in social participation. It has brought the accountability of public administration into the open. And it presents the option of truly democratic decision-making, rather than the populist sloganeering which has become the norm for the electoral process.

Volunteer Artisan Trainers, Nepal, India, Bhutan and Sri Lanka

This initiative, encouraged as an experiment by the UNV programme, is based on the knowledge and experience of master craftspeople and remote artisan groups involved with weaving (by women), bamboo and leather work in the four countries. It has been able to draw on "barefoot" volunteer artisan trainers and exchange visits as important catalysts of artisan development. It has also helped to make them conscious of common problems and threats to their future throughout the sub-region. A gradual realization has taken place of the negative impact on artisan development of the prevailing "mainstream" economic models and associated policies being followed by governments on pricing, foreign investment, export promotion and trade issues.

This has led artisan representatives to emphasize the importance of an alternative artisan-based "style of life" and production system — strongly rooted in local cultures and traditions, respectful of the environment, sustainable in terms of available resources, and capable of capitalizing on the true skill-based comparative advantage of the current "Third World" in international trade.

Successes in building experimental volunteer alliances between the artisans and influential "patrons" among professionals such as lawyers, economists and scientists, corporate executives and financiers, and media personalities, as well as foundations and technical institutes, provide good indications of future programme directions. The experience gained has also highlighted the need to match or "broker" the growing thirst for culturally distinct hand-crafted products in the affluent countries with the increasing pool of unemployed artisans in low-income countries who are being forced to leave their trade. Without conscious intervention to create alternative marketing and information channels — initially stimulated through volunteer mechanisms — the demand-supply equation is unlikely to be made in time. Invaluable skills and artistic traditions will be irretrievably lost.

Alternative, Volunteer Models of Social Organization

The discussion under this heading focuses on efforts to enhance collective welfare, social solidarity, and participatory decision-making. In some instances this extends to organizing economic activities to minimize the role of individual material incentives. In others, the focus may be on implementing and maintaining real democratic and participative practices in running the affairs of the group. Conditions of repression sometimes appear to stimulate the strongest responses of this kind of "micro-scale democracy". In the following cases we observe in Lima a residents' association in which the practice of democratic decision-making is inherent in meeting the association's long term goal: fostering the development of a community in which all the residents "can be someone". In a second case, also in Lima, we see how women volunteers in an association of self-managed community kitchens take on additional volunteer burdens as workers in micro-enterprises sponsored by the association. In effect, they donate what would be a large part of their wages to the association, which, in turn, re-invests the funds in its income- and non-income generating projects. Survival needs prompt a similar collective enterprise in a fishermen's co-operative in the wetlands of Calcutta. Finally, a tannery worker's union was able to establish education services for its members and their families, after it had won credibility for its representation of workers' concerns in a protracted struggle.

FDAH: Front for the Development of Human Settlements, Lima

The FDAH (Frente de Desarrollo de Asentimientos Humanos) is a neighbourhood organization of over 1,400 families living in 13 small contiguous low-income settlements in the area of Carabayllo, 18 kilometres to the north of downtown Lima. Forty-four per cent of the families suffer critical nutritional deficiencies and 80 per cent have restricted access to clean water; the rest have no access. Only half of the 35 tons of trash dumped daily is collected. Delinquency and natural disaster are constant threats. Assaults and robbery of homes are common. The region is seismically active and the land on which the settlement sits is extremely fluid. The siting of a nuclear power plant in the vicinity is a cause for great concern.

Most of the residents of Carabayllo migrated from very poor departments, among them Ancash, Cajamarca, Apurimac, Ayacucho, Piura, Huanuco, La Libertad and Huancavelica. On average these families have lived in Carabayllo for 12 years, although some of the earlier settlers in the community arrived in the 1970s.

The FDAH was established in October 1988, at the instigation of a group of long-time residents, principally to gain title to lands that they had either obtained or occupied illegally. (Some residents had "purchased" the land from unscrupulous agents and thus held false titles; others simply took possession of it and built their homes.) The FDAH seeks to bring basic public services to its members and to improve the communities' physical and social environment.

A second axis of FDAH's activities seeks to alter social processes and values. In the words of one of FDAH's leaders, "...to be citizens it is not enough to have a house or a village that is more or less inhabitable; rather there must be other elements that allow the resident to recognize his own self-worth". While FDAH has not defined explicitly the means for achieving this, it claims they are being formed in the daily practice of democratizing the diverse spaces of life in the community. First, the organizational structure of FDAH is founded on the potential of the Committees of Promotion and Development, formed by neighbours at block level. These micro-organizations attend to matters directly related to the life of the neighbours on the block. They are the basic cells of participative life in the neighbourhood and occupy themselves with, in many cases, the nutrition and health of children and pregnant women. This is the level at which the community kitchens, "glass-of-milk" committees, and health centres develop. These have another organizational dynamic, as they are involved in other more specialized federations.

Second, the "human settlement" is an organization of residents with a specific name that is recognized by the local government. The leaders of this social unit are a group of persons who assume, among other roles, those of governing, directing and searching for benefits for the whole of the population. They are also charged with looking after the security and development of the population. They are responsible for resolving conflicts within the organization and serve as ambassadors in other spaces. Generally, the leaders at this level are elected democratically.

Third, the FDAH is a body of residents — a mode of confederating territorially contiguous social units — organized to address the necessities of life. In fact, the concern for implementation of basic infrastructure (light, water, sanitation) for housing has its complement in the concern for improving the environment (streets, sidewalks and development of green spaces). The organizational purpose of FDAH encompasses a plan and its development, with the selection of directives determined in an electoral process. This includes lists of candidates and programmes and a secret universal vote of the members of the social units concerned. Incumbents serve for two years; their terms can be renewed.

These groups tend to institutionalize democratizing mechanisms in social relations. The dynamic life of these organizations is activated by the so-called "commissions", which are the instrumental arm of the organizations. In effect, no action is decided on by the organization that is not approved by this group, which has the responsibility to plan, operate and report on the actions that were selected. Commission members are chosen for personal

characteristics that will be most effective when establishing political relationships or handling economic transactions.

WEALTH — AND AUTHORITARIAN ORDER

"In recent years, instead of reinforcing the institutionalization of popular organizations as a democratizing political practice, we have been involved in a process of depoliticization, surrendering social and political organization to the guidance of the economic principles of supply and demand. For this reason, direct democracy as lived at the level of grassroots organizations has no correlation in national democratic life. The national life, moreover, seems to submit to the neo-liberal economic régime and to authoritarian politics. The old theme that progress — the production and accumulation of profits from wealth — is inseparable from the required order of a rightist régime is presented as a unilinear and inexorable process".

Interview with an FDAH activist

Central de Comedores de Tahuantinsuyo: Tahuantinsuyo Association of Community Kitchens, Lima

Not long after the first self-managed community kitchens began operation in the mid-1970s, they started to associate and share experiences, develop new capacities and, eventually, achieve economies of scale. Since individual kitchens operated with minimal infrastructure, it was very difficult to absorb bulk donations of food from agencies. Federations of individual kitchens, or *centrales*, as they became known, helped to overcome this limitation. They also made it possible for the kitchens to pool financial and labour resources to support other activities for the extended community, such as health posts, recreational facilities and, more recently, micro-enterprises.

The Central de Comedores de Tahuantinsuyo — a federation of some 40 individual kitchens in the Tahuantinsuyo sector of the Independencia district of Lima — shows how one such grouping is attempting to organize small income generating ventures. Their purpose is to provide a source of funds that can be invested by the Central for the benefit of the communities where the member kitchens operate.

This experience reflects the commitment of the women of the community to organize their economic activities to emphasize collective effort and collective benefit, with the goal of reinforcing solidarity, rather than allowing it to be eroded by market/competitive forces.

For the first projects of the Central, members chose kerosene sales (for domestic use), a confectionery, a food store and a rabbit-raising venture. Different combinations of members from the base units comprising the Central participate in each effort. In part this has been a function of the technology employed and the capacities of the members of the individual

kitchens. In general, however, the tasks for each of the efforts are shared by the members through a system of rotation or "turns", not unlike the work of the kitchens themselves.

As with the work in the kitchens, women in the income generating projects are not paid a salary. Instead, each receives a subsidy to cover part of the costs incurred in fulfilling her task within the micro-enterprise.

The women's contributions are defined as "volunteer" or "solidarity effort", in that the benefits of their work accrue first to the collective and then to the individual. The system of "turns" reinforces the communal or co-operative nature of the work. Individual effort does not generate property rights. And while the members collaborate as part of the venture, they do not acquire rights to do so on a "permanent" basis.

These small ventures have been operating between 18 months and three years. They appear to be successful: the members of the Central continue to participate in them, and have implemented new projects as well. These include offering transport services, raising animals on a larger scale, and establishing a full service grocery store. Each of the new ventures required capital investments: a truck for transport services, agricultural land for raising animals, and a permanent space for a full-service grocery. The profits of the other ventures were the main source of funds for these investments.

The basic feature of the model is that it is sustained by the volunteer effort of its members.

- The voluntary effort of the member of the community kitchen who works in the venture is converted into funds to be used by the Central.
- The subsidy that the kitchen member receives for her work permits her to cover the costs of her participation. It is in no case a market wage. The member's capacity to generate funds for the Central is due to her volunteer work. If the workers were paid a market wage there would be virtually no profit for the Central.
- The system of "turns" helps to generate in the members a sense of collective responsibility. No one assumes personally more rights than anyone else. This discourages fragmentation and makes it easier to assume that the profits or benefits should go to the common fund.

The difference between these undertakings and those of greater complexity, or ventures that require more volunteer inputs, depends upon the different capacities of the organizations from which their members are drawn. The capacities of the older kitchens tend to be greater than those formed more recently. In part this results from the younger women — who entered the community kitchen movement more recently — expecting higher recompense for the time they invest in the economic undertakings of the Central. These ventures are characterized by low profitability and the capacity to be extensive (because of their simplicity), e.g. raising rabbits. Lending money to such efforts does not compromise the resources of the Central. Transparency and non-exclusion are important.

Women's labour is often only available in the middle of the day and not always every day of the week. There is not high market demand for this kind of labour. Thus the opportunity cost for women's labour may be very low. However, if market demand for women's labour changed, as during the Programme for Temporary Income, members would have the opportunity for alternative employment, and it would be more difficult for the Central to have recourse to the "volunteer effort".

WBTMU: The West Bengal Tannery Mazdoor Union, Calcutta

East Calcutta constitutes, in the areas of Tangra, Tiljala and Topsia, a major focus of India's animal hide industry, accounting for some Rs 5,000 million annually in exports (20 per cent of the national total). For generations, it has been neglected as the filthy backyard of the city, outside the reach of civic services, most of its inhabitants poor migrants living in sub-human environmental conditions. The workers in the tanneries are either *harijans* (scheduled castes) or Muslims who migrated from the rural areas of neighbouring states because of poverty, exploitation and caste oppression. In Tangra, tannery owners are mainly of Chinese origin, running tightly controlled family businesses. After the war with China in 1962, the Chinese community felt insecure, and converted the workers' status from permanent to casual labourers, hired on a piece-work basis. Thus was born the need for a union. The initial phase in the early 1970s was resisted strenuously by the owners, through the use of strong-arm tactics. The first charismatic leader of the movement, Banarsi Das, was murdered by hired thugs in 1978.

The Union today has over 6,000 members from the three East Calcutta areas. It has been able to improve significantly the workers' terms of employment (with the exception of long-term security), including minimum wages, leave entitlements and fixed gratuities. More importantly, the marginalized groups who constitute the membership have gained confidence in their education, awareness and organizational capacity. They will need all their abilities in their future struggle, as the existence of the tanneries has been threatened, with the Supreme Court and the government determined to move this source of pollution to a distant location. The social and economic implications for the workers and the tannery community as a whole do not appear to have received much consideration.

Harijan leader Ram Vilas Ram, Secretary of WBTMU, comments: "Towards the end of the 1960s, we started a *samity* (association) called the Gram Suraksha Samity (Village Protection Association) with the objective of doing social work for our community. We have taken steps to set up primary and high schools; in one school, there are 1,100 children, mostly *harijans*. We have realized that illiteracy and not understanding our rights have kept us backward. Unless we educate our children, there is no way to go forward as a community".

MFCS: Mudiali Fishermen's Co-operative Society, Calcutta

As an example of sustainable resource management practised by one of the poorest communities in a sewage and industrial effluent-dumping zone, the

Mudiali Fishermen's Co-operative — operating in the Calcutta wetlands — is a particularly innovative case. Its establishment was a major volunteer self-help initiative, and is one of the few examples in Bengal of a successful production and income-sharing co-operative.

The Co-operative has leased 200 hectares annually since 1961 from the Calcutta Port Trust, with funds pooled from its 100 shareholders, and has been able to maintain an efficient sewage-recycling system, create a nature park, and produce approximately 300 tons per annum of carp varieties for the Calcutta market. Not only has it protected a highly valued and scarce resource — an ecological reserve in an otherwise densely populated and polluted city — but it has also provided 400 fishing families (some 2,400 people) with an adequate livelihood. Now the entire community investment is threatened by the Port Trust's plans to fill the land with concrete, following the West Bengal State government's desire to attract fresh industrial investment from abroad for the development of real estate in hotels, offices and shopping plazas.

In order to protect their 30-year investment, the Co-operative has accepted volunteer support — this time from environmental groups in Calcutta and a citizen's forum, Nagarik Mancha (see case study below) — and obtained a temporary stay order under a public litigation case. It also counts on the committed volunteer support of a particular official from the government's Fish Farmers' Development Authority, who finds himself with a policy paradox:

> *"Why is it that the potential investors of foreign capital in this city and State have been promised concessional land, labour, infrastructure and tax relief for goods and services that will face stiff competition in the world market, while investment (like that of the Co-operative) in natural resources such as fish, where the level of world competition is much lower, does not receive any support from the Government?"*

Conflict Resolution through Attitudinal Change

Civil, ethnic and communal/religious conflicts are all becoming more common (and more intractable) expressions of social disintegration than traditional inter-state wars for territorial gain. Governments often find themselves helpless to intervene through formal negotiation, legal and police methods. NGOs, CBOs, and peoples' organizations may be able to address fears and emotions at a more basic and direct level. On a structural level, they can also work to eliminate or reduce the pressures that lead to conflicts, or to help change attitudes that precipitate conflict. Earlier, we described the contributions of JANAM and SAHMAT in this area. In this section, we look at the extraordinary efforts undertaken by members of Local Peace Committees in the Johannesburg area to diffuse potentially violent confrontations in the months leading up to the historic elections in South Africa. We then turn to the important efforts by two different women's groups to halt communal violence in the slums of Mumbai.

Peace Committees/Peace Secretariat, Johannesburg

South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy has been described as a "miracle". Few countries with such great incidence of conflict and violence have been able to manage that conflict so creatively and effectively. Much of the credit for this goes to the local peace committees that were able to mobilize thousands of volunteers, who assumed a variety of tasks designed to assist the elections to take place as peacefully as possible.

Local Peace Committees (LPCs) formed the broad base of a three-level hierarchy of peace committees, including regional committees and a national umbrella committee. The main function of the regional committees was to establish the local committees and to provide them with training and technical support. The national committee was responsible for overall guidance. The LPCs are composed almost entirely of volunteers, and it is they who have been involved in the arduous and often life-threatening work of helping to maintain the integrity of the Peace Accords. The original objectives of LPCs were:

- To create and improve trust among community organizations and between these organizations and the police and defence force;
- To co-operate with local groups to combat violence and to settle disputes that arose within the community;
- To establish basic rules on which all groups could agree, which would work to decrease violent action, and which would encourage greater peace and co-operation.

To achieve these objectives, regional peace secretariats were set up toward the end of 1991 to facilitate the formation of the LPCs. The activities of the Wits/Vaal Regional Secretariat illustrates how this was done.

Towards the end of 1991, Charles Nupen, the director of the Independent Mediation Service of South Africa (IMSSA) was asked to chair the Wits/Vaal region and thus facilitate the formation of Local Peace Committees. Trouble spots were identified and all parties in these areas, including trained members or volunteers from the business community or church organizations, were called upon to participate in forums facilitated by IMSSA. As LPCs were established, regional meetings were held at IMSSA and local meetings within the communities. Training workshops were organized for the LPCs on such topics as negotiation skills, understanding the intentions of the Peace Accord, and working to build trust in what were often hostile environments.

Local Peace Committees vary in geographical and population size, scope of problems and in the focus of their activities.

Range of LPC Programmes

- *Dispute resolution in relation to community conflict/political violence, industrial conflict, land invasion/squatter issues and taxi conflicts.*
- *Monitoring activities, including the monitoring of industrial disputes, large public events and public gatherings, with the LPC acting as a sensor in the community to pick up tensions and mediate before conflict reaches the stage of violence.*
- *Police/community relations, including the establishment of community forums or sub-committees on police/community relations.*
- *Reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes.*
- *Media and publicity activities to inform the community of the presence of the structure.*
- *Workshops and training so that staff and volunteers are equipped to respond to the needs of their particular community.*

In addition to these core programmes, each LPC has designed further programmes to address the needs of their own local communities. The needs and dynamics within each local community vary greatly, and for this reason each LPC is different — but all represent a legitimate and inclusive forum with problem solving capacity.

Peace committees provided the first legitimate forum where conflicting parties came together to discuss common interests and resolve conflicts. The inclusiveness of the structure, encompassing a wide range of political, civic, business and church representatives, has been a great strength. The comprehensiveness of the consultation that occurred in the process of setting up local peace committees has also added to their effectiveness. Participation in these fora has brought about a sense of ownership and

empowerment, and has benefited participants on an individual and collective basis. Because of the consensual culture of participation, the peace structures have become a legitimate forum for ordinary people and community leaders to solve difficult problems constructively.

Legitimacy is in itself a crucial component of capacity. The achievements of Local Peace Committees have earned legitimacy, credibility and acceptability from a variety of role-players and their constituencies. Legitimacy is both a cause and a result of capacity. Legitimacy and credibility have been won because of hard-earned collective experience in problem solving on the ground — between different organizations and role-players, and between these organizations and the community.

An example in this regard is the collective resolution of taxi conflicts between taxi associations operating from three separate townships (Duduza, Tsakane and KwaThema/Springs) in November 1993. Taxi associations were unable to agree on routes to be used, but Local Peace Committees from the three townships represented the community interest and, through their collective leverage, were able to persuade the taxi associations to accept a resolution. In this instance, community representatives were actively involved in the mediation between the LPCs and the taxi associations — they communicated their demands to peace committee representatives, who represented them in the mediation and reported back to their constituencies on a daily basis. The outcome of the mediation was favourable to them and they had witnessed, first-hand, the problem solving capacity of the local peace committee structures.

The environment of a Local Peace Committee is non-threatening for ordinary people who want to contribute. Youth have been well integrated into their activities. The Congress of South African Students (COSAS), even though it was not a Peace Accord signatory, has joined the regional organization and participates in a number of Local Peace Committees. At least two LPCs (KwaThema/Springs and Benoni) have been instrumental in solving problems and conflicts that have arisen between COSAS and the Pan African Students Organization (PASO).

Rah-e Haqq: "The way to our rights", Mumbai

Unusual for being one of only two active Muslim women's groups in Mumbai, Rah-e Haqq (RH) was formed six years ago, and opened to all women in the slum community of Jogeshwari. In practice, RH is composed primarily of Sunni Muslim women who are poor and working class. There are a few Hindu women who also participate, but their role appears to have been peripheral so far.

Rah-e Haqq emerged out of a Women Animator's Training Programme (WATP) conducted by YUVA (Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action, see above) in 1988/1989. The six Muslim women selected from Jogeshwari had all been active in community affairs, and were expected to benefit most from the WATP philosophy, which viewed training "as a medium of liberation, as a process of reaching out by which women develop their ability to assert themselves. . . . The emphasis here is on the sharing of experiences and skills, with the notable absence of a teacher-student

relationship". The course content emphasized (1) housing issues, including legal rights of slum dwellers, their rights to civic amenities such as water, sanitation and rationing, and the methods of social action useful for realizing these rights; and (2) gender analysis of issues such as work, health, law and violence against women.

After the WATP, mobilization of women in the community began, with the six women and YUVA workers acting as catalysts. From the first set of issues, which concerned garbage collection and the maintenance of public toilets, the group moved to more contentious social issues such as the inequities and suffering caused by the dowry system. In one month in 1990, there were six dowry deaths in Jogeshwari alone, provoking awareness-raising discussions on the causes of violence against women.

A woman from RH was then put forward as a candidate for the municipal elections. Despite her losing, and a subsequent failure of RH's agitation in support of teachers at a local high school to have their salaries paid, participation in these processes has been essential in appreciating the strength of the opposition, in understanding how the administrative system actually works, and therefore how better to select and prepare for future struggles. Opposition from conservative members of the community, for instance, has led to RH being stigmatized, not only as feminist but even as anti-Islamic in the eyes of some.

"During riots, the women have spontaneously participated in vigilance, dispelling rumours, contacting police, and actually confronting mobs to prevent them from rioting. . . . The group has close ties with Hindu women's groups in the neighbouring areas, holding joint programmes to promote communal harmony and social integration, and expressing their solidarity with each other as women across communal lines. This provides a source of strength, particularly when communal tensions are heightened".

WLA: Women Litigants' Association, Mumbai

Three years after its formation, WLA now has a membership of about 100 women, dedicated to making legislation more pro-women; to bringing about procedural changes within the Family Court, so that it functions more even-handedly and loses its patriarchal family bias; and to acting as an internal support system for women litigants.

The initial group of 34 women came from different religious and caste backgrounds and lived in slum communities across Mumbai. Their bond was established on the basis of their common experience of the unequal relationships between men and women in society, through their families, personal laws, and the operation of the Family Court. This Court had been established as a radical departure from normal civil proceedings, with emphasis on family conciliation rather than rigid procedure, but its operation was perceived to have generally worked to the detriment of women.

WLA has met the need for a forum for women litigants to meet and share problems with and knowledge of the law and legal system, in order to design a collective-supportive response which is more effective than a case-by-case

approach. Community meetings with the women are held once a week, while WLA itself meets once a month. The meetings provide information on how to file appeals, draft petitions, register FIRs (First Information Reports), and represent one's case in court. They also encourage reflection on the relative success of the strategies adopted, and offer mutual support for the undertaking of joint actions. Live-in workshops to familiarize women with the law and legal system also take place regularly, where films, songs and other audio-visual techniques are employed.

WLA's first major campaign was against the Family Court: the anti-women bias of judges, harassment, delays and gaps in procedures, and the lack of facilities. "The campaign had a tremendous impact, and the presiding judge of the Mumbai High Court took up the issues for review and action. Members have also directly supported women in confrontation cases against their husbands/families — compelling a husband to pay maintenance, for example, and retrieving a woman's ornaments and belongings from the marital home from which she had been evicted. Today, the WLA has definite identity in the city, and members have obtained recognition by the court staff. They have also been able to build a relationship with counsellors and principal judges. Confidence to talk to the judge in his chambers, as well as to represent one's own case, has also emerged. One finds women getting exposed to broader gender issues such as population policies and housing issues".

In order to overcome the floating nature of the WLA group of women — based as it is on the number and scope of pending cases — efforts are being made to develop a core group of women litigants to function as counsellors to other women, taking on certain tasks at the court. As part of a federation of small women's groups from slum communities throughout Mumbai, WLA is itself a member of the Women's Platform, through which it expresses its concerns and opinions on broad gender and development issues with an impact on slum women.

Innovative Models of Service Delivery, Justice and Crime Prevention

In dealing with many kinds of social ills, local groups pioneer new approaches and adapt existing ones to local conditions and resources. In this section we review a series of four initiatives. In Rio de Janeiro, a small group of activist/researchers are pioneering more appropriate approaches in extending assistance and education to homeless children. In Chalco, outside Mexico City, a group of educators have adapted an educational programme to address concretely the most pressing problems of the community. In São Paulo, a local university and a neighbourhood association jointly develop and implement a lower cost and healthier alternative to publicly constructed workers' housing. Resident participation in the design and construction process, and crucial assistance of the university in lobbying the government to approve the building project were key elements in the success of the project. In North St. Louis, Illinois, a local group of mostly elderly citizens has developed a highly effective community crime prevention programme. In Johannesburg, the Center for Peace Action is attempting to find ways reduce the extraordinarily high level of day-to-day violence in the township of Eldorado Park.

Ex-Cola (Ex-Glue) Project, Rio de Janeiro

The Ex-Glue Project in Rio de Janeiro recognizes that incarceration, institutionalization, half-way homes or a return to an abusive family — the primary approaches to the problem of "street children" — rarely solve the problem. In practice, the child, more often than not, is further victimized. Among the project's chief successes has been a series of innovations to help such children minimize the hazards they face daily, and nightly, on the streets. The main component of the project is an educational programme designed to provide the children with:

> *"a kind of education in which philosophy plays a primary role, promoting thinking as a way to welfare in the world. In that sense, the provocation that is inherent to many of the actions developed by the project is fundamental — not only aimed at focusing on the reality experienced by homeless children, but also at providing them with information".*

The project stems from the recognition that the numbers of children on the street will continue to grow unless there are major structural changes in Brazilian society. That being the case, the project seeks to develop an educational programme to help children lead a healthier, more secure existence while remaining on the streets. Much of the work of the project takes place there, where they live, and mostly at night, when they run the highest risk of abuse or extermination.

The first step is for the teacher/researchers to establish contact with the children and begin to build trust with them. This often must be done while allowing the children to continue using the shoemaker's glue that they sniff regularly. Only gradually do the teachers attempt to wean the children from their dependency. This is done by engaging their curiosity and interest in learning, rather than by denunciation of the drug itself. The next phase involves basic information about the body, health and physical safety, with the eventual goal of leading the children to medical care, school and a return to family life. At the same time, the teachers systematically look for opportunities to help the children understand the causes of their plight, and to help them develop the capacity for making informed decisions about living, growing and developing their creativity during the time they remain on the streets.

The Ex-Glue Project believes that because of the cultural diversity of Brazilian society, the information and techniques of assistance developed in Rio de Janeiro may not be applicable elsewhere. They are also concerned that large organizations, especially those sponsored by the state, are not an appropriate base for developing the kinds of information and tools needed to work effectively with homeless children; nor are they appropriate for delivering services to them.

Instead, the Ex-Glue Project proposes a form of social franchising via a transfer of experience to other groups in civil society, possibly small NGOs or community groups. They fear that the expansion of the method into a large-scale project with the corresponding resources will result in manipulation for the benefit of others, rather than the children on the street.

Influencing public opinion also has an important place in the project's work, and it approaches the task with flexibility and imagination. In addition to dialogue, the project employs "mockery, irony, tricks, recovering the role of laughter and surprise. It searches for new forms of communication with society, and uses whatever language necessary to make effective political statements".

One of the project's most successful efforts was a Singing Conference, involving a band made up of homeless children and professional musicians. They performed 13 songs about life on the streets, some composed by the group and others with the aid of outsiders. Between songs, the children told stories or read brief texts on their experiences. They also recorded the music and readings from the Singing Conference as an album. According to the project, the Singing Conference is a more efficient method for addressing a general audience and influencing opinion than the publication of another magazine or newspaper article. The performers are now giving concerts in slums, universities and public schools.

CDCJD: Centro de Desarrollo Communitario Juan Diego, Mexico City

On the outskirts of Mexico City on top of a dry lake bed lies Chalco, one of the most rapidly urbanizing areas in the country. It is environmentally inhospitable and distant from places of work for most of its inhabitants, who

are largely migrants from other parts of Mexico. Daily commutes to work of several hours, a severely degraded environment, inadequate urban services and extremely low levels of income are the shared reality faced by most of Chalco's residents.

The CDCJD seeks to counteract the most serious impacts of this reality by promoting and implementing programmes for communities with scarce economic resources, and by helping families to improve their life in the areas of education, health, nutrition, social welfare, employment and housing. The part of the Centre's work that has gone farthest and has been recognized for its successes is the educational programme of the high school, described in the words of the co-ordinator:

> *"Since its inception CDCJD has sought to initiate an educational process of community development that begins with the daily necessities of the population of the valley, and extends to the formation of communities capable of recognizing, analysing and solving their own problems in a self-directed way. This involves recognition of their own possibilities and limitations, learning to optimize resources, and to manage, produce or obtain those which are not their own. They do so in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility, aiming to formulate a plan for community life and to bring it to fruition.*
>
> *"At the high school, we are touching upon issues of urban life in poor metropolitan areas which are commonly recognized as central. Our focus is educational but conceived in such a way as to include community actions involving both students and parents. Academically, we have been able to adapt the program — its subjects, times, and pace — to the students' general interests and personal preferences.*
>
> *"We are having good results against all expectations, given the volatile nature of the neighbourhood and the limited goals these youth generally express. Success is measured by the students' ability to learn by themselves, through the written word mostly, what their work or their interests demand".*
>
> *Gabriel Cámara, CDCJD Educational Co-ordinator*

The school curriculum emphasizes basic intellectual skills and centres on the regional realities that lead to action in the community. These already include:

- A network of independent communication through cassettes prepared by and for local families;
- Construction of dry toilets;
- Production of ecological stoves;
- AIDS prevention;
- Daily preparation of healthy food at school;
- Regular discussion of major problems;

- Student-to-student tutorials to spread learning at the base; and
- Recycling and sanitation.

A major criterion of success is the quality and efficacy of the actions undertaken to change the urban situation. The circulating cassettes prepared at the school contain information and opinions, for example, about issues that are generally censored in the media, and therefore lead to public debate and participation. The study of public works in Chalco is a means to reassess the costs and benefits of urban infrastructure in view of other alternatives and from the perspectives of the families — not those of the politicians or the big construction companies.

Undoubtedly the most important single element in the high school is the democratic nature of the group, which includes both teachers and students. "Not that everybody has a right", says the co-ordinator, "to perform any function, but that each has a chance to perform at his or her own capacity, and to decide on common issues. Commitment and creativity depend, for us, on such a horizontal structure".

AMAI: Residents' Association of Arco Iris, São Paulo

AMAI came into being in 1983, organized by a group of São Paulo slum families searching for a place to live. By the time AMAI had legally incorporated itself in 1986, 212 families had joined the Association and had identified the Grajau region of the São Paulo Municipality as the place where they would acquire land and build their homes. The population of the area had been growing rapidly because of the availability of both inexpensive land and industrial employment nearby. But competition for the residential land was intense, as evidenced by an increase of *favela* (precarious housing on illegally occupied land) dwellers in the area by 500 per cent in the previous four years.

AMAI's first task was to pressure the municipal government into turning land over to its members, with the eventual expectation that they would obtain legal title, be allowed to construct homes, and receive basic urban services. In June of 1987, the municipality granted title to 82 families and provided funds for construction materials. That only one third of the original number of Association members received land demonstrates that AMAI did not achieve its stated objective. However, to accomplish even this limited gain, the members of AMAI had to develop a range of different strategies to pressure the government, resist brutal police repression and obtain the recognition and assistance of other movements, political parties and representatives of the Catholic Church. Although AMAI's experience has its unique aspects, the process just described is broadly similar to other such efforts in São Paulo, and indeed, elsewhere in Brazil and Latin America.

AMAI did, however, join in a novel experiment in the design and construction of its housing. Prior to acquiring its lands, AMAI learned of a housing construction project developed at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP). Since the funding for the construction was to come from the municipality, it had an interest in building the homes for AMAI itself

through one of the municipal housing construction companies. These homes would be 18m^2. With the same budget, under the UNICAMP scheme, AMAI members would be able to build modular homes of 42m^2. Moreover, the UNICAMP method would yield a higher quality product, not degrade natural resources, and be sensitive to local cultural traditions. It would also involve the residents and build on their knowledge, making the process both efficient and self-managed.

The UNICAMP technology seeks fundamentally to re-establish the dignity of worker's housing, and to constitute a socio-economic alternative for popular (housing) movements and municipal housing programmes. In addition to the size difference between the UNICAMP and municipality housing, the UNICAMP process permitted and encouraged the participation and engagement of the community in the design and construction of their homes.

In its agreement with AMAI, the housing laboratory of UNICAMP committed itself to working with the community, both in training the manual labour (the home-owners themselves) and monitoring the construction. Even more crucial was the strong sense of solidarity with the community displayed by the UNICAMP professionals, without whose intervention in negotiations with the municipality the project would not have been approved, nor the construction funds forthcoming.

These negotiations were difficult and drawn-out, requiring contact with many parts of the municipal administration. Finally, it took a political decision to overcome the objections of the municipal engineers and construction companies, both of whom were committed to the construction of the minuscule row houses that were going up in the suburban *barrios*.

BREM Social Ministries, North St. Louis, Illinois

After a long decline in the local economy of St. Louis, and the flight of many residents to the suburbs, the many abandoned buildings in the neighbourhood had become home to a thriving drug trade by the 1980s. In response to the problem, over the past decade the residents in BREM's area have implemented a series of both conventional and innovative techniques to force the drug trade out of the area. These activities, organized by residents, include a crime watch, surveillance by walking around, neighbourhood welcome cards, a police relations programme, vigils for victims of crime, family education and intervention, crime prevention through environmental design, and anti-crime marches.

BREM's innovations consist of a set of three volunteer activities for monitoring the neighbourhood for illegal activities. First, it convinced the local police force to change its patterns of work and communications technology to allow residents to report crimes in progress in a way that would preserve the anonymity of the witness. Before the changes, police officers in patrol cars would verify the reports by visiting the home of the witness within half an hour of receiving the crime report. Neighbourhood residents considered this a dangerous practice, since drug dealers would have a good idea why the police were visiting a normally law-abiding neighbour. As many potential crime reporters were elderly, the fear of

retaliation from criminals discouraged many of them from contacting the police. Once the new communication technology had been adopted, crime reporters were able to convey information directly to officers on patrol. Also, the police force agreed that it was no longer necessary to obtain personal verification of the residents' reports.

BREM's second innovation sought to reduce traffic into the neighbourhood for the purpose of purchasing drugs. As part of the crime watch campaign, residents would note down the license number of unfamiliar vehicles that had been seen entering the neighbourhood on a regular basis and whose purposes were suspect. The residents would then turn over the license numbers to the police who would, in turn, notify BREM of the name and address of the vehicle's owner.

> *BREM's Drugs and Crime Task Force would then send a personalized letter to the car owner informing him/her that the automobile had been observed in the neighbourhood several times by crime watch reporters. The letter encouraged these "visitors" to feel safe and secure when visiting the neighbourhood for legal purposes in light of the community's effective crime watch programme. The letter went on to warn those who visited the neighbourhood for illicit purposes of the likelihood of surveillance and arrest.*

BREM's third innovation, again requiring a high degree of co-operation from local residents, was Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. When local residents were unable, because of their limited budgets, to follow the city's recommendation to light their porches every day to discourage criminal activity, BREM developed a system whereby families living at odd numbered street addresses lit their porches on odd numbered days of the month, while those living at even numbered addresses lit their porches during even numbered days of the month.

The Centre for Peace Action, Eldorado Park Township, Johannesburg

The Centre for Peace Action was conceived as a community psychology project aimed at intervening in the epidemic of violence in the township. Originally launched from the Health Psychology Unit of the University of South Africa — where it is still based — the project sought to locate itself in the township of Eldorado Park, drawing its volunteers and helpers from the township itself. The project was officially founded in early 1992 as the Eldorado Park Violence Prevention Programme, and its stated mission was to attempt to reduce violence in the area through community and personal empowerment.

The thinking of the founders of the project was based on the belief that overt political violence — seen as inherent in the apartheid system — was receiving extensive local and international media coverage at the expense of the more insidious, day-to-day interpersonal violence that pervaded society. Moreover, while the sources of political violence were readily traced to socio-economic and political conditions, interpersonal violence was often

dismissed as "criminality", with the blame being placed on the personal shortcomings of the individuals themselves. Thus, while political violence was seen as social in origin, interpersonal violence was presented as an individual phenomenon.

A further guiding premise was that successful intervention would require both a top-down and a bottom-up approach. Top-down interventions had to address structural issues such as the provision of decent housing, adequate services, accountability, community policing, general improvement of living conditions and better access to quality education.

There was also the realization that because violence had become so commonplace among the oppressed, most coped with it by desensitizing themselves to its occurrence. They either suppressed their true feelings or else psychologically insulated themselves and their families from its horrors. To bring this to the surface could only be achieved by working from below. Opportunities had to be created for people to explore and transform those aspects of their own lives and environments that had been distorted by apartheid and the violence it brought.

The CPA sees itself as structured on a five-tier pyramid model. Levels I and II — where it is currently operating — are designed to achieve a presence and involvement in the community. Emphasis at this stage is placed on the Centre's visibility and the degree and quality of community involvement in its activities. Levels III, IV and V are envisaged as flowing from the success of this early engagement. Level III should occur after the Centre has established itself, and the focus here will be on community development. This is seen as a prerequisite for level IV, which involves attitudinal changes, and finally — at level V — a reduction in violence.

Currently the CPA consists of seven core projects:

1. **Women's Services**: This programme addresses issues related to violence against women and the empowerment of women. It is run by volunteer-trained counsellors and deals mostly with difficulties experienced by women in the workplace and at home. The programme includes individual or family counselling, support, activity and skills groups, advocacy services, community workshops, education projects, and services designed to alter attitudes to women within the community at large and among community workers in particular.

The Centre serves as the meeting place for these support and other activities. It also runs a school-based programme that deals with issues such as domestic violence and violence against women. Workshops are regularly hosted throughout the year. Training is also offered to organizations that are in contact with women, and covers the problems they experience in dealing with police, social workers and medical staff.

2. **Violence Intervention Based at Schools**: Given the violent nature of South African society, it is inevitable that this will have an impact on all levels of society. Most distressing is its impact on youth, particularly in the schools, where children have themselves either been the victims or

perpetrators of violence. This has had a detrimental effect on their abilities and potential to learn. The Centre's School-Based Violence Intervention Programme was designed to help pupils cope emotionally with both overt and more subtle forms of violence.

The programme includes: conflict management and dispute resolution, teacher enhancement training, assertiveness training, child abuse prevention and education, communication skills, academic support, and career guidance. Emphasis is placed on providing play activities, so that children can comfortably begin to address this serious topic.

3. **Family Services**: This programme offers counselling and support to families who are the victims of violence, whether it be child abuse, neglect or domestic violence. In cases of child abuse the programme provides therapeutic counselling for the children and their families, reconciliation services, and liaison with medical practitioners, police and schools. The family welfare services include marital and reconciliation counselling, parent effectiveness training, divorce counselling, and single parent support services. The final component of the programme is crisis intervention. This entails violence intervention, supportive counselling, referrals to other agencies for specialized services, and guidance on legal matters relating to violence.

This aspect of the Centre's work is guided by the belief that through family counselling and support, families will become stronger, more harmonious and therefore better able and prepared to deal with the stresses they are exposed to and experience.

4. **Youth Services**: The Youth Centre aims to provide a service for the young people of the area, particularly those who are unemployed. There is a leisure and after-school support group regularly attended by close to 50 youths aged between 12 and 21, and a Peace Action Volunteer Group with 35 unemployed members. In addition, there are also recreation groups and a support group that provides counselling for pregnant teenagers.

The Youth Centre works on the basis of a Plan of Action that includes intensive recruitment, workshops, working in the community, publicity, general information service, and NGO information. The major aim of the Youth Centre is to integrate youth into the mainstream of community life. This is based on the firm belief that youth is the engine of social change, and the source of dynamic energy between the past and the future.

5. **Training of Volunteer Counsellors**: This forms the major component of the Centre's community outreach service. The programme is based solidly on the CPA's philosophy of empowerment. It attempts to address directly the legacy of apartheid, where individuals and groups were not in control of their own destinies. Through support and training, the CPA thus tries to bring about a shift in power to the individual and community, in both the public and private spheres.

The programme involves violence intervention, programme development, organizational development, consultation and training, community-based

research strategies, and training opportunities for psychology interns, counsellors, researchers, social workers and student volunteers.

Most of the work is done in consultation and liaison with a broad spectrum of organizations, through networking and coalition building. Through its outreach programme, the CPA hopes that it will become a part of the process of change in the country and participate in shaping local and national policy formulation.

6. **Small Business Development Services**: The system of apartheid not only excluded blacks from power, it also disempowered them financially. While this project does not provide loans or finance, it tries to address the issue of economic disempowerment by assisting potential entrepreneurs to get funding from the private sector, non-governmental organizations and financial institutions. It also provides would-be entrepreneurs with the necessary training and skills to ensure success.

Training is offered in marketing, management, accounting and bookkeeping, advertising and promotion, general business administration and internal auditing. Potential entrepreneurs are assisted with registering their businesses as co-operatives, partnerships or closed corporations. Entrepreneurs are also helped to obtain trading licences and buying cards.

7. **The History Project**: The "People's History Project" was first conceptualized in 1991. It became clear to the Centre, as it tried to do its work, that there was a need to familiarize itself with the community of Eldorado and its past if it were to be effective. This was especially important because the high levels of violence, while structural, had also to be placed in the context of a community with little sense of identity and almost no sense of history — a direct consequence of the forced removal policy and group area policies of apartheid. This contributed to an identity crisis, which was manifest within the community. The main aim of the project, therefore, was to help establish an image of the past with which people could identify. If links could be established between the individual and collective histories of community members, there would be greater scope for creating a common identity and sense of unity. The project thus formed part of the CPA's broader approach to community development.

The project is facilitated by a trained group of volunteers and has the following aims:

- Compile a bilingual book about the history of the area;
- Develop a community documentary video;
- Produce a project newsletter, the Bekgeskiedenis (literally, "history from the mouth");
- Develop an illustrated map of the area;
- Conduct community surveys;
- Exhibit collected material;
- Conduct workshops in related fields, such as photography, writing skills and people's history appreciation.

Volunteer Responses to Social Needs and Problems

All too frequently neither the state nor the market provide what the large majority of the population needs. In some cases, the actions of the state are even contradictory to the needs of its citizens. Community groups are among the first to spot and attempt to fill the breach. This section highlights four such efforts. In Calcutta, policies of closing down loss-making enterprises in sunset industries are wiping out hundreds of thousands of jobs. The Nagarik Mancha is a volunteer group that helps affected workers to propose concrete alternatives to such closures. In New York City, a small group of activists and volunteers has developed a series of assistance programmes aimed at helping homeless AIDS victims find housing and other services necessary to live out their lives in dignity. In the Kingston, Jamaica neighbourhood of Seivwright Gardens, the long-term absence of adequate state-sponsored education, health and job-training programmes has dictated that the neighbourhood fend for itself. For the past 15 years, such efforts have been orchestrated by the Seivwright Development Project, a consortium of small neighbourhood-led groups.

Nagarik Mancha: Citizen's Forum, Calcutta

This Forum was established in Calcutta in 1988, entirely through volunteer effort, to deal with a growing rash of factory closures. The closures have been taking place — with a major impact on the already high unemployment rate — due to chronic and deepening recession in "sunset" industries such as jute and cotton mills and small engineering. With the government producing a "Sick Industries Act" to regulate these closures, the Forum considered it a civic responsibility to understand and disseminate the causal factors and the social impacts of closure.

Citizen's Forum therefore provided workers' representatives with technical and legal assistance to produce enterprise-specific improvement plans that would allow them to prosper: "The central government is not only on the side of the owners, but is openly supporting privatization. . . . A new industrial surge cannot take place simply by ignoring the plight of currently ailing industries. . . . In many cases, the workers have proved that operating an enterprise effectively is not a birthright but the fruit of long experience on the shop-floor. . . . As a worker, I must feel able and willing to understand and internalize the full operation of the enterprise".

Citing the example of a highly successful enterprise that was about to be closed but is now run by the workers as a co-operative, the analysis has shown that the new managers "have kept all the union members informed of the problems faced, have explained the issues to them, and asked for their opinions before taking action. Consequently, the firm demonstrates tremendous unity of purpose".

"Large-scale industrialization can be beneficial if those workers of industries suffering deprivation receive the support not only of each other but from society at large. . . . the future should hold out such hope that self-reliance, independence, freedom and democracy may be retrieved and preserved".

Housing Works, New York City

Homelessness in the United States is a complex problem with several interrelated causes. Chief among them are transformation of social welfare policy during the Reagan and Bush administrations, radically reduced spending on low-cost housing during the same period, gentrification of centre-city residential areas, and the deinstitutionalization of the chronically mentally ill. People who lived on the economic or emotional brink before these developments in the 1980s too often became homeless under their cumulative weight.

AIDS can cause or at least contribute to homelessness. HIV seropositivity or AIDS has resulted in evictions, and can lead to loss of employment and a downward spiral toward homelessness. Homelessness can also lead to AIDS. Chemical dependency is common among the homeless, and sharing needles is a major cause of the spread of HIV. "Safe sex" is also difficult to practise in a homeless environment, and the many young prostitutes among the homeless are in fact often paid extra not to use condoms.

For the 13,000 people who are homeless with AIDS in New York, there exist 450 units of supportive and decent housing. Every one of these units is provided through Housing Works, an innovative and inspirational organization that has grown rapidly in size and scope since its founding in April 1991.

An overwhelming percentage of Housing Works' clients are racial minorities, or mentally ill, or chemically dependent. Some are recently released from prison; others are Viet Nam veterans who were never able to reintegrate into mainstream society. Ninety-one per cent of the clients are persons of colour, 50 per cent have a history of intravenous drug use, 80 per cent have a history of chemical dependence (usually crack/cocaine and/or alcohol), 40 per cent have a diagnosed mental illness, about 40 per cent are openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Housing Works' leadership believes that these people are quite capable of leading productive, independent lives for many years if they receive early intervention in an emotionally and physically nurturing environment.

Since 1991, Housing Works has assisted 2,000 people, of whom 450 have been placed in supportive housing. Currently, the organization operates an intake programme, housing programmes, supportive services, advocacy assistance, job training and literacy classes, and a harm reduction programme for substance abusers. It is launching a comprehensive tuberculosis treatment programme with Bellvue Hospital. Work is also beginning on a new residence with drop-in supportive services on the same premises. Housing Works also operates two thrift shops, which have become the popular place to contribute and/or bargain hunt, and which help

publicize its work. In New York, where celebrities abound and often lend their names to good causes, Housing Works has exploited every possible network with excellent public relations and fund raising results.

- The Intake Program provides initial screening and evaluation; determines eligibility for New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) supported housing and other entitlements; assists clients with documentation to secure entitlements; and provides emergency relief. Over 2,000 families and individuals have been served since April 1991.
- The Scattered-Site Housing Program, funded through the New York City HRA, provides housing and intensive support services to families who meet two criteria: (1) diagnosis of AIDS from Centers for Disease Control (CDC); and (2) problems of chemical dependence and/or mental illness. Over 250 people have been housed through this programme, and 83 per cent have remained stable and successfully housed. It is important to note that for these clients, the actual roof over their heads is only a part of the programme. "Helping people to live means giving them more than four walls. What's important is helping them to gain control of their lives and begin to enjoy life again".
- The Independent Living Program provides housing and supportive services to people who do not have a diagnosis of CDC-defined AIDS. The Independent Living Program raises money for rent from a variety of private sources, and is reimbursed from Medicaid for case management services.
- Supportive Services include a range of activities that help clients to become responsible for their own treatment, to improve their lives, and to find friendship, emotional support and an opportunity to be useful. There are peer support groups, nutrition and parenting classes, life skills training, and a theatre programme in which clients write and act in their own productions. Clients "co-facilitate" their own groups.
- Job Training and Literacy Classes prepare clients for paid jobs and for further education. To date, clients have been employed only by Housing Works, but there are plans to expand to other employers.
- The Harm Reduction Program is an innovative approach to substance abuse decline and eventual abstinence that is not always well understood by critics. It is run in collaboration with the Educational Alliance, one of the oldest settlement houses on Manhattan's Lower East Side. The programme is designed to reduce the harm that substance abusers cause to themselves and others. For example, dirty needles exchanged for clean ones lessen the spread of AIDS. Getting off crack, but continuing to abuse alcohol, is seen as a positive step in the harm reduction model, as is cutting the quantity of drugs consumed. The programme attempts first to reduce harm (high risk or anti-social behaviour), then to reduce use, moving toward a readiness for treatment and total abstinence. Housing Works' leadership insists that it is difficult to abstain from drugs on the street and in the shelters and, therefore, persons should be housed who are still using drugs but are refraining from dangerous, anti-social behaviour.
- The Advocacy and Public Policy Program is the responsibility of co-director Sandra Lowe. The programme functions on two levels: assisting and empowering about 50 individual clients per month to advocate within the system for individual entitlements; and organizing politically

with appropriate allies to change public policy on behalf of the homeless and persons with AIDS.

- The Tuberculosis Treatment Program — with Bellvue Hospital as a partner — provides TB screening for all clients, on-site preventative therapy and counselling for clients at risk of TB, appropriate medical care at Bellvue Hospital, and a new residence with housing and supportive services for people with HIV and TB. (It is estimated that about 50 per cent of the homeless with AIDS or HIV seropositivity also have tuberculosis.)
- The Mental Health Linkages Program, also developed in collaboration with the Educational Alliance, provides clients with referrals to licensed mental health counsellors.

In four years, Housing Works has grown phenomenally, despite the current New York political climate that is hardly supportive of expanding social service facilities in many neighbourhoods. However, Housing Works actually houses about 3 per cent of the homeless AIDS population, and it is the largest provider of housing for this population in the state of New York. The founders know they cannot do it all, though they continually seek funds to do more. They see their organization as a national model and are eager to teach others their successful methodology.

SDP: The Seivwright Development Project, Kingston

The Seivwright Development Project (SDP) is an umbrella organization that unites a set of community-supported activities and groups, including a craft co-operative, a basic school, a youth group, a community centre, a health clinic and a citizens' association. From the establishment of the youth group in 1976, each group has evolved and played a role in accordance with the needs and resources of Seivwright Gardens, providing services crucial to the community. What is compelling about the Seivwright Development Project is its longevity, despite major setbacks and the minimal level of local and external resources at its disposal. This could not have happened had the project not reflected the requirements and aspirations of the community.

SDP is located in Seivwright Gardens, a ghetto area of Kingston, situated close to the city's industrial zone, with a population of 35,000 to 40,000 people. It has most of the characteristics of such communities — high unemployment (despite its industrial location), high crime rates, crowded and dilapidated housing, inadequate sanitary services and a poverty-stricken appearance.

Traditionally, like the majority of the inner-city residents, residents of Seivwright Gardens have been adherents of the People's National Party (PNP), which presently holds power at the national level. At least one of the leaders of the PNP has also been a leader and activist for a SDP "group". The formation of the Youth Club, out of which SDP was to grow, occurred in 1976, at the height of the PNP's power during Michael Manley's first term as Prime Minister. Hundreds of youth clubs — and somewhat later, community councils — came into being during the 1970s period of popular mobilization.

At that time, as part of the ethos of the period, the concepts of group or collective action, voluntary initiatives, grassroots participation and self-help enterprise were very strong. They were integral to what was probably the chief contribution of the Manley period to Jamaican development — the ending of the colour/racial bar which had kept blacks, who make up 90 per cent of the population, at the bottom of the economic and social ladder. This bar, established by colonialism, had remained largely intact after independence in 1962; the transition had been co-opted by the *mestizo* middle class. It was from this current of thought and feeling running through society that the Seivwright drew its inspiration.

Today, however, the strength of the political hold on Seivwright Gardens people and youth is diminishing, and the violence connected with the PNP's contest with the rival Jamaica Labour Party (in spite of the name, the party of big business) is abating. This is largely because the differences between the two parties are more those of organization and of leadership than of ideology and economic policy. It is also because the government, and hence the party in power, currently have fewer resources to dispense to their followers. For all their years in Seivwright Gardens, PNP politicians have done surprisingly little for — or with — the people there, and at least the more conscious residents are well aware of this. They are no longer willing to pledge their all to the Party, but increasingly rely on their own efforts instead.

It is in this milieu that the SDP and its associated groups evolved their approach to community problems — starting from the needs of the community itself, forming appropriate alliances within it, and depending for direction and energy on its residents.

One feature of the approach taken by the Seivwright leaders, as explained by the President of the citizens' association, was to study the needs of the community, to decide on the priorities and then to tackle them one by one. This was taken as essential in view of the huge number and pressing nature of the problems of their surroundings. Concretely this meant getting a small plot of land for a centre, which was then used for a range of activities directed at basic community needs — schooling, health, training and employment.

A second element of the Seivwright approach was to collaborate with all the various interests and groups in the community in a joint effort. This allowed work on several fronts at once — children and their nurturing, youth and employment, general needs in health, and garbage disposal. One limitation to this approach was the reluctance of most of the community's more educated people — not a large number in total, however — to take part.

Third, the initiatives, drive and thrust of the Project have clearly come from the youth and adult people of the community. They have utilized the resources at their disposal — their skills improved through training, their labour, the input of a few professionals in the community, their contacts and linkages.

The overall goal of the Seivwright leaders is clearly identified: youth training in trade skills — masonry work, welding, carpentry and machining. The craft co-operative itself could, with proper resources, take on and train apprentices and wants to do this. In addition, idle school lands have been selected as suitable for a skill training centre, with the curriculum of the children broadened (as it once was) to include such training. The need for skilled workmen, the high unemployment, the importance of getting the youth off the streets and "away from the loafing" — are put forward as reasons for SDP's emphasis on trade training.

The chief complaint made by the manager of the co-operative has been about the absence of any structured government policy to deal with poverty and unemployment. As a result "the situation simply continues, nothing changes, and people take it as their immutable and God-given way of life".

Of course, Seivright people do want to have proper housing and less crime and a cleaned-up environment. But these, in their view, will only come if there is the opportunity to earn a decent living. This in turn, in the view of the Seivwright leaders, will lead to the currently low self-image of residents being replaced with self-respect. "Mental slavery" — in the words of Bob Marley's song — lies, they say, at the heart of the problem in Seivwright Gardens.

Perspectives on Urban Governance from Shanghai and Karachi

This section looks at issues of local governance that arose in the course of case study preparation in Shanghai and Karachi. In the case of Shanghai, wide-ranging economic reforms since 1978 have had a marked impact on governance at the local level. Previously important functions of local government that had been carried out by "quasi-volunteers" in the name of neighbourhood committees have become less important. In particular, new economic tasks and incentives have diverted committee members' energies away from social welfare-enhancing activities to organizing and often providing services for profit. In Karachi, the researcher activists reflect on the crisis of governance that has all but made many neighbourhoods self-governing. Such autonomy is unwelcome, and the groups believe that it is not their responsibility to provide public services for themselves, but to organize the community to demand them from the state. They see the community's role as being crucial, nonetheless, in providing direction for the provision of such services so that they will be relevant and adequate for all residents.

The changing role of neighbourhood committees, Shanghai

In Shanghai in the 1990s, the status of volunteer action at the neighbourhood level remains ambiguous, perhaps more so than during the preceding four decades. Between the Communist takeover in 1949 and the early 1990s, neighbourhood associations (*jumin weiyuanhui*) organized a wide variety of volunteer-supported activities. As the lowest level of the municipal administration, they differ substantially from what is generally called a community-led or volunteer organization. However, in some functions and in sentiment and staffing, there are clear similarities between the two.

But before reviewing the volunteer components of the neighbourhood committee's work, it must be recognized that some of its most important activities — involving surveillance and coercion of residents — did cast a shadow over some of the committees' other public-spirited activities. For example, the neighbourhood committees did have an important role to play in controlling population movement to and within urban areas from the early 1950s onward. They worked closely with the local office of the Public Security Bureau in monitoring the movements of residents and non-residents in the neighbourhood. This was done to maintain the accuracy of the household registration card, which identified the legal residence of everyone in the neighbourhood. Persons not registered in the neighbourhood could not officially reside there without the permission of the committee. Moreover, persons not legally registered in the neighbourhood could not obtain ration cards that would allow them to purchase staple foods and other rationed commodities. Neighbourhood committees were also among the chief mechanisms for enforcing family planning. Because of these tasks, the neighbourhood committees held an influential place in the community.

But in other functional areas, the committees appeared more like the neighbourhood organizations seen elsewhere. Among the common responsibilities of the committees were basic public health and hygiene (health awareness, immunization, neighbourhood clean-up, pest eradication, etc.), assistance to families in difficulty (child care when parents had emergencies or work responsibilities requiring absence from the home), conflict resolution among residents and within families, small-scale job creation, traffic control in the neighbourhoods (guarding crosswalks, bicycle parking lots, etc.) and "first response" to emergencies affecting the neighbourhood.

In these activities the committees relied extensively on volunteer labour, including that of committee members, who tended to be retired persons or women who did not work outside the home. In return for committee work, they received only a small fraction of what would be considered the average wage. Because of this, there was also a process of self-selection: publicly-minded residents would be more likely to take on committee work than those persons placing a higher priority on income. But much of the work of the committees was to organize labour contributions from residents of the neighbourhood when large tasks were to be undertaken, e.g. mosquito or rodent eradication programmes, tree planting, neighbourhood clean-ups, disaster relief, etc.

Although better-off families tended to participate less in the activities organized by neighbourhood committees than did the less well-off, the general sentiment was that much of the committee's work was for the good of all and that one should not shirk participation in truly useful community activities. The work of the committees was complicated by their politicization during the Cultural Revolution, which resulted in constant mobilization of residents in support of ever-changing political factions or policies. But by the mid-1980s political struggles had long since receded from the forefront of committee work and had been replaced by the more mundane tasks of maintaining health and order in the local community.

Some observers in China have suggested that the current reform process may allow an opening for new forms of organizations to develop in China. Some also think that the neighbourhood committee itself may evolve into the Chinese equivalent of an urban grassroots organization such as those that have evolved in developing countries elsewhere in Asia or Latin America. They cite its nearness to the people, the public-spirited nature of its staff — many of whom accept tasks on a completely volunteer basis — and the fact that they already know how to approach the government apparatus to reflect the concerns of the neighbourhood or to request action from the government.

Whether this will be the case remains unclear. Liberalization of the economy and society on the one hand, and differing administrative priorities linked to liberalization, on the other, are responsible for this. Most residents welcome the reduction of neighbourhood committees' surveillance function. This has come about both because economic reforms have negated the need for a rationing system for staples and because cadres in the committee perceive their time better spent in other activities.

Economic reforms have brought an abundance of staple and non-staple food to the urban market. Very few items are rationed now, and almost anything can be bought with cash alone. Thus, anyone with an income can survive almost anywhere. Moreover, the real estate market is far looser now and many families engage in "illegal" subletting of space. This is a widespread practice and trying to stop it would draw a loud outcry. At the same time, neighbourhood committees have been encouraged by the municipal government to find ways of supporting economic and commercial activities in the neighbourhood, either through facilitating the efforts of local entrepreneurs or by initiating their own commercial and productive activities in the neighbourhood. Not only has this brought about an important change in the way the neighbourhood committees see their functions, but also in the balance of activities they are willing to engage in.

Contact between the committee and residents is also becoming more tenuous. Families are more mobile than before, some because they now have the economic capacity to choose their own housing — previously assigned, usually permanently, by the workplace. The less affluent are also more mobile. However, this is more often because the land on which their homes rests has been marked to house a new hotel or business complex designed to accommodate enterprises with connections to foreign trade and investment. In Shanghai hundreds of neighbourhoods have been affected by such activity in the past 10 years, and the same process is being replicated in many of China's other large cities as well.

The growing gap between the *nouveaux riches* and the rest of the population, and the attitudes encouraged by Deng Xiao Ping's pronouncement that "some must get rich first", do not bode well for volunteer effort. In the current climate, working for someone else's benefit — including the community's — is a laughable concept, especially among those born too late to remember China's more self-reliant days. Nor do those striving to get ahead have much time for volunteer action. In contrast, the increasing numbers of laid-off workers have yet to find suitable outlets for their time, other than looking for new jobs. In part this is linked to the decline of institutions that value volunteer or community-spirited effort, and in part to a loss of self-esteem related to having once been a contributing member of society. This is a fundamentally disempowering phenomenon that is spreading across China's industrial heartland today.

Community action in a violent city, Karachi

A. Three Lyari Tanzeems (CBOs)

1. **Anjuman-E-Ittihad Naujawanan-E-Nawalane:** As one of the oldest (dating back more than a century), most central Katchi Abadis of Karachi (squatter settlements, of which there are 650, with 41 per cent of the total urban population), Lyari has a population of about 1.6 million on 1800 acres of land lying in sewage-contaminated, flood-prone zones next to the Lyari River. Half the households (3-16 persons per household) earn less than Rs 1500 (US$ 50) per month, with many household heads working as government clerks or small entrepreneurs/traders.

The Anjuman is one of 35 active social organizations in Lyari (which counts 250 registered NGOs). It began as a Sports Club in 1968, keeping many youth away from drugs through its emphasis on physical fitness. It now acts primarily as an agency of local arbitration and conflict resolution on issues raised by local families and clans. The Anjuman, called on to deal with cases that range from divorce and children's custody to property disputes and street fights, invites the conflicting parties to give their side of the story separately, verifies the facts through its committee members, and makes a decision that is binding on all those concerned. Its popularity derives from the widely-held belief that its judgements are just.

It also helps people with problems related to government agencies, on issues such as taxes, water, sanitation, street lighting and electricity, putting pressure on political leaders and agency representatives to deliver what has been promised. A dispensary/health centre is run by the Anjuman, as is an adult literacy programme and an education programme for primary school children. Some years ago, the need felt to team up with other CBOs led to a sudden spurt of coalition making. "A movement is in the making as the Lyari groups slowly come together; the sharing of experiences has resulted in groups learning from each other". For instance, nine representatives came together to form the LORDS club for Lyari (Leadership, Organization, Research, Development and Services).

Self-financing is a characteristic of most of the group's activities, through renting crockery, selling donated animal skins and renting out community hall space, as well as from members' contributions and community donations. Future plans, however, include more income generating schemes for the group. "A problem area has been the voluntary status of some unemployed members, since they face pressure from their families". The general body of the Anjuman comprises 326 families living in the area. The decision-making structure depends on an electoral process to a "cabinet" and working committee of lane representatives. Indicators of success include a dramatic fall in the number of conflict cases registered with the police, and of cases of drug abuse and corruption, while immediate problems related to road and sewerage services have been dealt with to the community's satisfaction.

2. **Anjuman Reza-e-Mustafa (ARM) — Child, Youth & Women Welfare:** ARM began in 1984 around an unemployed youth-based sanitation and anti-drugs drive, but it coalesced into establishing an evening street school for some 380 children from various ethnic and religious groups (Sindhi, Punjabi, Pathan, Balochi, Kacchi, Hindu and Christian) of a neighbourhood in Lyari. Graduates of the school have started literacy programmes for youth and for working children, while teachers have conducted community development workshops, supported other street schools, and conducted street plays on relations with the community. Practical work has centred on garbage collection and street cleaning, a sewing centre and vaccination programmes.

A major achievement of the group has been helping to overcome the exclusion of women from public life, bringing women to literacy and other classes, setting up a women's group, and providing health training to them to monitor illnesses. While an identified problem has been the "criticism from a few community members against the inclusion of women in the group, this has

been successfully neutralized by the strong support from the parents of the group members. The *tanzeem* members have on their part sought to befriend the people who criticize them and invite them to community events".

3. **Lyari Education Advisers (LEAD)**: A whole movement of street schools was started in Lyari in 1980 to enable poor children to obtain better quality education and to keep them off the streets (and drugs) in the evenings. Twenty-six street schools now operate in Lyari, with 5,050 students and 302 teachers, where the focus is on understanding and participation by the students. The better-motivated graduates of street schools appear to have higher numbers going on to college, to train as teachers, and to complete higher studies in medicine and engineering. LEAD, a coalition of six CBOs supporting street schools, was formed in 1992, after an upgrading programme for Lyari school teachers was conducted by the Teachers' Resource Centre of Karachi. LEAD members look at non-formal education as important to building a sense of community in Lyari: a theatre-training programme has just been started. Difficulties include fund raising, the problems of sustaining volunteer effort at such a high level for very long periods, the certification of the teaching required for recognition by regular schools, and motivating working street children to continue to attend the street schools.

B: Azam Basti Youth Group

As part of a resettlement scheme for 500 Christian families in Mahmoodabad, Azam Basti's low-income population of some 20,000 consists of street-cleaners and the holders of low-level staff positions in the government and private sector. The Youth Group was formed at the initiative of a community member who had returned from study abroad in the 1970s, initially to start youth and adult literacy classes as a way of building up community awareness and self-esteem. Leadership/social awareness programmes were run to focus on issues of justice and peace, and gender equality, as well as drug awareness and rehabilitation. The most successful income-related programme has been the credit co-operative, formed in 1988 without any seed money, which now provides small loans of a maximum of Rs 5,000 each to any of its 125 members, to meet personal needs as well as for enterprise development. An alternative to local loan sharks thus became available. Training has also started to help establish similar co-operatives in Muslim villages around Karachi.

All the Society and Club members work on a voluntary basis, while the fees for teachers are covered by donations. Work has been continuing on a public awareness campaign, together with non-Christian groups, on the 8th Amendment to the Constitution (giving constitutional status to martial law ordinances against minorities and women) separate elections, identity card issues (later withdrawn), and blasphemy laws. The impact of the last on persecuting minorities has recently reached dangerous levels. Future plans are to expand credit activities, re-open the day-care centre and to initiate a joint rally with other groups against consuming drugs. The importance of women in the Group may be seen from the statement that its success criterion is the number of women who have gone into factories or obtained jobs elsewhere. A major problem with expanding activities is the difficulty of finding time for Group members, who are already fully employed and can only come to the community centre in the evenings.

C. Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC)

The CPLC is unusual within this cluster of case studies for having been inspired by a member of the élite (the Governor of Karachi) and for being run by two industrialists with the help of 44 volunteers. The objective was to create a situation where "people should be able to go to a police station for help", since the public had stopped doing so because of police harassment, torture, jail deaths, and a general reputation for brutality and corruption. Complaints against criminals (First Information Reports or FIRs) were not lodged, thereby distorting crime statistics and the case for a policy to deal with rising crime. The formation of a civilian monitoring cell and placement of observers at police stations were seen to be a priority. In short, the CPLC "provides free protection and investigation services to citizens who are victims of kidnapping, car theft, robbery, rape, etc., or who simply need help to lodge a case at the police station. It works in collaboration with the Police Department, although independent of it".

All the volunteer members, having undergone rigorous screening for probity, have to be selected from among retired Sessions or Additional Sessions Judges, Advocates, and persons of eminence having provincial standing in business, finance, education or public service. The volunteers are given legal status as justices of the peace and first class magistrates in order to give them adequate status to function effectively in the police stations. The monitoring activity was given legal standing through an appropriate amendment to the Sindh Police Rules Act 1934. CPLC offices are located in all five districts of the city, each district has an 11-member Committee responsible for three police stations, and the committees monitor all police stations in the city. An office to co-ordinate the CPLCs was opened in the Governor's House, and sophisticated computer equipment put to use to support their investigative and monitoring work. Training programmes were conducted for the public to confide in the CPLC, file reports and raise public awareness on civilian rights with respect to the police.

In just one type of situation — the spate of kidnappings for ransom — the CPLCs have, since 1989, succeeded in breaking up 23 kidnapping gangs, arresting 135 kidnappers and securing the release of 125 victims. People, especially women, appear more ready to approach the CPLCs for help. Car thefts have also been traced more quickly. Campaigns in the media on how to report crimes and access police emergency cells have also proved valuable. Direct benefits so far, however, have accrued more to the affluent of Karachi than to the poor. Indirectly, through its impact on the culture of relations between the public at large and the police force, it is likely that the urban poor too will benefit from the CPLC experience. Volunteer contributions to making the committees work have clearly been crucial, since many members give freely of their time without any remuneration. However, the "CPLC feels that there is still a general ignorance of law, lack of rights of the individual, no knowledge of basic rights, and a lack of respect for rights of neighbours. This makes it difficult to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address violation of civilian rights".

Reflections on urban governance in Karachi

In reviewing the contributions and approaches of the different local groups studied, the Karachi case study authors have reached a number of conclusions of broader interest. They relate to questions concerning their overall significance and impact; their origins in public disillusionment with government; their value in pointing to valid alternatives in dealing with social problems; and listing policies and recommendations to encourage community-inspired voluntary responses in support of social integration.

The three Lyari organizations (*tanzeems*) are meeting various community needs for basic services in education, health, sanitation and peace-keeping. The second case (ARM Welfare) is of a credit co-operative, established by a minority-based *tanzeem* to be able to provide access to funds to community members. The third is at a somewhat different level, where the volunteer members of the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee assist the police force to carry out its functions more effectively. According to the authors of the Karachi study, "Taken together, the three case studies are an example of people looking out for themselves. They meet their own needs, and survive through organizing themselves and their somewhat limited resources".

They then ask: "If people are apparently governing themselves...what has made the government choose not to 'govern'"? Their answer to their own question is indictment enough: "A pattern of deliberate avoidance by the government to redress major issues unfolds. Despite population growth, inflation, urbanization, political unrest, and increasing difficulty to survive in urban Karachi, successive governments of Pakistan have failed to make policy changes to remedy the situation. Decades of martial law governments, militarization of the city and feudal style 'democracies' have created weak and unrepresentative political structures. Continuous propagandizing of imminent war makes a culture of peace impossible, and supports the obvious defence-oriented character of the national budget".

Formation of the local groups studied is seen to be a response to disillusionment with the government and an environment that marginalized the poor even further, so that people's organizations had to take up major social issues to try to resolve them through local action. Drug abuse, crime and violence became so common that the situation became intolerable. Faced with years of discrimination capped by the passing of threatening laws during the martial law period, the members of a minority community decided to do something to improve the lot and self-respect of their own community. The CPLC had to restore citizens' faith in their police system through voluntary effort and modern equipment.

The emerging pattern of development that the cases appear to reflect is one where "people are no longer willing to wait for the government to do something. They take matters into their own hands and respond to issues they feel are a priority. They are free to evolve effective strategies, learning through experience what works and what doesn't work". However, "a tendency has been to work in a limited fashion, restricting interaction to the limits of area and work. . . . Greater interaction among themselves and other initiatives will result in strengthening the participatory process. . . . As people are strengthened, they can in turn strengthen the planning process".

Finally, in terms of policies and recommendations, a number of suggestions are quite clear:

- the inclusion of CBOs and NGOs in the planning and development process of the government has to move from the level of rhetoric to one of implementation;
- CBOs and NGOs can help the government to understand its own failures and constraints;
- government planners need training for dialogue with people's organizations and to understand the processes of social change and peoples' responses so that community initiatives may be strengthened: institutions, rules and procedures should reflect such understanding;
- to ensure that people have a real voice in decision-making, decentralization to local bodies and elected authorities has to take place;
- rather than trying to organize service delivery themselves, the local groups should focus more on mobilizing and organizing people to obtain basic services from the state;
- interlinking of their efforts is required to address major social issues rather than those on the agenda of donors and others;
- the story-telling (using effective, low-cost media) and analytical abilities of local volunteer groups need to be enhanced in order to transport approaches, inform one another, and redefine their efforts in terms of macro-concerns.

APPENDIX: GROUPS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The following is a listing of the groups about which information was collected for the UNV-UNRISD project on **Volunteer Contributions to Social Integration at the Grassroots: The Urban or "Pavement" Dimension**. Case studies prepared for the UNV-UNRISD International Workshop of the same name, held in Cyprus from 20-25 November 1994, comprise the bulk of the materials cited in this paper. The titles of the case studies and the authors' names are provided below as reference.

Africa

Kenya

Nairobi

- The Kenya Women Workers Organization (KEWWO): unionism for women, women's rights and empowerment.
  Source: KEWWO Case study, "The Kenya Women Workers Organization".
- The Kayole Muungano Construction Project: self-help housing for destitute women.
  Source: KEWWO Case study, "The Kayole Muungano Construction Project".
- Maji Women's Self-Help Group: access to clean water, provision of water storage tanks.
  Source: KEWWO Case study, "Maji Women's Self-Help Group".
- The Karen/Kuwinda Slum Improvement Project: private assistance for slum-upgrading: enclosed toilets, pre-school and primary school, skills (handicraft training), and campaign to reduce alcohol consumption.
  Source: Case study, "The Karen/Kuwinda Slum Improvement Project".

South Africa

Johannesburg

- Center for Peace Action: training and counselling, youth services, community assistance to reduce level of violence in coloured township.
  Source: David Barnard, Case study, "Center for Peace Action".
- Katlehong Early Learning Resource Centre: pre-school services, educational programmes, health, nutrition.
  Source: David Barnard, Case study, "Katlehong Early Learning Resource Centre".
- The Open School: cross-community exchange, cultural programmes for Soweto youth, model school programme.
  Source: David Barnard, Case study, "Open School".
- Peace Committees/Peace Secretariat: conflict prevention, intervention, education.
  Source: David Barnard, "Peace Committees/Peace Secretariat".
- Planact: urban restructuring, technical assistance to civic associations, transformation of volunteer associations.
  Source: David Barnard, Case study, "Planact".

Asia

China

Shanghai

- Floating population: living and working conditions of floating population; gender issues.
  Source: materials from Fudan University Population Institute, in Chinese.
- Neighbourhood Associations: public health and environment, child and elderly care, family counselling and conflict resolution, public safety and security, income generation.
  Source: WANG Lin, communication with residents and staff members of five Neighbourhood Associations, in Chinese.
- Non-governmental Organizations' responses to help the elderly: Shanghai Elderly Committee, Shanghai Retiree's Committee, Neighbourhood Associations; assisting the elderly with daily tasks; health and family care.
  Source: GUI Shixun, background material "Non-governmental Organizations' responses to help the elderly" in Chinese.
- Non-governmental Organizations' responses to help the newly unemployed (xia gang ren yuan): Shanghai Quanye Development Company, Unions, training, income generation, counselling.
  Source: WANG Dabeng, background material "Non-governmental Organizations' responses to help the newly unemployed" in Chinese.

India

Mumbai

- Pavement Dwellers Citizens' Organization (PDO): housing policy (anti-evictions), basic human rights of pavement dwellers to live with dignity.
  Source: Youth for Unity and Volunteer Action (YUVA).
- Muslim Women's Group-Rah-e Haqq ("the way to our rights"): women's rights, conflict resolution, prevention.
  Source: Youth for Unity and Volunteer Action (YUVA).
- Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC): networking and supporting actions of poor communities and groups, mobilizing groups.
  Source: Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres.
- Women Litigants' Association: legal rights for women, education.
  Source: Women Litigants' Association.
- Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA): policy advocacy on behalf of poor, women; legal assistance; environmentalism; anti-communalism.
  Source: YUVA.

Delhi

- The AIDS Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan (ABVA): AIDS awareness, advocacy, organizing minority communities in wake of Babri Masjid riots.
  Source: communication to Krishno Dey.
- Jana Natya Manch (JANAM)-People's Theatre Forum: awareness through theatre.
  Source: Case study by Nandita Mathur, and selected writings of Safdar Hashmi.
- Rishte (Relations): Gender oppression, literacy, income generation.
  Source: communication from Lokayan.

- Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (SAHMAT): cultural activities in support of secularism.
  Source: Case study by Nandita Mathur.
- All India Democratic Women's Association (AIWDWA): women's rights, political action and education, research.
  Source: AIWDWA.
- Overview research on Volunteer and Community Action in New Delhi.
  Source: Aditya Nigam.

Calcutta

- Artisan Programme for South Asia: networking to strengthen traditional crafts.
  Source: Shantum Seth.
- Bengal Social Service League: Total Literacy Campaign (mass literacy).
  Source: Satyen Moitra.
- MKK Workers and Peasants Movement in Rajasthan.
  Source: communication from Bunker Roy.
- "Nagarik Mancha"-Citizen's Forum: schemes for saving sunset industries.
  Source: Case study by Arna Seal.
- Mudiali Fisherman's Co-operative Society (MFCS): environment/sanitation, co-operative fishing.
  Source: Case study by Arna Seal.
- Sramajivi Mahila Sangha (SMS)-Working Women's Group: personal security, self-improvement, HIV/AIDS training.
  Source: Case study by Arna Seal.
- Unnayan: alternative development, human rights, housing rights, livelihood benefits.
  Source: materials provided by Arun Deb, Unnayan.
- The West Bengal Tannery Mazdoor (workers) Union (WBTMU): tannery workers union, education, worker's rights.
  Source: materials provided by Arun Deb, Unnayan.

Pakistan

Karachi

- The Lyari Tanzeems: drug prevention through sports events, family counselling; conflict resolution, water, sanitation, and health care at low prices, training women in handicraft skills.
- Child and Youth Welfare and Women Welfare: street school, youth job training and income generating activities, education and health training for women.
- Education Advisers: alternative schools, drug prevention.
- Azam Basti Youth Group: adult literacy, social awareness programmes on justice and peace, credit co-operative.
- Citizen-Police Liaison Committee: citizen monitoring of police action, anti kidnap programme.

  Source for all above: Nora and Kenneth Fernandes, "Volunteer Contributions to Social Integration at the Grassroots: An Urban or "Pavement" Dimension; Karachi Case Study".

Latin America

Brazil

Rio de Janeiro

- Ex-Glue Project: street children, education, influencing public opinion.
  Source: Ana Lucia Lobato, "Ex-Glue Project".
- Candomble House of Mae Beata de Iemanja/Ile Omi Oju Aro: Project "Acao e Viver".
  Source: Ana Lucia Lobato, "Candomble House of Mae Beata de Iemanja/Ile Omi Oju Aro".
- Maes de Acari (Mothers of Acari): human rights, legal process, discrimination, corruption.
  Source: Ana Lucia Lobato, "Maes de Acari".
- Organization of Rap Groups: rap music, awareness raising, discrimination, sexism.
  Source: Ana Lucia Lobato, "Organization of Rap Groups" in Portuguese.
- Social integration in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo: background paper.
  Source: Ana Clara Torres Ribiero, "Brazilian Metropolises, Limits to Social Integration in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo" in Portuguese.

São Paulo

- Community Association of Monte Azul: building solidarity between favela and non-favela populations through volunteer education, training, theatre, health service programmes.
- Residents Association of Arco Iris (AMAI): acquisition and construction materials for housing, innovative construction programme.
- Social Development Center of San Caetano Thiene: child care, community development, collaboration with municipal government.
  Source for all above: Nora Krawczyk, "The Conflicts and Challenges of Three Community Initiatives in São Paulo" in Spanish.

Peru

Lima

- Elders Clubs of Independencia: self-help and social activities, income generation, health support.
  Source: Irma Marino Vargas, "Grandparents Get Organized: The Case of the Elders' Clubs of Independencia".
- The Kitchen Federation of Tahuantinsuyo: income generation through micro-enterprises organized by the federation of kitchens; proceeds to community development programmes.
  Source: Gino Huerta, "The Kitchen Federation of Tahuantinsuyo" in Spanish.
- Front for the Development of Human Settlements: legalization of land title, community upgrading, democratic and participatory decision-making.
  Source: Luis Mujica, "The Lot and the House, Bases for Being Someone".
- Self-managed Community Kitchens: basic needs, personal fulfilment, solidarity, gender awareness.
  Source: Carmen Lora, "The Experience of Self-managed Community Kitchens in Lima".

Mexico

Mexico City

- Centro de Desarrollo Communitario Juan Diego (CDCJD): education, health, sanitation, environment, etc.
  Source: Gabriel Camara, various communications.
- Ednica: assistance to street children in health, education; preventive maintenance for families at risk.
  Source: Case study by Ednica/Foro de Apoyo Mutuo.

North America and the Caribbean

Jamaica

Kingston

- Calaloo Bed Group: community improvement, role of animators.
  Source: Marjorie Lewis-Cooper, "Volunteer Contributions to Social Integration at the Grassroots: An Urban or 'Pavement' Dimension: Calaloo Bed Group Case Study".
- Mel Nathan Institute: mass dialogue, education and heath services for teens and young mothers, cultural programmes.
  Source: Jane Dodman, "Community Development through Community Groups".
- Seivwright Development Project: Community self-provisioning (health, education, skills training).
  Source: Horace Levy, "Seivwright Development Project Case Study".
- S-Corner: building health clinics, grassroots college, herb gardens, bicycle repair, extension of water supply to homes.
  Source: Marcia Hextall, "An Experience in Community Empowerment".

United States of America

Chicago

- Women's Empowerment Project: building self-confidence through training and collective action.
  Source: Anne Miller, "Draft Case Study of the Women's Empowerment Project, a Program of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless".

St. Louis

- BREM Social Ministries: community organization and development, crime prevention strategies.
  Source: Kenneth M. Reardon, "Stemming the Tide of Community Disinvestment in North St. Louis: The Church-Based Organizing Efforts of BREM Social Ministries".
- The Winstanley/Industry Park Neighbourhood Organization (WIPNO): community development, university-based technical assistance, participatory action research.
  Source: Kenneth M. Reardon, "The Winstanley/Industry Park Neighbourhood Organization: Building Local Planning and Development Capacity in East St. Louis, Illinois".

Los Angeles

- LAMP: homelessness, mental health, housing and income generating activities.
- New Economic for Women (NEW): housing, economic development, and women's empowerment.
- Proyecto Esperanza: job training, immigrant services.
- PUENTE Learning Center: bilingual employment training, multi generational approach.

  Source for all above: Elwood Hopkins, "Volunteer Contributions to Social Integration at the Grassroots: Case Studies from Los Angeles".

New York City

- Haitian Community Health Information and Referral Center: integrating immigrants into the health care system, language assistance, family and psychology counselling.
- Housing Works: multiple services for homeless people with AIDS in New York City.
- Mothers against violence: anti-violence training, public awareness, youth violence.
- West Harlem Environmental Action (WHE Act): "environmental racism", legal action, community education and empowerment.

  Source for all above: Jane P. Sweeney, "Community Responses to Issues of Social Integration in New York City: Selected Cases, Mega-Cities New York".