The Participatory Planning Cycle in Sambizanga: Good practice in the musseques of Luanda

Angola is emerging from long years of conflict which have left institutional fragility in Local Administrations and a weak civil society. There has been a weak culture of dialogue and consultation between social actors in local decision making. This evidence makes it important in the post-war era to introduce reforms to strengthen the functional capacity of local administrations to respond to the needs of the poor, civil society and encourage the community to participate in the dialogue to plan local development. The Angolan Government has taken a strong policy decision to promote decentralization and in late 2006 passed legislation that attributes new powers and budgetary authority to Municipalities. The Luanda Urban Poverty Programme (LUPP) works with local authorities in four pilot Municipalities.

Spaces for debate forums, while they are participatory mechanisms to promote dialogue and collective action between the state and the citizens, allow the elimination of discriminatory practices and promote opportunities for the most socially excluded groups to participate in the processes of planning and implementation.

The Participatory Planning Cycle (PPC) offers clear opportunities for the information exchange and knowledge of local reality that facilitate the optimisation of impacts in the community as none of the institutions acting in isolation is in a position to lay out all the resources and capacity necessary to reduce urban poverty. Collective action such as the Participatory Planning Cycle that took place in Sambizanga municipality, allow the municipal administration and the citizens to share visions, optimise available resources for local development and integrate local initiatives into the municipal plan.

LUPP has demonstrated methodologies that include the creation of spaces for debate to promote the engagement of different actors and to stimulate the participation of citizens. The Participatory Planning Cycle, developed in partnership with the Municipal Administration in Sambizanga, is an illustration of these spaces.

1 Revisão de 17/99 passed by the Council of Ministers in 2006
2 LUPP is a partnership between Development Workshop Angola, CARE International, Save the Children, One World Action and local government and communities. LUPP has received support since 1999 in two phases from DFID

LUPP Principles for Good Practice

- Partnership with community members and key stakeholders, such as public service providers, is key to promote participation and sustainability
- Solutions must be affordable to urban poor, yet financially sustainable
- It is important to focus on strengthening community capacity to improve their lives
- Ensure community and government ownership of initiatives with clear roles and responsibilities and accountability mechanisms in place
- Mobilise community members and key stakeholders to best develop and plan sustainable solutions
- Establish a code of conduct for key stakeholders to follow
- Value existing knowledge and ideas
- The impact of initiatives must be assessed at the household level
- Find ways to ensure the voices of women and children are listened to and they are active participants in the decision-making processes
- Ensure child protection policies are available to stakeholders and community members
- Promote equality, non-discrimination and inclusion
The need for a more cohesive administration which is and closer to local problems emerged in 1999, when the Angolan government started the deconcentration process of the state administration. In 2001, the Strategy for Deconcentration and Decentralisation was approved with an objective of deepening deconcentration and gradually, establishing autarquias as autonomous units of local government. In 2002, the process was accelerated and finally was possible to extend the administration of the state to all the national territory.

The practice of democratic management has produced new knowledge for actors of the civil society (CS) and governments, as has contributed to significantly change the relationship between public power and the population, above all in the area of local power. The practices of participation and citizenship have contributed significantly to the process of democratisation of public management, identifying alternatives for State reforms and the redefinition of relations with civil society, hitherto marked by a heritage of authoritarian rule, clientelism and patrimonialism.

The current political and social dynamic in the country demands decentralized management, which is increasingly participatory, creative and flexible, and includes access to information, dialogue and transparency in decision-making and implementation, and regular accountability. In a context of political and administrative reforms, it is becoming important that administrative structures are capable of providing services and have the potential for development, in such a way that they also increase dialogue between the state structures and civil society in its various forms of organisation. This increases the participation and responsibility of citizens in the resolution of problems and local development, strengthening democracy or at least ensuring citizens are closer to political-administrative decision making.

Participatory Planning is presented here as the mechanism which can make this vision operational. The Cycle of Participatory Planning organised in Sambizanga Municipality Luanda in 2005 is a practical illustration of the government and civil society engagement in collective work.

Lessons learned

The principal lessons learned by LUPP and its Government and Community partners are follows:

- A positive interaction between the government, political parties and civil society can be promoted through participative processes starting from a base in the community and them moving upwards.

- The Municipal authorities in Sambizanga found the experience very positive, not only gaining from learning to use Participatory Planning Cycle tools but learning more about decentralised governance in practice.

- The Participatory Planning Cycle experience raised the awareness of the basic service providers who engaged with consumers of these services to resolve issues related to social demand and developing the supply of services.

Background

The current political and social dynamic in the country demands decentralized management, which is increasingly participatory, creative and flexible, and includes access to information, dialogue and transparency in decision-making and implementation, and regular accountability. In a context of political and administrative reforms, it is becoming important that administrative structures are capable of providing services and have the potential for development, in such a way that they also increase dialogue between the state structures and civil society in its various forms of organisation. This increases the participation and responsibility of citizens in the resolution of problems and local development, strengthening democracy or at least ensuring citizens are closer to political-administrative decision making.

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Defining Participatory Planning

Participatory Planning is a pedagogic process of civil education in order to interest citizens in discussion and decision making regarding their destiny. Besides the need for greater democratic openness by local administrations, allowing broader participation of citizens in public matters, it is also necessary to inspire confidence in civil society to dialogue and negotiate with the state, to instil a democratic culture of participation, and co-responsibility for local development.

Participatory Planning is defined as a process in which different groups with different interests engage in collective action to reach a consensus on the elaboration and implementation of a plan. The plan can be initiated by one of the parties, but afterwards it must be negotiated and agreed upon by all parties. Its relevance is due to a recognition that society is pluralist and that there can be legitimate conflicts of interest that must be discussed in order to reach consensus. As a mechanism to promote participation, Participatory Planning...
Planning is aware of and sensitive to differences of power, but attempts to ensure that this does not determine the final results of the process. The process requires that different parties involved share relevant information to deliberate upon matters of mutual concern, in order to find the right ways to limit conflict.

The Angolan Government recognizes that Participatory Urban Planning plays an important role in urban development which aims to be more equitable and inclusive in order to strengthen social cohesion and reduce poverty.

**Decentralization in Angola—public administration**

Decentralisation became a focus of the agenda in the 1980s and 1990s. The tendency towards decentralisation is attributed to a generalized failure of centralised economic planning, which could not respond to local aspirations and the emergence of democratic processes.

The current public administration is characterised by a structural and functional fragility in human resources and processes of inclusive decision-making in the process of local development. Concurrently, Angolan Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) only began to emerge and start developing recently, following the approval of the Law of Associations in May of 1991.

**The function and structure of municipal administrations**

Decree 17/99 specifies the attributions and competencies of communal and municipal administrations. Following this, Decree 27/00 was published in order to eliminate and combine structures at communal and municipal level that were hitherto the responsibility of central government. As a result they would establish mechanisms to improve human resource, material and financial effectiveness.

Municipal administrations have the responsibility of supplying basic services, however most of these services are supplied by the provincial level governments due to insufficient budgets at municipal level.

The area of Research, Planning, Statistics, Documentation and Information often does not function due to the lack of qualified human resources. This further weakens the capacity of administrations to elaborate coherent plans which respond to local needs due to lack of information, particularly statistics.
Sambizanga is one of nine municipalities in the Luanda province. It borders Cacuaco Municipality to the North and Northeast; Cazenga and Rangel municipalities to the East, the Atlantic Ocean to the West and Ingombotas municipality to the South. It is divided into three communes, Sambizanga, where the municipal administration is located, Ngola Kiluanji and Bairro Operário, each led by a communal administrator nominated by the Provincial Governor.

Sambizanga municipality has a combination of urban and peri urban characteristics, but the peri-urban area represents more than half of the total area. Sambizanga was considered the second most populated municipality in Luanda until recently, with an estimated one million residents.

The informal market of Roque Santeiro, which is the largest in Angola and one of the largest in Africa, is found in Sambizanga, with a monthly revenue estimated to be around US$ 140,000 per day, based on the daily tax paid by sellers at the market.

Civil society
At the beginning of 1991, the Angolan Government started to legislate, and recognise the rights of political parties, the freedom to organise meetings and associations, the right to strike, the freedom of the press, as well as regulate the activities of NGOs. The new legislation that governs NGOs created opportunities for civil society to press for the creation of a more favourable legal framework for the development of civil society. There is now a greater recognition by the government of the role of civil society and the participation of citizens in local governance. Civil society recognizes too that there is a growing engagement with participatory municipal planning through municipal forums.

Municipal Forums are made up of local associations, the private sector and municipal administrations. However the lack of capacity and experience of the human resources at municipal level and the lack of budget at that level are the main challenges to confront.

The experience of the Participatory Planning Cycle in Sambizanga demonstrates the existence of positive alternatives for the development of a cooperative relationship at the local level between the government and civil society. Local civil society has helped to fill some capacity gaps at municipal level in areas of participatory diagnosis, planning and management of social projects, and there are opportunities to work jointly on the collection and analysis of data.

Spaces for debate
The institutional fragility of both local Administrations and civil society result from a lack of dialogue between social actors in decision-making. It is important...
to introduce reforms to strengthen the functional capacity of local administrations to respond to the needs of the poor, and for civil society to encourage the community to participate in the dialogue to plan for local development.

Debate forums are participatory mechanisms to promote dialogue and collective action between the state and the citizens allow for the elimination of discriminatory practices and promote opportunities for the most socially excluded groups to participate in the processes of planning and implementation.

The Participatory Planning Cycle offers clear opportunities for information exchange and the enhanced knowledge of local reality which facilitate the maximisation of impacts to the community. This occurs since none of the institutions acts in isolation and resources and necessary capacity to reduce urban poverty can be easily mapped out. Collective action, such as the Participatory Planning Cycle that took place in Sambizanga municipality, allowed the municipal administration and citizens to share visions, maximise available resources for local development and to integrate local initiatives in the municipal plan.

Results achieved with PPC in Sambizanga

- For the first time in the history of the Sambizanga Municipal Administration the municipal development plan was elaborated in a participatory manner. The process represented collective action in which the diagnosed problems and solutions identified were decided in a participative way based on reaching a consensus.

- The process facilitated the establishment of a positive interaction between different organs of the State and civil society. It demonstrated that it is possible to promote dialogue between various actors so that results are not merely determined by power relations, but instead serve to stimulate the participation of everyone.

- The analysis of problems, by sectors of activity, allowed the participants to have a clear idea of the priorities of each sector, which encouraged participation in discussions and in the elaboration of the plan.

- The opportunity to dialogue together allowed participants to recognise that solutions for many problems can be found locally.

- The improvement of access roads in the municipality and greater engagement by public security bodies in the fight against delinquency, considered the most urgent problems in the Sambizanga municipality, are a practical application of the plan.
The Participatory Planning Cycle approach

The approach of the Participatory Planning Cycle in Sambizanga was centred on the principle of citizen participation. People are subjects of the process, capable of contributing to discussions and decisions about the destiny of their municipality. Educational or experiential practice also aims at making the actions of the municipality clearer, more efficient and participatory.

It was necessary to introduce a methodology based upon participation and learning that helped the participants involved to analyse their necessities, aspirations, motivations and priorities. This resulted in an exchange of experiences, knowledge and reciprocal learning between the three communes in the municipality.

The methodology was summarised in periodic reflections organised with the participation of organs of the local government. Workshops were held to analyse the reality of each commune in terms of problems, solutions and priorities, and the information was collected to provide a base for the elaboration of the municipal plan.

Good practice principles for the Cycle of Participatory Planning

The Participatory Planning Cycle implemented by LUPP in Sambizanga municipality was supported by two fundamental principles:

1. Participatory Planning through experiential practice, or learning while doing

In the process of democratisation of public management, educational practice is a fundamental element to ensure greater achievement and quality in the activities carried out. From there, the need to build a pedagogy of democratic management, an indispensable dimension to ensure that civil society and government actors acquire efficiency and the potential to implement in practicing democracy, active citizenship, in vitalizing the public sphere and in the construction of a civic culture.

This principle emerges as a direct contribution to good local governance, to strengthen the levels of government and civil society participation, encouraging discussion that helps public powers to use techniques of Participatory Participation and processes of inclusive decision making and the development of partnership between different social actors.

2. Participative Planning centred on the participation of people while also being subjects of the process

This principle offers a significant lesson for the practice of active citizenship, by which people stop being helpers in politics and instead become citizens subjected to the definition and management of public policies. The apprenticeship of co-responsibility in municipal issues, the broadening of the vision about local problems and the recognition of its participation as a right are some of the elements that contribute to the construction of a new practice of active citizenship.

The practical implementation of this principle from the beginning creates a transparent and democratic public sphere in which the state and civil society at local level define, together, the priorities for the municipality, while stimulating associativism for an organized participation of citizens and collective action.
Legal framework

The legal framework of actions is fundamental to encourage the participation of citizens and to make the decisions made legitimate. Decree 17/99 supports the Participatory Planning Cycle in Sambizanga, as well as Public Gazette No 44 of 10/99, which recommends the obligation of Municipal Administrations to elaborate annual participatory plans.

Associated to this, there is also a decree (directive?) from the Luanda Provincial Government (GPL) according to which municipal administrations must, until June and July of each year, present its municipal plan so it can be integrated into the general provincial plan.

Additionally, to Law 3/04 for the Territorial Classification of Articles 28, 30 and 31, emphasises public participation as the operational mechanism for consultation in the process of elaborating municipal plans and also includes mechanisms for strengthening the civic values of citizens and the right to information and participation.

This is a clear illustration of the importance and legitimacy of the participatory planning process carried out in Sambizanga. The cycle of participatory planning did not only deal with the simple obligation of the municipal administration to elaborate the plan but also, created a space for dialogue and engagement between the state and civil society which resulted in reciprocal learning between them.

Why participatory planning?

The actual public administration is characterized by a structural and functional fragility in terms of human resources and processes of inclusive decision making and that organised civil society emerged and developed recently with the approval of the Law of Associations in May 1991. Associated to this, it is important to consider the administrative decentralisation process that is underway in the country, supported by the argument according to which decisions need to be made closer to citizens in such a way that they better reflect local conditions, needs and priorities.

The Participatory Planning Cycle in Sambizanga proved to be an important practical mechanism to reinforce the institutional capacity of the communal administrations of Operário, Sambizanga (centre) and Ngola Kiluanji as well as the Municipality of Sambizanga in the use of Participatory Planning techniques and processes of inclusive decision making. In addition, it constructed a learning process on engagement that involved the largest number of institutions possible in a process of discussion for local development.

Although it was a pilot project, the Participatory Planning Cycle aimed at reinforcing the good governance capacity of public power at the Sambizanga municipality level and also started a process of discussion and decision making on the reality of the municipality (conditions, needs, priorities, potential) through dialogue with all municipal actors – governmental sectors of the municipality and citizens, through representation by their organizations.

Basic assumptions (presuppositions)

The experience demonstrates that many assumptions or presuppositions need to be taken into account in the establishment of the Participatory Planning Cycle. Successful
implementation depends greatly on the capacity of key actors to internalise the following presuppositions:

i. Recognising the difficulty of converting the procedures of negotiation that imply the democratisation of power through shared decision-making into daily practice.

ii. Recognising the technical weakness of the actors involved. This problem is linked to the challenge of structuring processes that ensure flows of adequate information that is accessible to all actors, that promote continuous training processes and ensure conditions and equal capacities of participation in the process.

iii. Perception of relations between provincial government and the limitations of municipal government.

iv. Considering that no models exist on the Participatory Planning Cycle to follow, but that the basic conditions are the existence of a clear political will, transparency in actions and general principals shared for creation of a confident environment which is essential for the process.

Phases of process

The Participatory Planning Cycle is structured in three fundamental phases:

i. Organisation Phase (6 working days) dedicated to initial reflection and organization of the process

ii. Implementation Phase (18 useful days) which include workshops for collection of information, consolidation and elaboration of plans

iii. Socialisation Phase (between 20–25 working days, depending on the speed in which the document is elaborated), for the elaboration of the final documents and negotiations with Luanda Provincial Government.

Organization phase

The organization phase involves establishing a technical team to lead the process and organising specific meetings with organs of the local administration for preliminary discussions on general concepts of the process and logistics. The experience demonstrates that the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams (comprised of civil society, political parties and government) provides the process with greater capacity for articulation, organisation and legitimacy. In parallel, the prior discussion on general concepts increases the awareness of the local administrations of the challenges that the Participatory Planning Cycle involves.

Another objective of the organization phase is to strengthen the capacity of local administrations to general matters related to the advantages and disadvantage of Participatory Planning, their understanding of current practice and the elaboration of municipal plans, reflection upon problematic issues (such as concerns by local administrations regarding financial centralisation by the Provincial Government of Luanda, civil society passivity in participating in the resolution of local problems and the dissatisfaction of the municipal administration due to poor consideration to their concerns by Provincial Government), as well as defining the methodology and timetable for the process.

This phase is a direct translation of the participatory planning principle with regards to practical education, in the way that it deals with a moment of action-reflection, which is a fundamental element to ensure the quality of the involvement of local authorities in the process.

Implementation phase

The implementation phase is characterised by workshops to diagnose problems and define local priorities. In this phase, all the structures of the municipal government, organised civil society, private sector and political parties participate together and reflect on local development while translating into practice the principles of Participatory Planning centred on the participation of people as subjects of the process.

The workshops are divided in communes and municipalities. The communal level workshops last on average five days during which the participants from each commune – civil society, political parties and public power – reflect on Participatory
Planning – what it is, its advantages and disadvantages – and during which the diagnosis of problems begins (causes and effects), followed by the definition of priorities, or the desired, ideal situation.

The workshops at municipal level last, on average, three days and aim fundamentally to build a common vision on local problems, reinforcing the awareness of participants of the need for collective action in the resolution of local problems, stimulating the establishment of necessary alliances between key actors and finally, consolidating the collected information in each commune for the elaboration of the municipal plan. During this phase, a process of face to face social responsibilisation of actors begins, identifying the problems and solutions.

Overall, the communal and municipal workshops help the participants – civil society and government – to become aware that the resolution of municipal problems is not the exclusive responsibility of government but instead, of all actors involved in the process.

Socialization phase

The socialisation phase involves organising broad municipal workshops that enable the results of the process to be shared, or the presentation of the municipal plan that has been developed, the elaboration of the Participatory Budget and the definition of a strategy that will lead to the integration of the municipal plan into the plan of Provincial Government.

The practice of participatory budgeting initiates an educational process that provides the civil society and government actors important apprenticeships. In practice, the elaboration of Participatory Budgets requires that the Municipal Administration has an efficient technical institutional capacity so that they are capable of managing the process and ensuring the participation of citizens. This means that the elaboration of a Participatory Budget requires qualified participation.

The lack of a technical unit at the time the process of Participatory Budgeting is led, could be the reason to establish a multidisciplinary team for this purpose, supported by the argument that the elaboration of a municipal budget must be seen as being an activity that requires specific technical abilities not observable by most of the participants involved in the process. In this case, it becomes important to have a strategy that emphasises the perspective of qualified participation from social actors which has been revealed as the best way of concluding the Participatory Planning Cycle. Meanwhile, in a long perspective, it becomes important that during the Participatory Planning process the participants have the possibility of increasing their technical capacity allowing them to participate actively in the elaboration of the municipal budget and in this way, protecting the issue of representation. The diagram below illustrates in detail the participative planning cycle implemented by LUPP in the Sambizanga municipality.
In this context, the Participatory Planning Cycle in Sambizanga municipality demonstrates that the fight to reduce urban poverty is a very complex process and is becoming a collective action among institutions and individuals. It is also important to stimulate the exchange of information and recognize the need to optimise impacts in the community, and facilitate the integration of local initiatives in the municipal, provincial and national plan.

The principal lessons learnt with the implementation of the Participatory Planning Cycle can be summarised as follows:

i. It was a clear demonstration of the possibility of creating positive interaction between the government, political parties and civil society, allowing the organization of participative processes from community upwards

ii. The low participation of women and the poor capacity of gender analysis is a limit to development at every level and is a problem to both structures of government and civil society.

Lessons learned

In current conditions in Luanda, making Participatory Planning Cycles routine practice for the municipal administrations becomes a challenge if we bear in mind that:

i. the elaboration of municipal plans always creates a need for the provision of resources (human, financial and material) to implement, which unfortunately do not exist locally

ii. the municipal plans are elaborated with the aim of being integrated in the general plan of the Provincial Government, so that the final responsibility for implementation does not lie with the municipal administrations, which means that municipal administrations are not able to ensure the implementation of plans

iii. the participation of key actors in Participatory Planning Cycle depends greatly on results achieved with the implementation of the previous plan

Bearing in mind the challenges raised, the main challenges involved in conducting the Participatory Planning Cycle in Luanda are intimately connected:

i. local capacity of establishing upward institutional links that result in the integration of municipal plans in the annual plans of Provincial Government

ii. whether it could be possible to develop local capacity to monitor the implementation of the municipal plans

iii. the development of local capacity to guarantee the acquisition of human, financial and material resources to implement the municipal plans.
What is LUPP?

The Luanda Urban Poverty Programme (LUPP) is a partnership between CARE International, Development Workshop, Save the Children UK and One World Action. It is supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) and has been ongoing since 1999. The second phase, LUPP2, ran from April 2003 to September 2006. LUPP2 was implemented in four of nine municipalities in Luanda, namely Sambizanga, Cacuaco, Cazenga and Kilamba Kiaxi.

What does LUPP do?

LUPP partners work in collaboration with the Government of Angola to support the government to meet its declared goal of halving poverty levels by 2015. The programme is implemented in partnership with civil society organisations, NGOs, service providers and government departments/ministries. LUPP engages to promote pro-poor policies, especially in seeking to guarantee the provision of basic services to Angolan citizens.

The purpose of LUPP2 was to influence equitable, inclusive, pro-poor policies and best practices for Angola for poverty reduction in urban Luanda. The policy influencing agenda was the overarching framework of the programme. LUPP seeks to influence poverty reduction in Luanda by:

- Demonstrating effective, sustainable, inclusive and replicable best practice strategies (models, methods and approaches) for basic service delivery (water, sanitation, rubbish collection, community crèches), livelihood support (microcredit, savings, Business Development Services (BDS) and consumer cooperatives), social capital, governance and poverty reduction more generally which can be effectively replicated in poor urban areas to bring about positive change in the lives of poor urban families;
- Facilitating active learning and understanding on urban poverty issues and policies by key stakeholders and producing strategic information on the lessons, messages and methods emerging from the models and approaches, adapted to demands for policy relevant information;
- Strengthening the commitment and capacity of local authorities and civil society to promote and implement inclusive and participatory local development;
- Promoting greater engagement, inclusion and accountability between government and civil society on urban issues, largely through the creation of spaces in which different actors can come into contact with the lessons, messages and methods, absorb their implications and take forward the work of integrating them into policy and practice.

More information on LUPP can be found at www.luppangola.org

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