COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING
Plan for Action!

Getting Started and Hints

INTRODUCTION

This "Project Planner" wall chart may be used in three ways:
- as a guide for running Community Action Planning workshops
- as a management tool in organizing, evaluating and arranging logistics for workshops
- as a training tool for practitioners

It is arranged in a sequence of tasks, under five main sections. Each task includes the steps to be followed and an example of the chart to be prepared. Note that the chart may be folded to limit display to one series of tasks at a time.

This chart is intended as a general framework which should be modified and adjusted to reflect the dynamics and context of specific workshops.

This chart was derived from "A Manual for Technical Staff Working With Communities" prepared under a UNDP/UNCHS project in Bangladesh. It was field tested with technical staff in Dhaka and Chittagong.

The "Project Planner" is a companion to the book: "ACTION PLANNING FOR CITIES: A Guide to Community Practice", Nabeel Hamdi and Reinhard Goethert, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. 1997. The book introduces an alternative agenda for planning based on a critical review of current development theories and practices. It reviews and analyses examples of participatory planning, and sets out the basis on which to plan training programs. The book concludes with a series of case files that illustrate the principles and practice of action planning programs.

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SAMPLE WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Identifying Urban Issues *(In Office)*	**Assembling Information** *(In Office)*	**Making Community Map** *(In Field w/Community)*	**Determining Actions** *(In Field w/Community)*	**Synthesizing Proposal** *(In Office)*
1: Review Context	**5:** Prepare Base Plan	**8:** Complete Base Map	**10:** Decide Actions	**15:** Prepare Coordinated Plan of Action
2: Summarize Issues	**6:** Identify Spatial Physical Elements	**Identifying Characteristics**	**Considering Implementation** *(In Field w/Community)*	**Presentation to Community** *(In Field w/Community)*
Understand Community Context *(In Office and Field)*	**7:** Identify Non-physical Elements	**9:** Prepare Typologies	**11:** Gather Prioritized Actions	
3: Review Community Issues				
4: Make Community Observations				

Planning the Workshop

Carefully prepare for the workshop. Think through each of the activities; consider Time To Do, Activity Planned, Goals, and Arrangements for Seating and Materials.

Example of worksheet

HINTS

Who should participate in the Workshop?

Most important, there should be representatives reflecting the range of families in the community: the young, the old, leaders, men and women.
- Representatives from the government should attend, both technical and administrative: these may include water and sanitary engineers, road engineers, health representatives, local teachers, as well elected representatives
- Representatives from NGOs, both local and from outsider groups
- And last, the Workshop moderator, who may be one of the technical staff

What has to be arranged beforehand?

- Determine where is the best location for the workshop: be sure to inspect the location before hand; avoid last minute surprises!
- Check to see that you have sufficient wall space for pin-up or hanging of the worksheets.
- Make sure you have the necessary materials and hand before you start:
  - Flip charts with sufficient paper
  - Program worksheets which explain who does what on a day-by-day basis.
  - Markers, different colors: maybe four different?
  - Tape or pins to attach charts to wall.
  - Sufficient tables and chairs for the participants.
  - Base plan of the area, and any other information that is available.
  - Maybe a camera?
  - And last, maybe a bell or whistle to call the meeting to order!
- Arrange for drinks, snacks, and if needed lunches for all the participants during the all of the sessions. Maybe ask the community to provide this?
- A higher level authority person should open the workshop to give legitimacy to the sessions and to address the dynamics of city politics.
- Ensure that invitations to guests for the final day presentations are prepared and sent out in a timely manner during the first days. It is essential to have on the last day those who attended the first day.
- Agree and arrange for certificates if appropriate, particularly during a training session.

Hints for managing the Workshop

- Participants should be led to discover for themselves, do not force ideas! They should not be prescribed.
- Participants should be encouraged to perceive problems, issues, and solutions through the eyes of the various actors with whom they will to deal with when undertaking the tasks. Role playing is a very useful technique in this respect. Remember that the participants are familiar with the problems.
- Local people often have better understanding of local issues than experts from the outside.
- Each session should start with a summary of the previous day and with an outline of what is to come.
- Each day should end with a summary of the day's activities. Remember:
  - **Tell them what you're going to tell them**
  - **Tell it to them**
  - **Tell them what you told them**
- Adhere to schedules, but be flexible enough to incorporate new ideas or to spend additional time where it may be needed.
- Illustrate issues and points with concrete examples which participants can identify. Summarize what you have said several times to make sure people have understood. Repeat entire sessions if needed. Try "mini-exercises" to clarify issues.
- Point to charts when you talk about them: place charts in a visible place and easy to reach.
- Go around and see how people are getting on doing the work. Remind people of what they are doing!
- Be sure someone knows how to change bulbs in projectors!
- Keep breaks (tea, lunch, etc.) short. It is better to finish early that to extend breaks, or to fill in time.
- During discussions or participant responses, ensure that only one discussion is being conducted at any one time.
- Minimize abstract diagrams or ideas.
- Control wandering during presentations and discussions!

A — Statement of PROBLEMS and OPPORTUNITIES

■ **Identifying Urban Issues**
Update to a project area and background information at the urban scale.
■ **Understanding Community Context**
Introduction to the site and information about how it works.

1 — REVIEW CONTEXT
Identifying Urban Issues

Procedure:
- Invite speakers to present the background of key sectors of the urban area. Topics to be covered may include:
  - Economy
  - Population
  - Land
  - Shelter
  - Infrastructure
  - Services
  - Planning context
- Keep notes of key issues that may impact target area.

Example of Notes

2 — SUMMARIZE ISSUES
Identifying Urban Issues

Procedure:
- Reflect on overview papers that were presented.
- Identify key issues that may impact targeted area. These may be developed by small teams or by the group as a whole.

Example of Chart

3 — REVIEW COMMUNITY ISSUES
Understanding Community Context

Procedure:
- A planner is asked to give a brief overview of the area. Information is presented on plans and slides and includes a basic description, population, history of area, growth, etc.
- A representative from the community is asked to give introductory remarks to the group.

Example of information presented

4 — MAKE COMMUNITY OBSERVATIONS
Understanding Community Context

Procedure:
- Groups go out and observe area as lookers or listeners, for house/area or family/community.
- Write up findings and indicate priority by number

(Hints: Specify problems carefully: not "drain broken" but "road flooded". Ask all groups of the community: children, women, and older people. Organize yourself into "talkers" and "writers" - the person who keeps notes. Locate problems on the community map.)

Example of Notes

"LOOKERS"

HOUSE		AREA	
Problems as Observed	Why	Problems as Observed	Why

"LISTENERS"

FAMILY		COMMUNITY	
Problems as Reported	Why	Problems as Reported	Why

Supplementary: REVIEW PROBLEMS
Understanding Community Context

Procedure:
- Prioritize "Problems" identified in "Make Community Observations"
- Select top 3-5 problems and explore causes and impacts.

Example of Chart

Problems	Causes	Impacts

B — Documentation of KEY INFORMATION

■ **Assembling Information**
Review of information, documentation of physical and non-physical elements, and mapping impact and prioritization of urban programs.

5 — PREPARE BASE PLAN
Assembling Information

Procedure:
- Review available plans for the target community. Check:
  - Date plan prepared
  - Scale (Is it appropriate for the information shown?)
- Agree on scales and information to be shown in a community map.

Example of Plan

Supplementary: EXPLORE PLAN
Assembling Information

Procedure:
- Identify on Base Plan:
  - Public Uses. These include: schools, clinics, parks, etc.
  - Public Access. These include: streets, roads, lanes, alleys, paths, etc.
- Predict on Base Plan:
  - Relative land values (high, medium, low)
  - Relative potential of commercial uses on Base Plan (high, medium, low)
- Measure from Base Plan:
  - Length of access (total length of all circulation)
  - Areas of Public Uses (streets, paths, parks, open spaces)
  - Total Area (whole site within boundaries)

Example

6 — IDENTIFY SPATIAL PHYSICAL ELEMENTS
Assembling Information

Procedure:
- Divide into two working groups.
- One group documents "as is" elements on a Base Plan.
- One group documents proposals from Structure Plans, Master Plans, reports, etc.
- Include things like water, sewer lines, drainage, electric lines, educational and health facilities, garbage boxes, etc.

7 — IDENTIFY NON-PHYSICAL ELEMENTS
Assembling Information

Procedure:
- Divide into two working groups.
- One group documents "as is" elements on a Base Plan or chart.
- One group documents proposals from Structure Plans, Master Plans, reports, etc. on Base Plan or chart.
- Include things like political boundaries, community territories, water-shed areas, etc.

C — Making COMMUNITY MAP

■ **Making Community Map**
Documentation of community problems and issues as considered by community.
■ **Identifying Characteristics**
Documentation of plot types as a basis for assessing deficiencies in infrastructure, plot uses, densities and growth potential.

8 — COMPLETE BASE MAP
Making Community Maps

Procedure:
- Meet with community representatives on-location.
- Discuss and update Base Plan with Spatial and Non-spatial Elements.
- Prepare Map of Community Concerns and Opportunities; for example, where does flooding occur? where are streets congested, at what times of the day? are there high crime areas? what are the best locations to live? where is the best place for a shop?
- Prepare Map of Patterns of Use; for example, where do families go shopping? where do children play? etc.
- Combine plans into one "Community Map".

9 — PREPARE TYPOLOGIES
Identifying Characteristics

Procedure:
- Identify key types of dwelling/plot situations found in area. Types are determined by a combination of:
  - Use (commercial, mixed, residential)
  - Plot sizes (large, small)
  - Tenure (ownership, rental, squatter)
  - Building type (multi-story, single floor, shack)
- Prepare the following for each dwelling/plot type:
  - Description of type
  - Description of development process in the form of a "family story" highlighting past, present situation and future expectations
  - Description of physical characteristics:
    - Plot plan with dwelling, plot uses, and dimensions
    - Photograph or sketch of dwelling
    - Table of Basic Data

Example of Dwelling Typology

D — Set of ACTIONS and Related TASKS

■ **Determining Actions**
Identification and prioritizing of actions to deal with problems and opportunities

10 — DECIDE ACTIONS
Determining Actions

Procedure:
- Meet with community representatives and their related actions and non-spatial interventions.
- The actions relate to the problems identified in the strategic phase "Statement of Problems and Opportunities" and the information gathered from the plans and field visits.
- Prioritize interventions based on "now, soon, later" (mark with a "n", "s", or "l") according to community need, feasibility (money, time, technology, skills, etc.) and political viability.

PROPOSED ACTIONS	SPATIAL/ PHYSICAL INTERVENTION	NON-SPATIAL INTERVENTION

11 — GATHER PRIORITIZED ACTIONS
Determining Actions

Procedure:
- Gather "now, soon, later" interventions into a summary chart.
- Consider sequence of "now" interventions and group into like families" of things; for example, group together things dealing with community inputs, or group together things dealing with drainage and streets.

	NOW	SOON	LATER

E — Plan for IMPLEMENTATION

■ **Considering Implementation**
Identification of tasks, hurdles to be overcome, and responsibilities.
■ **Synthesizing Proposal**
Summarizing actions, inputs, and who does what into a implementable proposal.

12 — IDENTIFY TASKS
Considering Implementation

Procedure:
- Select the "now" interventions from "Now" column of previous exercise and agree on actions to be taken for each.
- It may be useful to limit tasks to the top 3-5 "now" interventions.

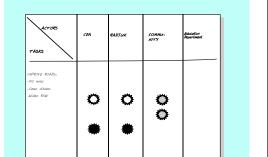| "NOW" INTERVENTIONS	TASKS

13 — CONSIDER CONSTRAINTS
Considering Implementation

Procedure:
- Take each group of tasks from previous chart and what are the constraints and how to overcome them.

WHAT ARE THE CONSTRAINTS	HOW TO OVERCOME

14 — ESTABLISH RESPONSIBILITIES
Considering Implementation

Procedure:
- Identify potential actors for implementation.
- List tasks entailed for each action.
- Identify who is responsible. Three levels of responsibility could be used:
  - Full
  - Shared
  - Support

15 — PREPARE COORDINATED PLAN OF ACTION
Synthesizing Proposal

Procedure:
- Prepare "project memorandum" including the following sections:
  - Executive Summary (what you did, how you did it, what did you conclude?)
  - Area Profile (very brief description of area, including population, main features, housing typologies, etc.)
  - Overall Planning Objectives (Goals for area linked to development program and strategic plan) Consider both current situation and future potential
  - For each project proposed, ready to be handed to potential funding agency
  - Project Objectives (goals of specific project)
  - Project Description (include tasks, responsibilities, time schedule, costing)
  - Project Budget (only include items, not necessary to include costs)
  - Plan

The Project Memorandum becomes the short term development vision for the community. It includes specific projects that can be initiated quickly by the community, by the government when necessary, or through joint efforts in a partnership arrangement.

Copies should be left with the community leaders, with the technical officer responsible for the area, and for other agencies involved in particular projects.

Example of Plan of Action