COMMUNICATION TOOLS
FOR
COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

by

Sebastian Gray

Architect
Universidad Catolica de Chile
1985

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ARCHITECTURE STUDIES
AT THE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
JUNE, 1988

© Sebastian Gray 1988

The author hereby grants to M.I.T.
permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly copies
of this thesis document in whole or in part

Signature of the author

Sebastian Gray
Department of Architecture
May 6, 1988

Certified by

Reinhard Goethert
Principal Research Associate
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by

Julian Beinart
Chairman
Departmental Committee for Graduate Students
COMMUNICATION TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

by Sebastian Gray

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree Master of Science in Architecture Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

ABSTRACT

1. THE NEW PARADIGM
An introduction to the historical and conceptual framework that underlies the new paradigm of support-policy and community-participation.

2. COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
The new paradigm translated into development policy.
The aim of community-based development programs:
Making use of local and untapped resources
Building community self-confidence through relevant participation
Relieving the authority of unnecessary expense
Producing a decentralized, manageable program
Producing a flexible program suiting specific needs
Allowing replication

3. THE USES OF COMMUNICATION
Distribution, sharing, provision, exchange of technical information; replication of successful experiences.
Premise: "Communication precedes Action" at both the technocrats' and the community levels in participatory community-based development programs.
Communication for stating intentions, expectable outcomes and roles of the different parts involved in the development process.
The case of Microplanning as an instance of communication and collective action.
The case of the NHDA's Urban Housing Unit: its organization, operations and problems.

4. APPROPRIATE MEDIA
 Appropriateness of media according to aims, target size, available resources: the use of traditional and technological means.
The issue of evaluation of the effectiveness of the use of message-oriented communication devices.
The organization of UNICEF-funded "Jana Udawa" Communications Project in Colombo, Sri Lanka, using traditional media: its operations and problems.

5. REPLICATION:
The ultimate participatory instance or Communication in the unusual direction.
The use of media and of a communication structure for communities to feed-back the development process.
Description and critique of a NHDA proposal for a community-operated video information program.

6. APPENDIX
"The Story of the Waiting People", a play for puppet theatre.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Thesis Supervisor: Reinhard Goethert
Title: Principal Research Associate
FOREWORD

This writing is a collection of ideas and reflections on a new field of exploration: the nature and needs of community-based development programs. It intends to be a frame of reference for professional work that, in these domains, I believe largely empiric.

There is, however, thesis: the advocacy of small-scale, low-technology, traditional, appropriate media for communicating at different levels all the information conveyed and shared among the many actors that participate in the development process of communities.

The topic was inspired on the inquiry and experience of the Design and Housing program at MIT in community-based development programs in developing countries.

The topic was informed by the fortunate experiences I had while visiting Sri Lanka and collaborating with the NHDA.

Thanks are given

to the officials of the National Housing Development Authority in Colombo, Sri Lanka

to the people in the Jana Udawa Communications Project in Colombo, Sri Lanka

to the Department of Architecture at MIT

to the Council for the Arts at MIT

to my thesis readers: Sandra Howell and Russell Neuman

Special thanks are given

to my concerned and kind advisor: Reinhard Goethert

This is dedicated to the ones I love
THE NEW PARADIGM

"A house for everyone" has been the unfulfilled hope of many homeless families and individuals and good-willing citizens, as well as the promise and concern of many politicians and regimes all across the world, but specially in such countries where the great lack of appropriate housing constitutes the very image of underdevelopment; a source of frustration, economic stagnation and of social unrest; the evident risk of political instability and thus a political issue of the first order.

It wasn’t until very recently that the struggle for providing a better living environment for the urban poor through reasonably successful and manageable housing programs produced a sharp shift of attitude and trend that is still taking place and growing at different levels of the decision-making structure in the administration of countries both in the developing and developed world. Finally, and against all preconceptions, the developed world has learned a lesson and has borrowed from the developing world what was devised practically out of desperation.

Change -radical change- was indeed the unavoidable and ultimate result of a crisis of increasingly frustrating attempts to apply a formula for the fast development and modernization of the third world, not only in the provision of housing, but in all other sectors of the political and economic life of what are predominantly traditional cultures. Paradoxically, it is change that constitutes the very essence of modernity; the same modernity that the developing world had been seeking to make its own by blindly following the conceptual and ideological framework that the developed world offered, and which ultimately failed. Until change was
generated by necessity from within, and not by importing it, true development -political development, the development of a genuine and original political culture- could not begin to take place.

Until recently, the concept of development was defined by what Everett Rogers calls "the dominant paradigm" of the times; that which the western world defined out of the historical (slow paced, transitional) experience of the industrial revolution, the economic expansion of colonialism, the emerging social sciences and the consolidation of capitalism as a functional and successful economic and political system. Development was indeed defined by economic growth, and its indexes were quantitative, statistical; measuring the quality of life in terms of material well-being (such as GNP and per-capita income) regardless of the cultural, social, ethic and historic wealth of many otherwise "poor" countries. But what was measured was just growth, not the equality of development benefits.¹

Thus defined, "underdeveloped" countries were advised by "developed" countries to industrialize rapidly through technology and capital, in detriment of agriculture and other traditional sectors and regardless of the abundance of labor supply; all this failing to recognize that most industrialized countries had achieved their development helped to a great extent by colonialism, with plenty of traditional industries and cheap labor available.²

¹ Everett Rogers: Communication and Development, The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm. Communication Research, April 1976

² Some authors argue that, after the second World war, rapid global economic growth seemed indeed possible, and that the new means of communication -widespread radio broadcasting and the emerging television- were
As capital-intensive technology is largely in the hands of a few industrialized countries, technology was to be "introduced" to underdeveloped countries, with the needed capital provided by international loans and multinational firms in what could be seen as a different form of colonialism: political freedom was a matter different than economic independence; the dehumanized nature of this form of development led in some extreme instances to the setting-up of dictatorship to ensure the political stability and unity essential to continued economic growth.

It is in this context that Housing had been -and in many cases still is- regarded as a large-scale direct intervention, and a public commitment, in which the government played the main role in terms of management of the program and allocation of resources: housing for the masses was to be provided -usually according to alien standards and with new building technology- at the lowest possible cost, in the least possible time, to as many people as possible and, within the possible, pleasing the people, who were to be the grateful and fortunate recipients of a new, unknown, often belated and sometimes unexpected product: a house, an apartment, an urbanized lot; in any case a long-awaited-for lifetime property.

Failure of the social structures to accommodate to this material technology -in this as in any other sector- was usually blamed on "traditional forms" which needed to be changed through the use of mass-media. The media was regarded as the main vehicle for change and thus for transformation of the traditional society into modernity by implanting necessary new values and beliefs.

Since the problem of underdevelopment was defined in economic terms, man being an economic -rational- entity, "central economic planning of development" became the standard procedure to pursue development goals in the Third World of the '50s and '60s; planned and executed by national governments, neglecting the more local levels of which self-development was considered either unlikely or just too slow. For the purpose of devising a suitable Housing program, for instance, a variety of professionals (technocrats, experts, specialists, consultants) would gather after the call of the central authority, bound to work together and to produce the ultimate and most efficient solution to an ages-old problem. These professionals would have different backgrounds, their own and singular bodies of knowledge and images of knowledge, and little experience or common ground to produce an all-encompassing vision. Their client was their employer; the subject of their work largely abstract. At any rate, the making of housing programs and other policies under that "dominant paradigm" has been a process in which all the involved parts played a very active role, with the sole exception of the user, who was to remain almost invariably passive.

But that couldn't matter. Growth was thought to be infinite, thanks to the existence of infinite resources and the promising technological panacea. In this way massive public housing was indeed provided, while habitational standards (such as quality of construction and built area per inhabitant) steadily decreased, because often foreign, "imported" indexes and criteria were being used and because in fact the scarce available resources could hardly keep up with the growing need. Usually people's real needs -the need for good-quality building, flexible dwellings, available public and private space- have not, in the past, been satisfied. Hardly and slowly did the local intellectuality and the ruling
classes realize the extent to which their developing nations, aspiring to possess the institutions and attributes of the industrialized world which had offered them a model and a way of doing, were economically and ideologically dependent on other countries and lagging behind their essential goals. The causes of underdevelopment would be justified as laying within the underdeveloped nation: its idiosyncracy, its social structure; with no regard for external factors such as the terms of trade or the interests of transnational corporations. These assumptions were accepted within and without the underdeveloped countries because, on one hand, the intellectual elites - the scientists, planners, politicians - were either western or western-trained; on the other hand, international power was truly concentrated in a few nations.

It wasn't until the mid-'70s that the paradigm changed. Everett Rogers cites a number of world events that influenced this shift of mind: the oil crisis demonstrated other sources of financial and political power among countries that were not typically "developed", this made possible for the developing world to succeed in redefining the problem of underdevelopment as due to both internal and external factors; also, the developed nations suffered from "ecological disgust with environmental pollution", a crisis of their ideal of endless progress and material well-being; the case of several socialist countries that had succeeded in developing without following the western model (China most notably); and the realization of the overall failure of the development effort in the third world over a period of twenty-five years.3

Small-scale, labor-intensive programs and projects that had been typically disregarded as inefficient were now strongly advocated by a number of influential authors and publications:

3 Rogers, Op. cit.: pp. 221-222
Christopher Alexander's "Community and Privacy" and Hassan Fathy's "Architecture for the Poor", for instance, were specially influential in the domains of architecture and urban design, a domain that until then had had Modernism and the International Style as the very image of the old paradigm. Schumacher's "Small is Beautiful" and its argument for intermediate technology as the adaptation of scientific tools and methods to local cultures exerted a great influence in all fields and the idea caught on with enthusiasm.

The achievement of development was now understood to be possible in different alternative ways. From that of mere economic growth, the new concept of development had evolved more concerned with social development, equality and freedom:

...a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment.*

The new premises were equality of distribution, popular participation (through community-based programs, decentralization), the use of local resources and the integration of traditional and modern systems. The new concept of development was, indeed, more flexible and humanitarian.

It was at this time that, in dealing with the question of public housing, and after all these years of trial, it became gradually apparent that the authority and other involved parts -designers, the industry; even the users- should address the problem not only as a quick, efficient result-oriented task,

* See: Rogers, Everett: The Anthropology of modernization and the modernization of anthropology. Reviews in Anthropology, 1975
but rather as a system of choices and decisions demanding the
discrimination and recognition of different levels of
intervention. Technology, standardization, industrialized
building could all help achieve a rational saving of
resources, but there should be no standard solutions, or even
standard criteria, when dealing with the provision of public
housing, housing with a social concern, for -just as in every
other matter of Architecture, for instance- different
conditions and circumstances require and produce different
responses; these local conditions being not only those of the
environment but also those of the users, the available
resources at a given time, and political and cultural
singularities.

This concept of a functional development program -functional
to specific needs; agricultural, educational, housing-
required the acceptance of the fact that the results are not
exactly predictable or designable (there's no fully designed
product) and thus not as pleasing to the result-oriented
ribbon-cutting politicians, or as pleasing even to the users
who have been traditionally led to expect a finished product;
that the programs might take longer to implement, and that the
user was to be directly involved in the process; that he
should be able and committed to participate in and influence
the process that leads to the production of his own house
along with its built environment, the ways in which he and his
community will have to interact, organize, develop; being
required for this a solid representative and communicating
political structure (which is why this trend hasn't gathered
enough momentum under totalitarian regimes which view
independent community-based initiatives and a stable
representative structure as an open threat).

And how to hear from the users? For years, social researchers
have been retrieving, gathering and interpreting great amounts
of information through thorough surveys on the users’ needs and aspirations; an important body of information ultimately used for designing habitational standards that usually give way to more practical and unavoidable considerations. These habitational standards have often become the template against which dwellings are measured to find out what they lack. Traditionally the users’ participation and involvement was indirect, through such surveys, savings programs and accumulation of data; but never truly incorporating the user into the process of decision-making and design having him or her be one of the active-role involved parts.

So how to have the central authority deal with so great a diversity of contexts and determinants? How to have the government act efficiently at different levels of intervention? And how to bring the user into an active role?

The first answer was: by changing the scale of the intervention. The central government should no longer attempt to manage the whole decision-making and design process; it should rather allocate resources, organize the agenda and enable the operations of smaller, local organizations that better understand local needs and possibilities.

Smaller, local organizations still require the same group of professionals to gather but, again, with a different attitude and new methods. Their employer and the subject of their work is now much one and the same; the immediacy of their field of action probably allows them a faster and more comprehensive overall view, turning the usual joint work—where different opinions affect and modify a result along a somewhat linear process—into authentic interdisciplinary work, where the superimposition of different experiences produce a result altogether, in a more dendritic, organic process.
In the same way, the interdisciplinary team no longer has to expect or to be expected to solve a problem as if it were a given equation; it rather plays the role of an on-site enquirer, analyzer, consultant, finding its way through to the most appropriate solution. The design of the physical environment with its universe of aesthetic and historical values, qualities and considerations still remains the Architect’s main field of action and authority. However, of all parts involved in the urban housing process, the Architect may very well become the head of the team, the organizator, the animator. The nature of his discipline and of his training should allow him to be the one party with the broadest knowledge of tools, methods and techniques, so as to lead the interdisciplinary negotiation.

The next question was: How to achieve such a program? At this point, it became necessary to redefine the role of communication in development.

Under the "dominant paradigm", mass communication had always been regarded as a powerful and direct force for development, "especially in conveying informative and persuasive messages from the government to the public in a downward, hierarchical way". Indeed the expansion of mass communications corresponded with an increase of literacy rates; the people were more exposed to a wealth of information through the printed word and the transistor radios which had reached every corner. The mass media, the schools and the factories were understood as inculcators of individual modernization, and a number of researches were undertaken in order to find this correlation between communication and development (In reality, it was difficult to determine the real effects of media in

---

5 Rogers, Everett: Communication and Development... p.225
actual development; its effects may be rather indirect and contributory).

In due time, criticisms were formulated on the role of mass communication in development. The media were accused of being an extension of former exploitation (as in the case of advertising, especially of the products of multi-national corporations); the fact that the media were owned, controlled and influenced by an elite; and the fact that many dictatorships that appeared between 1965 and 1975 in Latin America, Africa and Asia "stressed the media's propaganda role, decreasing the public's trust in mass communication". Little attention had been given to the content or quality of the mass media in terms of education and contribution: until now it had been mainly devoted to promote overall development (slogans, ideology), rather than give information. Rather than diffusion of innovation, what had been offered was diffusion of politics. Also, criticism pointed out the fact that structural changes in society must come before the use of media in development: a previous education was needed.

Alternative conceptions of communication in development have emerged out of this judgement. One replaces the top-down development policies (and its uni-directional sense of communication) for the conception of self-development at small-scale community levels. As is proposed above, in this approach the basic idea is decentralization of planning, decision-making and execution: the community takes primary responsibility for deciding what type of development is most needed in their village or neighborhood, for planning how to achieve this development goal, for obtaining necessary resources, for carrying out their development activities. This

---

6 Ibidem, p.227

7 Ibidem, p.229
approach has produced a higher rate of accomplishment, is less costly for the government, and more flexible to changing needs. This is the "microplanning" approach as has been applied, for instance, in the development and upgrading of urban communities in Sri Lanka, in a joint effort by the local National Housing Development Authority and MIT’s Design and Housing program.

Surely this conception of self-development demands a different role for communication. Here it is not the government "conveying informative and persuasive messages" from the top-down, but rather answering the specific needs of the self-developing communities. The main effects of mass communication should be promoting participation, mass mobilization, group efficacy -and these effects can indeed be quantified and evaluated-; its main roles are providing technical information, and circulating information about previous successful experiences.

This, which could be now called "the new paradigm", is by no means widely accepted -certainly not in the developed world (although some of these lessons are being borrowed by developed nations, as was noted at the beginning; especially in the case of community-development programs in the slums of big cities). These changes have to deal with questions of political ideologies, petrified bureaucracies, concealed interests, ignorance, reluctance, and the like. The need for a new order of doing must be simultaneously understood and accepted at all levels of society, especially from both ends of the political pyramid: the central government, with a disposition for offering help and resources instead of finished products; and the needy individual and his community, with a disposition for joining actively in the production process in order to get true satisfaction. It may be needed for this purpose, and as a starting point, some kind of a
A comprehensive educational program aimed both at the technocrats and the citizens, and at the same time I believe that good chances of success—particularly in changing the user's attitude—will exist only under the benign influence of a well-established democracy, in which citizens be naturally bound to exercise their duties and rights to influence and participate in whatever public matters affect their own well-being.

I think that implicit in this new order of development are certain roles of the media that have to do with the creation of a new ideology, of a new and genuine political culture that would allow, in each environment and country, the success of a program based on the premise of self-development. It is difficult to distinguish Education from Propaganda; both are the domain of communication—of the media—and both may be just labels depending on different interpretations of the same content. The ideology in question should be that of modernity, of knowledge as power, the ideology of change. It is the triumph of imagination in which the people are curious and courageous enough to see themselves projected onto a better future. This capacity for imagining a different state of things is what Daniel Lerner calls "empathy", and it is the mechanism of modernization; it distinguishes the western world from the traditional societies in that westerns have become familiarized with a sense of change, of mobility, and they adapt to it; political institutions have been created—out of the necessity of change—to protect every man's opportunity to participate and to gain. A new order of development is, accordingly, a project for national empathy, for psychic mobility: for modernization. But this vision of modernity, this capacity of change is by no means equivalent or forcefully conducent to the loss of all traditional values. These values can be acknowledged and established, recognizing which may be no longer viable or constructive in objective
terms, as in the case of unhealthy popular practices and beliefs. This vision of modernity is, in fact, respectful of national identity and all the virtues of the traditional culture that give "a sense of uniqueness and meaning to individual political cultures".8

A political culture is not just the historic experience of a nation but a cultural outcome: the local beliefs, symbols and values. "Political culture provides structure and meaning to the political sphere... as culture in general gives coherence and integration to social life", writes Lucien Pye.9

A political culture is previous and essential to political development, as the failure of the implementation of the western model for development under the "dominant paradigm" demonstrated. Political development is intended to allow economic development; a better administration; to develop "modernity", sense of change, "empathy"; to integrate society and to develop a capacity of the system to meet challenges; to "perform" in the modern world; to develop international power; to develop democracy (or other ideal systems).

If a new order of development is to be established among the countries of the developing world, the media will be used not only to distribute and share technical information and to replicate successful experiences, but to promote the values of a political culture: trust, equality, liberty, loyalty, commitment, and whatever else; and to build a basic ideology: "The aptitude is empathy, the attitude is desire".10

---

8 Pye, Lucien: Political Culture and Political Development, p.19

9 Ibidem, p.8

10 Lerner, Daniel: Empathy, p.72
I would like to summarize the roles of media as stated:

a. Distribution of technical information and replication of successful experiences
b. Building of an ideology
c. Promotion of a political culture

It is my objective in this particular work to explore the variables and alternatives existing for the fulfillment of the first mentioned role: that of the distribution of technical information and replication of experiences. This is the domain that comes in closest touch with my own; that is, the theoretical and empiric aspects of the physical upgrading of community environments, the political and administrative organization of communities in order to carry out self-development ventures, the communication of information leading to the successful completion of given activities. The other two topics, as much as they interest me, I leave to others better versed in political science and philosophy. Each topic may be regarded as an independent unity.
2.
COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Only the broadest of intentions or policies are... brought to the site from the top, and subsequently crafted into workable programs from the bottom. (It) is therefore a process which seeks to build linkages between... local and central policies... and so to reach consensus among participants on priorities, as well as appropriate courses of action and government intervention.\(^\text{11}\)

The "new paradigm" allowed a change of attitude in what is regarded as a government's necessary or desirable degree of intervention and in the valuation of the people's potentials, rendering it possible to carry out settlement-upgrading or development programs that are in many aspects generated, organized and to a great extent undertaken by the very same communities it is intended for. These programs are more precise in aim than a centrally-managed program would be; that is, tailored to the specific needs of a given community (although the most relevant issues may be the same in most cases); but the ensemble of upgrading projects thus undertaken may well make it possible to achieve large-scale development and satisfy the wide range of requirements of different geographies, cultures and political organizations that may exist within a country. On the other hand, the government limits its action to those things it cannot avoid doing and that is best suited to do, such as the organization of a national agenda, of technical assistance and in general of the allocation of resources.

Community participation is "...an active process by which beneficiary/client groups influence the direction and

\(^{11}\) Goethert, Hamdi et alia: Making Microplans, p.5
execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well being in terms of income, personal growth, self reliance or other values they cherish".  

Community participation is appropriate when the objectives of development are the empowerment of the people for initiating actions and influencing the processes and outcomes of development; and building capacity of sharing in some of the tasks of the project. Empowerment and capacity-building effectively translate community participation into action, the implementation of specific activities.

Community participation is necessary when the design of the project services calls for beneficiaries identifying their needs and preferences, when the implementation of the project demands frequent dialogue and negotiation among beneficiaries or between authority and community, and when the users are better able than a weak bureaucracy to manage a part of the project operations. On the other hand, community participation may be difficult to achieve where there is no social tradition supportive of it, when inadequate technologies inhibit the delivery of project services, when the market or the government are perceived by the beneficiaries as a satisfactory medium for project implementation, and when the authorities are reluctant to incorporate community participation into project-design.  

The aims of community-based development programs can be thus expressed in a number of broad intentions:  
a. Making use of local and untapped resources  
b. Relieving the authority of unnecessary intervention

---

c. Building community self-confidence through relevant participation
d. Producing a decentralized, manageable program
e. Producing a flexible program suiting specific needs
f. Allowing replication

A. Making use of local and untapped resources

Informal settlements are constantly emerging and being established; in them houses are being built and many other problems are being somehow dealt with without the assistance of any kind of formal, "expert" advice.

Entrepreneurs emerge who service these settlements as money lenders, materials manufacturers and suppliers, water vendors, garbage collectors and builders. Intricate and complex social, economic and political networks develop for purchasing and exchanging commodities, exerting influence, buying into services, securing employment and sometimes leveraging a stake in the general body politic of the urban or regional districts in which they are placed.

In time, people build a substantial body of experience about how best to build, to profit, or dodge the authorities. It is a cyclical process of doing and learning built up through individual experiences but institutionalized as knowledge, passed on to others in a variety of formal and informal ways and which grows exponentially.\(^{14}\)

Faced with the need for immediate and simple solutions to ever emerging problems, people produce fast and ingenious responses and systems of rules that are specific to a given circumstance; processes that, although out of the control of the formal planning initiative (and sometimes upsetting it), are usually more effective in dealing with the most urgent

\(^{14}\) Goethert, Hamdi et alia: Making Microplans, p.10
needs such as the ones mentioned above. These processes have evolved out of trial and error and common initiatives; they can and should be taken advantage of for everywhere they represent a valuable body of knowledge that should be internalized by the acting authority and turned into fitting and wide-spread practice. The use of local resources may improve project efficiency because of valuable beneficiary inputs that may reduce delays, produce better project design and minimize overall costs.15

How can this knowledge be collected, systematized and turned into practice? Needed here is an instance in which information can find its way from the informal bottom to the top, the organizing authority. It is a flux of information, a communication, that requires established paths and receptors. It demands an organized effort in which people become able to conceptualize their responses and systems for dealing with specific problems and in which the authority is able to recycle and apply these concepts at a broader scale of intervention, improving the available set of solutions for recurrent problems in development. In the last chapter of this work are discussed some possible ways for communities to feedback the general process, provided that all involved parts be predisposed and prepared for such exchange.

Indeed this first objective -to profit from people's experience- is essential and dominant, and it is possible to state that community-based upgrading depends primarily on it. The premise could be: "Community-based development programs require making full use of local resources". In doing so, several of the following objectives can be logically fulfilled.

15 Paul: Community Participation... p.4

22
B. Relieving the Government of unnecessary intervention

The question is how the authority should act in order to be effective. Until now, housing has been regarded as a large-scale direct intervention in which the government plays the main role in terms of management and resources. Largely, this view of the government as an obligated provider hasn't quite worked. For instance, public housing at a large scale has been indeed provided, but with decreasing habitational standards that do not satisfy people's actual needs in terms of quality and quantity: materials, space, environment.

This formal intervention system can be broken into smaller pieces. Still the government and the state have to provide: to most people, the government is the landowner and the giver of permits, services, titles and financial aid; in short, the source of solutions. The central government will always be the one to allocate resources, organize the national housing agenda and provide technical assistance wherever needed; but it should no longer attempt to manage the whole decision-making and design process; instead it should rather enable the operations of smaller organizations and limit its direct participation to an overall supportive role, leaving the actual decision-making and design process in the hands of local organizations that better understand local needs, trends, skills, conditions, culture, possibles and impossibles.

Indeed the government is a provider, but of a different kind, at a different level; and this is, once again, a matter of attitude. Its main role—and the people should understand it so—is that of support and facilitation: to help people develop according to their own ways, resources and concerns. This support and facilitation implies building community capacity of sharing in some tasks of the development projects.
by assuming operational responsibilities, such as project management and monitoring. Communities must be willing to share the cost of projects by contributing with resources of labor, maintenance and even money.¹⁶

The authority will still have to organize an administrative and institutional framework in order to support and facilitate; but this is much more in its own nature and within its means than looking after the great task of actual construction.

Some important tasks the authority cannot avoid. Efforts should be directed, for instance, towards the ownership of the land. The question of land-tenure is central to the encouragement and stimulation of the people towards the achievement of further development. And not only the users, but other actors must be encouraged and stimulated as well: the government should be able to offer incentives to the individual as well as to the community -as in the case of cooperatives and land partnerships- and as well as to the private sector (such as industries and landowners), which can play an important role in the development of the land and in construction.

The government should provide the least necessary. With the least level of involvement, with the least intervention, and with the maximum support. As in the case of the provision of utility cores in "Site and Services" projects, the simplest designs offer the greatest freedom to the users, as opposed to complex and finished products which are rigid and often unfitting.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p.3,4
C. Building community self-confidence through relevant participation

Indeed when, after so long a waiting, people decide to overtake land and squat upon it, tremendous forces and wills are acting. When squatting, for instance, things are quickly organized; people are free to do as is most convenient: by phases, according to the possibilities and expectations of the moment. The resulting strong communities are made up of neighbors that relate to each other on a basis of necessity, solidarity and mutual protection; settlements are usually more closely related to the city and its many networks, and people are proud of their achievement.

These informal initiatives normally conflict with the formal planning of the city, with land use and tenure, with health and urbanization standards. When the authority comes to "regularize" a situation, it actually attempts to change and even upset valuable and established networks. It is a struggle of interests and of expectations.

But these tremendous forces and wills cannot be dismissed; on the contrary: they are the raw material with which to achieve the goals of a further and more wide-spread development. Not only the authority is, as was said, better-off by making use of this resource and bringing in development and formal recognition to what has been already achieved; but in doing so people's effort, merit and capability are being given due value, significance, importance in the development process.

Relevant participation, that in which the people are empowered to make relevant decisions about their own environment, builds community spirit and self-confidence; participation from the very onset is indispensable to allow responsibility and control over the process of community-development at the time
of decision-making, at the time of action and throughout the years of consolidation and upgrading.

D. Producing a decentralized, manageable program

There's yet another argument for community-based development programs when it comes to questions of scale and speed. The problem here is that more must be built in order to catch up with the ever-increasing growth of demand for housing and utilities, due, for instance, to obsolescence of the existing housing stock, or natural disasters, or demographic factors such as the immigration from the countryside to the cities and the vegetative growth of the cities. We must build at a large scale, and faster.

"Faster" and "large scale" usually mean the use of new technologies, materials, methods, new building systems; often at enormous expense. This also implies the training of labor forces and even the education of the public towards the acceptance of new shapes and materials that may be regarded with reluctance. There's also the risk that these new technologies will fail due to mismanagement, lack of maintenance of equipment and tools, ignorance, corruption, or even plain rejection from the public.

The question is, still, how to build faster and at a larger scale. Apart from the option of new technologies, centralized "large scale" involves large-scale administration and consequent inefficiency and corruption.

But "large scale" does not have to mean "formal intervention system", as it doesn't have to rely on sophisticate technologies. Faced with austerity, ingenuous solutions can be developed according to local standards and resources.
Vernacular and popular technologies and materials often provide inexpensive and effective means of construction—making use, again, of accumulated knowledge and cultural preferences—that may be appropriate to satisfy the requirements of massive building and upgrading. The use of appropriate technologies doesn’t preclude the need for standardization and industrialization of building components and materials; in fact these are indispensable for reducing costs and speeding-up the process.

In the same spirit, as it has been said, a large-scale intervention program can be broken down into an ensemble of smaller actions, transferring the usually centralized, all-encompassing decision-making process to the local organizations. From the communities’ point of view, a decentralized program has the intrinsic benefit of allowing for responses better tailored to specific needs; from the management point of view, it relieves the central authority from a complex, inefficient, unidirectional and unresponsive process but it poses the risk of losing central control over the primary objectives and goals of the agenda.

E. Producing a flexible program suiting specific needs

A comprehensive development program (at a national scale, for instance) demands a credible physical response for the government and for the public, and yet affordable. Here we are confronted with the social, economical and political implications of whatever is chosen to be done, and with the compromise between what would be desirable from different points of view and what can in fact be done. Letting slums spread without much control or support may be the cheapest alternative in the short-term, but it has a social and political price because of the misery that is implied and
because they show an incapability of the authority; upgrading them to acceptable standards may show concern without being too costly; building finished houses is politically beneficial in the short-term, it raises great expectations; but it’s expensive and may get to be deceiving in the long term. Putting up emergency dwellings after a disaster may show speed of action and prove to be a political success.

And supposing a "least intervention" and land-ownership policy: should just the land be given? Or the land and a layout? Or a site with services? If so, what services? Or a layout and a sanitary core per family? Or common sanitary units? Should a roof be given as well? Or a finished room, or two? What are the compromises of "least intervention"?

It isn’t rational to come up with single, general solutions just as it isn’t possible to come up with individual and unique solutions; the answer lies somewhere in between. A general development program should be flexible enough to allow different responses suiting different needs. A centralized program is at a loss to acknowledge and respond to many different demands but controls the process as a whole; smaller-scale locally managed programs can well respond to the needs of the immediate community but may drift away from policy goals.

Development undertaken in a way balanced between the needs of the central authority and the needs of the community level can better guarantee success in the large scale and in the long run. Success, of course, is hard to measure: what is judged from the user’s side may not be the same that is judged from the authority’s. Success may be providing shelter for everybody, or assuring a source of income, or a good-looking city. Success is, most probably, a matter of consensus.
F. Ease of replication

The use of appropriate technologies, the decentralization of the processes, and a program of enabling for gradual development rather than for finished products; it all aims to achieving broad goals with the least resources. Such a program can offer a credible proposition of strategy for success so as to attain consistent commitment from the people and credibility in order to be assisted by external aid.

Such a program can help make possible the replication of successful experiences, which is the basis for a comprehensive development program. Ease of replication depends on the possibility of breaking down a program to simple elements that can be easily transmitted and carried out in spite of differences of culture, environment, resources, etc. A large-scale community-based development program attempts to replicate a process rather than a finished product; the argument here is that a process is indeed more likely to be successfully replicated than a finished product. The strategy and final goal is that communities share experience and undertake the replication program making use of their own initiative and skills. This topic will be explored in further detail in the last chapter of this work.

These are some of the concepts that support community-based development programs. They formulate the will of the government and the people to make better use of limited resources and to effectively incorporate the people in the processes that lead to improvement and well-being. The consequent question -and objective of this work- is that of the communication needs, patterns and means existing between the authority and the communities and among different actors in order to carry-out and feedback the development process at its different stages.
3. THE USES OF COMMUNICATION

What is lacking in most cases is a forum for articulation of a problem, a framework that provides the needed structure for drawing out problems, defining solutions, and building consensus and partnerships.17

Community-based development programs attempt to achieve development minimizing the government's direct intervention and making use of local resources, particularly incorporating the users -the people- in the process of decision-making, of action, evaluation, replication.

The community-based development approach seeks to enable communities to manage their own processes leading to the improvement of their environment, according to specific needs and available resources, while the authority limits its participation to the provision of technical assistance and whatever indispensable resources out of the reach of the community.

Abstract ideas and concepts, objectives and goals, reasons, judgments, concrete information; all these must be transmitted and shared at all times between the different parts involved in the process. These actors include the communities, the various levels of authority, the private industrial and services sector, non-governmental organizations and funding agencies, political organizations, religious organizations, individual landowners, etc.

Established communication conduits are necessary, and normally exist, within the authority's or technocrats' structure,

17 Goethert, Hamdi et alia: Making Microplans, p.12
between authority and specific communities, between authority and the general public and among specific communities. These different relationships translate in an exchange of messages of different nature and demand different instances of communication essential to the agreement of interest groups upon issues and the making of decisions. This exchange of basic information must take place among the involved parts before attempting any action. Thus, a simple premise could be: "Communication precedes action in community-based development programs".

The variety of messages and tasks involved in and leading to a participatory development process can be tentatively arranged in a number of areas that apply at the technocrats' level as well as at the community level:

a. Transmission of an ideology, encouragement
b. Statement of intentions and expectations
c. Mediation between actors
d. Providing technical information
e. Sharing knowledge and experience
f. Acting and making decisions
g. Monitoring, upkeep, evaluation
h. Learning and replication

A. Transmission of an ideology, encouragement

The users -the people- are called to play the most important role in the development process through relevant participation, and a consistent commitment and understanding of the process are necessary. The simple principles that support the concept of community-based development can offer a credible program, a strategy for success with which to arouse the interest and commitment of those parts involved. This
strategy is part of an ideology, a general frame of motivation and action that generally informs the initiatives and decisions of the authority and that, shared with the people, may bring forth a needed sense of discipline and responsibility.

B. Statement of intentions and expectations

Well understood and agreed upon, at all levels, must be the intentions of the program and the results expected from the process. That different actors will play defined roles: the authority limiting its participation to a role of support and facilitation of community participation, while the communities are committed to be responsible for their parts in the process. This understanding is necessary both at the technocrats’ level (field officers and managers) and at the community level.

C. Mediation between actors

The various actors involved in the development process have different interests, often conflicting and hindering each other’s efforts, and sometimes supporting each other but without realizing it. These conflicts exist not only between the public authority and the communities but it involves the interests of private sectors, funding agencies and even political and religious organizations.

...there is a lack of consensus among those involved about problems, issues, objectives, priorities and actions. What we need is a way of crafting workable links between various sets of demands, various groups of people, and various scales of organizations which so often compete for
dominance and so exclude the benefits which each has to bring to the design and planning process.\textsuperscript{18}

Mediation means indeed a search for consensus and for a balance between the need for formal intervention -under the control of the planning authority- and the necessary allowance for spontaneous responses. At any rate, mediation is itself an ongoing process managed by the authority that implies an effective communication among all involved parts; it requires an instance in which the involved parts can actually confront each other and come up with compromises and results.

D. Providing technical information

Objective information -such as building specifications, surveys, training, financial options- must be provided and exchanged in a systematic way. The authority and non-governmental agencies usually have among their primary tasks the propagation of technical information indispensable to development programs. Financial options are a good example: a credit or subsidy program may spark the interest of a target group and facilitate the following steps of the initiative.

E. Sharing of knowledge and experience

Community-based development programs make full use of local resources, including the knowledge and experience with which people solve emerging problems. This is valuable knowledge that has developed empirically and of which everyone can benefit. A way must be found to systematize and share this

\textsuperscript{18} Ibidem, p.12
knowledge so as to inform the methods and practices of the authority and to make it available to all communities.

F. Acting and making decisions

A permanent dialogue exists between the different parts that take part in the decision-making process at the time of organizing, programming, and implementing activities. Some planned objectives may change, some actions may turn out impossible to carry out. This is, again, a dialogue of compromise and definition of objectives and responsibilities.

G. Monitoring, upkeep, evaluation

The processes of a development program, at a general or local scale, must be monitored along the process to ensure that methods and procedures are carried out according to the original goals and intentions. Also, programs have to be evaluated in order to assess effectiveness, to avoid errors and misconceptions; in short, to learn from experience.

h. Learning and replication

The lessons learned through the evaluation of participatory programs constitute a valuable body of information that must be systematized so as to make it available and accessible at both the authority's and the community level. At the authority's level, this learning should improve the allocation of resources, revise support policies and provide with a wider range of options and solutions for typical problems. At the community level, this learning should enable the people to
better deal with other agents and should enlarge the range of available solutions too.

The final purpose of this learning is to refine, to distill the participatory development process until it reaches a form simple and disaggregated enough so that it can be subject to widespread understanding, manageability and replication, which is the ultimate goal.

The case of Microplanning at the NHDA

All the above objectives can be regarded as transfers of information among different actors. In the participatory process, several instances have been developed for all parts to communicate and act collectively.

In particular, methods have evolved that translate community participation into action. The context of participation is the development project or program, and the focus is on the participation of the beneficiaries, who are the object of development and it is their involvement in the direction and execution of projects which is of concern.

Community participation calls for the organization of groups—communities—in order to collectively advise, decide or act upon issues. Participation can take place at different levels of intensity; from the simple sharing of information, to consultation, decision-making and initiating actions. It is, indeed, not a product, but a process.¹⁹

An example of this process is the Microplanning initiative as carried out since 1984 by the National Housing Development

¹⁹ Paul: Community Participation... p.2
Authority in Sri Lanka and developed with the assistance of the Design and Housing program at MIT. Microplanning has evolved from the conceptual background of the support paradigm as a community-based process aimed to the management of decision-making in urban communities’ development programs. Microplanning advocates the direct participation of communities in a process that comprises the definition and identification of their main deficiencies and problems, of the required actions or solutions, of the required resources and time for implementing such solutions, and of the different parts that must become responsible for the implementation of such solutions within the established schedule.

Its main single activity and starting point is a brief, intensive on-site workshop where all involved parts (community, authority, funding agencies, etc.) engage in formal participation and commitment to the agreed decisions, as in a partnership for improvement of which everybody will benefit. It is a process devised and developed by the acting authority and brought to the site so as to incorporate the community in the making of decisions. General guidelines are given regarding procedures and outcomes.

At the community level
A typical project cycle in community-based development programs consists of reconnaissance of problems and needs, identification of specific issues, preparation of a project and its implementation.

Accordingly, Microplanning proceeds on five related areas of action and analysis, mostly at the time of the workshop. There, different interest-groups may work independently or mixed, and role-playing techniques can be used to increase
awareness of the nature of different actors and the reasons for different perceptions.\textsuperscript{20}

The five areas are:

a. Problem identification
b. Strategies to deal with problems
c. Program agreement; assessing actions, options and trade-offs
d. Implementation planning
e. Monitoring and evaluation

A. Problem identification

At this stage problems are identified and defined, according to the varying perception of the different parts and according to a general guideline on what to look for. It involves documentation, analysis and compromise, specially in regard to the importance of the identified problems. The outcome is a list of problems which all agree are critical, and a list of secondary problems on which there is no consensus.

B. General Strategies to deal with problems

Here the goal is to prioritize the identified critical problems and to find alternative ways to tackle them. The different groups propose appropriate strategies for problems of varying degrees of urgency; later the groups agree on a summary list of recommended actions and priorities.

\textsuperscript{20} Goethert, Hamdi et alia: Making Microplans, p.14
C. Program agreement; assessing actions, options and trade-offs

Once agreement has been reached regarding strategies for tackling prioritary problems, needed next are alternative ways of carrying out these strategies and then selecting the alternatives that offer the most appropriate compromise between what is desired and what is indeed possible. Negotiation and technical feedback lead to different levels of community involvement and work input towards the realization of the most desirable alternatives.

D. Implementation planning

At this stage, the objective is to establish a detailed procedure for the implementation of the agreed program resulting from the preceding activities. The outcome is a formal specification of plans, schedules and division of responsibilities among the interest groups. The action plan includes proposals which link physical improvement with other social and health development programs.

E. Monitoring and evaluation

Lastly, as work gets underway, there will be a double agenda for those involved with implementation, particularly the technical and management teams.

First, and inevitably, as priorities change, as technical and administrative problems reveal themselves, as the supply of money, materials and even political good-will dries up, we will want to know what lessons or principles we can draw from what we are doing or have done, to finish the job at hand effectively.

Secondly, we might want to ask: What can we learn this time to improve performance next time? What would one do
differently next time assuming one confronted similar sets of circumstances? And in this sense, what general indices or guidelines might we draw which would be helpful next time for project work? This process of learning or reflecting in action we commonly call monitoring and evaluation, although as we have argued, it less commonly serves that purpose. It is the (...) often sadly lacking category of enquiry.\textsuperscript{21}

Evaluation can be an integral part of the activities of the development process. In fact, communities can be assisted in developing their own evaluation criteria based on the agreed-upon goals. It would serve the interests of the community to monitor the rate of achievement, the shortcomings, and it would become a valuable contribution to the authority.

At the authority's level
At the technocrats' level there are also communication needs and lacks. The problem of learning from experience is as serious there as it is at the community level. "Learning is not taking place", complains one of the Managers of the Urban Housing Unit at Sri Lanka's National Housing Development Authority.

This unit organizes and manages community-based development programs in the area of Colombo, allocates state resources and undertakes the training of field officers and community members for this purpose. It is in charge, for example, of organizing Microplanning workshops in qualifying communities. It also coordinates the activities of non-governmental and governmental agencies and services, such as the Jana Udawa Communications Project, as is described further on.

In this unit, for instance -and at the time of my visit-, the progress of ongoing programs and projects was monitored, but

\textsuperscript{21} Ibidem, p.15
no system for permanent evaluation of the different levels and actors in the process existed. Except for case projects, in which independent agencies produce more elaborate reports, the NHDA had no proper evaluation department. In an effort to draw lessons from the great amount of cases and ongoing projects, weekly unit meetings had been established; a unit consisting of the Unit Manager, Managers and Housing officers. A more comprehensive monthly meeting was attempted to which the Deputy General Manager and all units would attend to discuss general issues and share information, but these failed due to lack of time on behalf of the officers and because, in the end, such a quorum served to discuss issues of different nature. Confronted with this deficiency, conscientious managers find other sources; some formal, as in inter-agency discussions, and some informal, as in plain talking with officers and community members.

Even when achieving effective decentralization of the decision-making process, managers remain removed from the field and must still rely on the field officers' experience in order to assess and decide. Generally, issues are settled at the site, which is where the people and the problems are. Field officers and those who do clerical work have a different perception and opinion of all the issues; while some see exciting results and community interaction and development, others see administrative problems and shortcomings. It is the experience on field which sensitizes the officers.

Management is, at any rate, the hardest to decentralize. In order to transfer knowledge, in order to pass on technical know-how to local authorities, "so that the accumulated experience be of use in other districts", a large training program is required. Training workshops normally intended for the top of the technocratic pyramid must be extended to other local authorities and community members. There could be, for
this effect, regional or sub-urban workshops conducted by NHDA officials, in the spirit of self-generated replication. It requires not only technical training, but the teaching of an ideology.

"Microplanning in the Housing Program has been a helpful method that allowed the NHDA to have a closer relationship with the people. Presently, Microplanning is useful in all major projects, but in smaller communities or in projects of specific scope, brief issue-specific work-shops are more appropriate", explains the Manager. ²²

These are some of the communication issues that community-based development programs must deal with. The following chapter will attempt to explore some ways of communicating these messages according to the nature of the message and of the target groups.

²² From an interview with Urban Housing Unit's Senior Manager, Mr. I. A. Hameed. Colombo, August 1987
4. APPROPRIATE MEDIA

In our times, a great variety of media can be used to convey the different kinds of information and messages that have been previously defined. These range from traditional folklore forms to low-tech communication devices to the use of high technology and combinations thereof.

Different media are more or less appropriate according to the nature and objective of the message, the size of the target group, the complexity of the message, the available resources. Some messages are intended for widespread propagation and require media that can effectively reach the entire population in a territory, while others are intended to carry a specific message about a specific issue to a specific community. A discussion on appropriate media is a discussion on effectiveness in communication and optimization of the use of available resources.

Communication of a specific message -propaganda campaigns for concepts or for physical products- often seeks redundancy of the message in order to increase effectiveness. Some messages, such as the transmission of an ideology or the fostering of a state of social or political awareness, may make use of different levels of sophistication of media in order to be redundant and effective. For instance, a campaign aimed to promote a housing program through new lines of credit and subsidies and a community-based development policy would use a range of media varying from television, radio and newspapers to promote the main objectives of the program, and small-scale community addresses to explain details and state intentions and expectations; all this during a determined length of time.
In other cases, such as in the dissemination of technological innovations among a specific target group of the population, redundance may be achieved by using a variety of media of the same kind. An example can be found in the case of the promotion of a new fuel-efficient stove designed to replace a traditional and inefficient stove in Niger. The campaign, started in 1985, consisted in consciousness raising about ecological depletion, promotion of the product and commercial advertising. Actors, dancers, designers and singers produced a variety of instances for direct publicity at the community level with the support of a series of television and radio commercials.23

Communities don't have access to all the media the authority is able to use for widespread communication, but probably they don't need to; in order to share knowledge and experience and to feedback the development process, communities may make use of other available forms of communication that may be effective in conveying whatever message. At any rate, the choice between the use of technological or traditional means depends not only on the nature of the message and the receptors, but on the available resources.

In attention to restricted resources, to community participation and to smaller-scale, community-based development programs, it is possible to think that a great deal of communication at all levels can be achieved through small-scale, low-technology, appropriate and traditional media. Traditional media can be enlivened and made useful and effective in the communication of abstract concepts and concrete technical information. This is, indeed, the proposition of this work: its thesis.

23 See: CERES, The FAO Review, No. 120, 1987
Already much has been achieved, for example, through graphic displays, small-scale printed matter, models and demonstrations, talks and performances of different kinds.

Dramatic forms, such as role-playing in the classroom, sociodrama (spontaneous role-playing), theatre or puppetry have long been used with educational purposes in community development programs. Health is here a common and essential issue and, since many efforts are directed towards the creation of health habits, especially in children, dramatic forms have been a fitting medium. Traditional performing arts, however, are equally attractive to the adult population and more varied and elaborate messages can be transmitted as well. The success of staged forms in this respect depends on the quality of the script and the capabilities of the performers.

Dramatic forms are a good and influential learning process for performers and audiences alike, based on participation and discovery. The enacting of situations, social relationships and problems can increase people's awareness and hint possibilities for action and change. One of the merits of the medium is that issues and messages are easier to understand because they are conveyed in a colloquial manner, a representation of reality through fascinating illusion. In the same sense, issues are presented to be reflected upon rather than in a confrontational way, as it would be in the case of a lecture or assembly.

Performances can serve as a medium to bring messages into the community and, in a participatory way, to encourage insight and self-initiative. Effective and fruitful community participation ideally would prompt community members to make

24 See: Werner and Bower: Helping Health Workers Learn. The Hesperian Foundation, California, 1982
use of this traditional forms, among other things, to express ideas and concerns among themselves, to reveal issues to the authority, and even to communicate to the general public, to society, as in the case of community-based street theatre and its social and political concerns.

The case of the JANA UDAWA Communications Project

As an example of a formal initiative, organized and sponsored by the authority, there is an interesting case of a communications project based on popular and traditional dramatic forms that is worth reviewing. This is the UNICEF assisted Jana Udawa ("The awakening of the People") Communications Project in Colombo, Sri Lanka, that was set-up in view of the urgent need for community-based upgrading programs and taking advantage of the fact that many slum and shanty communities have effective community organizations to undertake development activities "using the general and latent attraction of the people to traditional and folk arts and using such arts as the arena for the people to discuss and understand their own needs and problems". 26

By 1978 in Colombo, the pre-school child population was approximately 52,000, of which 50 percent lived in slums and shanties.

Infant mortality rates were higher in the overcrowded communities, with a high incidence of water-related diseases. Over 25 percent of the urban population used latrines or buckets, and half of these households shared their latrines.

Only 45 percent of the households in Colombo in areas served by the old sewerage system were connected to it.

The need of a project of this nature is unquestionably urgent. The response of the beneficiaries through the medium of Communication through Art was prompt and pervasive. An example reported by a neutral observer is given below:

DRAMA GETS THE MESSAGE ACROSS
by Edward Arambawela

Last week Mr. Simon Navagaththegama, the well known dramatist, told a Colombo seminar of how he used the medium of the drama to get the people in a shanty town in Kirillapone to return building material stolen during the July disturbances, and to rebuild a set of toilets for their own.

Mr. Navagaththegama was illustrating the effectiveness of the medium in molding the character of people and making them good citizens.

He told his audience which included Health Minister Ranjit Atapattu, that several bags of cement stored in that particular shanty town had disappeared during the July disturbances. They had been brought to build a set of toilets for the shanties. When Mr. Navagaththegama heard about this he had gone there and organized a drama with shanty youth as players.

The theme of the story was the disaster that befell a new couple - a Sinhalese married to a Tamil. The moral was that looting and killing were not the answer to problems.

As rehearsals were held in one of the shanty houses, the lost bags of cement appeared one by one in a home nearby. After the whole lot had been returned, the people themselves organized a Shramadana [voluntary works] and built the toilets for their town. They are not in use yet as the drainage connection has not yet been obtained.

Mr. Navagaththegama’s point is that the medium of the drama is effective in taking a message across the people.

The Jana Udawa project succeeds in bringing entertainment and education into slums and shanties, urban communities formally recognized by the authority and organized in Community

26 Ibidem, pp.3, 4
27 Ibidem, p.5
Development Councils, mostly within the area of the Colombo Municipal Council. The project conveys issue-specific messages dealing with community development and support-based policy through performing arts, most notably drama and puppetry.

The project is assisted and partially funded by a Non-Governmental Organization—a Canadian aid agency—through UNICEF. It counts with a pick-up truck, a collection of puppets, musical instruments, props and tape recorder; a large deployable puppet stage, etc. Its center of operations is located in the premises of the Community Center of Maligawatte, a large housing project in the heart of Colombo, where it has an office equipped with all necessary supplies and commodities plus occasional access to the adjoining community hall.

Officers of the Jana Udawa are group of around ten young and talented men and women, skilled and knowledgeable in the various aspects of the production of plays and in the general management of the project; all of them headed by Mr. Simon Nawagaththe-gama, a well-known playwright, who effectively guides, inspires and supervises the output of his team.

"The Director is assisted by an inter-departmental committee which is well experienced in handling community development work of any nature. They have been carrying out UNICEF Assisted Special Programmes called «Environmental Health and Community Development in the slums and shanties of Colombo>> from 1979 onwards". The committee consists of inter-departmental and ministerial representatives, and together with the Director is responsible for the formulation of the project's policies. The committee responds to the NHDA, which has administrative and accounting controls on the project.

28 Ibidem, p.1
The puppetry program is particularly interesting to analyze. The project has produced a number of plays that are periodically performed at urban communities—the "gardens" of Colombo—either by request or following a pre-established monthly schedule of performances rotating among the 40 or so CDCs. The Jana Udawa has a current repertoire of plays that mostly address issues of health: environmental health, personal health care and vaccination. The most notable feature of this program is the training of community youngsters as puppeteers; the troupe that normally performs at urban communities—occasionally assisted by the project’s officers—is made up of school-age boys that are very committed and proud of their achievements and of having learned a trade.

A typical production consists of the writing of a play, usually undertaken by the director following the need to address particular issues in a particular community or satisfying a request from the NHDA for the propagation of a given message. After the script is determined and refined, the troupe (usually the staff officials) undertake the recording of the play at a professional recording studio, including ad-hoc music and effects. Puppets and props have to be modified, fixed or made. Rehearsing and directing the young puppeteers comes next; finally the performances. The boys are in charge of setting-up the stage and of virtually every detail, assisted and hosted by the communities where they regularly perform.

(...) Arts festivals with items dealing with the problems of the community could make the authorities aware of the urgent needs of the community and force them to be more responsive to the rights and legitimate demands of the poor. These cultural activities also will sharpen the sensibilities of the people and generate intelligent community action against oppression and exploitation. These Arts Circles could strengthen the existing Community Development Councils which could influence and secure demands from the official policy makers and also engage in
community activities of self-reliance, thus making a breakthrough for "alternative development".  

In the same way that community youngsters have been trained to work for the project, an interesting possibility is the eventual training of independent groups in other communities urban and rural so as to allow development of independent initiatives. By teaching production and organizational skills, this would make possible the replication of a communication project so that communities inform each other and enrich their own environment without the direct intervention of a government-sponsored group.

Although this intention is explicitly stated in the principles of the project, it hasn't been so far realized, possibly because it has taken some time for the project to mature its techniques and because a training program would demand such a small staff extraordinary commitment and energy to undertake.

Another potential has yet to be taken full advantage of: the project is by now capable of new productions with relative ease. The NHDA could make much better use of the project commissioning message-oriented plays with a content more varied and complex addressing a variety of issues more or less specific conducing to community development and suit the needs of particular circumstances and problems. So far, the project is staging a fixed repertoire of puppet-plays and organizing theatre and dance shows with community members in an established number of shanties and slums in the Colombo area.

Smaller, portable stages and smaller productions could allow performances in less accessible communities bringing the

---

29 Ibidem, p.13
messages of health care and community-based development further away. Simpler productions would also bridge the distance between the brought-in performers, their messages, and the audience.

An interesting possibility for interactive drama would be that in which the script allows certain pre-established "blanks" to be filled by the community through the names or doings of local characters, answers to the actors' questions, description of local issues and problems, etc.

In order to try-out some new possibilities in the use of traditional media, this author had the chance of writing a puppet play that was produced and performed by the Jana Udawa puppeteers in several communities of Colombo. The play was intended to foster community organization, participation and self initiative; an experiment in using this traditional medium to convey more complex concepts rather than specific messages such as the typical health-related issues. A small, light and deployable stage was built so as to perform in spaces and circumstances where the usual large stage would not be convenient, such as in the interior of a child-care center, or when planning for several performances at different places in the same day. The play, "The Story of the Waiting People", and copy of a program are included as an appendix of this writing. It calls for four puppets and puppeteers, no props or backdrops; action occurs in a generic setting that makes reference to both the city and the countryside. All these simplifications take into account the need for easy transportation and the need for a single text that will be appropriate when performed in different contexts. It is, of course, an exercise; perhaps even an abstraction of what it could be. The audiences where, at any rate, attentive and amused. And what did they get from it?
Evaluation of the effectiveness of traditional media

As with all propaganda campaigns, all communication projects and initiatives, as with all messages conveyed, one of the central questions of message-oriented traditional forms is that of evaluating the effectiveness of the medium and of the message.

Evaluation can measure the response to a message in terms of more or less change of attitude or behavior towards a given problem or issue; it can measure the effectiveness of the medium in terms of acceptance, rejection, indifference. It is difficult to gather objective information other than through surveys and on-field observation where messages are being conveyed through entertainment and through media that offer an abstraction of reality. Objective results may be observed and quantified, such as consciousness rising related to community relationships, political organization, improvement of the environment and health-related problems, etc.

What children may understand and enjoy may be too simple for their parents, and what is interesting to adults might be boring for children. At any rate, entertainment that brings together the community has a positive and cohesive result, specially in participatory, self-generated instances. The effectiveness will depend on the quality and skills of those behind the action and in how well represented the community concerns are.

Through our experiments so far executed it had been confirmed that Arts media can be utilised as a superordinate means in the task of attitudinal re-structuring. The process of organising people around Arts Circles can trigger off a series of popular communication activities leading to positive community development action. Most effective way to get people to reflect on and respond to social, political and economic realities is through performing Arts. Traditional Art forms revived through Art
Circles to train residents, especially youth and children in the art of focusing attention of the community on common problems and conscientising them on areas where community action could help change the adverse conditions now experienced. Community drama with (...) community development themes and messages could be tailored to suit the aspirations of the people and become a very forceful mobilising media for breaking communicational and motivational barriers.\textsuperscript{30}
5.

REPLICATION
The ultimate participatory instance
or
Communication in the unusual direction

The final objective of the community-based initiative, apart from the intrinsic benefit of the immediate and long-term results within a given community, is the capacity of the process to be repeated, "replicated", in a systematic way that will be able to overcome the various limitations -geographic, political, administrative, economic- that may hinder larger-scale development programs.

Replication depends basically on the capacity to learn from experience. It also depends on a way of doing, a system, a method, that is simple enough or can be subject to a level of disaggregation such that it can be easily transmitted and comprehended by the parts involved (beneficiaries, bureaucrats and technocrats, even the common tax-paying citizen). When we use the words "transmitted" and "comprehended", we are once again assuming the use of means of communicating a specific message; in this case, that of the need for improvement or, more likely, of the possibility of improvement, and of a way or choice of ways for doing so. Replication also depends on a message that is credible and arousing.

The message, regardless of from where or whom it comes, may well show as an effective and encouraging example the cases of previous experiences which would be desirable to replicate. In our case, it could be the before-and-after images of a community-development project; images of the process with its successes and difficulties, etc. Apart from institutional propaganda, journalism often plays this role of propagating
(spreading) social programs and the knowledge and discussion of social issues of this nature, specially when it acts as an open social podium in which arguments can be confronted.

Journalism is, after all, one of the constituting elements of a political representative system. In a modern Democracy, it is often the press which most effectively represents the ideas, questions, initiatives and fears of the society it serves. That the press itself exerts influence and biases the opinion of the public it represents and serves can't be denied; the extent to which and the willingness with which it does so we will not attempt to establish here but it is a topic endlessly debated. Can journalism play a role in the replication of community-based development programs without acting as a mere medium for government-sponsored propaganda? And what alternatives are there?

In order for a replication program to be effective, the information and the messages should be generated from within the communities which have undergone transformation and development, which can best attest to benefits and drawbacks and, most important, which can share valuable first-hand experience and get the basic concepts through within a frame of credibility that a conventional government-produced program may not achieve. This is not only to say that the government should attempt to make good use of the people's experiences in order to carry-out a successful replication program -propaganda will always show instances of achievement and satisfaction-, but rather that the necessary propagation of concept and knowledge should be attempted by the communities themselves with due assistance, rather than the other way around, and that this task could be even considered as another product of the community-development process, as a corollary, an evaluation, and as a commitment and a valuable contribution to the program and the national goals.
The idea of replication of a community-based development program relying on the initiative and skills of the very communities it serves comes to reinforce the notion of participatory action on which the entire program is based; it should close the circle of a self-sustaining and multiplying process in which, once again, local and untapped resources are used while the authority is relieved of unnecessary effort.

After an internal participation process enables the community to improve its own environment, indeed the ultimate participatory instance would be that in which communities go on to prepare, stimulate, guide and assist other communities in their own internal participation processes. The conventional direction of the flow of information—from top down, from society to individual, from authority to community—is here changed and even reversed, since it is now individuals and small communities who back-feed the process from the bottom-up and laterally: the experiences of a few constantly find their way up to a level of general exposure for the benefit of the rest.

In what way? Through what means? The first thing that comes to mind is that the conventional means of communication are suited and available for this purpose. A government-endorsed, technically assisted, decentralized community-based replication program should have the same possibilities of access to the journalistic media (news coverage in newspapers, radio and TV) as any other independent initiative engaged in social development such as health care, literacy or promotion of arts and crafts, specially to the extent to which these activities can be "news" and attract the attention of both the media and the public. But this alone certainly does not guarantee the continuity and effectiveness of the exposure; alternative ways must be found for consistent and useful communication.
For this participatory replication scheme to succeed, different instances of communication are needed:

a. Those which will provide **public exposure** of the program, its progressive achievements and goals;
b. Those which will allow communities to **feed-back** the development process at the decision-making level; and
c. Those which will enable communities to **interact and learn** from one another.

Regarding the first instance, that of public exposure, it could be assumed that given the nature of the enterprise, the media would secure periodical coverage of the initiative but not necessarily of its contents; it would inform about it and no more. Specific space and time could be allocated by the media for communities to make use of it (as it is in some community cable-TV stations); and even when space and time should be paid for, this would be an expense that central or local governments could surely afford when compared to the cost of setting-up a centralized campaign.

Regarding the second instance -that of feed-back-, an operational link will always exist between the communities and the authority; there are intermediating agents and organizations to serve that purpose, such as on-site government officers, municipal and community councils. However, a structure must be set-up so that community members can cooperate systematically with the authority in the evaluation of ongoing programs at a level higher than specific cases and requests such as those handled by individual officers in a given project.

Receptiveness to such input is often hard to achieve at the decision-making level, and there is normally no formal instance for it. The authority, although supportive of community-based programs and thus relieved of several
obligations, may be less able to accept that it can continuously learn first-hand lessons that may well influence even broad planning issues. This reluctance is evident even within the technocrats' level: it was surprising to observe that little effective transmission of information existed between field-officers and their managers at the NHDA, for instance. Very specific problems were indeed discussed, but for the most part these were matters of action that required approval at a higher level; otherwise the field-officers were able to take many decisions on their own, improving their own personal experience but without necessarily sharing their findings with the rest of the administration in an organized way. For instance, the experience of the field officers would be informative and valuable if facts were just logged for later analysis and evaluation.

This problem doesn't escape the perception of the managers, but the reasons are varied and complex and not always acknowledged. Poorly-attended weekly or monthly meetings are excused with the fact that field-officers must make the best possible use of their time and resources (available vehicles, other meetings, etc.), but it's more difficult to understand why requested written reports are seldom completed or handed-in and why often circulating papers aren't read. The managers could complain that the officers are uncooperative and the officers could complain of their managers being inattentive to their experience and opinions.

Possible reasons for all this are that perhaps written reports or circulares are the wrong media altogether, or local training for field evaluation is indeed necessary. It is also possible that some local ways of solving site problems evolve in such a way that cannot be formally reported (barter, stealing; change of planned priorities). Reporting certain things may create problems to both community and the officer.
Commitment and learning are required from managers and field officers alike:

...agency staff members must be able and willing to conceive and try out new interventions, take risks, and exhibit an entrepreneurial spirit. In all of these respects, the demands for institutional learning conflict with traditional systems for institutional control -a conflict that must be carefully managed in an effective learning system.31

Yet another possibility must be considered: technocrats are career-oriented educated people, normally trained to be executive, to take decisions on their own, and usually expecting progressive improvement of their working conditions and status. Extraordinary commitment and understanding are needed from public servants where entangled bureaucracies and unattractive salaries can hinder the best of intentions, undermine ideologies and, as it often happens, promote selfish competition or negligence.

Communication, then, is also a goal within the decision-making structure. It must be a formal internal process, it must involve some kind of education on the necessity for and benefits of an open information system, and it must include an instance of evaluation of achievements. A formal process could involve such diverse media as small periodical publications and reports, seminars, exhibitions; each one for different purposes and uses such as mere transmission of information, learning, sharing of experience, reaching for consensus, etc.

The authority must think in terms of "collective learning", a process "by which individuals in different institutions or roles interact to produce collective perceptions,

31 Schon: Institutional Learning... p.22
attributions, understandings, intentions and actions".\textsuperscript{32}

Instrumental learning is the most important form (cumulative improvement in performance of a task; trial and error) for reaching settled objectives.

Agencies will need improved capacities to observe shelter and settlement phenomena and pick up the signals that reveal how policy interventions are working out. They will need two kinds of systems, which may be dubbed "cool and clean" and "hot and dirty". In the first category are the solid, continually updated accounting systems that contain mainly quantitative data about such things as land ownership, subsidies, rates of return on investment and rates of cost-recovery. In the second are the mainly qualitative, narrative descriptions of the workings of the shelter system and the unfolding of policy interventions. The former depend on formal reporting requirements, analytic tools and systematic formats conscientiously applied; the latter, on insightful observation, interviewing -especially of street-level informants whose everyday knowledge can be as useful to government agencies as "talking to customers" can be to business firms- and careful story-telling more like good journalism than scholarly research. Both kinds of information systems depend on institutional commitments that insure continuity of attention over long periods of time.

The reporting systems through which information is recorded and distributed must be suited to the differences between the two kinds of information. Formal reporting systems must be precise, uniformly designed, reliable, and continuously updated. Informal reports must be unsanitized, containing the vivid, personal accounts usually relegated, in most agencies, to corridor conversation. They should be organized in the form of case studies usable by planners and administrators for purposes of action. In both cases, information must be allowed to flow freely within and across agencies, both vertically across layers of management and horizontally from one department to another.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} Ibidem: p.3

\textsuperscript{33} Ibidem, pp.21-22

59
Our point, however, is that there must exist an established way for communities to inform the decision-making structure. Assuming that the authority would have the disposition to receive, acknowledge and make good use of such input, the question is what could a formal communication instance be.

Just as the support-planning approach produces community-based programs in which all parts are committed to given responsibilities and negotiation, in which the authority limits its influence to bringing general policies that are eventually turned into specific actions, and in which people have a transcendental participatory role in contributing to the content and structure of the program; in that same way can communities inform the authorities on strategies and methods. The instance in which these exchanges occur should be the same: the collective transaction that takes place during the action-planning stage, the "workshop".

Exchange is desirable at this point; it allows for a trade, it provides a balance that brings community and authority closer together. This exchange is not restricted to any particular stage in the process; indeed it happens all along, and the field officer will often be responsible of collecting and processing information and passing it on to the higher levels. It would be desirable that all information be accumulated, registered, formally logged; otherwise it can be easily forgotten. Another interesting instance would be a end-of-project evaluation session in which the original parties meet once again, after months or even years, analyze the implementation of the upgrading program and feedback the original outcome. Evaluation thus obtained can be complemented with external surveys can be useful and revealing inasmuch they offer an unbiased, more objective view.
Finally, at the scale of the third instance - communication from community to community, on-site, specific, individual, immediate—more specific and immediate tools are required. The variety is wide and may range from simple speech and printed matter, through traditional means of communication and message-oriented entertainment such as drama and dance, to technological means such as audiovisuals, film, video, recordings. The combination of various media allows redundancy of the message and increased effectiveness, it could be argued. The use of different media depends on availability of resources, time, skills and assistance, but the most important feature is, as said, the fact that the information is generated and shared among people of similar expectations and needs, instead of through an intermediary or from the authority unknown or mistrusted.

However, the use of certain media requires technical assistance and often initial resources for the setting-up of a given project. Communities can profit from the knowledge of new techniques and skills, which in itself would justify and perhaps even mortgage any initial investment. It would be the case of a community-managed small press or photographic laboratory. It is the case of the UNICEF-funded "Jana Udawa" communications project in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in which youngsters are trained as actors and puppeteers in order to stage educational performances at urban communities, and from which new trade they may broaden their experience and perhaps even earn a living. It could also be the case of a project in which the use of high-technology means was proposed for the documentation and eventual replication of community-based development programs:

In July of 1987, a British independent television production company proposed to the NHDA the setting-up of a communications project consisting of the documentation of the
process of a community-based development program, using video, to be realized by the community members themselves:

The purpose of this pilot project is to recycle the knowledge and experience of people as a communication resource. By teaching people basic video shooting and editing skills, we enable them to create a record of a particular project which can act as a catalyst for others.34

The proposal included training of a production team, consisting of selected community members, in the use of equipment and shooting techniques. A trainer or director would advise during a period of time at the beginning of the project and at the time of the final editing, at the end of the project. Suggested products of this process were training and documentary videos, which could be eventually commercially exploited by the community producers; printed matter to accompany the videos (handbooks, guidelines, &c.); commercial exploitation of the hardware by community groups and replication of the initiative; independent evaluation of the program to serve as a background study for further similar initiatives.

I was asked by one of NHDA's managers to study the proposal; the comments at that time are reproduced here verbatim:

I trust and support the use of diverse audiovisual media, especially in a participatory fashion, for conveying messages intended to explain and encourage community-based development programs. In that sense, my interest in using puppetry in Sri Lanka arose from the fact that it is an attractive medium for all audiences, it is rooted in the local tradition, it is inexpensive to produce and can be effectively participatory in the sense that its required skills are easy to teach, particularly to the eager young. Its drawback may be that, as with other scenic arts, it is

forced to portray ideas and facts through an abstraction of reality, a fiction.

The notion of using video to document a community support-based project, by the members of the same community, for other similar communities to watch and learn and be encouraged from, is certainly very appealing and, if successful, could prove to be one of the most original and exciting communications project ever undertaken in a developing country.

However, there are certain considerations to be made:

I would be concerned about a project involving the use of high technology and sophisticated (expensive) equipment in an environment of general austerity and financial restriction; suffice it see the expenditure in office supplies and other necessities at the NHDA's Urban Housing Division, for instance. Even when the important initial investment was arranged (with the concourse of an Non-Governmental Organization, for example), the project would evidence a great contrast or imbalance of available resources, something perhaps upsetting to some managers, officers, community members, etc. 3

It would seem to me that there is no need for foreign professionals to come over to teach the techniques of video planning, shooting and editing; I'm certain that many srilankans have full knowledge of the craft and would be well qualified and disposed to work in such a project for the NHDA -at local rates, without travel expenses and in full command of the local language and idiosyncracy. 3

Besides the initial investment, the project must be financially self-supporting. It is my personal experience that recording and editing equipment, which consist of delicately calibrated components, demand constant and expert maintenance (particularly the editing facilities); as much as a sophisticated electronic typewriter or a photocopier. This is an expense for which there must exist a consistent budget.

Financial self-support can be achieved by the selling of products, such as documentaries and training programs (but after there are enough around, who do you sell to?), and services, meaning by this a wide range of options within

35 The principle here is: media appropriate to resources.

36 The principles here are: use of local resources, boosting confidence in the process from within.
the local Ministries and agencies, and in both cases considering the setting-up of a professional team and facilities devoted to such productivity. It's all possible.

Questions are: Who are the audiences? How often will the documentaries be shown, and where, and how? Will a Jana Udawa-like team be in charge of installing TV monitors around gardens periodically, or will the communities arrange for showings at request? And when will the showings and documentaries become too many? What would become of the project's resources once it is completed? A possibility is the setting-up of information services and systems in the form of a visual library of topics (such as construction, community organization, evaluation, maintenance, &c.)

It is also necessary to multiply the yield of the available resources. There's a trade-off in sharing equipment among several communities instead of carrying out a single project over a given period of time. Covering a single project is rather unrealistic and wasteful. Unrealistic, because some of the most complex community-development projects may well take longer to fulfill the main priorities than the time allocated originally. Wasteful, because the equipment can be used for shooting at different locations over the same period of time, every other day or once a week or on special occasions, etc. In this way, there would be a better chance of succeeding in one of several cases, of accumulating technical experience and, in the end, of learning through the comparison of different projects.

Ambitious initiatives can be carried through if sensibly tailored to the actual resources, aspirations and understanding of the people it's intended to, in order to be effective and truly worthwhile.

High-technology media indeed can and should be used when possible and appropriate. Much of this technology is becoming more accessible and easier to handle and maintain. In the case of edited video, the result may be an elaborate product rich in messages and connotations, susceptible of being matured and enriched in time and as useful and thrilling as a play.

But then, a play can still do the job, requiring no other resources than will, skill and desire.
APPENDIX

"The Story of the Waiting People"

A play
THE STORY OF THE WAITING PEOPLE
A play for puppet theatre
written and directed by
Sebastian Gray

The puppeteers and actors:
Ahmereen Reza
Snehanshu Mukherjee
Purnima Kapur
Sebastian Gray
all S. M. Arch. S. students in the Design and Housing program

"The Story of the Waiting People" was written in English in Sri Lanka during the summer of 1987. It was intended as an experiment in alternative communication tools for the setting-up of community development programs as they have been undertaken by Sri Lanka's National Housing Development Authority with the assistance of MIT's Design and Housing group.

It is a message-oriented play in which multiple notions are blended to convey and stimulate the concepts and values of participation, self-initiative and communal organization, among other things. It is aimed not only to the younger crowd but for the entire communities where entertainment of this kind is popular and welcome.

This play was translated into Sinhalese, adapted, professionally recorded and performed that same summer in several urban communities by a troupe of young puppeteers working in the Jana Udawa ("Awakening of the People"), a UNICEF-sponsored communications project in the city of Colombo. At the same time, a prototype of a portable stage was built with the collaboration of the Puppetry section of the Museum of Colombo, and the set of four puppets used at this performance was commissioned to an artisan of puppeteering lineage. The Sinhalese version of the play is now part of the Jana Udawa's repertoire, and is periodically performed. The stage prototype was used successfully at several small performances and was subsequently donated, along with a box of tools, to the Museum of Colombo.

Back at MIT, a new stage was designed and built and the English version of the play was recorded. Today's performance has been completely produced by four graduate students.

This project has been completed thanks to the generous support of
Council for the Arts at MIT
The Department of Architecture
The Film and Video Section at the Media Lab
and many others to whom we thank for their encouragement and collaboration.

Cambridge, April 1988
THE STORY OF THE WAITING-PEOPLE
A play

An old man
A young man
An old woman
A young woman

(The young man sits by an orchard, waiting. Enter the old man)

Old Man: Good morning, my friend!
Young Man: Good morning...
Old Man: May I ask, What are you doing?
Young Man: I'm waiting.
Old Man: Waiting! And waiting for what? Are you waiting for the bus? Because if you are, buses go along the road over there; they don't come this way because this is an orchard.
Young Man: No, grampa, I'm not waiting for the bus. I'm waiting for a mango-tree.
Old Man: A mango-tree! But you can't go anywhere on a mango-tree! Mango-trees don't have wheels. In fact, they don't move at all. They simply grow in one place and stay there forever, provided that you take good care of them.
Young Man: I know, I know! I don't want to go anywhere, I'm simply waiting here.
Old Man: Yes, but what are you waiting for?
Young Man: I told you: I'm waiting for a mango-tree.
Old Man: (Thinking) And have you been waiting for long?
Young Man: For about two weeks now.
Old Man: (Laughing) You've been waiting two weeks for a mango-tree to come? That's very funny!
Young Man: Yes, and I'm still waiting. I can't see why you laugh.
Old Man: (Shrugging his shoulders) All right, then. You wait for your mango-tree and I'll continue my walk. I'm going to visit my friends in that house over there. I'll see you later, then. (To the audience) This poor young man must be crazy! He's been sitting there for two weeks waiting for a mango-tree! I never heard of such a thing. (Exit)
Young Man: (To the audience) Ah, these poor old people, they understand nothing! Can't he see that I've planted the seed of a mango-tree here two weeks ago and I'm waiting for it to grow? He should realize, because he's old and experienced, but then old people forget everything they know. Besides, they always ask everything twice and then they get it all wrong and in the end they laugh at you. (Enter the old man) What is this? Here he comes again!
Old Man: Hello, my friend; good to see you! I see you're still here.
Young Man: Of course I'm still here! Didn't you just go to visit your friends?
Old Man: Yes, and it was a very short visit. I always make short visits. Now I'm going back home, and I'm going to wait
for the bus over there, on the road. Are you still... waiting for your mango-tree?

Young Man: Yes, I'm still waiting.

Old Man: (Tender, sits by the young man) My dear boy, Why don't you tell me what your problems are? Perhaps this old man can help you a little...

Young Man: But I don't have any problems! (Thinking) Well, maybe I do have one little problem: I just can't get this mango-tree to grow. I've been sitting here for two weeks since I planted the seed but nothing comes out of the ground yet! And all I want is a good mango-tree to give me shade when it's hot, and to eat mangoes every day, and even sell a few of them to earn a little money. So you see, that's the reason why I'm sitting here and waiting.

Old Man: (Laughing) So that was the reason! And why didn't you tell me so before?

Young Man: Because you're old and wise, and I thought you would realize yourself.

Old Man: No, no. If you want someone to understand something, you have to be able to explain things very well. That's why we learn to speak and listen, as well as read and write.

Young Man: Well, now you know.

Old Man: (Laughing) Oh, but you'll never get your mango-tree like that!

Young Man: No? Why not?

Old Man: Then you must be from the city, aren't you? These young people born in the cities, they know nothing about the ways of nature! (Kneeling down) Look at this soil: It's all hard! You should have loosened it up a little so that the roots from the seed can spread out easily.

Young Man: I didn't know that...

Old Man: And everything is so dry! Haven't you watered it?

Young Man: Watered it?

Old Man: (Laughing) You haven't even watered it! No wonder you've been waiting here for two weeks. You might as well wait for your entire life!

Young Man: Really? Why?

Old Man: My young friend: You can't just put a seed in a hole in the dry and hard ground and expect it to grow into a nice big fruit-tree or a beautiful flower only sitting by it and waiting for it to grow. Not only it may not grow, but you're wasting your time. What does your wife say of you, spending all your time sitting by a dry seed?

Young Man: My wife doesn't say anything, because I don't have a wife. I'm not married.

Old Man: You're not married! And why aren't you married yet?

Young Man: Well, because I'm waiting.

Old Man: Waiting? And waiting for what?

Young Man: I'm waiting until I find a wife.

Old Man: You're waiting and waiting! You're waiting for everything and you do nothing! Well, let me tell you: To have a tree grow, first you must plow the soil, then you have to
water the seed; after that you must protect the plant from animals and pests and see that it grows straight. You have to work for it! It's the same thing as with your wife and with your children.

Young Man: Do you mean I have to water them, and protect them from animals and pests, and see that they grow straight?

Old Man: No, no. I mean you have to take care of your wife and of your children. Children are like young trees: You have to give them nourishment and knowledge, protect them from illnesses and also see that they grow straight, both in the body and in the soul.

Young Man: (Thinking) Well, if I could grow this mango-tree, at least I could give them mangoes. Can you teach me how to grow this tree?

Old Man: (Kneeling down) As I told you: First, you have to...

But no: You have to learn, you do it! (The old man sits down while the young man follows his directions) First, you loosen the soil... yes, like that. Then, you plant the seed, not so deep that it won't come out, not so close out that the birds will eat it. Right. And next, you water it a little. And that's it.

Young Man: That's it? Good! Now I can sit and wait for it to grow and yield.

Old Man: Wait yes, but you don't need to sit here staring at it! Plants don't like that because in the beginning they're very shy. Now that you did your part, you must let Nature do hers. In due time, you'll have to do your next part. (Pause) Do you know something? This reminds me very much of a nice story I know about a group of people who were waiting like you for things to happen, and they waited for so long that a very funny thing happened to them! It's a pity that I don't have the time to tell it now.

Young Man: A story! But I love stories! Can you please tell me that story now?

Old Man: No, no. I told you: I have to go home now, besides I'm a little tired. Some other time.

Young Man: Oh, please! I beg you to tell me your story. Besides, I'm sure the people out there will be interested in your story too.

Old Man: The people out there? What people?

Young Man: But haven't you noticed? (Pointing at the audience) All this people have been sitting there all the time watching us and listening to our conversation.

Old Man: Oh, it's true! I hadn't noticed. (To the audience) Hello!... How are you today?... What are you doing there?... What did you say?... (To the young man) What did they say?

Young Man: I think they said they're waiting.

Old Man: Waiting! And waiting for what?

Young Man: I think they're waiting for you to tell us a nice story. (To the audience) Wouldn't you like this old man to tell us a nice and interesting story?...

Old Man: All right, all right! I can't stand people who wait!
So I will tell my story about the Waiting-people. But in order to do this I will need some help. My story has four characters in it; and you, my friend, will have to act as one of them.

**Young Man:** Me? But I can't act! I don't know how to act.

**Old Man:** Oh, don't worry. Anybody can act, the important thing is not to be afraid of trying; besides it is great fun. Myself, for instance, I will play the part of the old man. But now we also need a young woman and an old woman to join us in the play. (Thinking) Where can we find a young woman and an old woman to come act with us today?

**Young Man:** (Also thinking) I don't know... Perhaps if we wait for a little while, they will come by...

**Old Man:** What did you say? I'm getting a little deaf. It's the old age, you know.

**Young Man:** I said that... I know! Maybe my grandmother would like to do the part of the old woman.

**Old Man:** Does she like to act?

**Young Man:** Oh, I'm sure she likes to act, because every time I ask her for money she pretends she's asleep.

**Old Man:** And is she old?

**Young Man:** Oh, yes, very old. I think she's about 100 years old.

**Old Man:** 100 years old! (To the audience) What do you think? Is she old enough?... (To the young man) Yes, we think she is old enough. But now we will also need a young girl... maybe my friend's daughter, over there, would like to come and play with us. I'm going to go and ask her to come.

**Young Man:** And I'm going to go and ask my grandmother.

(Both exit on opposite sides and return with the women)

**Old Man:** Well done! Here we are, all four of us. Let us introduce ourselves.

**Young Man:** Yes. This is my grandmother.

**Old Man:** (To the old woman) How do you do. So you are the woman that's 100 years old?

**Old Woman:** (To the young man) You! How dare you go around telling my age! (To the old man) Oh no, sir, I'm only 85.

**Old Man:** Oh, just a girl, then! How good of you to come join us. You will play the part of the Witch.

**Old Woman:** A witch! Oh no, sir. I would only like to play the part of a young and beautiful girl.

**Young Man:** But grandma, you do look like a witch...

**Old Woman:** Shut up! Everyone can see that I'm still young and beautiful at heart.

**Old Man:** Oh, you don't need to worry! You will be the witch, who is in reality young and beautiful, but who disguises herself as an old, old woman.

**Old Woman:** (Thinking) I see... In that case, it's alright.

**Old Man:** Good! Now this girl, here, is my friend's youngest daughter. (To the young man) She and you will play the parts of a young married couple.
Young Man: Really! Then can I kiss her? (Tries to kiss her)
Young Woman: Help! Go away! (To the old man) Oh no, sir, I
don’t want to play the wife of this man!
Old Man: But you don’t have to let him kiss you if you don’t
want him to; you can defend yourself!
Young Woman: Really?
Young Man: (Chasing after her) Now I will kiss her!
Young Woman: (Slaps his face) There!
Young Woman: Ouch! But why did you do that?
Young Woman: Because you can’t kiss me! I’m not your real
wife. This is only a play. (To the old man) And you, what part
will you play?
Old Man: I will be the old man of the village.
Old Woman: Good! And now that we all know what parts we will
play, we should go and get ready. (To the old man) Meanwhile
you could explain to our friends out there about the story
they’re going to see. (Exit all but the old man)
Old Man: (To the audience) The story of the Waiting-people is
about a village, far, far away, and all these things happened
many, many years ago. The people in this village were
peasants, and they were very poor. They were certainly honest
and good-willing, but even so they were very poor. Their
houses needed repairing, the walls were cracking a little and
their roofs had to be replaced, but on the one hand they
didn’t have all the tools they needed, on the other hand they
didn’t know where to begin with, and on the other hand they
were out in the fields all day and when they came back they
were too tired to do any more work.
Young Man: (His head poking out) Excuse me!
Old Man: Yes, What is it?
Young Man: That makes three hands! Do you mean these people
had three hands? (He is pulled in from the inside. In off:)
Ouch!
Old Man: I’m sorry. As I was saying, sometimes, in the rainy
season, it rained so much that the roads and the houses got
flooded, and they needed to dig long ditches to prevent this,
but there weren’t enough people in the village to do the work,
so they hadn’t done it. But now it had been a very dry year,
there was a drought, and their great problem, and the reason
for their great poverty, was that they didn’t have any water.
They lived at the top of a little hill, and they didn’t have a
well. Can you imagine that? They didn’t have a well! So they
had to go far away to fetch water for their animals and
orchards and for themselves, and all this was very tiring.
Young Man: (Poking out, crying) Boo, hoo, hoo, hoo...
Old Man: But what is it now! Why are you crying?
Young Man: Because your story is so sad... boo, hoo, hoo (He’s
pulled in from inside. Again:) Ouch!
Old Man: Let’s continue. Things were very bad, and this is
why, one day, they decided to go and speak to the Mayor to see
whether he could help them solve their problems. (In the
background, the other three cross the scene from end to end)
The Mayor said they should go and see the Governor, so they went to see the Governor. (Same as before, in the opposite direction) The Governor said they should go and see the Minister, so they went on a long trip to see the Minister. (Same as before) The Minister was a very busy man, so they could only speak to him for three minutes and twenty-two seconds. Nevertheless, this Minister was a very kind man, and he told them they should go back to their village and wait until the Chief Surveyor came to see what it was that they really needed, and then he would be able to help them. (Same as before) They waited and waited and waited and waited for so long, that they stopped doing anything else but wait! But then one day, a very strange thing happened. And now you will see the rest of the story... (Exit the old man. Enter the young woman, walking and speaking tiredly)

Young Woman: Ah, I’ve just woken up from my waiting-sleep. (Looking around) I think it will be a nice waiting-day today. What can I do today? (To the audience) Can you tell me, What could I do today?... I know. I will sit down and wait. I wonder if my husband is up yet. (Enter the young man) Ah, here he is.

Young Man: (Tiredly) Good waiting, wife.
Young Woman: Good waiting, husband.
Young Man: How are you waiting today?
Young Woman: Oh, I’m waiting just fine, thank you. And how are you waiting today?
Young Man: I’m waiting fine too, thank you. Have you made breakfast yet? I’m very hungry and I’m waiting for breakfast.
Young Woman: No, my husband; I haven’t made breakfast yet.
Young Man: But why not? What are you waiting for?
Young Woman: I’m waiting for you to bring the fire-wood into the kitchen, otherwise I can’t cook anything.
Young Man: Oh, but can’t you see that I can’t bring the fire-wood in without having had breakfast first?
Young Woman: In that case, you will have to wait.
Young Man: Well, wife, I guess you’re right. I’ll have to wait. I’ll sit here and wait. (Enter the old man) Oh, look who’s coming here; it’s the old man of the village.
Young Woman: Good waiting, grampa.
Old Man: (Tiredly) Good waiting, dear girl.
Young Woman: How are you waiting today?
Old Man: Just fine, thank you. And yourselves?
Young Man: We’re waiting fine, too. Tell me, grampa: What brings you here?
Old Man: Well, I simply got tired of waiting in my own house, so I thought I might come and wait here with you.
Young Woman: Well, certainly, grampa. Tell me: How come you’re not chewing betel today? You’re always chewing betel.
Old Man: Oh no, I’m not chewing betel anymore.
Young Man: No? And why not?
Old Man: Well, I chewed my last bit yesterday, and now it’s all gone: I don’t have any more. And I don’t have the money to
buy any more either, so now I`m waiting for a betel-tree to grow in my garden.

Young Man: You´re waiting for a betel-tree to grow in your garden? That´s funny! That reminds me of an old story I know about a man who was waiting for a mango-tree to grow.

Old Man: A story? I love stories! Can you tell it now?

Young Man: No, I can´t. Right now we´re telling another story.

Old Man: Oh, that´s true! Anyway, I´m not chewing betel anymore because I can´t chew betel and wait at the same time. I can only do one thing at a time, and of the two, I think waiting is far more important, don´t you agree?

Young Woman: Oh yes, grampa! Waiting is very important for us, if we want to have our problems solved soon.

Old Man: That´s right. So, if you don´t mind, I´ll sit down and wait with you.

(Pause. Enter the old woman, the witch, flying from above, and remains suspended a few inches from the ground)

Young Woman: Oh! Look at that! That woman just came flying from the sky!

Young Man: Who is she? I´ve never seen her before.

Young Woman: I don´t know... She´s not from our village. Women around here don´t fly.

Young Man: (To the audience) Do you know who that woman is?... What did you say?... I can´t hear!...

Old Man: I think she´s probably a traveler... and she´s very, very old. I wonder how old she is. She seems to be very tired, too. I´m going to speak to her. (To the old woman) Good waiting, old woman!

Old Woman: Good waiting? Good morning, I should say.

Old Man: Well, yes, good morning. But in this village we now say "good waiting" instead.

Old Woman: That´s very strange! (To the audience) I think these people are very strange, to be sitting there in a beautiful morning like this and doing nothing. I wonder why. Can you tell me what is it that they´re doing?... What?... (To the other three) These people out there say that you´re waiting.

Young Woman: That´s right, grandma.

Old Woman: And may I ask, waiting for what?

Old Man: Oh, we´re waiting for many things. We´re waiting to have our roofs repaired, and our houses´ walls too; we´re also waiting to have some ditches dug along the roads, and we´re waiting to have a well dug too.

Young Woman: Yes, but most important of all, we´re waiting for the Chief Surveyor to come to our village and find out what it is that we´re waiting for so the Minister can give us what we need.

Old Woman: But that´s very strange!
Young Man: Why is it so strange? (To the audience) This old woman finds everything strange, and she’s pretty strange herself!

Old Woman: It’s strange that you’re waiting for the Chief Surveyor to come to find out what it is that you need, when you just told me the things you needed...

Young Man: Oh, but you don’t understand! (To the audience) Old people never understand the things one says. (To the old woman) The Minister told us to wait for the Chief Surveyor, and we’re doing as he said.

Young Woman: That’s right. We’re waiting for them to come and give us what we need. Anyway, grandma, tell me: Why are you floating in the air? Maybe you are... you couldn’t be... surely you’re not... a witch?

Old Man and Young Man: (Panicked) A witch! Oh, help! HELP!

Old Woman: (Laughing) Of course not! I’m not a witch. Do I look like a witch?

Young Man: Yes!

Old Woman: Shut up before I turn you into a slug! Everyone can see that I’m young and beautiful at heart. You can ask these people out there, if you want to be sure. (To the audience) What am I?... Right. That’s exactly what I’m not. Isn’t it true that I’m not a witch?... Enough. Thank you. (To the other three) You see? I’m not a witch.

Young Man: Then why are you floating in the air?

Old Woman: Oh, that. I will tell you. I’m a pilgrim, and I’m on my way to visit the shrine of the mountain, which is very far away. So I’ve been walking for many days now, but, poor me, I’ve had nothing to eat! So now I’ve become so light of weight that when the breezes blow, I can fly. And when the breezes don’t blow, I can float in the air. But I’m starving! Please, be kind to this poor old woman who is on her way to the shrine of the mountain, and give me something to eat?

Young Woman: I’m sorry, grandma, but I can’t offer you anything to eat.

Old Woman: And why not?

Young Woman: Because I’m waiting for my husband to bring the fire-wood into the kitchen so that I can cook the food.

Young Man: But I can’t bring the fire-wood into the kitchen without having eaten first.

Young Woman: So we don’t have food.

Young Man: And we don’t have fire-wood.

Old Woman: I see. Well, then, at least give me a drink of water.

Old Man: Oh, I’m sorry but we can’t offer you a drink of water.

Old Woman: And why not?

Old Man: Because we don’t have a well in the village, and we have to go and fetch the water very far away.

Old Woman: So why haven’t you gone to fetch the water, then?

Old Man: Oh, but can’t you see that we’re waiting? We can’t go fetch the water and wait at the same time! We can only do one...
thing at a time. But you're not waiting; besides you can fly.

Why don't you go fetch some water yourself, and then you could
bring us some too? We certainly need water.

Old Woman: (To the audience) Oh! I'm furious! I'm really
furious! These people are lying there, doing nothing, allowing
themselves to starve, just because they're waiting! What a big
shame! Well, now they shall see. (To the others) Well, yes! I
am the famous witch of the dark clouds! And because you didn't
give me food and you didn't give me water, I will cast a
terrible curse on this crooked village: (The three scream in
terror)

Ten winged elephants!
Twenty feathered snakes!
Thirty flying mongooses!
Forty fat mosquitoes!
Fifty golden cockroaches!
Sixty white crocodiles!
Seventy roasted crows!
Eighty stinking lizards!
Ninety stuffed butterflies!

and ONE HUNDRED YEARS will this village be damned and the
people living here WILL FORGET EVERYTHING THEY KNOW! Yes! That
is my curse, and it cannot be broken, unless fresh water
springs from right here where I'm standing, because, as you
know, nothing can overcome the power of fresh, clean water.
Yes! So now you will forget everything you know! One, two,
three! Done! (The old woman hides behind a curtain, the others
rise as if from a deep sleep)

Young Man: Oh!... What happened?
Young Woman: I don't know... I can't remember! Who are you?
Young Man: I don't remember. Who are you?
Young Woman: I don't know!
Old Man: Hello, young people, Who are you?
Young Woman: We can't remember. And who are you?
Old Man: I don't know... Anyway, what are we doing here?
Young Man: I don't remember. (Pause) Look! This is a house!
Oh, but this house is falling apart; I don't thing this is my
house. (To the old man) This must be your house.
Old Man: (Examining the house) No, no. This doesn't seem to be
my house! It must be yours.
Young Man: I don't remember, but I can tell that it needs some
repairing. I suppose I could repair the roof today.
Young Woman: Oh, but take a look at the walls! I think the
walls need to be repaired first.
Old Man: Maybe, but have you noticed the state of the roads?
Everything will get flooded with the next rains. I think the
roads should be repaired first.
Young Man: No, the roofs!
Young Woman: No, the walls!
Old Man: No, the roads!
Old Woman: (From a corner, to the audience) Oh, this is all so very funny! I think I’m going to stay around to see what happens.
Young Man: The roofs!
Young Woman: The walls!
Old Man: The roads!
Young Man: Oh, I can’t discuss anymore with an empty stomach. I’m starving, I need to eat!
Young Woman: Yes, you’re right. We should eat something.
Old Man: (To the young woman) Why don’t you go into the kitchen and prepare something for all of us? (The young woman exits and comes back)
Young Woman: There’s no fire-wood, and there’s no water.
Young Man: (Looking around) Fire-wood... there it is! Let me take it into the kitchen.
Old Man: And water... I don’t see any well around here. I wonder where do the people around here get their water.
Young Man: I don’t remember.
Young Woman: And why haven’t we got a well here?
Old Man: I don’t remember, either.
Young Woman: So we need a well, too.
Young Man: Yes, but first we need to repair the houses.
Old Man: Yes, but first we need to repair the roads.
Young Woman: No, the well!
Young Man: No, the houses!
Old Man: No, the roads!
Young Woman: The well!
Young Man: The houses!
Old Man: The roads! (Enter the old woman)
Old Woman: So why don’t you get organized and discuss this in a proper way?
Young Woman: And who is this?
Young Man: I don’t remember!
Old Man: She must be from the village, too. I think I’ve seen her before...
Young Man: (To the old woman) So what do you mean?
Old Woman: I mean, let one of you be chosen to be the chairman and to conduct the discussion.
Young Man: That’s a good idea! I’ll be the chairman!
Young Woman: No, no: I’ll be the chairman.
Old Man: No, my friends, I’ll be the chairman.
Old Woman: Don’t fight! Usually, the chairman would be elected by the others, but given the circumstances, in this case I think the chairman can be the oldest person in the village, for old people are experienced and wise.
Young Man: (To the old woman) In that case, you should be the chairman, without doubt.
Old Woman: Who, me? Oh no, sir! I’m much younger than what I look. I think you are the chairman.
Old Man: Ah, I’m very honoured. Let’s see: The session is open!
Young Woman: First, we need a well.
Young Man: No. First, we need to repair the houses.
Old Man: Absolutely not! The first thing will be the repairing of the roads. The session is closed!
Young Woman: But that's not fair! You didn't even let us speak!
Old Man: Of course it's fair! I'm the chairman.
Old Woman: No, no, no, no! The chairman only conducts the discussion; he can't take decisions on his own. The decisions are taken by way of common agreement.
Young Man: But that's impossible because we can't agree.
Old Woman: Of course you can! The thing is, you have to give reasons, arguments; you have to explain why you think that one thing is more important than the others. You have to explain things well and be polite. (To the old man) Chairman! Open the session again!
Old Man: The session is open! May I speak first? I think the roads have to be repaired first because if the roads flood, people can't get out of their houses and go to school.
Young Man: You're right, but I think that the houses have to be repaired first because that's where we live, and eat, and sleep, and study; so if we don't have a house in good conditions we cannot live a healthy life, and if we don't live a healthy life, how can we go and repair the roads? So the houses have to be repaired first.
Young Woman: You're right, but I think that a well has to be dug first of all. Without water, we cannot bathe, wash our clothes or even cook our meals, so we can't even think of repairing the houses if we don't have water first.
Old Man: You're right.
Young Man: Yes, the well should come first.
Old Man: Then we agree! The well will come first, then the houses and finally the roads. And where shall we dig the well?
Young Woman: Well, right here, I think. This would be a nice place for a well.
Young Man: And when could we do it?
Young Woman: Oh, aren't you hungry?
Young Man: Yes, very much!
Young Woman: So, the sooner we get the water, the sooner we eat.
Young Man: Alright, then. I think I saw an old shovel in the house. Let's see if it's still in good shape. (Exit)
Young Woman: And meanwhile I'm going to light the fire. (Exit. At the same time the young man comes back with a shovel)
Young Man: Here. I will dig right here. (Starts digging and a stream of fresh water springs off the ground)
Old Man: Oh!... Look! There's a spring right by your house!
Young Man: My house? You're right, now I remember: this is my house! And you are grampa, the old man of the village. (Enter young woman)
Young Woman: What happened? I had this funny dream! I dreamed we were all discussing about which things we should do first, and then we agreed to start digging a well, and then...
(Seeing the water) OH! LOOK AT THAT! There's fresh water in the village! I'm so happy! (Enter the old woman)

Old Woman: Will you be good to this poor pilgrim and give a little food?

Young Woman: Oh, you're still here! You were also in my dream. Look! We found a spring right in the middle of the village! My husband only had to shovel a little... Now I can give you water and food. (Exit)

Young Man: And now we will be able to repair our houses.

Old Man: And later on, we will repair the roads.

Old Woman: Oh, it all sounds very good! But weren't you waiting for something, before?

Young Man: Waiting? Oh, no, grandma! We're not that kind of people! We're expecting the Chief Surveyor to come, but when he comes, we will tell him what we have decided to do and we will ask him to help us with those things we cannot do ourselves. In this way it will be much easier for him and the Minister, and things will go quicker, too. (Enter the young woman with food)

Young Woman: Here, grandma, have this to eat and you will feel much better.

Old Woman: (With a full mouth) Oh! You're a very good cook! (She slowly descends and touches ground) Ah! Look! I'm not flying anymore, now that I've had something to eat. Anyway, I couldn't stand this flying business anymore, the winds were taking me wherever they wanted to. Now I shall walk, which is a little slower but much more effective.

Young Man: And have some water too.

Old Woman: Thank you, I will drink a little water. (She kneels down and drinks 20 buckets of water)

Young Woman: Oh, no! Look what she's doing! She's going to dry our well!

Old Woman: (Raising) Certainly not, my dear; you don't need to worry. This well will never dry, unless you sit around it and wait. That you must never do! And now, I must go. Thank you very much. Maybe I'll see you on my way back from the shrine of the mountain. Good Bye! (Exit)

All: Good bye!

Old Man: Strange woman, she is. And what do we do now?

Young Man: Well, we have to start repairing the houses. I must go now. Good bye!

Young Woman: (To the young man) But you can't do that alone! I'm coming to help you. Good Bye! (Both exit)

Old Man: (To the audience) So that was the story of the Waiting-people, and the very funny thing that happened to them. How did you like it?... Now I'm going to call the actors on the stage so that you can give them an applause. (Calling) Alright, now! It's finished! You can come out now! (The others come out, they all join hands and bow) Thank you! So, how did you like acting?

Old Woman: Oh, it was marvelous! Now I know I can be a movie star!
**Young Man:** But grandma, you’re too old...

**Old Woman:** Shut up! Never mind age! Drama is ageless.

**Old Man:** Stop quarreling! What I was asking is: Did you like the story?

**Young Woman:** Oh, yes, Sir. I liked it very much. I learned that there’s no point in waiting for others to help you if you can start by helping yourself a little. Anyway, it’s very late now, and I must go back home now to help my mother. Thank you very much, sir. It was great fun. (To the young man) And you may come visit my family, once in a while. Goodbye! (Exit)

**Old Woman:** Oh, yes, it’s very late indeed! I must go home too. (To the old man) Thank you very much for your play. (To the young man) And you, don’t be late! Your mother too is waiting for you. Goodbye! (Exit)

**Old Man:** So, my young friend, I must go too. My wife will be very angry and worried because I’m coming home so late, but when I tell her all the things that have happened this day, I’m sure she will forgive me. Goodbye, then! (Exit)

**Young Man:** Goodbye, and thanks for all your teachings! Funny! I always thought that old people didn’t understand things very well, and now I don’t think that anymore! Well, it’s late; I’m going to go too. (As he leaves, he notices on the ground) OH! LOOK AT THAT! My little mango-tree is coming out! With its little leaves and everything! What did the old man say I had to do next? Ah, yes: protect it from animals. (He kneels down and does so) Now I can go. Goodbye! (Exit)

**THE END**
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Inkeles, Alex: Becoming Modern. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1974


Pye, Lucien: Political Culture and Political Development in Pye, Verba, Editors: Political Culture and Political Development, 1965

Rogers, Everett: Communication and Development, The passing of the Dominant Paradigm in: Communication Research, April 1976


Schramm, Lerner, Editors: Communication and change in developing countries. East-West Center Press, Honolulu, 1976

Srivardena, Susil: The Sri Lanka case - Scale, Creativity and Satisfactions trough Support. NHDA, Colombo, 1987


Werner and Bower: Helping Health Workers Learn. The Hesperian Foundation, California, 1982