

This item was submitted to [Loughborough's Research Repository](#) by the author.
Items in Figshare are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

People's participation in slum upgrading

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

PUBLISHER

© WEDC, Loughborough University

VERSION

VoR (Version of Record)

PUBLISHER STATEMENT

This work is made available according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence. Full details of this licence are available at:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

LICENCE

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

REPOSITORY RECORD

Ain, Quratal. 2019. "People's Participation in Slum Upgrading". figshare. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/28588>.



PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN SLUM UPGRADING

QURATUL AIN

Community Organiser, Baldia Soakpit Project,
Karachi, Pakistan.

1. (a) INTRODUCTION:- Pakistan faces similar problems like any developing countries. Karachi being its largest commercial and industrial city, has attracted people from all over the country, resulting in a tremendous increase in its population. The population of Karachi is six million and increases by 5% yearly.

Thus like any other city of a developing country, a large number of squatter settlements have grown up. In Pakistan these settlements are known as "KATCHI ABADIES". About a third of Karachi's population now live in these Katchi Abadies, scattered all around the city. One of the largest Katchi Abadies is Baldia Township.

1. (b). BALDIA TOWNSHIP:- Baldia town is located towards the north of Karachi. The site industrial area which is very close to Baldia, provides employment for many of its people. According to the census of 1971, the population of Baldia was 79,529. But now it is not less than 150,000 covering a total area of 430 hectares, having 24,200 plots.

1. (c) THE PEOPLE AND THEIR EXISTING SANITARY CONDITIONS:- The population is economically and socially hetero-geneous. People from all over the country live in small pockets called "Mahallas" which are extremely homogenous, because people belonging to same villages live within their own country.

Majority of the houses are semi-pucca, that is the walls are made of C.C. blocks with no plaster and a tin or asbestos sheet is used for roofing. About 5% are hutments, and 5% have good quality R.C.C. construction.

Most of the people are unskilled labourers e.g. potters, and apprentice for masons and carpenters. Quite a few are working as loaders at the fish harbour. But a good percentage of trained mechanics and technical people work in the industries near Baldia. Unemployment seems not to be a major problem, although they are low paid workers.

Water is supplied by a network of stand pipes installed by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) pumping station which delivers water for about 5 hours a day. The area is zoned and each zone receives water for about two hours every second day. (For details, refer to the report by John Pickford and

Bob Reed on Sanitation for Baldia Township Karachi, WEDC Loughborough University of Technology, Department of Civil Engineering).

The most common latrines are served by the conservancy system, which is not popular with the house owners. About 70% - 80% of the houses in Baldia has bucket latrines. The residents place a gallon oil drum or a battery case in a rectangular channel in which faeces is collected.

Another common practice is that the latrine has a plinth on which defaecation takes place. This plinth slopes towards a hole, in the outside wall through which faeces are removed, and urine and cleaning water runs off to the road-way or open ground outside the plot.

These containers or channels are emptied by self-employed sweepers, who collect the excreta in bigger tins. Then the house owner throws water into the channel, to clean it. The water usually runs through the outside face of the boundary wall, and stays there.

When the containers of the sweeper are full, he takes them to one of the three main disposal points, or dumps the contents into a nearer drain or vacant land. The condition of these latrines get worse when the sweepers do not come for 2 days. Excreta and waste water flow on the streets. Sometimes a small pool of stagnant sullage and excreta are found outside the plot near the latrine.

The occupants of houses without latrines, and also some children from households with latrines defecate in open spaces. (For more details refer to John Pickford and Bob Reeds report on Baldia and its sanitation).

2. (a) BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT:- According to the KMC report more than 1 in 9 babies born in the slum areas of Karachi die before reaching one year of age. Those who survive suffer from frequent diseases and ill health. The main causes of this high mortality and morbidity rate are unsanitary methods of human waste disposal and a low level of health consciousness. Baldia, which is one of the largest slum concentration of Karachi faces these problems. The government requested in the early 1970's the services of a Dutch Advisory Mission (DAM) to assist in planning a comprehensive scheme for slum improvement. In 1979 the team recommended the construction of

"Long Life" pit latrine, as a relevant solution to reduce child mortality and morbidity rate. UNICEF got interested in the plan as the impact was on children. Since pit latrines are privately constructed and maintained by individual families, they fall outside the scope of government physical improvements. So UNICEF has discussions with government to identify suitable governmental or non-governmental organization that can take this project. Finally the Karachi University's Social Work Department (KUSWD) and Pakistan's Jaycees (PJC) a non-governmental organization were contacted to undertake the project on an experimental basis.

2 (b) AN EXPERIMENT IN CONSTRUCTION OF SOAKPIT LATRINE:- In August 1979, UNICEF began supporting these two organizations. To start with, Jaycees agreed to construct 30 soakpits using UNICEF's funds.

Pakistan Jaycees contacted a local contractor who is also religious leader in Muslim Mujahid Colony (MMC) in Baldia. The pits were constructed by this contractor with technical supervision by the engineers of Jaycees.

Three months later KUSWD had also agreed to construct 30 soakpit latrines. By this time Jaycees had already finished its construction. Having no experience in construction, the professors and students (I was one of them) of KUSWD visited MMC to orient ourselves on the design and procedure of construction. We met the mason who was trained and involved in the construction of the pits. We took a round of the MMC along with the mason and some other active workers, who gathered around us to know what was going on. We observed that MMC was not a very poor area nor the sanitary conditions were that bad. From here the mason took us to his area that is Turk Colony. He extended his full cooperation to us, and requested that the pit latrines be constructed in Turk Colony.

2 (c) TURK COLONY (TC) - The People & Community This community is right in the middle of Baldia Town. It is a compact homogenous community, who call themselves "Turk Sepoy" because their ancestors originally came from Turkey as soldiers of Muslim Army who conquered India.

The area was totally inhabited by Turk Community in 1958, when Baldia was a large place of vacant land, on the outskirts of Karachi. In 1960 after the fire in the city, in which a large number of huts were burned, the government got them settled in the present area. About 250 small houses were allotted to them. The area now covered by this community is 70,000 sq feet, with more than 500 plots, accommodating more than 600 families.

The people of TC came from Veraval near Junagarh State (India) in 1947, at the time of partition of the sub-continent. The community is like one big family because of inter-marriages within their community. One finds every family related to the other. Their language is Gujarati but they can speak

Urdu too.

The total population of this colony is about 4000 to 6000 people. The family pattern is joint family system. There is no government school. Illiteracy is high. Eighty percent of the women cannot read or write.

Most of the people are skilled and unskilled labourers e.g. masons, carpenters. Others are shopkeepers, hawkers, paddlers. There are two school teachers, a compounder, and a clerk. The average income is Rs.400 to Rs.1,000 per month (US\$ 40 to 100). Few who work in Middle Eastern countries send home a good amount. Women are also involved in income generating activities within or outside their area.

Water is supplied by 6 stand pipes in 8 lanes of the area. These taps receive water every second day for 2 hours. There is extreme shortage of water.

2.(d) SANITATION BEFORE THE SOAKPIT PROJECT:- Sanitation in TC is similar to the conditions existing in other parts of Baldia. A study has shown that the community has 80% bucket latrines. The people lack health consciousness and awareness of child care. But the presence of local soakpit shows that the community had initiated some efforts to solve this problem. These soakpits which they constructed lacked the proper technology. Thus the pits did not function properly, and were of poor quality.

On the whole the community was passive and inactive towards their problems, particularly in sanitation. They had no support from the government or from other authorities. The councillor did not pay any attention to them, because they voted against him in elections. The people lacked confidence and determination. But the basic capabilities are present. They needed knowledge and guidance in organizing themselves and their efforts. The MMC has more or less the same characteristics as TC the only difference is the community of MMC is not homogeneous. The area and population is larger than TC. The sanitary condition is better as most of the houses have local soakpits, because the people are better off than the TC people.

3. PEOPLE PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PIT LATRINES IN TURK COLONY

The pit latrines constructed by PJC were given free to individual families. The local people did not provide any assistance or contribution. The news, therefore, spread that every house will get a free soakpit.

The KUSWD, on the other hand, wanted to develop self reliance in the people. We did not want to cripple and degrade them further by giving charity. It was therefore made clear to the mason and the people of TC that no soakpit will be given free. The people must share in the cost and responsibilities of construction.

This created confusion, mistrust, confrontation, agitation and frustration among the residents of TC because one area got free soakpits while they have to share in the cost. I along with the Professors of SWD had several discussions with the people. After a month of motivation, the mason and 10 other people agreed to do the digging of the pit themselves, for which

materials will be provided by UNICEF, while the local mason will do the masonry work. These 10 people and the mason belonged to a cricket team in their area. They were concerned to clean the place so they can practice on the streets of TC because there is no other place to play.

This group of young community workers started digging their own pits. This provided an opportunity for other community people to observe the new design construction and utility of pit latrines. Within a month 10 pit latrines were completed. The pit W/C was 10 ft. deep by 7 ft. in diameter was dug by the people. Thus saving 30 to 40 US \$ per pit. Masonry was done by the mason from the community, and the materials were provided by UNICEF. The total cost of each pit was Rs. 1,200 to 1,500 (US \$ 120 to 150).

Within 2½ months, 30 soakpits were completed by this active group of community people. The process forgetting the families involved in digging the pit, and then the construction by this group, gained them confidence and publicity. Their efforts were acknowledged and appreciated by the community and project people. The constant visits by UNICEF and government officials gave them recognition. Seeing this, more people joined them. They are not only a cricket team now but they are looked upon as community workers. Observing this development, we helped them to form an organization and trained more masons and workers. This facilitates the distribution of functions and responsibilities in the construction of soakpit.

The group was organized to assist the project in motivating the people to construct soakpits and also guiding them on their proper use. Moreover, this group helped the community in identifying the poorest, and selecting the place inside the house for digging. While we were able to motivate and organize the people in Turk Colony, there were also technical difficulties in construction such as (1) obtaining cement subsidy permit, (2) use of cheaper materials e.g. PVC pipes, (3) constant deviation from the technical design, (4) variable quality of construction materials and poor quality control, (5) difficulty of fixing the U trap to W.C. bowl, (6) inadequate depth of pit due to sub-soil water and (7) a cheaper design to reduce the cost.

4. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT:- The project was evaluated after the completion of 120 soakpits in Turk Colony and Muslim Mujahid.

The PJC constructed good quality soakpits in MMC as they had the technological know-how, but they could not organize the people in bringing social awareness and development.

On the other hand, the KUSWD created a social welfare organization through the construction of soakpits. They also followed it up and trained the people on how to use them, and assisted on other activities of social organization and development e.g. education for women and children. The KUSWD had motivated the people of TC but lacked technology so that pits constructed by them were not of good quality.

5. THE BALDIA SOAKPIT PILOT PROJECT:- The University of Karachi SWD has professional expertise in community development and organization to take up the social and motivational aspects of the project. Whilst the PJC has professional expertise in management and technical/construction matters. Thus these two aspects were collaborated and co-ordinated under Baldia Soakpit Pilot Project.

a) Objectives of the Project

- i) To reduce infant and child mortality and morbidity rate due to water related diseases.
- ii) To create community wide acceptance of soakpits through improved community organization, and to later develop other social sector improvements benefitting children.

b) The Structure

The project has 2 full time workers, a community organizer from the University of Karachi, Social Work Department and a technical adviser from the Pakistan Jaycees International. The KUSWD and PJC will work in close collaboration. The former will do the motivational, utilization and follow up evaluation of the soakpits while the latter will do the construction of the soakpits, and training of masons, and constantly improving the design to bring down the cost of construction.

6. THE IMPACT OF THE COLLABORATION OF PEOPLE & TECHNOLOGY ON BALDIA SOAKPIT PILOT PROJECT

By March 1981, more than 200 soakpit latrines have been constructed by the project with the leadership provided by the Turk Welfare Society and with assistance from the community organizer and the technical adviser. This time the quality of construction has improved and the technical difficulties overcome with the help from the project engineer.

The project not only brought a positive change in the attitude of the people and the environment but the process had multidimensional achievements, (1) physically, (2) socially, and (3) technically.

- Physical Development:- There is no more bucket latrines in the Turk Colony. Eighty percent of the households have soakpits, either through the project or self made. The streets are free from human excreta. There is a new water pipe line which has increased the water supply. Four more water taps were added. The open drains for waste water from bath and kitchen is under construction. The colony's roads lights have 12 mercury bulbs. The roads are under construction. The colony have a cleaner look. Women now do not throw garbage on roads. They collect it in a place and later burn it, for the sweepers from KMC collect it every third day with supervision from the people of Turk Welfare Society.

- Social and Technical Development:- The best achievement of the whole process is the emergence, creation and development of Turk Colony Welfare Society. It has now 111 members with 33 active workers. The society has also assisted us in preparing the

motivational and publicity materials for sanitation and hygiene. It has recently started a community newspaper, where they express their objectives, achievements and limitations. This paper has served in the motivational, utilization and technical aspects of soakpits.

The organization has also constructed a water storage tank and supplied water to the community when there is a shortage. It has marked houses with soakpits to keep an account of the houses assisted by project. It also undertook a census survey of their area.

I have also trained a group of women who demonstrate and teach women and children on using pit latrines. These women are also given lectures on child care and hygiene by students of Social Work. The society has arranged for a woman to give literacy class to women and children. UNICEF has agreed recently to provide black boards and books to this school.

Through the process of construction and motivation I could reach the women and organize them, around the project for other activities related to education, child care and income-generating.

All the tools and frames for the blocks were bought by the society. Four sets of digging tools were loaned to families who wanted to dig their pits. This accelerated the work. The society people and masons tried for cheaper designs. The mason was involved in designing when Mr. John Pickford visited Baldia as technical expert. He wanted to learn from the technical expert a new design that would not destroy the existing super structure of the latrines. He knew that it costs so much for the residents to first demolish the walls of his present latrines, then dig the pit so that the pan could be fixed directly on the pit, then again reconstruct the walls. Finally, after detailed discussion with the mason and Pickford a design was prepared to satisfy the community people. The mason has already implemented the other design which was recommended by Mr. Pickford.

Presently I have identified 10 women community workers and trained them for the survey work on child mortality and morbidity. Identification and training of mid-wives in the community is also one of the programmes. I also visit houses with soakpits that are constructed by project's assistance and inspect the pan, if the excreta is there I train them of flushing the water so the excreta can go in.

In addition to these activities of the organization there are a number of examples which illustrate the effect of this project on developing peoples participation and confidence.

One example when they invited the Mayor of Karachi and their councillor on completion of the soakpits, they organized a reception, gave a detailed written description of their efforts in developing their area and at the same time expressed their problems of water,

street lights, open drains and roads. All these demands were presented to the Mayor, who was impressed by the community's efforts. Later, after constant follow-up they could manage to get what they asked from the authorities. The councillor is also very cooperative now. The garbage collection is regular from KMC and is done under the supervision of the society's worker.

The project and its personnel now enjoy the trust and confidence of the people. The organization, through its active president has helped introduce me to new areas.

A house of 3 rooms has been offered to the project as an office for the community organizer and technical adviser and also as storage for construction materials. The place is managed by the Turk Society on a voluntary basis. They have constructed tables and chairs for the office, for which only materials expenses were given.

The mason trained four more masons in the construction of the soakpits. The Turk Society made blocks themselves under the supervision of technical adviser. These blocks were good in quality and were sold on no profit no loss basis for the soakpits.

Here I would like to relate an example of a change in attitude towards sanitation and hygiene practice. A child had excreted on the street, which is a usual practice in this area. But I saw that 8 or 10 women were quarrelling with the mother of this child. They were telling her that she must train her child to use the latrine. Finally the mother was persuaded to clean the mess right then and there. I was able to set another example of helping the poorest by the poor from within the community. There was a lady with 6 children and a mentally sick husband. Her condition was extremely poor and the bucket latrine was filthy as she could not afford the sweeper daily. Another lady from within the area requested us to construct her a pit. She was quite well-off with 4 sons all earning and her living standard was satisfactory. Her own soakpit was full. She needed a soakpit because she has a large family. They dug their own pit. I motivated them to pay for the materials. I told her that with this money she can help the other poor lady to have a pit latrine. Finally after strong motivation she paid for the digging of the pit for the poor woman with 6 children. Thus, soakpit latrines were constructed for both families.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:- Soakpits are not new to the people of Baldia and Turk Colony. They had constructed soakpits by themselves before the project, but they lacked the technology for design and quality of construction. They could afford to construct the soakpits, but still did not know how to maintain and use it properly and effectively. They lacked social training and knowledge of health and sanitation. Thus, Baldia Soakpit Pilot Project provides the opportunity to combine the technical and the social approaches to sanitation. The working mechanism applied was that, first, I as a community organizer would identify the poorest Mahalla with the

filthiest sanitary condition and select those families with large number of children and motivate them to have a soakpit, by sharing in the cost of construction.

Once the Mahalla have been identified according to the above criteria then the technical adviser selects the site and design of the pit, according to the soil condition. He examines the size of the pit when it is dug, and supervises it, when it is constructed. When the soakpit is completed, I train the residents on correct use and maintenance of the pit latrine. My experience in Baldia convinces me that technology and social work must be co-ordinated to have a positive and long lasting result in programs of slum improvements.

Models on people's participation should be demonstrated to the people. The interested communities should be organized, and technical supervision and assistance should be given through community organization. The people of underdeveloped areas are often underestimated of their capabilities and potentialities and considered as a burden on society and authorities. It is the greatest mistake on their part.

My experience proves that people of backward areas only need technical and social guidance to develop and strengthen their capabilities. Through their organized efforts they participate in shaping their society and influence decision makers of their countries. Sponsoring agencies commit a mistake by giving free assistance to the people. This not only creates dependancy in the community, but cripples them for ages. The contributions should be made on teaching and training, demonstration of successful community improvement models that has maximum people participation. Funds and external resources should be used in training the people socially and technically at the grass root level.

The improvement and development of an area should be the impact of community organization.