

# THE ABC'S OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

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Community development projects which attempt to involve community participation are actually easier said than done. The reasons for failure are many. The most common perhaps, is that the members of the community concerned are not genuinely involved and remain as passive partners in the process. The project is pushed down the community's throat. As a result, the activities of development are not sustained or followed up. The community returns to its old ways as soon as the project is considered delivered.

This manual attempts to guide the readers on how to bring in the community as equal partners in development projects such as the primary health care movements. The orientation of the manual is towards developing urban poor communities. However, the principles discussed are relevant and applicable also to the rural communities.

Although the manual is aimed mainly at primary health care workers, it is also useful as a guide for extension workers in other fields such as agriculture, veterinary and social development. Higher level managers can find hints on recruitment of community workers, project planning, implementation and its subsequent evaluation.

The chapters are organised step-by-step, beginning with the cardinal rules for primary health care, through details of information-gathering exercises, community organisation and process, project planning and implementation. The manual ends by discussing issues and current trends in primary health care. A glossary of terminologies used is provided to avoid any misinterpretation and the references are extensive for further readings by those who are interested to know more.

Key points in the text are highlighted by drawing illustrations which depict real life situations in a lighter vein. Reading the manual is enjoyable for the language used is smooth flowing, simple with clarity of expression.

To any community worker, the guidance put forth in the manual is both practical and realistic, because it is based on the author's experience in dealing with community development. The manual should be a starting point for new workers in the field of primary health care especially those who are lost - not knowing how or where to begin.

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