



**International  
Institute for  
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Human Settlements  
Programme

## **Reconstructing social capital in a poor urban settlement: the Integral Improvement Programme in Barrio San Jorge, Argentina**

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## Reconstructing social capital in a poor urban settlement: the Integral Improvement Programme in Barrio San Jorge

Ricardo Schusterman and Ana Hardoy

**SUMMARY:** *This paper describes how the continuous support provided by an external team over a ten year period in a low income informal settlement in Buenos Aires (Barrio San Jorge) resulted in a development process which helped to improve living conditions, change the inhabitants' relationship with society and reduce the deprivations normally associated with low income. Over time, and with each new initiative seeking to build on the momentum achieved by previous initiatives, considerable improvements have been achieved, including improvements in housing quality, access roads, land tenure and provision for water and sanitation and for child health and development. Perhaps as important has been the development of a representative community organization within the barrio, since no such organization had existed previously. This in turn has helped change the relationship of this settlement's inhabitants with the rest of society - as the settlement is no longer 'illegal', as the inhabitants are acquiring legal tenure of the land on which they live, as provision for water and sanitation is now managed by the official utilities and as an engagement has developed between the inhabitants and government agencies at municipal and other levels.*

*This case study suggests that many low income illegal settlements need a long and continuous support programme to allow the many kinds of deprivation and illegality their inhabitants face to be addressed. Poverty is not 'solved' through one or two quick, sectoral interventions. Action is needed on many fronts. But this case study also shows the important catalytic role that international funds can have in helping low income communities develop their own representative organizations. This is important for allowing them to address their own problems. But it is also central to them being able to successfully negotiate with their own local governments and utilities for the infrastructure and services to which they are entitled.*

### I. INTRODUCTION<sup>[1]</sup>

Barrio San Jorge is one among a large number of poor settlements in Buenos Aires (and other Latin American cities) in which the inhabitants survive with inadequate incomes, very poor housing conditions, and a lack of basic services. In 1987, when the support team began work there, absolute poverty and insufficient and inadequate external support had eroded social capital.<sup>[2]</sup> Barrio San Jorge was also one among thousands of low income settlements in Latin America where, despite many speeches, promises and programmes, there had been little support from government programmes and projects. Like most other

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<sup>1</sup> This case-study draws on several documents, reports and papers, especially on the paper "Building community organisation: the history of a squatter settlement and its own organisations in Buenos Aires", Hardoy, J.E., A. Hardoy and R. Schusterman; *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 3, No. 2, October 1991.

<sup>2</sup> 'Social capital' is considered to be the norms, trust, and reciprocity networks that facilitate mutual beneficial co-operation in a community (C.O.N. Moser (1996), *Confronting Crisis: A Summary of Household Responses to Poverty and Vulnerability in Four Urban Communities*; ESD Studies and Monographs Series; The World Bank).

low income settlements, it also lacked a community organisation - or at least one that was representative of its population.

What makes Barrio San Jorge unusual is some features of the intervention by one external agency, the Community Support Programme of IIED-América Latina. This support programme has been working continuously in Barrio San Jorge for the last ten years, promoting initiatives in different sectors, seeking support from government agencies, international funders and private sector sources, and seeking to involve the different actors who are affected by these actions. Continuity, the integration of actions and partnership with stakeholders have been the principles on which a development process has been built to confront poverty in San Jorge. The main challenge for IIED-América Latina has been to support the reconstruction of social capital within the settlement, to address the needs and problems of the inhabitants that could not be tackled at an individual or household level.

Two points should be stressed at the outset. First, this case-study does not claim to be a "success story"; it is not intended as an example of "best practice" or to provide a blueprint about how things should be done. This case-study seeks to provide an insight into what has happened in one informal settlement over the last ten years, what has been achieved and what was learnt through the involvement of an external team. This includes a description of the complex and constantly changing relationships between Barrio San Jorge and different government agencies and different external funding agencies - and the difficulties in achieving a good match between community-directed improvements and external support. The paper also outlines how the lessons learnt from working in this settlement form the basis for similar support programmes for other informal settlements nearby. The second point that should be stressed is that the authors of this case study have both been part of the support team working in Barrio San Jorge, and as such, are part of the story that follows.

If the approach taken by IIED-América Latina's community support programme working in Barrio San Jorge and now in other informal settlements is considered one that should be tried in other settlements, it implies the need for new forms of support from international donors. The first is an acceptance that external support is often needed over a long period and for many kinds of intervention - so that as one successful intervention is completed, the community organization and mobilization it achieves can then be capitalized on to tackle another problem. In virtually all informal settlements, there are many needs that have to be addressed and 'poverty' is not solved through single sector 'projects'. But most international donors support single sector projects and having supported one initiative in a settlement, prefer not to support another. The second is that funding must be provided in ways which match the rhythms and possibilities of community-based organizations - and this often means a slower use of funds than that sought by funding agencies. The third is perhaps the most difficult - the recognition that community support programmes provided by local NGOs like that provided by IIED-América Latina in Barrio San Jorge usually demand a large amount of time provided by professionals. We believe that it is the constant presence of staff from IIED-América Latina within Barrio San Jorge over ten years that has helped the inhabitants overcome their well-founded scepticism about any useful role for an external agency and to begin to work as a community, rather than as individual households. We also know that reducing poverty and deprivation in any informal settlement also means changing the relationship between that settlement and many public agencies. This negotiation - in the case of Barrio San Jorge, with the municipal authorities, the provincial

government, the water agency, the electricity utility and many others - is very time consuming. It has required a considerable amount of staff time from professionals within the NGO support team. But this negotiation has brought benefits that external funders could not provide or sustain - the regularization of land tenure, the improvement in garbage collection, the connection of the settlements water supply and sewer system to wider networks (add others as appropriate). External funding can often have such a valuable role in supporting community organizations and the NGOs that work with them in negotiating with national, state and local authorities for land rights, credit, infrastructure and services and in building their capacity to sustain achievements. This is such an important part of moving an informal settlement 'out of poverty'. Yet few international funding agencies are able or willing to fund this process, especially the staff time needed within community organizations and NGOs to achieve this.

## II. BACKGROUND

*"...el que no llora no mama y el que no afana es un gil..".*

*(Those that do not cry do not suck and those that do not rob are fools)  
Tango Cambalache*

*"Con la democracia se come, se cura y se educa."  
(With democracy, it is possible to eat, to cure and to educate)  
Raul Alfonsín, President of Argentina 1983-1989*

*"Si paramos de afanar durante dos años, se arregla todo."  
(If we stop stealing for two years, everything is solved)  
L. Barrionuevo, union leader and former official of the present government*

Argentina's political history in recent decades has been plagued by military coups with military dictatorships alternating with weak elected governments. Between 1930 and 1989 only two governments could complete their mandate. Constant political change has meant that social policies have been erratic, even within the lifespan of a single government.

Argentina's largest concentrations of poverty are within the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, especially in precarious neighbourhoods and squatter settlements, most of which are in the peripheral municipalities.<sup>3</sup> They are known as *villas miseria* or *villas de emergencia* - the term villa being used in irony since it comes from the Italian word which implies a high quality house. Under the military governments of the period 1976-83, many illegal settlements were bulldozed and the development of new illegal settlements prevented, at least in central areas. Where the state did intervene in poor neighbourhoods, generally the intervention was limited to the education and health sector. Successive governments neglected broader support to low income settlements, as they were considered problems of the emergency, which would be solved as soon as the country overcame the crisis that had its root in the exhaustion of the import substitution model since the 1960s.

Local and provincial governments in Argentina have long mistrusted community organisations and the non-governmental organisations that work with them. The fact that

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<sup>3</sup> Buenos Aires is made up of the Federal District (the capital of Argentina) and 19 municipalities around it which are within the Province of Buenos Aires. By 1991, the whole agglomeration had 11.3 million inhabitants.

so many promises by political leaders go unfulfilled lead to apathy, as the inhabitants of the *villas* were continuously discouraged by the failure of each successive government to address their needs. Few such settlements benefitted from public projects and programmes at the scale of individual settlements.

Barrio San Jorge is located in San Fernando, the least populous municipality in Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. In 1991 San Fernando had 143,000 inhabitants and one of the lowest rates of population growth among the 19 municipalities and the Federal District which make up the Metropolitan Area. This is largely explained by the very limited employment opportunities available within the municipality. It is also the result of the poor environmental quality of the areas within the municipality, which have not yet been urbanised, the shortage of local government resources for the implementation of social programmes and the low level of investment from the provincial government.<sup>[4]</sup> San Fernando has one of the highest infant mortality rates among the municipalities within Greater Buenos Aires - which at 30 per 1000 live births in 1991 is twice the rate in the Federal District.<sup>[5]</sup>

The proportion of the population with unmet basic needs in the municipality of San Fernando is above the average for the Metropolitan Area.<sup>[6]</sup> On the western side of the district, where the largest poor settlements are found (including Barrio San Jorge), over half of all households have unmet basic needs. The recognition of these settlements by local government is limited, as can be seen in the maps of the cadastral office, where the only reference to them is by their name on areas classified as vacant or as belonging to no-one.

### III. BARRIO SAN JORGE

*"Barrio San Jorge: en el margen de la marginalidad."*  
Local politician

#### a. Origins

Barrio San Jorge's origins are as a resettlement site. In 1961, the government resettled 60 families in houses made of corrugated iron sheets on the site that later became known as Barrio San Jorge, because they had been living in areas prone to frequent flooding. They were settled as a temporary 'emergency relief.' Despite the lack of infrastructure and basic services on the site where they were resettled, other households moved there, attracted by surrounding vacant land from which they seemed to have a low risk of eviction. Thus, the settlements' population inhabitants increased gradually. The neighbourhood had two more important advantages: the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires had set up a primary school, kindergarten and

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<sup>4</sup> The municipality of San Fernando, like those of the other 18 municipalities within Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, comes under the provincial government of Buenos Aires; only the Federal District, the centre of Buenos Aires (with around 3 million inhabitants in 1991) is under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

<sup>5</sup> Arrossi, Silvina (1996), "Inequality and health in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol.8., No.2, October 1996.

<sup>6</sup> The National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) publishes statistics on the number of households with "unsatisfied basic needs" in each municipality in Buenos Aires; households with unsatisfied basic needs include households with more than three people per room, households which live in housing of an unsuitable type (which includes houses with no provision of piped water inside the house and no flush toilet) and households with any child of school age who is not attending school. See Arrossi 1996, *op. cit.*

health centre in existing buildings, and the area was served by buses which provided connections with other districts of the Metropolitan Area.

The settlement expanded after 1979 into a new section, when the municipal authorities evicted some 200 families from a site located by a stream, because the land was needed for infrastructure works. The municipality levelled a marshy site adjacent to the existent settlement and subdivided it into lots. Lots were provided for the households who were being evicted, and also trucks for the transport of their belongings and recouped building materials from their shacks. Since then, Barrio San Jorge has been divided physically and socially between the old barrio and the new barrio. Both arose from the relocation of groups whose previous homes had been affected by floods, and both were resettled in low lands that were also subject to flooding - although the risk of flooding has diminished in recent years, because the river has been dredged up-stream from the barrio.

#### **b. The situation in 1990**

According to a census undertaken in December 1990, there was about 450 households and 2400 inhabitants in the barrio, giving an average household size of 5.3 persons.<sup>[7]</sup> As is common in settlements of this type, a high proportion of the inhabitants were infants, children and young people (58% were under 20 years old). There were few elderly people (only 6% were over 50 years old). Educational standards were also well below the average for the Metropolitan Area; only 46 percent of the adult population had completed primary school. Although the vast majority of children between 6 and 13 years old attend school, the quality of their learning process was poor, which can be seen in the difficulties that some older pupils face in reading and writing and the frequency with which pupils have to repeat grades. The schools within Barrio San Jorge were appreciated by the adults less for the practical utility of the instruction received and more for the benefits they provide in terms of child care, daily access to meals and occasional health controls.

In regard to employment, the proportion of people employed was high but incomes were found to be very low; 35 percent of the economic active population's incomes did not cover the cost of a basic basket of food. The high proportion of economically active people was partly due to the incorporation of women and young people in the labour market.

However, data about income levels for one particular point in time does not reveal the broader context where most household heads do not have stable incomes and depend on earnings in cash and kind from outside the formal sector. Virtually all the economically active population faced precarious working conditions and unstable income sources. Despite the many studies from other settlements which show a relationship between wage levels, sex (with men earning more than women) and educational level, no such association was found for the inhabitants of Barrio San Jorge.<sup>[8]</sup>

Interviews with a small sample of residents showed that households' main item of expenditure was food - followed by public transport, bottled gas (for cooking), clothes and

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<sup>7</sup> Household is defined by those people living under the same roof.

<sup>8</sup> Monthly incomes were higher for men; however if incomes per hour worked are considered, income levels are almost the same for women and men.

housing improvements. The low income levels provide obvious constraints in the satisfaction of these priorities for many neighbours; indeed, a reduction in the quality and quantity of their diets represent the only possibility they face in reducing costs.

Ensuring that the young people (especially the boys) begin work early was considered the best option for reducing their exposure to criminal activities, drugs and street gangs. There was (and still is) considerable rivalry between street gangs based in the old and the new sections of the barrio. Most residents and houses in Barrio San Jorge have suffered robberies. The responses are limited to individual actions, such as keeping children indoors and avoiding leaving the home alone - both measures which reinforce social isolation and disintegration.

The environmental and housing conditions in Barrio San Jorge were very precarious in 1990. As Map 1 shows, the settlement is located by a river (the Reconquista). This river is heavily polluted by untreated industrial effluents. The northern and southern borders are ditches that are meant to drain water towards the river but they are usually full of household garbage. Vacant lots where garbage is heaped surrounds the site. The foul smell produced by sewage, rotting waste and stagnant waters and the presence of insects and rodents produce a depressing picture.

Most of the land site (87 percent) is owned by the Province of Buenos Aires and the Municipality of San Fernando; the remainder belongs to a private owner (see Map 1). The irregular land tenure and the inhabitants' previous experience of evictions have discouraged them from improving their houses. Two thirds of all dwellings require considerable improvements. Two fifths of all housing had more than two persons per room.

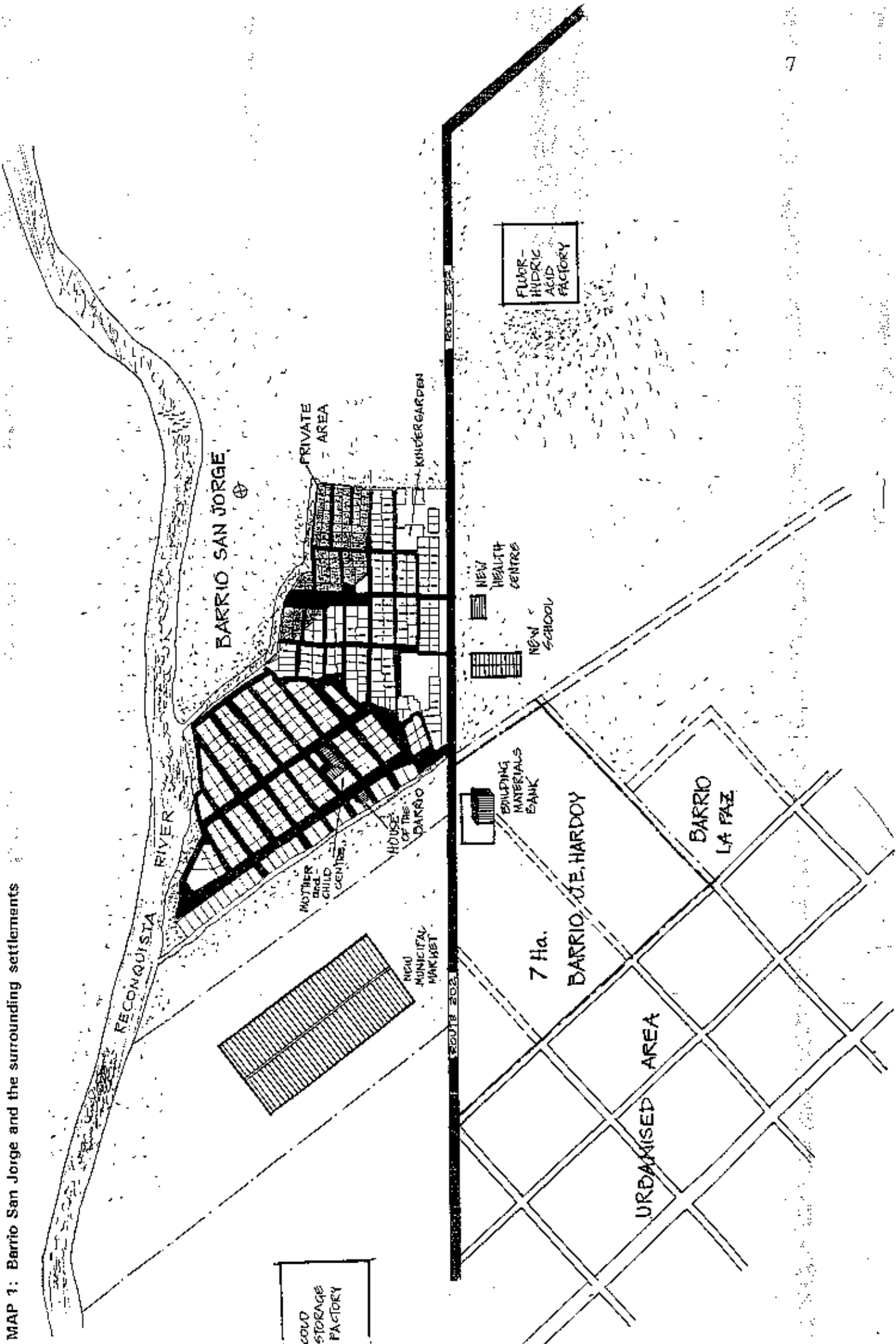
The provision of basic infrastructure and services was very inadequate in 1990. According to the census in that year, 55 percent of the settlers used public standpipes that drew its water from a pipeline extended from a nearby cold storage factory, and 39 percent had connected their house to this pipeline. But this statistic does not present the whole picture since the factory provided water for a couple of hours a day and during the summer, water pressure usually diminished to the point where the pipe only provided a very small trickle. The households tried various ways of improving the water supply. Some collected water as early as possible when the demand was lower. It was also common to draw water direct from the horizontal pipes (which meant less reduction in pressure) -although this required the digging of holes in their courtyards in which to put buckets. Many connections to the pipe leaked - and when pressure within the piped system dropped, the water in the system was often contaminated with infiltration from waste waters around the pipe. The amount and frequency of diarrhoea and intestinal infections were a proof of precarious infrastructure and the poor quality of piped 'drinking' water.

Regarding sanitation, there was no sewer system. Most households (68 percent) used cesspits while 23 percent had latrines. Since the groundwater table was only 0.50 m below the surface in some areas of the settlement, sewage was not absorbed by the cesspits but ended up in the groundwater.

The barrio's internal roads were often inaccessible to motor vehicles. As Barrio San Jorge did not have drains and as 70 percent of the settlement lacked paved paths and streets, on rainy days these become very muddy. This was used as a pretext for police cars, fire engines,



MAP 1: Barrio San Jorge and the surrounding settlements



ambulances and trucks that empty cess-pools or latrines not entering the settlement. Only a quarter of households - those that lived along the main road - had their household garbage collected. The rest of the population used the ditches and the vacant sites around the settlements as the place in which to dispose of their garbage. But even those living in the area covered by the collection service could not rely on set days and timetables - so their garbage had to be left at collection points within the settlement where this often remained for several days before it was collected.

Both the precarious environmental and housing conditions contribute to serious health problems. Acute respiratory diseases were the most common health problem and particularly affected children up to six years of age. The incidence and severity of these diseases were exacerbated by the dampness of the site, due to the proximity of the Reconquista river and poor surface drainage and also to the poor quality of the housing. High levels of ambient air pollution from nearby factories was also a serious problem. Diarrhoeal diseases were frequent, especially during the summer, largely as a result of the shortage and poor quality of the available water, the lack of provision for sanitation, drainage and washing and uncollected garbage. Other infectious diseases such as scabies were also common. The high level of overcrowding also helped the spread of most infectious diseases.

The inhabitants of Barrio San Jorge probably under-estimated the scale of their health problems. One reason for this is that the inhabitants understand their health problems more according to their outcomes than to the specific health problem - for instance the death of a family member, a difficult delivery or loss of employment due to illnesses - or any other illness or injury that may keep them away from school or work. Given the limited resources they have to hand and the very poor housing conditions, there was not much margin left for preventive measures.

#### IV. THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN BARRIO SAN JORGE

##### a. Introduction

A continuous process of development which began in Barrio San Jorge ten years ago, has involved the participation of members of the community, government agencies (from municipal and provincial levels), NGOs and private sector enterprises in various actions, initiatives and projects that seek to improve living conditions. This process can be described in three periods. The first covers 1987 to 1989 when several small initiatives were carried out and the support team was first formed. The second covers the period 1990 to 1992 when an integrated programme was launched with the participation of various stakeholders. The third covers the period 1992 to 1996 when certain initiatives reached the whole of Barrio San Jorge and expanded into new settlements. Box 1 gives a summary of some of the important dates in this process.

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### Box 1: Important Dates in the Development Process in Barrio San Jorge

#### In the beginning (1987-1989)

September 1987	Beginning construction of the mother and child centre
June 1989	The Netherlands Save The Children provides a flexible grant for three years.
August 1989	Some women organised the sewing and knitting workshop
November 1989	Purchase of The House of the Barrio as a community centre

#### The Integral Improvement Programme (1990-1992)

March 1990	The idea of an inter-institutional programme for integral improvement of San Jorge is submitted to the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires.
August 1990	An Agreement for Co-operation is signed by the provincial and municipal government and IIED-América Latina. The first elections are held in the barrio to constitute a Neighbourhood Commission.
July 1991	The Commission develops into the Co-operative <i>Nuestra Tierra</i> .
September 1991	Changes in the composition of the provincial government and end of its involvement in the Barrio San Jorge programme.
May 1992	The Municipality donates a seven hectare site to lower density in the barrio
September 1992	The provincial government earmarks the site occupied by the barrio for the actual settlers.

#### Scaling-up (1993-1996)

August 1993	Beginning of a pilot test for a water supply and sewerage system.
July 1994	The building materials bank starts operating.
October 1994	The mayor of the municipality and his cabinet resign.
December 1994	The water supply and sewerage system is extended to whole barrio
December 1995	The new municipal authorities supports the work in Barrio San Jorge and its expansion into other settlements.
February 1996	The now privatized water company Aguas Argentinas takes on the responsibility for the maintenance of the water and sewerage system.
October 1996	The National Government approves finance to implement a housing programme in San Jorge and in 4 more settlements

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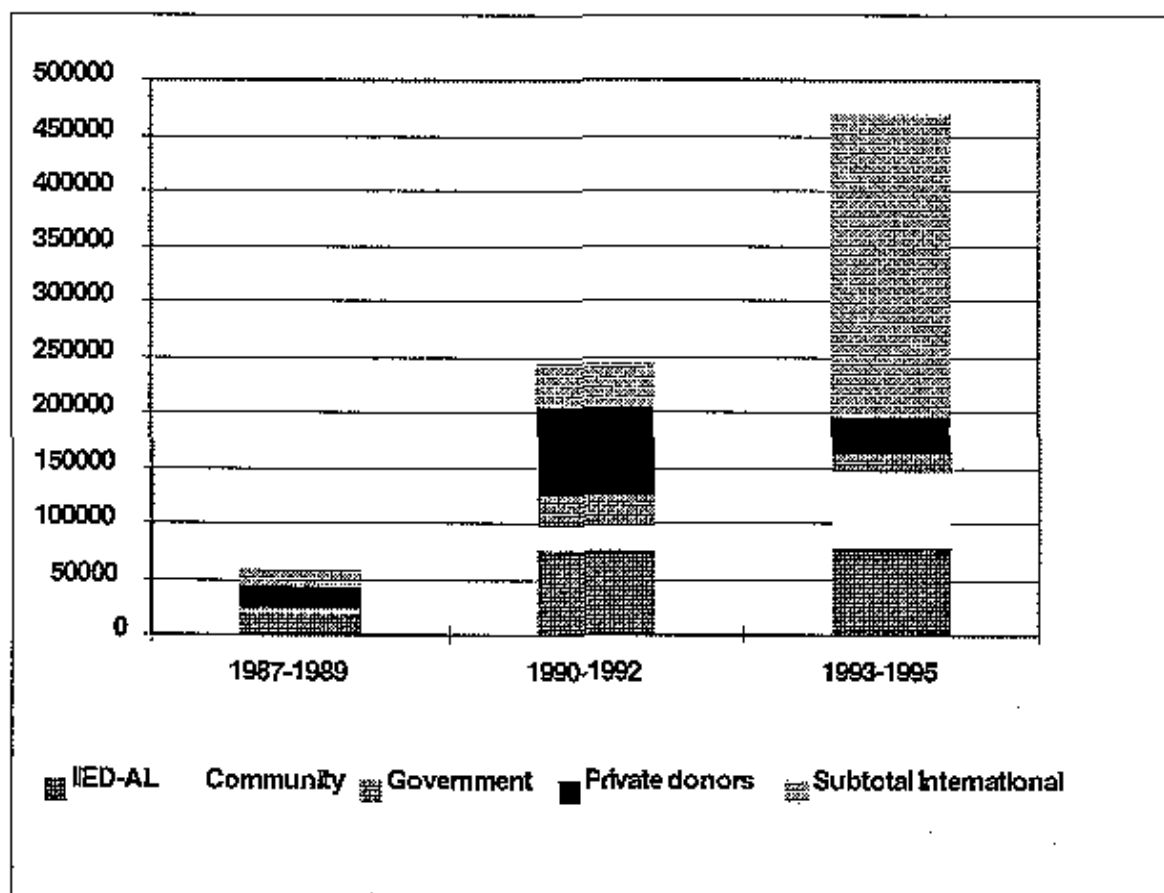
This whole process has had a total budget from external sources over the ten years of U\$771,137. Of this, 57 percent was provided by national sources and 43 percent by international donors. Two points are worth highlighting. The first is the relatively minor

contribution of government agencies which in total contributed only 11 percent of the funding from external sources. The second is the growth in the volume of external financing; the amount of funding increased fourfold from the first to the second stage, and almost doubled from the second stage to the last one (See Table 1 and Figure 1).

**Table 1: Sources of Funding, 1987-1995 (US\$)**

SOURCES	1987-1989	1990-1992	1993-1995	TOTAL
IIED-América Latina	20,000	74,700	79,000	173,700
Community	2,370	21,660	68,000	92,030
Government	1,705	28,950	17,500	48,155
Private donors	19,872	78,500	30,500	128,872
Sub-total; national	43,947	203,810	195,000	442,757
Sub-total; international	15,300	40,950	272,130	328,380
TOTAL	59,247	244,760	467,130	771,137

**Figure 1: The growth in external funding and the main sources, 1987-1995 (US\$)**



#### **b. In the beginning (1987-1989)**

In 1987, after almost seven years of meetings between residents from Barrio San Jorge and members of the local catholic parish, a decision was reached to build a mother and child centre. Such a centre had been a long cherished aim of the neighbourhood's informal mothers' association. This would have the double purpose of improving child health, nutrition and development and allowing mothers to go out to work, since the new centre would care for their children during working hours.

An architect who lived in the parish and had a long experience in the management of construction projects was asked by Caritas, a charity associated to the catholic church, to plan and co-ordinate the construction of the centre. Most of the people in Barrio San Jorge viewed the construction of the child centre with apathy or with scepticism, as they did not believe it would be materialised. They had listened to too many political, religious and university groups enquiring about their needs - including many that also made promises that were never fulfilled.

Initial financial support for the construction of a first stage of the mother and child centre were provided by Caritas, with additional funds received some months later from the Canadian Embassy and from private Argentine donors. This permitted the purchase of basic equipment for the centre and the start of a second construction stage. In 1988, the centre received the first group of 10 children.

This new centre appeared as a receptive institution where comments and proposals from those living in the neighbourhood were encouraged and taken into account. Given that some mothers now had more time for work because their children were looked after in the new centre, they proposed to organise a sewing and knitting workshop to improve their skills and to help them develop a new source of income. The initiative was supported by the German embassy, and 24 women started to take lessons.

At that time other initiatives were taking place in the settlement promoted by FLACSO (the Latin American Faculty of Social Science) and the Provincial Government. As part of an action-research project, FLACSO was involved in the extension of water supply from the nearby factory. The initiative was supported by what was, at this time, the national public water company, which provided the building materials and contributed most of the labour. The system did not reach the old section of Barrio San Jorge, because the households there did not organize and supply the labour that was required.

The Government of the Province of Buenos Aires had launched a social assistance and health programme in several settlements including Barrio San Jorge. This included new methods, such as the participation of neighbours in actions related with community health care. The programme was heavily staffed but poorly funded, which constrained its implementation.

During 1989, Argentina underwent a severe economic crisis and social and political instability. This included hyperinflation which reached to 200 percent per month. The crisis also provoked assaults on supermarkets and hastened the change in government from that of President Alfonsín (who had been elected as the first President after the return to democracy in 1983) to President Menem. Different initiatives were undertaken in low

income settlements as responses to the emergency. Communal ('popular') kitchens were set up by public and private institutions. In Barrio San Jorge, they were organised by the provincial programme and implemented by residents. A popular store was also established in the house of one of the residents to sell basic foodstuff at reduced prices.

The emergency measures revealed the difficulties that external agencies have in working in low income settlements that lack a representative, organized community organization. The NGO that sought to support popular stores set conditions that required the store to be run by a legally constituted community organisation. The management of the store had to be allocated to a resident who had the papers of an inactive community organisations that some years previously had tried to make improvements in the settlement. In the past, this organization had consisted of one or two people who made profits from the monetary contributions of residents. In this instance, the store became a short lived family business, and another negative experience in the already eroded social capital of the community. The sewing workshop suffered a similar fate, when a local NGO was called to support the activity. An experienced member of this organisation denied support because the group of women who requested the sewing workshop were not a consolidated organisation; in contrast, funding was provided to a group run by the workshop's teacher in her neighbourhood, which presented more guarantees for the success expected by the NGO and the international aid agency.

In 1989, The Netherlands Save the Children charity provided a donation of U\$ 36,000 - \$12,000 a year over three years. The use of the grant was not restricted to carrying out a specific project in any sector. It also did not suffer from the condition so often attached to grants that it had to be spent on capital costs only - with none of it being available for recurrent costs. The grant was to encourage a development process through the support of community initiatives. The flexible conditions of the grant allowed support to be provided for three part time professionals: an architect and two social workers (who were also members of the health centre). This team supported an steady expansion of the mother and child centre's activities and infrastructure and promoted the participation of children's families in some of these activities. Other initiatives supported by the team were the training of women in the workshop, and the improvement of streets through the construction of pavements using waste material from a nearby factory.

The funds were also used to purchase the right to use a lot within Barrio San Jorge, close to the Mother and Child Centre, which had a derelict building on it. This building was repaired by men involved in some of the ongoing initiatives, and used initially for the women's workshop. The installation of the settlement's first public telephone in this building attracted many residents who 'found' a house that could be used as a common place for their meetings. In this way, the slow process of developing what came to be known as the 'House of the Barrio' started.

In these years, the different groups working in Barrio San Jorge slowly came to an understanding of the need to work more together. Different external groups working in a low income settlement often regard each other as competitors and avoid working together. Slowly, an inter-institutional multidisciplinary permanent forum developed with members of our team, FLACSO, the health centre, the school, the kindergarten, the child centre and a religious group. This group included architects, social workers, doctors, sociologists, psychologists, teachers and priests. They shared their experiences and their professional

and institutional approaches. The inter-institutional network promoted learning and facilitated the co-ordination of initiatives and the means to ensure that the resources from different initiatives and institutions complemented each other. It also created the conditions to launch joint initiatives, such as the publication of a bi-monthly bulletin. This bulletin included local news, letters from the neighbours, and useful information about health care and environmental improvement. It also was used to report on the progress of different initiatives, and to outline future activities.

By late 1989, the inhabitants of Barrio San Jorge had a diverse range of initiatives in which they could become involved. But their participation was subject to their own estimation as to the benefits they could obtain by participating. When community activities meant immediate and tangible improvements in their material conditions of life, many neighbours took part. But where there were no immediate, tangible benefits, they were reluctant to participate. This was the case in the initiative to improve the streets. When a truck brought materials to build pavements, neighbours organised themselves quickly and worked to improve their street. However, when they were invited to meetings for planning the activity, only few people helped. At this stage, the activities supported by our team reached only a limited number of neighbours, and some of the main problems of the population were not being addressed.

### c. The Integral Improvement Programme, 1990-1992

*Dice que dice y no dice. Hace que hace y no hace.*

*(They say that they say but they do not. They pretend that they do when they do nothing)*

*Divididos*

In early 1990, a member of IIED-América Latina's team was asked by the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires to help on the formulation of a decentralised programme. The municipality of San Fernando was persuaded to take part in the implementation of the provincial programme, which sought to improve housing conditions in poor settlements. In August, an Agreement for Co-operation was signed by the provincial and municipal government and IIED-América Latina to co-ordinate actions aiming at an integrated development of Barrio San Jorge with the participation of community. As is usual in Argentina, this political agreement did not include any plan of activities, goals, or schedules. Nor did it specify what contributions each party would make - but it expressed a general commitment and a broad distribution of responsibilities. The regularisation of the land tenure and the transfer of property rights to the occupants was chosen as the first priority of the programme. Achieving this depended largely on the performance of the provincial government.

In our work in Barrio San Jorge, we had sought not to raise false expectations - and had avoided becoming involved in actions associated with the activities of political parties. This was also consistent with the resistance of most inhabitants in the barrio to participate in any proposal where *'hay política'* (there are politics). The inhabitants of the barrio had a long and painful experience of being manipulated by politicians - to gain their support but in exchange for promises that were often unfulfilled. Although an agreement between IIED-América Latina - with whom the support team had merged<sup>9</sup> - and the government implied

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<sup>9</sup> The team began as an independent unit. In 1989, it became convenient to integrate it into the Instituto Internacional de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo - IIED-América Latina.

the raising of expectations which might not be fulfilled (and over whose fulfilment neither the inhabitants nor IIED-América Latina had control), we decided to take the risk. The regularisation of land tenure was a long cherished priority among the inhabitants. It, in turn, could encourage large investments by the inhabitants in their home and their participation in neighbourhood wide improvement initiatives. And given the commitment of the provincial government, it seemed feasible.

The integral improvement Programme of Barrio San Jorge was launched in an assembly held in the settlement. This assembly had the largest number of inhabitants of any meeting in recent years (150 people). Members of the government required the organisation of the community and the creation of a formal legally recognised entity in order to integrate the Programme and fulfill the necessary procedures to achieve land tenure. Elections were held in Barrio San Jorge for the first time. All residents voted for candidates in their block. As a result, 16 neighbours were democratically elected to represent the interests of whole community. They constituted a Neighbourhood's Commission, which would be the first organisation committed to prioritise the neighbours' main needs over the interests of external political, religious and aid groups.

Although the Commission arose not so much as a community initiative but more in response to a demand from the Government, most elected candidates and representatives were people who had taken part in activities supported by the institutions working in Barrio San Jorge. This Commission formalised a process of building up community organisation which had been on progress through those small, continuous and diversified initiatives during the previous three years. In Barrio San Jorge, the community organisation was neither the result of a pure bottom-up process controlled by the population nor a top-down decision of external agents, but rather a combination of the two.

Members of the Commission and staff from provincial and local government, IIED-AL and other institutions working in Barrio San Jorge took part in a one-week workshop on participatory neighbourhood development. The workshop was run by the German government's technical assistance agency (GTZ), which applied the ZOPP methodology to elaborate an integral development plan for the settlement. Among a large number of ambitious goals set for the Programme, priority was given to the improvement of infrastructure, basic services and environment and, in particular, the transfer of landownership from the government to the inhabitants.

Some months later, the Commission developed into the Co-operative *Nuestra Tierra* (Our land). Its name expressed the reason it had been founded and its main concern. The Co-operative obtained massive support from the inhabitants, since 85% of the families were members and most began to pay a minimum quota towards its running costs. Both the emerging community organisation and our team put most of their efforts and hopes in land transfer.

The Co-operative and IIED-América Latina undertook several activities to support the legal and physical regularisation of the site, such as the control of plot sales, a land and a topographical survey, a study of housing quality, and an analysis of zones which needed to be reorganised prior to being transferred. The emphasis on land regularisation became one of the main strengths of the Co-operative for motivating the community. But it was also one of its main weakness, as time passed and the hopes of achieving the transfer of land were discouraged by the endless bureaucratic procedures.



The main constraint against land regularisation was that the site occupied by Barrio San Jorge was under the minimum height required by the Hydraulic Provincial Direction for the protection of permanent settlements from flooding. The requirement was based on old analyses, and there was no record of any adjustment due to the improvements from the dredging of the river and other infrastructure works. In the last decade, Barrio San Jorge suffered only one flood and this had not affected the settlement significantly.

Another major constraint was the lack of commitment by the provincial and municipal governments to respect the Agreement for Co-operation that had been signed in 1990. The civil servants responsible for taking the lead in the transfer of land ownership did not have a complete picture about the necessary procedures and the large number of technical, administrative and legal requirements. The slow progress achieved towards the transfer of land ownership to the inhabitants was the result of constant pressure from the Co-operative and IIED-América Latina. However, the effectiveness of such pressure was limited by the large amounts of time needed to keep this pressure up and the distance (80 km) between Barrio San Jorge and the provincial government offices.

Although the intended goal was not met, the Co-operative and IIED-América Latina accomplished one important advance. The provincial government earmarked the site occupied by Barrio San Jorge for housing programmes for the actual settlers, which virtually eliminated the risk of eviction. Nevertheless, the failure to complete the transfer of landownership eroded much of the trust of the community in the Co-operative, and also left a heavy burden of frustration among its members.

During this period, the Co-operative had begun to be recognised by most inhabitants as the institution of reference for the needs and problems that could not be addressed by individual households. The Co-operative became involved in many every-day activities, such as the repair of the water pump, the permanent demand to the nearby factory to not interrupt the supply of water, or the provision of bulbs for public lighting. Other initiatives sought to improve living and environmental conditions, including campaigns for garbage collection, the construction of wire baskets in which households could place their garbage for collection by garbage trucks, and constant pressure on the municipal government to ensure that the waste trucks came to collect the garbage and to provide the machines to clean ditches. IIED-América Latina supported these and some other actions through a daily presence in the settlement and continuous work with the community to promote the active participation of its members.

Since 1990, the child centre has been self-financing. A campaign to obtain one scholarship for each child (US\$ 120 per year) had a quick and positive response from Argentine donors. The continuous support from the Fundación Antorchas and other private donors has allowed the centre to increase its capacity and the quality of its assistance. The building has been gradually and constantly extended up to provide the necessary infrastructure for 100 children. The centre also expanded its activities, by giving additional training to some 70 pupils identified by the local primary school due to difficulties in their learning.

The inter-institutional network continued to prepare and publish the bulletin and launched a programme for children and adolescents. This included three activities: a sewing course for girls, training in football for boys and a workshop on creativity and artistic expression. The activities aimed at supporting initiatives proposed by children and young adolescents aged from 8 to 16

years - and this is an age group who were usually left out of community priorities.

All activities supported by IIED-América Latina did not follow a fixed list of priorities but rather they were implemented according to the opportunity of securing funds. The long term development planning of the Integral Improvement Programme was not put into practice because of the mismatch between the activities identified and the resources available to carry them out. However, the attention given to many small scale initiatives needed a broader framework, otherwise they could have fragmented the impact. This strategy was essential for not discontinuing every action, because when some activities run out of funds, others would start or continue.

#### **d. Scaling-up (1993-1996)**

From 1991 onwards, IIED-América Latina increased the search for funds to sustain ongoing activities and launch new initiatives in Barrio San Jorge. A large number of contacts with local and international donors were made, and several different project proposals were submitted to different donor agencies. In 1992, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) approved an action-research project for the study of the relationship between health and habitat in low income urban settlements. The project had three main activities: a diagnosis on the settlement's habitat and health conditions; the introduction of changes in the habitat through the implementation of a social intervention; and an assessment of how health conditions changed or could change as a result of the intervention.

Barrio San Jorge was selected as the place where the project was to be implemented. Based on a participative health diagnosis and the priorities identified with the community during the summer 1992-1993, a decision was taken to improve the water supply and sewerage system. The limited funds allocated for the social undertaking (US\$ 10,000) could only reach a group of 25 families. The strategy devised by IIED-América Latina was to use the intervention as a pilot test for a new water supply and sanitation system that could later be extended to the rest of the settlement.

The undertaking meant a difficult technical and social challenge for the Co-operative and the NGO. The lack of a reliable source of potable water and a high level of groundwater - meant the need to apply innovative technologies for both water supply and sewerage. The water supply required to use a double system: one system connected to the existing network, which would provide small volumes of potable water subject to the operation by the factory; and another which could draw on more readily available ground water sources that were too salty for drinking and cooking but which could be used for house cleaning, laundry and personal hygiene. The sewage system was based on the combination of cesspits within each household (that retained the solids) and a small bore sewage pipe network.

After long delays as a result of technical and social problems and climate conditions, the undertaking was completely successfully. The pilot test provided several lessons. One of them was that the priorities of the inhabitants change in response to changing circumstances. Soon after the end of the summer the problems related with deficient water supply decreased, and when several heavy rainfalls made paths and roads muddy, the target group shifted their priority to build sidewalks instead of pipelines. The initiative was added up to the sanitation works and financed with contributions from the inhabitants. This also taught us that even the poorest households could afford small repayments, if financial conditions for loans or for repaying

capital improvements were adequate to their scarce saving or income capacity.

In 1993, the UK charity Homeless International provided financial support for establishing a building materials bank. Its purpose was to support housing improvement by selling materials at lower prices and having the materials available and closeby. One of the constraints that the inhabitants faced in building and improving their homes was not only the cost of the materials but also transporting the materials to their house site. The building materials bank could also remain open during evenings and week-ends when conventional building material suppliers were closed. The building materials bank also provided the inhabitants with materials on credit and technical training and advice in design and construction.

Despite the broad consensus between the Co-operative, IIED-América Latina and the external donor, Homeless International, about the importance of working in partnership with local government, this project showed the limitations of working with certain sectors of government at certain times. The construction of a store for the materials on a site just next door to Barrio San Jorge could not be begun until the site was cleaned, filled and levelled. This needed heavy machinery, and the municipality was to provide this. After a long period of delay, during which much lip service was paid to the need for local government participation, IIED-América Latina had to take over responsibility for this task (and in so doing eat into the capital of the project).

The operation of the building materials bank between 1994 and 1996 has contributed much to the improvement of 180 houses in Barrio San Jorge. It has also helped low income households improve their homes in other low income settlements in the area - as the use of the building materials bank was not confined to the inhabitants of Barrio San Jorge. The high rates of repayment achieved on the credits provided for building material purchase confirmed that when financial conditions are suitable, poor households can engage in credit schemes and a substantial parts of the costs can be recovered. In addition, the support given by the staff responsible of the bank, and the availability of a structure to store buildings materials was also invaluable for storing the equipment and materials needed for extending the water supply and small bore sewers to most of Barrio San Jorge.

In this period, two external interventions in Barrio San Jorge revealed the real interest of some members of local and provincial government. The first was the purchase of private land by the Municipality of San Fernando. A small part of Barrio San Jorge is on land owned by a private land owner and the municipality purchased half of this from the owner at a cost that was five times higher than the market price. The second was the provincial government contracting private companies to construct new buildings for the local school and health centre. Even though the existing buildings required substantial repairs, the new ones meant higher investment and the product obtained had lower quality. Other members of government had a different approach to Barrio San Jorge, as was shown by the donation to the Co-operative of seven hectares, right next to Barrio San Jorge (one the opposite side of the main road).

Also in 1992, after a long negotiation, the German agency MISEREOR donated U\$ 131,000 for the provision of water and sewers to the 325 houses which occupied public land. IIED-América Latina and the Co-operative had to overcome the doubts of the aid agency to support a project in a settlement which did not show solid signs for success. Barrio San Jorge could not present real guarantees such as land titles to demonstrate the permanence of the settlement. In addition, it was acknowledged that the site was at risk from flooding and that there was not complete consensus among the inhabitants to encourage the necessary massive involvement of

community.

If the local government had supported the project, this also would have provided an important justification for the aid agency to give support to Barrio San Jorge. But once again, the local authorities' commitment to supporting the barrio proved volatile. In mid 1994, when the Co-operative and IIED-América Latina were making the final preparations before beginning the implementation of the project, a private company unexpectedly appeared in Barrio San Jorge, and started building a water network. The company had carried out similar works in 115 low-income settlements throughout the Metropolitan Area, as part of a national programme. Since it was proving impossible to work with local and provincial government at that time, IIED-América Latina withdrew from the Agreement of Cooperation.

Four months later, it became evident that the private company's water network would remain unfinished. As such, it simply followed many other works sponsored by this national programme - where in the vast majority of settlements where the networks have been laid, they never worked. IIED-América Latina and the Co-operative launched 'their' project.<sup>10</sup> By this time, two events took place that were to have a great influence on the work in the barrio. The first was the fact that the Mayor and his cabinet had to resign as a result of allegations of corruption, and a different internal sector of the same political party took office. This sector of the political party had given more support to the work of IIED-América Latina and Co-operative. The second was that the newly privatised water company Aguas Argentinas was extending the potable water network to an area close to Barrio San Jorge. IIED-América Latina and the Co-operative had begun negotiating with the company two years previously, when it was still a government company. Given the fact that the water supply network that the Cooperative and IIED-América Latina were to install would operate much more easily if it could be supplied by the conventional water distribution system, increasing pressure was brought to bear on the water company to extend their water system to Barrio San Jorge.

However, initially, there was no response from Aguas Argentinas - but even so, the project was launched. Unlike most community initiatives in which the inhabitants were invited to meetings in the House of the Barrio, in this case the Co-operative and IIED-América Latina went out to meet them. The strategy stemmed from the idea that if the community did not reach out to the community organisation, the organisation should reach out to the community. Open meetings were held in all streets of the neighbourhood. At these meetings, members of the Co-operative and IIED-América Latina explained technical aspects of the project and proposed a form of organisation for the implementation, based on the lessons provided by the pilot test. Many inhabitants overcame their fear and reticence about taking part in a community activity by coming to those meetings. When some of them expressed scepticism and mistrust about the project, meaning that it could be a new unfulfilled 'promise', we sought to persuade them with the concrete evidences we had: 25 houses having access to water and sanitation, hundreds of pipes and cesspits stored in the building material bank, a group of hired workers laying the main pipeline, and many years of permanence in the settlement, sharing not only achievements but also frustrations. We made no promises. The success of the project depended essentially on joining community forces and working together.

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<sup>10</sup> According to the company's architect responsible for the works in Barrio San Jorge, in only 5 settlements had networks been completed by neighbours and were in use. In the remaining 110 settlements where that company intervened, the systems have not been finished and were practically abandoned.

Although there were no certainty that the service would provide potable or salt water, a first group of neighbours decided to take the initiative in their street. The following week-end, three groups of neighbours laid the pipeline in their streets. From that initial groups, the impulse spread all over the settlement. Many streets had to postpone their contribution to the installation of the pipes, as the technicians were not able to assist more than 3 streets at the same time. With such a community mobilisation, it was possible to provide pipelines for 250 houses in 3 months. This should be compared to the pilot test when it had taken 6 months to provide a pipeline for 25 houses. Given the lack of any decision by the water company Aguas Argentinas, IIED-América Latina contracted out a company to drill a well from which to draw (salty) water for the piped water network. The work became unnecessary, one week later, when Aguas Argentinas confirmed that an extension of the piped potable water system would reach Barrio San Jorge.

Since April 1995, most of Barrio San Jorge's inhabitants have running potable water within their home. Many have started to improve their bathrooms and kitchens, to buy sanitary devices, and to fix tiles on the floor and walls. There used to be dozens of buckets in evidence in and around most houses - and now they are no longer there. It also seems the health problems have diminished considerably. According to doctors in the local health centre, health problems associated with poor quality and inadequate water and back pains associated with fetching water, have decreased sharply. According to teachers from local school, the children now go to school in better hygienic conditions.

The involvement of the new elected local government and the private water company in the last phase of the project allowed an agreement to be reached for ensuring the maintenance of the network. Aguas Argentinas took over the operation, maintenance and repair of the system, while the families have to pay this agency at a fixed rate. This was the first experience for this company to work in partnership with a low-income community, an NGO and a local government. The firm also acknowledged the merits of the innovative technology applied within Barrio San Jorge and it is currently applying the same methods in other low-income settlements. The national government also awarded the project with the second prize out of 600 cases presented in a competition on social innovation.

During 1995, IIED-América Latina and Co-operative continued to work on some ongoing activities, such as regular actions to improve waste disposal and collection and fund raising. The building material bank has reached a volume of sales and credit repayment that almost covers its operating costs. It also obtained financial support for launching housing credits for households who are building new houses on the 7 hectares donated by the municipality. This site is being used for the relocation of families who occupy private land in an area identified by an environmental diagnosis of the Barrio San Jorge as in great risk.

#### **e. Expanding the work outside Barrio San Jorge**

Work is now underway in locations other than Barrio San Jorge. This includes developing the seven hectare site just across the main road from San Jorge where some households from the barrio are being relocated. It also includes support to initiatives in other low income settlements nearby.

For developing the new seven hectare site, the households who are to be relocated formed a commission which works within the Co-operative to promote their relocation. In a public assembly, they named their future settlement 'Jorge Enrique Hardoy', in honour to the

founder of IIED-América Latina and its president up to his death in 1993. The plan of activities consists in filling and levelling the site and gradually relocating families. Some families have already moved to the new site to protect it from occupation by other settlers. Eleven families who had invaded this site some years previously and had lived there ever since were relocated and incorporated to the plan. A house has been built as a prototype to be replicated in the design and construction of new houses.

IIED-América Latina's community support programme is now drawing on its experience in Barrio San Jorge and in Barrio Jorge Hardoy to develop comparable support programmes to other low income settlements in the area. The Integral Improvement Programme for Barrio San Jorge is becoming the Integral Improvement Programme for five Neighbourhoods in San Fernando.<sup>11</sup> The objective of this programme is to improve their populations' living conditions and their organisation and participation in community initiatives and projects in different sectors. The Programme also seeks to show the possibility and utility of working in partnership with state agencies, the private sector and organisations of civil society. In October 1996, the Social Development Secretary - a national state agency - approved finance to implement a housing programme for the five neighbourhoods, which includes the improvement of 1,000 existing houses and the construction of 240 new houses and the provision of a water and sewerage network in Barrio J.E. Hardoy.

## V. LOCATING THE WORK IN SAN JORGE WITHIN BROADER SOCIETAL CHANGES

### a. The constraints on community organization

In 1991, our reflections after four years work in Barrio San Jorge were concerned with some fundamental issues in the life of Barrio San Jorge: the mistrust of the population, the relationship between paternalism and passivity, and the relationship between power and inhibition. When our team began work in Barrio San Jorge, only some neighbours linked to the mother and child centre were interested in developing new initiatives. The vast majority of residents were reluctant to get involved in any proposal from a group of neighbours or outsiders for the improvement of their settlement. Many of them were resigned to survive through strategies based on family or close friends income generating activities, and any eventual support from government (mainly food supply).

These attitudes were rooted in general and particular historical circumstances. Since the 1940s, the attitude of many urban poor in Argentina has been to expect the state to solve their basic needs. Good personal connections with political leaders and political committees were the way to solve many problems: obtaining a bed in a hospital, a seat in a classroom, or corrugated iron sheets. This attitude was promoted by the state and also by the church and by private charities. Politicians have long seen in these approaches a way of securing votes and advancing their political careers. This 'social welfare' orientation with the provision of 'welfare' determined and implemented by external agencies and the paternalistic approach of those with political power undermined the organisation of residents in low income settlements. It also helped encourage the development of an

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<sup>11</sup> The five neighbourhoods are San Jorge, San Martín, Presidente Perón, La Paz and J. E. Hardoy. San Martín, Presidente Perón and La Paz have a population of approximately 1,300 families and are also located within a kilometre of a major road and by the Reconquista River; they also have conditions that are similar to those described for Barrio San Jorge.

attitude among many people to avoid their responsibilities and try to benefit freely from the efforts of others without getting involved. The importance of political patronage on low income groups possibilities of obtaining certain key resources or services was further increased from the 1960s, as the possibilities of social advancement started to decrease for most Argentinians.

The particular history of Barrio San Jorge is closely linked to the hierarchic and paternalistic attitude and activities of a priest from the church of Antioquia. His attitude towards the inhabitants - sometimes positive but frequently negative - gradually destroyed any attempt by the community to get organised. This priest lived in the settlement for twenty years. He had close links with an senior functionary in the last elected government of Peron and of his wife (1973-1976) and with members of the armed forces during the last military dictatorship (1976-83). Conscious of the political support he had, he ran Barrio San Jorge as a military camp. He even imposed a night-time curfew. He decided which families could come to live in the settlement, and which families had to leave, because he judged their behaviour to be at fault. He decided when streets should be cleaned and houses should be painted. He even managed to change the original name of the Barrio, which was renamed after him, for he was called Father Jorge.

In 1983, the return to democracy brought a national government which began the slow and painful process of rebuilding the country's representative institutions. In the municipality of San Fernando, the elected major was a charismatic local politician, who was re-elected twice. During 12 years, almost all senior positions were filled by political appointees who reinforced the paternalistic assistance oriented approach. Some of Barrio San Jorge's inhabitants tried to launch different initiatives to improve living conditions in the settlement and raised funds from residents, but few achieved satisfactory results. The mistrust of the population grew, since most people assumed that anyone who wanted to encourage a community initiative had hidden interests and would profit from people's contributions,

Since 1990, Argentina has been undergoing a process of substantial changes, characterised by the dissolution of the paternalistic state and the adoption of the mainstream macroeconomic policies of the time. The reform of the state has been backed by the largest number of decrees ever sanctioned by an elected government. In 1995, two more records were achieved: the level of inflation was among the lowest world-wide and the rate of unemployment reached the highest level ever recorded within Argentina. In a context of economic recession, the support to low income sectors through individual political patronage is diminishing, as the budgets managed by decentralised local governments also diminish. And the struggle for scarce resources is increasing individual responses, fragmentation and social disintegration.

#### **b. Reflecting what has been learnt over the last ten years**

Looking back on our work for ten years in Barrio San Jorge, we realise that our main challenge has been to support the rekindling of community action and organization and in so doing to support the reconstruction of social capital based on the promotion of solidarity and reciprocity between neighbours. The activity of IIED-América Latina in Barrio San Jorge throughout the last decade have maintained one overall objective: to help improve living conditions in Barrio San Jorge by means of the organisation and participation of the inhabitants in a comprehensive development process. This approach implies a questioning of the traditional approaches to poverty reduction in Argentina from governmental and non governmental

organisations, which are generally short term, sectoral and top-down programmes and projects.

Our work in Barrio San Jorge was based on two main strategies: the promotion of a more integrated and long term approach, which builds on continuous and complementary improvements, and the involvement of stakeholders, who were identified as individuals, groups, organisations and institutions, whose interests could be affected by the initiatives undertaken.

The first strategy stemmed from the acknowledgement that the inhabitants of Barrio San Jorge (and other informal settlements) have multiple and diverse needs and problems. Virtually all are rooted in a common cause: poverty. Most are closely inter-related. The development of a more integrated approach to these multiple and diverse needs has not meant the need to implement projects in every sector but to develop an integrated perspective in every initiative in which we were involved. This perspective was based on the recognition of the inter-sectoral nature and effects of all interventions and how their co-ordination can often ensure that they complement and reinforce each other. The building material bank is an example of this approach. This not only supports housing improvement but it was used to give advice about construction techniques and design. It also served to disseminate information about the relationship between habitat and health. It also developed a credit system to allow the inhabitants to purchase materials on credit which helped them learn how to manage credit. As noted already, the building materials warehouse was also essential for storing materials for the water and sewerage project.

One other advantage of having many initiatives in different sectors was the possibility of tapping different funding sources - as many external funders will only consider providing support for particular sectors. This also meant that if one initiative was interrupted, it was possible to continue with others initiatives. Achieving continuity is important for maintaining the community organization. The inhabitants of Barrio San Jorge have experienced several interventions animated by political interests - mostly before a local or provincial election - which after a short period became of little value or useless. The extension of water from the nearby factory, which in part had been carried out because of the political aspirations of its president was an important achievement, but the lack of maintenance of standpipes created drainage problems and pools of stagnant waters. Once, the main street of Barrio San Jorge was filled with soil and levelled - but it was not compacted, so after the first rain it became so muddy that it restricted the use of motor vehicles for several days. The local government had wrongly trusted on the weather forecast, which had announced rains for two days after the elections, instead of two days before. Most such interventions have a short-life working properly, and the inhabitants have to take over the maintenance and repair, despite their limited resources and the difficulties they face in doing so.

The continuity of actions in the long term and the achievement of tangible results have been crucial to the community and its morale. For instance, the construction of the mother and child centre and its further development encouraged a growing interest from small groups of residents who supported the initiative - mostly women - to initiate new activities. Another example is that after groups had laid pipes for water and sewage, several went on to develop sidewalks. The inhabitants of Barrio San Jorge needed support not for one or two development projects but for continuous actions that supported a long term development process.



Our second strategy consisted of working in partnership with the different actors involved in or related with the development process of Barrio San Jorge, i.e. not only community groups but also local and provincial government agencies, other NGOs, the private sector and donors. The interaction with such a wide range of organisations taught us several lessons:

1. No organization is completely inflexible and it is important to establish where and with whom common goals can be developed. The involvement of any institution depends heavily on the particular and variable roles, needs and circumstances of some of their staff. With some organisations, it takes a long time - 10 years in the case of the municipality - for a good working partnership to develop.
2. Working with different organisations required a time-consuming exercise of persuasion, lobbying and bargaining to make compatible different views, rationales and priorities.
3. These negotiations with local actors, although time consuming, produced important results - including results that international donors could not provide. For instance, the long negotiations with the municipality produced the donation of 7 hectares of land adjacent to Barrio San Jorge - where some of the barrio's inhabitants could resettle, to remove houses from the land areas most at risk from flooding and to reduce the density. But at the same time, partnership also implies taking considerable risks and having to bear the consequences when the results were negative, such as the failure to get the land ownership transferred and the frustration this provoked within the inhabitants.
4. Although the development of partnerships with other organizations is important, given the unpredictable performance of some organisations, our experience suggests the need to analyse their costs and benefits. The experience in Barrio San Jorge also shows the need to make alternative provisions for instances where partners do not deliver on their promises. The building materials bank could only be launched, after the plot had been filled and levelled. The provision of a piped water supply and the installation of the sewage system 'had' to follow a list of priorities i.e. to wait until the ownership of the land was transferred. These are two among many possible examples of delays because one partner (in this case the government agency) failed to deliver on its promise - and this brought not only a considerable delay but also an erosion of community and its leaders's motivation.

### **c. The changing nature of participation**

The participation of the community broadened both quantitatively and qualitatively throughout the decade - partly in response to the different approaches taken by IIED-América Latina and partly because of the characteristics of each project. At the outset, when the team working in Barrio San Jorge had a more assistance-oriented approach, participation was based on a limited consultation with the community. When the proposal of some mothers to build a child centre was approved by the church, the group was consulted about their needs and expectations, and two architectural projects were presented for their selection.

Subsequently, at the time of formulating a long-range comprehensive programme for the improvement of the settlement, elected representatives of community took part in the diagnosis of problems, the identification of working objectives and the planning of activities. They also began to become involved in many negotiations with provincial and municipal government, private companies and local donors. In the water supply and sewerage project,

almost all street-based groups within the barrio negotiated with IIED-América Latina for some changes - such as adopting organisation models and systems which matched better their preferences than those proposed by technical staff - as well as providing labour for project implementation.

#### **d. The partnerships with government, donor agencies and other actors**

The partnership with government was constantly changing, with different results achieved with provincial and municipal governments, with different sectors within the same government and the same political party, and with different politicians and civil servants. The tangible benefits achieved as a result of these numerous negotiations have often been much influenced by limitations such as the scarcity of qualified technical personnel, the absence of a broad vision of local problems and the lack of political will among decision-makers. At least up to 1995, the politicians within the local government office were rarely committed to working in Barrio San Jorge, as it was never seen as a worthwhile political goal. Since then, the change in municipal government has been of great importance in accelerating the expansion of the support team's work into other settlements.

The participation of private sector was also variable. Some entrepreneurial groups simply refused to work as partners in the development process of low-income populations. For them, who have so often been associated with power structures, such as civil and military governments and the church, an assistance oriented approach was more functional. Eventual partnerships with recently privatised utility companies had to follow the pace of organisations in process of restructuring, from which disparate results were obtained. A long negotiation to regularise the electric system failed because the company did not comply with what had been previously agreed - the installation of individual electricity meters. By contrast, the intervention of the privatized water and sanitation agency, Aguas Argentinas, allowed the barrio to overcome a conflict that had impeded the supply of water for more than ten years. They provided a water main to an area close to Barrio San Jorge, which in turn enabled the extension of the piped water supply to the settlement. A group of entrepreneurs is currently supporting the process of relocating some families from Barrio San Jorge to Barrio J.E. Hardoy. They have facilitated contacts that allow the households to obtain building materials at lower prices and provided a house prototype. Two of the private donors who support the child centre have provided US\$100,000 and also a financial study on how to implement a revolving credit for housing construction and improvement.

Four aspects are worth noting in regard to the participation of donors. First, the flexibility that most funding agencies permitted in the use of funds according to the variable needs and priorities of community was crucial to carry out several projects in Barrio San Jorge. This room to manoeuvre became indispensable in most projects to make the necessary adjustments to the original proposal. In part, this was due to the long delay between applying for funds and obtaining them - during which priorities changed. Secondly, most financial aid was only provided on the condition that there was a solid community organisation, which would should be able to ensure the achievement of projects' expected results. This requirement that an informal or illegal settlement have a formally constituted and effective community organisation could imply the exclusion from funding of many or indeed most of the low income settlements in Buenos Aires which, like Barrio San Jorge in 1987, had no representative community organization. Thirdly, the support provided to Barrio San Jorge was mostly for short term projects. Only the funds provided by Save the

Children (Netherlands) and Homeless International (UK) were devised to sustain an initiative for more than one year. Despite the advocacy of so many international agencies for sustainable development processes, the negotiations for support for Barrio San Jorge with a wide range of donor agencies reveals the extent to which aid is 'projectized'. By and large the aid given to Barrio San Jorge mismatched the continuity required to generate a sustainable development process. The discontinuity of aid had to be offset by a permanent concern by IIED-América Latina about fund raising - and this also is very time consuming and was rarely acknowledged by agencies. Our team has never come across an agency willing to finance fund-raising. Covering the staff costs of funding raising usually has to be fund with hidden spending from the budgets allocated to projects. Finally, most donors were interested in supporting initiatives to achieve visible products and granted funds to cover capital costs, but few of them recognised the need to help cover operation and maintenance costs, including the necessary technical assistance to produce those achievements. Our experience with supporting long-term community processes and negotiating with different government agencies reveals the need for large amounts of staff time, both from the staff of community organizations and support teams like ourselves. But very few international donor agencies are prepared to recognize this, in the support they provide.

## VI. SOME CONCLUSIONS

When our team began to work in Barrio San Jorge, there was no community organisation. The most frequent reactions among most of the inhabitants to any community initiative for the improvement of living conditions were passivity, scepticism and mistrust. In large part, this was the legacy of decades of paternalistic and authoritarian approaches and the lack of experience with any form of democratic process. Community reciprocity, representation, accountability and participation were alien principles and practices and they were not easily or quickly inserted.

In our experience, it was necessary to start and then sustain a process to modify these attitudes. The first group of neighbours who joined the mother and child centre were expecting to receive a benefit without giving anything. This is what they sought from external agencies. For many experts, these were not the best circumstances in which to launch a development process. Working in low income settlements where there is already an organized, representative community organization is much easier. But we believed that the attitudes we found in San Jorge were typical of those found in most communities suffering absolute poverty in Argentina. And within San Jorge, it was this group of mothers who were the best partners with whom to launch initiatives for alleviating poverty.

The implementation of many different community initiatives in different sectors over a number of years has enabled the building of a development process, which has contributed to improving the living conditions and reducing poverty or the deprivation associated with it in Barrio San Jorge. Our conclusion is that it is not only possible but necessary to support the generation and consolidation of neighbourhood organisation and participation in low income communities in order to address those needs and problems which can never be addressed by support for individual responses.

This has important implications for donor agencies (and government agencies) that seek to work in participatory ways with the inhabitants of illegal or informal settlements. In many

such settlements, there is little social capital at the community level. It has generally been eroded by the pressure of absolute poverty and the lack of adequate support. These have broken down the trust and the basic social networks. The reconstruction of social capital could take a very long time, even longer than the time that NGO support staff will stay at communities, aid agency officers will remain in office, or development banks and governments will sustain their own policies. The rekindling and nurturing of the sense of community implies changes in personal and societal attitudes.

Many of the inhabitants in Barrio San Jorge show this change of attitude. For instance, they are paying part of the costs of the water and sewerage project, which will be applied in a similar project to benefit the neighbours who had to be relocated. They showed solidarity with those families that are in the worst situations, giving priority and support to help them move to the new site. Members of the Co-operative are actively involved in negotiations with local government and private companies.

In the last ten years, we found no shortcuts to accelerate this process. Many times we were tempted to give up and move to work in a community with a high level of organisation, located in a municipality where local government were more responsive. Our commitment to work with people who not only live in absolute poverty but also are least likely to receive support from government agencies and international donors stopped us from doing so.

# Recent publications from iied's human settlements programme

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- Urban Change and Rural-urban Interactions
- Participatory Tools and Methods

Publications that concentrate on urban issues in Africa, Asia and Latin America – with a special interest in housing and housing finance, health, environment, poverty reduction, community action, sustainable development and urban change.



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## ● ENVIRONMENT AND ● SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### ● **The Environment for Children**

● *David Satterthwaite, Roger Hart, Caren Levy,  
● Diana Mitin, David Ross, Jac Smit and Carolyn  
● Stephens*

● Subtitled "*Understanding and acting on the  
● environmental hazards that threaten children  
● and their parents*", this book explains how  
● both environmentalists and development  
● specialists have given far too little attention to  
● the impact of the environment on children. It  
● describes how millions of children die  
● unnecessarily each year from environmental  
● causes while tens of millions suffer ill-health  
● or injury. It discusses why promoting a safe  
● and healthy environment for children is rarely  
● given a high priority by governments and aid  
● agencies. It also includes chapters on  
● sustainable development and on community-  
● based approaches to addressing  
● environmental problems, including how  
● children themselves should be involved in such  
● approaches. This book was commissioned by  
● UNICEF and written by a multidisciplinary  
● team that included specialists in child  
● development, infant and maternal health,  
● environmental health, economics and  
● community development.

● "*..an ideal reference for those concerned with  
● the effect of environmental hazards on  
● children's health and development*" **Third  
● World Planning Review**

● "*..an important contribution to an area which  
● has been given surprisingly little attention in  
● the past*" **Local Environment**

● 1996. Earthscan, London. ISBN 1-85383-326-6.

● 284pp. £13.95/\$23 (half price for non-OECD orders)

● Order No.5060

## Environmental Problems in Third World Cities

Jorge E. Hardoy, Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite

Now in its fourth reprint, this book describes environmental problems in cities and how these affect human health, local eco-systems and global cycles. It also shows that practical solutions to many of the problems can be found, especially through building the capacity and competence of urban government, supporting local NGOs and channelling support direct to associations of low-income households.

*"It is rare to encounter a work as authoritative and accessible as this. It is a mine of useful information from cities in every part of the Third World, which does not shy away from the immensity of the problems but says as much about the solutions to them as about the problems themselves"*

### Jonathon Porritt

*"Environmental Problems in Third World Cities" is not just a masterly analysis. It shows how to manage issues which have often proved unmanageable"* Sir Crispin Tickell, Warden of Green College, Oxford

*"This well-written and lucid book is a useful primer on the complex environmental problems facing cities in the South"* Health Action

1993. Earthscan, London. ISBN: 1-85283-146-8. 302pp. £14.95/\$25 (half price for non-OECD orders)

Order No.5057

## Sustainable Development and Cities

Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite

This is the background paper commissioned by Global Forum '94 for the five-day conference it organised on "Cities and Sustainable Development" in Manchester, UK. Delegations from 50 cities around the world attended this conference, with representatives in each city delegation drawn from citizen groups and NGOs, trade unions, city government and the private sector.

The paper is divided into nine sections. The first discusses the potential that cities have for contributing to sustainable development and what has to be done to realise this potential. The second considers the main goals that are part of sustainable development and how these relate to cities and to the seven themes chosen for discussion at Global Forum '94. This is followed by sections on these seven themes: resource use; livelihoods; basic needs and urban poverty; environment and health; transport and communications; finance for sustainable development; and governance and institutions. An annex considers the extent to which Agenda 21 (the main "action plan" coming out of the Earth Summit in 1992) addresses urban issues.

1994. Available in English, French and Spanish. 82pp. £4/US\$8

Order No.7017

## Sustainable Cities

A special issue of the journal *Environment and Urbanization*. Volume 4, No. 2

This includes papers on: cities' ecological footprints; the political economy of urban poverty and environmental management; recycling in Bogotá; upgrading in Surabaya; non-conventional



options for garbage collection and recycling; urban agriculture; and Curitiba's environmental programme. Papers also on voluntary organisations in Bangladesh and an innovative sports programme for children in one of Nairobi's largest squatter settlements. There are also profiles of IIED-América Latina and of Homeless International.

1992. ISSN: 0954-2478. 238pp. £10/US\$18 Order No.7007

NB: The October 1998 issue of *Environment and Urbanization* will be on **Sustainable Cities Revisited** and will include case studies of innovative Local Agenda 21s.

## URBAN POVERTY REDUCTION

A working paper series launched in 1996, with case studies of the experience of government agencies and NGOs that have implemented large-scale poverty reduction programmes over the last 10 years. There are also some overview papers.

### A. CASE STUDIES

◆ **SPARC and its Work with the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan, India**  
Sheela Patel

1996. 17pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7036

◆ **Reconstructing Social Capital in a Poor Urban Settlement: the Integrated Improvement Programme, Barrio San Jorge**

Ricardo Schusterman and Ana Hardoy

1996. 25pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7041

◆ **The Orangi Pilot Project, Pakistan**  
OPP Research and Training Institute

1996. 14pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7037

◆ **The Urban Community Development Office, Thailand**

Somsook Boonyabanha

1996. 9pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7045

◆ **From Community Development to Housing Finance: from Mutirões to Casa Melhor in Fortaleza, Brazil**

Yves Cabannes

1996. 29pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7046

◆ **Decentralization and Urban Poverty Reduction in Nicaragua: the experience of the Local Development Programme (PRODEL)**

Alfredo Stein

1996. 27pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7032

◆ **FONHAPO: the experience of the National Fund for Low Income Housing in Mexico**

Enrique Ortiz

1998. 55pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7040

◆ **Our Money; Our Movement** (case study of the Women's Credit Union in Sri Lanka)  
Aana Albee and Nandasiri Gamage

1996. IT Publications, London. £3/US\$5

Order No.7038

◆ **Bottom-up Initiatives for Poverty Reduction: an NGO effort in Ga Mashie, Accra, Ghana**

Anoba J. Annorbah-Sarpei

1997. 15pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7048

**uTshani Buyakhuluma (The grass speaks):  
People's Dialogue and the South African  
Homeless People's Federation**

*Joel Bolnick*

1997. 22pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7049

## **B. OVERVIEWS AND GENERAL WORKS**

**Urban Poverty: reconsidering its scale and  
nature**

*David Satterthwaite*

1996. 22pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7033

**Reaching Low-income Groups with Housing  
Finance**

*Diana Mitlin*

1997. 45pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7044

**City-based Funds for Community Initiatives**

*Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite*

1996. 14pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7039

Another IIED working paper of relevance to this  
topic is:

**NGO Capacity and Effectiveness: a review of  
themes in NGO-related research recently  
funded by ESCOR**

*Anthony Bebbington and Diana Mitlin*

1996. 37pp. £7.50

Order No.7050

More case studies of urban poverty reduction  
initiatives will be published during 1999 and 2000.

Two issues of the journal *Environment and  
Urbanization* published in 1995 concentrated on  
urban poverty:

**Urban Poverty: characteristics, causes and  
consequences Volume 7, No.1**

This includes papers on urban poverty in Harare,  
Mexico, Dar es Salaam, San Carlos de Bariloche,  
Bombay and the rural-urban interface in Tanzania  
- and also four general papers, including one by  
Robert Chambers considering the links between  
poverty and livelihoods. Also two papers on  
participatory tools and methods.

1995. ISSN: 0956-2478. 283pp. £12/US\$21

Order No.7012

**Urban Poverty II: from understanding to  
action Volume 7, No.2**

This includes papers on urban poverty in Abidjan,  
Dhaka, Brazil, Nairobi, the Pacific and Khartoum  
and also on how municipal interventions can  
address poverty. Also papers on how the middle  
classes were squeezed in Latin America during the  
1980s, on housing markets in La Paz and on Chile's  
housing policy. Also, two papers on participatory  
tools and methods and a profile of the Orangi Pilot  
Project in Pakistan.

1995. ISSN: 0956-2478. 266pp. £12/US\$21

Order No.7028



## **FINANCE FOR HOUSING AND BASIC SERVICES**

### **Hi-Fi News**

A twice yearly newsletter of the Habitat  
International Coalition's Working Group on  
Housing Finance and Resource Mobilization. This  
provides information about housing finance  
projects and programmes in the South and details  
of recent publications.

**Available at no charge;** write to the Human  
Settlements Programme at IIED or e-mail us on  
diana.mitlin@iied.org

### **Housing Finance and Resource Mobilization**

*Diana Mitlin (Editor)*

This is the report of a second Habitat International  
Coalition workshop on housing finance and  
resource mobilization held in 1996. The workshop  
brought together 20 professionals and  
practitioners working within the field of loan  
finance for housing and neighbourhood  
developments in low-income settlements. Case  
studies of housing finance programmes from  
South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Philippines,  
Thailand, India, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil  
were presented and the experience of those taking  
part allowed the discussions to draw on a much  
wider range of projects and programmes.

1996. 97pp. £8 (free to Southern NGOs and Southern  
teaching institutions)

Order No.7034

## **WORKING PAPERS ON HOUSING FINANCE**

A new series of working papers was launched in  
1998. The first two are:

**Micro-finance of Housing: A Key to Building  
Emerging Country Cities?**

*Bruce Ferguson*

forthcoming 1998

Order No.7052

### **SPARC's work with HUDCO**

*Sheela Patel and Randi Davis*

forthcoming 1998

Order No.7053

Two papers in the Urban Poverty Reduction series  
are also on housing finance:

**FONHAPO: the experience of the National  
Fund for Low Income Housing in Mexico**

*Enrique Ortiz*

1998. 55pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7040

**Reaching Low-income Groups with Housing  
Finance**

*Diana Mitlin*

1997. 45pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7044

Other papers in the Urban Poverty Reduction  
series, listed in the previous section, and the  
publications in the next section on Funding  
Community Initiatives also have material on micro-  
finance for housing and basic services.



## HOUSING AND HOUSING RIGHTS

Both 1997 issues of the journal *Environment and Urbanization* were on housing issues:

### Tenants: addressing needs, increasing options

*Environment & Urbanization Volume 9, No.2*

This includes papers on rental accommodation and tenants' organisations in Goiania (Brazil), Cape Town and Durban (South Africa), Howrah (India), Lima (Peru), Cochabamba (Bolivia), Nairobi (Kenya), San Salvador (El Salvador) and central areas in Latin American cities. Also a paper on provision for sanitation in tenant areas in Nairobi. Papers in the feedback section on: new models for aid agencies in the search for shelter; translating NGO successes into government policies; growing up in cities; urbanization and caregiving; evictions and relocations in Lagos; greening small recycling firms in Calcutta; and appraising a low-income housing programme in Kenya.

1997. ISSN: 0956-2478. 360pp. £12/US\$21 Order No.7047

### The Struggle for Shelter

*Environment & Urbanization Volume 9, No.1*

This includes papers on the struggle for shelter in Dakar, Fortaleza, Lima, Hyderabad (Pakistan), Buenos Aires, the United States and South Africa and a photo-essay on Mexico. Also, papers on: *The Big Issue* and other street papers for the homeless; what determines vulnerability to floods in Georgetown; the use of existing data to understand inequalities in health; experiences with participatory action research for children of the urban poor; and the experience of Sharan in developing financial services for the urban poor in India.

1997. ISSN: 0956-2478. 293pp. £12/US\$21 Order No.7043

### Squatter Citizen: life in the urban Third World

Jorge E. Hardoy and David Satterthwaite

This describes the vast and complex process of urban change and considers its impact on the lives of its poorer citizens. Boxes intersperse the text to illustrate points made and also tell stories of how a squatter invasion was organised or how communities in illegal settlements organised their own defence or worked together to improve conditions.

"... a book which should enjoy wide appeal: as a plea for adoption of the 'popular approach'; as a text for student use; and as an accessible and stimulating guide to the urban problems of developing countries..." *Progress in Human Geography*

"... one of the best contemporary statements of what is occurring in the growth of urban places in the Third World." *Environment and Planning A*

"... a very readable book, containing a lot of well documented information. The book is especially relevant for interested lay people but many a professional can also benefit by having it on the bookshelf." *Third World Planning Review*

1989. Earthscan, London. ISBN: 1-853830929-8. 374pp. £13.95/US\$23 (half price for non-OECD orders)

Order No.5148

## From Housing Needs to Housing Rights: an analysis of the right to adequate housing under International human rights law

Scott Leckie

The right of all people to affordable, secure and healthy housing has been legally recognised since the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This report documents how governments in both the North and the South have failed to adopt the policies and legislation necessary to ensure their citizens' housing rights are respected. It describes the growing movement worldwide to press governments to respect the right to housing and advises on how to combat housing rights violations (eg. opposing forced evictions and demanding action for the homeless) by showing where housing rights exist, which governments are bound by law to respect them and how such rights can be enforced and protected.

1992. ISBN: 0-905347-78-1. 109pp. £9.95/US\$17.50 (half price for non-OECD orders) Order No.7014

### Evictions

*A special issue of the journal Environment and Urbanization, Volume 6 No.1*

This includes an overview of evictions worldwide and case studies on evictions in Bangkok, Manila, Karachi, Durban, Rio de Janeiro, Lhasa and Israel. Also papers on health in Nairobi's illegal settlements, urban agriculture in Harare, and sustainable cities and China. There are also profiles of the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi and the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions.

1994. ISSN:0956-2478. 222pp. £12/US\$21 Order No.7010

### Service Provision in Cities

*A special issue of the journal Environment and Urbanization, Volume 6 No.2*

This includes papers on a community-directed basic service programme in Guatemala City; a programme to stop violence against women and children in Cebu; the promotion of community-based approaches to urban infrastructure in Nigeria; community mobilization for obtaining land tenure and services in Ouagadougou; and a sanitation programme in Dhaka. Also papers on setting a new agenda for sexual and reproductive health and rights; household-level environmental problems in São Paulo; and waste-picking in Bangalore. Also a profile of the Carvajal Foundation and Feedback articles on action plans for sustainable communities and on the decline of the urban management system in South Africa.

1994. ISSN: 0956-2478. 240pp. £12/US\$21 Order No.7011



## FUNDING COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

### Funding Community Initiatives

Silvina Arrossi, Felix Bombarolo, Jorge E. Hardoy, Diana Mitlin, Luis P. Coscio and David Satterthwaite

Despite four decades of development planning, at least one third of the urban population of Africa, Asia and Latin America remain poor. Over 600 million live in "life and health threatening" homes and neighbourhoods because of poor housing and inadequate or no piped water, sanitation and health care. But as the shortcomings of governments and development programmes become more apparent, the untapped abilities of low-income groups and their community organisations to develop their own solutions are increasingly recognised. This book analyses the conditions necessary for successful community initiatives and includes 18 case studies of intermediary institutions (most of them Third World NGOs) who provide technical, legal and financial services to low-income households for constructing or improving housing. Many also work with community organisations in improving water, sanitation, drainage, health care and other community services.

1994. Earthscan, London. ISBN: 1-85383-204-9. 190pp. £14.95/US\$25 (half price for non-OECD orders).

Also available in Spanish

Order No.5072

### Funding Community Level Initiatives

A special issue of the journal *Environment and Urbanization* Volume 5, No.1

This contains case studies of funding initiatives by local groups in Bombay, Karachi, Mexico City, San José and South Africa with overviews of funding systems for community development and for shelter improvements. Also, a description of the work of the Cooperative Housing Foundation in Central America and of the Settlements Information Network Africa, and a paper on environmental problems in the river Magdalena (Colombia) by Gabriel García Marquez.

1993. ISSN: 0956-2478. 190pp. £10/US\$18 Order No.7008

One paper in the *Urban Poverty Reduction* series is also on funding community initiatives:

### City-based Funds for Community Initiatives

Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite

1996. 14pp. £3/US\$5

Order No.7039



## HEALTH AND HOUSING

### Urban Health in Africa

Sarah J. Atkinson and Alfred Merkle

This discusses the main environmental and occupational health issues and the provision of health care services in urban areas in Africa. It includes case studies of initiatives to improve environmental health and health care. It draws on the experience of over 50 health professionals who took part in a workshop organised by GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) and the World Health Organization on "Urban Health in Africa" in November/December 1993.

1994. ISBN 0905-347-79X. 71pp. £6/US\$10.80 Order No.7018

### The Poor Die Young: housing and health in Third World cities

Jorge E. Hardoy, Sandy Cairncross and David Satterthwaite (Editors)

This book describes the main health problems confronting low-income groups in cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the ways in which most such problems can be solved quickly and cheaply.

"The authors concentrate on detailed analyses of cities... they consider innovative schemes for dealing with the problems, the needs of the people and how they could be met. In a fascinating chapter, they peer into the future and see what might happen if no changes are made in governmental and aid agencies' approaches and what could be achieved if lessons are drawn from present failures." *The Guardian*

"This volume shows hundreds of examples of self-help, in cities as diverse as Allahabad, Rio de Janeiro and Khartoum. There, people are improving their health by upgrading their neighbourhoods, in ways that are far cheaper and more enduring than any of the large-scale projects advocated by planners and engineers trained in the western model." *New Statesman and Society*

"A well structured collection of essays concerning health, its relation to environmental conditions among the urban poor, and the kinds of innovative, low-cost improvements that can and have been adopted both by governments and deprived communities themselves."

### Development in Practice

1990. Earthscan, London. ISBN: 1-85383-019-4. 309pp.

£13.95/US\$23 (half price for non-OECD orders) Ord. No.512

### Health and Wellbeing in Cities

A special issue of the journal *Environment and Urbanization* Volume 5, No.2

This includes case studies from Accra, Jakarta and Lusaka, a study in Khulna (Bangladesh) on the impact of ill-health on household income and nutrition, and papers reviewing the impact on health of urban environments and women's needs and priorities for water and sanitation. Also, a description of a violence prevention programme and a paper on what makes "a healthy city". Also a guide to the literature on health in cities, a profile of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights and Feedback on the Community Assistance Service (Praja Sahayaka Sewaya) in Sri Lanka.

1993. ISSN:0956-2478. 219pp. £10/US\$18

Order No.7009

The April 1994 issue of *Environment and Urbanization* on **Service Provision in Cities** also contains case studies of innovative ways of addressing urban health problems. *Volume 6, No.2*

1994. ISSN: 0956-2478. 240pp. £12/US\$21

Order No.7010

## URBAN CHANGE AND RURAL-URBAN INTERACTIONS

### Beyond the Rural-Urban Divide

A special issue of the journal *Environment and Urbanization*, Volume 10 No. 1

This includes papers that document how recent and current economic changes affect migration patterns and rural-urban resource transfers in Botswana, Mexico, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe and how gender and household organisation influences migration patterns. There is also a guide to the literature and papers on: the inter-dependence between small towns and their surrounding areas in Zimbabwe; who gains and who loses in the intense competition for land on the edge of Manila; and health risks associated with natural resource production in peri-urban areas. The Feedback section has papers on street and abused children in Egypt; women-vendors in Port-au-Prince (Haiti); housing policies in Egypt and poverty reduction in urban areas.

1998. ISSN:0956-2478. 298pp. £12/US\$21. Order No.7051

### The Scale and Nature of Urban Change in the South

David Satterthwaite

This paper draws on the most recent census data and on other national studies to show how the growth rates for many cities and most urban populations slowed down considerably during the 1980s. During this decade, many of the South's largest cities had more people moving out than in. The paper shows how population growth rates among cities in the South are not unprecedented and how several cities in the North are among the world's fastest growing cities. The paper also shows how most of the world's largest cities are heavily concentrated in the largest economies and how only a very small proportion of the world's population lives in "mega-cities".

1996. 30pp. £2/US\$3

Order No.7030



### Small and Intermediate Urban Centres: their role in regional and national development within the Third World

Jorge E. Hardoy and D. Satterthwaite (Editors)

Most of the Third World's urban population either lives in or depends on small and intermediate sized urban centres for access to goods, services and markets. Yet most urban research has concentrated on large cities. In response to the increasing interest shown by governments in special programmes for intermediate size cities, this book seeks to provide a better understanding of how economic, social and political forces shape urban systems and thus affect the development prospects of small and intermediate size urban centres. Five chapters report on the findings of empirical studies on the role of small and intermediate size urban centres in regions in Argentina, the Sudan, Nigeria and North and South India. There are also chapters reviewing the literature on this subject and reviewing the scale and nature of government policies towards smaller urban centres.

"...until now, there has not been a comprehensive review of the factors behind the growth and stagnation or decline of smaller urban centres and the policy implications that follow. Hardoy and Satterthwaite's book will fill that void" *Cities* 1986. Hodder and Stoughton (London, UK) and Westview (USA). ISBN: 0-340-36075-6. 421pp. £15/US\$27 (this book is close to selling out and when it does, a high quality xeroxed copy with ring binding will be available for the same price) Order No.7019

### Outside the Large Cities: annotated bibliography and guide to the literature on small and intermediate urban centres in the Third World

Silvia Blitzer, Julio Davila, Jorge E. Hardoy and David Satterthwaite

Detailed annotations of 170 published works on small and intermediate urban centres, drawn mainly from a review of 53 journals. Each annotation aims to give the reader a clear idea of the scope and key conclusions of the original work. The annotations are divided into those dealing with urban case studies and those dealing with broader aspects such as migration, settlement patterns and trends, productive organisation and government strategies and plans. The bibliography also has four indexes: by author, nation, city and source.

1988. 168pp. £11.50/US\$20.70 (half-price for non-OECD orders) Order No.7013

## ENVIRONMENT AND URBANIZATION

A journal that concentrates on urban and environmental issues in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Its coverage includes housing, infrastructure and services, health, poverty reduction, community action and sustainable development. One of the most widely read (and cheapest) journals in its field, *Environment and Urbanization* is written for both a specialist and a general audience.

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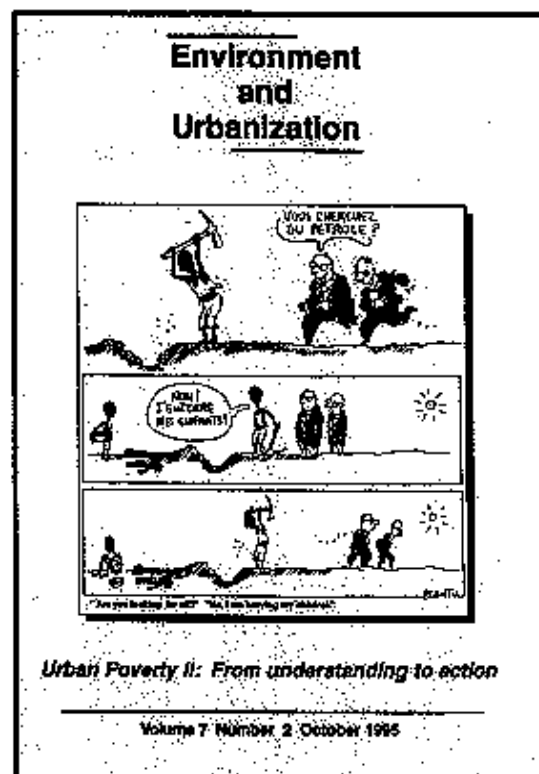
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