WHO'S TALKING TO WHOM? VILLAGER PARTICIPATION IN THE RELOCATION OF EL GOURNA, EGYPT

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1 ABSTRACT

There is almost universal agreement among planners and designers that public participation in civic projects is critical. However, successful public participation can be problematic. There are important differences between the concepts and goals of planners and designers on one hand, and the daily lives of local residents on the other. Participatory procedures are often formal and stiff, representing a bureaucratic approach that is not suited to the customs and communicative structures of local populations. This paper presents the results of a 16 month qualitative study of village participation in the relocation of El Gourna, Egypt. While the study corroborates certain findings from other studies of relocation, it introduces a unique communicative structure that we have called "village talk." The main purposes of the study were to examine how relocation and villager participation actually occurred, to describe relevant conditions of the relocation, to draw conclusions, and to propose recommendations for better participation. The study provides examples of various levels of interaction and communication between government officials, designers, and the local population. It shows that while important social and communicative structures, special occupational skills, and local knowledge were present in the community, they were not properly utilized in the participatory procedures or resettlement plan. This oversight led to conflicts between relocation officials and the local population, and to some unsatisfactory solutions. It suggests alternative methods for involving local residents in complex civic undertakings. It recommends that social, political and communicative structures of local communities be carefully studied, and that a strategy of participation and inclusion be designed to fit the unique aspects of these communities.

1.1 Key Words

El Gourna Egypt, Tombs of the Nobles, relocation, public participation, village talk.

2 INVOLUNTARY RELOCATION

According to the World Bank, from 1986 to 1993, about 80 to 90 million people were displaced due to large development projects involving infrastructure, dams, reservoirs, airports, and urban transportation, a number far greater than those displaced by wars, famines, and natural disasters (Betts, 2005; Cernea, 1997; Cernea & McDowell, 2000). More recent figures for displacement have been difficult to compile because a large number of projects are internal and governments are reluctant to share figures (Scudder, 2005). In addition, many projects are not financed by major lending institutions, such as the World Bank, that keep track of such figures (Dwivedi, 2002). But estimates are still between 4 to 8 million per year (Betts, 2005; Stanley, 2004).

Unlike refugees from wars or natural disasters, villagers who are involuntary relocated cannot maintain any hope of returning to their ancestral homes which are now either submerged behind a large new dam or replaced by new uses. Relocation is a permanent, irreversible change which engenders a deep sense of loss and grief (Fahim, 1983; Fernea & Kennedy, 1966; Marris, 1974; Scudder, 2003). During these transitions, relocatees undergo a series of traumatic changes as well as the disruption of traditional values, social structures, and customs (Cernea & Guggenheim, 1993; Scudder, 2003, 2005). They also face the intimidating prospect of re-creating new economic, social, and community structures in unfamiliar conditions and amid an unknown host community.

Achieving new sustainable livelihoods remains one of the most intractable problems in relocation. Failure to resolve this issue alone results in long term impoverishment for the resettlers (Cernea & McDowell, 2000). "Tragically, there are very few cases world-wide where resettlement caused by large dams has been able to improve, or even restore, the livelihoods of a majority of those who must relocate" (Scudder & Habbob, 2008). However, some studies do report that meaningful involvement of relocatees has contributed to better results (Cernea & McDowell, 2000; Cernea & Guggenheim, 1993; Scudder, 2005).

3 RELOCATION OF EL GOURNA

Beginning in 2005, residents of the historic village of El Gourna, Egypt, located on the west bank of the Nile, opposite Luxor, were relocated to a new site about 3 to 4 kilometers away in order to protect priceless underground tombs from the Pharaonic era that lay directly below the village. El Gourna consisted of about twenty-four hamlets and family clusters that included Arab settlers, Coptic residents, and indigenous peoples from earlier times. The hamlets were gradually established over a period of 250 to 300 years on the dry, sandy limestone ascent of the nearby Theban mountains, opposite the ancient capital of Thebes (modern Luxor).

Figure 1: Partial View of Old Gourna. Photo by authors.

Since the many tombs and caves remaining from the Pharaonic era provided good protection, visibility of the Nile Valley both north and south, and hiding places from roaming armies, tax collectors, conscription, and the annual Nile inundation, early settlers gradually moved from the valley floor to the caves and unfinished tombs into an area known as the *Tombs of the Nobles* (Figures 1; El-Aref, 2007; Farag, 2004; Seel, 2007; Simpson, 2000, 2003). Over time, they expanded their dwellings and built over or near entrances to the caves often incorporating them into family compounds. Although many of the dwellings included only unfinished caves, some were built over finished or decorated tombs.

These finished tombs are among Egypt's greatest treasures. They contain priceless artifacts and wall paintings of fascinating scenes from everyday life in ancient Egypt, providing a detailed account of the life and times of the Middle Kingdom. Although the kings, queens, and princes of Egypt's Middle Kingdom dug their tombs in the valleys and gorges lying deeper in the mountains, in the Valley of the Kings, the royal nobles told their stories in tombs that were cut into cliff sides or in the dry, rocky ascents facing the Nile.

With the arrival of European adventures and archeologists in the 19th century, the Gournawii, as the local residents are known, became expert guides and excavators. As their livelihoods became entwined with foreign visitors, they worked as low paid laborers and guides for treasure hunters and archeologists, and from time to time sold artifacts from the tombs, or in many cases, hand made replicas, in order to supplement their income (Van der Spek, 2003). Unfortunately, long occupation and unregulated trade in ancient artifacts had damaged some of the tombs and posed a threat to their preservation (Hawass, 2007; Kamil, 2008; Simpson, 2000).

In 1946, the Egyptian government initiated a program to protect and preserve the *Tombs of the Nobles* as well as other antiquities in the Luxor area. Well known Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy was commissioned to build a new village, known as New Gourna, on the valley floor about 2 to 3 km. east the old village (Fathy, 1969). Fathy used vernacular architecture and innovative low-cost mud brick construction to build the new village which included mosque, school, theatre, commercial center, and about 90 new homes. The project, which lasted about three years, was not successful and never completed. Only a few families from El Gourna moved to the new village. After the flash floods of 1994/95, some of the Gournawii moved to El Suul, a hastily built village north of Old Gourna near the village of El Tarif, but many remained on the mountain (Van der Spek, 2000, 2003).

Another attempt to relocate residents began in January 2005 with the arrival of a new governor in Luxor. The governor selected a new site near El Tarif and employed a new design team. Aspects of participatory planning were utilized to keep the Gournawii informed about the relocation, to gather information on social and economic structures of the old village, and to persuade residents to relocate. As of February 2011, all the residents had been moved from the mountain and either relocated to the new village to the north or have moved to other villages on their own. The old village of El Gourna has been completely demolished except for about 20 buildings in the southernmost hamlet of Gournet Mar'ii. The intention is to preserve these buildings as examples of the former mountain community.

The new village, called "Gurna Jedeeda," or New Gourna, is not yet complete. Some streets and services are unfinished and detract from an otherwise satisfactory new village. Government housing has been built for most families, but other plots that were set aside for families who wish to build their own homes, and for commercial use, are still vacant. The Luxor Supreme Council has developed plans to provide better and more diverse employment opportunities and additional community facilities such as recreational and health centers, but these projects have not yet been realized.

4   PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The main purposes of the study were to determine: 1) how villager participation was implemented and functioned during the relocation, 2) if villager participation affected outcomes and 3) how meaningful participation and involvement of local residents can be structured and enhanced to improve project outcomes.

A qualitative and ethnographic approach was selected for the study in order to develop a comprehensive description of actual events and experiences. In other words, we endeavored to learn about participation and relocation from the participants themselves, from an "emic" or insiders perspective, and to develop interpretative concepts and conclusions grounded in the collected data.

Information for the study was gathered from interviews, group meetings, documents, casual conversations, personal observations, and participation in village life (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Spradley, 1979; Stake, 1979). We learned about relocation and participation by listening to residents, by recording and transcribing what participants had to say, by determining the roles of various participants, and by investigating events,

available documents, and actual circumstances of the relocation.

A total of 46 villagers and villager families were interviewed over a period of 16 months, from November 2009 till February 2011. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in verbatim format as far as possible. The processing of information followed standard qualitative methods of "chunking," detecting themes, and interpretation. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated based on insights gained from the processing and analysis of the data (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Richards & Morse, 2007; Wolcott, 2001).

5   RELOCATION STUDIES

At present, there are two main theories of relocation: Thayer Scudder's theory regarding stages of adjustment and adaptation, and Michael Cernea's theory of impoverishment risks and reconstruction.
In the 1980s, Thayer Scudder and Elizabeth Colson developed a four-stage framework of adjustment and adaptation, a sequence of stages that relocatees go through in the process of successful resettlement (Scudder, 2005). They identified four stages: a) resettlement planning and physical removal; b) multidimensional stress, and initial coping; c) economic and community redevelopment; and d) handing over of local governance and incorporation into the larger society (Scudder, 2003; Scudder & Habbob, 2008). This framework was primarily behavioral and dealt with three forms of stress: physiological, psychological, and socio-cultural. It helped "explain why resettlers are the key resource for achieving a positive outcome" (Scudder, 2005, p. 32).

Michael Cernea, former Senior Advisor for Sociology and Social Policy at the World Bank, developed another model of relocation based on relocation risks and the need for redevelopment following relocation. "Risk recognition," he emphasized, "is crucial for sound planning" (Cernea & McDowell, 2000, p. 33). Cernea defined risk as "the possibility that certain courses of action will result in future injurious effects — losses and destruction" (Cernea & McDowell, 2000, p. 19). His study of relocations funded by the World Bank led him to conclude that, "The most widespread effect of involuntary displacement is the impoverishment of … relocatees" (Cernea & McDowell, 2000, p. 12). Cernea identified the causes of impoverishment as the loss of homelands, livelihoods and occupations, and social support systems.

Cernea also emphasizes the importance of good communication and local participation. "Dysfunctional communication between decision makers and groups affected by displacement are one of the roots of resettlement failure" (Cernea & McDowell, 2000, p. 51). Christian Sorenson, an anthropologist who has studied relocation extensively, agrees and focuses attention on the importance of villager involvement. "It is important that 'outsiders,' including the government and humanitarian agencies, build on refugees' own initiative-driven strategies for survival and reconstruction of livelihoods instead of imposing preplanned packages" (Sorenson in Cernea & McDowell, 2000, p. 201).

In a more recent study of 50 large dam projects, Scudder suggested that if his theory of adaptations and Cernea's theory of risk reversal are used in combination, they can provide a more complete approach to resettlement (Scudder, 2005). Scudder goes on to point out that, "Resettlers are the key resource for achieving a positive outcome … (and) government policies and the activities of project authorities have been the main factors constraining a successful resettlement process" (Scudder, 2005, p. 32).

Anthropological case studies have also provided significant details for the study of relocation and participation. They show that meaningful participation by the local community is essential for successful resettlement, and that there is a critical lack of correspondence between the goals and capacities of various relocation entities, and the needs and often neglected resources of relocatees. (Cernea & Guggenheim, 1993).

In sum, various theories, studies, and approaches to relocation point to the local community as the key to the recovery process. "(Research) suggests that more encouragement given to the initiative, energy, and self-organizing capacity of oustees may unlock a potential insufficiently used in resettlement programs" (Cernea & Guggenheim, 1993, p. 397).

What these theories and case studies on relocation do not adequately clarify is how the various "forms of communication" among participants and within the village itself function and influence outcomes. Most often studies of participation are concerned with standard forms and venues of participation, such as public meetings or technical conferences. In this study, we point out that there is an additional layer of village communication, what we have called "village talk," that takes place almost exclusively among villagers themselves. This form of communication was replete with effective and creative solutions to difficult problems and tailored to the specific needs and customs of the villagers.

6   IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

In western democracies, public participation in planning and design projects has been sought as a way of obtaining greater acceptance of civic projects, of providing and exchanging information, and for giving citizens a greater voice and more input in the decision making processes (Glass, 1979). In these environments, citizen participation depends on certain pre-conditions such as common terminology, speech patterns and technical knowledge, legal and formal frameworks, locally organized interest groups and leadership, and planners, designers, and staff that can communicate effectively and facilitate meetings. Participants themselves must also be capable of expressing their thoughts and be able to work with others who may have contrary opinions. Given these prerequisites, some segments of modern, and yet traditional, society may still be unable to participate effectively. For example, those who have limitations regarding educational or technical background, or of time, resources, and/or information. Thus, important sectors of the public may still find themselves excluded (Allmendinger, 2002; Corburn, 2003; Forester, 1989, 1999; Innes & Booher, 2010).

Planning agencies and design firms tend use participatory methods that coincide with their philosophy of planning (Lane, 2005). For example, for approaches such as "rational planning" or "urban systems planning," participation is a way of consulting with and gaining input from key stakeholders and more powerful citizen groups who are able to relate to planning terminology and objectives, but they may still exclude significant sectors of the population. Advocacy, equity, and collaborative approaches endeavor to include citizens and social groups that may not be well connected to the larger society (Davidoff, 1965; Innes & Booher, 2010; Krumholz & Forester, 1990; Peattie, 1968). For these latter approaches, participation necessitates alternative techniques and creative ways of reaching out to those who are most impacted by planning and design decisions, but who are frequently left out of the process (Allmendinger, 2002; Krumholz & Forester, 1990).

Inclusion of local residents, who live at the margins of society, in formal participation procedures can be difficult (Innes & Booher, 2010; Quick & Feldman, 2011; Peattie, 1968). These groups often lack the social organization and local leadership needed for participation in wider planning process, or may not possess the necessary background and experience to participate in public meetings and other formal settings. Although gathering local knowledge from all segment of society is critical for all types of projects, since it "provides crucial political and technical insights often overlooked by professionals (Corburn, 2003, p. 420), it is particularly important for the planning of more complex projects such as relocation (Corburn, 2003; Innes & Booher, 2010; Quick & Feldman, 2011).

Examples of successful inclusion of marginal groups typically involve informal participatory methods. In other words, instead of inviting residents to participate in formal planning meetings in a controlled setting, planners, designers, and community workers have gone out to the residents in their communities and neighborhoods and met with them in informal settings (Innes & Booher, 2010; Krumholz & Forester, 1990; Peattie, 1968). Information was then gathered using ethnographic, or even conversational, methods. They "gathered data, took a poll, did interviews" (Peattie, 1968, p. 85). However, experience also shows that even with the best of intentions, community workers may still be considered as outsiders by these groups.

Certain "practical" theories of participation and local involvement have also demonstrated better success in the field. Landscape architect Randy Hester has suggested five ways of obtaining information on user needs and of involving citizens: town meetings, interviews, questionnaires, neighborhood observations, and post-construction evaluation (Hester, 1975). These steps combine both formal and informal methods. As part of neighborhood observation, Hester often uses behavior mapping, a method of graphic observation and documentation, to discover and record the habits and "daily rituals" of people that are often not mentioned in surveys and interviews (Hester, 1985, 1993).

Participation and involvement in more complex projects, such the relocation of El Gourna, can be even more problematic because of the unique characteristics of local communities, long-range consequences, and complicated redevelopment problems involving social, economic and psychological factors. In these situations, residents are involved in multifaceted processes that include not only relocation and resettlement, but reconstruction of new social and economic structures that go well beyond typical participatory scenarios.

Studies of relocation indicate that there are many practical benefits to be derived from meaningful involvement at the local level. For example, it provides critical local knowledge and innovative solutions, important new roles for residents during the resettlement process that can affect future social development of the new village, and it strengthens the determination and self-motivation of the resettlers to succeed in

the new environment (Cernea & Guggenheim, 1993; Choguill, 1996; Colson, 2003). Participation enables residents to develop a sense of ownership, to take part in developing designs that will more closely fit their activities and life patterns, to more quickly reestablish livelihoods and social structures, and to develop their own "initiative driven strategies" (Sorenson in Cernea & McDowell, 2000, p. 201). Local involvement also provides a dynamic management framework within which decision making can be shared and many of the diverse elements of a project can be brought together into a more unified process (Cernea & Guggenheim, 1993, Davidson, et al., 2007; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2009).

During our study, it was clear that El Gourna was a community at the margins of a larger society, and subject to the communicative difficulties discussed above. Specifically, El Gourna was governed by an authoritative political structure centered in Luxor. Policies and programs were managed by national agencies in Cairo rather than by local institutions. El Gourna was a traditional community with an intricately developed and fragile economy. Speech patterns and the cultural and social organization of the community were unique and often at odds with modern Egyptian society. And, the community was not experienced with formal participatory methods and techniques such as public meetings, stakeholder workshops, and local organization and representation. Given these conditions, an alternative approach that involved reaching out to the community, locating participation within the community itself, gathering local information in informal settings, and developing an emic perspective on community problems, was needed.

7   Village Talk

The phenomenon of village talk as a significant form of village communication only came to light as we gradually discovered how villagers communicated with one another and how most of them obtained information about the relocation. Village talk was the most active form of village communication and constituted a unique social institution and communicative structure (Scones, 1998). It occurred whenever residents got together to share news, to talk to each other, or just to spend time together. Village talk took place in the streets, at the markets, in the cafes and restaurants, at the mosque, in the diwans, and every night in front of the houses with residents, relatives, neighbors and guests seated on the "mastaba" benches. These places were the principle venues of social interaction in the village and the core of village life. (Figure 2)

Figure 2. Village Talkers. Photo by authors.

One reason why participation in the El Gourna project did not include village talk was that the *definition* of participation did not include informal aspects of communication. "Participation" was only understood in a formal sense, i.e., in terms of committee or public meetings, or as communication between public officials and residents, but not as participation between residents. The procedures of participation did not include these informal gatherings or tap into this level of village communication, where villagers

could freely speak their mind, to capture the ideas, solutions, and energy of the village community.

In addition, the flow of information and ideas went in one direction only. Few officials or higher level representatives went into the village to listen and learn from the residents, or to seek their input. Thus, the flow of information and ideas from the village upward to the public and administrative meetings was only minimal (Forester, 1999).

For El Gourna, and by implication for many small towns and villages, representatives from the government "side" not only needed to carry information to the village, but they also needed to listen to residents, to go into the villages, to meet with local people, and to gather ideas and information from them at the level of village talk (Forester, 1999; Krumholz & Forester, 1990; Peattie, 1968). Relocation officials and representatives could thereby learn from the residents about their lives, about the village, and about their thoughts and hopes for the future. Villagers would also be able to engage government representatives by "telling their stories," by describing for them their situations, and in return by listening to and understanding issues that were important from the government side (Forester, 1999).

In El Gourna, the most appropriate setting for this type of communication was at the various venues of informal communication where villagers felt most comfortable. This aspect of communication was the missing feature of the discourse. But it is also a kind of involvement for which the villagers might have needed assistance.

8   FINDINGS

In qualitative studies, verbal descriptions are necessary for clarifying themes and presenting specific findings. The descriptions below highlight the findings of this study. They help explain how the process of participation worked in reality, and establish a context for assessing participation.

8.1   Resettlement Plan

Although several redevelopment plans and some social and economic studies were prepared for City of Luxor, which also included the relocation of El Gourna as an additional objective, no relocation or resettlement plan was developed specifically for El Gourna. At the time, only the physical design of the new village and some proposals for new economic development, such as hotels and shopping areas, were considered. The absence of a comprehensive plan, as well as much needed input from local villagers for its preparation and implementation, resulted in many ad hoc arrangements and left important issues unaddressed.

8.2   Compensation

Because there was no actual resettlement plan, and no prior anthropological study of the cultural and occupational conditions of the village, compensation problems arose. In addition, the idea of replacement costs, as well as allowances for costs involved in moving and setting up homesteads anew, was missing from the relocation planning.

Although discussed in public meetings in the main Diwans of the West Bank, (large meeting halls usually attached to a mosque or a large family compound) the agreed upon solution of one "flat", or one new unit, for every married man as compensation for lost housing, was out of touch with the living situation of many families. In the new village, each prototype unit had 4 rooms plus a small courtyard in the back. The units were about 150 square meters each, or about 1,600 square feet, compared to about 300 to 500 square meters (3,230 to 5,282 sq. ft.) for the former family compounds.

Most households were actually extended families composed of several generations of related family members living in one compound. Splitting up families by awarding one "unit" per each married man undercut the social and economic structure of the extended family. In addition, individual units that housed related family members were often located in disparate places throughout the new village making family activities difficult.

By the time construction was completed on the first two sections of the new village (the village had a total of 5 sections), compensation problems began to snowball. In the old village, there were considerable differences in the size of family compounds, in the size and number of families living in a compound, and in the needs of each family. Some households included unmarried adult siblings, as well as other dependent family members such as divorced women with children, and older parents, aunts and uncles. Some families that included unmarried adults with dependent children were being supported by an unmarried head of household and received only one or two small units as compensation.

These conditions did not come to light during administrative meetings nor during the village

discussions on compensation which relied heavily on the authoritative opinions of upper level village representatives rather than on input from local villagers. The result was that all these different family situations could not be accommodated by the "married man" solution, nor by the single prototype housing unit. As the relocation progressed, and the government realized that they would not have a sufficient number of units, families were pressured into accepting fewer units than were needed to accommodate their needs.

8.3   Occupations and Sources of Income

It became clear during the interviews that a significant number of residents had lost all if not most of their income. No matter what occupation a resident might otherwise have, most residents also worked at home producing fine quality statues and figurines from local stone and selling them to tourists who visited old Gourna (Van der Spek, 2003). This supplemental income was a crucial component of family income.

Relocation officials seemed unaware of the complicated ways in which villagers assembled their monthly income from many small sources and depended on tourists who visited the village rather than on those who stayed in hotels in Luxor. Using generalized survey data from earlier studies and assumptions generated by experts, officials incorrectly assumed that villagers would be able to continue working in the same occupations, and have the same incomes, after the relocation (Yousry, 2004).

As two respondents explained:

The disadvantage (is) that they don't have any extra income. Because he is a clerk in the government, he gets a salary. And after this, ... in his free time he was working at home doing this souvenirs and selling it. Now it's totally closed.

And,

Here in the new Gourna, it's very nice. It's clean, bigger, and I don't deny that it's much better. But I need to live. I have no income.

8.4   Social Fragmentation

Although plans for the new village called for each extended family group to be housed as closely as possible to each other, it was only partly achieved. For example, family Horobat, the largest of the four families from old Gourna, was split into 4 different areas. The splitting of larger family groups and the separation of more immediate families' members from each other has led to a diminished sense of traditional community life and less participation in community events.

8.5   Villager Initiatives

In New Gourna, residents have shown considerable initiative by providing many improvements to the homes and village. These improvements have enhanced the quality of village life and demonstrated a determination to succeed in the new environment. However, local government policies have sometimes hindered and, in some cases, even penalized residents for improvements. For example, villagers were subject to fines for planting trees, for opening small shops and other business to compensate for lost income, and for adding much needed extra rooms to the housing units.

8.6   Modes of Communication

In observing the modes of communication that took place during the relocation as a key to understanding villager participation, it became apparent that communication and participation were occurring at three different levels. However, only two levels were recognized as forms of participation, and communication was predominantly a unidirectional process. The levels of communication could also be identified by the various meeting and communicative formats, such as administrative and executive meetings, public meetings, and informal communication in the village. The three levels of communication include:

1) administrative and executive meetings: This level involved planning meetings in Luxor, the discussion of technical details, and input from various specialists such as economists and designers, and from higher level village representatives, many of whom no longer lived in El Gourna.

2) public meetings: The general purpose of these meetings was to inform the villagers of what would be happening in the relocation, to select a single prototype for the housing units, and to discuss problems with compensation. In these meetings, of which there were only a few, there was little sharing of information or collaboration between average residents, village leaders, and the relocation officials.

Conversation was mostly between the "bigger" people.

   3) <u>village communication</u>: This was the most dynamic level of communication and informal participation during the relocation. It was the level of everyday village talk.

9 CONSEQUENCES OF RELOCATION

   Taken as a whole, the relocation of El Gourna had both positive and negative outcomes. On one hand, major Improvements were provided. There are better services, better houses (although much smaller than the traditional compounds), new schools, town services, and the quality of life has improved. On the other hand, serious issues remain. The project is not yet complete. Streets, parks, services, and residences remain unfinished (Figure 3). Most resident have lost a significant portion if not all of their income. In many cases, compensation was not an equal exchange or adequate reimbursement. Poor construction in about 30% of the houses in sections 4 and 5 has caused walls to crack and some houses to be unsafe. And the lack of government support for the initiative and improvements provided by the residents has discouraged many and prevented innovative solutions from being proposed or utilized.

Figure 3: Unfinished units in New Gourna. Photo by authors.

   For the families of El Gourna, the relocation has introduced complicated changes. At its most fundamental level, residents have gone from a traditional rural way of life to town life. This has resulted in significant trade-offs such as a change from a modest form of independence, self-reliance and autonomy to being a small part of a larger political and economic system, from a self-sustaining traditional economy to a wage economy, from rural services to city services and cash payments, and from a life based on day to day living to a future based on training and education, with the ever present threat of dependency and unemployment. In addition to the old village itself, many unique features of the village may be inevitably lost such as world class artistic skills, local craft trades, a widely acknowledged tradition of local hospitality to visitors, and a unique cultural and historic site.

   As with most relocations, one of the most difficult problems is the sense of loss and sadness experienced by villagers when leaving the old village. A university educated resident from family Horobat describes it thus:

   While we were moving from the old Gourna to the new, I didn't think it would be hard for me or difficult. Then when they started to destroy our house I was very sad. … I felt like unconscious. I didn't know what to do, where to go. Pain, painful. My father and my mother they cried. They let the mother go to another part of the family that she doesn't see the house while they destroy it ... (It was) the saddest time in my whole life when the bulldozer (a front loader) came and destroyed the house. The father, … that was the first time to see him cry. … And he couldn't move, like paralyzed. That was too sad. … In old Gourna, it was my life and it was my memories.

10   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In sum, although the intention was there, the process of villager participation had only a limited effect on relocation. Official "participation" was restricted by definition to formal meetings that typically involved only government representatives, consultants, and higher level village representative. It did not recognize or take advantage of "local knowledge," local communicative patterns such as village talk, nor the resources, ideas, and solutions that were available at the village level.

10.1   Relocation Planning

Whether redevelopment plans originate at a local or regional level, the challenges for large scale civic projects involve issues at various levels that are intrinsically bound up with and influence one another in complex ways. For resettlers however, the critical effects and long term consequences tend to crystallize at the local level. Long after the planners, designers, and government officials have all departed, what remains in this transition is the relocated residents themselves. They carry within themselves the solutions, the innovations, the determination, and the potential for adaptation that successful relocation depends on. Stefano Bianca refers to this as a "regeneration from within" (Bianca, 2000, p. 335).

The traumatic changes involved in relocation and resettlement go far deeper than just a change of location or the design of a new town, and present complex challenges for the planning process itself. There are difficult questions to answer such as how the community will regain a sense of purpose and meaning, how residents will deal with critical losses such as the loss of income and occupations, and the loss and disruption of individual social positions and community functions. All of these questions are interrelated and must be addressed on a holistic basis.

This human dimension of large scale civic projects must be carefully considered and receive equal emphasis with economic and engineering concerns. If not, it can result in irreconcilable tensions between residents, government administrators and design experts, in long term harmful consequences, and in dependency on the part of the resettlers. What seems most certain in this process is that recovery, regeneration, and redevelopment of village or community life cannot be achieved by external means, or without the full participation of the local residents.

An often overlooked element in the planning of large projects is an assessment of the immediate and long term impact a project will have on local residents. Extensive involvement with the local population is necessary to perform this assessment and to formulate predictions. Once a project is completed, a continuing follow-up relationship with the community that will monitor its long term impact should be maintained as part of a post-occupancy study.

10.2   Villager Participation

Could more inclusive method of participation have resulted in better outcomes? This might have been possible if other conditions were also favorable. For example, if government officials were willing to consider alternative solutions proposed by the villagers, or if outside factors did not constrain outcomes such as limited local governmental capacities or limited funding.

Nevertheless, it is essential that the social, political and communicative structures of local populations be carefully studied using alternative techniques, such as ethnographic inquiry and participant observation, and that a strategy of participation and inclusion to be designed to fit unique local characteristics (Glass, 1979). Since villagers themselves are the most important source of local information, potential ideas and solutions, their input are crucial and essential.

In the relocation and resettlement of El Gourna, three levels and formats of participatory communication, as outlined above, were identified that included both formal and informal means of communication. The importance of informal village communication, or village talk, fits in at this point. It is easy to think of village talk as just conversation in the village and miss its institutional character. As an important social institution of village communication and interaction (Scoones, 1998), it provided a communicative function similar to that provided in more modern or middle class communities by organized community and interest groups, and by various media sources (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006).

In situations similar to El Gourna, where local populations are not experienced in or lack the required resources and capacities to participate in the organized ways, such as executive meetings, public meetings, or stakeholder meetings, planners and designers must be prepared to reach out to the residents, rather than expecting the resident to come to them, and to assist them in developing the capacity for meaningful participation and involvement. This will require much more than inviting citizens to participate.

It will involve actively soliciting their input by entering into dialog and working within the community in the local village setting, by developing and insider's perspective. It includes such activities as supplying technical information and assistance, equipping and encouraging local resident to participate, identifying capable representatives and leaders, helping residents form interest groups, and possibly providing staff assistance (Innes & Booher, 2010; Krumholtz & Forester, 1990; Peattie, 1968).

10.3   Guidelines for Participation

One objective of the study was to identify principles or guidelines that could be used to enhance and improve participatory procedures. The following guidelines are drawn from the participatory experiences of El Gourna, but they can be applied to almost any project that requires public participation or citizen involvement.

A) An effective strategy of participatory and inclusion should be designed before the project begins, and should include the follow components: 1) the collection of specialized local knowledge, 2) identification of local skills and sources of income, 2) participatory methods that build on local communicative processes, 3) identification of potential leaders, spokespersons, and advocates who are approved by the villagers themselves, and 4) assistance in the formation of interest groups to address specific issues such as new occupations and vulnerable residents.

B) Project officials and designers should seriously consider using alternative methods of data collection that include informal interviews, participant observation, and other forms of involvement with residents, rather than expecting them to be conversant in formal participation procedures.

C) It is critically important that local residents have the capacity to interact and participate. They need to have the necessary information, the skills to organize and communicate effectively, and the ability to learn and communicate with others. If they do not have these background skills, program officials should assist them in developing them. In addition, since they will need the time and resources to participate, adjustments in the participatory methods selected may be necessary to accommodate their way of life. In other words, the participatory framework must fit the local population (Glass, 1979; Innes & Booher, 2010; Krumholz & Forester, 1990; Peattie, 1968).

D) Citizens on the edge of a larger society often do not participate because they feel they will not be respected or listened to (Innes & Booher, 2010). Program officials should clearly demonstrate to the residents, in tangible ways, that their input will matter.

10.4   Implications of the Study

The thrust of these comments is that planning and design professionals need to develop an effective "policy framework," from the start of a project, which fits the unique characteristics and capabilities of local residents. This framework will be different from one community to the next, but the same principles of careful study at the village level and development of a unique participatory framework apply. Planners and designers need to employ alternative participatory methods, to risk departing from the comforts of familiar policies and procedures, to go into the community on a regular basis, and to learn from the local population about their circumstances, needs, aspirations, and dreams. This will requires personal contact with local communities and input from their point of view.

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