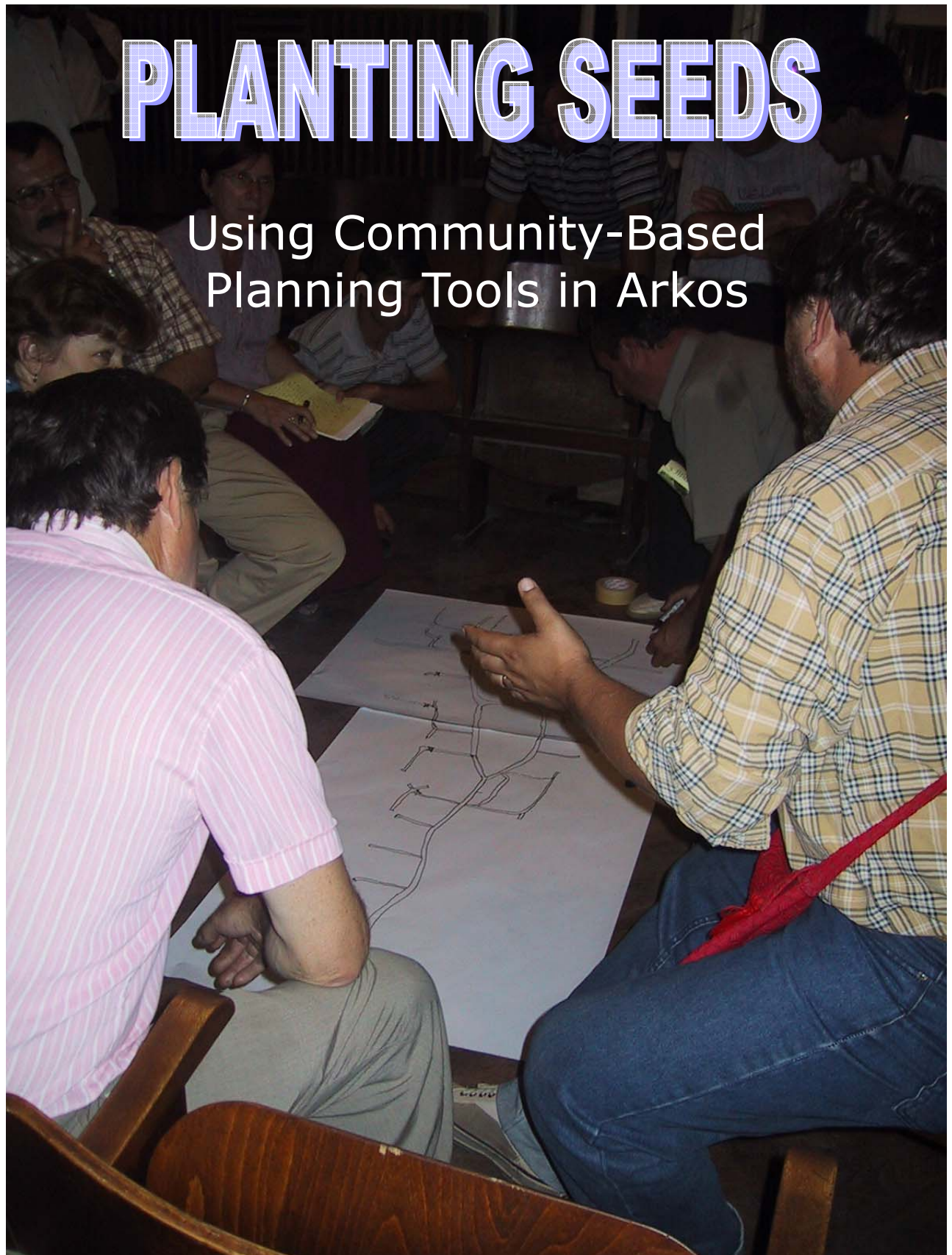


PLANTING SEEDS

Using Community-Based
Planning Tools in Arkos



This booklet is the first field manual to be published in the North American — Transylvanian partnership program. It describes a participatory assessment carried out in the village of Arkos in Covasna County, Transylvania, Romania. It is available both in English and Hungarian and is published jointly by the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, the Unitáriu Egyház of Arkos, Romania, and the Center for Community-Based Development, Clark University (USA). Its publication is made possible through the generosity of the International Fund for Unitarian Universalism.

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About the Title

Arkos is a small village, previously a farming community and now becoming a multi-purpose village. Community-based assessments that empower local institutions to assume an equal role with outside agencies is a new idea in Arkos. The use of people-centered tools in Arkos has planted the seeds of a new concept. The tools will ripen and spread only if they are nurtured, cared for, adapted to new situations, and shared with other communities. *Planting Seeds* seemed a fitting title for a community that knows how to cultivate newly planted seeds.

Planting Seeds

Using Community-Based Planning Tools in Arkos

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In addition to the people of Arkos, several Transylvanian groups have provided critical assistance including Mathe Arpad, Mayor of Arkos, who was able to attend the first meeting; the Covasna County Council and others in St. George, the Covasna county seat; Kolumbán Gábor, the Lay President of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church and a member of the faculty of Sapientia University; and Székely Janos and Eniko, the minister of the Unitarian Church of Arkos and his wife. Additional thanks go to Szeke, the Regional Community Development Association of Szekelerland, and Civitas Foundation for Civil Society. They were supportive of the program and will be central to implementation of projects that will come as a result of the planning.

We must also mention the pivotal and dedicated contribution from members of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, especially the chair of that organization, Barbara Beach. They have helped to launch this bold and vital initiative to build the capacities of rural communities in Transylvania and elsewhere. This is important work and deserves our recognition and support. Several other UU organizations and individuals have been critical including Dr Olivia Holmes, Director of International Programs for the UUA, the Reverend Fran Mercer of the UU United Nations Office, and the UU Service Committee. We thank the people of Nabinglod, a village in the Philippines that inspired this visit and the members of the Partner Church Committee of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, Texas, who learned of the work done there and thought it held promise for Arkos, the home of their partner church. All of the above and more have provided help and timely assistance.

Finally we thank Fund for International Unitarian Universalism that provided a portion of the support that made the workshop possible.

Cathy Cordes, Executive Director, UUPCC
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Executive Summary and Background

In July 2004, representatives from the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, the First UU Church of Houston, and the UU-United Nations Office (USA) joined with residents of Arkos (Romania) as well as local government officials, non-government organizations, and institutions in Arkos, including the Unitárius Egyház (Unitarian Church), in a three-day (9 hours) workshop to learn whether participatory planning methodologies used in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the United States, and other parts of Eastern Europe could be used effectively in Romania. This report presents the data and findings as assembled from several of the workshop's exercises. The principal lessons learned include:

While the planning tools used in the pilot study were excellent, their organization and timing need adjustment for use in Romania. This field manual, based on the Arkos experience, allows more time for field exercises in the community as well as adds additional tools.

Although time did not allow use of the household survey, discussions during the workshop clearly demonstrated need for quantified data to complement the qualitative information more commonly associated with participatory approaches. A revised household survey is in the design and field testing stage.

Creation of action plans, based on consensus building tools used in Arkos, is possible in Romania. Further, the consensus was achieved without voting. There were no "losers" in the workshop.

Youth and young adults in Arkos were especially interested in the approach and were among the most active and enthusiastic members of the workshop.

While a church in Arkos facilitated the workshop, discussions about decentralized planning and community-based action included the entire community.

Many plans for follow-up activities came forward during the workshop and include

- extending the approach to other communities
- linking the approach to city and county planning and project designs, especially where several villages, towns, and counties may wish to cooperate
- developing a cadre of village leaders experienced in participatory planning to help team leaders in other villages learn the approach
- conducting workshops for youth and young adults to help find new options and livelihoods to keep them resident in their rural communities.

An expanded version of Lessons Learned appears on pages 29 - 31.

DRAFT

Chapter 1

Participatory Tools for Community-Based Assessments

Arkos Background

The village of Arkos, which lies in the bend of the Carpathian Mountains in southeastern Transylvania, is ancient. Clay jugs and a beautiful ceramic plate from the 4th century testify to a rich culture long before the first written mention of Arkos, in the 1332 register of papal taxes. By the 15th century documents reveal a class system consisting of nobles, free peasants, and serfs. The working people then farmed, cut wood from nearby forests, and raised animals and garden vegetables, much as they do now in their small subsistence plots of 2-4 hectares.

Although the population remains ethnically uniform—of 1200 people 99% are Hungarian—the village is religiously diverse, with 45% being Unitarian, 35% Reformed, and 19% Roman Catholic. About 1% are Romanian Orthodox or Roma (gypsy). But the Unitarian church perhaps plays the biggest historical and cultural role. The fortified church, built in 1639, provided shelter when the Turks devastated the region in the 17th century. A museum in the church contains objects from many parts of village life. The palace from the late 19th century, where the former dictator Ceaucescu had luxurious apartments, now houses a cultural center. Traditional culture stays alive when the village youth, organized into a dance troupe, perform Szekely, Hungarian, Saxon, and Romanian folk dances, wearing their colorful, traditional costumes.

But Arkos faces change. As the town of Sepsiszentgyorgy (St. George, only 3 km away) grows, Arkos increasingly will become a suburb. Indeed, many villagers work in the town because there are few jobs in Arkos, and high school students must travel there to attend school. The Arkos public school, taught in Hungarian, includes only grades K-8. The village is also changing politically, as Romania is still emerging from the Communist rule of 1944-1989. In fact, Arkos has just become self-governing, with its own mayor, council, and administrative board, which meet in the newly-renovated council house.

The village faces possibly the most threatening change from a project designed to reclaim a mine, operated from 1976-1992 by the Communist regime. The sedimentary geology of sandstone, limestone, low-grade coal, and yellow clay made the location, from the outset, unsuitable for a mine. Poorly conceived and executed, the mine depleted the ground water and was abandoned as a scar on the landscape. Work has already begun to turn the mine into a lake, which will probably attract tourists and construction of vacation homes. Roads, water, and sewerage systems will no doubt be built; the telephone system may be upgraded.

Whether the village will influence planning decisions and whether the environment will be protected remain to be seen.

PAPPA (Policy Analysis for Participatory Poverty Alleviation)

The charts, tables, and maps in this field guide result from a three-day needs assessment conducted in July 2004 in Transylvania. Sponsored jointly by the Unitarian Church of Transylvania, the Unitarian-Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC), the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO), and Clark University (USA), the assessment represents an experimental approach in which the local Unitarian church in Transylvania helps a community to settle its differences of opinion and build consensus about its highest priority needs. It is patterned on the PAPPA method developed in Kenya and Ghana, jointly with Egerton University (Kenya), the Ghana Organization for Volunteer Assistance (GOVA), and Ghana/Oxfam GB. The approach has a number of effective strategies that appear to be helpful for community-based development in Transylvania.

The PAPPA planning tools are a new approach to community mobilizing, enabling village institutions to help themselves. They also assist local groups to influence national policy. Drawing on the experiences of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and household economic analysis, PAPPA integrates strengths of qualitative information associated with PRA and quantitative data derived from household surveys. It functions at two levels. At the macro level, PAPPA community-derived data inform and shape national policy on matters of pricing, subsidies, incentives, and taxes. At the local level, PAPPA uses village household data to anticipate economic and environmental impacts of Community Action Plans (CAPs), which help villages solve their highest priority needs. PAPPA bridges development gaps between local and national, quantitative and qualitative, and policy and practice.

PAPPA community-based tools help to:

- " **build village consensus on public issues**, using conflict mediation techniques
- " **create action plans**, based on community consensus about highest priority needs and ways to address them
- " **assist local institutions to mobilize their own resources** to focus on these priority needs
- " **form partnerships** with external government, NGO, and private sector agencies
- " **integrate databases and village monitoring** to link village priorities with district plans and national policy.

The PAPPA method brings a fresh perspective to mobilizing communities. PAPPA leads to a Community Action Plan (CAP) that belongs to the community. The addition of household income data produces an economically viable plan that community groups can follow. Armed with a CAP, the community no longer needs to wait for governments or NGOs to come to its "assistance." Village institutions can take initiative on their own. PAPPA can also be a powerful tool for informing national policy on poverty alleviation to reflect local realities.

There are three benefits in the PAPPA approach that more traditional design tools lack. First, PAPPA uses participatory methodologies to engage communities and to draw out voices not always heard in community deliberations. The PAPPA CAP therefore becomes internalized within the community in ways that centralized decision-making and planning cannot achieve. Second, the PAPPA method is carried out in a public and transparent mode. Issues are debated. Those who feel that a possible solution may favor one interest group in the community at the expense of another can say so. Discussion enables all to ask questions and come to consensus about what should be done. Village fears that political or business leaders will “eat the money” are less likely to occur because participation increases transparency. Third, public discussion informs local government and political officials of issues of priority to the community. It reduces possibilities of local politicians high-jacking projects (and project money) and claiming the patronage for themselves.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Planning Methodology

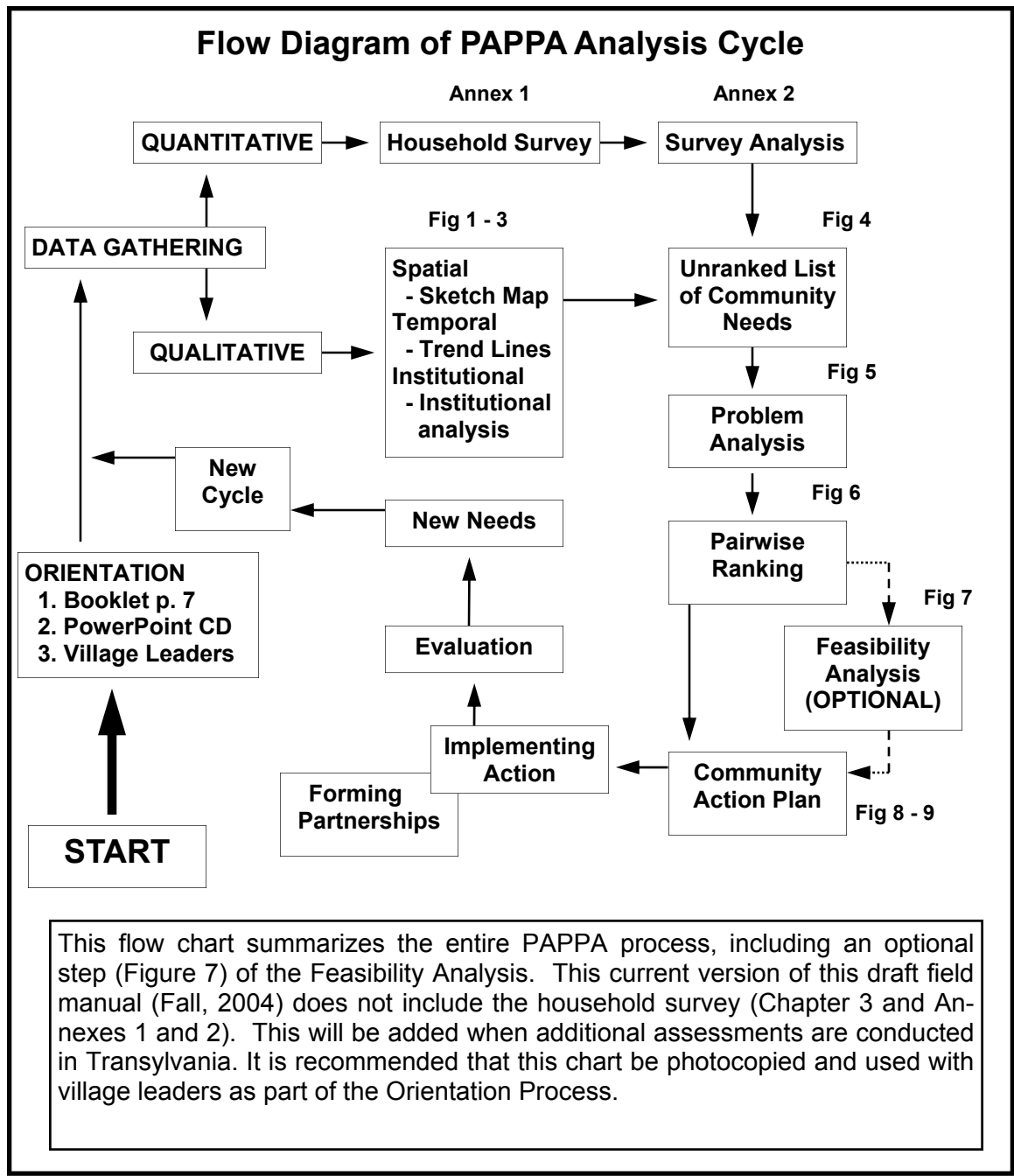
These participatory planning tools have emerged over the last 20 years in many parts of the world. Clark University, an active participant in this movement, prepared a set of field tools for testing in Arkos, based on three assumptions:

1. Communities are filled with knowledge and information about their needs and ways to solve them but that this information may need to be **organized**;
2. Communities have some resources – human, material, managerial – to solve their problems but these resources may need to be **mobilized**;
3. **Organizing information and mobilizing internal resources** enable a community to resolve internal conflicts and develop consensus on its highest priority needs and how to solve them. This consensus becomes part of a formal planning process and leads to a **Community Action Plan (CAP)**.

The action plan builds local ownership for priority needs and is substantially more important than money that outside groups can provide. The plan enables a community to generate internal resources to implement its solutions. It also demonstrates to external government, NGO, and donor agencies that the community has conducted a serious analysis of its needs and is already making contributions toward meeting them. Many thousands of development practitioners have received training in community-driven approaches, conducted hundreds of assessments, helped these communities to create action plans, and facilitated projects in water, health, feeder roads, education, income generation, forestry, and soil control in which the people have been the primary designer and manager of their own development.

The first set of assessment tools — Figures 1 - 3 — focus on data collection and analysis. For Arkos these tools included a map, trend lines, and an analysis of institutional roles in the community. These exercises established a baseline data set for the community as well as helped communities think about their assets and needs. Figure 4 presents a comprehensive list of community needs that community residents have identified, listed in random order.

The second set of tools — Figures 5 - 6 — addresses conflict mediation and consensus building. Figure 5 presents problem analysis, including causes of major needs and previous attempts to solve them. Figure 6 is the integration of three small groups in Arkos that ranked all identified problems, using pairwise ranking. It is of interest that all three groups selected the same three highest priority needs: education, income generation, and infrastructure. This unanimity suggests that the community is already in agreement about its most severe needs. The challenge then was to determine whether similar consensus could be created about how to solve them.



The Action Plan Recommendations

The assessment process culminates in a Community Action Plan. Note that Figures 8 - 9 demonstrate the community's consensus on priority needs. To enable a community to speak with one voice is a major accomplishment and confirms that organizing knowledge and mobilizing resources help village institutions — churches, farmer and forest associations, the Office of the Mayor, the village council, women's groups, water user associations — to reach agreement on development goals and strategies to meet them.

Arkos determined that water and sewerage improvement lay at the core of its needs. The Problem Analysis (Figure 5) notes a deep understanding among villagers of the relationship between water supply, human health, environmental quality, attraction of new residents, employment opportunities, and the overall well-being of a community. At present, discussions are already underway in Saint George about a possible agreement to include Arkos in the St. George water and sewerage district. The assessment enables St. George to know three things: (1) that improved water is a high priority for Arkos, (2) extension of the water system would probably reduce cost per unit of water consumed for all users, and (3) that a reliable water supply would open up new employment opportunities for many different groups in Arkos. The assessment also creates opportunities for St. George and Arkos to become partners to work together in ways that help both communities.

There is another element in the action plan. During the assessment the Arkos young people were among the most active of the entire group. Their sketch map was of particular interest as it probed into the institutional elements of the village as well as helped them to identify a mature and far-reaching list of needs. Later, during some of the ranking and planning exercises, they had much to contribute to the community dialogue. As a result, the young people decided they would like to create a supplemental action plan that responded to specific priorities that they had identified. A youth meeting was set in Arkos for July 29. Sixteen Arkos young people (age 30 and under) attended. Participation was as active and energetic as it had been when they had made their map during the first session. As a result of this second meeting of young adults, a second action plan (Figure 9) set an additional goal that reinforced the environmental theme of clean water and improved sewage/waste disposal — cleaning up a portion of a village stream.

The young people's action plan identifies steps to be taken, partners to contact, and group members who will take the next steps. The reason the young adults picked this action was that it was small, could be accomplished in a short period of time, and could be completed with only small help from outside groups. Success in cleaning a stream could then help the young people to move on to other activities on the priority list — school hygiene, a school library or playground, and other work related to improved environment and waste disposal for the community. The youth meeting demonstrated two additional items: (1) there is great energy and hope among the young of Arkos and they are ready to invest time in turning the hope into action; and (2) there have not been many opportunities in the past for the people of Arkos to form partnerships to solve their own needs. Cleaning up the stream is a good chance to learn skills of community-based planning and action. It will help the group learn how to become partners with others in the community and beyond.

Building the PAPPA Team

In theory, it is possible that all of the skills needed to conduct the PAPPA method could be found in one individual and that the PAPPA “team” could be only one person. It is more realistic to have a bare minimum of two and, ideally, three to six persons to constitute the PAPPA field team. An effective team will have among its members:

- " participation/group facilitator - responsible for leading the team
- " household survey manager - responsible for leading the household survey, entering data into the CD template (included with this field guide), and assessing findings
- " gender specialist - responsible for assuring that all members of the community participate in the assessment process, and
- " village residents - leaders from communities already active with the PAPPA approach to bring a village perspective to the team.

It is assumed that the team will have language compatibility with the community. Team members should be experienced in community-based development as well as some of the technical skills needed in rural development.

Villagers as Facilitators and Animateurs

One portion of a PAPPA community assessment identifies village leaders who demonstrate skills and attitudes for helping communities to organize information they already know and mobilize resources they already have. Identifying and training such gifted village leaders creates a cadre of local “experts” who can assist other communities to carry out their own assessments. There is wisdom in this approach.

Building a community-based cadre strengthens capacities at local levels to gather and analyze data, mediate conflicts, build consensus, initiate partnerships, and implement action to solve a community’s highest priority needs. Long-term and sustainable solutions to poverty alleviation are rooted in helping local communities to solve their own problems and maintain these solutions. For example, in Ghana, Mary Amoah, a resident of the village of Bamenase, was an active participant in the community’s PAPPA assessment in June 2002. Although limited in formal education and lacking experience in mobilizing communities, during Bamenase’s assessment she recognized that PAPPAs’s participatory tools could help her community to help itself. She worked with existing leaders, the village chief, government extension officers, and local NGOs to implement an action plan that built a secondary school, constructed a cassava processing factory, introduced commercial snail farming, launched a tree nursery for commercial trees, and created ponds for fish farming. Mary’s impressive accomplishments as organizer of community groups has now created a demand for her mobilizing and facilitating services in neighboring villages. She also continues as a strong leadership force in Bamenase.

Initial Field Visits

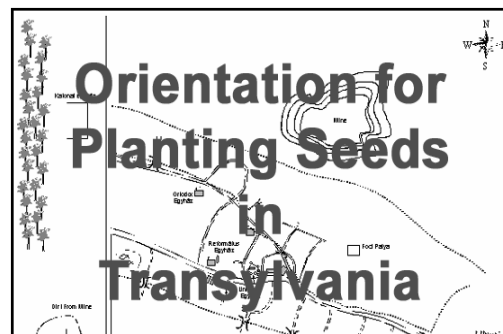
Before beginning the PAPPА appraisal, the team should observe a number of preparatory protocols. These include meeting with government officials, sometimes including prominent politicians in the area, as well as having thorough discussions with local leaders (formal and informal) about the planned PAPPА assessment. The PAPPА team should explain what people can hope to accomplish as a result, and what things the PAPPА appraisal will not accomplish. It may be helpful to photocopy the flow chart (page 4), which provides a quick overview of a community assessment and describes the procedures involved. This is a good time to explain that PAPPА brings **NO MONEY** to the community. Rather, it provides something more powerful: a plan that the entire community has agreed upon, will support, and can implement.

It will be helpful to distribute a few copies of the sample questionnaire (Annex 1) as an example of the kinds of questions that the team will be asking. The team should also find out if there are people in the community who are already skilled in some of the data gathering techniques and who might be helpful to facilitate the data gathering, take notes, prepare visual materials, or help out in a variety of other ways.

If the situation allows and a laptop computer is available, the team might also sit with small groups of community leaders and review the PAPPА PowerPoint presentation contained on the CD that accompanies this booklet. You can go slowly with the PowerPoint as well as translate the main points into local languages. There is also a short orientation booklet in Hungarian (described below) that may be helpful as it offers an abbreviated version of this handbook.

A Tool for Orientation

Think about using the short booklet, noted at the right, with village leaders and other opinion makers before the formal assessment begins. It contains very brief descriptions as well as a few of the diagrams. People can look at the process, review the specific exercises, determine how much time it will take, see the outcome in the form of the action plan, and discuss among themselves whether this is a helpful process for their community. They can also review the booklet with leaders and residents from villages that have already conducted an assessment. Copies of the orientation booklet can be obtained from the organizations listed on the inside front cover.



Chapter 2

Data Gathering

Day 1; Exercise 1 (parallel with Exercises 2 and 3)

SPATIAL DATA: Village Sketch Map

Objectives:

- " To open a development dialogue within the community and between the community and the PAPPA team
- " To announce to the community that there is an opportunity to tell outsiders something about their accomplishments as well as needs
- " To begin building a data base to help community groups rank problems and consider solutions that they can undertake themselves, possibly joining with development partners for some of their larger needs.

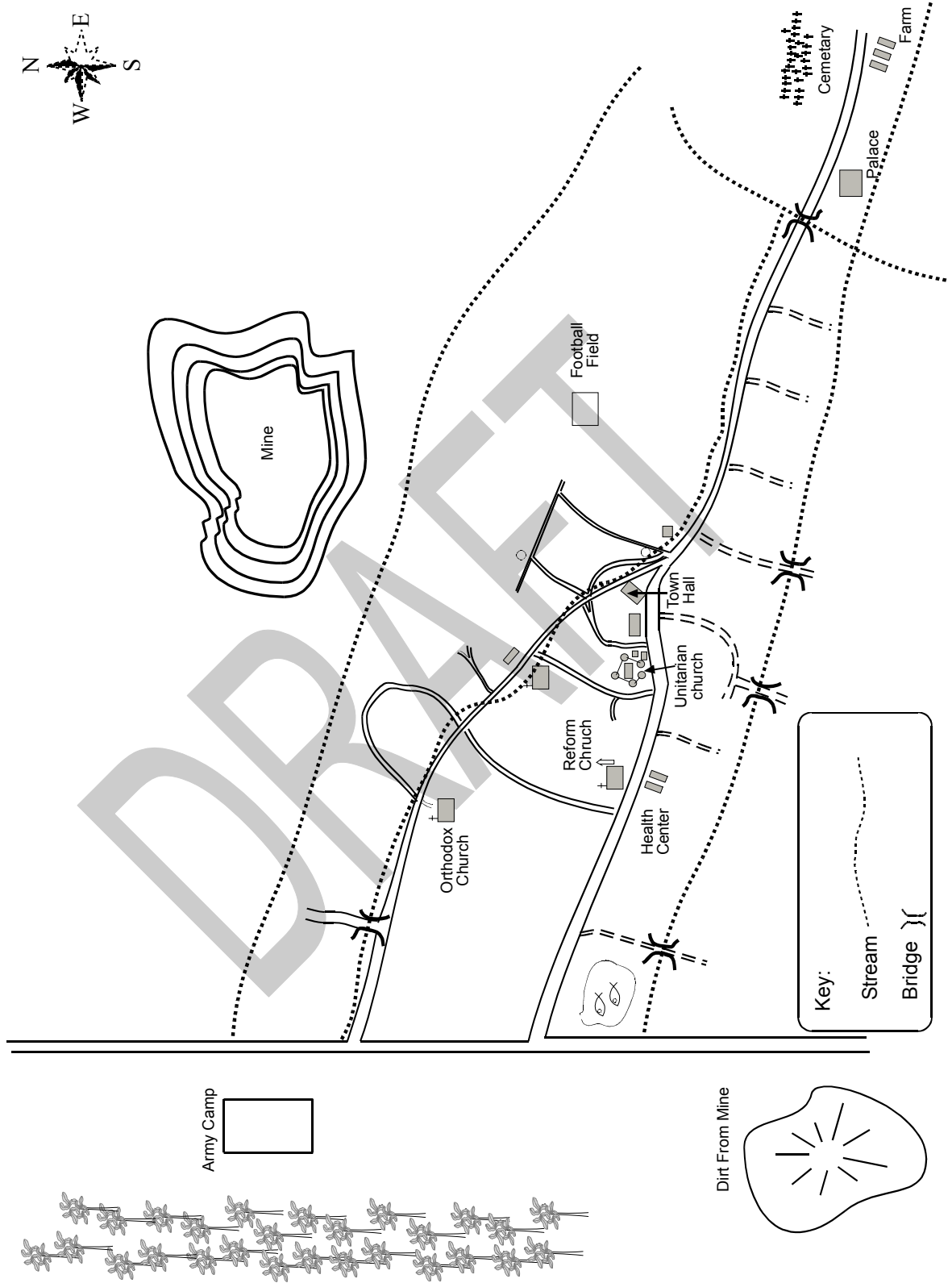
Instructions:

Explain that the best way to start a PAPPA assessment is to draw a sketch map that locates the village's development successes, failures, and continuing problems. It may be helpful to have smaller groups prepare their own maps — perhaps men, women, and youth. Groups can draw their map on the ground, build three dimensional models, or simply draw it on paper. At the end of the exercise, one person should make a clear copy of the map(s) on flip chart paper to report back to the community later that day or the next.

Comments:

The sketch map has proven to be a durable tool to encourage residents to talk to one another as well as to offer views about the community's accomplishments and needs. With the PAPPA assessment, it serves an additional purpose. In Arkos, the map established baseline data for all subsequent exercises. Making the map and then analyzing its contents provided time to discuss needs of the community, including water quality, sewage, infrastructure, and the school. A more detailed list appears in Figure 4 (page 14). Mapping goes beyond needs. It also enables the community to discuss its accomplishments such as their well-managed forest association, the newly created Office of the Mayor and village council, and their newly renovated town hall. The map sent still another message. The vitality, creativity, and energy of the youth was a marked contrast to the reserve and hesitation of the older population. Subsequent exercises confirmed the generational differences and resulted in the creation of two action plans, one for the older generation and one for the youth (Figures 8 and 9).

Figure 1: Sketch Map



Day 1; Exercise 2 (parallel with Exercises 1 and 3)

TEMPORAL DATA

Village Trend Lines and Timelines

The second data set are time-related characteristics. Just as differences from one location to another are important, it is equally significant to assess changes over time. There are several temporal tools including timelines, trend lines, gender calendars, and seasonal calendars. All help a community to examine changes in their use of time. This booklet includes only trend lines and time lines.*

Objectives:

- " To encourage community residents to reflect on changes taking place in their community, especially in the last 15 to 20 years, since the collapse of the Communist government
- " To open conversations on the meaning of these changes
- " To ask whether reconfiguring ways that the community plans and copes with its needs can give greater voice to broadly-defined and sometimes unspoken village priorities.

Instructions:

Organize small groups that reflect different constituencies (*e.g.* young and old, male and female) or do as we did in Arkos and simply count off to form three groups. The goal is to obtain broad diversities in perspective as well as to stimulate exchanges among different elements of the community. These exchanges at an early stage in the assessment will be a great help when it is time to do the ranking (Figure 6).

Comments:

There is no simple way to open a conversation about changes underway in Romania. Reflections on the enormous transformation from a state-dominated to a market-influenced economy do not come easily or quickly. Nor do these changes come without considerable disruption to the old social order and appearance of the new. Helping a community to reflect on changes underway within its structure is an excellent way for them to grasp how changes in their own community are a reflection of new options emerging at regional and national levels. The discussions can also help to introduce the notion that communities can influence the nature and the types of changes that will occur in their own communities and lives.

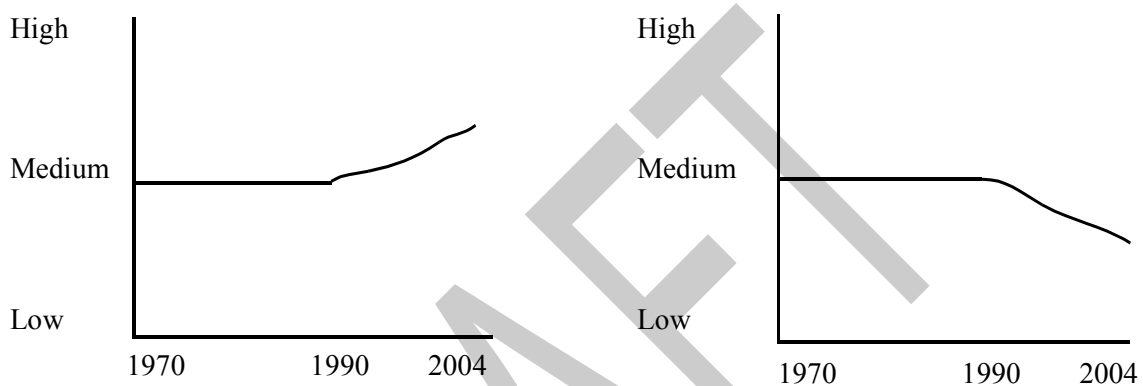
* For additional examples of tools, consult several of the case studies and handbooks listed in the bibliography.

Figure 2: Trend Lines and Time Lines

**Trend Lines
Arkos:
2004**

Agricultural Productivity

Access to Health Services



Time Line

Yeghegnadzor, Armenia (collected in 1995)*

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1965 | Every second Saturday of October is celebrated as the holiday of "Song and Harvest." |
| 1966 | Movie Central Hall is constructed in Yeghegnadzor. |
| 1976 | Yeghegnadzor Culture House is constructed. |
| 1984 | The 700th anniversary of Gladzor University. Many trees planted in the city. |
| 1985 | Industrial complexes begun in the city to eliminate the emigration of the young men to the |
| 1985-1988 | All the construction works, including all new buildings were frozen, especially in the field of housing |
| 1988 | Armenia became an independent state. |
| 1991 | Land privatization process completed |
| 1994 | Liberalization of the prices for bread. |
| 1995 | Establishment of the local TV. |

* The Arkos assessment was conducted under considerable time constraints and time did not permit gathering a timeline. This brief timeline is reproduced here as an example from another community, Yeghegnadzor in Armenia. It will be replaced with a timeline gathered from Arkos or another community in Transylvania.

Day 1; Exercise 3 (parallel with Exercises 1 and 2)
INSTITUTIONAL DATA
Institutional Analysis

Objectives:

- " To determine which institutions in the community are the most significant and why
- " To assess villagers' perceptions about which groups cooperate most effectively with each other
- " To identify missing elements in a village's institutional capability and how these gaps might be corrected.

Instructions:

Show villagers an example (Figure 3) of an institutional analysis, noting how the larger circles represent the more important institutions and the smaller circles the less important. You might want to prepare different-sized circles of paper for villagers to use in the exercise. Or you may prefer simply to have people draw in the sand or on a chalkboard in a schoolroom. Some prefer to list all of the institutions first and use pairwise ranking to determine precise rank order of importance. Others feel that the ranking will emerge during preparation of the graphics. Another option is to code the chart by gender, using circles to represent groups dominated by men and squares to identify groups in which women are active. Once you have the size of the figures established, have group members arrange them so that overlaps represent the groups that cooperate with each other in the community.

Comments:

Measuring the importance and degree of cooperation among community groups is critical if a village is to implement its own Community Action Plan (CAP). Preparing this institutional chart helps villagers to see their own capabilities in ways they might not normally consider. It also helps outsiders to understand tasks that the community can perform for itself as well as those for which outside assistance may be helpful. For example, there was a great deal of discussion about whether the people had any business designing and thinking about their village institutions. There was an underlying assumption that such diagnosis was the responsibility of the government — a holdover from the previous regime. In the end, two people prepared the institutional analysis. While one might think that such a tiny group would cause the community to reject a "minority" view, the result was the opposite. Many residents reviewed the chart (Figure 3) and commented that it was a valid representation of their community, namely many organizations that hardly functioned or had little influence, (*i.e.* Hunting Association, the Palace, Agriculture House), and a few that had respect from almost all of the community (*i.e.* Forest Association, some of the churches, the Office of the Mayor). Such information and discussions gave the group much food for thought as the assessment continued.

Figure 3: Institutional Analysis

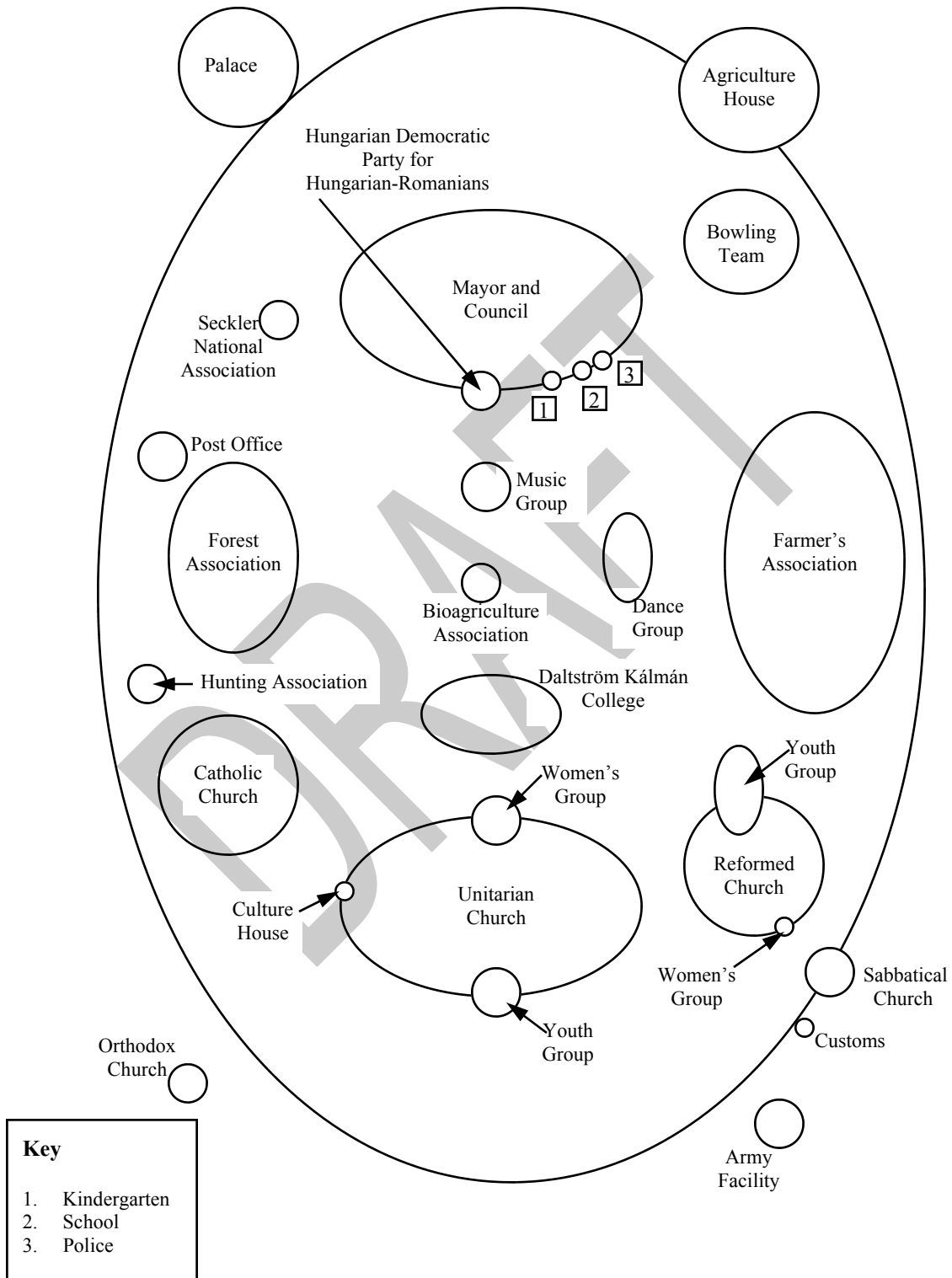


Figure 4: Unranked Needs in Arkos

1. NGOs

- Lack of cultural life – no social events
- Lack of a club for elderly
- No organized local fire protection
- No local association of farmers
- No NGOs working in Arkos

2. Unorganized sport life

- Bowling team is not organized and supported
- Sport life – poor facilities, especially football

3. Healthcare system

- No full-time healthcare staff
- Lack of health care system
- Diseases at change of season

4. Income generation

- Lack of employment
- Lack of economic development
- Pension is very small

5. Palace / mine

- Palace – does not belong to community

6. Inadequate educational system

- Lack of hygiene in school
- No physical education in school
- No library in school
- No playground in school

7. Insufficient services

- Infrequent bus schedule
- Telephone service does not extend to all houses
- Garbage in streets, dump near farm fields

8. Weak infrastructure

- No sewage or natural gas system
- Inadequate water
- Unpaved roads

9. Limited social activities for youth

- No place for youth at night – no pubs, movies, or dance facilities

10. Insufficient legal services

- No accountability
- No legal services

Thus far in the assessment there have been three parallel data collection tasks: spatial, temporal, and institutional. All three of these are normally completed during the first three hour session (Day 1). These are designed to assist the community to see a broad view of itself in order to organize information on both accomplishments and needs. The accomplishments are not necessarily used in the analysis other than as examples of how the community has solved some of its own problems or form partnerships in the past. The needs are used in a more formal way.

Figure 4 provides the community's view of its needs. Most were developed during the sketch map exercise. The discussions during the temporal and institutional exercises clarified and refined their thinking. These exercises also helped the community to place its needs in a context that extends beyond their immediate home or livelihood into a community-wide context. Once the list of needs was developed (a total of about 30), the assessment team, working with a small group of village residents, compressed it to the 27 individual needs noted above as well as re-shaped it into ten categories. If the total list of needs in a community is under ten, there is no need for compression. If it is over ten, it is best to find some way, such as that noted in Figure 4, to compress it to a manageable length for the analysis and ranking that come on the second day of the assessment, and as noted in Figures 5 and 6.

Helpful Hints on Participatory Data Collection

Opening Meeting

The initial PAPPAs meeting is very important. It is a time to announce to the full community what they can expect. Think carefully about how to conduct this meeting. Work on getting good attendance, especially the local leadership that goes beyond the immediate village. It is often a good time to do the sketch map, as the map is easy and community residents enjoy the activity.

PAPPA Brings No Money

Stress early in the discussions that the PAPPAs team brings no money. Instead they deliver something more powerful: a community action plan and a village unified to implement it.

Gender

Think about starting out the data collection with women and men meeting separately and pursuing some of their perspectives in an environment in which all feel comfortable.

Conflict Mediation

The best tools to mediate conflict are those that help all parties to understand that all will benefit by negotiating a shared action plan. It is a plan in which there are no losers, only winners.

Regional and District Opinion Makers

The final step in the PAPPAs assessment (Day 3) is a Community Seminar to which district and regional government, business, NGO, and professional opinion makers are invited. Remember to keep everyone informed about the progress of the workshop as you carry out your exercises. This will help them to feel as if they too are part of the process.

NGOs Already Present

If your PAPPAs team is new to the community, remember that there are already formal and informal groups working there. Find out who they are and enlist their collaboration as partners in the PAPPAs assessment. If they do not become partners, they will eventually become antagonists.

LIPs

Every village has LIPs — locally influential people. Just as lips speak for an individual, so LIPs often speak for villages. Be aware of the LIPs in your community. While one cannot keep the LIPs silent, you can help others in the group have their turn as well.

Simultaneous Exercises

There are many different participatory exercises to carry out. With limited time and small staff, there will not be opportunity to conduct a large number of exercises. Think about conducting two or even three exercises at the same time. While one group is doing a sketch map, another can prepare a gender calendar. However, be careful not to end up with some data sets in which only men or only women have been involved. That may skew the reliability of the data.

Team Residence During the Exercise

Some of the most effective participatory assessments have taken place when the team lives in the community. Their presence brings small income to the families where they stay; evenings provide time to tell stories or sit about a fire. It also expands the levels of trust and friendship between community and the team. The residence may even lead to a PAPPAs team vs. village youth football match.

Day 2; Exercise 1 (Precedes Ranking)

PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Objectives:

- " To assist community residents to identify the causes of their most important problems
- " To help villagers think about why some previous solutions have not worked
- " To consider new or creative strategies that might be more effective in helping the community to meet its basic needs.

Instructions:

Ask residents to compile a chart modeled on Figure 5. The example provides information on only one community problem, largely to save space in this manual. Many villages complete the exercise for 10 to 12 problems. While small group work may be helpful to provide this kind of information, it is recommended to complete this chart with the full community present or with representatives of ALL constituencies of the community. At this point in the process, it is critical that as many villagers as possible buy into both explaining why the problem has gotten out of hand and what are possible solutions. If portions of the village feel that the eventual plan of action represents a minority opinion of the community or if it appears to be a plan engineered largely by outsiders, they will probably boycott village action and certainly will not contribute money or other resources to support it.

Explain for the last column (opportunities) that it will be possible to add additional options later, especially from technical people who may be specialists in water, forestry, credit, or other technical needs. These options can then be evaluated as illustrated in (optional) Figure 7, the Feasibility Analysis. Note also that the problem analysis chart prepares the community for the ranking (Figure 6) that will be the next exercise.

Comments:

This is the first exercise that focuses on solutions. The three data columns (Causes, Previous Coping Strategies, Opportunities) are offered in sequential order. The process encourages the community to think first about the causes of its problems, then try to remember previous attempts they have made to solve them, including why they did not work, and finally to reflect on these points before offering new options.

Figure 5: Problem Analysis, An Example from Arkos Water Needs

| Causes | Previous Attempts to Solve Problem | Opportunities/Possible Solutions |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Lack of funds</p> <p>Because of the mine, the ground water table has dropped</p> <p>Well water is not safe to drink--contaminated by fertilizers, nitrates, and possible human waste</p> <p>Piped water supply leaks, lends to insufficient water pressure, and does not reach every house</p> <p>There is no sewerage pipe network in the village. Sewage pits are unhealthy and environmentally hazardous (especially when dumped in fields)</p> <p>Water consumption has increased</p> | <p>Collect water from forest springs. However, use of mineral spring was prohibited by government</p> <p>Village wells</p> | <p>Clean Drinking Water</p> <p>Hook up to the Saint George water and sewerage network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -use professional consultants and engineers -write feasibility plan that will be in accordance with regulations and seek approval of local committees and offices -obtain grant funds <p>Dig village well</p> <p>Bring Spring Water to the village from the Army Facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -spring should become village property again -lobby for approval from army and other government agencies (open discussions with Mayor, Local Council) -seek professional planning and advice -establish local committee -involve local village group and the churches -purchase pipe as village contribution -dig trenches -dig sewage cleaning pit -clean spring -build a tank -money now being used to purchase mineral water could be contributed toward cost of project, perhaps for two months -contribute labor |

Day 2; Exercise 2 (Follows Exercise 1) Ranking Problems and Opportunities

Objectives:

- " To enable the community to come to consensus about which problems are the most severe and which possible solutions may be most feasible
- " To employ pairwise ranking to help community residents carry out full discussion of their preferences.

Instructions:

Prepare a grid for pairwise ranking. Start with a matrix on a large flip chart or in the sand, such as the one in Figure 6. List the problems to be ranked (preferably no more than 10) in the left hand column and then again (in the same order) across the top. Block out each cell in which the same problem meets, *e.g.* sports and sports, health and health, or schools and schools. Also block out all cells below the line of the intersecting cells to avoid duplicate ranking. Then ask the group assembled to compare each set of choices, one pair at a time. Select whichever of the two the community judges to be the more severe and enter the abbreviation into the proper cell. For example, to start with the first pair, ask which is a greater need, more effective NGOs or better sports facilities. Note that after some discussion the community said NGOs were a higher priority (more severe need). “NGO” appears in the upper left hand cell where NGO and Unorganized Sports intersect.

Continue with the next pair, NGOs and Health Care. After discussion, the community said health was a greater need - note “HC” is in the cell where NGO and Health Care intersect. Continue with the chart until all cells are filled in. Then tabulate the number of times each need was selected. Note there are 45 times pairs can be ranked if you have ten needs to rank. So the number column for ranking ten choices will always total 45. Then go to the last column (Rank) and label the need with the highest number of choices (Income Generation with 9 selections) as the need ranked with the highest priority. Then complete the ranked order list.

Comments:

Ranking may be the most critical of all the PAPPAs tools. It provides the community with an opportunity to discuss its preferences. If making a decision about one cell is difficult, skip it for a few minutes and go on to other cells. Come back later and see if it is any easier a second time. If there is still disagreement, do not try to settle the conflict by voting. PAPPAs seeks to build unity and consensus in a community. Voting creates winners and losers and may disrupt community unity at some later date. If after all of these attempts there is still disagreement over a particular cell, put 1/2 point for each of the choices — indicating that it is a tie. That will have no adverse impact on the eventual ranked order.

**Figure 6
Pairwise Ranking to Identify Most Severe Needs: Arkos**

| Problem | NGO | SPT | HC | EDU | SER | INF | INC | SOC | P/M | LEG | Num. | Rank |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| Lack of NGOs | | NGO | HC | EDU | SER | INF | INC | SOC | NGO | NGO | 3 | 7 |
| Unorganized Sports | | | HC | EDU | SER | INF | INC | SOC | SPT | LEG | 1 | 9 |
| Health Care | | | | EDU | SER | INF | INC | HC | HC | HC | 5 | 4 |
| Education | | | | | EDU | EDU | INC | EDU | EDU | EDU | 8 | 2 |
| Community Services | | | | | | INF | INC | SOC | SER | SER | 5 | 4 |
| Infrastructure | | | | | | | INC | INF | INF | INF | 7 | 3 |
| Income Generation | | | | | | | | INC | INC | INC | 9 | 1 |
| Social Activities for Youth | | | | | | | | | SOC | SOC | 5 | 4 |
| Palace/mine | | | | | | | | | | LEG | 0 | 10 |
| Legal Services | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 8 |

Ranked Order: Arkos

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Income Generation | 4. Social Activities for Youth |
| 2. Education | 7. NGOs |
| 3. Infrastructure | 8. Legal Service |
| 4. Health Care | 9. Informal Sports |
| 4. Services | 10. Palace/mine |

Optional Exercise Feasibility Analysis

Objectives:

- " To develop more detailed technical information on complex and large-scale proposed activities
- " To consider measures of the quantitative impact of particular options on a community's well-being
- " To prepare a report or set of recommendations for the community so that more intelligent and sustainable decisions can be made.

Instructions:

This is an optional exercise. It is used if a group finds that it lacks expertise to make complex recommendations in areas of high technology (*e.g.* sewage treatment), large regional scope (*e.g.* a regional forestry or transportation need), or professional services (*e.g.* equipping a clinic or providing training for health workers). To get started, create a sub-committee to collect pertinent information. It may be that government or NGO groups in the region can offer advice; perhaps a young person in the community has access to the internet; or possibly one of the potential development partners can provide information. Once the new data are available, assemble the committee or the full community group and conduct a feasibility analysis, using the tools pictured in Figure 7. It provides opportunity to assess different interventions on the basis of six criteria:

- " ***Productivity*** - how much will the option yield?
- " ***Stability*** - will major changes follow from the intervention that may disrupt the economic, political, cultural, or ecological life of the community?
- " ***Sustainability*** - will the option be able to continue producing/operating for an extended period of time?
- " ***Equitability*** - will all people in the community benefit equally from the intervention?
- " ***Time to Benefit*** - How long will it take for benefits to reach the people?
- " ***Cost*** - Is the cost realistic in relation to the benefit?
- " ***Technical Feasibility*** - Can the project work in the context of the community's support system?

Once the committee has collected information and outside specialists have been identified, review the Feasibility Analysis chart. It is more complex than the pairwise ranking tool (Figure 6) but its outcomes are more precise. Figure 7, as presented on the next page, includes results from a community that faced technical choices about which water system would serve its needs most effectively.

Figure 7: Feasibility Analysis

| Intervention | Productivity | Stability | Sustainability | Equitability | Time Benefit** | Cost** | Technical Feasibility | Score | Rank |
|------------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------------------|-------|------|
| Boreholes | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 4 |
| Roof Catchments | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 12 | 2 |
| Natural Springs | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 1 |
| Repair Dams | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 2 |
| Shallow Wells | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 3 |
| New Surface Dams | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 3 |

| Key to Response Codes | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ? | Unknown |
| 0 | Negative Impact |
| 1 | Good Impact |
| 2 | Better Impact |
| 3 | Best Impact |

** Note that this exercise can be confusing because Time to Benefit and Cost use low numbers for a high rating. Note in the borehole line that cost for a borehole will be high so it has a low ranking (1); time to benefit will be short so it has a high ranking (3). For all the other ranking categories, if the output is high, the ranking will be high. For example a borehole's productivity will be high so its rating is 3; its equitability will be low so its ranking is 1. Read this note twice as it can be very confusing when you are doing the actual ranking. The chart below may help.

| Characteristic | Unknown | Negative | Good | Better | Best |
|-----------------------|---------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| Productivity | ? | 0 | 1 = Good | 2 = Better | 3 = Best |
| Stability | ? | 0 | 1 = Good | 2 = Better | 3 = Best |
| Sustainability | ? | 0 | 1 = Good | 2 = Better | 3 = Best |
| Equitability | ? | 0 | 1 = Good | 2 = Better | 3 = Best |
| Time to Benefit | ? | 0 | 1 = Long | 2 = Medium | 3 = Short |
| Cost | ? | 0 | 1 = High | 2 = Medium | 3 = Low |
| Technical Feasibility | ? | 0 | 1 = Good | 2 = Better | 3 = Best |

Day 3

Creating the Community Action Plan (CAP)

Objectives:

- " To integrate the ranking, household survey analysis, and impact assessment exercises through adoption of a Community Action Plan (CAP)
- " To consider which portions of the CAP can be provided by members of the community and which will need outside assistance.

Instructions:

If you have skipped Figure 7 (Feasibility Analysis), bring a technical person (*i.e.* water engineer, health specialist, or forester) to the planning meeting to scope out the needs in material, labor, management, and money for the highest priority options. Start with the technical needs. Then find out who or which groups in the community can provide materials, time, or money. If one of the needs is training (for example, in leadership), ask whether anyone in the village knows of organizations that provide such services. Finally, consider schedules. If the list of projects is small, you may be able to combine the CAP with selecting indicators to save the community from meeting another time.

Comments:

At this stage in the process, the Arkos community was becoming comfortable with setting its own priorities, planning how to solve them, and designing a course of action that would involve their own contributions as well as counterpart funds from partner agencies. However, they were less comfortable in working out technical details for the complex and capital intensive water and sewage system that was among their highest priority needs (Figure 8). As a result, Arkos determined that a lower priority and simpler task would be more advisable to get PAPPAs action started. Young people met a few days after the assessment and created a second Community Action Plan, presented here as Figure 9. The young peoples group not only decided to start with cleaning streams, but made very specific plans, including organizing pledges of materials (gloves and trash containers) and small money to buy additional equipment. They also designated specific individual for particular tasks.

If this is the first time you are conducting a community planning exercise and the first time that a group in the community is becoming involved in community-driven planning and action, it is a good idea to try something small and see how it works. Exercises such as the water and sewage work can come later, or can use tools such as Figure 7 to work out technical details. Arkos opted to do the small project and it was started within a few months of the assessment. It is too early to know whether the small task of stream cleaning will open the door to additional and increasingly more complex projects. The action will be carefully monitored and analyzed as it moves forward and lessons learned incorporated in booklets and manuals such as this one.

Figure 8: Community Action Plan - Water

| Activities | What is needed | First Steps | Who to Follow Up? | When | Indicators |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Connect to the St. George water and sewerage network | Professional consultants and engineers 15 to 20 kms of pipe | Write proposal to Office of the Mayor and other local councils, encouraging the use of ecologically friendly practices in designing, implementing and managing the system | Village Development Committee | From now until 2005 | Clean, healthy drinking water for the village Improved control of sewage and waste disposal to protect the environment Increased water availability with improved pressure Decreased cost |
| Dig village well | Technical survey to identify what will be needed | | | | |
| Build pipeline to bring spring water from army facility into village | Approval of army and appropriate government agencies Funds Materials: pipe, sand, gravel, cement Tools and large machines Professional consulting 2 kms of pipe Trenches | Toth Kaiman to open discussions with Mayor, local council, and other government offices Establish a Spring Water Management Committee | Local council Village Development Committee Local village groups and churches Professionals | | Improved public opinion toward water quality preservation Increased rural tourism |

**Figure 9: Community Action Plan - Youth and Young Adults
Cleaning a Stream as a First Step in Solving
An Environmental Need**

| Activities | What is needed | First Steps | Who to Follow Up? | When | Indicators |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| Gathering the people | Location/meeting room | Select a date for preliminary organizational meeting | Andras, Csongor, Jutka | To be set | |
| Assessment of the situation | Meeting of Organizational Committee | Define where and how much of stream | Ervin, Csongor, Laszlo. Miklos, Gergo | | |
| Supplies | Film, brochures, fliers, paper, protective gloves, buckets, rakes, transport to move trash, hoes and shovels | Ford to contribute up to \$100 for publicity materials; Székely Enikő to give ten pairs of gloves and 5 plastic bags | Contact Ford if mobilizing additional resources from outside groups is needed | | |
| Organizational Committee | | Go to council and mayor | Andras, Csongor, Jutka | August 3, 2004 | |
| Contacting the local council to inform them of our plans | Place to deposit trash that is collected | | Andras, Csongor, Jutka | | |
| Publicity | Posters, personal invitations, small group discussions | Contact Ford with list of things needed such as film, photocopying | To be identified | | |
| Contact the army to see if they would have interest in becoming a partner | Truck to help haul trash | Arrange a plan to meet with army leaders | Andras, Csongor, Jutka | | |
| Evaluation of entire process | | | | At the end of the project | |

Follow-up

Choosing (or Training) a Village Development Committee (VDC)

The community may have an existing committee with the explicit responsibility to implement action. If so, make sure that the existing committee represents all parts of the community — elders, other men, women, youth, ethnic groups, religious groups. In the case of Arkos, there was already a youth group and a registered NGO, the Forest Association. If such a committee does not exist, work with leaders to appoint such a group. There are often leadership training opportunities already available through the local government or other organizations. Help members of the committee take advantage of such training. There may also be retired teachers or civil servants in the community who could help implement the CAP. The main point is to identify a group of about seven residents who will take specific responsibility for implementation.

Selecting and Using Indicators

One task of the implementing committee will be to select and monitor indicators to determine how well CAP implementation is proceeding. Figure 8 contains a list of indicators (last column) that measure change in the community related to the CAP. For example, measuring the time that households are without water is one indicator. Another is looking at health statistics to see if water borne diseases are decreasing. It is high priority that the committee designate one or two people to keep track of these numbers and periodically report back to the community.

Securing Competent Technical Assistance

Projects falter for many reasons. One is poor technical advice. The committee needs to work with the village, county, or appropriate NGO officers, to make sure that the water system, school, and related projects are well planned, that issues such as water runoff are considered, and that realistic designs are adopted. Most local governments, such as Covasna County, have staff skilled in the basic technologies of development. If staff members are not available, work through village and district networks to find people knowledgeable in technical areas.

Holding Meetings and Keeping Records

Arkos' CAP was created through participation. It is critical to sustain involvement of the entire community. One way is to assign a resident (ideally a member of the committee) with the task of recording decisions taken at committee meetings and village discussions. One of the inevitable outcomes of community-based planning and action are rumors about leaders stealing money, placing wells and clinics next to their own homes, or add-

ing all their relatives to the payroll of a community project. The best way to control rumors is to make all decisions public. Record keeping is critical. Making the records available to the entire community is essential to maintain community energy and morale.

Forming Partnerships

Community groups can do a great deal for their own development, but they normally cannot do it all. Working through the local government, the committee needs to learn about NGO, government, and international programs that can help with their CAP. Initially it is usually difficult to attract attention from external groups. The difference that enables a community to break out of its isolation is its CAP, the means through which a community can find and formalize partnerships. The tactic that has worked in virtually every PAPP community has been: (1) creation of a plan — the CAP upon which the entire community agrees; (2) community initiatives to begin implementing the CAP; (3) good monitoring of indicators to show change; and (4) sustained community consensus in support of the plan. These four steps are within the grasp of any community and committee. Think carefully about how a community can use these four tactics to transform its CAP into development partnerships with external organizations.

Managing Money

Another basic management need is a transparent and fully accountable money management system. Individual communities have different systems, depending on local needs and traditions. At the core of any system lie three principles: (1) multiple signatories, ideally with one being from the local government or an NGO; (2) public reporting on a regular basis, including itemized expenditures and sources of income; and (3) an independent referee in case of disputes. With these procedures established and respected, funds should be well managed in ways that benefit the entire community.

Stimulating Additional Activities

All of these follow-up strategies are designed to create a physical infrastructure and an institutional capability to support additional projects. Building infrastructure and improving roads, education, health, water, and resource management benefit the entire community by enabling individuals to pursue more productive livelihoods. Strong communities support successful livelihoods; strong livelihoods help to build successful communities.

Chapter 3

Integrating Quantitative Data with Participatory and Qualitative Information

A full PAPPAs assessment includes systematic use of quantitative data gathered through a brief household survey. Time in Arkos was limited and did not permit a survey of the community. For an example of a survey, see *Mato Bato: Solving a Water Problem on Negros Island through Community Action*, pages 18 - 21 and 26 - 35. These pages present instructions to administer the survey, an example of a survey, an example of the survey results tabulated within 24 hours of its being carried out, and examples of charts and graphs that are quickly and easily derived from the household data. As this Transylvania field manual moves through different field trials, a field instrument will be included along with an appropriate template to enable the assessment team to enter all the household surveys at the rate or about five minutes per questionnaire.

The advantages of the survey are fourfold. First, the information on average household income, expenditures, business/farm/employment expenses, health and social conditions, and self-measures of well-being help to assess the economic impact that a community's planned intervention may have. Second, the quantified information coming from the survey establishes a structural baseline that can be used to compare with future developments. Third, if county or regional planners opt to introduce the PAPPAs community-driven planning tools, they will be able to use the data to shape policy for poverty alleviation, educational planning, health care management, transport, vocational training, water and sewer arrangements, and many related planning needs. The statistical data can be gathered quickly, effectively, and in forms that can easily be scaled up (aggregated) to develop a regional data base for policy formulation.

The fourth purpose is by far the most important for the community. When the PAPPAs team concludes its work in a community, they leave all of the qualitative data (sketch map, ranking *et al*) with the Community Development Committee. They also leave the findings of the household survey (see pp. 30—33 in *Mato Bato*). Armed with qualitative and quantitative data about their community, with demonstrated evidence that they have conducted a careful analysis of their own needs, and with a plan of what they plan to do about meeting these needs, a community greatly increases its ability to find development partners. While PAPPAs communities can solve some problems themselves, there are many times they need government or non-government development agencies to provide technical, material, or human resources not available from within the community.

Many examples of PAPPAs assessment helping to identify partners are available, including:

" Nagbinlod, The Philippines to develop community water system

- " Bamenase, Ghana to construct a cassava processing mill and build a new school
- " Dararweyne, Somaliland to rebuild their agricultural infrastructure after a devastating civil war
- " Mbaruk, Kenya to reforest badly degraded lands, and
- " Vohibazaha, Madagascar to reduce land degradation and stop forest encroachment in a national park

Many more examples could be cited. The point is that assessments lead to action plans and the plans greatly assist the community to create one or more partnerships to solve their own problems.

There is no guarantee that accomplishments such as those noted above will blossom in all Transylvania communities that conduct PAPPAs assessments. However, Arkos is off to a good start. Within two months of creating an action plan the youth group has already conducted a stream cleanup and is now looking toward additional projects related to education, sanitation, and community well-being. It is too early to conclude that the process has worked for Arkos. It is not too early to conclude that the assessment has caught hold in Arkos and that after only a few months has helped the community to take tangible steps toward gaining control of problems that have plagued them for several years.

DRAFT

Chapter 4

Report from the Houston Team: Lessons Learned

The final section will be of particular interest to North American UU congregations and fellowships that are contemplating developing or expanding a partner church relationship. The Arkos assessment included six members of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston. Their thoughts, comments, and evaluation of the process follows. It will be interesting reading for those who are thinking about joining with such an assessment and partnership.

The Houston group's narrative follow:

The assessment in Arkos was an experimental pilot project, intended and designed to discover to what extent the PAPP method, developed over 20 years mostly in African communities, could be adapted to work effectively in a different culture in Transylvania. Our tentative, preliminary answer is yes; we think this approach to community development has great potential for that region. However, we learned, to no one's surprise, that Arkos people and culture have distinct characteristics that a community development project must take into account. Though a small village, Arkos lies close to a sizeable town, in which a number of the villagers work; its people are quite aware of modern technology, despite their limited access to some of it. They also have a centuries-old experience with oppression but very little with democracy at any level. Consequently they have little reason to think that individual or even communal initiatives can be effective in satisfying their needs. We were told that they tend to be suspicious of collective enterprises, partly because of their experience under Communism. Based on our experience in Arkos, we offer the following list of lessons we learned and some suggestions about matters to consider before going to Transylvania to undertake a community-development assessment.

Lessons Learned

- " As a local community-development group (Szeke) warned us, Transylvanian communities may need more preparation than we offered before conducting an assessment, both before and after the assessment team arrives. The local partner church needs to inform all the citizens and the leaders of the community about the nature and purpose of the project and prepare them to participate well before the team arrives; a survey (in the PAPP toolbox) can gather demographic information of interest to potential partners and help publicize the coming meetings. An orientation booklet is also available to use with village leaders. It can be obtained from the UUPCC, address at the beginning of this booklet.

- " Local or regional people can be trained to conduct the assessments. Facilitators from Szeke, who spoke both Hungarian and English, were invaluable in facilitating and interpreting results of the meetings for us.
- " Older members of the community may be somewhat passive and slow to take initiative. Young adults may be much more responsive and active; they may be able and willing to serve as translators and help carry out surveys. However, because of jobs or schools elsewhere, they may not remain in the village to carry out extended projects.
- " Community members need to be encouraged (subtly) to choose a feasible project to which they can contribute. A fourth meeting would provide an opportunity to assess the feasibility of various projects (*cf.* PAPPA toolbox) and also to share information about potential partners and their resources that the assessment team had already gathered.
- " Americans should avoid culturally insensitive comparisons between Transylvania and other countries or cultures.
- " Economic development is often inextricably tied to politics at all levels. Relevant economic development activities, for example, are already in progress very near Arkos, so the community must learn how to participate effectively in the political process to ensure that the community will benefit from this development. The assessment team can help gather and share information relevant to this process.
- " An American assessment team should help the community form an action committee before leaving and share with the committee information that may be helpful concerning possible governmental or non-governmental partners. Because the American team may already have contacted these possible partners, it may be able to help the committee with initial contacts. The American team can also encourage partners to help with the action plan.
- " The Arkos assessment occurred in the summer, at the height of the growing season. Meetings could not begin until villagers finished their evening milking, so meetings could not last the necessary three hours. Choosing a time, say in the fall, when villagers have more leisure would be ideal for purposes of the assessment.
- " The American team can model democratic and collaborative skills within community groups and with outside partners.
- " Villagers may have been conditioned by past donations from American partner churches to expect the assessment team to bring money. It is necessary to explain that the American team brings no money. However, once an action plan is made, Americans can help facilitate funding. Perhaps, also, partner churches may have small amounts of money available to help the process. For example, after the Arkos assessment, the Houston team bought tee shirts for the young adults' project to clean up the stream running through the village.

" Americans should avoid the temptation to diagnose problems and design solutions. Being appreciative of local culture and adapting to it, being humble and friendly make for a successful assessment—and lead to lasting friendships.

Before You Go

1. Ideally, members of an American partner church will have visited their partner church before planning a project.
2. Members of an American assessment team should receive training in PAPPA methods. Contacting the UUPCC is a good way to make these first steps. The Houston PAPPA team is willing to offer any help we can.
3. An American assessment team should work with its home church to establish the extent of its church's commitment to the project. The team should include people well integrated into the church.
4. The team should covenant with each other and with its home church about its working relationship within its team and with the church. This covenant might include how to make decisions, how to keep communications open, and how to honor different perspectives. At some point, the team should covenant with its partner church, also.
5. Make in advance as many logistical arrangements as possible. These arrangements include travel, lodging, transportation within the country, and translation. The UUPCC can help. Also learn about details of village life — availability of drinkable water, plumbing, etc. Check with your doctor about the need for shots.

In summary, we conclude that the basic assumptions we brought to the exercise are valid ways to stimulate actions that solve problems:

- " The tools enabled the Arkos community to identify and prioritize its most severe needs.
- " The process helped Arkos residents to organize and mobilize their community to take action on immediate problems as well as leave in place a method for them to deal with new needs as they arise.
- " The approach has created an opportunity to strengthen partnerships between North American Unitarian Universalist churches and their Transylvania partners.

