



PRAXIS
Institute for Participatory Practices

Annual Report
April 2008 - March 2009

PRAXIS

Institute for Participatory Practices

Annual Report 2008-2009

Contents

From the CEO	3
Revisiting April 2008 – March 2009	5
Voices of the People of Kosi.....	6
Rights of Dalit Communities	7
Empowering Sexual Minorities & Injecting Drug Users.....	8
People with Leprosy Will Have a Say	10
Including the Voices of Children	10
Addressing Vulnerabilities of Bonded Labour	12
Voices of The Elderly in Bihar	13
Engaging with the State	14
Trainings	14
Breaking The Silence.....	19
Praxis Productions	19
Publications.....	21
Praxis System Audit.....	22
Praxis in UK.....	23
Praxis in Afghanistan.....	25
Facts & Figures.....	26
The People of Praxis	28
Managing Committee.....	35
Members of the General Body.....	36
Annexure.....	37
Praxis Offices.....	41

1

From the CEO



A planet in peril, an economy in crisis is how the times we are passing through have been described. There has never been a time more pressing than now for a task never more imperative than this: to re-examine the fundamentals that govern economic and environmental decisions globally, nationally and locally. Sadly though, the process of

revisiting is still seen as the prerogative of people privileged enough to suffer the least impact of the (shall I say, civilisational) crisis that we face. Analysis and remedial policy prescriptions still emanate globally from the North, nationally from a political capital firmly under the siege of big business and locally from (still) feudally entrenched vested interests.

Practitioners and proponents of participatory processes, indeed participatory democracy, have also not faced times as challenging and potentially exciting as the present. The free market jingoism that drowned out our fervent pleas to ‘include the excluded’ is now substantially muted. Financial capitalism that transferred billions across continents in nano seconds and mocked at the dispossessed (*there is no free lunch, no matter what data your participatory rural appraisals churn out*) is now queuing up at its flagship institutions for survival doles from the national exchequers.

Rather than gloating with the familiar *we told you so* rhetoric, this is the opportunity to hone our skills and examine our methodologies to effectively build-in mechanisms to offset the still persisting exclusiveness of the socio-economic arena. Our work in empowering and linking invisible communities should present a credible challenge to the vested interests determined to quick fix the crisis and double speed the return to business as usual. But more significantly it should seek to offer a perspective to address the problems that confront humanity at this historical juncture comprehensively, indeed structurally.

In the light of what we have set out to accomplish over the last year I look forward to sharing our work and accomplishments while we continue to strengthen our base and extend our vision, mission and values both in India and abroad.

From Praxis's early beginnings twelve years ago we have continued to break new ground on diverse fronts. The projects of the last year address the rights of the most marginalised and excluded groups such as - children, *dalit* communities, the people of the Kosi Basin, sexual minorities, injecting drug users, people with leprosy and disabilities and bonded labour being among the groups we have reached out to.

The steady growth of Praxis UK is a testimony to the quiet strength and commitment to engagement with participatory tools and methodologies as a viable means to development. The role of Praxis UK is pivotal in representing the issues of the South to the North and creating a platform for Praxis's mission, vision and values in Europe and Africa.

As we move forward I cannot but thank the Praxis team without whom we could not have achieved all that we have, your sincere commitment and unique strengths not to mention the camaraderie has seen us through good times and bad.

I thank you all for being part of this incredible journey.

Tom Thomas

CEO, Praxis

2

Revisiting April 2008 – March 2009

Praxis-Institute for Participatory Practices is a not for profit organisation set up in 1997 to promote participatory practices in all spheres of human development. Over the years it has evolved as an autonomous entity that has become synonymous with participation in the development sector.

As an organisation Praxis believes in inclusive development by building the capacity of the poor and the marginalised. Enlarging its vision and mission through trainings, capacity building, community mobilisation and advocacy, Praxis has set in motion the process of active participation in decision-making. Over the past year we have worked with some of the most marginalised groups such as children, *dalit* communities, the elderly, sexual minorities, injecting drug users, people with leprosy and disabilities, the river people of Kosi to name a few. Praxis extends its vision, mission, and values through Praxis UK, to include the people of Africa and Europe while providing a platform for the issues of the South to be represented in the North.

Included are some of the major projects and events as well as professional assignments and internal advocacy initiatives undertaken between April 2008 – March 2009. A list of all projects with details of donors can be found in the annexure.

Voices of the People of Kosi

Advocacy - Kosi Yatra

On October 12, 2008 the Kosi Yatra began from Kusaha, the point where the embankment breached. The Yatra concluded on October 21, 2008 at Kursela where the Kosi river flows into the Ganga. The exploration was an attempt by Praxis to follow the trail left by the devastating Kosi floods of 2008, to get a sense of the damage caused and to extend support and solidarity to the affected communities. It was the first attempt of its kind by any institution, government or non-government to travel through the changed course of the Kosi river, as a result of the breach of the eastern embankment at Kusaha. People on the boat included engineers, academicians, social activists and *panchayat* leaders, besides members of the Praxis team.



Lives displaced by the breach in the embankments of the Kosi at *Kusaha* in 2008

Built nearly five decades ago to confine the river and provide security to inhabitants from flooding, the Kosi embankments have become a curse. Over the last fifty years there have been eight breaches in the embankment with disastrous consequences to life and property. People most affected by the floods are *dalits*, people belonging to backward classes and the elderly, who are excluded from relief and other support structures.



Dalits are socially excluded and marginalized in Bihar

structures like houses, canals, and drainage had been damaged, agricultural land was silted or waterlogged and could no longer be used for cultivation. The loss of lives, damage to property and displacement had precipitated a crisis on a scale unprecedented. In several places where the Kosi ploughed a new course, it caused havoc as people in the area had never experienced floods before.

Praxis continues working with its partner organisations within the Kosi Basin to find a sustainable and long-term solution to the man made ecological disaster that is gradually eating into the lives of over a million people who live along and between the embankments of the Kosi river.

The breach in the eastern embankment in Kusaha in 2008 witnessed devastating floods in Northern Bihar. The change in its course caused colossal damage in areas that had been declared flood free for forty-five years leaving people unprepared and unequipped for the unprecedented havoc it caused - it was declared a national calamity.

In the course of ten days, it was found that over a million people had been displaced,

Rights of Dalit Communities

An Assessment of Dalit Atrocity and Implementation of the SC/ST Act in Bihar

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was enacted in 1989. The objective of the Act was to prevent widespread instances of atrocities against socially marginalised communities living in India. After nearly two decades of its enactment, atrocities against *dalits* continue to be perpetrated at the behest of socially dominant communities in Bihar. In August 2008, a Public Tribunal was held in Patna to understand the implementation of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in Bihar. The meet was organised by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) project. It involved survivors of different kinds of atrocities and included women and men from communities belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Praxis supported in documenting the outcomes of the meet for implementation of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in Bihar.

Dalit Watch Monitoring Report

The devastation caused by the breach in the embankment of the Kosi River near the Indo-Nepal border resulted in one of the worst floods in the history of Bihar in August 2008. The unforeseen disaster affected 18 districts; Supaul, Araria, Madhepura, Saharsa and Purnea being the worst hit.

Praxis, as Dalit Watch secretariat with other partner organisations came together to monitor relief camps set up in the aftermath of the floods of 2008 to address promptness in delivering relief and issues of discrimination against Dalits in the distribution process. The report titled 'Morsel of Life' in English 'Jivan Ki Aas Ke Liye' in Hindi was compiled and published by Dalit Watch with support from Praxis.

Empowering Sexual Minorities & Injecting Drug Users

Baseline Assessment Study for Monitoring Community Mobilisation for Avahan II

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation focuses on HIV prevention in India with the goal of reducing HIV prevalence among high-risk groups and stabilising infections among the general population. The Foundation's Avahan program is one of the largest single HIV prevention programmes around the world. The first phase of the programme started in 2003 with community mobilisation as its central strategy.



Mobilising sexual minorities

In continuation with Avahan I the second phase is set to roll out from 2009 through 2013. One component of the HIV prevention project focuses on rigorous strengthening of community capacity and management capacity on the ground so that communities are ready to engage with government and operate institutions to help build their access to entitlements. With this objective, Avahan has been working on a community mobilization approach for the last few years with target groups such as female sex workers, men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender and injecting drug users.

Owing to challenges relating to monitoring the quality of processes of community mobilisation across the programme, there has been a need to reflect on the indicators to determine how change is happening at scale.

Employing its expertise in developing effective monitoring designs Praxis is assisting Avahan take the process forward by creating processes as well as a framework to facilitate periodic updating of minimum standards for community mobilisation. Praxis will also independently monitor the progress at the field level. In the first



Baseline Assessment of Community Mobilisation for Avahan II a sample of about 40 Community Based Groups (CBG) were selected from a total of 120 CBGs across six states that are within the project purview. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland and Tamil Nadu are the states in which the Baseline Assessment has been carried out. The tools employed were evolved through rigorous participatory processes with primary as well as other participating stakeholders, academic reflection, as well as extensive piloting and review of field level processes.

Praxis has built a software solution for the entry and analysis of all the information that has been collected in the field.

The information from the field is being used to understand the current level of community mobilisation as well as project areas where the CBG needs to be capacitated so that they can evolve into independent community led bodies to lead the processes for change in their respective domains of engagement.

People with Leprosy Will Have a Say

A Capacity Needs Assessment for The Leprosy Mission

The Leprosy Mission (TLM) works with people and communities affected by leprosy and disabilities, a highly stigmatised group in India. Having achieved the milestone of a sharp reduction in the number of leprosy affected persons in India, TLM has moved to the next level, shifting their focus from the provision of health services to working towards community organisation and empowerment in a participatory manner. The organisation is in the process of adopting new strategies of working and interacting with individuals and communities.

Recognising the needs of the staff to adopt new skills and competencies in development tools and practices, Praxis was called in to prepare a Capacity Needs Assessment to assist TLM improve their performance.

Praxis conducted a detailed study and investigation of current organisation structures, systems and processes to carry out Capacity Needs Assessment and training of core staff members of CBA division in different locations at Allahabad, Belgaum, Delhi, Kolkatta, Raipur, Villupuram, Vizianagaram. Praxis facilitated the process of Capacity Need Assessment for staff members in all project locations with a view to strengthen capacity of TLM staff in all areas of project cycle management.

Including the Voices of Children

Invisible and voiceless, protecting the rights of children continues to be an important initiative for Praxis.



Children are often left out of any serious discussion with regard to their own development or predicament almost by design. These studies were a reaffirmation of Praxis's belief that everyone irrespective of their age, caste and gender, can participate actively in development debates. In

both the the study for Save the Children and the evaluation for Railway Children, Praxis took care to listen to children and foreground their concerns and points of view, it was key to finding solutions to address their problems.

Save the Children, Finland

Participatory Baseline Study on Child Rights of the Indigenous Community for eight villages of European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Project, South Rajasthan, was conducted by Praxis for Save the Children, Finland. The study focused on understanding the nature, extent, magnitude and trends of the child rights' violations and child abuse in eight villages of Udaipur and Dongarpur. This participatory research specifically explored the magnitude and forms of child abuse in the project districts, studied the profile of the abused children and the social and economic circumstances leading to their abuse. The Study focused on children belonging to tribal communities of Rajasthan.

Railway Children UK

Praxis organised the end - evaluation of the 'Reintegration of platform children into society' project implemented by Railway Children and its partners. The Programme is part-funded by Comic Relief. The Study team organised the evaluation during the period from December 15, 2008 to March 10, 2009. The team visited ten project sites across six states, in addition to meeting and consulting with Programme Officers and Country Director of Railway Children. The purpose of the evaluation was to consolidate the past learning before embarking to the next phase; to examine the underlying hypothesis of "Early intervention-Partnership-Reunification"; and to examine the role of RC in the successes and challenges in the partnership. The evaluation was carried out through a set of tools developed to enhance participation of the implementers as well as intended beneficiaries. Within the time constraints and other resource-related limitations, the evaluation was organized with a larger focus on strategic dimensions and enabling and constraining factors rather than getting into miniscule details of financials and target monitoring.

The Study met children on the platforms and at the drop-in-centres, and had group discussions with them on issues affecting their lives, including the possible solutions to address their problems. The voices of children captured by the team provided significant inputs for a comprehensive strategy for the reintegration of platform children.

Addressing Vulnerabilities of Bonded Labour

Rapid Appraisal of Vulnerability of Workers to Bondage Situations in Key Economic Sectors in Tamil Nadu

As part of the efforts to promote the ILO (International Labour Organisation) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Praxis conducted rapid appraisal of vulnerability of workers to bondage situation in key economic sectors in Tamil Nadu with support from the ILO. The study spanned four months and was conducted in four sectors - rice mills, brick kilns, handlooms and stone quarries.



The study analyzed the living and working conditions of workers in the above four economic sectors in the identified blocks, by using qualitative and quantitative methods. It analyzed the preferred labour force management, recruitment practices, motivations of employers, employment trends and prospects of the sectors; and provided suggestions / recommendations for programme design to address vulnerabilities to bondage situations. Detailed data was collected, and analyzed on the different dimensions of life situations of workers in four sectors.

Voices of The Elderly in Bihar

Research & Support

Commissioned by HelpAge India (HAI), Praxis undertook a participatory study on conditions faced by the elderly persons in the flood affected district of Supaul in the month of November 2008. Covering 20 locations from Basantpur, Raghapur and Chhatapur blocks of Supaul district, the purpose of the study was to incorporate the findings through interventions with elderly people. Praxis provided support to HAI functionaries by sharing local knowledge and building linkages with local organisations to implement relief work.



Initially, Praxis provided administrative support to HAI for setting up administrative systems and processes by providing training to their volunteers in distributing relief aid, and facilitated them to conduct the study using participatory methods. The relief work was carried out in two phases. In the first phase of relief, medical support was provided to flood victims through Mobile Medical Unit (MMU). Praxis facilitated the process of identifying affected villages with the help of local NGO “Gram Bharti” and distribution of relief material to 1200 families in Nirmali and Araraha villages.

The learning experience of the first phase worked as a basis for the second phase wherein the routes for the MMU were pre-decided and local people had prior information about the MMU’s visit. The relief distribution was also regulated and provided to 3001 families across 5 *panchayats*. Verification of the beneficiary list

was conducted by individuals with no political or other sectarian affiliations to avoid exclusion.

Additionally, video documentation was undertaken as a part of the assignment, to expose the vulnerabilities faced by the elderly.

Engaging with the State

Support to Bihar Governance Reform Mission

Government of Bihar (GoB) has demonstrated the political will to undertake wide-ranging reforms. However, impact has been hampered by limited capacity.

The purpose of the programme is to improve the capability of GoB to deliver better quality services to all its citizens, particularly the poorest and most excluded. Praxis is providing its domain expertise to GoB in a three year partnership through a consortium led by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India Private Limited.

Trainings

Praxis has been conducting regular workshops and trainings for government institutions, various national and international development organisations and the corporate sector on a range of topics such as the basics of participation, introduction to participatory tools, micro level planning, participatory monitoring, and evaluation. Some of the training programmes undertaken include the following:

The Workshop 08

The international workshops in participatory development play a pivotal role in capacity building in participatory approaches of development professionals across the globe. During the year Praxis organised the 12th International Commune on Participatory Development.



Robert chambers addressing participants at the Workshop 08

For ten days, over 65 development professionals from across 15 countries in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and South, South-East and Central Asia resided at the Kerala Institute of Local Administration campus in Thrissur, to reflect, share and learn about participatory development. Four training modules were conducted:

1. Participatory Methods and Approaches
2. Community-led Local Level Planning
3. Community-led Monitoring and Evaluation
4. Corporate Social Responsibility and Community Development

The programme included general and specific module based theory, four days in various rural and peri-urban field settings, as appropriate to the module content, and finally a sharing, reflection and feedback session.

Immersion

“Immersion” have been described in many ways. To keep it simple, as the term itself suggests, it is a situation in which someone is fully absorbed by a certain reality. In our context, that “someone” is the development professional who, eager to get a first-hand understanding of people’s lives s/he is concerned with, decides to live among them for some time, as one of the community. In this sense, immersion represents a unique opportunity to learn about the complexities of people’s realities on their own terms and on more equal power relations.



Senior programme officer at Praxis, Rafaella Catani, participating in an Immersion

Social Inclusion is one of UNICEF's central pillars of work in the new Country Programme Strategy (2008-2012). 'Immersion' were seen as the ideal mechanisms by which UNICEF staff could reflect on the meaning of a commitment to social inclusion based on engagement and interaction with families, communities and children from socially excluded groups in the state/geographical contexts in which they work. UNICEF India contacted Praxis in order to initiate an immersion learning programme. A pilot immersion learning programme for UNICEF India took place from 24-28 November 2008 in Mohala block of Rajnandgaon District (Chhattisgarh) for a group of nine individuals, most belonging to the UNICEF State office of Chhattisgarh with the help of our local partners Samajik Sanstha and Ekta Parishad. The overall objective was to gain a first-hand understanding of social exclusion with a specific focus on Dalits and Adivasis.



Praxis programme officers Rafaella and Sharmista at an Immersion in Chattisgarh

UNICEF has also recently expressed interest for an immersion in Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. New learnings are expected from these experiences; not only with regard to the immersion topic but also on the current Praxis design of Immersion, Insight.

Most Significant Change Trainings

The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique is a participatory monitoring and evaluation technique based on stories rather than indicators. MSC stories are about important or significant changes - they give a rich picture of the impact of development work and provide the basis for dialogue over key objectives and values of development programmes. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the kinds of change to be recorded and in analysing the data. It is a form of monitoring because it occurs throughout the programme cycle and provides information to help people manage the programme. It contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the programme as a whole.

Two workshops on The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique took place in New Delhi from 24-25 November (for experienced users) and 27-28 November (for new users). Rick Davies, the developer of this technique and Veronica Magar, Director of REACH, facilitated these workshops. Eighteen participants attended the first event and around twenty-five attended the second one.

Perspective and Capacity Building Workshop on Social Equity Audit

Towards more inclusive and equity based development interventions.

The workshop was organised in the three states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala during April 2008. The focus of the workshops was on helping participants to understand and address structural, organisational and strategic constraints and bottlenecks that prevent/limit marginalised and vulnerable communities from equitable participation and benefit from sharing in development programs. It has further helped the Caritas India partners known as Diocesan Social Service Societies (DSSS) in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala to re-evaluate their structure and programming to move towards more inclusion. The workshop also focused on helping organisations re-form their structure, systems and organisational processes in an inclusive manner by being attentive and giving visibility to the voices of the excluded within the organisation. The workshop helped participants become familiar with tools and methods for integrating the concerns of the excluded in design,

planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in project management through participatory practices, a necessary step towards empowering the vulnerable.

Micro Level Planning

Praxis has been conducting Micro Level planning (MLP) training workshops in the past. Praxis facilitated a five-day training on Child Centred Micro Level planning for partner NGOs in Bihar for Plan (India), an organisation working on the issues of children. One of the outputs of the training programme was the preparation of a manual entitled 'Child Rights and Micro Level Planning'. The manual identifies the needs of children, captures the process of MLP and the need to incorporate children's voices while planning programmes for them from a rights based perspective.

3

Breaking The Silence

Praxis Productions

Ranked Outsider/ Kahye Bhaye Pardesi – A 27 min. film on migrant workers

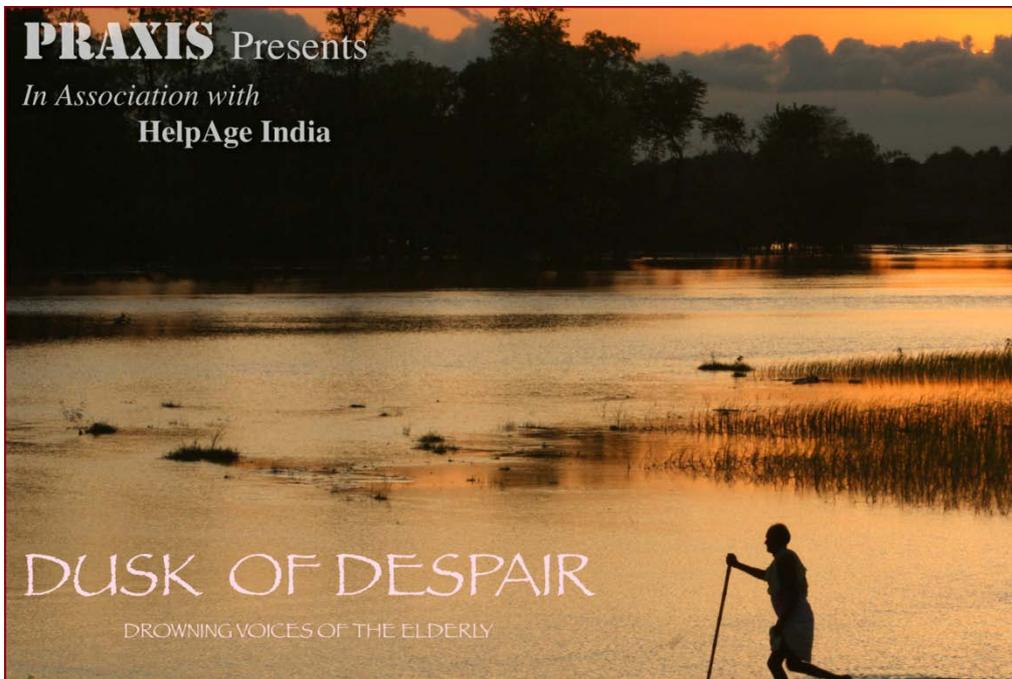
A documentary film produced in English and Hindi captures the journey of migrant workers in the process of migrating from their state of origin to their destination.

Migration is a common phenomenon in Bihar where millions of workers migrate in search of livelihood. Migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to the deprivation of their fundamental human and labour rights. Their vulnerability arises from poverty and as a result they are not in a position to influence policy makers and implementers. ‘Ranked Outsider’/ ‘Kahye Bhaye Pardesi’ was produced by Praxis on the triumphs and traumas faced by migrant workers.

Dusk of Despair – A film on the fate of the aged in times of floods

“Dusk of Despair” is a documentary film produced by Praxis for HelpAge India on the plight of the elderly in a disaster. According to Census 2001, more than seven million people in India are above 60 years of age, of them, a very large percentage of

the elderly live in the state of Bihar. The film depicts the hardships experienced by the elderly living in North Bihar where the Kosi floods occurred.

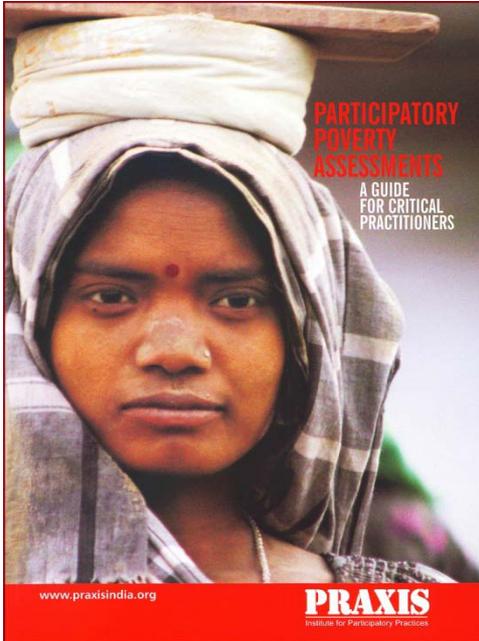


The elderly being extremely marginalised under regular circumstances were the most vulnerable section of the population during the Bihar floods in 2008. With almost no means of coping during the floods of 2008, they were abandoned to their fate by family members and a community struggling to survive the floods. The film in brief depicts the sorrows and tragedies experienced by the elderly during relief and rehabilitation camps organised after the flood.

An elderly woman in the film throws light on her situation, which could sum up the fate of the old, who at the twilight of their lives are forced to fend for themselves. “Everything I owned has been washed away. My son and daughter-in-law have gone and left me alone here. I am living at the mercy of my village community. Since the floods, I have received nothing. I survive only on water.”

Publications

Participatory Poverty Assessments: A Guide for Critical Practitioners



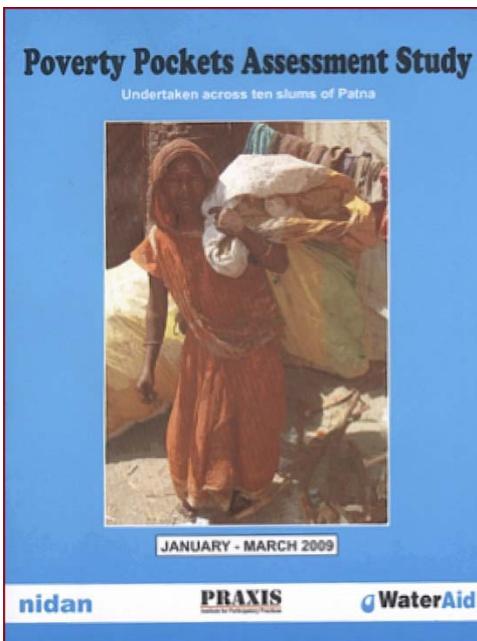
Praxis published a book entitled Participatory Poverty Assessments: A Guide for Critical Practitioners. The book presents a theoretical and practical guideline for Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA).

It presents an introduction to the tools and methods of PPA as they have emerged through best practices and lessons. An attempt has been made to bridge the gap between the different strands of debate and practice.

It provides practitioners with an understanding of wider context and the debates, challenges and opportunities of

PPA. An honest assessment of what PPA can and cannot achieve in the current development context has been aptly made in the book.

Patna's Urban Poverty: A Report



A report on Patna's urban poverty, based on an assessment undertaken by Praxis in collaboration with Nidan, was published with support of WaterAid in March 2009. Praxis had earlier conducted a training of resident representatives of ten slums of Patna and members of Jhuggi Jhopri Sangharsh Morcha in January 2009, who were assisted by the staff of Praxis and Nidan in undertaking fieldwork for the assessment. The report was put together by Praxis based on a synthesis of data generated under the assessment.

4

Praxis System Audit

Towards doing it better

Having completed twelve years in existence, a need was felt within Praxis to further strengthen organisational processes to ensure accountability within a democratic framework. Keeping in mind its primary goals and objectives, efforts were made to reduce the drudgery seen in traditional reporting and paradigm review.

The goal of the process was to help Praxis 'do it better' by revisiting the various processes, systems and methods practiced over the years without compromising on Praxis's quality and competitive edge

The key issues addressed were:

- a) Improving Praxis' internal systems (systems of communication, management of resources including financial & personnel)
- b) Strengthening of knowledge production dynamics – consultancy, training and internal programme
- c) Improving quality of Praxis' services and products to the clients

The audit revisited the processes, systems and methods of doing business on a day-to-day basis in light of the vision, mission, values and strategies articulated by the team. It began with the deliberations that were held around this topic at the Annual Retreat 2008 where the team reviewed various activities and engagements of all the offices of Praxis (Delhi, Patna, Chennai and UK) and inputs were solicited from staff, clients and other concerned stakeholders.

All these processes led to a Systems Audit Workshop at Badkhal resort, Faridabad from February 21-23, 2009, to take concrete steps in 'doing it better'.

5

Praxis in UK

Praxis UK is a registered charity set-up in October 2007. The goal of Praxis UK is to extend the vision, mission and values of Praxis to a wider global audience by working in the UK and Africa. Praxis UK aims to reflect the voices from the South, directly to the North through Praxis India. Its first three-year strategic framework for 2008 – 2010 outlines its four directions of building capacity, developing equitable partnerships, advocating for the right to participate and scaling up the use of participatory approaches for equitable and sustainable development.

It does this through providing technical support and capacity building services, resource mobilisation for Praxis India and running its own ‘home’ projects.

With regard to technical support, Praxis UK has quickly established itself as a lead provider of capacity building in participatory approaches and bringing best practice from India, to Europe and Africa. In the last year it has provided capacity building in participatory approaches to a wide range of organisations including the Universities of Bristol and Goldsmiths, The Brooke, the International Nut Producers Cooperative, and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance. A training for statutory and Third Sector organisations on the ‘The Duty to Involve’ – new UK legislation regarding citizen’s right to participate in the design and delivery of local services is on the anvil.

Praxis UK has also managed several major participatory evaluations, including two of national HIV community mobilisation projects for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It has established close links with other leading participatory practitioners in the UK in order to identify synergies and partnerships for future work.

Praxis UK’s flagship project is the Voice of the Nile programme. The aim of this programme is to enable marginalised river dependant communities to have an active and influential voice in development decisions regarding the world’s longest river.

Rivers are a critical natural resource for poor communities throughout the world. But they are being depleted through climate change, pollution, over-use and inappropriate

damming. How the poorest are being affected by these issues, how they are coping, and what support they need is not clearly understood. This ambitious four-year programme will therefore build the capacity of civil society throughout the ten Nile basin countries to assess the needs of the most vulnerable and communicate these needs to local, national, regional and international policy makers and planners. Towards this aim it has established partnerships with the main civil society and governmental umbrella bodies of the Nile and established an online platform for civil society organisations throughout the Nile to add their voice to the Nile.

With support from DFID, the international Scout Association and the Royal Geographical Society, the project has also established a development awareness programme to raise consciousness in the North of the plight of river-dependant communities in the developing world. The first stage of this saw scouts in the UK and India conduct research expedition down rivers in the UK and India, and comparing and contrasting how floods affect people along rivers in both countries, and the development of 'Youth Manifesto's' to address the issues raised. These were then uploaded to an innovative Google Earth platform for young people to compare and contrast findings. In 2010 this will be scaled up with the world's first expedition down the Blue and White Nile's to raise international awareness of the voices of Nile dependant communities.

PRAXIS | uk
Including the Excluded

Contact us

Search Praxis
Google Custom Search Go

HOME WHO WE ARE WHO WE WORK FOR WHO WE WORK WITH WHAT WE DO GET INVOLVED

Praxis UK : Including the excluded

Praxis UK is a not-for-profit NGO specialising in participatory approaches to sustainable development. We aim to enable excluded people to have an active and influential say in their own equitable and sustainable development.

We are part of the Praxis international alliance with partner organisations in the UK and throughout Asia and Africa. As a development NGO originating from India, we also bring the Southern perspective on development policy and practice to the North.

[donate now](#)

River Voices

Quick links

The Duty to Involve – Are you involved? 1-day seminar for statutory authorities and third sector organisations on making the Duty to Involve work for you

“Be the change you want to see”
Mahatma Gandhi

The Praxis UK office is based in central London with two permanent staff, several volunteers and, a pool of associated consultants. As part of the Voice of Nile project launched the Friends of the Nile in London and Brighton with members to providing occasional voluntary support and fundraising to the project.

6

Praxis in Afghanistan

Facilitating a Process of Fair Trade

Praxis had direct presence in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2005, to support the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan through capacity building of national, regional, and local government, and of local and international organisations in community development. It has a continued commitment in supporting sustainable and equitable development and stability in Afghanistan and is keen to create an alternative to the common Afghan charity model of handouts, which only increase dependency on aid, create resentment in non-conflict affected regions and reduce sustainability.

Having worked closely with communities in various parts of Afghanistan, Praxis believes that an ideal way to do this is to optimally use locally available resources and skills. Afghanistan produces some of the world's finest nuts, but current terms between the Afghan producers and consumers in Pakistan and India, are far from fair. So for Praxis UK to facilitate a fair trade process for Afghan nuts, may help to address some of Afghanistan's development issues in a sustainable way.

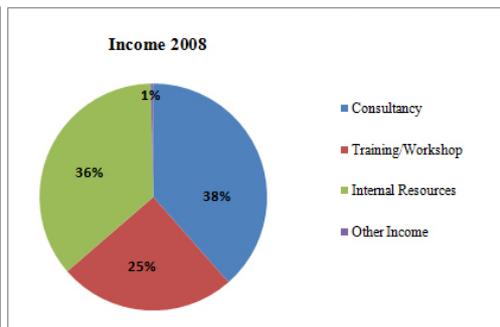
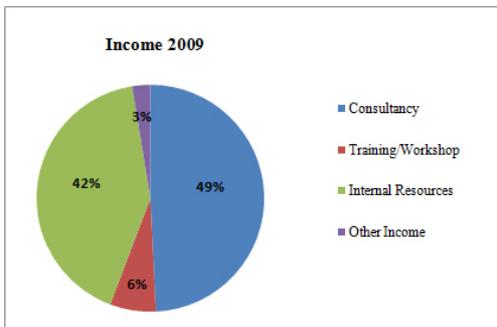
Praxis UK has therefore teamed up with the International Nut Producers Cooperative to assess the viability of setting up a fair trade process which

- Offers self-reliance and an equitable and sustainable alternative to the current paradigms of charity and handouts.
- Significantly improves the management and business skills of communities.
- Increases transparency and accountability in management and commercial relations
- Offers payment of a fair price
- Increases gender equity
- Ensures safe working conditions
- Ensures environmental protection

7

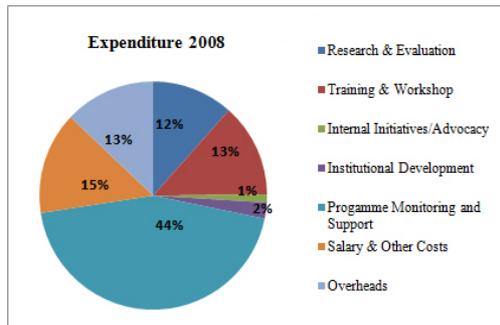
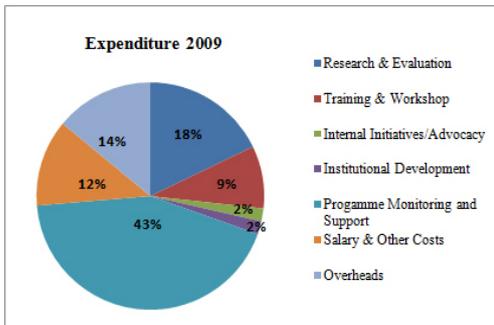
Facts & Figures

Sources of Funding (figures in Rs. 000's)			
	Activity	2008/09	2007/08
1	Consultancy	10607	5217
2	Training & Workshops	1407	3406
3	Income from Investments	8981	4876
4	Other Income	555	50
	Total	21550	13548



Expenditure

Distribution of Expenditure by Activity <i>(figures in Rs. 000 's)</i>			
	Activity	2008/09	2007/08
1	Research & Evaluation	3183	1789
2	Training & Workshops	1584	2049
3	Advocacy	325	177
4	Programme Monitoring and Support	7710	6853
5	Institutional Development	331	351
6	Admin/Office Overheads	4694	4243
	Total	17827	15462



8

The People of Praxis

Praxis Delhi

Asiya` Nasreen

(Programme Officer)

Asiya comes from an academic background in social work. She has taught the social work curriculum at the postgraduate and undergraduate level at the Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia for ten years. She has written articles on development issues and a book on the issue of ageing, she also holds a Ph.D in social work. She is currently associated with Praxis after taking a break from her career in teaching.

Anberin Pasha

(Fellow)

Anberin joined Praxis in April 2009 to produce documentary films on Praxis' initiatives and is currently working in the communications department. While researching for a documentary film to be produced by Praxis on the impact of globalization, exploring an ideology that is both unconscionable and ecologically destructive, she is working with the communications team to strategize external and internal communications. She has worked in Africa, the Balkans and the United States producing documentary films and fundraising films for NGO's.

Benji John*(Admin. Officer)*

Benji has sound experience in administration, data processing and logistics. He has previously worked with national and international NGOs. Benji is fluent in English, Hindi and Malayalam.

Indu Prakash Singh*(Head – Capacity Building)*

Indu is a multifaceted person whose work with the marginalised and excluded sections of Indian society over two decades has spawned valuable insights reflected in a creative sphere. As writer, poet and editor, Indu has authored four books on women of India and has edited a number of publications. In 2003 Indu was chosen as the Person of the Year, by Delhi's First City magazine. In November 2008 Indu became a citizen journalist with IBN 7, to raise the issue of homeless women in Delhi having no shelter at all.

Indu has worked with ActionAid International – India, BBA/ SACCS, Navdanya/ RFSTE, VHAD, VHAI, Helpage India and been part of the women's movement since 1983. He is active in various national movements and campaigns and is a voluntary blood donor (having O Negative blood group) donating over 20 times in the past.

Mukta Ojha*(Programme. Officer)*

After completing her post-graduate diploma in film Direction and Production from Sri Aurobindo Institute of Mass Communication, Mukta assisted on various documentary film productions addressing issues of tribals in Himachal, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Arunachal Pradesh. She has also worked as a core team member with Pragya, an organisation working in high altitude Himalyan region. Films are her passion and traveling is a way of living for her.

Pradeep Kumar*(Communication Assistant)*

Pradeep holds a Post Graduate Diploma in TV Production from Notre Dame Communication Centre, Patna and a Certificate Course in photography from Ravi Bharti Institute of Communication Arts, Patna. Pradeep is Praxis's in-house cinematographer, film editor and photographer. Before joining Praxis he worked as a freelance photographer for seven years.

Pradeep Narayanan*(Head Consultancies & Resource Mobilization)*

Pradeep has more than thirteen years of work experience with the Government, Corporate and Non-Governmental Sector in India, Singapore and London. Having started his career as a Management Trainee in a corporate group, he has diversified to varied sectors. For the last six years he has focused on children's issues, primarily child labour and its relation to education, child protection, child participation and health. Over the years, he has also handled projects on issues of community participation, water rights, free trade agreements and fair trade. He is a post-graduate in Development Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Raffaella Catani*(Senior Programme Officer)*

Raffaella has more than seven years of field experience in the development sector, mainly in social and community-based programmes in Africa. She is well acquainted with REFLECT, which is a participatory methodology to empower communities through literacy. Currently, she is responsible for the management of Praxis immersion programme, called Insight. Raffaella is fluent in Italian, English, French, Portuguese and has a working knowledge of Arabic.

Ranjit Kumar Jha*(Accounts Officer)*

Ranjit has over thirteen years of experience in Finance and Administration in a non-profit and corporate organizational setting operating in multiple locations.

Sabu Varghese V*(Driver and Office Asst.)*

Sabu Varghese is PDC in Automobile Engineering (ITI) from Central Technical College, Kerala. Sabu has more than fifteen years of driving experience. Other than driving the office vehicle, he also assists in the day-to-day activities like photocopying, filing, stores and office maintenance.

Shahina KK*(Senior Programme Officer)*

Shahina has been a television journalist with Asianet communications, one of the oldest television networks in India. She has been in journalism for a decade and has produced several documentaries and news features besides the routine newsroom and reporting assignments. She has brought out several issues in areas of development, gender and human

rights through her stories. She has done masters in English language and literature and Postgraduate diploma in Mass communication and journalism.

Sharmistha Sarkar

(Programme Officer)

Sharmistha Sarkar has nine years of experience in planning and management of nutrition, child survival, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS programmes, along with Participatory Planning and Monitoring, Advocacy, Strengthening Local Governance, Institutional Strengthening, with diverse target groups. She has been involved in various participatory and policy research projects in areas around community mobilization, social exclusion, corporate social responsibility, decentralisation, nutrition and food security.

Srijan

(Senior Programme Officer)

Srijan has over five years of work experience in the field of development. He has worked on issues of child rights, livelihood, tribal rights, disaster relief and mitigation and corporate social responsibilities. His interest areas are participatory research, training and filmmaking.

Tom Thomas

(CEO)

Tom Thomas has over 20 years of experience in the development sector. His association with Praxis began in 2000 when he took over as CEO. Prior to joining Praxis, he held senior positions with Action Aid in India, Bangladesh and the UK. He has led Praxis on several important assignments, both nationally and internationally. He is fluent in English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada with working knowledge of Bengali and Marathi. Tom is also a member of the Praxis Board.

Dr. Vinita Yadav

(Manager Consultancies)

Dr. Vinita Yadav has nearly nine years of experience in urban development and expertise across various sectors. After graduation, she completed two masters: in Geography from M. D. University and Urban Planning from School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi and Ph.D. in Institutional Capacity Building and Governance from Jawaharlal Nehru University. She has worked on projects related to institutional capacity building, governance, urban poverty analysis, monitoring and evaluation, financial management etc. She has experience of managing projects which include interface with multi and bi-lateral donors, govt. officials, NGOs and community members. Currently, she is responsible for managing all the externally funded projects.

Praxis Chennai

Ajai Kuruvila Jacob

(Fellow)

Ajai Kuruvila Jacob has been a consultant to various agencies such as ActionAid International, Red Cross, CARITAS, CASA, DFID, Govts of Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, ILO, UNIDO, etc. He has worked on projects relating to Child Rights and Education, Displacement and Urban Poverty thematic areas of Action Aid International India. He led the Community Facilitation Unit of the NGO Coordination and Resource Centre (A UNDP supported process in Nagapattinam) in the post tsunami context and has been involved in facilitating work among the pavement dwellers in Chennai over the last few years.

M. J. Joseph

(Head - South India Operations)

Joseph has over 20 years of experience in the development sector. An experienced facilitator and a practitioner of participatory approaches, he has also been extensively involved in various capacity building exercises. He has worked on participatory action research in the area of micro-credit, agrarian issues, drinking water, watershed development, democratic decentralisation and local governance. Joseph has also lent his knowledge to several participatory assessments and evaluations. He is fluent in English and Malayalam with working knowledge in Tamil and Hindi.

Mary George

(Programmer Officer)

Mary has spent over ten years working at the grass root level in the development sector. She has been involved mainly with issues such as empowerment of women, and community based programmes in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Prior to joining Praxis she worked for two years on post Tsunami rehabilitation, housing, livelihood and community-based disaster preparedness, for Caritas India in six coastal district of Andhra Pradesh.

Bala Sundar B

(Programme Assistant)

Sundar has more than fourteen years of experience in the development sector. He is well versed with the application of participatory methods and tools for data collection, analysis and community organization. He has wide experience in conducting urban poverty assessment, process documentation, and participatory need assessment of Dalit communities in Tamil Nadu. He has also been actively involved in the field research and documentation process related to Tsunami rehabilitation interventions across Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh coasts. He is fluent in Tamil, Hindi and English.

Praxis Patna

Anindo Banerjee

(Head Internal Programme Initiatives)

Anindo Banerjee is backed by Post Graduate Studies in Rural Management and has been involved in a number of projects in areas of Policy Advocacy, Participatory Research and Capacity Building in India, South Asia and Africa. Fluent in Hindi, Bengali and English, Anindo is in charge of Praxis' programme initiatives aimed at furtherance of equitable development, good governance and community-led collective action.

Girish Chandra Mishra

(Manager Finance and Admin)

Girish has nine years of experience handling finance and administration in non-profit, multi-locational settings. He has an in-depth understanding of various statutory provisions and compliance management issues pertaining to governance of societies, FCRA, income tax, provident fund and gratuity. Before joining Praxis, he worked with several public and private agencies.

Jay Verma

(Programme Officer)

Jay has facilitated partnerships and dialogues amongst various development agencies. He has been involved in the appraisal and capacity building of NGOs, participatory poverty assessment (Chhattisgarh) besides managing research on issues relating to youth reproductive health in Bihar and Jharkhand. Additionally, he has worked extensively in Western Rajasthan in areas of health advocacy, livestock development and community based rehabilitation programmes. Jay is fluent in Hindi and English.

Rajendra Ram

(Driver and Office Asst.)

Rajendra Ram has more than ten years of driving experience. Other than driving the office vehicle, he also assists in day-to-day activities like photocopying, filing, stores and office maintenance.

Praxis UK

Josh Levene

(Country Manager)

Josh Levene has over thirteen years of experience in the area of civil society participation and capacity building. Josh has worked extensively on projects with special focus on capacity building of civil society, communities, strategies for inclusion of vulnerable population groups, country needs assessments, advocacy, monitoring & evaluation, HIV/AIDS and post-conflict countries. He has worked in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, India, South East Asia & Pacific.

Sowmyaa Bharadwaj

(Programme Officer)

Sowmyaa's involvement in the development sector began as a volunteer ten years ago. Her areas of expertise and interest include poverty, water, sanitation and hygiene, urban development and rights. She has a keen interest in gender issues, which has resulted in some pioneering work on menstrual hygiene.

9

Managing Committee

Mr. Tomy Mathew (*President*)

Tomy Mathew heads Elements, a business endeavour committed to ‘organic’ and ‘fair’ trade. He is also the Chairperson of the International Nut Co-operative, an international fair trade alliance. Tomy was previously the Vice President, Corporate Communications, Alacrity Group of Companies, Chennai.

Mr. Tom Thomas (*Secretary*)

Tom Thomas has been in the development sector for the past 20 years. His association with Praxis began in 2000, when he took over as CEO. Prior to joining Praxis, he held senior positions with ActionAid in India, Bangladesh and the UK. He has led Praxis on several important assignments, both nationally and internationally.

Mr. V.S. Thyagarajan (*Treasurer*)

Thyagarajan is a Chartered Accountant by profession and has over three decades of corporate and development experience. His specialization is in Governance and Accountability in the NGO sector and he has a vast experience in developing financial systems and procedures for NGOs. He has worked as the Director of Finance and Administration for the ActionAid (UK) for its India Programme (for 8 years) and also in the same capacity for AMREF, an international Health NGO with its headquarters based in Nairobi, Kenya (for 6 years). Currently, in addition to his responsibilities as a board member of PRAXIS, he is also in the board of Richmond Fellowship Society an NGO working in the area of psycho-social rehabilitation who have their headquarters in Bangalore.

Mr. Babu Mathew (*Member*)

Babu Mathew is presently the Country Director of ActionAid International India. He is a development thinker and has been a trade unionist for over 3 decades. Previously Mr. Mathews was registrar at the National Law School, Bangalore.

Mr. Shankar Venkateswaran (*Member*)

Shankar Venkateswaran is an Advisor to SustainAbility, an organization that advises companies on how to manage environmental, social and economic risks and opportunities and, to develop solutions that will protect and create future value. He has previously been associated with organizations such as American India Foundation, Partners in Change and ActionAid. Shankar is an alumni of IIT (Chennai) and IIM (Calcutta) and has also worked in the corporate sector with blue chip companies like Brooke Bond and A.F. Ferguson.

Ms. Gouthami (*Member, resigned during the year*)

Gouthami heads "Travel Another India", a consulting group for Responsible Rural Tourism. She has 17 years of work experience with international and national development agencies such as ActionAid, Concern Worldwide, Christian Aid, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan and the UNDP

Members of the General Body

Members of the Managing Committee are also on the Praxis General Body. Additionally, the General Body has the following distinguished members:

Dr. Arif Hasan

Mr. Arjun Rajagopal

Dr. Robert Chambers

Mr. N. Satish Chandra

Mr. Ravi Narayanan (resigned during the year)

10

Annexure

Project Summary*April 2008 – March 2009*

Projects/ Training	Sectors	Supporting Organisation
Child Rights Workshop	Child Rights	CRY
Thematic Training Sessions	Training	ASA
Training on Micro level Planning	Training	Water Aid
Patna Urban Poverty Profile	PPA	Water Aid
Kosi Yatra	Advocacy	Self Funded
Participatory Theatre Workshop	Training	Self Funded

Review and refine the current Community Mobilisation strategies and approaches to implementation adopted by ORCHID	Community Mobilisation	Emmanuel Hospital Association
Research Design and Building Capacities of project team on conducting PLA	Research and Training	Mamta-Health Institute for mother and Child
Final Evaluation of the 'Reintegration of platform children into society'	Evaluation	Railway Children
CBA Capacity Building Project	Capacity Building	The Leprosy Mission of India
PRA Training in Kenya	Training U.K office	Brooke Hospital for Animal, London
CARE Cambodia Facilitation	Workshop U.K office	Care USA
Facilitation of a Writeshop for producing a resource book on Community Led Animal Welfare	Training U.K office	Brooke Hospital for Animal, London
Training in PLA	Training U.K office	University of Goldsmiths, London
Training in Facilitation Skills	Training U.K office	University of Bristol
Community Mobilisation for youth toolkit	Preparing toolkit U.K office	International HIV/AIDS Alliance

Citizens Rights to Public Financing	Capacity building	Plan Malawi
End of Project Evaluation of Path-Interact Project	Capacity building U.K office	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Exposure for International Nut Producers Cooperative Delegation	Immersion U.K office	International Nut Producers Cooperative
The Workshop 08 – 12 th Praxis International Commune on Participatory Development	Training	Self Funded
Evaluation of Community Development Women's Empowerment Project	Evaluation	The Leprosy Mission of India
Orientation Session on PRA for students of Jamia Millia Islamia University	Training	Department of Social Work – Jamia Millia Islamia University
Training workshop on The Most Significant Change Technique	Training	Self Funded
Immersion learning Programme for UNICEF India	Experiential Learning	UNICEF
Essential Advocacy Project: End Project Evaluation	Evaluation	Constella Futures
Technical Assistance to SAKSHAM program	HIV/AIDS	SAKSHAM/ Assistant Country Director, Health and HIV, CARE India)

Technical Assistance to Strengthen Community Mobilisation in Avahan	HIV/AIDS	Care India
Training on Community Centred Micro Level Planning	Training	Plan (India)
A Study of Vulnerability Facing by Elderly	Gerontology	Helpage India
Participatory Needs Assessment for Comprehensive Health and Development: Sivagangai, Tamil Nadu	PNA	The Leprosy Mission of India
Participatory Needs Assessment for Comprehensive Health and Development, Pondicherry	PNA	The Leprosy Mission of India
Participatory Needs Assessment for Comprehensive Health and Development: Vizianagram and Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh	PNA	The Leprosy Mission of India

11

Praxis Offices

Head Office

C - 75, South Extension

Part II, New Delhi-110049

Ph / Fax: + 91-11- 41642348 / 49 / 50 / 51

Email : info@praxisindia.org, website : www.praxisindia.org

Patna Office

1st Floor , Maa Sharde Complex

East Boring Canal Road, Patna- 800001

Ph / Fax + 91-612 - 2521983 / 6453807

Email : info@praxisindia.org, website : www.praxisindia.org

Chennai Office

Flat No - 5 D 808

Poonamallee High Road

Kilpauk, Chennai - 600010

Ph / Fax: + 91- 44 - 26612876 / 26612883

Email: info@praxisindia.org, website: www.praxisindia.org

Praxis UK

CAN Mezzanine, 32-36 Loman Street

London SE1 0EH United Kingdom

Email: info@praxis-uk.org, website: <http://www.praxis-uk.org>

PRAXIS - Institute for Participatory Practices, was formally registered as a non-profit organisation under the Societies Act 1860.