

## Capacity Statement

*“Praxis is making innovative and significant contributions to development through its participatory approaches”*

### Who are we?

Praxis UK is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation which provides project management, consultancy, research and training services in participatory development. Praxis UK’s strong multi-disciplinary team has an established track-record of work across Africa, Asia and Europe during the last fifteen years.

Through our services and our own projects we aim to assist vulnerable and marginalised people to have a more active and influential say in decisions which affect their lives. In this way we aim to contribute towards addressing exclusion, poverty reduction and sustainable development in the UK and internationally. We are affiliated with Praxis – the Institute for Participatory Practices in India [www.praxisindia.org](http://www.praxisindia.org), and have partners throughout Africa, Asia and Europe.

### What do we do?

Through the provision of technical support and our own home projects we:

- **Build the capacity of organisations** - governments, NGOs, private sector and multi-lateral institutions - in how to effectively involve, listen and learn from marginalised and vulnerable groups
- **Build the capacity of marginalised and vulnerable groups** to speak out and have a say
- **Scale-up**, broaden and deepen participatory processes at local, national and global levels
- **Facilitate more equitable partnerships** between excluded groups and other stakeholders
- **Develop and publish participatory methodologies** and tools
- **Conduct participatory research** with excluded groups
- **Advocate** for peoples right to a say
- **Monitor and evaluate** participatory processes and projects

### Who do we work with?

Praxis UK has worked with a wide base of clients around the world. Organisations in the UK and internationally we have worked with include:

**National and local governments:** in India, China and Malawi

**UN Agencies** UNICEF, ILO, UNIDO and UNDP

**Bi-lateral and multilateral donors** including DFID, SIDA, Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

**Non-governmental organisations:** including Oxfam, ActionAid, ODI, IIED, Plan International, HelpAge International, Aga Khan, Red Cross, CARE, Christian Aid

**Community-based organisations:** across Africa, Asia and Europe

**Global and regional networks:** Regional Participatory Learning & Action Network, Nile Basin Discourse and Nile Basin Initiative.

**Academic institutions:** Institute of Development Studies, Universities of Bristol, Delhi and London.

**Private sector companies and fair trade associations:** Price Waterhouse Coopers, Tata Steel, Phillips India.

## Services Praxis UK provides

### Our core capacities

- ✓ Training in all aspects of participatory development
- ✓ Qualitative and Participatory research
- ✓ Participatory Poverty Assessments
- ✓ Community and social mobilisation
- ✓ Project design & management
- ✓ Training and Facilitation skills
- ✓ Toolkit development
- ✓ Organisational and institutional assessment & development
- ✓ Community-led advocacy
- ✓ Participatory video
- ✓ Community immersions for policy makers
- ✓ Community audits
- ✓ Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, including end of project evaluations

### Thematic areas

- ✓ Poverty reduction & exclusion in urban, per-urban and rural settings
- ✓ Sustainable livelihoods
- ✓ Governance, including community auditing
- ✓ Water and Sanitation
- ✓ Environmental Health
- ✓ Nutrition
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ HIV/AIDS, Sexual & Reproductive Health
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Children and Youth
- ✓ Micro finance
- ✓ Participatory ICT
- ✓ Humanitarian Relief and Rehabilitation

## Our approach

At the core of our work is the desire to democratise development processes, enabling marginalised groups to be involved at every stage of a programme, from design to evaluation. This often involves us facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue at both the local and national levels. In all of our work we therefore take **a capacity building approach** with the communities and organisations we work with – ensuring that they feel they have achieved **lasting change** from which to build upon themselves.

## Our Team

Praxis has 25 full-time staff and a large network of international consultants and partner organisations throughout Africa, Asia and Europe. The Praxis team includes professionals drawn from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and nationalities.

**The Training Team** provides training services in participatory methods, tools and approaches across a wide range of thematic areas. As well as having trained over 100 organisations, they also run the internationally renowned workshop on participatory approaches held annually in India.

**The Policy and Research team** conducts rigorous qualitative and participatory research and evaluations to inform clients and Praxis' own policy and programming.

**The Communications & publications team** houses our participatory video unit called WeDIO (We Do It Ourselves), our ICT specialists, and publications unit which has produced over fifty publications.

**The Insight Team** – runs our community immersions for policy makers programme – Insight. Insight enables senior managers to gain a first hand understanding of the reality of community conditions through a guided immersion in that community.

**The Programmes team** – is highly experienced in the contractual, managerial, operational and financial aspects of external, client-funded contracts and projects as well as running our home projects.

## Recent work undertaken by Praxis

- **Citizens' Rights to Public Financing – Government of Malawi.** This project established mechanisms for local communities and civil society organisations to demand government accountability on public funds through promotion of citizen participation in monitoring the national budget cycle.
- **'Consultations with the Poor'** study in India for the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network of the World Bank to feed into the World Development Report 2000-2001. The consultations were held across ten sites (Urban, Peri-Urban and Rural) in the two states of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, covering about 50 diverse communities.
- **Participatory Poverty Assessment at the State Level** in Assam, Chattisgarh and Sikkim, India, Asian Development Bank
- **Evaluation of Strengthening Rural Decentralisation** project of Government of West Bengal, April – DFID
- **Interact HIV/AIDS project final evaluation** of PATH programme for Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- **Evaluation of Kashmir earthquake relief and rehabilitation project,** December 2006, Help Age India
- **Final Evaluation of Government of India-UNDP 'Community-based Pro-poor Initiatives'** (CBPPI) Programme, United Nation Development Programme
- Capacity building and designing system for Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of activities performed under DFID-supported '**Cochin Urban Poverty Reduction Project'** implemented by Corporation of Cochin.

- **Participatory Evaluation of Efficiency of Government of Orissa's delivery of Public Services Infrastructure**, for the Poverty Task Force, Government of Orissa, India, Department for International Development
- **Participatory Video Project** – Children See UNICEF – understanding children's perceptions of UNICEF and what support they feel they need from it.
- **Participatory Gender Impact Assessment** study for Uttar Pradesh, for the World Bank.
- **'Participatory Poverty Profile Study'** for DFID India, in drought-prone Western Orissa region (Bolangir district) of India. PRAXIS invested 549 person days, covering all 14 administrative blocks of Bolangir during the field based study.

## Needs-based Training

*“The course was brilliant, experiential and grounded in people's lives. The facilitator was rigorous in both the methods and in ensuring that power remained steady in the hands of community members. Thanks for helping me bring together science, reflection and practice.”*

Praxis regularly conducts needs-based tailored training in participatory approaches for a wide variety of clients across Asia, Africa and Europe. For the last 12 years Praxis has also held its internationally renowned workshop on Participatory Approaches. Participants from 33 countries have attended these. They have included organisations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, UNDP, UNOPS, ActionAid, Care, CARITAS, NIPRANET, British Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, JICA, Oxfam, Brooke Hospital etc. More than 1100 participants have benefited from these workshops.

## Key publications

Praxis has produced over sixty toolkits, resource guides and research reports. A list of our toolkits can be found at <http://www.praxisindia.org/?q=books> and a selection of our field research reports at <http://www.praxisindia.org/?q=fieldresearchreports>