

MANAGING A COMMUNITY LATRINE
PROJECT IN TOGO, WEST AFRICA

by

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Managing a Community Latrine Project in Togo, West Africa (Case A)

Max and Jennifer had been working on the latrine project for nine months. The construction delays were becoming a serious concern. Every day the rainy season loomed closer, threatening to delay the project further and bringing with it the possibility that they wouldn't be able to complete the latrines before Jennifer's return to the United States. It was now June, by July the rains would be coming every day, and in August Jennifer would complete her Peace Corps service and leave Togo. Jennifer was anxious to see the latrines completed before her departure. If she left without the latrines being completely done she wasn't sure that they would ever be finished. Peace Corps volunteers weren't always able to see their projects through to completion due to delays. The community partners were ultimately responsible for the projects, but they often lost motivation to continue without the presence of the Peace Corps volunteer who'd helped them to get started.

Jennifer was seriously worried that this project might become one more of the halfway done projects never completed in Togo. It had been difficult to gather community financial contributions for the construction due to past negative experiences with community projects in Kougnohou. So many people had told Max and her that they were giving to the project because they trusted them more than the people who'd tried to run projects in the past. If the latrines were never completed Jennifer feared that the community would lose even more motivation to work together to help themselves. And it would also set a negative precedent for Peace Corps in the region, regardless of how many times Jennifer had tried to explain this was not "her" project, rather it was a "community" project.

Max knocked at Jennifer's gate that evening on his way home from work. Max was the sanitation engineer at the Kougnohou health clinic and had been the driving force behind this project. After he came up with the project idea Jennifer worked with him for five months on the development of the proposal for funding and he was now overseeing the construction. Max joined Jennifer on her porch. "How are you this evening? I came by to talk to you about the cement that the driver, Kossi, delivered from Atakpame yesterday. The Taxi Association won't pay him for it..." Max shook his head in disbelief as he continued his story.

"The Taxi Association is incredible. Do you know what the secretary, Mawudo, said to me today? They feel they've already done enough for a project *for the village*. It's like they completely forgot that once the latrine construction is done *they'll* be the ones who will be collecting any revenues it generates from the tickets people will be buying."

The latrine project was centered around the role of the community partner, the Taxi Association. They were given the management rights to the latrines and the revenue collected from user fees in return for their promised financial and in-kind contributions. Max continued,

"There's another problem, too. We're missing 4 iron bars. I found out that someone in the Taxi Association took the iron bars from the latrine construction supplies to use for repairing their station's office."

"They did what?!" Jennifer was in disbelief, yet at the same time she knew it was true. Supplies had a tendency to be "borrowed" indefinitely by those who had access to them, whether or not

the borrower ever truly had intentions of replacing them or reimbursing the owner. “How can we continue to work with this group? They’re behind on their promised cash contributions, Mawudo hasn’t given me any receipts yet, they’re always making excuses, they don’t seem to care if this project gets done, and now they’re taking supplies that aren’t theirs. I just don’t know how the latrine construction will be done before the rainy season if we continue to work with them. Don’t we have any other alternatives?”

Background

Togo is a country slightly smaller than West Virginia, located between Ghana and Benin along the coast of western Africa. Togo’s population is among the poorest of the world, with the average income of a farmer being less than \$300 per year. The current President, Gnassingbe Eyadema, has been in office since 1967 and is Africa’s longest-serving leader. The majority of the 4.8 million residents of Togo are farmers. Togo has come under fire from international organizations for human rights abuses and is plagued by political unrest. Most bilateral and multilateral aid to Togo remains frozen.

Kougnohou is a very small town in the Plateaux region of Togo¹. It is the *sous-prefecture* capital for the Akebou *sous-prefecture*. There is a very large weekly market every Friday frequented by vendors from across the Plateaux and even buyers from the capital who come for bulk quantities of bananas, corn, hot peppers, cassava, and other produce. Though Kougnohou is a small town, the weekly market is the largest in the area. The adjacent taxi station usually has one or two vehicles waiting for passengers on non-market days. On a Friday though, the large station will have more than 50 vehicles that will be loaded until overflowing with people and goods.

Togo has over 50 different ethnic groups throughout the country. In the South the predominant ethnicity is Ewe, but many local regions consist of smaller groups of villages of other ethnicities. As a result, most people are multi-lingual, speaking two or more local dialects, with French being the official national language that is taught in school. Kougnohou is an Akebou town, but there are many people who are not Akebou who live there. The majority of the non-Akebou are the well-paid civil servants who were transferred from their hometowns for their job assignments, including teachers, police and military, health clinic staff, and their families. The higher-ranking government officials, including *prefets*² and *sous-prefets* tend to be Kabye, the ethnicity of the president of Togo.

Jennifer had been assigned to serve in Togo, West Africa as a Peace Corps Volunteer for two years in the Small Business Development program. Jennifer’s primary work in Kougnohou was as a consultant to independent entrepreneurs. Her past experience included several years as a program manager with US non-profit organizations and local government. Through her work she hoped to be able to transfer some of the skills she had gained through her work experience and her time in graduate school for her Masters of Public Administration.

Jennifer’s arrival in Kougnohou was widely publicized and she received many visitors at her home in her first months there. The presence of a foreigner had in the past meant that an NGO was there to help and was possibly giving out limited resources in the form of funding to local

¹ Togo is comprised of five major regions – Maritime, Plateaux, Centrale, Kara, and Savannes. Each region is divided into several *prefectures*, with larger *prefectures* sometimes sub-divided into *sous-prefectures*.

² *Prefets* are the responsible government official for a *prefecture*; *Sous-prefets* are the responsible government official for a *sous-prefecture*.

projects or supplies to families to help them in working their fields. With time she was able to explain more clearly that Peace Corps was not like other international NGOs and that her role was to spend two years in the area as a consultant for personal business and group activities. But regardless of what she said, people often assumed that Jennifer had many contacts in the United States or Europe with NGOs that would be able to fund projects or with individuals who would want to import produce from Togo.

The Need for Latrines

Every Friday, *marché* day, there were close to 2,000 merchants and shoppers at Kougnohou's *grand-marché* selling agricultural products, used clothing, housewares, prepared traditional foods and juices, and locally produced goods like shea butter and wicker baskets. The outdoor market was made up of rows of stalls covered with sheets of metal or thatch roofs and was a day of socializing as well as a business opportunity. It was also the day that out of town visitors often chose to come to the Akebou region as there were a much greater number of taxis traveling to Kougnohou. While a large number of the *marché* users were from Kougnohou, many vendors were from other towns and villages in the greater Plateaux region.

Jennifer had been working in Kougnohou for one year, since the prior September, and had gotten to know and be known by people from throughout the community. One day, on his way home from work, Max rode his bicycle over to Jennifer's house to talk to her about doing a project with him. Working at the Kougnohou clinic he'd noticed an increase in the number of cases of and deaths from typhoid fever since the previous year and wanted to build a latrine in the *grand-marché*, the largest market in the region, located adjacent to the Kougnohou taxi station. As a part of his training to become a sanitation engineer, Max had learned enough masonry to supervise the construction of latrines.

The rivers running alongside of the part of town by the *grand-marché* carried dangerous bacteria that infected villagers with typhoid and other water-borne illnesses. Having no latrines in the *grand-marché* left the vendors and clients with no other option than to use the open areas behind the vendor's stalls in the tall grass and bushes. As a clinic worker, Max saw firsthand the effects of poor hygiene on the villagers who came seeking medical attention.

Max had been stationed at the Kougnohou clinic for just over six years. Every Wednesday morning he worked with the women and their babies who arrived in Kougnohou from the local villages for baby weighing and vaccinations. Max had met people in almost every household in the village as a result of having treated a sick member of an extended family. People in Kougnohou and the surrounding villages had also met Max on his many house visits during campaigns to vaccinate children and adults for polio, measles, and other prevalent diseases. A visit to the clinic usually meant someone was seriously ill and people had come to appreciate Max's smiling face and calm disposition when they arrived.

Although Ewe, not Akebou, Max had earned the trust and respect of most villagers in Kougnohou and the surrounding Akebou villages. Max's wife was a food vendor in the *marché* and they'd recently moved from a rented room into their newly-built home in Kougnohou. Max was always busy with his work at the clinic. He could often be found there afterhours or making house calls for follow-up medical care on his way home from work. He was truly dedicated to his work and visibly put forth a significantly greater amount of time and effort than most professional staff in dispensaries or government offices.

Max asked Jennifer about the possibility of securing funding for a latrine project through SPA (Small Project Assistance), a small grant program offered by Peace Corps for village-initiated projects. Over the past year Jennifer had heard numerous people complain about the water quality in Kougnohou and the lack of latrines in the *grand-marché*. She was also aware of the logistical difficulty of implementing a project of this scale. But, Max was one of the only people who had approached her with a clear project plan prior to asking her for help to secure funding. She knew how dedicated he was to his work and that he would take his commitment to this project just as seriously.

Before agreeing to work with Max on further developing the project plan she explained very clearly what her role and Max's role would need to be. Max would have to do the majority of the legwork to research the information needed for the proposal and oversee the implementation. Jennifer would be there to guide Max through the application process, offer advice on the preparation of the proposal and the implementation plan, and assist with aspects of the implementation, but this would be Max and the village's project, not Jennifer's project.

This point was important for Jennifer to make clear. The project was supposed to be community-based and not reliant on her. By working alongside Max she could help him learn how to develop and implement a community project so that he could then repeat the process on his own in the future. Max agreed and they began talking about the need for latrines in the village and what a project like this would entail.

The SPA application required a community contribution of at least 25% in the form of cash and in-kind labor in order to be approved. The Peace Corps SPA committee was also concerned about funding public latrine projects because of mismanagement after their construction. Many times latrines were built in a public area and became unusable when ownership and responsibility rested with the village at large and nobody performed necessary routine maintenance. To avoid this problem sometimes the management was left in the hands of a "village latrine committee". In theory this committee would manage the latrines, ensure that ongoing maintenance was performed regularly, and keep the latrines usable for many years to come. The reality was that people were quick to form a committee, but had no ongoing incentive to continue to participate for very long. A number of SPA-funded latrines that were given over to village management committees had been known to no longer be in a state in which people would use them. As a result, the SPA committee was disinclined to fund most latrine projects.

Max and Jennifer discussed ways that they could organize the project to garner the necessary community support and involvement. Jennifer's biggest concern was the management of the latrines after construction. She wondered about other options besides a village management committee. A locally-run NGO would be an ideal partner, but unfortunately Kougnohou did not have any well-established groups that currently had the capacity to take on the latrine project.

One existing organization, APAF, was well-staffed and funded through a grant from the European Union, but they had their mission clearly identified as working to help develop sustainable agro-forestry practices. They spent the days in the field visiting groups of villagers in the Akebou region, giving trainings, or at meetings in the regional capital at their headquarters. Another local organization, ASNH, was established to "preserve nature and mankind", but in reality they were a paper-only organization and were not truly functional.

Jennifer's prior meetings with ASNH had revealed that they were willing to take on any project that would bring in funding, yet they had no real expertise in any particular field. Their president also worked fulltime in the field as an extension agent with APAF and, consequently, was rarely in Kougnohou. Jennifer had been meeting with Semoudje, a retired man in Kougnohou who was starting a new NGO, ASPRA, to work on community development projects and Max had recently joined him as a founding board member. But Semoudje hadn't yet developed ASPRA well enough that Max and Jennifer felt comfortable approaching him with the latrine project. Then Max thought of another alternative.

"What about the Taxi Association?" asked Max. "Their office is in the taxi station adjacent to the *grand-marché*. What if they contributed to the project in exchange for the rights to manage the latrines after construction? They have money from collecting fees every Friday from all the taxis coming to and from the *grand-marché*."

Privately owned public latrines in other regional towns charged a nominal fee of 25CFA (US 5¢) and made significant profits once the initial investments were paid off. But the initial investments were usually too expensive for anyone to do on their own, even if the benefits of having a publicly accessible latrine were obvious.

Jennifer agreed, the Taxi Association would make an ideal partner. Their members were primarily locally born drivers and former drivers who still lived in Kougnohou. Since the taxi and truck drivers were all a part of the Taxi Association they could transport supplies as an in-kind contribution to the project. Transportation was often a deterrent to independently run programs in Togo since it was so expensive. The Taxi Association was a fairly stable organization with an elected board consisting of a president, secretary, treasurer, and advisors. They were not affiliated with the government and therefore weren't subject to the random site transfers most people with official positions had to deal with every year, including teachers, government officials, military and police officers, and staff at dispensaries. Now Max and Jennifer just had to convince the Taxi Association of the benefits to them and get started on the proposal.

Getting the Community Involved

Jennifer knew how important it was to involve key people and groups early on in the planning process of a community project if they wanted their ongoing support and cooperation. Max and Jennifer discussed all the groups of people that they'd need to be involved and how they could be approached.

First, they would have to contact the Taxi Association. This was the organization that would be making the largest cash and in-kind contribution and would be responsible for the ongoing latrine maintenance after construction was completed. The association's board consisted of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and advisors. The members were all the drivers who were based in Kougnohou and serviced the western plateaux area from there. The secretary, Mawudo, was the most visible member of the organization's board and was known throughout the community.

The Taxi Association essentially functioned like a union. Drivers were required to be members if they wanted to pick up passengers from taxi stations in the region. Board members would

often station themselves at the entrance road to the village in order to prevent any non-member drivers from attempting to pick up passengers on the side of the road. Mawudo was responsible for managing the order in which taxis were slotted to take passengers from the Kougnohou station, as well as taking money from drivers for their ticket each time they had a full car ready to leave. The revenues from the tickets went into the Taxi Association's account, but most drivers never knew exactly what this money was used for. Occasionally the board would call a strike of all drivers in protest to too much military harassment on the roads by the government, but this would just cause the drivers to lose a day's wages. It was not uncommon to find drivers trying to get around the regulations of the Taxi Association by picking up passengers at points in towns other than the official taxi stations. Passengers even preferred to find a taxi this way as the waiting time at a taxi station could be several hours until the taxi was deemed full enough to leave. But, for the most part the drivers were still obliged to respect the Taxi Association board members and the regulations.

The latrine project would add to the total revenues of the Taxi Association each month. Board members were no longer drivers either by choice or due to lack of a vehicle and counted on the revenues of the Taxi Association to pay them a small salary for their work. The additional account balance could either be used to pay additional board members something for their efforts or pay for other expenses, such as rebuilding their office at the taxi station that had recently been destroyed by a storm.

Most of the local community would also benefit from the latrines, albeit more indirectly. This included the 2,000 vendors and clients that frequented the weekly market every Friday and would become the primary users of the latrines. With people using latrines in the market, the adjacent river water quality would improve for the over 5,000 residents of Kougnohou.

The benefits from building the latrines seemed clear, but it would take the support – at least passive support – of the local government officials in order to get the project off the ground. The *sous-prefet*, Monsieur Alfa, was responsible for the Akebou *sous-prefecture* and all decisions that involved government funding had to be funneled through him to the *prefet*. *Sous-prefet* Alfa was a very approachable person, constantly receiving visitors in his office from throughout the Akebou region to help settle disputes and plan events and projects. Previously, Jennifer and Max had both had many discussions with him in regards to their work in Kougnohou and he always had a few minutes for them whenever they stopped by to talk.

The *prefet* was based 36km away from Kougnohou, in Badou. He was responsible for the larger western Plateaux area, including the *sous-prefecture* of Akebou. Though Akebou was technically under the jurisdiction of the *sous-prefet*, the *prefet* was a higher-ranking government authority and the final decisions about supporting community projects with funding were made by him, not the *sous-prefet*. As the highest-ranking official for the area, the *prefet*, was very busy and more frequently not available to see unless an appointment was scheduled. Jennifer had had several meetings with him since her arrival and he knew her well, but she always found him hard to read, though always welcoming and polite to her.

Official government authority rested with the *sous-prefet* and the *prefet*, but the traditional local governing role was still retained by Kougnohou's village chief, Chief Anonéné. The chief was often found riding around Kougnohou on his motorcycle, frequently stopping to talk to the residents or have a drink with friends. Jennifer had become close friends with his wife, Akouvi, over the past year and often was at their home sharing meals and talking with them about her

work in Kougnohou, and differences in life in America versus Togo. While Chief Anonéné had no access to funds to allocate for projects, his level of support for a community project was critical in setting the tone for the villagers' level of participation.

There was a tremendous amount of work to do to generate support for the project. Max and Jennifer began by organizing meetings. They started with the religious leaders; ministers from the nine churches and the two Muslim imams were convened, together with the *sous-prefet*. The majority of the residents of Kougnohou belonged to a church or mosque and could be reached through these key leaders. They held an informational session with the religious leaders and asked them to each give a sermon that coming weekend to their congregants to pass along this information. Max used a quote from the bible to help the religious leaders find a way to work the theme of latrines into their sermons.

*Deuteronomy 23:12 Set up a place outside the camp to be used as a toilet area.
13 And make sure that you have a small shovel in your equipment. When you go out to the toilet area, use the shovel to dig a hole. Then, after you relieve yourself, bury the waste in the hole.*

Convincing the Taxi Association

After the meeting with the religious leaders ended, Max and Jennifer scheduled a meeting with the *sous-prefet* to meet with the Taxi Association. Max and Jennifer then stopped by the taxi station to invite the association's board and members to the meeting. They found Mawudo, the association secretary in the station, as he was most days.

“Hello Jennifer, where do you need to go today? Atakpame? Badou? There's a taxi almost full to Badou, do you want me to save you a place?” asked Mawudo.

Jennifer declined the offer for a taxi and explained why she and Max had stopped by that afternoon.

“No thanks, I'm not going anywhere today, Mawudo. We're actually here to see you. We just came from the *sous-prefet's* office. We wanted to invite the Taxi Association to a meeting to talk about building latrines in the *marché*,” Jennifer said.

Mawudo expressed immediate interest in what he heard. The word “latrine” always drew attention from people. There was a severe shortage of latrines in the village and outside funders had made contributions in the past to build latrines in elementary schools and in other area villages. Mawudo hoped that this meant someone Jennifer knew was going to come and build latrines in Kougnohou. The construction of a public latrine was too expensive for villagers to afford by themselves. Jennifer explained that Max wanted to put together a proposal and that they wanted to invite the Taxi Association to be the main community partner. Mawudo promised to tell the others about the meeting date and time and promised a good turnout and their support.

A few days later Max, Jennifer, and the *sous-prefet* met with the Taxi Association. Although the public health benefits of the project were discussed, the focus of the meeting was on the business

opportunity this project presented the Taxi Association. Max explained how the future revenues generated by the latrine user fees would be the property of the association, in exchange for their role in managing and maintaining the latrines, as well as contributing cash and labor for their construction.

The members of the Taxi Association listened intently. It was made clear that there would be profits, but that a significant input was needed to make the project viable. The Taxi Association was asked to become the main community partner and lay out cash and in-kind services, with the expectation that the exact amounts would be determined later as the budget was finalized. The president and a few others asked questions and then convened a short private group meeting outside the station office. They returned and the president accepted their role in the project. As everyone walked away from the meeting, they were talking animatedly about the prospect of the pending proposal being funded and the village's new latrines.

With the Taxi Association on board, Max and Jennifer got to work on the official proposal to submit to the SPA committee. Jennifer was confident that their alternate approach to depending on a village management committee would help their proposal be approved. The budget hadn't been finalized at the time of the meeting with the Taxi Association, but Max and Jennifer felt that the 150,000CFA³ they'd ended up allocating as the Taxi Association's cash contribution was reasonable given Max's estimate of their weekly ticket revenues.

The proposal was submitted and shortly afterwards they received word that it had been approved in full for 799,000CFA, about half the total estimated cost of the project. The rest of the costs were to be met by in-kind contributions and cash donations from the Taxi Association, the villagers, the *grand-marché* users, and the local government. Max was elated by the good news, but knew there was a great deal of work that lay ahead.

Getting the Momentum Started

With the SPA funding secured Max and Jennifer needed to begin soliciting the community contributions. The first meeting was with the Taxi Association. Max and Jennifer reviewed the total budget of 1,600,000CFA, explained that 799,000CFA would come from Peace Corps, and that in-kind contributions and cash from the community were needed for the rest. Max broke it down to what was anticipated would come from the local government, from the villagers, from the *marché* users, and from the Taxi Association. Jennifer explained what the Taxi Association's responsibilities would be.

“The largest part of the funding will be through Peace Corps. We'll also be taking a collection in the *grand-marché*, passing out envelopes for contributions to residents of the village, and requesting a contribution from the *prefet*. So, you see the money is coming from many different places and is not entirely your responsibility. All we need you to contribute in cash is 150,000CFA.”

Jennifer and Max continued to explain the Taxi Association's participation in the project. The money for the cash contribution would come from the tickets bought each week by drivers

³ At the time of the project's funding, March 2004, 530CFA= US\$1.00; 150,000CFA was worth approximately US\$283.00 and 799,000CFA was worth approximately US\$1,500.

picking up passengers and goods at the weekly *marché* and taxi station. They made it clear that the in-kind contributions of transporting sand and other construction materials would not cost them money because they could have their member drivers do the work. They took time to discuss the final budget and clarify all the Taxi Association's questions. One of the concerns was the Taxi Association being able to retain the management rights and the revenues once the latrine construction was finished. As the government was being solicited for a financial contribution, the Taxi Association president asked what would prevent the *prefet* from deciding to take control some day. Jennifer agreed that this concern was valid and that she would work with the Peace Corps headquarters office to provide them with a certificate stating their role in the project and the right to manage the latrines and the associated revenues.

After a short internal meeting with the board and present members the Taxi Association president again agreed to what was asked of them. Jennifer then asked them to select dates when the cash contributions could be expected. They suggested three dates over the next two months when they'd give 50,000CFA each time.

Several days later Max, Jennifer, and the *sous-prefet* met with key women in the village who also were vendors in the *marché*. The idea behind the latrine project and the need for latrines in Kougnohou was explained, focusing on the benefits of having a latrine in the *marché*. Some women expressed their displeasure with the local government for not having done this for them already.

“Every week each of us pays 100F to an agent of the *prefet* to be allowed to sell in the *grand-marché*. This money is supposed to be given back to the community, but we never see it again. The *prefet* should pay for the project, not us,” protested Madame Yovo.

Max replied,

“You're right, we should get more from the *prefet* than we do, but we don't. We have two choices, we can either wait and not have a latrine, or we can work together to build this ourselves now. If we wait we'll continue to have to use the bushes on *marché* day, our water will just get worse, and our families will continue to get sick. Plus, most of the money is coming from Peace Corps and the Taxi Association, so the amount we still need to raise isn't all that much.”

The women grudgingly agreed with Max and after talking some more became excited about the idea of having latrines to use and wanted to help get the word out to the other *grand-marché* users. The next Friday they borrowed the clinic's megaphone and took turns walking around the *grand-marché* announcing the coming collection of donations for the latrine construction. This “town crier” approach to spreading the news was common in Togo. The message they spread told people that funding was already partially secured for construction of a six-stall latrine adjacent to the *grand-marché*. As they walked around announcing the news and preparing people for the request for a donation in the upcoming weeks, they answered questions and explained that the construction would begin very soon, to be completed in just a few short months.

Soliciting Money from the Prefet

The next step was to get money from the *prefet*. The official way to request funding involved a letter to the region's Special Delegation and the *prefet* from the Kougnohou CVD (Comité Villegois de Developpment⁴). The Special Delegation officially managed the budget of local government funds available for community projects, but the *prefet* had a great deal of influence over them. Unfortunately, the Kougnohou CVD was not very active. But the official requirement was for the CVD to send the letter or money could not be requested.

Max drafted the letter on behalf of the CVD and gave it to Jennifer who took it and met with *Sous-prefet* Alfa. The letter also needed to be signed by Alfa and Chief Anonéné. Alfa was so enthusiastic about the project that he immediately drove Jennifer around Kougnohou in his truck to locate Chief Anonéné and the CVD president. They found the CVD President, explained the project, and were able to get his signature. They then drove to pick up Chief Anonéné at his house where he signed the letter, as well. Jennifer, Alfa, and Chief Anonéné then continued on to Badou where the *prefet's* office was located.

The visit was well timed. There was an official function that day that the *prefet* was scheduled to attend with the *sous-prefet* and Chief Anonéné. Arriving in Badou they found the *prefet* busy meeting with three other local village chiefs. Alfa, Chief Anonéné, and Jennifer joined them in the *prefet's* office. "It's good to see you again, Jennifer. How are things going in Kougnohou? What good wind brings you here today?" asked the *prefet*.

"Thank you, *Monsieur le Prefet*, it's good to have the chance to see you again, as well. I hope everything is going well in Badou and with your family. I am here today with the *sous-prefet* and chief of Kougnohou to deliver a letter to the Special Delegation and we also have a copy for you. We'd like to build a six-stall latrine in the *grand-marché* in Kougnohou and received some funding from Peace Corps to get started."

Although Jennifer was anxious to get a financial commitment, she thought it might not be appropriate to press the *prefet* for a verbal commitment with the other village chiefs in the room. After the official function in town was finished, however, Jennifer was able to meet privately with the *prefet* to discuss the project. He made it clear that the final decision was based on the Special Delegation's budget and that he'd push the president to make sure a significant contribution was given. Jennifer left the *prefet's* office feeling hopeful, but wondered when they might hear back about how much they'd be given and when they could expect to receive it. Timeliness was not as valuable in Togo as in the United States. As the popular expression said, "it will come...." But Jennifer wondered if funding would come in time to complete the latrines before her departure and the start of the rainy season.

Kougnohou's Contribution

The tradition to collect money for a village project was to hand out envelopes with a note inside that explained what the project was and respectfully ask for a contribution. Recipients of the envelopes were then personally visited to retrieve each donation. Max prepared a note to send in the envelopes. The normal contribution might be 500CFA⁵ from a family, maybe more from

⁴ Village Development Committee

⁵ 500CFA is just less than US\$1.00.

someone with more money, sometimes less from others. Some farmers only earned 15,000CFA in a whole month and used this money to support their family of one or more wives (polygamy is practiced in Togo) and several children. They recruited members of Max's family and other young acquaintances of Max to walk around the village distributing the envelopes.

Construction Begins

Once the SPA money was in hand, it was time to begin construction. Max began purchasing cement, iron bars, and sheets of roofing metal in Atakpame, the regional capital 60km away. Mawudo negotiated with a truck driver to pick up several large piles of sand from a nearby river that was needed for the cement. After returning from Atakpame, Max stopped by to talk with Jennifer at her house. Already complications had set in.

"The prices were higher than we'd anticipated in the budget. The shop owner informed me that there had been a price increase last week because of the iron workers' strike," Max explained. "Well, hopefully we'll be able to raise the money we're expecting from the community," Jennifer replied. "Luckily we'd overestimated a little how much we'd get, but we still need most of what we requested," she said.

"There was another problem," Max continued. "For some reason the Taxi Association paid the drivers in cash for the delivery of the supplies." Jennifer looked confused and said, "But I thought the supply deliveries were going to be a part of their in-kind contribution. How are they going to keep paying drivers for deliveries and still be able to give 150,000CFA in cash towards the project?"

The first of the three dates arrived for the Taxi Association's cash contribution and Mawudo brought Jennifer 50,000CFA which was recorded in the official project expenses notebook, along with the receipts from Max's purchases. Jennifer asked Mawudo for any receipts from the Taxi Association's expenditures, and he promised that he'd bring them soon. Jennifer wondered how much money they were spending outside of the cash contributions. She was getting seriously concerned that by paying the drivers that the Taxi Association would not be able to meet the rest of their cash contributions and wondered how they were planning on getting the rest of the money. Max and Jennifer began making rounds of the village to find the people who'd received envelopes and slowly began adding their names to the notebook, as well.

Construction Delays

With the masons beginning construction the sand was being used up and Max realized that they'd need more. As previously agreed, Mawudo made arrangements for a driver to make another delivery of sand. But by the end of the week, the first pile of sand was depleted and the new delivery had not yet arrived. When pressed, Mawudo admitted that there were problems getting to the sand because the rains had started and the roads were too muddy. The driver of the delivery truck was concerned that he would get stuck in the mud due to the weight of the sand and needed to wait for three straight days of no rain before the sand could be picked up. Again, the Taxi Association had decided to pay the delivery driver rather than consider the service an in-kind contribution and they were seeing their account go from fairly full to close to empty.

Jennifer saw the Taxi Association president by the taxi station at the end of that week. Jennifer was getting more and more apprehensive about the way the Taxi Association appeared to be

managing their finances and was worried about their ability to make the contributions they'd promised, both cash and in-kind. After greeting the president, she introduced the subject of the latrines and asked,

“How are things moving along with the latrine project? Max told me the sand was delayed until next week. I'm worried we're falling too far behind schedule. Are you sure it will be able to be here by Wednesday?”

The president quickly confirmed that yes, the sand would definitely be there. He then started joking around that Jennifer should pay the driver for the sand this time. Jennifer sensed that he wasn't really joking. She asked if all was in order for the second 50,000CFA contribution due the following day. The president looked surprised and said,

“Tomorrow? Already? But we just gave you 50,000CFA the other week and we've been spending so much money on other things like the supplies we transported from Atakpame. And how are we supposed to pay for the sand and pay the driver for the delivery if we give you another 50,000 this week? Can we wait until two more weeks and pay you then?”

Jennifer replied, “If you are short on cash and have to choose between tomorrow's second 50,000CFA payment or the sand, then you should get the sand. You can make the next cash contribution after the next week's taxi *marché* fees are collected.”

Max and Jennifer were worried. They noticed a growing hesitation on the part of the Taxi Association, in spite of the fact that the latrine would clearly be a profitable venture in the long-run. There were other problems, too. Mawudo still had yet to turn in a single receipt for the Taxi Association's expenditures. They were clearly spending more cash on the project than she and Max had anticipated. Jennifer wondered how much they had spent and how they would possibly catch up with the second 50,000CFA payment and when she could realistically expect then to make the third and final payment. She couldn't understand why they were paying for everything rather than contributing more “in-kind” services as originally discussed.

Later that evening, Jennifer and Max sat together on her porch discussing the project's progress. Max shared a conversation he had had that morning with, Komlavi, one of the taxi drivers. Komlavi had stopped Max to talk about how much the latrines were costing the Taxi Association. Max was confused as Komlavi complained that there was no money left for anything else. Max explained to Komlavi that only 50,000CFA had been received so far, the other 100,000CFA was still due. Komlavi got upset; the board had told him that all the money had already been given to Max and Jennifer. He walked away from Max muttering about where they money was spent if not for the latrines. Jennifer and Max began to realize that there was much less communication and trust within the Taxi Association than they had anticipated.

Complications Continue

The following week Max broke the bad news he'd just heard to Jennifer, “I just found out that there's been a death of someone rather important in the region, the president of the Special Delegation.” After registering who this meant, Jennifer realized, “but our money is coming out of the Special Delegation's budget, isn't it? How is this going to affect us?”

Funerals in Togo are separate from the interment of a body. They aren't always held immediately after a death. Sometimes they are months later, sometimes relatively soon after the death. The president of the Special Delegation had been ill, but it was not thought to be serious until just a few days prior to his death. The funeral was scheduled for the end of May, several weeks away. Max and Jennifer knew that the funding of the latrine project by the *prefet* was at high risk. Without the president would the *prefet* authorize a contribution? It was also common practice to spend large sums of money on funerals, especially for politically prominent people. Max and Jennifer were concerned that the money that could be allocated for the latrine project would be spent instead on the funeral.

Jennifer was in Badou the following week so she stopped by the *prefet's* office. They discussed the latrine project and the progress that had been made so far. Jennifer brought up that she'd heard the sad news of the death of the president of the Special Delegation. The *prefet* responded,

“Yes, the president's funeral is set for May 28th. I can't do anything for you until after then, but come see me afterwards and we'll talk some more. I can probably guarantee you that you will get 60,000CFA from me, after the funeral.”

This was good news and bad. Jennifer and Max's request had been for 250,000CFA. They'd overestimated what they'd needed knowing that the *prefet's* budget would be tight, but Jennifer was glad to finally have a commitment to some level of financial support. Knowing that money flowed into the *prefet's* office on a regular weekly basis as fees were collected in the village *marches*, Jennifer pushed for a larger amount of money if they didn't receive it all at once. The *prefet* reluctantly agreed to two rounds of 60,000CFA, the first to be distributed after the funeral and the second round a few weeks after that.

Upon returning to Kougnohou from the *prefet's* office, Jennifer looked for Mawudo at the taxi station. The second 50,000CFA payment's rescheduled due date had been the previous day and no one had come to see her yet. Jennifer saw one of the drivers sitting alone at the desk at the station with a smile on his face as she approached him. She joined him and said, “Well, I was going to try to talk with Mawudo, but I can see that he's not here right now.” He replied with a grin, “Yes, he is...go look over there,” and pointed to the neighboring barber's outdoor stand. Jennifer glanced over with a confused look on her face, not understanding. The driver encouraged her to get up and walk over and look inside where the barber was giving someone a haircut. Jennifer did as suggested and found Mawudo crouched down under a table laughing to himself, hiding from her. After joining Jennifer outside, he confirmed that no, they didn't have the cash on hand for the second payment. Frustrated, Jennifer replied, “We need that cash to continue to pay for the cement and other supplies. If we don't have the money soon, the project will be delayed. Tell the president that I need to know when you'll really have the money.”

Trouble Collecting Village and Marché Contributions

Max and Jennifer had been busy trying to keep the construction on track, coordinating with the Taxi Association, and soliciting funds from the *prefet*. Now the project funds were precariously low. Getting funds from contributions from the *grand-marché* users and the rest of the people in Kougnohou who'd received contribution envelopes was critical. Although the women who'd participated in the meeting with Max and Jennifer had informed the vendors in the *grand-marché* about the project, many vendors were still hesitant to contribute any significant amount of money when collections were attempted. A sentiment of distrust was expressed that the project

wouldn't be completed and their money would go to waste as it had in past uncompleted community projects.

Max and Jennifer started visiting homes to collect the remaining envelopes. Although some happily returned a full envelope, others either stalled or offered excuses as to why they couldn't give anything. Max and Jennifer could hardly refuse a request to come back the following day or the next week, but they knew that a majority of these people were indirectly telling them that they wouldn't be contributing anything. Other expressed sentiments included:

“I gave so many times already for community projects, they always come to me for money, I don't have enough to give any more.”

“Oh, you're asking me too late in the month, you know we get paid in the beginning of the month, come back again around the next pay date and I'll have more money available then.”

“When the government ministers came for that festival a few months ago, they took them to my bar and drank without paying me...I'm still waiting to be reimbursed the 12,000CFA they owe me.”

Of the most frustrating responses were the refusals from the members of the community with the largest disposable income – the teachers, military, police, and government agents who were paid a regular salary by the government that was many times larger than the income of a peasant.

“Why should I give anything to this village, I'm not from here. I'm only stationed here temporarily, I'll probably be transferred next year.”

There were not many wealthy individuals in Kougnohou other than those paid by the government. But early on in the envelope collection process Max and Jennifer had been encouraged by significant contributions by Loumovi, the owner of the Mobile gas station, and the co-owners of the well-off Desiadenyo store.

The Prefet's Contribution

The end of May was approaching and Jennifer went to Atakpame to buy more cement. She saw the *prefet* in town and inquired after the first round of 60,000 he'd promised after the May 28 funeral. The *prefet* looked at Jennifer oddly and wrinkling his brow expressed that it wouldn't be possible to have a contribution for the latrines in the week following the funeral, but that Jennifer should come to see him at his office in Badou the following Monday to talk about what could be done.

Jennifer was afraid that this change of plan meant that the *prefet* would not give anything to the project. She returned to Kougnohou and conferred with Max. The total contributions from the village's envelopes and the *grand-marché* users wouldn't be enough to cover the remaining expenses without a contribution from the *prefet*. The project was already behind schedule; this meant yet another delay.

The following week, Jennifer fell sick and Max went in her place to see the *prefet*. When Jennifer returned from the Peace Corps medical unit several days later she found out that the

prefet had not been at his office the day he'd scheduled their meeting. Max waited the entire day for him and was told simply that the *prefet* had returned late the night before from an out of town meeting and was at home sleeping.

Jennifer asked *Sous-prefet* Alfa to call *prefet* from his office in Kougnohou. After he spoke with the *prefet* finally a commitment was made that they would receive 50,000CFA after the ticket collection at the *grand-marché* that Friday. It was a month late and significantly less than they had planned for.

Problems with the Taxi Association

Nine months had passed since Max first approached Jennifer with the project idea. The rainy season was practically upon them, Jennifer was scheduled to complete her Peace Corps assignment and leave Kougnohou at the end of July, and they were practically out of money. The latrines still needed a significant amount of work before they would be functional and it was starting to look like they wouldn't be completed.

The construction continued and once again the sand supply was running low. The same difficulties as before were encountered in ordering more sand through the Taxi Association. The rains were coming more frequently each week and threatening the progress of the construction even further. Funds were low for the project and they needed to purchase more cement. Unfortunately buying cement in bulk didn't reduce the price any. More of a problem though had been the wet weather. Dry cement powder would be damaged by the humidity if stored too far in advance. Every day Max and Jennifer were trying to locate people who had promised contribution envelopes, supervised the construction progress, and coordinated logistics with Mawudo.

One of the secondary goals of the project was to provide an example of an "open book" way to manage a community project. The expense/contribution notebook was going to become a public document for anyone's examination to show that money was properly managed and not taken for personal or other uses. In the past, village projects had not always been well managed and levels of trust were low, creating some of the problems Jennifer and Max had encountered while soliciting contributions for the latrines. Jennifer was worried that they wouldn't be able to gather enough money to finish the latrines before her departure. Her biggest concern was that the latrines would never be completed, exacerbating the lack of trust for community projects, and more specifically, negatively impacting the efforts of future Peace Corps volunteers.

For weeks Jennifer had been asking Mawudo for receipts and had yet to receive them. The Taxi Association's payment schedule had been changed to several payments of 20,000CFA each to make up the remaining 100,000CFA due of the total 150,000CFA that had been committed.

Max knocked at Jennifer's gate that evening on his way home from work and joined Jennifer on her porch. "How are you this evening? I came by to talk to you about the cement that the driver, Kossi, delivered from Atakpame yesterday. The Taxi Association won't pay him for it...." Max shook his head in disbelief as he continued his story.

"The Taxi Association is incredible. Do you know what they said to me today? They feel they've already done enough for a project *for the village*. It's like they completely forgot that once the latrine construction is done *they'll* be the ones

who will be collecting any revenues it generates from the tickets people will be buying.”

Max continued,

“There’s another problem, too. We’re missing 4 iron bars. I found out that the Taxi Association took the iron bars from the latrine construction supplies to use for repairing their station’s office.”

“They did what?!” Jennifer was in disbelief, yet at the same time she knew it was true. Supplies had a tendency to be “borrowed” indefinitely by those who had access to them, whether or not the borrower ever truly had intentions of replacing them or reimbursing the owner. “How can we continue to work with this group? They’re behind on their promised cash contributions, Mawudo hasn’t given me any receipts yet, they’re always making excuses, they don’t seem to care if this project gets done, and now they’re taking supplies that aren’t theirs. I just don’t know how the latrine construction will be done before the rainy season if we continue to work with them. Don’t we have any other alternatives?”

What To Do Now?

Max and Jennifer sat in silence on her porch for a few moments absorbing this idea and thinking of any possible ways to remedy the situation. Max asked Jennifer, “Could we drop the Taxi Association from the project and find a way to complete it without them?” Jennifer thought this over and replied, “Well, we do need a community partner though, otherwise who will handle the maintenance? Is there anyone else here we could talk to and see if they’d be interested?”

They needed to find a solution that would include raising the missing 100,000CFA that had been promised by the Taxi Association or there wouldn’t be enough cash to pay for the remaining construction work. There was also a potential problem with project ownership since the Taxi Association had already contributed 50,000CFA and an unknown amount of in-kind labor, most of which they had paid for in cash.

Alternatives to the Taxi Association

Max and Jennifer brainstormed possible alternatives to continuing work with the Taxi Association. Jennifer lamented the lack of functioning NGOs in Kougnohou. Had ASNH been functioning better they could have approached them to take over the latrines. She had been meeting with Semoudje, the head of ASPRA, on another project idea throughout the year, but wasn’t so sure they were ready to fund the rest of the latrine construction and ensure the ongoing maintenance afterwards. “I’m on the board of ASPRA, I can put 50,000CFA towards the latrines and I’m sure between the other board members we can find the rest of the money we need,” said Max, surprising Jennifer with his offer. Jennifer was leaving Kougnohou soon, but her Peace Corps replacement could work with ASPRA to help them develop a latrine management committee.

ASPRA was a potentially good alternative, but they continued discussing their other options in case ASPRA couldn’t meet the financial obligation. “What about an individual entrepreneur? Is there anyone in Kougnohou you think could afford 150,000CFA by themselves?” Jennifer asked Max. They thought of Loumovi, the Mobil station owner and the brothers that co-owned the

Desiadenyo general goods store. Max replied, “It would be easier to deal with just an individual than an NGO, actually. If we meet with them, they might be interested, especially once we explain the profits they’ll earn.” But the project was designed to be a community effort, not a private for-profit business, so Max and Jennifer were hesitant to give up on the idea of a community partner.

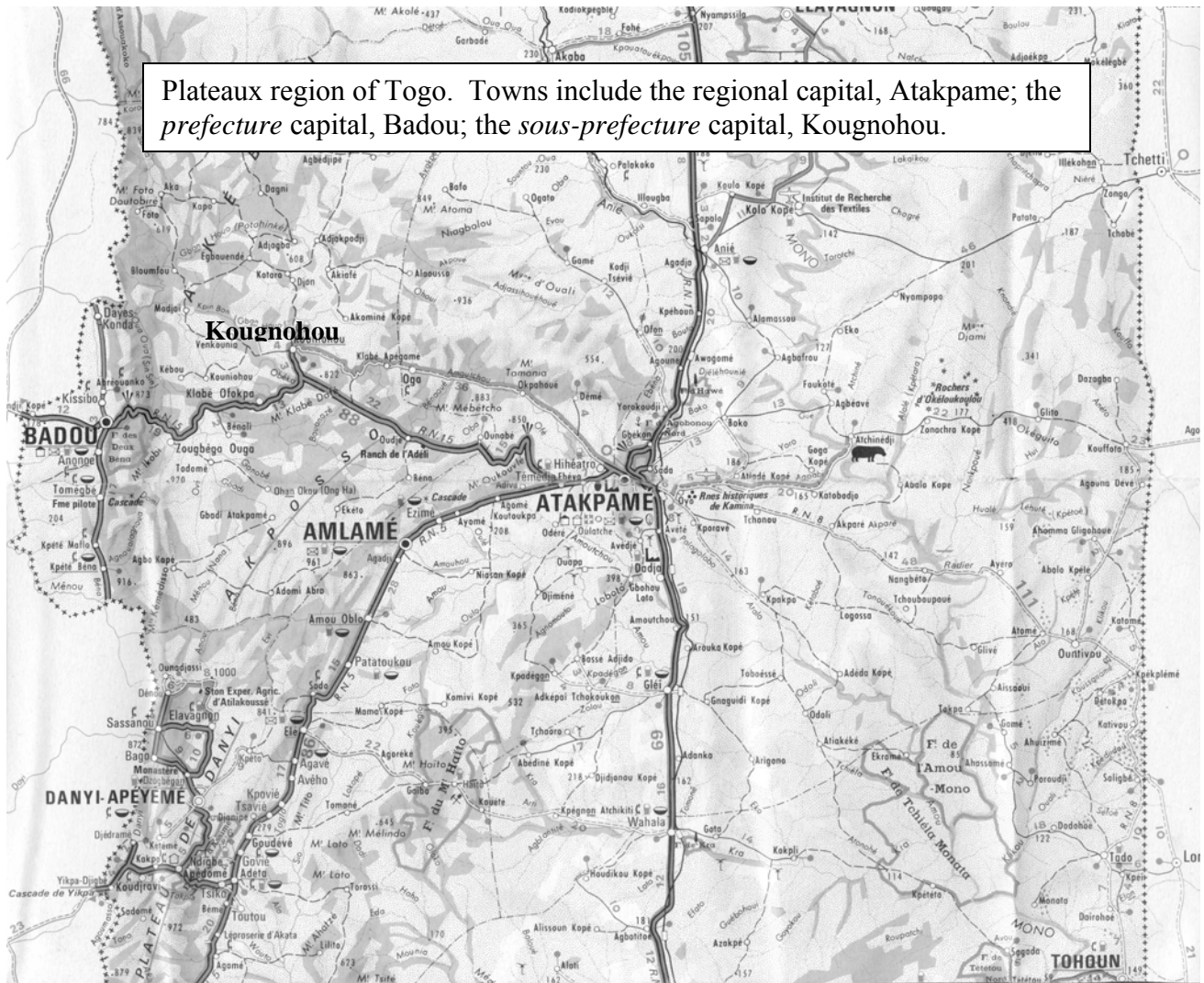
A final alternative, more of a last resort, would be forfeiting the project to the local government. If ASPRA or an individual were to take over the project, they would need to “buy out” the Taxi Association’s interest to avoid conflicts over who had the right to the profits from the user fees. But if the government intervened, they could assume the latrine management rights and the Taxi Association would have to accept that their expenses had become a non-refundable community contribution. Jennifer wasn’t sure that the SPA funds could even be used for a project that would then be managed by the government. “I need to call the Peace Corps office, Max. I’ll explain what’s been going on and ask if we can make any of these changes,” Jennifer explained.

Whatever else happened, Jennifer knew that a decision had to be made soon and things had to change or the latrines would never be done. If the project was never completed, that would make any future community efforts that much more difficult. She didn’t want to see the villagers’ concerns vindicated that the contributed money would be for nothing. Even though she only had a month and a half left in Kougnohou, Jennifer was determined to work with Max to find a solution and get the latrines finished.

Appendix A



TOGO



Appendix B

The envelopes Max and Jennifer distributed to the villagers requesting a contribution for the latrines included the following note:

S.O.S. Construction de Latrine

Le grand-marché de Kougnohou ne dispose pas de latrine. Cette situation oblige les usagers du marché à faire leurs besoins tout autour du marché. Ce qui pollue énormément les rivières se situant de part et d'autre dudit marché, surtout en temps de pluie. La communauté avec l'aide de la Volontaire du Corps de la Paix a eu un financement pour construire une latrine au grand-marché pour réduire la fréquence des maladies liées à l'eau. En vue de respecter le contrat demandant une participation financière de la communauté, nous avons l'honneur de solliciter votre soutien financier pour mener à bien ce projet. Nous vous rappelons que d'autres bonnes volontés, le syndicat des chauffeurs et les usagers du marché, se sont déjà manifestés pour apporter leur pierre dans la construction de ladite latrine. Nous vous prions de faire une croix dans la case correspondant au montant que vous désirez mettre dans l'enveloppe et tenons à vous informer que nous repasserons jeudi, le 8 avril pour la collecte de fonds. Nous vous remercions sincèrement pour votre patriotisme.

5000F

2500F

1000F

_____ (autre)

Les Initiateurs

Jennifer SAMNICK
Volontaire du Corps de la Paix

AZIALE K. Marcellin
Assistant d'Hygiène

Appendix C

Original Planned Project Timeline

Period	Activities	People or Groups Responsible
Oct 2003 - Feb 2004	Awareness-raising in the village, finalization and submission of SPA proposal	Max and Jennifer
Mar-04	Begin collection of community contributions	Jennifer, Taxi Association, <i>marché</i> users
	Selection of latrine construction site	Max, Jennifer, Taxi Association
	Dig the foundations of the latrines	Max and Taxi Association
	Locate and transport sand for cement fabrication	Taxi Association
Apr-04	Fabrication of cement bricks	Masons
	Fabrication of cement slabs covers for septic tanks	Masons and welders
May-04	Preparation of the interior of the septic tanks	Masons
	Building of the latrine walls and stall dividers	Masons
	Installation of squat seats and drainage PVC pipes	Masons
	Installation of cement slab covers over septic tanks	Masons
	Construction of the roof	Carpenters
	Construction of maintenance worker's stand	Carpenters
	Installation of stall doors	Masons and carpenters
	Finishing of cement work (interior and exterior)	Masons
Jun-04	Painting of walls	Painter
	Training of the maintenance worker	Max
	Inauguration and opening of the latrines to the public	<i>Sous-prefet, prefet</i> , Jennifer, Max, Taxi Association
	Final report to SPA on expenditure of grant funds	Jennifer and Max

Managing a Community Latrine Project in Togo, West Africa (Case B)

Change of Heart

After speaking with the Peace Corps office, Jennifer had confirmation that their best option was to work with ASPRA or find an individual entrepreneur. She was counseled to avoid giving the project to the government if any other option were available. Meanwhile, without any knowledge of Max and Jennifer's level of concern, Mawudo finally arrived with the Taxi Association's receipts for what had been intended to be in-kind contributions. She thanked him and added them to the official project notebook after he'd left her house.

While waiting for Max to stop by, Jennifer tallied the receipts and was shocked to see that they had spent close to 150,000CFA beyond the first cash contribution of 50,000CFA. As soon as she saw the total she knew that this was the reason why the rest of the cash contribution payments were so late and why the president was resisting giving any more money. They truly didn't have any cash available. To drop the Taxi Association from the project after they'd made a total contribution of close to 200,000CFA would be next to impossible.

Jennifer showed Max the notebook and receipts that evening and they concurred that they should revise the budget and timeline and find a way to work out the rest of the project with the Taxi Association. Max and Jennifer set up a meeting with the Taxi Association to motivate them and verify the new timeline and what was needed to complete the latrines. They made arrangements for the final purchases of cement and sand and fixed dates for the revised schedule of five cash contributions of 20,000CFA.

Leaving Kougnohou

A few more weeks went by. The latrines were all but complete, over two months later than planned. The project account was empty, the *prefet* was not giving any more money, all the envelopes that were going to be filled were collected, and Jennifer was preparing to leave Togo. The Taxi Association only still owed 15,000CFA of the 150,000CFA total cash they had agreed to contribute. Two people were owed money for their labor, a carpenter and a mason.

From the beginning, Jennifer had been against making any large personal contributions to the latrine project on principle. That would set precedents that a "wealthy" foreigner would be there to fix problems in the end and the community did not really have to find a way to finance the full portion of the project that they were responsible for. But she felt she needed to make an exception. The two individuals who were owed money were not likely to get paid any time soon. They normally would not have performed their work on credit had she not been a part of the project. Since they had trusted her and the latrines would be able to be completed as a result of their efforts, Jennifer made a personal contribution to the project in the amount that they were owed, 37,000CFA.⁶

Before leaving Kougnohou for good, Jennifer met with Max, *Sous-Prefet* Alfa, Chief Anonéné, the Taxi Association's president, and Mawudo. Everyone was made aware of what remained to do to complete the latrines. The Taxi Association would be responsible for paying for any

⁶ Jennifer's monthly stipend was 135,000CFA.

additional expenses. The president promised to soon find a reliable person to staff the latrines and perform daily maintenance.

Jennifer bid sad farewells and left Kougnohou. She worried that the latrines would never be fully functional, but rationalized that it was a community project and their ultimate responsibility to ensure that it was done, not hers.

Staying in Touch

A few days later she received a surprise email from Max. He'd learned to use email the day after her departure from a brother who lived in the capital, Lomé. Max and Jennifer continued to stay in touch. Two months after her departure Max sent word that the latrines were finally finished and that they'd scheduled the inauguration date.

Managing a Community Latrine Project in Togo, West Africa (Teaching Notes)

Summary

This case illustrates the difficulties of managing a community partnership to build a latrine in the developing West African country of Togo. Jennifer, a Peace Corps volunteer and Max, a staff member at the local health clinic work with the local Taxi Association as the main community partner to build a six-stall latrine in the village's marketplace. A number of problems ensue, including difficulty in raising the necessary funds, underlying cultural differences, lack of community trust, unclear stakeholder commitment, and responsibility for the project. At the end of the case, Jennifer and Max are faced with a dilemma – whether to continue working with the original community partner, the Taxi Association, or to find an alternative so they can finish the latrines.

This case would be relevant to courses with a focus on international development, public-private partnerships, community development, program management, and cross-cultural relations.

Major Themes/Teaching Objectives

Mapping Stakeholder Incentives:

The case asks students to consider the incentives of the major stakeholders involved in the project and how those incentives relate to their actions. Mobilizing community participation proves to be difficult. Students should be asked to think about why participants show enthusiasm some days and hesitation on others.

- The stakeholders that are most involved and have the most responsibility for implementing a project may not be the parties most motivated towards getting it done. A project organizer's perspective of the stakeholders' interests may be incomplete; there could be other things more important to them.
- Managing from below or from outside your authority – How do you influence a government official when not officially affiliated with the government? Is what you perceive of as their responsibility the same as their perception of their responsibilities?

Planning in a developing country:

Working outside of a known cultural setting adds unique problems to planning the project in this case study. Perceptions and norms are not as easily understood or anticipated and an outsider needs to make an extra effort to find ways to work within an unfamiliar social structure.

- Concepts of time and planning ahead are different than in the United States.
- “Yes” might actually mean “no”.
- Local values are not the same as an American's values (i.e. paying for a funeral may be more important than paying to complete a community project).
- What could have been anticipated better? Expect the unexpected. Delays will occur. The budget will need to be revised. Overestimate what is needed from each party enough to cover your bases when pieces fall through the cracks.

Community Collaborations:

This case looks at a community project that works with an organization as well as the community at large. A clear understanding of each party's access to resources is necessary to motivate the community to participate in a cooperative effort. Sometimes there are underlying problems that cause a collaboration to falter.

- Managing a community partnership – How do you decide if a partnership is not working well enough? What is the tipping point? You need to consider the repercussions of a change in the partnership agreement, as people will still be living in the same small community.
- Raising money from a community – What does contributing to a community project mean to the members of that community? What are past experiences with similar projects and how will that affect this project?

Class Discussion Questions

What went well for Jennifer and Max?

- They involved the whole community in the project – villagers, *marché* users, local government officials, and identified a main community partner (the Taxi Association).
- The Taxi Association was chosen to perform latrine maintenance rather than a community-run management committee; they have responsibility and obligation with a built-in benefit (cash profits) other than just the benevolence of helping the community.
- Jennifer guided and trained Max on the writing of the funding proposal and the project implementation, rather than Jennifer taking the lead role by herself.
- They involved the local leaders in Kougnohou, the *sous-prefet* and the chief, and made sure to keep them informed so as to maintain their support throughout the implementation, not just at the beginning.

What went wrong?

- Max and Jennifer thought the Taxi Association would be able to perform in-kind services that they ended up paying for.
- There was a misconception of the level of trust between the Taxi Association board and its members.
- The president of Special Delegation's death left an ambiguous path for Jennifer and Max to follow to ensure a financial contribution from the *prefet*.
- Underestimated quantities of sand created delays.
- Supply costs were higher due to an ironworkers' strike.
- The *prefet* verbally committed to two rounds of 60,000CFA, but only 50,000 total was given – a total significantly less than the 250,000CFA requested.

What could be done differently next time?

- The support of the chief could have been used to reach out to the villagers to encourage contributions, rather than just relying on the envelope system. The chief could have organized a "town crier" to make rounds of the neighborhood to solicit contributions.
- The 150,000CFA contribution from the Taxi Association could have been staggered so the payments weren't equal amounts. A larger amount could have been required first, followed by decreasing amounts.
(i.e. 75,000CFA, 50,000CFA, 25,000CFA)

- A particular minimum of the cash contributions from the community could have been waited for before beginning to purchase materials (though, some of the contributions were tied to seeing that the construction had really begun).
- A better communication to the *marché* users about the latrines before asking for money from them.
- They could have gone back to the church leaders to help get community support through repeat sermons about the latrines. Max and Jennifer could have made presentations each week at different churches and mosques and asked for contributions while there.

What are the pros and cons of each alternative Max and Jennifer had to staying with the Taxi Association? What is their best next step? (Possibly introduce here the idea of staying with the Taxi Association, which is what they ultimately decide to do.)

- Find an NGO in the village to buy out the project.
- Find a financially well-off individual to buy the project.
- Give it to the government, either the *sous-prefet* or *prefet*.

NGO

Pros:

- The latrines could still be a community-based project, as originally intended and approved by the funder (SPA).
- The Taxi Association would be reimbursed for their prior expenses.

Cons:

- Kougnohou didn't really have a stable NGO. ASNH hadn't been functioning for quite some time. ASPRA had potential, but they had never managed a program before.
- Some backlash from the Taxi Association against the NGO members, jealousy.

Individual Entrepreneur

Pros:

- An individual entrepreneur would be an easier alternative to deal with logistically than an NGO or the government.
- The Taxi Association would be reimbursed for their prior expenses.

Cons:

- The project was designed to be a community effort, not a private for-profit business.
- Is there was an individual in Kougnohou who could immediately afford to pay 150,000CFA on their own? Maybe Loumovi, the Mobile station owner or the co-owners of the Desiadenyo store?
- Taxi Association would be upset at the profits going to a single person rather than to them.

Government

Pros:

- The latrines would be finished when and if the government decided to finish them; Max and Jennifer would have little influence after handing them over.

- Max and Jennifer would not have to struggle with the Taxi Association any longer.

Cons:

- Jennifer wasn't sure that the SPA funds could be used for a project that would then be managed by the government.
- The government would take any profits from the latrines out of the village.
- The taxi association would not be reimbursed for any prior expenses.

Handout Case B

Allow three-five minutes to read the Case B.

Case B Discussion

- What did they decide to do and why?
- What would you have done? Anything different?
- What problems would have occurred had the Taxi Association been replaced?
 - Replacing the Taxi Association could have sent a signal to the *prefet* that the project was in jeopardy and might not be worth spending his money on.
- Was it a good idea for Jennifer to pay the carpenter and mason out of her own pocket?
 - Jennifer felt that the two workers would not have had the influence necessary to get paid after her departure if project money was in short supply.
 - Had they not been paid, it could lead to future problems with their participation in future community projects. Others may hear of the lack of payment and refuse to perform work that was still needed.
 - Jennifer felt responsible for their participation for payment at a later date. Without her presence as a sort of guarantee, they may not have chosen to work on credit.

Additional Readings

Suggested readings to enhance student learning of the case could include any articles or books on working in a rural African community, particularly West Africa. Readings would be beneficial that illustrate the approach to working in a culture where time is not money, in any part of the developing world. Below are listed several possible readings, though many alternates could be utilized, as well.

Bunch, R. (1982) *Two Ears of Corn*. (World Neighbors).

A practical guide for field-level management, particularly in Latin America.

Kristensen, P and C. Rader. (2001) *The Strategic Management Approach*. Conservation International.

Presents the logical framework approach and how it fits into strategic management.

Uphoff, N. "Analyzing Options for Local Institutional Development."