Introduction and objectives

PRAXIS - Institute for Participatory Practices is a not-for-profit development support organisation committed to democratisation of development processes and institutions to ensure that the voices of poor women, men and children are heard and acted upon. PRAXIS believes that true participatory democracy involves affirmative action to empower the poor and the marginalised sections of the society.

PRAXIS was set up as an independent organisation by ACTIONAID India in 1997 and has since partnered national and international agencies, governments and non-government organisations in propagating participatory approaches to development.

We provided the following services:

Training in Participatory Methodology: We impart training to both national and international organizations in participatory research methods. Training modules can be tailor made and delivered anywhere in the world.

Research: Research is our stronghold. We undertake a large number of studies for various agencies in the development sector. These include: participatory poverty assessments, baseline studies, impact assessments, participatory monitoring and evaluation and stake-holders’ appraisal.

Networks and exchanges: We are a part of several national and international networks. Our international workshops are often attended by members of these networks; the workshops act as a platform for the exchange of ideas and trends from practitioners the world over.

Information Dissemination: We spread the learnings we acquire, in the form of reports and summaries, PRA topic packs and also books, CDS and VCDS on issues relating to participatory development.

Video Documentation. We have a full-fledged Video unit: WeDIO (We Do It Ourselves). WeDIO captures in-training situations, footage on themes of ‘participation’ and also provides opportunities to communities and development workers to produce their own video documents. This services is made available to intended beneficiaries who want to present their side of the story. WeDIO has carried out such exercises in the past for rural communities and children?
Field testing of PRA tools for World Bank study
Period - June 2004
Praxis conducted a pilot of the methodology for the World Bank study on *Moving out of Poverty*. Methods were field tested in two locations of Assam - one urban and the other rural. The data collection tools involved key informant interviews, three different focus group activities, two mini case studies, and semi-structured household interviews to get life stories.

Advisory Meeting of Participation Group of IDS
Period: June
Praxis is a member of the advisory committee of Participation Group of IDS. It attended a meeting organized by the participation group at IDS to share its experiences as well as provide inputs to strengthen the future activities of the group. Praxis was also uniquely placed to provide the point of the view a developing country on the challenges of trying to bring about participatory democracy.

CRY PME Workshop, Lucknow
Period: August
PRAXIS facilitated a workshop for entire CRY India team to help set up their Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation systems.

PRA training for Zameen Adhikar Andolan,
Period: August
PRAXIS facilitated five days PRA training for members of Zameen Adhikar Andolan, a network of NGO in Aurangabad.
Poorest Areas Civil Society Program (PACS).
Period: Feb – Sep, 2004
Praxis had been selected as one of the support organizations for the Poorest Area Civil Society Programme in the state of Jharkhand. It was an ongoing programme started in February. The main task was to undertake supportive supervision of 16 projects, implemented by 77 NGOs, under DFID-PACS to ensure that the implementation and management of the project design was as per the specified parameters.

Participatory Poverty Assessments in States of Sikkim, Assam and Chattisgarh supported by Asian Development Bank.
Period: April to December 2004
In line with ADB’s strategic development objective (1992) and of its poverty reduction plan (’99), Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) were commissioned in selected states of India to identify priorities for development action, that emerged from these in-depth analysis. The assessments were expected to feed into ADB’s country strategy and programme updates and provide insights into the processing of future projects and proposals in the selected states. Praxis had been given the responsibility of conducting the assessments in Assam, Sikkim and Chhattisgarh.

Project Development Resource Organisation, PACS-Bihar,
Period: November 2004 - Onwards
The Management Consultants of the DFID supported Poorest Areas Civil Societies Programme had approached Praxis to support the project as a resource organization. Praxis was requested to handhold interested CSOs in developing their proposals and projects through intensive appraisal. We had in the two months provided such support to six projects involving 16 grassroots CSOs. The projects were cleared by the Project Selection Committee.
CARE, Sonagachhi Assessment:
Period: December 2004 - February 2005

Praxis worked with the community of sex workers based in Sonagachhi and other red light district of West Bengal to facilitate the documentation of the internationally acclaimed movement of sex workers led by Durbar Mahila Samanvay Committee. The project was commissioned by CARE India to feed into the design of an immersion program for its SAKSHAM project. As part of the effort, a core team of facilitators (made up of Praxis staff and representatives of the sex workers) visited various red light districts in West Bengal and interacted with a range of local stakeholders.