

2001

How I see poverty

I see poverty as multidimensional disadvantage, and deprivation of wellbeing as defined by poor and deprived people themselves. This includes experiences and conditions which the vast majority of us would agree in saying "no" to, as simply not being acceptable for our fellow human beings.

The dimensions can be expressed in many ways. Our "outsiders" words and categories often differ from those of "insiders", people who are themselves poorer and more deprived. Both our words and theirs have strengths and weaknesses, but it is good practice to start with what they themselves say and express in their own languages, about their views of illbeing and wellbeing, of bad and good conditions of life and experience.

The dimensions can be seen as an interlocking web. Development can then be good change in which the anchors or circles at the edge of the web move from negative to positive values. One expression of this (attachment A) is the five circles, with development as shifts

	from material lack and poverty	to enough for a good life
	from physical weakness	to physical wellbeing
	from bad social relations	to good social relations
	from insecurity	to security
and	from powerlessness	to freedom of choice and action

All these affect quality of life and experience, moving from pain, anxiety, humiliation, inability to provide for and help children and so on, to their opposites, including self-respect and peace of mind. A change in one often affects the others.

The web of deprivation and disadvantage can have numerous other circles, and many variations are possible (e.g. attachment B). Expanding and adding to the above can then include:

- Places of the poor – isolated, risky, unserved, stigmatised...
- Poverty of time and energy – exhausted, overworked, no time for recreation, relaxation,
- Gender relations – troubled and unequal
- Seasonality – the worst times of year
- Lack of capability – lack of information, education, skills
- Institutions - disempowering and excluding
- Livelihoods and assets – precarious and inadequate
- Lacking organisation and political clout
- Behaviour of the rich and powerful – disregard, abuse, exploitation...

Individual anchors can be elaborated, as for example with physical illbeing and wellbeing (attachment C)

What I can do against it

It is a continual puzzle to know what best to do. I have never committed myself enough to this, and have never got it right. I have far too little direct contact with poor people. I desperately need more including in my own country. This is both to learn more from them, and to confront the hypocrisy of my life.

My comparative advantage may be in writing and dissemination. This learnshop should be good for me, to make what I write more real and relevant. The issues I should maybe try to learn and write more about include:

- whose reality counts? Issues of power, knowledge and error
- professional institutional and personal change
- participatory approaches and methods

and how these interlink. The hope then is that writing and dissemination, and sometimes talks and workshops, will really make a difference for the better. But sometimes I do wonder and doubt.

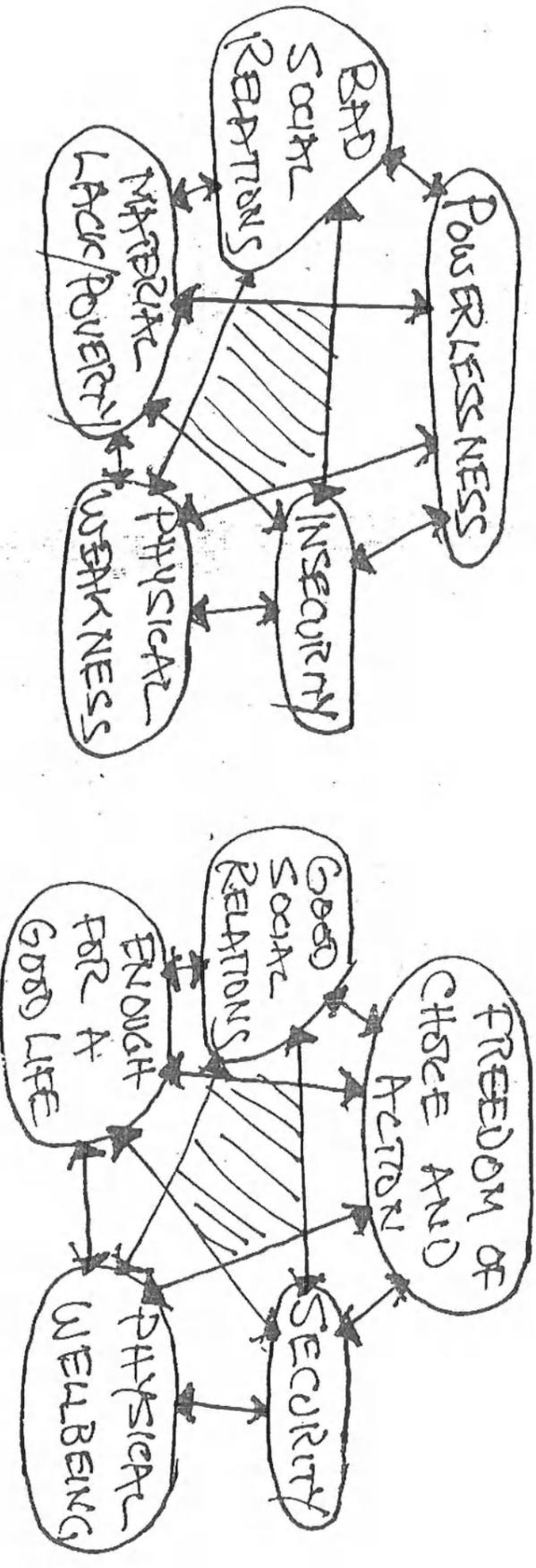
Ifakara

10 June 01

Robert

DEVELOPMENT AS GOOD CHANGE - FROM ILLBEING TO WELLBEING

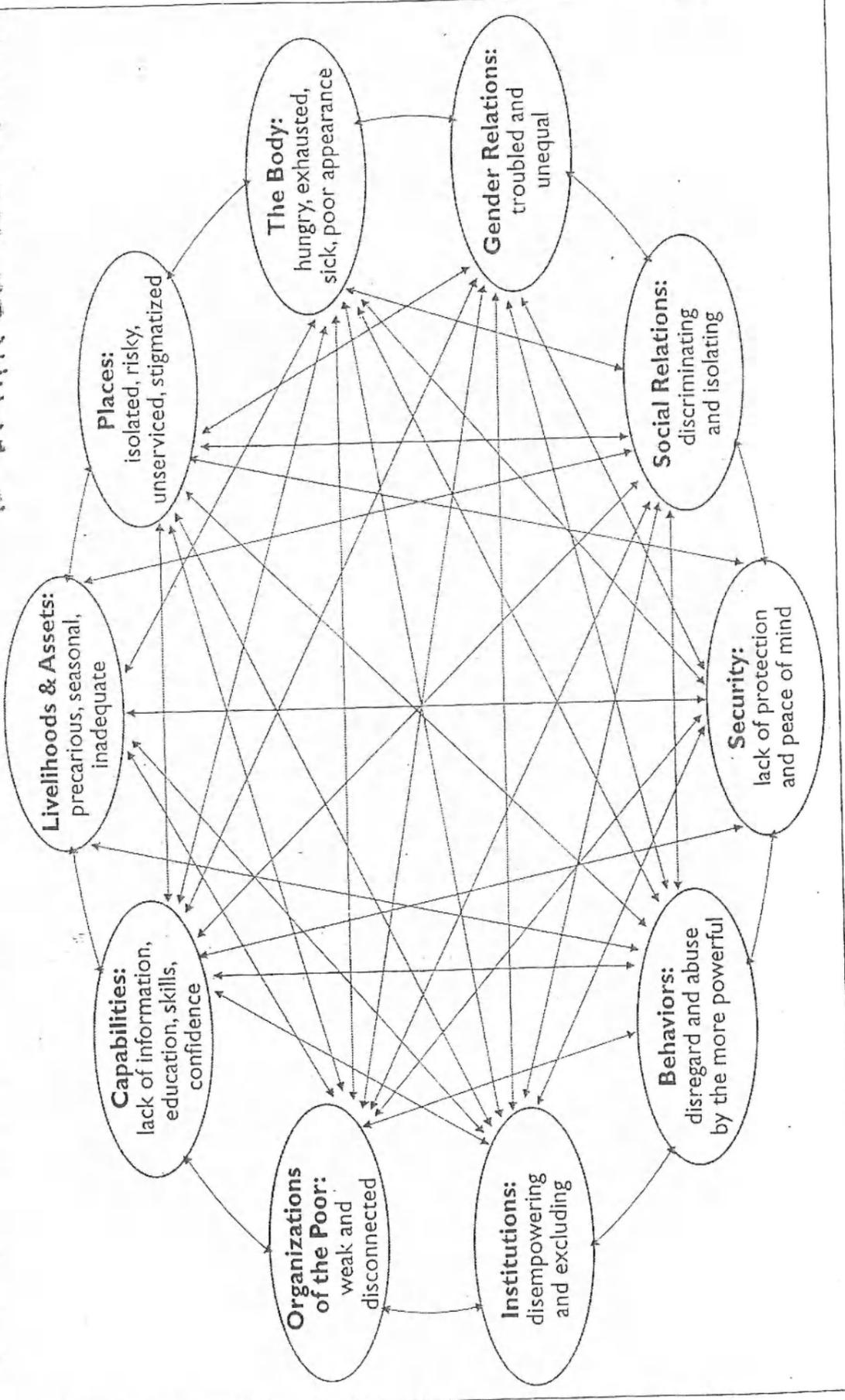
ILLBEING → WELLBEING



 = EXP. PSYCHOLOGICAL...
 = THE EXPERIENCE OF LIVING AND BEING
 THE BAD AND THE GOOD LIFE

? ALL POINTS OF ENTRY
TO ENHANCE WELLBEING?

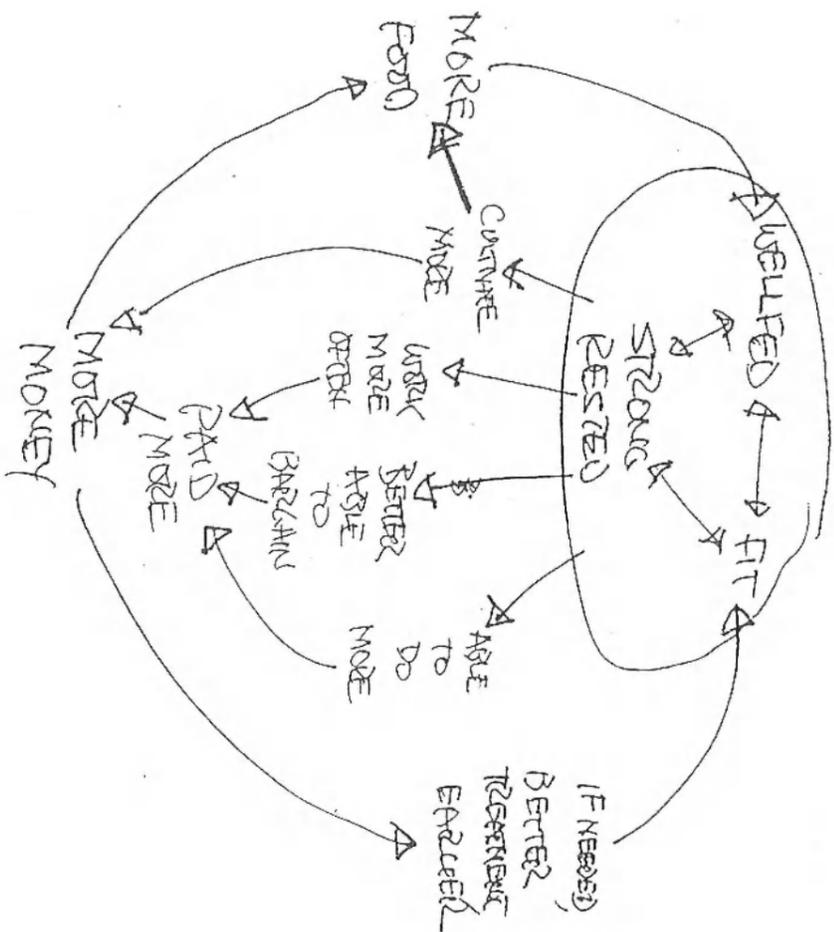
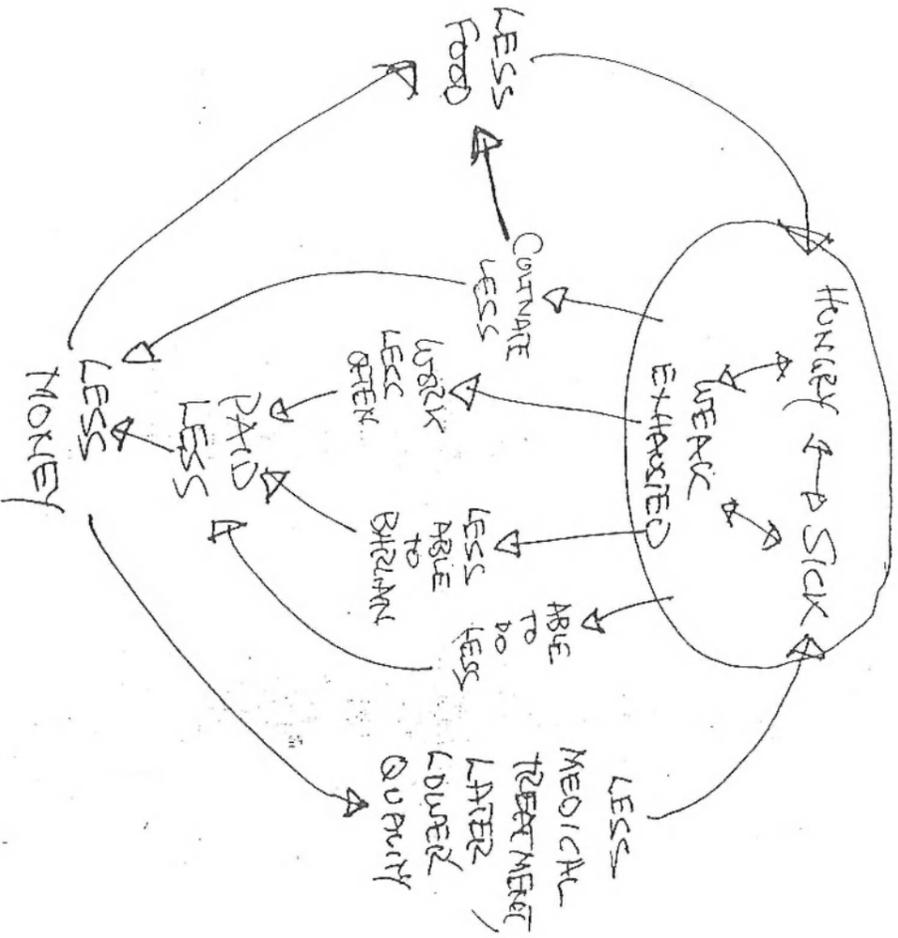
Figure 11.1 Dimensions of Powerlessness and Illbeing



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BODY SYNDROMES

UNBEILIG → WEILBEILIG



RJR
6/1/00