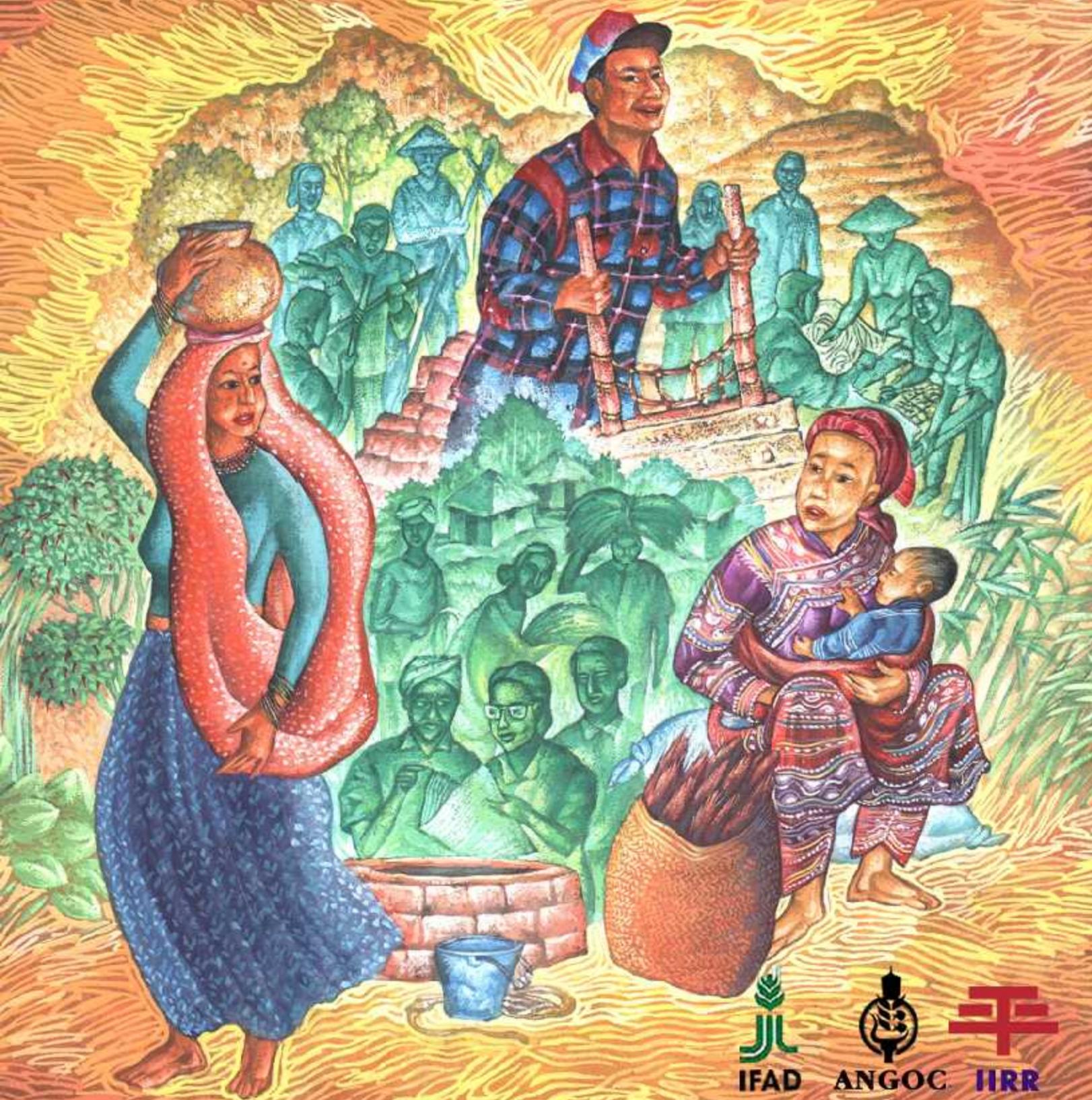


ENHANCING OWNERSHIP and SUSTAINABILITY

A RESOURCE BOOK ON PARTICIPATION



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April 2001



SEARSOLIN

MYRADA



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Contents

	Acknowledgements	v
	Foreword	vii
	Introduction to the Resource Book	ix
part 1	Poverty and Participation	
	Poverty, Indigenous Peoples and the Upland Poor: Design Issues	3
	Poverty, Reduction Strategies: A Part for the Poor?	9
	Decentralisation and Participation	16
	“Hidden” Costs-Benefits to Participating Communities	21
	Social and Equity Concerns in Participatory Watershed Management in India	29
	Participatory Poverty Assessment	36
	Targeting Poor Communities: An Example from Africa	41
part 2	Participatory Processes	
	Participatory Learning Approaches	51
	Overview of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)	56
	Scaling Up Participatory Rural Appraisal: Lessons from Vietnam	64
	Participatory Monitoring: An Experience from Nepal	70
	Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Some Concerns from the Field	75
	Critical Reflections on PRA and the Project Cycle: Practitioner Perspectives from Nepal	81
	The Appreciative Inquiry Approach	86
	Building Institutional Capacity: The Use of Appreciative Inquiry in Rural Communities	94
	Appreciative Inquiry with Community-Based Organisations: A Sample Module	98
	Stakeholder Analysis: A Process Approach	102
	Participatory Diagnostic Study in Project Formulation and Beyond: A Process Approach	108
	Monitoring and Evaluation of Participatory Research	118
	Training in Participatory Approaches	123
	How to Make Log-Frame Programming More Sensitive to Participatory Concerns	128
	Result-Based Project Planning	138
	Participatory Technology Development and Dissemination: Some Key Principles	141
	Empowering Women and Facilitating their Participation for Better Resource Management	145
	A Participatory Workshop Process to Produce User-Friendly Information Materials	151

part	3	Participatory Project Planning and Implementation	
		Searching for Participatory Approaches in China: Findings of the Yunnan PRA Network	161
		Introducing Participatory Processes among Ethnic Minorities: Challenges in Vietnam	166
		Participatory Process in Institution-Building: Experiences from Northeast India	169
		Stakeholder Involvement in Participatory Practices: An Overview of Bangladesh NGOs	174
		Enhancing the “Assessment” in Participatory Assessments	179
		Participatory Planning in Nepal	185
		Participatory Self-Monitoring System: The Maharashtra Rural Credit Project	191
		REFLECT: An Empowering Approach to Education and Social Change	199
part	4	Monitoring Impact	
		Elements of Participatory Evaluation	207
		Systematisation: Documentation and Sharing of Project Experiences and Lessons	211
		Innovative Experiences in the Use of Participatory Monitoring Tools	217
		An NGO-Designed Participatory Impact Monitoring (PIM) of a Rural Development Project	223
		Using PRA for Participatory Impact Monitoring: An Illustrative Example	230
		Testing Participatory Impact Monitoring: Participatory Resource Management Project in Vietnam	236
		Scaling Up Local Successes	242
		PME Process Practised at the Field Level: Learning from the LIFE Project	248
		Building Participation into Benefit-Cost Analysis	255
part	5	Institutions, Partnerships and Governance	
		Participation, Citizenship and Local Governance	265
		Evaluating Governance Programmes	272
		Building Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships	274
		The Triadic Approach: Some Experiences in Landcare, Philippines	279
		Participatory Approaches in Government Bureaucracies:	
		Facilitating the Process of Institutional Change	285
		Understanding Resistance to Change	291
		Understanding and Dealing with Conflict	295
		Getting around the Limits to Participation	300
		Creating Spaces for Partnerships to Work: NGO Involvement in Multilateral/Bilateral Projects	308
		Mapping of NGO Initiatives: Building from Existing Experiences	312
		Learning Participation from NGO Experiences in Asia	319
Annexes		Participants	327
		Advisory Committee and Workshop Coordinating Team	331
		Production Staff	333

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And Its Partners



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Foreword

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was established as an international financing institution within the United Nations system with the specific mandate to reach out to the rural poor in general and to women in particular. The powerlessness and the inability of these groups to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives has been a major concern of the Fund. Over the past 22 years, there has been a continuing search for participatory approaches that could empower the rural poor to have a greater say in improving their coping strategies. Through these years, we have met many NGOs who share our concern and who are proactively addressing lack of voice of the rural poor.

In 1999, IFAD started a collaboration with a regional institution – the Centre for Integrated Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) – and a regional NGO – the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) – to document the experiences with participatory processes in project design, implementation and evaluation of NGOs and IFAD-funded projects. The identified processes were documented and then discussed in Bangalore, India, in a 14-day participatory workshop organised by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR). Papers were presented by staff from non-government organisations (NGOs), research centres and IFAD.

Early in the workshop, the participants also brainstormed ideas for new topics (other than those already prepared) that should be part of the resource book. These new topics were assigned to knowledgeable participants for development and presentation during the workshop.

The inputs of all participants were discussed, re-edited several times, dropped or validated by all the participants. Permanent backstopping was assured by resource persons, editors, artists and experts in desktop publishing.

The result is this resource book which describes a broad range of first-hand experiences with participatory approaches in the context of projects funded by IFAD, NGOs and governments in the Asia and Pacific area.

It also contains details of some of the newer approaches that are being tried in the region.

While working closely with CIRDAP, ANGOC, IIRR, MYRADA, SEARSOLIN and other NGOs, we have come to develop a deeper and broader knowledge of the participatory approaches that are being used in the region. We are grateful to all the partners for their extremely valuable experience.

This resource book was originally intended to be used only by IFAD staff. However, during the Bangalore workshop, we agreed that it shall be made available to all development workers who share our concern about the rural poor.

We hope that this publication will help all of us to help the rural poor to overcome their lack of freedom of choice of action.

Phrang Roy
Director, Asia and the Pacific Division
International Fund for Agricultural Development

Introduction to the Resource Book

New participatory tools for learning and action are constantly being developed and tested in the field. These experiences yield valuable lessons for improving project delivery and effectiveness and for increasing sensitivity to local indigenous participatory processes and gender concerns.

There has been a growing recognition worldwide on the need for more civil society participation - especially of beneficiary groups - in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of development projects. In Asia, non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) have emphasised various participatory approaches in their work. Participation is seen not just as a means to improve project delivery but more so as a measure to ensure that benefits accrue to the intended target groups and that capacities of local people, groups and communities are built. More importantly, participation motivates communities to assert their collective ownership over projects, thus ensuring that development impacts are sustained in the long run.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has always been searching for ways to integrate participatory approaches in various phases of its project cycle. In 1998, IFAD defined its two most important objectives for its work programme as (a) emphasis on beneficiary-driven projects; and (b) development of systems for periodic impact assessments.

It is within this context that IFAD provided a grant to Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) to carry out a project on "Participatory Processes: Learning from NGO Experiences in Asia and the Pacific", to document the experiences of NGOs in promoting participation at various stages of the project cycle. As a complementary activity to this initiative, IFAD asked ANGOC and the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) to organise an effort to compile a sourcebook of ideas, drawing upon field-tested experiences in a few Asian countries: Philippines, India, Vietnam, Nepal and Bangladesh. The effort involved the use of a participatory approach to produce educational materials in a "writeshop" environment. Institutions like MYRADA, CIRDAP and Southeast Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN) were

invited to join in as partners in organising and conducting the workshop, which took place in Bangalore, India on July 3-14, 2000. Key staff from IFAD were present. A total of 61 papers were presented. Artists, editors and desktop publishing specialists helped revise materials during the workshop itself. The result is this “resource book” for development managers and trainers involved in project management.

The publication focuses on participatory processes and their management, and presents a broad range of concrete experience with different tools. It is assumed that the reader is already familiar with the use of tools like PRA/PLA/PME and is now interested in second generation issues related to project design, training and measurement of impact associated with the use of participatory processes. Each article reflects a specific experience. As such, it has its own validity.

This compilation was originally designed for use in IFAD-supported initiatives, but the range and nature of the topics would make it useful to local government units, NGOs and networks of community-based institutions. This effort to document ongoing experiences with specific participatory approaches and interventions, drawn primarily from among Asian NGOs, has a strong potential for replication in the region. IFAD’s future project design and implementation will benefit from this compilation of field-tested practices and the lessons derived therefrom.

The participatory workshop process which was pioneered by IIRR involved key presentors of field experiences as well as editors, artists and desktop publishing specialists. In the course of the workshop, illustrations were added and repeated draft versions were produced - typically two or three drafts per paper. These papers were greatly enriched, thanks to peer-review of each version undertaken during the workshop. Key staff from IFAD, ANGOC, CIRDAP, SEARSOLIN and IIRR guided the process, from the original planning to the production of the finished versions. The resource book benefited greatly from post workshop reviews by Phrang Roy and Bernadette Trottier of IFAD, Tony Quizon and Don Marquez of ANGOC, Vidya Ramachandran of MYRADA, Rachel Polestico from SEARSOLIN, P. Subrahmanyam from CIRDAP and Julian Gonsalves and Joy Caminade of IIRR. Special thanks is given to Jel Montoya who coordinated the final publishing of the manuscript and brought the manuscript to print, under the overall guidance of Phrang Roy, Ganesh Thapa, Tony Quizon, Joy Caminade and Julian Gonsalves.

This resource book is copyright free and readers are encouraged to use material extensively, with no restrictions on photocopies, lending, or other uses - provided that the authors and source are duly acknowledged.

AFTER A VERY TRANSPARENT
OPEN DEMOCRATIC AND PARTICIPATORY
PROCESS, WE HAVE OUR VERDICT.

WE DECLARE YOU BELOW THE
POVERTY LINE.



part **1**

Poverty and Participation

Poverty, Indigenous Peoples and the Upland Poor: Design Issues



Why Do We Need to Opt for the Poor?

Until recently, East and Southeast Asia were the world's best examples of what could be achieved in human development. Between 1975 and 1995, populations of the absolute poor (i.e., people living on less than one dollar a day) in East Asia declined by two-thirds from 720 million to 350 million and critical social indicators such as life expectancy at birth, infant mortality and literacy rates improved significantly. These achievements were, however, seriously threatened by the financial crisis that gripped the region during 1997-99, leading to the collapse of employment, declining real wages, sharp increases in prices and significant public spending cuts. In Indonesia, the crisis gave rise to widespread unrest and ethnic violence as the food security of the poorer households came under increasing pressure.

The Asian crisis exposed the consequences of a development paradigm that has largely ignored the sectors of food-growing and subsistence agriculture in the marginal rural areas and over-emphasised income from cash crops in high potential areas and out-migration. It was a timely reminder about the scope and severity of poverty in the region.

In the past, spectacular macro-economic performance had distracted attention from the plight of the rural poor, including the fact that East and Southeast Asia has more poor people than elsewhere in the world. Indeed, the stark reality is that, despite the dramatic reduction in poverty mentioned above, many groups of people who are politically marginalised have remained very poor.



The Marginalisation Process

These groups include the indigenous peoples living on the outer islands and in the hilly areas of Indonesia and the Philippines and throughout the hinterlands of Southeast Asia. Most of them combine swidden and terraced rainfed cultivation with the gathering of forest products; they can be called “farmers in the forest”. Another group of marginalised peoples comprises the highlanders or mountain dwellers of

the Himalayas and the surrounding ranges, who rely even more on gathering of non-timber forest products and animal husbandry. Although it is true that their isolation has to some extent

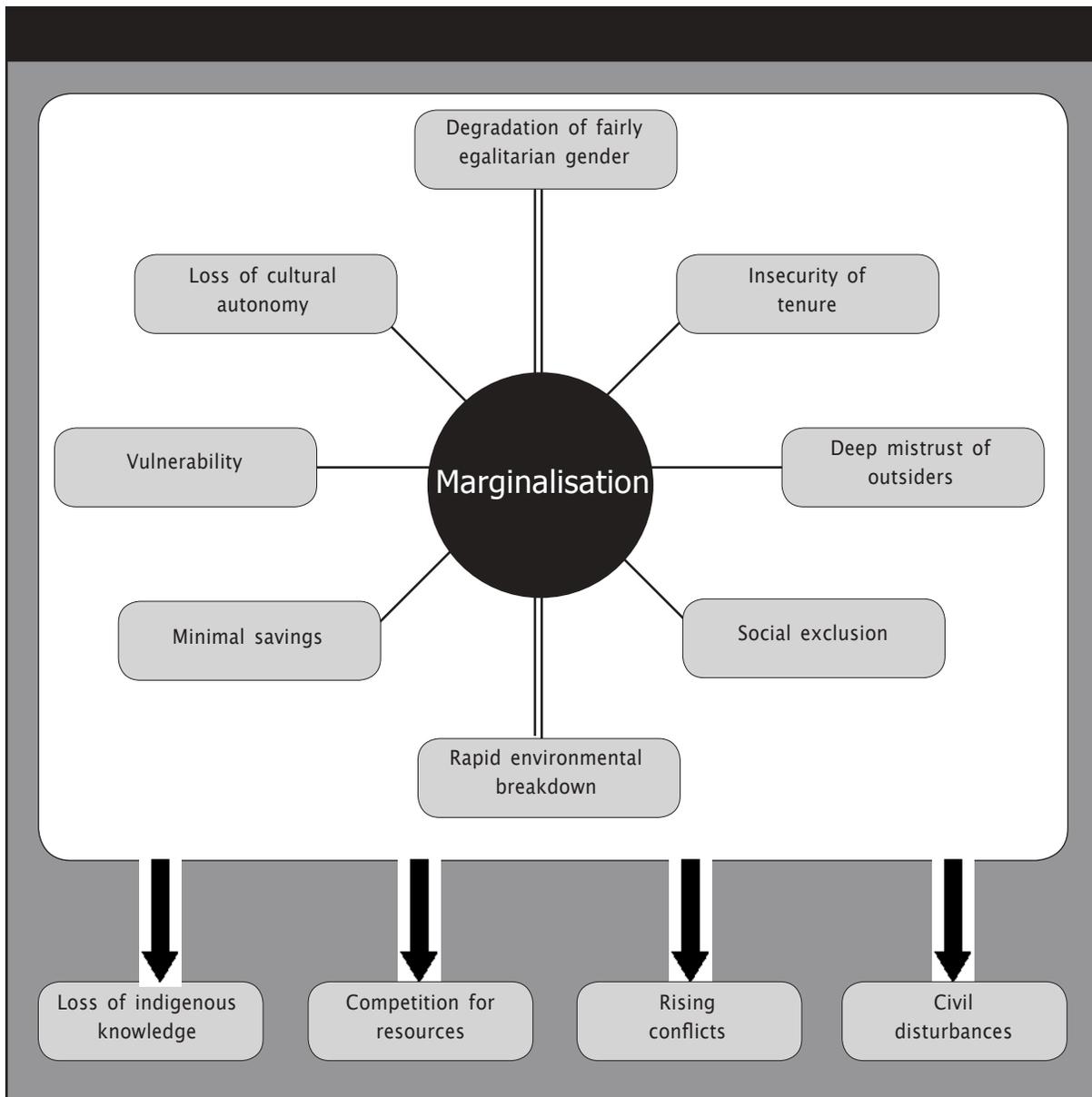
buffered them from the Asian crisis, theirs is a situation of persistent and rising crisis.

What little development assistance the upland populations have received has until recently been guided by the primary concerns of the lowlands and the mainstream societies. Indeed, the conventional industrial and agrarian sectors rarely flourish in the hills and mountains, due to strong comparative disadvantages (e.g., in terms of production costs). The uplands do have attractive assets, but past efforts to exploit their comparative advantages have tended to dispossess the local populations. The current process of globalisation enhances the risks of further marginalisation, disempowerment and desperation. Measures specially adapted for these areas are urgently needed to prevent this.

Indeed, upland timber, fuelwood, hydropower, minerals, uncultivated soils, biodiversity and opportunities for eco-tourism are very attractive to outside investors and capital. However, their development to date has followed the classical exploitation (extractive) mode rather than an empowerment approach based on genuine involvement and generation of real benefits to the local populations. If this is allowed to continue, the conflicts already experienced in many countries could spread throughout the uplands of Asia.

The marginalisation of indigenous peoples is leading to a rapid social and environmental breakdown. Building up their resilience against future economic adversities is an important and strategic necessity for enabling recovery and for the promotion of broad-based economic growth for the region. The traditional coping strategy of the upland poor has been out-migration, an immediate response to rising population pressures and deterioration of their basic renewable resources. However, when migration is motivated by marginalisation induced by external forces, it is often associated with violence and conflict.

Having subsisted at the margins of the economic miracle for the past 30 years and becoming increasingly aware of their own marginalisation, a silent but growing discontent is developing amongst the upland poor. Shortages generated by rising population pressures and environmental changes have already provoked destabilising population movements that appear, in turn, to be the main cause of many of the ongoing upland conflicts and wars.



Some Windows of Opportunities

Fortunately, there is a small awakening of the need to redefine the paradigm for the development of the uplands. The value of regenerative and environmentally-sound agricultural practices that maximise the use of locally adapted resource-conserving technologies has been recognised. Upland poor people think about their resources holistically. They plan their household economics on the basis of all the local resources available to them. Upland dwellers have an important role to play as the stewards of biodiversity and the environment, and hence in the sustainability of life on our globe.

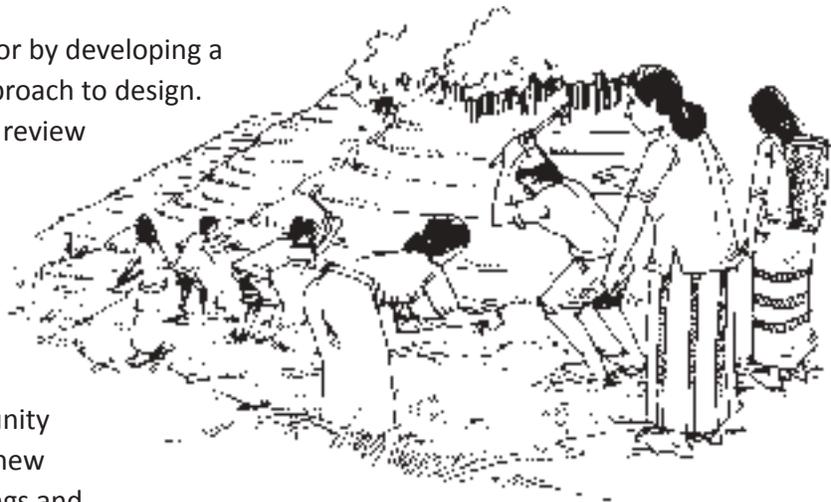
Indeed, an interesting opportunity for the development of these areas is linked to their potential for generating positive effects on world living conditions. The Kyoto conference on the environment

highlighted the need to reduce hydrocarbon emissions as one of the most pressing environmental issues. Asia's vast uplands, with their steep slopes and marginal soils, are well suited for afforestation and the empowerment mode is a way to do this sustainably. Innovative ways are being explored for linking up those willing to pay for environmental services with the deprived populations who need finance for development. Instrumentalities that are being tested include: the commoditisation and sale of watershed and landscape services, the financing of biodiversity conservation through bio-prospecting fees, carbon offsets, etc. Opportunities for investment include value-adding activities in forestry and agroforestry, the harvesting of valuable non-timber products, medicinal and aromatic plants, environment-friendly production of high-value products such as vegetable seed, mushrooms, cardamom, ginger and fine wool. Finally, the uplands and mountainous regions in Asia have some of the world's most pristine settings, eminently suitable for eco-tourism.

Elements of a Development Strategy for the Upland Poor

Process

Win the confidence of the upland poor by developing a participatory and people-centred approach to design. Take time to undertake a diagnostic review and institutionalise a periodic impact monitoring system by the upland poor themselves. An analysis of the changing gender relations amongst the upland poor is crucial. Some key indicators relate to decision-making at the household and community levels, control over assets, access to new knowledge and technology, and savings and investment decisions.

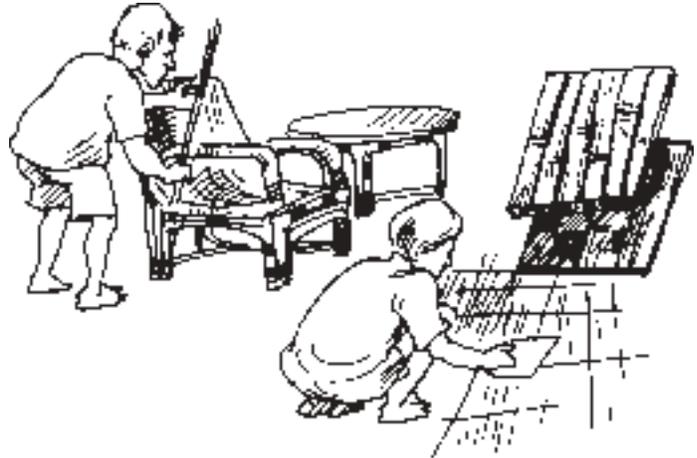


Tenure

Improve practices aimed at securing access to and control over natural resources by the marginalised upland poor. Transform the relations between the upland poor and outsiders from exploitation to empowerment and partnership-building, with a special emphasis on gender and equity. In matrilineal societies, note the growing breakdown of women's control over natural resources.

Technology

Develop and disseminate locally developed technologies using indigenous technologies as the starting point and – where feasible – try to create niches for the benefit of the upland poor. Promote regenerative agriculture and forestry for the local people.



Market linkages

Maximise financial and subsistence benefits by exploiting new market opportunities.

Participatory methods

Use systematic and widespread participatory techniques, including participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Equity and Gender

Share equitably the benefits from improved access to and management of local forest products. Develop participatory indicators with the upland poor to assess the trends of local capital formation. Promote self-help groups for using saving methods already known to the people themselves.

Transform gender relations in ways that emphasise women's control over resources and their involvement in household and community decision-making. Include strong participatory gender analysis in the design and implementation of projects and programmes intended for the indigenous peoples and the upland poor.



Institution-building

Focus on local institution-building through a process of participatory learning and networking.

Networks

Mobilise local knowledge networks and cultural traditions of experimentation. Use indigenous knowledge as the starting point for blending local and new technologies especially where resource pressures are high and traditional practices need to be adapted accordingly. Use innovative learning and networking approaches to develop local champions and national/international mentors of the upland poor.



Examples of Successful Upland Development Initiatives

Ningnan County (West Sichuan, China): From stagnation to progress

In Ningnan, one of the poorest counties of China, people's income and product availability increased manifold within a period of 15 years. The vital emphasis of the development approach was on selecting agricultural activities and overall land-use patterns according to natural suitability, i.e., harnessing the niche and rehabilitation/upgrading of marginal land resources. Decentralisation, people's involvement, use of new technologies and market links were the key instruments. Besides agroforestry, high-value crops such as cereals, vegetables, oilseeds, fruit and other food crops were promoted according to location suitability. Post-harvest processing, marketing and agro-industries further enhanced the overall income and resource generation for reinvestment in a chronically poor area.



Meghalaya (India): Savings method of the Khasis

The Presbyterian Churches in the Khasi Hills in Meghalaya (India) have been built with funds raised through a traditional savings mechanism whereby each household sets aside a handful of rice before a meal is prepared. This rice is taken



Prepared by:
Phrang Roy

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Poverty Reduction Strategies: A Part for the Poor?



Poverty Reduction Strategies

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are at the heart of a new anti-poverty framework announced in late 1999 by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They are intended to ensure that debt relief provided under the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, and concessional loans from the international financial institutions, truly help to reduce poverty in the poorest, most indebted Southern countries.

This Policy Briefing (Issue No. 13, April 2000) was written by Rosemary McGee and edited by Geoff Barnard, with input from John Gaventa, Andy Norton and Mel Speight. Much of the material comes from a synthesis produced by Rosemary McGee with funding from DFID. Other ideas emerged at an international workshop at IDS in February 2000, co-sponsored by IDS, the NGO Working Group on the World Bank and the World Bank. The opinions expressed

To get creditors' approval for debt relief, countries have to prepare a PRSP outlining their poverty reduction goals and plans for attaining them. Countries must then demonstrate progress towards these goals before any funds are released. There is time pressure on both sides. Countries want to benefit from debt relief as soon as possible, while the financial institutions want to be seen to be taking swift action. Of the 40 countries currently eligible for HIPC debt relief, about 25 hope to have PRSPs in place by the end of 2000.

The focus of PRSPs, according to the World Bank, is to "identify in a participatory manner the poverty reduction outcomes a country wishes to achieve and the key public actions-policy changes, institutional reforms, programmes and projects which are needed to achieve the desired outcomes".

Underlying Principles

PRSPs cover a three-year period initially and should be:

- Country-driven: with governments leading the process and broad-based participation in the adoption and monitoring of the resulting strategy;
- Results-oriented: identifying desired outcomes and planning the way towards them;
- Comprehensive: taking account of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty;
- Long-term in approach: recognising the depth and complexity of some of the changes needed; and
- Based on partnership: between governments and other actors in civil society, the

In many respects, this new approach is a triumph for the non-government organisations (NGOs) and the concerned public around the world who have campaigned for debt relief. It offers an unprecedented opportunity for development efforts to re-focus on poverty reduction, and for civil society organisations (a term that includes NGOs, labour unions, business and professional associations, religious bodies and other citizens' groups) to influence anti-poverty policy.

But it also raises many concerns:

- Will it be seen by poor countries as yet another imposition from abroad – just the latest form of aid conditionality to be accommodated?
- How do we ensure that the rushed timetable and conflicting interests do not undermine the proposed participatory approach?
- How do we avoid excessive emphasis on the paper, as opposed to the underlying strategy, which is, after all, the point of the exercise?

There are many who doubt whether the good intentions enshrined in the PRSP principles can be achieved in practice, especially given the tight timeframe. Yet one thing is clear: if the PRSP approach is to succeed in its ambitious objectives, building effective participation into the process will be essential.

Who Should be Involved?

Besides central government, who is expected to take the lead in the process, many other “stakeholders” need to be involved. Most important are the poor themselves. Finding ways to engage their input is critical. Others who have a significant stake in the process, or a role to play as enablers, advocates, or channels for information, include:

- local governments;
- politicians and political parties;
- organisations representing poor people (community groups, religious leaders, trade unions, farmers' associations, traditional authorities, NGOs);
- academic researchers and analysts; and
- the press and broadcast media.



Two other important groups also have a legitimate stake in the process – donor agencies and the better-off sectors of the population. Both are likely to have a strong influence on the success of any anti-poverty strategy. Efforts are therefore needed to win their commitment, or to at least ensure they are not against the process.

Building Participation into the Process

Participation can happen at various stages in the process of formulating a poverty reduction strategy and to varying degrees. It can range from simple information-sharing, to more extensive consultation and joint decision-making, and to situations where the relevant stakeholders take on responsibility for monitoring the process and evaluating its success.



The process of drawing up and implementing a poverty reduction strategy will vary from country to country and it will take place against the backdrop of national planning and electoral cycles. To identify opportunities for participation, it is helpful to think of the process as having five basic stages, as sketched out in the diagram (*see next page*). At each stage, particular activities will be happening and different forms of input may be appropriate. However, there is no fixed blueprint to follow: countries need to map out their own process and define who exactly needs to be involved, and when.

Building meaningful participation into the process will be a challenge for all concerned. In some countries, governments already consult with civil society organisations when drawing up an implementing policy. But in others there is no such tradition – participatory approaches are new and unfamiliar, and little rapport exists between government and civil society actors. Here, governments will often have much to learn from the NGOs and other agencies.

Lessons from Experience

Countries now embarking on PRSPs are heading into uncharted territory. However, there is valuable experience to build on from previous efforts to build participation into policy.

Encouraging ownership

For participation to be meaningful, those involved need to feel they “own” the process to a significant extent. Although governments and donor agencies are increasingly adopting participatory approaches, many have difficulty “taking the back seat”. Ownership tends to stay with the donors; sometimes it stretches to national governments, but it rarely extends to the civil society.

There are exceptions. In Bolivia, the government recently convened a second national dialogue on development in which NGOs were invited to participate. The NGOs set their conditions relating to access to information, adequate follow-up and other procedures, and only agreed to participate once these were accepted.

Where Participation Fits In

Stages in the Poverty Reduction Strategy

How Participatory Approaches Can Help

Stage 1. Analytical and Diagnostic Work
Research to deepen the understanding of poverty and reflect the diversity of experiences (e.g., according to gender, age, ethnic or regional groups)

Participatory Poverty Assessments can supplement conventional data-gathering and capture the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and different groups'

Stage 2. Formulation of the Strategy

- Analysis of the poverty impact of a range of public expenditure options.
- Identification of public actions which will have most impact on poverty.

Participatory analysis of the poverty impact of public expenditure can generate deeper understanding than analysis by officials and "experts" only.

Negotiation between different national stakeholders over priorities can lead to broader ownership and more widely accepted consensus.

Stage 3. Approval
Approval at country level, then formal approval by the World Bank and IMF Boards – at which point debt relief and/or concessional loans become available.

Also important is public approval, reached through extensive consultation between civil society representatives and their constituencies. Though non-binding, this is vital for broadening

Stage 4. Implementation

- Agreeing roles and responsibilities with government and service providers at local level.
- Monitoring implementation.
- Feedback to revise the strategy and

Negotiation of roles and responsibilities with civil society can help generate agreed standards for performance, transparency and

Participatory research can enhance people's awareness of their rights and strengthen the poor's claims.

Participatory monitoring of effectiveness of policy measures, public service performance and budgeting can contribute to efficiency

Stage 5. Impact Assessment
Retrospective evaluation of the poverty reduction strategy to derive lessons for subsequent versions.

Participatory evaluation can bring to bear the perceptions of actors at different levels and their experience of

Feedback to next

Nurturing in-country ownership of PRSPs will not be easy, given their origin in Washington D. C., USA. Their very broad scope also makes ownership problematic. They have to cover macroeconomic policy, for example, an area where global financial institutions have a tight grip in poor countries and power relations are deeply entrenched. To avoid undermining local ownership, donors and creditors will have to learn to step back from their traditional dominant position.

Promoting two-way information flow

Good information flows, both upward and downward, are essential. Upward flows are needed to help policy-makers understand better the realities and perspectives of those living in poverty. Participatory research has proved useful in this regard. Downward flows are needed to inform people of their rights and to let them know what policies are being enacted on their behalf. Research suggests that only when they are translated into a concrete policy, advertised widely, and implemented and monitored, do people realise that rights or entitlements are theirs to claim.



To ensure good information flows, governments need to announce early on that a poverty reduction strategy is being developed, explain the stages involved, and highlight where the civil society can take part. This should be followed up with regular information updates and steps to encourage media coverage and public debate.

Being involved

The process of participation can be as important as the information it generates. Broad public participation helps raise public awareness and build consensus, and it can overcome some of the political constraints that stall policy change. It also creates ownership of the resulting policies and helps enhance their legitimacy.

For civil servants, activities that bring them into contact with NGO workers and the people directly affected by state policies can transform their outlook. In Uganda, central and local government, NGOs and academics are working together to bring the voices of the poor into policy. Besides generating valuable information, this is building capacity and forging lasting relationships between the very diverse actors involved.

Enhancing accountability

Participatory approaches can be used to make governments and service providers, such as health officers, more accountable. This can be particularly important for the poor, given their weak voice. In some cases, initiatives have been prompted by governments; in others, citizens' groups have taken the lead.

The South African Women's Budget Initiative, for example, set out to make the national budget more gender-equitable. In this model, researchers, NGOs and parliamentarians are analysing budgets as part of

What can go wrong?

Participatory initiatives often suffer from weaknesses that can jeopardise the process and reduce their impact.

Common problems

- Unrealistic or unstated expectations which can create frustration and cynicism among participants.
- Insufficient time allowed for proper participation or consultation.
- Inadequate dissemination of information, or providing it in an inaccessible style or language.
- Lack of transparency over the criteria for selecting participants, and failure to represent the poorest, most marginalised groups.
- Lack of follow-up and feedback, and failure to follow the process through to its conclusion.



the national budget cycle. One offshoot is Budget Transparency and Participation Scorecards, designed for monitoring fiscal performance and delivery at the provincial level.

In a PRSP context, accountability means:

- ensuring that the process of drawing up the PRSP explicitly reflects the needs and priorities of the poor;
- establishing realistic mechanisms so that ordinary people can hold government and service providers answerable for the delivery of policies and goods, and for the spending of public funds; and
- involving citizens directly in monitoring how the strategies laid down in the PRSP are being implemented and whether anti-poverty commitments are being fulfilled.

Setting up these mechanisms will be difficult and will require strengthening the capacity for budget and policy analysis in PRSP countries, particularly among civil society groups. Development agencies could play a useful role by supporting this.

Monitoring the Quality of Participation

Making participatory approaches mandatory in PRSP formulation raises the question of what standard of participation is acceptable, and who judges it. New indicators are being developed to assess the quality and impact of participatory processes. These seek to capture:

- the level and nature of participation in the process;
- the impact on the participants and on their capacity to become involved and influence policy processes in the future; and
- the ultimate impact of participation on policy and change.

General quality standards for participation in poverty reduction strategies can be agreed at a global level, covering basic principles of transparency, accountability and ownership. But detailed monitoring in specific cases demands a more tailored approach. Ideally, it should be designed and undertaken by a multi-stakeholder group including government, civil society organisations and donors. This two-tiered approach allows for diversity between countries while ensuring that there are some non-negotiable starting points to prevent standards from being pushed down to the lowest common denominator acceptable to all.

Being Realistic about PRSPs

It remains to be seen to what extent the new approach can really offer a meaningful part to the poor. Providing poor people with the chance to contribute to PRSPs, directly or via their civil society representatives, is an important start. But it is only the first step in making development strategies truly responsive to the needs of the poor.

The PRSP model is highly ambitious and, as yet, untested. Inevitably, there will be flaws in the first batch of papers. If an honest and open “learning approach” is adopted, however, early errors should lead to improvements.

Ensuring a high level of participation in the process is vital. But participation needs to be viewed realistically. Expecting all stakeholders to be involved at every stage is neither feasible nor desirable. Decisions as to who participates, when and how, are therefore crucial. These decisions need to be made transparently, in a way that commands the respect of civil society organisations and the broader public.

With the pressure on to complete PRSPs, all of the main stakeholders face significant challenges. In particular:

- **Organisations representing the poor** need to learn fast how they can make the most of this opportunity, both to feed into the PRSP and to build up their influence and legitimacy in the longer term. This will require strengthening their links with poor constituencies and acquiring a range of new skills.
- **Governments and borrowers** need to take participation seriously and embark on the process with a commitment to broad-based involvement over the whole life of the Strategy, not merely as a cosmetic exercise during the preparatory phase.
- **Donors and other outside agencies** need to strike a fine balance in how they channel their support, and learn to facilitate the process, without dominating it.



Further Reading

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- IDS. 2000. Accountability through participation: Developing workable partnership models in the health sector. IDS Bulletin Vol 31 (1), January.
- McGee, R. 2000. Participation in poverty reduction strategies: A synthesis of experience with participatory approaches to policy design, implementation and monitoring. IDS Working Paper No 109, Brighton: IDS, United Kingdom.

Useful Web Sites

- IDS Participation Group: www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip
Institute for Democracy in South Africa: www.idasa.org.za
International Budget Project: www.internationalbudget.org
World Bank: www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies

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Decentralisation and Participation



Decentralisation is a key element in empowering local communities to take decisions. For decentralisation to succeed in the long run, the capacity building and participation of community organisations at the grassroots level are crucial.

During 1960-1990, the Panchayat (party-less) political system of Nepal, introduced “participation” as a tool to legitimise its system as democratic. A number of policies and practices were introduced but most of these did not reflect the people’s aspirations. It was only during the 1990s, during the advent of the multiparty system, that opportunities were opened up for people’s participation. However, the feudal and autocratic attitude of many leaders remained unchanged. Leaders were often unwilling to share power and to come to terms with the concept of decentralisation and people’s participation.

This paper is based on the UNDP-assisted Participatory District Development Program (PDDP) in Nepal where capacity building and participation of community organisations (COs) are critical components of the process of decentralisation.

Today, a number of programmes, such as PDDP and Local Governance Programme (LGP), are working towards advocating decentralisation, participation and capacity building of communities at the grassroots level. The Local Self-Governance Act of Nepal (1998) has opened up new avenues to facilitate and nurture the decentralisation process by assigning increased authority, responsibility and resources to local bodies to plan, manage and coordinate development activities by themselves.

Policies Initiated by the Local Self-Governance Act of Nepal (1998)

- Coordination and integration of the rural development programmes being carried out by different agencies.
- Emphasis on the delegation of authority, allocation of budgets to local bodies, development of human resources at local level, technical capacity and flow of information to local bodies.
- Developing competence, autonomy and accountability of local institutions in order to mobilise local resources and technologies effectively.
- Mobilisation of community-based organisations and non-government organisations (NGOs).
- Transparency in the functioning of local bodies.
- Participation of women and oppressed ethnic peoples in decision-making processes.
- Enhancing of the bureaucracy's responsiveness towards local bodies.
- Institutionalisation of a decentralised monitoring systems in all levels of governance.

Changing Perceptions on Participation

- 1950: After the popular revolution of 1950, there was a tendency to promote welfare-oriented approaches.
- 1960–1970: The advent of technology transfer from outside. Sharing of these technologies was considered as participation.
- 1970s: The integrated rural development concept was introduced and participation was considered as volunteerism or “free labour” provided by beneficiaries at the grassroots level. The participation of local people in decision-making processes was never considered.
- Today, participation is viewed more as a partnership, coordination or ownership of the programme leading towards people's control over their resources.

Enabling Participation and Capacity Building

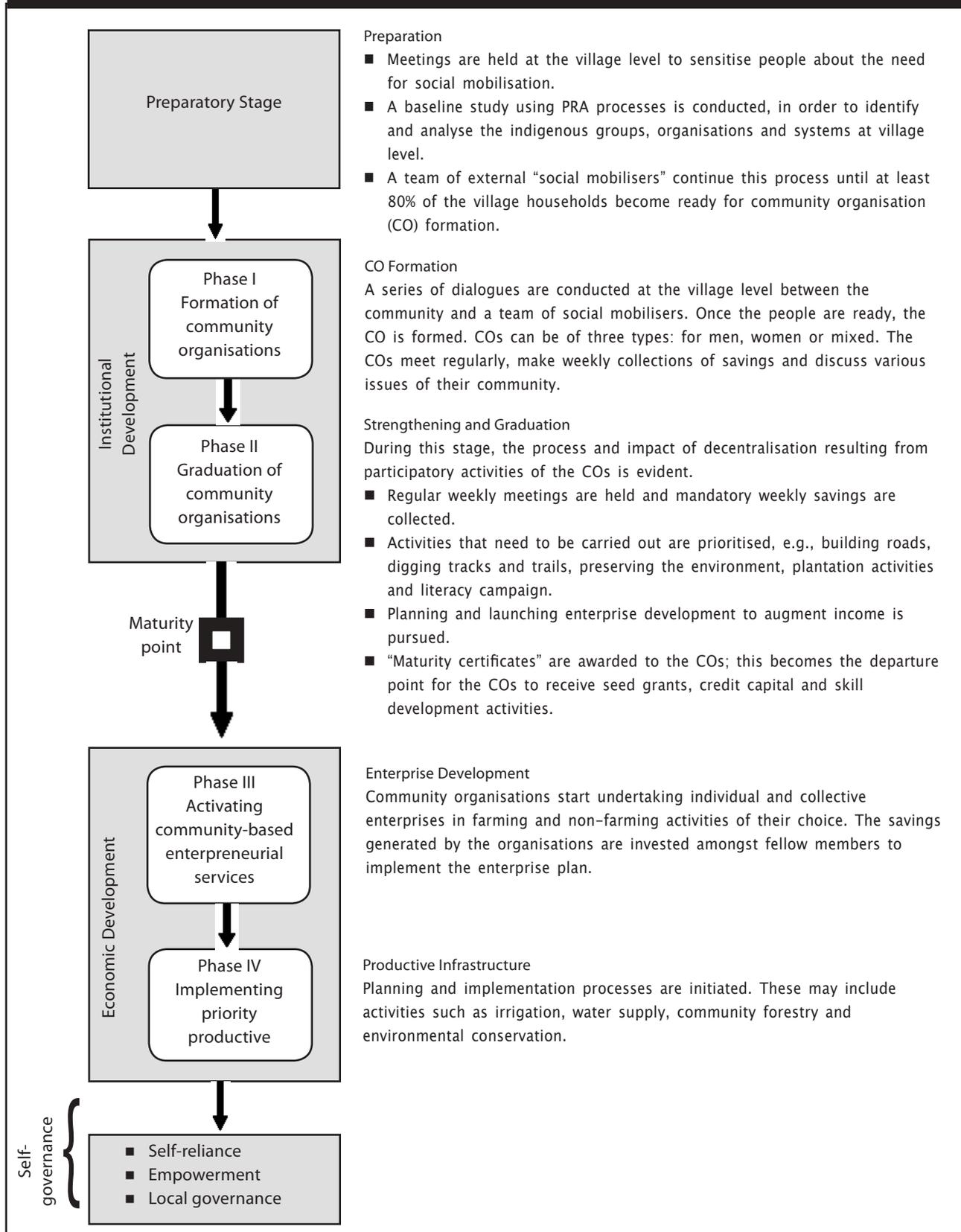
The first step to ensure participation and to sustain the process at an institutional level begins with social mobilisation resulting in the formation of self-governing institutions at the grassroots. This not only provides support for organisational development, skill enhancement and capital generation for creating community assets but also helps in the process of identifying community needs and preparing plans for implementation. It is also necessary to provide training for skills development and management of community organisations (COs).

The second step is to give priority to the areas of capital formation and human resource development to strengthen the communities as self-governing institutions.

Once the COs and functional groups firmly develop themselves as self-reliant grassroots level institutions, they further expand their links (vertical and horizontal) for development and management with government line agencies, NGOs, civic societies, banks, etc. This stage is the upper level of achievement of the Village Development Programme. The COs also receive support in the transfer of technology, i.e., improved seeds, off-season vegetable production, farming systems, non-farm activities, etc.



Process of Self-Governance Initiated by the PDDP



Some Benefits of Participation

More achievements at lower cost

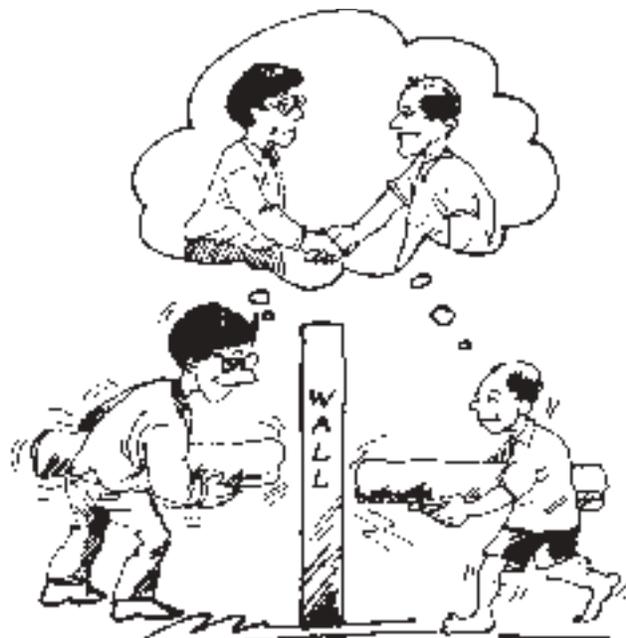
Through participation, local government and donor agencies can create an environment where resource sharing is possible at grassroots level. Participation also promotes transparency.

Politically attractive slogan

The use of “participation” as a political slogan has its pros and cons. However, this can create a greater awareness amongst people at the grassroots level about the importance and benefits of getting involved.

Economically appealing proposition

It is now recognised that the long-term sustainability of investments is linked to the active participation of the poor, e.g., the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh has proven that the poor are as reliable as clients as any other category. Similarly, the experience of COs in Nepal has proven that participation ensures that resources are equally distributed and utilised.



Indicators of a Mature Self-Governing Community Organisation

- The organisation has rules to govern its affairs and transparent accounts.
- At least 80% of members are active.
- The organisation has its own assets or budget.
- Each member benefits and the benefits should exceed the costs.
- Decisions are based on consensus; not just on majority-rule.
- Sanctions for breaking rules are applied.
- Conflict resolution is fair, legitimate and mutually agreed to.
- There are self-initiated community activities.
- The CO shows respect for autonomy,

Breaking barriers

Participation brings the poor in direct contact with funders and authorities. In a decentralised participatory system, decision-making is facilitated resulting in quicker responses to the needs of the poor. Government units have thus begun to advocate and apply “participatory tools” in its work.

Promotion of human resources

Participation helps the community to improve their social cohesion, cooperation relationships and knowledge of local realities. All these are necessary to make any investment at the grassroots fruitful. Participation also provides the venue for managing all these human dimensions needed for development.

Scope for exercising decentralised power

Participation enhances the process of decentralisation pattern at different levels. If all the people of a village, including women, participate in the planning and decision-making processes, widespread changes and benefits can be brought



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“Hidden” Costs-Benefits to Participating Communities



Project funds normally provide financial overheads to cover direct operational costs but tend to overlook the “hidden” costs (such as human costs, social costs and time costs) incurred by communities participating in projects and programmes. These are “hidden” for two reasons:

- they are not incurred by projects, but by communities; and
- they are not always incurred in terms of money even individuals and communities normally do not perceive them as “costs”. Benefits, similarly, are not always monetary.

For local people to invest in any participatory arrangement, they must be convinced that collective action brings greater benefit (relative to cost) than individual action. It is therefore important to gain a deeper understanding of the value of these hidden costs and benefits as these affect villagers’ participation in project activities. This link between hidden costs and benefits and participation needs to be understood at various levels. Project managers and staff need to realise that the level of community participation can be extended if these hidden benefits and costs are recognised and explicitly considered in project processes. Also, external agencies need to see just how investments in social capital formation through participatory approaches can result in sustainable projects.

Recognising Hidden Costs and Benefits

Examples of hidden costs

Intangible and non-monetary costs are often not recognised as costs even by those incurring them. Thus, it is important to identify and describe them in more detail, so that project stakeholders recognise their true nature.

Individual costs

■ TIME

Individual participation in project activity has a cost. The farmer has to take time off regular work, the poor may have to lose daily wages, women may have to spend extra time later to catch up on postponed housework. While wage labour can be easily monetised, other costs may be more difficult to measure.



■ HOSTING PROJECT TEAMS

The tea and biscuits that appear somewhat magically when project teams arrive in a village, or in the middle of a participatory exercise, have a cost. These are either contributed by an individual, or have been paid out of community funds. Similarly, a “free” drop to the bus stop on a villagers’ motorcycle costs him money. And his generous offer to guard you overnight in a dangerous locality means he goes without sleep – and will have to postpone the work he planned to do the next day.

■ VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Somewhat more recognisable are the voluntary contributions of material, cash and labour for participatory project activities. Since they deal with either money or tangible items (like bricks, cement, stones, etc.), these are more easily recognised, even by villagers, as costs. While project management considers these “participants’ contributions”, they are actually costs.

■ CONSEQUENCES OF “SPEAKING OUT”

While participatory exercises encourage villagers to “speak out”, there may be adverse consequences for those who do so, especially in caste-ridden or male-dominated communities. At the individual level, women may have to contend with husbands displeased with having domestic information “shared” during participatory exercises.

■ DOMESTIC DISCORD

Participation in project activities may sometimes result in domestic discord. For example, the wife may take time off domestic chores, resulting in either work lying undone or the husbands having to do them. Husbands may express their resentment directly (verbally or physically), or indirectly (lack of cooperation, constant criticism, etc.). Men who neglect their regular work, including sharing of household tasks, may cause wives to express the same resentments.

■ LOSS OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

When individuals volunteer to share their skills with others in the community, they may be losing future income. For example, if the demand for the skills (and the consequent output) is fixed, an increase in supply will reduce the earnings per person.

■ LOSS OF INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP OF IDEAS

When an individual brings up a “good” idea which is adopted by the village group, there could be a perceived loss of ownership (comparable to the loss of intellectual property rights).

■ VOLUNTEERING RESPONSIBILITY

Men or women who step up to take on project-related responsibility usually do so on a voluntary basis. While the project usually views this as “delegation of responsibility”, the cost to the individual is not usually taken into account. Apart from time, such action can involve tedious work (e.g., chasing people to contribute, managing inter-personal conflicts, making logistical arrangements, etc.).

■ THE RISKS OF SOCIAL POSTURING

Individuals may feel the need to put on a “pleasant mask” (e.g., village elites wanting to cultivate relationships with project staff so that their village is chosen to be part of the project) or try to please everyone (e.g., individuals within the groups). These people often find themselves “stuck” in between and pleasing no one.



Community costs

■ ACCENTUATED CONFLICT

Social change processes can imply a shift in power balances between groups and within groups, which can accentuate social conflict in the village. The effects of such conflict are felt by the entire village, and could last a long time.

■ LOSS OF POWER

When village elites have to sit down in the same group as labourers or lower castes, they may feel a loss of power, which may be expressed in several subtle ways, some of which may be detrimental to group building. Similarly, negotiations across unequal social groups can lead to a feeling of a loss of social power by one group, with adverse consequences for meaningful participation.

■ COSTS OF NEGOTIATION

When a village community negotiates with another as part of a project's participatory process, the give-and-take may imply costs to the community. These may include giving up some customary water rights, rights to collecting forest products, or just the loss of village identity or sovereignty when making joint decisions. However, costs of negotiation can also be felt at the level of the institution attempting to promote participation. When a negotiation involves many stakeholders, as in many participatory projects, considerable time and effort has to be spent to facilitate the process. This give-and-take process involves patience, diplomacy, flexibility, openness and compromise – all of which imply “costs”.

■ THE BURDEN OF “CARRYING ON”

Participation in project activities also implies that the community must take up the responsibility of carrying on the work even after the project has withdrawn. Without the support structure of the project, these may prove too much for the village community – unless they realise significant benefits from “carrying on”.

Examples of “hidden” benefits

Apart from tangible improvements, participation in projects can also bring the following less visible “benefits”; many are non-monetary and based on perceptions.

Individual level

■ CONFIDENCE AND SELF-RESPECT

Villagers, particularly in remote rural areas, tend to be shy and to suffer from a feeling of inferiority. But participation in project activities, especially in groups, builds trust, confidence and self-respect. Although this is a more visible benefit of participation especially, among women, it is often taken for granted or reduced to anecdotal reporting.

■ LIBERATION FROM FEAR

Closely related to confidence, and yet distinct, is liberation from a variety of fears. By engendering social change or even by simply providing information – projects can “liberate” individuals and community groups from fears of oppression, social stigma, fallacies and superstitions, and more.

When asked what an IFAD project in Maharashtra had done for her, a lower-caste woman replied, “I no longer walk on the edge of the road, but walk on the middle of the village with my head held high.”

■ TRAINING AND SKILLS

Another intangible benefit of participating in projects is attending training programmes which develop individual skills and enhance income opportunities.

■ AWARENESS AND INFORMATION

Participating in project processes builds awareness about other issues.

■ RAPPORT BUILDING

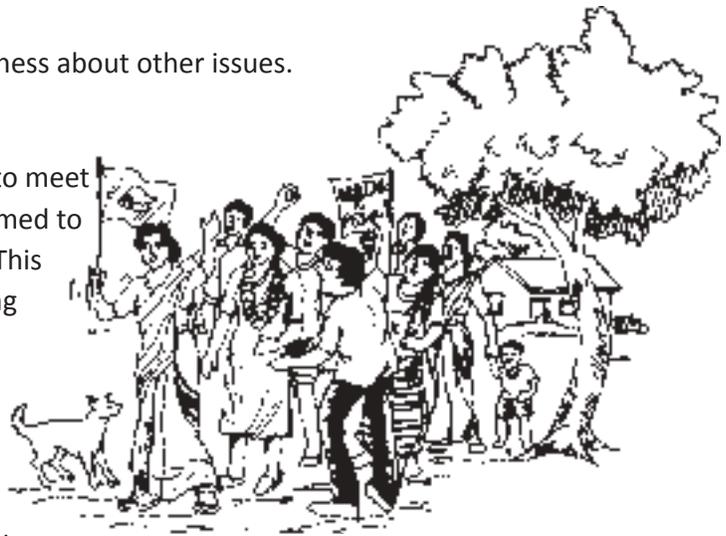
Participatory project processes allow villagers to meet in different groups than what they are accustomed to (e.g., clan, kinship or neighbourhood groups). This could have the positive consequence of building new rapport between group members.

■ RECOGNITION AND SOCIAL STATUS

Taking up project-related responsibility in villages can bring increased recognition and social status. Both these can have important future consequences (e.g., election to political posts).

■ ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

Although it may sound trivial, a large part of the reason why initial meetings or PRAs draw a crowd is the desire to see new faces, clothes and vehicles. Project teams do have entertainment value.



Several community women who were selected and trained to be project “social organisers” by the Doon Valley Watershed Management Project (Dehradun, India) contested successfully for village elections after working for a

Community benefits

■ TRUST AND RECIPROCITY

Development of trust among individuals in communities facilitates co-operation by reducing transaction cost and this liberates resources needed for project implementation. Trust is reciprocated by trust, resulting in group unity and the creation of a social obligation.

■ UNITY

Participating in project activities can increase unity within the community. For instance, the formation and fostering of self-help groups, and even attending project meetings, can demonstrate the power of joint work. The resulting recognition of the power of group action can lead to other related activities, such as joint lobbying for community development.

■ GROUP OWNERSHIP

Sharing the joys of success and the pain of failure in groups increases the sense of “belongingness”. Success also raises group esteem and increases members’ sense of social responsibility.

■ NETWORKS AND LINKAGES

Participating in projects brings more members of the village community in contact with potentially useful people (starting with project management, but including government officials responsible for their village, local business people, NGO staff, etc.). Establishing personal relationships can give village communities and groups the confidence that they “know important people” for future assistance. Such networks can also lead to potentially beneficial linkages.

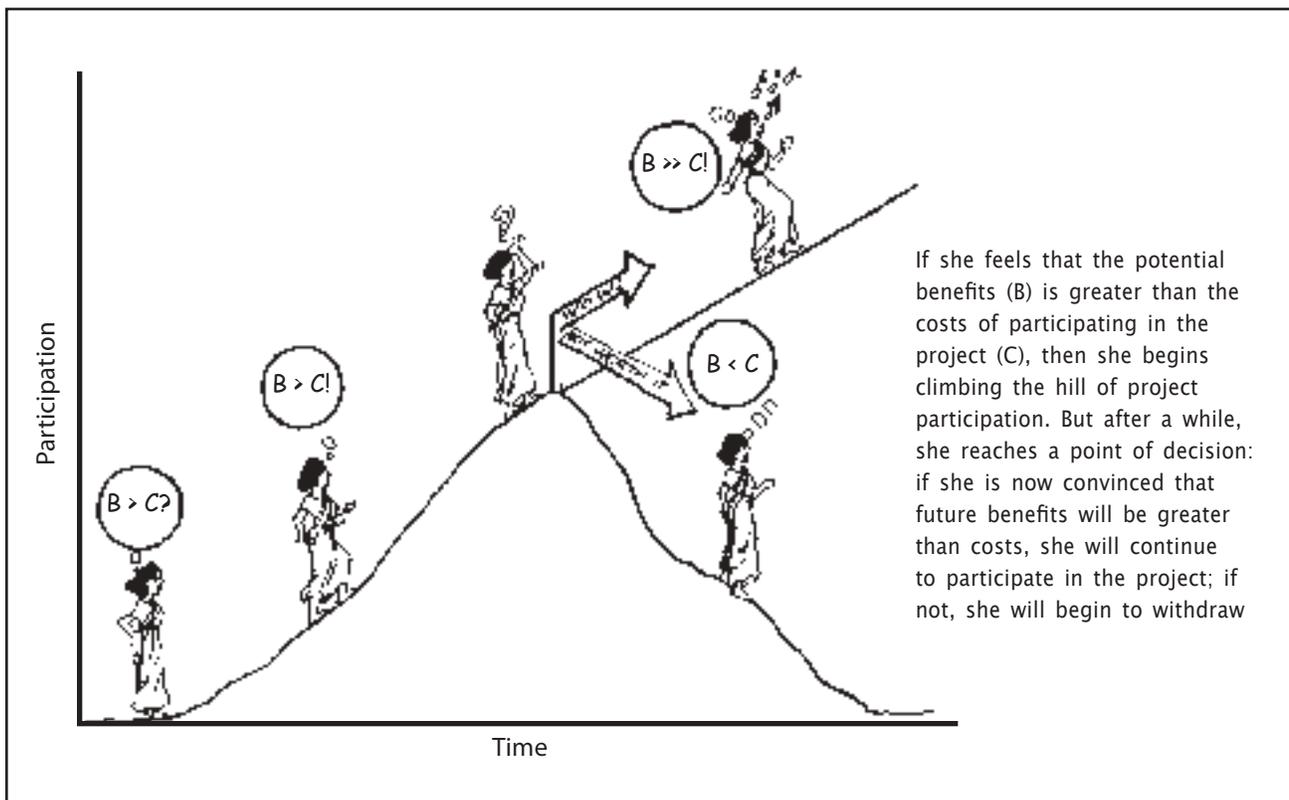
■ SEEING THE LARGER PICTURE

Recognising village-level (as opposed to individual level) impacts of everyday activities (e.g., fuel and fodder collection, grazing, groundwater use, etc.) is an important learning for the community as a whole, and may bring the added benefit of community-level decisions to change their patterns of resource use.

Hidden Costs-Benefits and Participation

Hidden costs and benefits affect participation

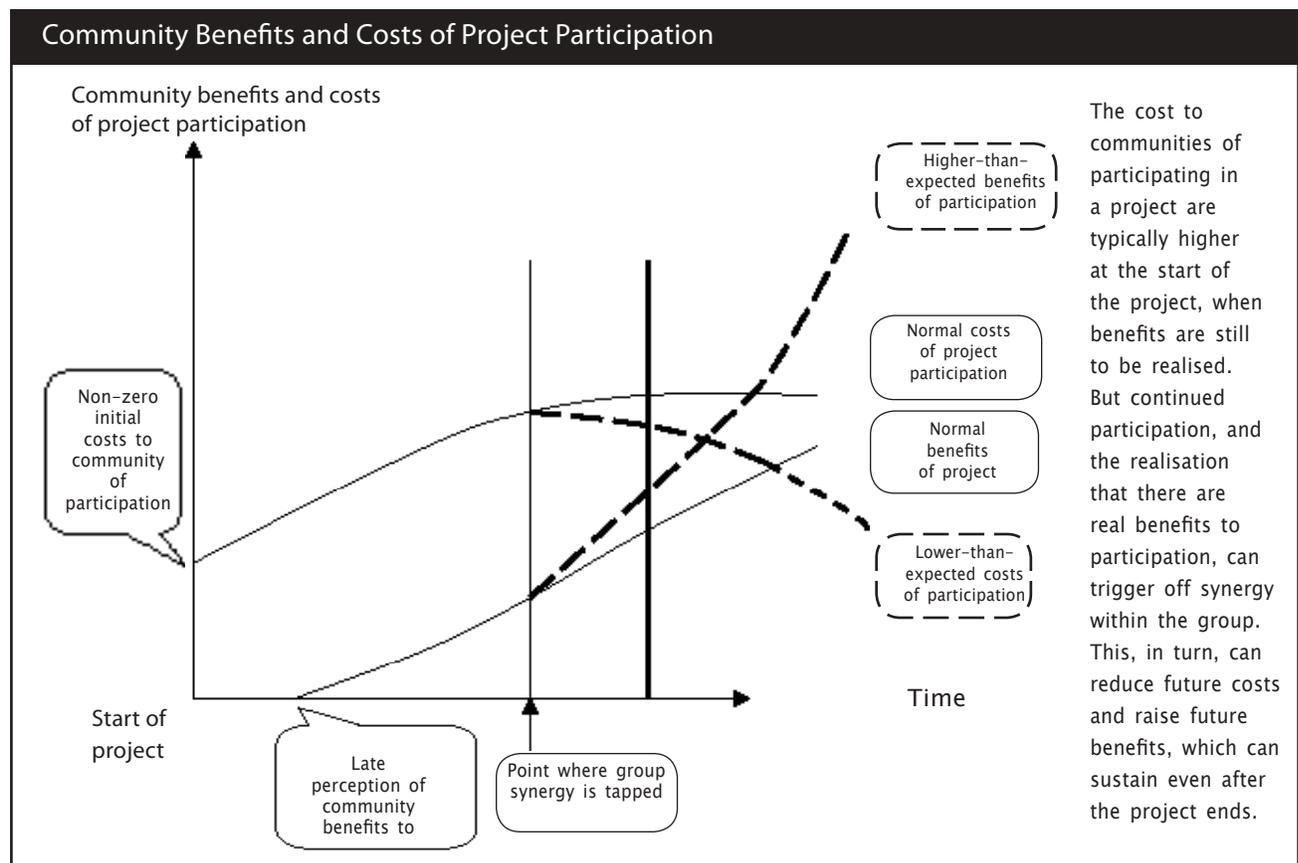
In most cases, individuals and groups do not compute the costs they incur in participation because they do not even perceive them as “costs”, but as their share in the project, etc. Coming to meetings, hosting meetings, volunteering responsibility and mobilising participation do involve costs. These are the costs that are sometimes weighed (in an informal and mental “benefit-cost analysis”) against perceived benefits, leading some individuals to decide not to participate. At the start of a project, it is often difficult to demonstrate the future benefits. This is largely why initial levels of participation are low. Once project benefits become visible, participation increases. If the project fails to demonstrate successes – or to overcome the “limits to participation” (e.g., distrust and inappropriate management systems), the resulting delays, confusion, dissatisfaction and demoralisation could cause participation to decline. In other words, when costs do not fall sufficiently or benefits do not rise enough, new costs appear and participation begins to decline.



Participation affects hidden costs and benefits

The converse relationship is also true. Participation levels can pass a certain threshold, beyond which they rise rapidly. This threshold which marks the tapping of the synergy of participatory activity, usually follows the initial successes of project-led group activity. The realisation that participation can work, leads more people to participate. But this stage can only be reached given an enabling environment including capacity-building, policy support, etc.

Tapping group synergy can lead to a fall in costs (e.g., responsibilities and burdens are shared more equally and within a larger group) and to a rise in benefits (e.g., growth in self-help group funds, economies of scale in non-farm production, etc.). The graph depicts that as the outward shift in the benefit curve and the downward shift in the cost curve.



How to Increase Participation in Projects

Participation can be increased by reducing costs and increasing the benefits of participation. Conversely, participation will fall if costs rise or benefits fall. Participating communities and project management should understand the value of hidden costs and benefits and should put more emphasis on them (even though they are not monetised) within any participatory arrangement, as these affect project outputs. It is also important to put more effort in building local capacities, interests and commitments, so that participating communities have their stake in maintaining structures or practices once the flow of monetised incentives stop.

Informing participants about the costs and benefits of their participation (although not monetised) is to foster positive attitudinal changes, such as the feeling of ownership, confidence, self-respect. Such “benefits” might make it “worthwhile” to bear the burdens of participation. Such “benefits” contribute to the creation of long-term obligations between people. This can be done through reflective exercises where participants engage in a visioning workshop.

Measuring hidden costs and benefits is difficult because they are perceived with differing subjectivity, occur at different points in time and are affected by a variety of circumstances. It is best to understand what they were from the past experience, acknowledge they exist and appreciate them as projects are implemented with real people.

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Social and Equity Concerns in Participatory Watershed Management in India



Today, watershed development has become the main intervention in natural resource management in India. Watershed development programmes not only protect and conserve the environment, but also contribute to livelihood security. Watershed development programmes in the country are funded largely by the government, which has made substantial budgetary provisions for the rehabilitation and development of micro-watersheds. Programmes are funded also by international organisations such as World Bank, DANIDA, DFID, SIDA, SDC, IFAD and the Indo-German Watershed Programme.

Out of a total geographical area of 329 million hectares, 175 million hectares of land in India has been classified as “degraded”. Most of this area is rainfed and prone to recurring drought. Further, about 65% of the net sown area in India falls into the category of “rainfed”. The purpose of watershed development is to rehabilitate and conserve the land and water resources in these areas for food and livelihood security.

Evolution of “Watershed Plus”

In the past, watershed development programmes in India mainly concentrated on the technical aspects of soil and water conservation. These programmes often failed to achieve their objectives, or were not sustained, because the intended beneficiaries of these programs were not involved. In fact, watershed projects sometimes increased disparities between small and big farmers, because technical inputs were “hijacked” by the large farmers who were the dominant groups in the village.

Current Approach to Watershed Management in India

- Village is taken as the unit of development.
- Unit of micro-watershed taken for development within the village is 500 hectares.
- Implementing agencies are government as well as non-government organisations.
- People's participation in the planning and implementation of the programme is emphasised

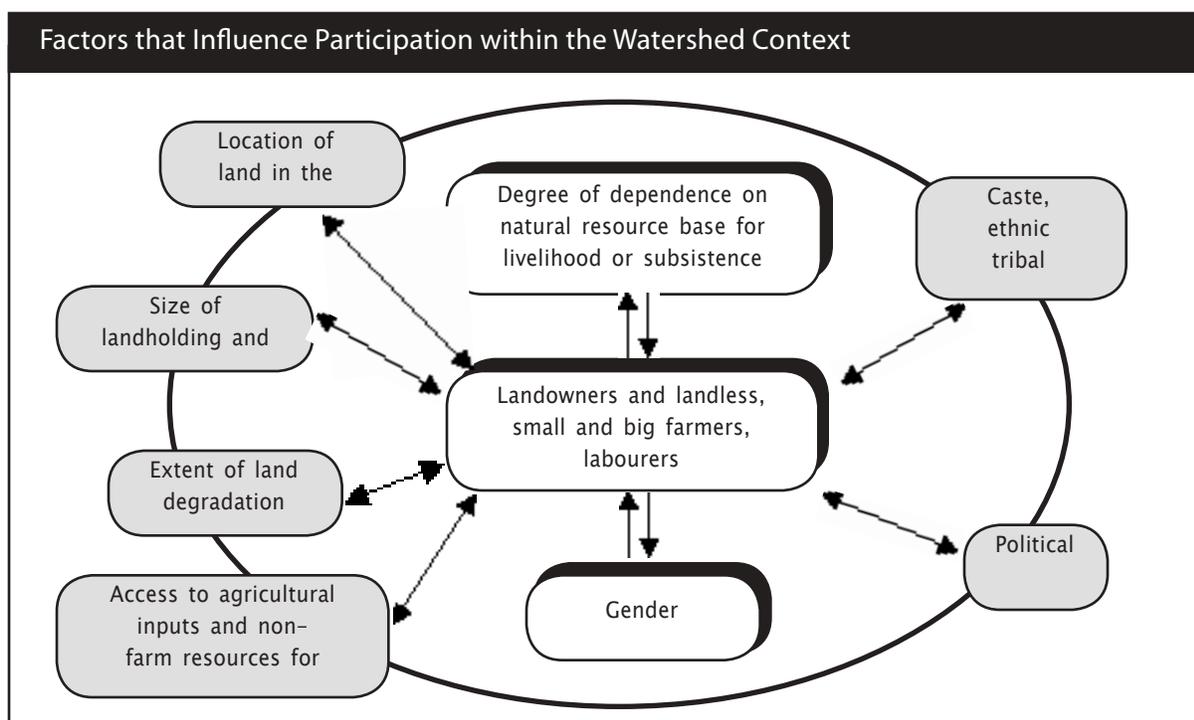


Experience and learning from the field has brought into focus various issues and dimensions of watershed development, which had not been recognised before. Several local initiatives by non-government organisations (NGOs) highlighted the need for community participation, and the government responded by integrating this learning into what is now referred to as the “Common Guidelines for Watershed Development” of the Ministry of Rural Development. These guidelines came into effect in 1995.

With the understanding that community involvement was the pre-requisite for the successful implementation of the watershed development programme came the concept of “watershed plus”, which implies that watershed development goes beyond soil and water conservation to encompass social and equity aspects as well. It also emphasises that watershed development is an integrated, inter-sectoral programme whose success depends on how “integrated” the approach is in its implementation.

Constraints to Participation in Watershed Management Projects

In the Indian context, many factors influence an individual’s ability to participate in the planning and implementing process of a watershed management project. These factors may relate to the individual’s access to and dependence on the natural resource base, or, they may be related to the individual’s bargaining power in the community.



■ Degree of dependence on the natural resource base

The degree of dependence on the natural resource base for livelihood or subsistence needs is determined by land ownership and size of the landholding, e.g., poor landless households have a high degree of dependence on common land. Land-owning households can obtain fuel wood and fodder from their own land, but if their landowning is small, then there will be some degree of dependence on common lands. Better-off households might switch to kerosene or gas. Similarly, some livelihoods like leaf plate making are completely dependent on the natural resource base.



■ Gender

As a group, women are landless and have less control over resources than men. However, the degree of dependence on the natural resource base is also determined by whether or not they belong to land owning families. It has been observed that women from “higher caste” or “better-off families” are less interested in the management of common lands. Women also generally have lower bargaining power in the community.

■ Caste, ethnic/tribal affiliation

Traditional, caste-based occupations still exist and many of them (e.g., those of craftsmen and artisans) depend on the natural resource base. In some villages it is found that certain castes are landowners and others are landless. Caste also influences bargaining power in the community, with lower-caste people frequently having little say in issues affecting the whole community. Tribal populations are also more dependent upon the natural resource base and often have less control over these resources.

■ Political affiliation

Affiliation to the dominant political party in the region facilitates access to natural resources and to bargaining power in the community.

■ Location of land in the watershed

This is important, since lands in the valleys often receive the most benefit from treatment in the watershed. Also, greater investments are required for treating lands on the upper slopes and the farmers may not be able to afford them. Fertile lowlands are generally owned by richer farmers while it is the poorer farmers who own the uplands.





- **Size of landholding and land ownership**

The size of landholding determines the economic status and bargaining power of the farmer as well as the extent of his/her dependence on the common lands for fulfilling subsistence needs.

- **Extent of land degradation**

This affects the productivity and also the investments required for rehabilitating the land.

- **Access to agricultural inputs and non-farm resources for development**

Large farmers have greater access to agricultural inputs than small farmers. Women farmers rarely have access to resources and extension services.

These factors determine an individual's capacity to contribute to the planning and implementation of watershed project activities. Decisions taken for project implementation, in turn, have an impact on the livelihood of the individual.

Effect of Access to and Control of Natural Resources on Participation

- In most watershed management projects, access to common lands – which are often located on the upper slopes – is closed off in order to allow the land to regenerate. Most poor households depend upon these common lands for meeting their subsistence needs. When their access is cut off, women have to go further away to collect fuel and fodder. In some instances, women have had to sell off their goats, which were a source of personal income to them, because they had no place to graze them. In addition, when these areas are opened up, grass and fuel wood is often sold on a “cut and carry” basis, or auctioned. If this happens, households have to buy resources that they never had to pay for earlier, which increases their financial burden. The control of these common property resources lies in the hands of the local village-level governing body and they are the ones who take the decisions.
- With the recognition that cost-sharing by stakeholders contributes to the sustainability of the project, members of the watershed community are expected to contribute in cash or through labour towards project activities. The contribution is determined as a percentage of the cost of the activity. Different percentages need to be fixed for private and common lands based on the benefits that are expected from the activity. While the poorer households will benefit more from treatment on common lands, they may not be able to contribute a high percentage of the costs.

Whereas individual landowners will benefit from treatment on private lands, some small landholders may not be able to contribute as much as the larger ones. If a high percentage contribution is determined for landowners, the small farmers may not be able to take advantage of the project activity.

- Where work on common lands is concerned, people are not willing to contribute unless they perceive some benefit for themselves. NGOs have found that fuel wood and fodder security motivates community members to contribute to treatment of common lands. However, this happens only after there has been some demonstration of the impact of watershed works.

- Conflicts sometimes arise when decisions have to be taken in relation to the location of water harvesting structures, soil erosion control measures and the use of common lands. Seva Mandir, an NGO in Rajasthan, has been working to free common lands from “encroachment” by private individuals, so that these common



lands can be made accessible to the poorer households in the villages. One of the strategies used to motivate the villagers to come together to oppose the encroachments is to demonstrate, on other lands, the impact of watershed development interventions. Privatisation of grazing land has increased pressure on smaller land areas, leading to further degradation of these lands.

Effect of Bargaining Power on Participation

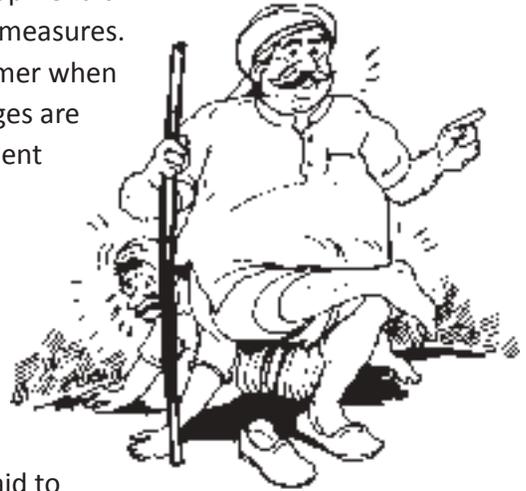
- When a watershed project is introduced in the village, it is usually the landowners and dominant groups that come forward to participate in the project. Special effort needs to be made to identify and involve the other stakeholders and ensure their representation on the decision-making bodies.
- Watershed Committees (WCs) at the village level are expected to have representatives from the “landless” villagers, “backward castes” and “women”. However, marginalised groups are often unable to voice their concerns in meetings that are dominated by the better-off, “upper caste” or predominantly male groups. The representation must be made effective and capable of influencing the decision-making process. One way in which this can be ensured is through capacity-building activities for the committee members.
- Specifically, women find it very difficult to voice their needs in a male-dominated meeting. Also, one woman cannot represent the needs of all the women belonging to different sub-groups in the community whose needs are varied. Women are generally able to participate if they are in a group and if they are given special space in the meeting to communicate their views.

- NGOs have developed their own strategies and have succeeded to a great extent in involving marginalised sections of the communities in decision-making. A common strategy is to form homogeneous sub-groups within the watershed. However, care should be taken that these sub-groups are involved in the decision-making process; otherwise they remain outside mainstream watershed activities. Women’s self-help groups (SHGs) are a classic example of this – these SHGs have become an “add-on” activity for women in most watershed projects but they are rarely involved in decision making in the context of watershed activities. While SHGs have many other advantages, they need to play a specific role within the watershed context as well, in order to ensure that women’s needs are addressed by the project. NGOs like OUTREACH are building the capacities of women’s SHGs to manage the watershed projects.
- Political affiliations create power centres in the village communities. Decisions related to the management of natural resources are influenced by these power centres, making it difficult for other villagers to voice their needs and opinions. This constraint can be addressed by forming committees and local institutions for the project outside the Panchayat (local decentralised government elected body at the village level) and political system. Efforts are increasingly made to work together with the Panchayat and to build a common platform where local institutions at the village level can work together for a common purpose.
- Bargaining power is conditioned by ability to take advantage of new resources. Water-harvesting measures create new water bodies like percolation tanks, farm ponds, ponds of water formed behind nullah bunds, etc. and these can favour groundwater recharge which increases the potential for irrigation. Various decisions need to be taken in relation to these water bodies and the use of groundwater, e.g., should the water be left to percolate (recharge the groundwater) or can some of it be used for irrigation? Sometimes, farmers who have the resources lift this water for irrigation, while the poorer farmers are unable to do so. In areas where water is scarce, decisions need to be taken regarding cropping patterns to be adopted by the farmers (e.g., to grow less thirsty crops instead of crops like sugarcane which are water intensive). Farmers cannot resist changing to cash crops once water becomes available and, since it is the large farmers who have the resources as well as the decision-making powers already referred to, they are the first to do so.



In Ralegan Siddhi village situated in a drought-prone area of Maharashtra, the better-off farmers wanted to grow sugarcane but the villagers decided they would not do so, although water became available for irrigation due to the success of the watershed development programme. In the Pani Panchayat movement, the landless were also given water rights which

- The most immediate perceived benefit of watershed development is wage employment during implementation of conservation measures. Most of the physical works are undertaken during the summer when the poor need wage employment. Although the official wages are the same for men and women (as declared by the government and NGOs), in practice it is sometimes found that different wage rates are paid, even for the same work. One reason why this happens is that NGOs prefer to structure the payment of the wages on the basis of the current agricultural wages in the village and local men do not want to accept the same wages as the women. A study conducted by the author (1996-98) showed that the wages paid to the women were 30% less than the wages paid to the men in some projects.



Overcoming Constraints to Participation in a Watershed Project

Watershed development aims primarily to secure the livelihoods of the people and ensure increased and optimal access to the resources within the community. It does not aim to re-distribute resources within the watershed. In the short term, rather, it aims to secure access to the people who now rely on them. It is extremely important that different members of the community perceive benefits from the project. For example, if prosperity in the village increases, there is a rise in agricultural wages, along with availability of work within the village itself; this is a direct benefit to the landless labourers, and an indirect, perceived benefit to the others. Similarly, a small farmer whose land is submerged during the rainy season because he donated it for a percolation tank, may be able to grow a crop in the dry season. For him, this may be adequate compensation for donating his land to the village.

There have been different experiments for overcoming constraints related to differential access to resources and bargaining power. For example, usufruct rights to common lands have been given to groups of landless villagers for securing access to meet subsistence and livelihood needs as well as increase their bargaining power in the community. Another experiment is to promote and invest in capacity building of small homogeneous groups of poor people within the watershed area who are included in the watershed committee. Although several NGOs have adopted these strategies, they have yet to be used on a large scale.

Reference

OIKOS and IIRR. 2000. Social and institutional issues in watershed management in India. OIKOS, India and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Y. C. James Yen Center, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

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Participatory Poverty Assessment



Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) seek to understand poverty in its social, institutional and political context. Conventional approaches have focused mainly on the material and measurable aspects of poverty and deprivation such as income levels and nutritional intake. PPAs recognise that other aspects of deprivation and well-being, such as dignity, respect within the community, love and religion, may be equally, if not more, important for the poor in determining their livelihood strategies. These subjective aspects of poverty, which lie in the domain of the psychological and spiritual, are difficult to measure and are best captured by qualitative measures. Many of the techniques used in PPAs are therefore participatory and iterative.

A Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) is an iterative, participatory research process that seeks to understand poverty from the perspective of a range of stakeholders especially the poor.

Narayan

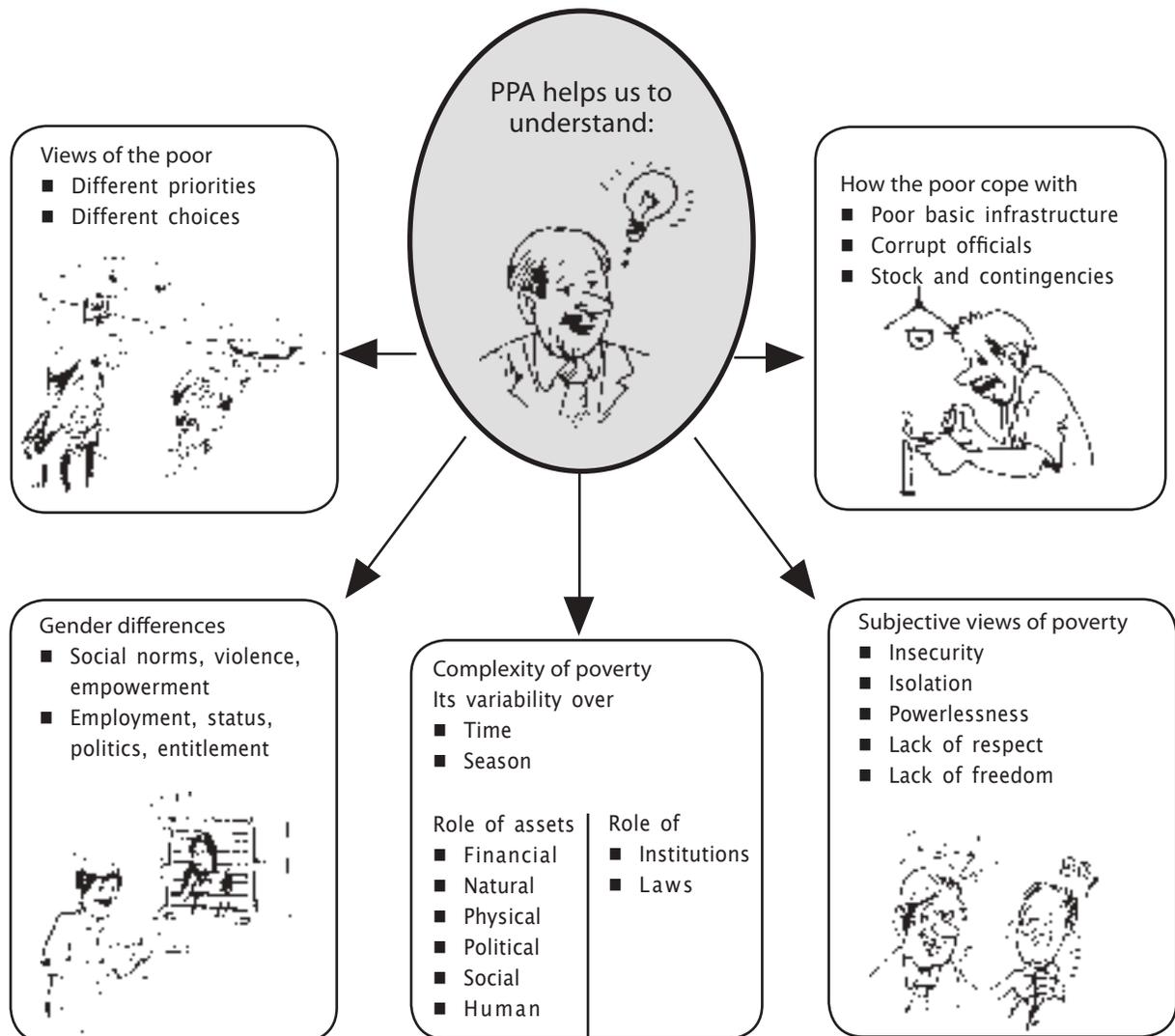
Principles of PPA

- Poverty must be analysed and understood in a holistic fashion.
- The perceptions of the poor, themselves, must be incorporated in poverty assessments.
- The role of the poor as researchers and planners must be recognised and they must be actively engaged in identifying the causal factors of poverty and in planning poverty alleviation strategies.
- Other stakeholders must also be involved in the process if lasting solutions are to be found.
- PPAs can contain hard data, too.

A central principle of PPAs is that the poor can play a critical role in identifying the real issues that underlie poverty. In other words, the poor are not just providers of information, they are analysts and researchers too.

PPAs do not have a fixed duration, scope or number of stages but attempt to identify as many significant themes and issues relevant to poverty as possible within a given timeframe and resource structure.

Although the most important stakeholders are the poor themselves, other actors are also part of the process. Secondary and tertiary stakeholders include government officials at all levels, civil society organisations (a term that includes NGOs, labour unions, business and professional associations, religious bodies and other citizens groups) and local leaders. Perhaps more attention also needs to be given to the specific perspectives and concerns of children. By revealing and reconciling different interests and perceptions, solutions are more likely to be viewed positively by the various stakeholders. Follow-up actions to problem-identification are likely to be more focused, widely accepted, prompt and successful if a range of stakeholders is involved and a best compromise is found.



Understanding Poverty

- The poor can play a critical role in identifying the real issues that underlie poverty.
- Pre-determined questions and rigid definitions preclude a multidimensional understanding of poverty.
- Poverty lines based on nutritional levels do not tell us much anything about overall vulnerability.
- The skills of the researcher



Participatory, Open-ended and Iterative

A key feature of PPA is continuous learning, which feeds into the research strategy. At every stage, new dimensions and characteristics of poverty are revealed and further investigation is based on this. At the same time, whatever has been collected is analysed to piece together a picture of how different details fit together vertically, horizontally, historically and seasonally. PPA is almost diametrically opposite to conventional approaches whose pre-determined questions and definitions are rigid and preclude a multidimensional understanding of poverty.

Complementing Quantitative Data

Poverty data has typically attempted to express phenomena quantitatively due to the widespread conviction that hard numerical data are superior. Such measures yield results that leave many gaps in the story. For example, poverty lines based on nutritional levels cannot tell us anything about the overall vulnerability context of a person or her/his prospects for exiting from poverty. There is no information on what endowments and assets she/he can draw upon in terms of education, health, social background, employment and kinship networks or anything about the services available locally. Therefore, it is entirely possible that a woman within a household that is above the poverty line may be absolutely poor herself. She may have very few assets which leaves her vulnerable to contingencies. PPAs are particularly good at identifying less visible and vulnerable groups of people – casual agricultural labourers, street vendors, disabled people, new immigrants, people with no access to safety nets – and giving a voice to their concerns with a view to finding solutions that will help them. PPAs are a good starting point for dealing with the difficult subject of illegal or taboo activities – which could actually be an important livelihood support.

PPAs can help us in the interpretation of data collected through surveys. For instance, official data show that there was a deceleration in non-agricultural employment growth and a shift towards agricultural work in the post-reform period in many locations across India. There was also an increase in subsidiary workers, who are mainly women, engaged in agricultural work. It is not clear from the data alone whether this was a positive development

or a distress measure related to lower rural non-agricultural opportunities and higher poverty. In such a case, qualitative research is needed. PPAs can also generate hypotheses that can then be tested through surveys. Therefore, the two methods – surveys and PPAs – complement each other.



The PPA Process

In order to understand poverty holistically, we need information on many aspects that are not measurable – such as access to resources and services, the role of institutions and social networks in people’s lives and seasonal fluctuations in vulnerability. PPAs use a range of participatory and open-ended methods to gain an understanding of such factors. However, PPAs can contain quantitative information and are therefore not strictly qualitative.

The PPA research process follows many of the norms developed in other contexts, e.g., anthropological practice, participatory rural appraisal (PRA), social assessment and gender analysis. Good rapport and trust are essential and the results of the exercise depend on this. **The skills of the researcher are of paramount importance. Researchers must be good listeners, willing to understand different perceptions and not impose their own, have good analytical skills and be good communicators. In fact, the capabilities of the research team are key in the PPA process and are its greatest asset; they could also jeopardise the quality of the PPA.** A commitment to change on the part of government and other formal institutions is a prerequisite for PPAs to succeed.

Information collection and analysis

Many of the methods used are already tried and tested: PRA; rapid rural appraisal (RRA); beneficiary assessment; self-esteem, associated strength, resourcefulness, action planning and responsibility (SARAR); semi-structured interviews; and, focus groups. Some earlier PRAs used these methods in a more extractive manner than they have been in a project context because the results feed into policy and the impacts of these changes may not be felt by the poor immediately.

PPAs can yield large quantities of information that may make it difficult to incorporate them into existing findings or to use them for policy purposes. Recurrent themes in the results of PPAs can be identified using methods such as systematic content analysis. Qualitative data analysis software like non-numerical unstructured data indexing searching and theorising (QSR NUDIST) is available.

Some of the issues that have emerged through PPAs and how their coverage differs from conventional methods are shown below.

Issues	Aspects addressed through PPA	Aspects addressed by conventional surveys
Sanitation	Lack of access to clean water and toilets	Presence or absence of handpump or water point with very little information about the working condition
Corruption	How corrupt officials can prevent poor people from obtaining facilities that they are entitled to	Not usually addressed by poverty surveys
Definitions of poverty	How the poor understand, define, interpret poverty, its causes and effects	Poverty externally defined in terms of nutritional intake or income/expenditure
Risk and vulnerability	What kinds of events could pose a threat to livelihood patterns and what coping mechanisms the poor employ	Not covered in depth by poverty surveys
Access	Access to services, institutions infrastructure, common property resources	Yields or physical structures are taken as a proxy for access and availability

Some Limitations of PPA

- Multiple skills and capabilities required in researchers.
- Places ethical demands on researchers.
- Superficial investigations may be passed off as PPAs.
- Ideally requires long timeframe.
- Sometimes viewed as exploitative of people's time and resources.

Analytical framework

Different practitioners may use PPA with different analytical frameworks in mind. Implicit in many of the more recent PPAs is the sustainable livelihoods (SL) approach. The SL approach helps us to recognise that a poor person's vulnerability context is determined by his or her ability to draw upon six different kinds of assets – physical, financial, political, social, human and natural – as well as the influence of transforming structures and processes, namely institutions, laws and regulations. What a person does for a living – his or her livelihood strategies – depends on this context (*see chart on page 37*). The livelihood strategies also reflect what the person intends to achieve in the longer term or in his or her livelihood outcomes.

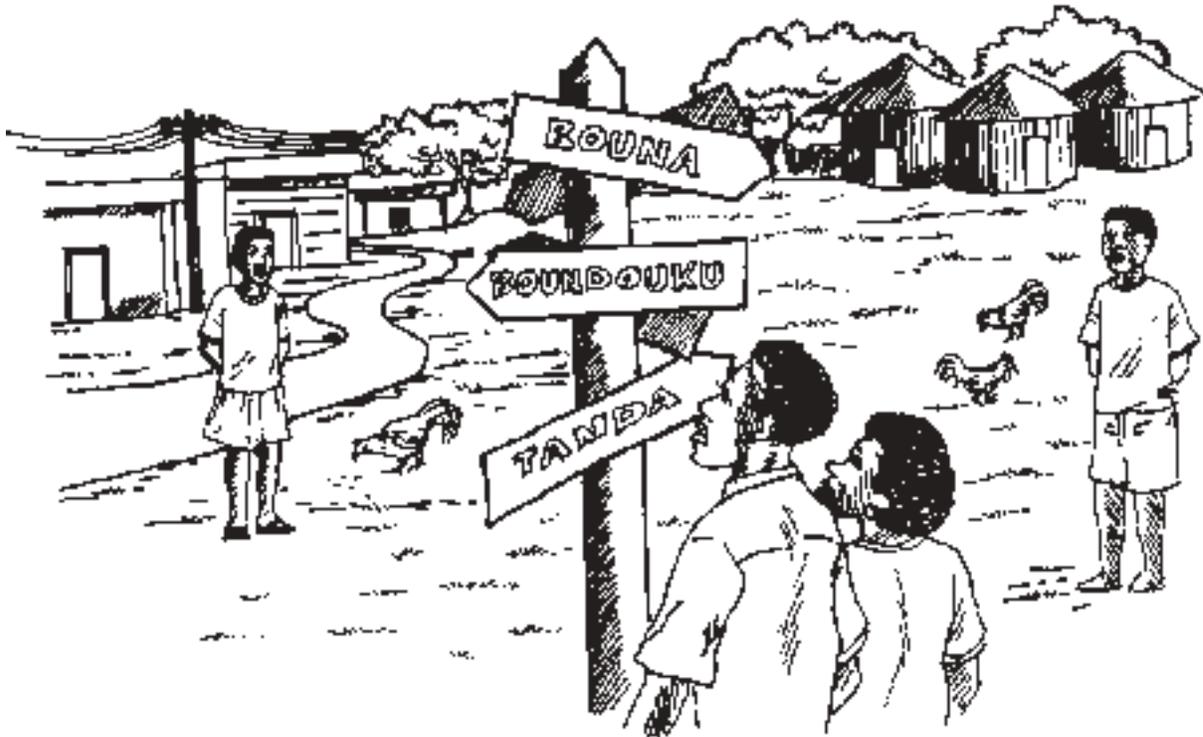
While PPAs have tried to appreciate that the poor may have a different worldview, there is still reluctance to accept livelihood outcomes that do not “make sense” in terms of our rationality. At the centre of the PPA researcher's thinking is still an image of the “economic man” – a person who is bound to want to improve his lot materially and to amass personal wealth and other assets, given the right conditions. But is this necessarily true?



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Targeting Poor Communities: An Example from Africa



Implementation teams of rural development projects have to make choices about village selection. Even projects with clear poverty alleviation objectives often lack clear poverty-based criteria for screening villages. In the absence of explicit poverty-related criteria, there may be a tendency to favor richer and less remote villages because they are better organized, easier to work with and more accessible. The poverty alleviation objective can become no more than empty rhetoric in practice – something that happens all too often.

This paper is based on study conducted by Cabinet de Consultants Associés and a paper by John Hoddinot and Saul Morris, IFPRI.

Approach in Targeting Poor Communities

The approach is a tool for making comparisons across large numbers of villages to enable implementers to initially screen potential villages for project interventions based on a set of poverty criteria.

The approach can be used:

- for making poverty a more central concern to project implementers;
- for identifying "pockets" of poor communities;
- for identifying "poorest of the poor" communities;
- for prioritising district and sub-district infrastructure investments that reach the maximum number of poor people;
- for monitoring and evaluating the equity impact of project interventions; and
- as a supplement or pre-cursor to participatory approaches.

The approach does not:

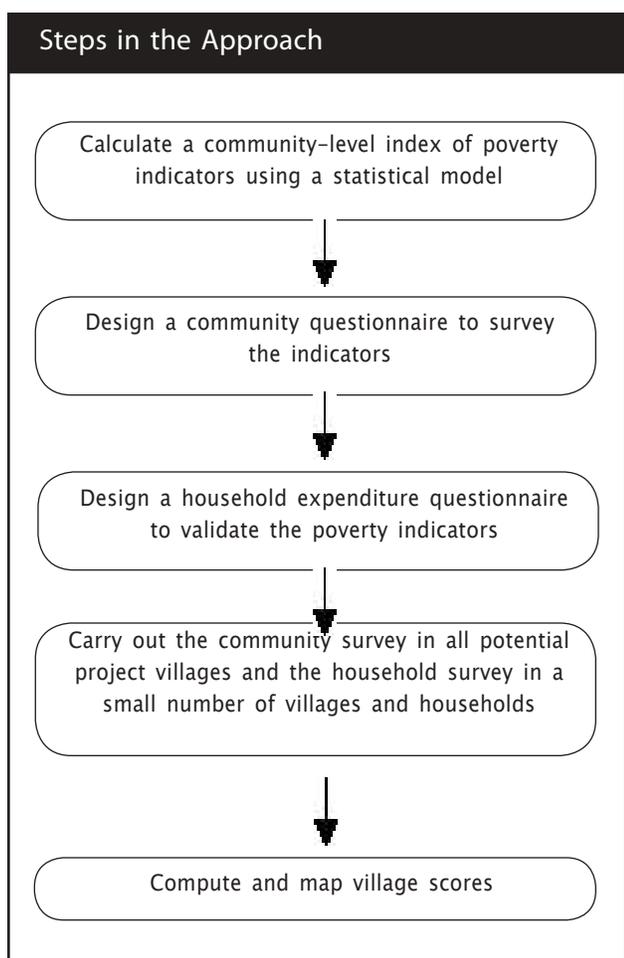
- provide a definitive choice of where investments will be made; or
- substitute for participatory diagnostic and planning exercises within individual villages.

While participatory approaches are useful for poverty ranking within villages, they may be less useful for making wealth comparisons across a large number of villages. For making large-scale comparisons, judicious use of quantitative approaches can also complement participatory approaches to enable development projects to more effectively reach poor people.

The Project Zone

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)-supported Rural Development Project in the Zanzan Region of Cote d'Ivoire was designed in 1998. With a population of about 600,000 and over 1,000 villages spread over a large area, the region is comprised of three administrative departments – Bondoukou, Bouna and Tanda – which are very heterogeneous in terms of population density, economic activity and potential, and income levels. The northern most department, Bouna, is in the Savannah zone, while Bondoukou and Tanda are transition zones between Savannah and forest. Zanzan is among the poorest regions in the country, although agricultural potential does exist and much of the region has strong, but informal, commercial agricultural links with urban areas.

Rural social and physical infrastructure investment in Zanzan has been minimal relative to other regions, seriously hampering agricultural development.



Study Objectives and Methodology

In early 1999, with IFAD support, two economists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) trained a nationally-recruited team to launch a survey in order to more effectively target interventions to the rural poor in the project zone through development of an initial screening mechanism for village choice.

Additional objective

- Included testing the specific method for reliability, practicality, cost-effectiveness, and clarity for non-economists.

STEP 1 is to select proxy indicators for poverty using pre-existing survey data. One identifies a limited number of easily observable community-level variables that strongly correlate with income poverty by estimating a regression equation to weight the respective coefficients to arrive at a village-level score.

Cote d'Ivoire has a particularly rich set of data on poverty, having been one of the first countries to participate in the World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS). Nationwide surveys were conducted in 1986, 1987 and 1988. In rural areas, data were collected both at household and community levels.

Per capita annual household expenditure was used as the basic measure of welfare. All variables in the LSMS community questionnaire were examined to determine whether or not they were associated with household expenditure levels. The variables that resulted in the strongest statistical model included presence of nuclear and satellite settlements, length of time the village was cut off during the rainy season, distance to a post office, the portion of village girls attending school and proportion of births in clinics.

Proxy variables are easily observable substitutes for variables that are more time-consuming and costly to directly identify. The most direct measure of income poverty is expenditure level, but this is prohibitively costly to measure on a large-scale. Carefully selected community-level variables can serve as indirect measures of poverty if one is reasonably confident that they approximate the true situation.

STEP 2 is to design a community-level survey questionnaire with questions related to the proxy indicators as well as to other community-level information of potential practical value for project implementation. Care is taken to keep the questionnaire short, but to also gather additional information of practical value for project implementation.



There were a total of 18 questions on the following topics: geographical background of the village and access problems; presence of community health and education infrastructure and service providers; main types of housing; sources of potable water supply; presence of development projects and existence of village and sub-village associations.

STEP 3 involves designing a detailed household-level expenditure survey to be carried out in a limited number of villages for purposes of validating the relevance of the proxy indicators to poverty in the project zone. Without this step, it is dangerous to assume that the proxies are valid indirect measures of income poverty in the project zone.

STEP 4 involves carrying out the community-level survey in all villages in the project zone, or in all villages with population greater than a pre-determined cut-off point. At the same time, the household expenditure survey is also implemented in a limited number of villages to double-check that the variables derived from the national survey are valid in the project zone.

The IFPRI experts stayed in the country for 10 days, during which they trained a local team composed of an economist, a statistician (who also served as field supervisor) and eight enumerators from the region. The team field tested and finalised the questionnaire, developed data entry and synthesis procedures and carried out the household-level expenditure survey.

The actual time required to conduct village interviews was 10-20 minutes. However, village protocol required a longer stay of as much as two hours to be properly introduced to the village chief and dignitaries, accept hospitality (at a minimum, a drink of water, soda, or palm wine, but sometimes reception of chickens or yams) and answer questions from the villagers about the new project. The most time-consuming part of the exercise was reaching the villages (including fair amounts of time getting lost) rather than completing the questionnaire. In retrospect, the opportunity cost of including a richer set of community-level questions would not have been very high (in terms of data collection and entry, not necessarily in terms of analysis later).



The household-level expenditure survey (for purposes of validation) was carried out in 2-6 villages per department, with 1-2 villages each considered rich, median or poor (as determined by the community survey). In each village, 30-50 households were randomly interviewed. Results of the household survey confirmed the validity of the community survey as there was a good correlation of income poverty as measured at household-level and community ranking.

The survey covered 17 districts and 1,073 villages. Initially, the team intended to survey only villages with more than 200 inhabitants. However, this idea was discarded because of the small average size of villages in Bouna (only about 130). The decision was therefore taken to visit all villages in the project zone.

STEP 5 is to compute and map village scores. Results for individual indicators are also useful to analyse and map. Using the statistical index, an example of how the scoring was calculated for an individual village is shown in the following table.

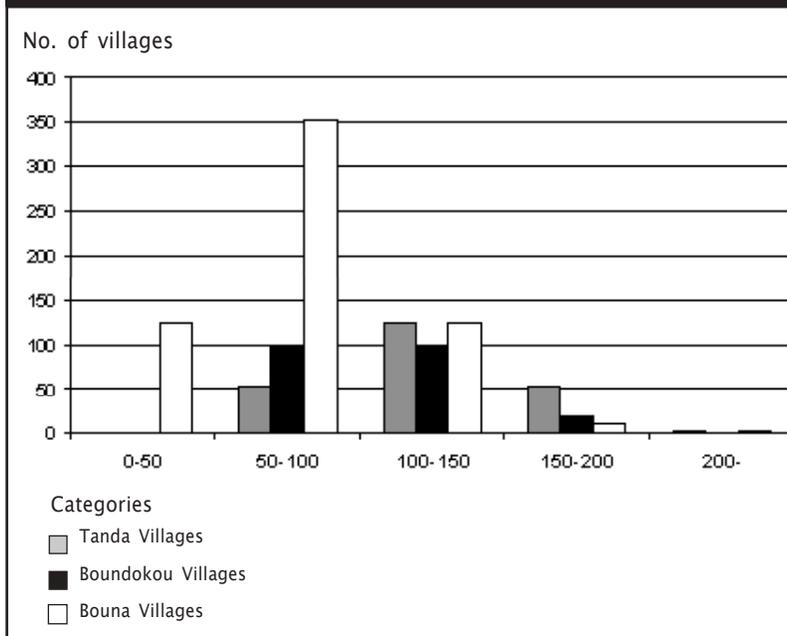
Example of a Village Score Calculation		
Question	Response	Number of points (example)
Regression constant	Same for all villages	→ 164
Are there satellite settlements (campenents) attached to the main village?	If yes, -10.24 points; if no, 0 point	Yes → -10.24
In general, how many months per year is the road cut?	Response multiplied by -7.8 points	1 month → 1 x -7.8
How far is the village from the post office or telephone?	If located in the village, 37.45 points; if not, 0 points	10 km → 0
About what percent of school-age girls attend school? 1 = nearly all 2 = more than half, but not all 3 = half 4 = less than half 5 = Just a few 6 = None	Response multiplied by -10.15 points	2, more than ½ → 2x-10.15
Where do the majority of women give birth? 1 = at home 2 = at a clinic (maternite) 3 = in a hospital 4 = other	If response is 2 or 3, 30.32 points; if 1 or 4, 0 points	1, at home → 0
Result = 164 + -10.24 + (1x-7.8) + 0 + (2x10.15) + 0 = 125.66 points		

Results of the Village Scoring Exercise

For ease of presentation, villages were divided into five categories with scores of 50-point intervals. A solid majority of villages (about 60%) were in either category one or two (the poorest categories), confirming the general impression of the Zanzan region as having very poor access to infrastructure and services. Yet results highly vary between departments. By far, Bouna is the least blessed with nearly 80% of villages in the two lowest categories. In contrast, Tanda has only about one-fifth of villages in category 2 and none in the lowest category. Almost half of the Bondoukou villages are in the second category.

While Tanda is clearly better off, the number of less well-off villages is not negligible: about one-fifth of its villages are in the second category. Almost half of Bondoukou's villages are in this category. This points to the potential usefulness of the approach for identifying pockets of poverty in otherwise better-off zones.

Village Score Classification by Department



Generally “poor zones” are often assumed to be uniformly poor, thus discounting the need for targeting within those zones. However, the survey team found that variability of village scores (as measured by the coefficients of variation) was significantly greater in Bouna than in the other departments. Twenty percent of villages were in the bottom category and could be classified as “poorest of the poor” while 58% of villages were in the second category. If the goal of a development project is truly to reach the poorest of the poor, this approach can also be of assistance in not only poor villages but also the poorest villages.

The design team of an earlier IFAD project in Cote d’Ivoire attempted to use “minimum distance from a paved road” as a major decision rule for initial village selection. It had been specified that at least 75% of the villages selected for project interventions should be situated more than 5 km from a paved road. This was partly due to the tendency of projects to concentrate activities in villages where access was easy, and partly due to analysis from other countries demonstrating links between access to infrastructure and rural poverty. Yet these nuances were lost in the debate that ensued. Government officials viewed it as arbitrary and not reflecting local reality. The idea was dropped, and subsequently, the IFAD country portfolio manager was often kiddingly referred to as “Mister Five Kilometers”.

Beyond village rankings, it is also possible to provide a rich level of reporting on individual variables for each zone such as access to health, education and communication facilities, transport and water problems, extent of village organization, and involvement with on-going development projects.

Potential practical uses include identifying poverty “pockets” and the poorest communities. It can be a powerful supplement (or pre-cursor) to participatory diagnostic and planning approaches. For investments at levels higher than individual villages (district and sub-district) like roads, a mapping of villages by their scores and populations can enable decision-makers to prioritise roads for rehabilitation that reach the maximum number of poor people. The approach can also be used for monitoring and evaluating the equity impact of project interventions.

In the specific context of Cote d’Ivoire, the approach appeared to be politically acceptable. An array of indicators was seen as consistent with common-sense notions of poverty. In addition, while variables were aggregated to derive a village score, the individual variables were generally consistent with common-sense notions of poverty. It also mattered very much to ministry technicians that practical uses were obvious and that results were generated quickly.

Summary of Strengths and Limitations	
Strengths	Limitations
Cost-effective in time and money for large-scale exercises (4–5 months duration and 0.5% of project costs)	Only for initial screening across villages; not a substitute for village-level participatory diagnosis and planning
Appears valid for making poverty comparisons across communities	Income-based, but poverty has many dimensions
Can supplement or precede participatory diagnostic and planning	Quantitative approaches may be sensitive to the choice of variables and their weighting
By making poverty criteria explicit in village selection, helps avoid natural tendency of implementers to work in “easier” villages	Reliable household expenditure and community survey data must already exist
Can be used to identify “pockets” of poor villages and “poorest of the poor” villages	May miss significant numbers of the poor if wealth disparities are greatest within villages

Future Considerations

As this is a new approach, it is worth considering different options for improving upon it. Could indicators be derived in more participatory ways? Using participatory approaches, villagers in a project area could be surveyed about what they consider to be easily observable characteristics of poverty at community level. If their perceptions are fairly uniform or varied in ways that could be easily stratified and adapted by zone or ethnic group, questionnaires and indices could be designed using locally-derived variables. This could potentially be more locally reliable, save time and be less demanding in technical expertise. The survey data could also be entered into a Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Additional data (including results of participatory exercises) could also be incorporated to enhance project planning.

Whatever the technique chosen, one thing is clear: there is a need to introduce more rigour into village selection in self-proclaimed rural poverty alleviation projects.



Prepared by:
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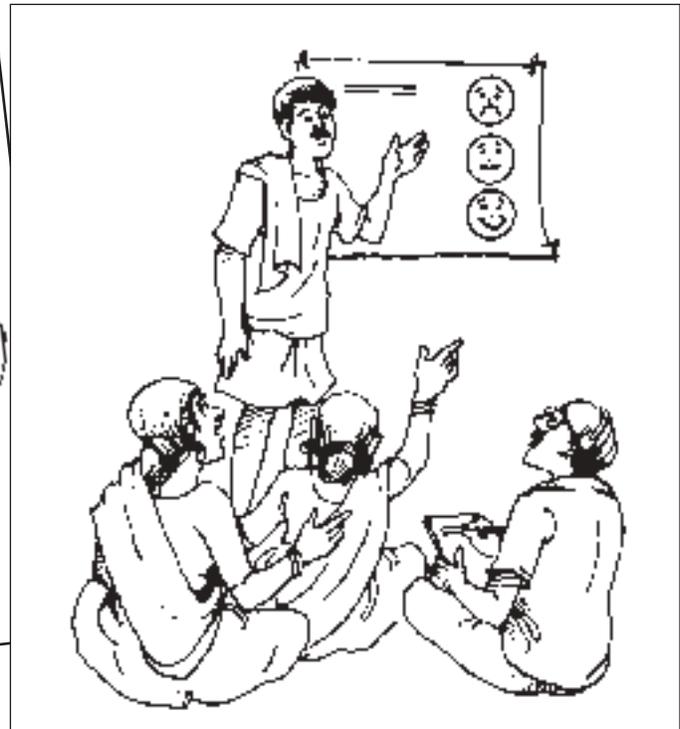
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part 2

Participatory
Processes

Participatory Learning Approaches



Whose Learning?

Participatory learning is based on the principle of open expression where all sections of the community and external stakeholders enjoy equal access to the information generated as a result of a joint sharing process. The information generated in the process would not only be of use to the secondary stakeholders but would also be of use to members of the community.

What is Participation?

The word participation often has different connotations for different people in different contexts. Definitions of participation have also changed over time. It is therefore useful to differentiate between different levels of participation – each describing varying levels of involvement of the community, ranging from material contribution, to organisation, to empowerment.

Participation has been categorised by Pretty, Satterthwaite, Adna, et al and Hart ¹ into seven stages. (See typology overleaf.)

¹ International Institute for Environment and Development. 1995. Participatory Learning and Action, A Trainer's Guide. IIED, London, United Kingdom.

8 Catalysing change
An eighth level of participation may be added to this typology, viz. the involvement and stakes of community members in influencing others in the environment to initiate change.

7 Self-mobilisation
People participate by taking initiatives to change systems independent of external institutions. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilisation and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.

6 Interactive participation
People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

5 Functional participation
People participate by forming groups, which are externally initiated to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Involvement of the community is not solicited at early stages of the project cycle but rather after major decisions have been made. These groups tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may eventually become self-dependent.

4 Participation for material incentives
People participate by providing resources such as labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Most on-farm research today falls in this category - farmers provide the fields for demonstration but are not involved in the experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.

3 Participation by consultation
People participate by being consulted, and external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.

2 Participation in information giving
People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.

1 Passive participation
People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. A unilateral announcement is made by the administration or project management without listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.

A typology of participation

A sustained commitment to the participatory learning approach will trigger a process, enabling a progression from lower to higher levels of participation in the community.



The Need for Participatory Learning

The evolution of participatory approaches indicates a shift from a “top-down” to a “bottom-up” approach that is popularly known as the “paradigm shift” (Chambers, 1995). There are several limitations inherent in the top-down approach which brought about this shift:

- Traditionally, the information-gathering process took the form of extraction where communities had no say in the content or type of information required in designing a project. The questionnaire type of survey is not only extractive but also results in restrictive “yes” or “no” responses.
- When the analysis of such data takes place, the causal factors depicted in a current situation are not revealed so that learning from the analysis is also restricted.
- Field experience shows that in many instances pre-determined conclusions from restricted information have failed to answer the reality of problems faced by different sections of the community. This is particularly true for the vulnerable sections of society whose voices are not heard and who are frequently left out in an extractive mode of information-gathering.
- In many instances, the process is limited to validating pre-conceived project ideas of policy-makers and funders. Such a process is not transparent and the cross-checking possibilities are extremely limited.

The participatory learning approach (PLA) has the potential for eliminating many of the problems described above by being transparent, allowing for cross-checking, providing space for the vulnerable to voice their opinions and for delving beyond results to discuss issues of causality with the community.

Prerequisites for Participatory Learning

- The attitudes and behaviour of different stakeholders should be supportive. Willingness to listen to others’ views, patience, respect, free expression and above all, the willingness to learn through an in-depth analysis of causes and effects of problems and issues are attitudes which enhance a participatory approach.
- The tools and techniques used in this approach must provide the means through which participatory information generation, analysis, findings and conclusions are arrived at. The situation analysis is further enhanced by the visualisation that accompanies the tools and techniques. The potential of the visual in empowering the vulnerable communities to express themselves in front of authority, the powerful and the rich is of great significance.
- There must be **commitment to the process and learning through sharing of knowledge.**

Experience shows that best results are obtained through harmonising methodologies and making use of the strong elements in each for achieving the common objective of a participatory learning process. There is no way in which a prescription for the use of these tools may be given – the idea is to master the different alternatives and to pick, choose, adapt and innovate to suit the purpose. The mechanical use of tools runs the danger of turning “participation” to “manipulation”. The spirit and attitude that accompanies the methodology is crucial for creating the space for the different stakeholders – more so that the primary stakeholder may participate.

Using Participatory Learning Effectively

- The role of facilitation is a key element in the use of participatory approaches. Much emphasis is needed in the training of facilitators and training of trainers if “paying lip-service” to participation is to be avoided.
- The strength of harmonising the positive elements of different methodologies with a strong emphasis on participation requires attention. Experience shows that PRA types of information generation lends itself to a log-frame kind of consolidation by adapting to the need. Tailor-made approaches are essential in the application of participatory methodology in different contexts. The tendency to use rigid methodology does not recognise the complexity of socio-cultural-economic contexts.

Tools for Enabling Participatory Learning at Different Stages in the Project Development Cycle

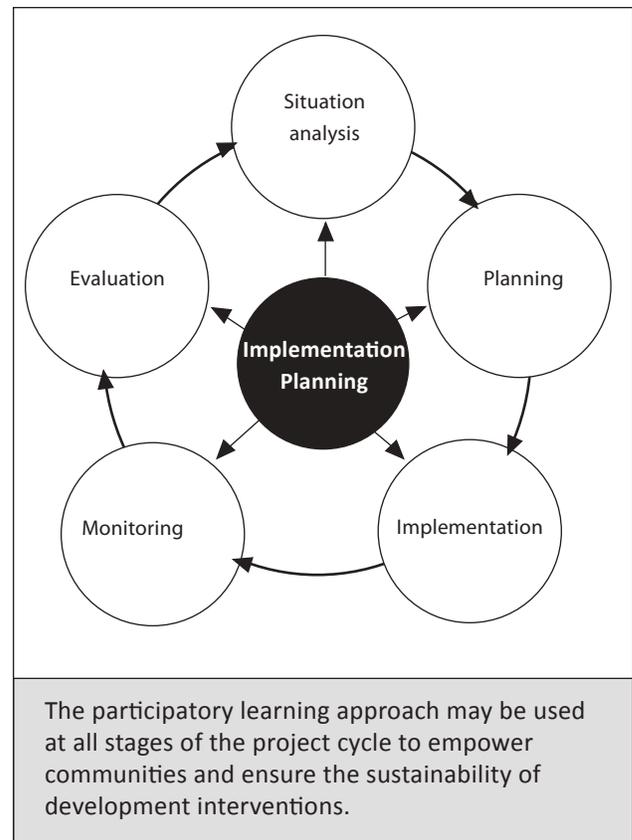
Tools	Situation analysis	Planning	Implementation	Monitoring	Evaluation
Secondary data analysis	✓	✓			
Social and resource mapping	✓	✓		✓	✓
Seasonality charts	✓	✓		✓	✓
Historical timeline	✓				
Daily activity charts	✓			✓	✓
Wealth and well-being ranking	✓			✓	✓
Livelihood profiles	✓				✓
Matrix ranking/paired ranking	✓				
Venn diagramming	✓			✓	✓
Semi-structured interviews	✓			✓	
Problem analysis	✓	✓			✓
Objectives analysis		✓			
Alternatives analysis/ options assessment		✓			✓
Project planning matrix		✓	✓	✓	
Gantt/flowchart		✓	✓	✓	
Stakeholders workshops	✓	✓			✓
SWOT* analysis		✓		✓	✓
Group discussion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Joint field visits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brainstorming	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

- Field officers and facilitators end up in frustration if enabling environments do not exist within organisations. Frequently, middle-level management within organisations are the most resistant to change. This calls for adequate orientation of all levels in a system towards participatory learning and also for providing space for institutionalising a process-oriented approach to development. High expectations from one-off training programmes affect the quality and use of the participatory approach. Many organisations, both government and non-government, do not realise the need for a long-term training package targeted at structural reorientation.

- At the planning stage, care should be taken to allow adequate time for the participatory process so that realistic targets are set during the time-frame for implementation. Donors and funders must be adequately aware of time constraints in the use of participatory approaches.

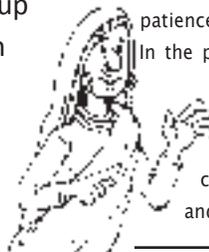
- In designing research using participatory methodology, adequate attention is needed in selecting the appropriate tools for generating the information required. There are instances where stereotypical use of tools has ended up producing a mass of information resulting in chaos at the data analysis stage.



Participation: Building Micro-Macro Linkages

The common allegation that participatory approaches are useful only for micro-planning or small-scale operations is wrong. Macro-level policy formulation is best achieved by collating the perceptions and inputs from the micro level. The learning approaches discussed in this paper have the potential to influence policy, if those concerned have the patience and commitment to go through the process.

In the past, valuable insights have been elicited from community perceptions which had an impact on policy formulation - e.g., social forestry, sustainable use of coastal fisheries, wildlife conservation and protected area management, etc., and in poverty reduction strategies.



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Overview of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)



Alternative views and critiques of conventional research started to appear in the literature and became subjects in development discussions in the early 1960s. These were triggered when agriculture-based action-research revealed that many findings in laboratory and conventional research are irrelevant. This is because the research was not tested in the real-life situation of the farmers and did not benefit from the lifelong experience of those who are familiar with the situation being researched.

Conventional research only recognised knowledge generated in supposedly “scientific” ways. Other forms of knowledge that were generated were trivialised. This resulted in devaluing and almost total obliteration of centuries-old indigenous knowledge that was beyond the ability of reductionist science to encompass.

The Need for an Alternative to Traditional Research

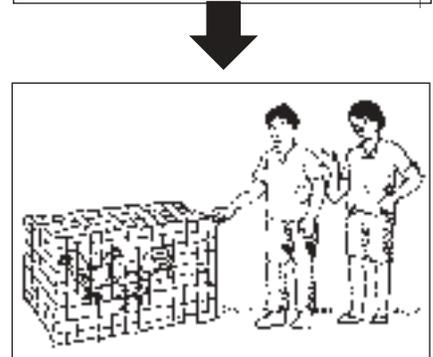
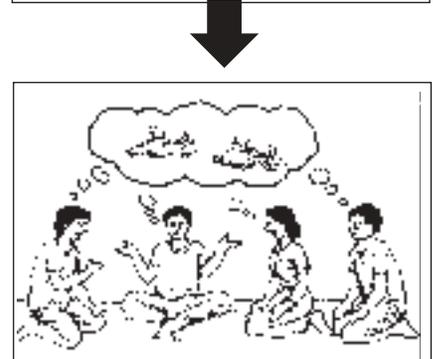
There was a need to find a research method that would give power to the powerless and make people the subject, not the object of research. The methodologies employed by the anthropologists marked a radical departure from the research methodologies of the social sciences and the mathematical objective systems of the physical sciences. These methodologies provided “windows” that took people’s own words and ideas at face value. As participant-observers, the anthropologists, the social activists and the development workers lived together with communities and chronicled their felt needs, priorities, art and worldviews. This marked the beginning of the practice of a participatory alternative to conventional research.

There was also an intellectual ferment that permeated the academe during the 1960s that questioned the “ivory tower” stance of research and how the results were being used.

The Change in Development Thinking

The work of Latin American scholars and practitioners such as Paulo Freire and Fals Borda pointed out that crucial to the people’s taking responsibility of their own development is the conscientisation of the people themselves to the problems and structures that render them powerless and to their collective ability to change that situation. The other challenge was how to manage change together, as a community, to reap benefits for the good of the most disadvantaged groups if not for all members of a community. Another challenge was how to make those who are in a position (to allocate resources for the poor) to view this shift as necessary.

Earlier work on community animation as practised by humanitarian NGOs provided insights that for community development to occur, the people needed skills to organise themselves, to generate information and ideas, and to mobilise their resources. Many programmes designed to empower the poor followed the formula of organising, education and resource mobilisation, before they tackled the work of influencing social structures.



PRA as a Participatory Alternative in Development and Research

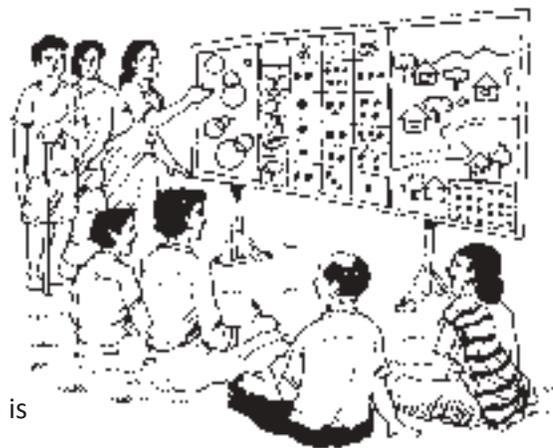
The pioneering work of Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway in a technique called rapid rural appraisal (RRA) was one example of an attempt to include the interests of the poor in the design of programmes and projects. The importance of RRA was that it recognised the need to consult the poor on their needs and that it very quickly showed the inherent limitations of this superficial tour to reality. RRA is mainly seen as a means for outsiders to gather information; and hence, the need to replace or supplement it with participatory rural appraisal (PRA) which empowers the local people. PRA is a method that facilitates the community's own in-depth look at themselves and of their possibilities, and enables them to articulate these discoveries in their own colourful, meaningful, useable and realistic way.

Perhaps because of the work of Robert Chambers and other development practitioners advocating the shift in development thinking embodied in the PRA approach, many agencies, governments and financial institutions now prescribe the use of PRA in their development programmes. There is now a wealth of experiences and insights with which to view, define and practise PRA.

PRA as a Set of Principles

After years of advocating for PRA, and after seeing the contribution of this technique in enabling the poor to articulate their needs and to act on them, Robert Chambers would prefer PRA to be remembered as participation, reflection and action. This places PRA in the company of other pioneering explorations of how to mainstream the interests of the disadvantaged groups by putting the "farmers first". These explorations share the following principles:

- That development workers are prepared to learn from the people, adapt to the flexible learning process and pace of the community, and to seek out the poorer people and learn their concerns and priorities.
- That the main role of the development worker is to facilitate the investigation, analysis, presentation and learning, by the rural people themselves, so that they are able to articulate and own the outcomes of their activities.
- That development workers continuously examine their behaviours so as to recognise error and to constantly learn to be better facilitators of development with the people.
- That relaxed rapport between outsiders and rural people can and should be established early on in the process.
- That the people have a greater capacity to map, model, quantify and estimate, rank, score and diagram their own realities than any outsider. That the sharing of these products is popular and powerful because the information is visible, public, checked and owned by the participants.
- That the sequence of PRA exercises builds upon the commitment of the participants to further action and self-learning measures.
- That different PRA exercises have the cumulative effect of adding a few more dimensions to the community's understanding of itself. That all concerned learn through the process of sharing, observing and analysing.



PRA as a Set of Data-Gathering and Awareness-Raising Tools

PRA is often also understood as a set of tools with which the community can visualise its own reality. It deals with space, time and relationships. PRA tools can be grouped together according to what kind of data or information they are sensitive in capturing. Some examples are the following.



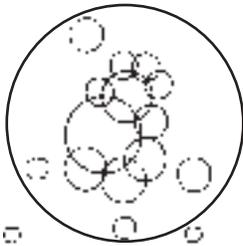
Spatial data

Deals with data relating to land and land uses and the different ways in which they may be viewed. The tools that are commonly used to draw spatial information are land-use maps, resource maps, farm sketches, spot maps, transects, thematic maps and three-dimensional models.

Year	Forest	Agri lands	Water	Livestock	Yield
1940					
1950					
1970					
1985					
1990					

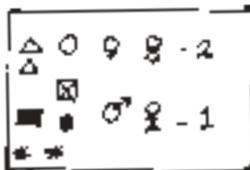
Temporal data

Includes time-related data such as those contained in time lines, trend lines, seasonal calendars and time-allocation diagrams.



Social/Institutional information

Sketches the relationships of the people with one another or with outsiders or with different organisations. The tools rank and/or score the relative values of these relationships as derived in social maps, Venn or institutional diagrams, wealth ranking, flow charts, etc.



Discrete data

There is also some information that stands alone. This is gathered by such tools as census mapping, demographic profiles, simplified survey forms, sectoral consultations, matrices, etc.



Indigenous or local data

These are artefacts or cultural forms within the community that have symbolism or histories behind them such as images, ceremonies, sculpture, songs, dances, weaving patterns, life stories, legends, myths and other indigenous ways of expressing realities.

The process of constructing these tools normally starts with an objective of why this information is gathered, and once the PRA tool is constructed, it is subjected to deeper analysis.

Analysing each of the PRA tools results in an awareness of the deeper causes of the problem that the PRA tool reveals and also engages the community in possible ways to address these problems by themselves. It has also been noted that for a community to be able to view and analyse their own situation reverses their role from being objects to being subjects of research. Hence, the community takes the initiative to make their recommendations come true simply because the idea of the change was theirs. This has been one of the satisfactions the villagers take home with them after a PRA exercise.

One way of analysing the situation is to ask the following questions:

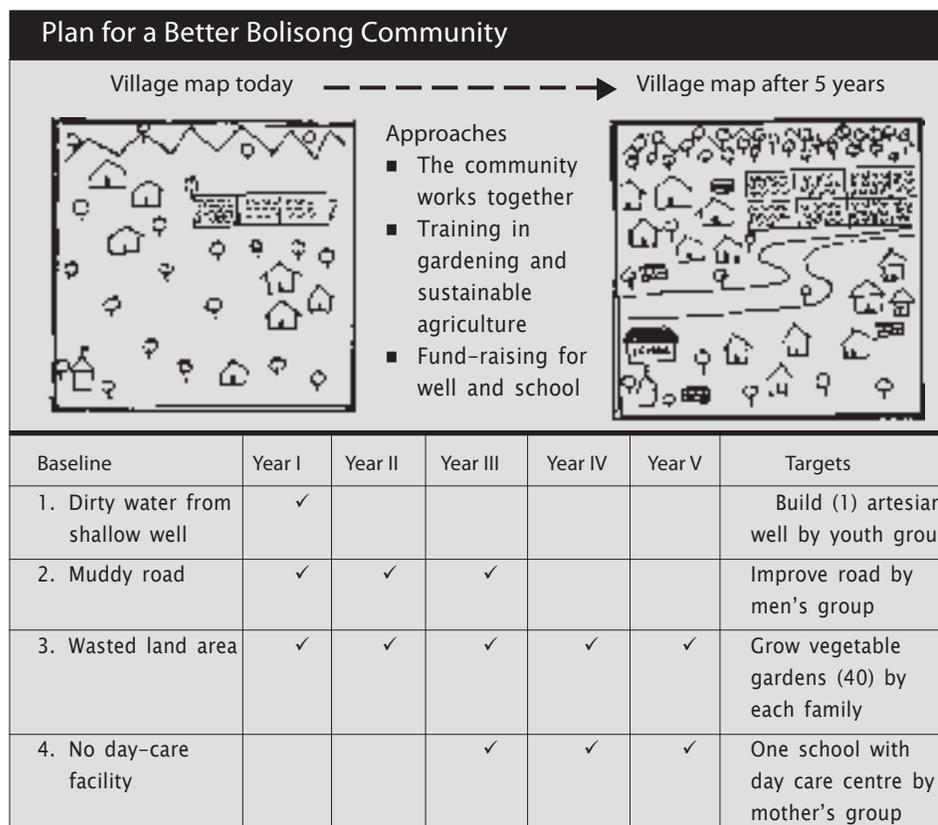
- What are the observations that can be extracted from the PRA tool?
- What problems do the data suggest?
- What is the cause of the problem suggested by the PRA tool?
- What are the gender or environmental implications?
- What should be the ideal situation?
- What can be done to attain the ideal situation or to eradicate the cause of the problem?

PRA as a Method of Participatory Project Management

PRA is more commonly defined as a family of approaches, methods and behaviours that enable people to express and analyse the realities of their lives and conditions, to plan themselves what actions to take, and to monitor and evaluate the results. PRA has the potential of being used for participatory project formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In this sense PRA can be used for participatory project management. This process can be done with just one PRA tool or with a series of PRA tools that can be used in the entire project cycle.

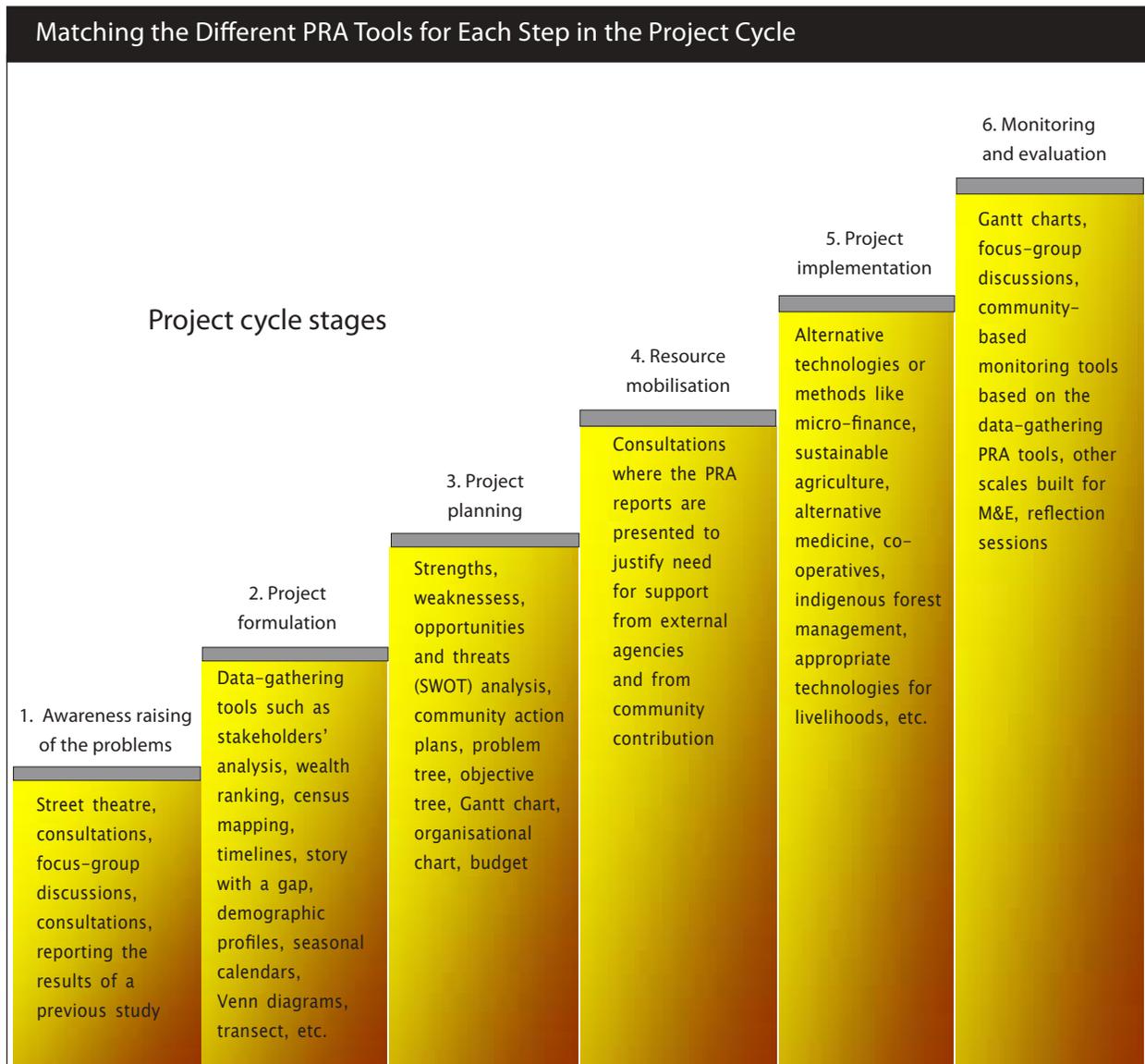
Example

A community draws a sketch map of their settlement featuring houses, infrastructure, roads, boundaries, etc. Once the map is drawn, the community looks at it and identifies the features they want eliminated or added in five years time. They then draw a map of the future settlement which contains their plans. They identify the new elements they want to see in the community and spell out steps they must take to achieve this. They make estimates



of the time and resources needed and identify the people who will be responsible for each of the steps. They then use this as a record to monitor and track whether these activities have been carried out and whether their development objectives have been achieved.

Another way of using PRA in project management is to match the different PRA tools for each step in the project cycle.

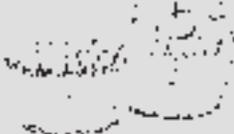


There are also creative ways of meeting the demands of donor organisations for solid quantitative data with the development imperative to involve people. There are projects that conduct surveys or RRAs first in order to prioritise target areas or target beneficiaries. Then PRAs are conducted in those communities that are already sure of being included in the project. This ensures that the people involved will have a greater say in what should be done in their own communities.

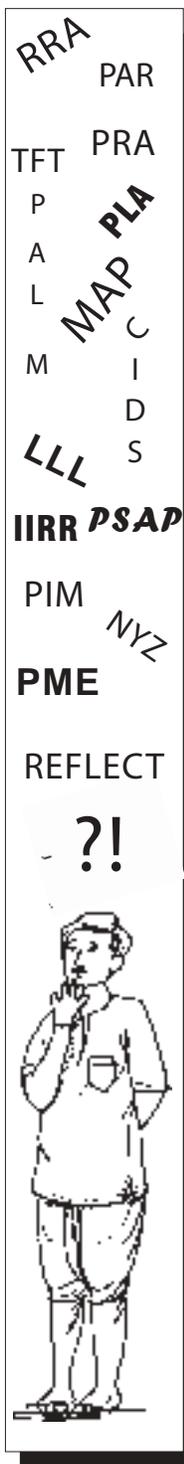
The RRAs provide data that can be compared across communities and could be tracked over time, whereas the PRA results provide qualitative information for community-based monitoring and evaluation systems.

PRA for Addressing Specific Issues

PRA is also useful for addressing specific concerns or sectoral issues. It is a matter of asking the appropriate questions so that the tool captures the specific data and the analysis needed. Some examples are listed in the table below:

Issues/Concerns		PRA Tools
Land improvement and development		Resource and social mapping, transect mapping, farm sketching, trend-line, three-dimensional participatory modelling
Marketing systems		Service mapping, Venn diagramming, flow charts
Credit programme		Census mapping, seasonal calendar, Venn diagram, sociogram for credit sources
Health improvement		Census mapping, seasonal diagram, service mapping, demographic profile
Targetting assistance to the poorest		Wealth ranking, census mapping, demographic profile
Agrarian reform		Mapping tools, Venn diagrams, sociograms, resource mapping, etc.

The PRA results that are gathered for these specific issues can be used very effectively in campaigns for reforms and advocacy. The articulations of PRA have the advantage of being very reflective of the realities of the proponents. They are also semi-abstract and are hence accessible to both the proponents and the policy makers.



PRA as a Work in Progress

Because PRA has widespread acceptability and is being used extensively, there are bound to be many problems or “mistakes” with its implementation. Questions arise regarding the quality of data gathered through PRA and the varying levels of competence among PRA facilitators. In some instances, PRA has been conducted in the same extractive way as conventional research. There will be more criticism as praxis intensifies in the years to come.

The challenge is not to stop altogether the use of PRA but to find ways of improving the application of PRA. Stopping it completely carries the risk of closing the opportunities of people to participate in the development process. The results of PRA may not meet statistical standards and may not have the characteristics of solid quantitative data. However, as long as they are a product of the collective thinking of the community and the community is able to use the results for their own self improvement, then PRA is its own excuse for being.

Because PRA depends so much on the creativity of its practitioners, it has undergone modifications and these modifications are known by other names. Already there are several variants to PRA that are popular. There are now other methods such as training for transformation (TFT) which originated in Zimbabwe as a Freirean approach to enable people to understand the structural causes of their problems. There is the productivity systems assessment and planning (PSA) popularised by the Institute of Philippine Culture for the agrarian reform programme and the participation and learning methods (PALM) demonstrated by MYRADA, an NGO based in India, to enable villagers to handle and process voluminous amounts of data for their projects.

More recent methods include the participatory learning approach (PLA) and the linked local learning (LLL) that utilise the inherent power of participation and visualisation to expand the possibilities of the people. PRA is a “Perpetually Rejuvenating Approach” and has been an important underlying theme in the whole series of evolution of participatory approaches.

In many countries, PRA is the domain of development workers and social development organisations. Its power in inspiring the grassroots is so dramatic and lasting that it should be the domain of all interested in uplifting the poor. The use of PRA should be second nature to the next generation of development workers coming from the academe or for those who seek learning with the people.

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Scaling Up Participatory Rural Appraisal: Lessons from Vietnam



This paper gives a brief overview of the use of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) in Vietnam from 1991 to 1996, focusing on considerations given and experiences gained in scaling up applications of PRA in the Vietnam-Sweden Forestry Cooperation Programme (FCP). It summarises the main lessons learned from this “experiment” – a term that aptly describes the development context in which the methodology was applied.

PRA as a planning tool and catalyst for participatory development has been used in Vietnam since late 1991. Prior to that time, there had been some use of rapid rural appraisal (RRA) for such activities as project identification. Widespread use of the methodology amongst foreign-based non-government organisations (NGOs) started a few years later. However, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)-funded FCP is the only programme in which PRA has been used systematically on a large scale over an extended period of years. Even so, in the first four years of the programme, only 70 villages in five provinces were covered.

PRA was introduced to the FCP in December 1991, and the first two years were spent trying out and modifying the methodology to suit the specific needs of the programme and the variable settings in which it was being introduced. At the end of this period, a fairly standardised PRA package was in use throughout the FCP.

This was a transition period when most Vietnamese organisations were moving out from under the protective umbrella of a subsidised system, and consequently were facing greater risks and uncertainties than before. Because of the long years of war and the almost total dedication of productive resources to support the war effort, all infrastructure development was adversely affected and the state of development of human resources was poor.

It was within this context that the FCP introduced PRA. There was no existing organisation or system for extension, so nothing “old” had to be broken down or changed. Moreover, the Vietnamese were interested in trying out new things. The PRA approach seemed to fit in well with one of Uncle Ho’s dictums, that in order to create a successful revolution the People’s Army had to “live with the people, work with the people and learn from the people.”

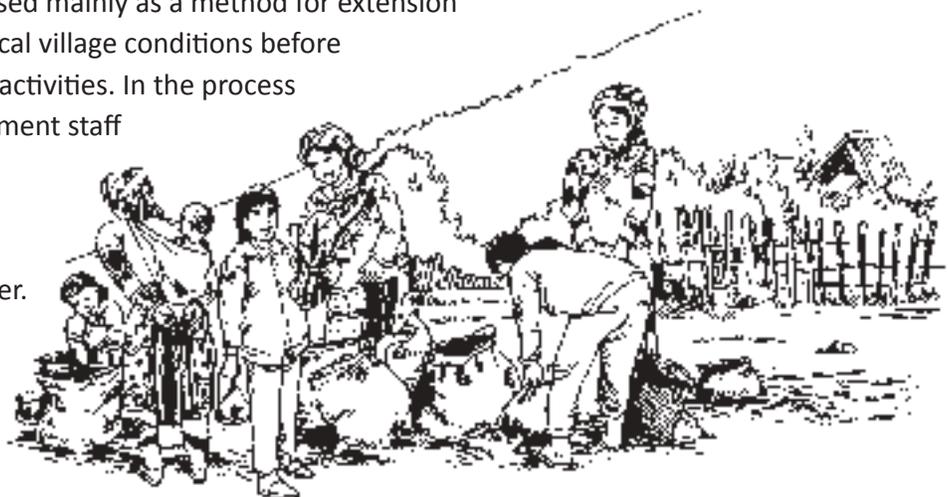
Several other factors were also supportive. The “doi moi” policy of economic reform shifted the basis of economic development from the cooperative to the individual households, creating new markets and freedom to produce for these markets. There was a rising demand for extension services. The allocation of forest land to individuals and groups also created additional demands for technical and material support for developing these lands.

Other enabling factors were the high levels of literacy and education among the population, and the presence of strong managerial and professional skills within many village communities. This made possible the establishment of strong community organisations capable of running project activities with minimal outside help.

The funding agency SIDA was very tolerant about the time required to develop and test out new methodologies. SIDA supplied large-scale funding to the forestry sector and supported some of the experimental activities.

How PRA Was Used

In the beginning, PRA was used mainly as a method for extension workers to find out about local village conditions before initiating extension support activities. In the process of working together, government staff and farmers learned how to use the methodology. They also gained a much better understanding of one another.

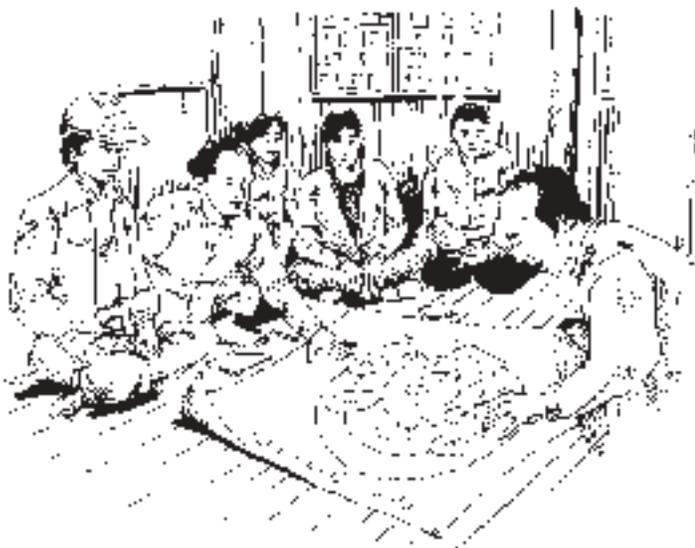


PRA became a catalyst for initiating a development process in each village. At the end of every PRA, a preliminary village development plan was formulated, this was finalised a little later by the villagers with the help of extension staff. The result of this process was a plan based on local realities and preferences that gave local people a genuine sense of ownership in its creation and implementation.

PRA was also used for thematic analyses of specific issues, such as livestock or the dynamics of village marketing. Indirectly, PRA was a factor in changing individual and institutional thinking, as well as how people and organisations functioned.

What Was Achieved

The PRA approach was found to be a useful method for gathering data and analysing conditions within a wide range of environmental and socio-economic conditions. Extension workers became sensitised to the knowledge and capabilities of farmers, and accepted the importance of involving farmers in the planning and development process. They also came to recognise the wide diversity of conditions within and between communities, and that there were no simple solutions to the farmer's problems.



Over time, there was a noticeable change in the way extension staff approached and worked with problems of local resource management and village development. They were eventually able to provide a more diversified and relevant set of responses to local needs. As they built up trust, they became more and more confident in delegating responsibilities to villagers to carry out on their own. Eventually, this delegation of responsibilities spread throughout the system.

As a catalytic influence for jump-starting the development process, PRA proved to be unrivaled. It was an effective method for involving local people in project planning and implementation. Eventually, villagers were successfully carrying out PRAs on their own in neighbouring villages, and they provided follow-up services and back-up support to other communities.

Constraints of Scaling Up PRA

One of the major objectives of FCP was to develop methodologies that could be scaled up. After four years, it was clear that PRA could be used effectively on a larger scale. However, there were some natural constraints and certain basic requirements would have to be met in order to achieve its successful application on a wider scale.

The main constraints relate to the context in which it is used – institutions, personnel and the overall system in which development takes place.

A Systems Approach

PRA is not a stand-alone methodology. It is never an end in itself because it is always serving some other purpose. It has to be part of a systemic approach that is applied to achieving a broader development objective. As such, it is one of the many steps taken in the project cycle and development process. Understanding its placement and timing in the process and how it should be designed to fit in with the other components in the system is critical for successful application.



The relationship among institutions has to be well understood. Most development programmes involve a variety of players and support mechanisms – politicians, policy-makers, managers, training support, financial support (subsidies and credit), material supply and technical support. Their roles, responsibilities and lines of authority have to be made clear. The application of PRA and the consequences of using PRA must be properly fitted within this institutional framework.

The Institutional Context

Under the influence of PRA, institutional dynamics change over time. Tasks may be initiated at one level in the system and then shift to another level at a later date. This may be part of a gradual process of decentralisation and delegation that develops out of the use of PRA (e.g., a training task may start at the province level, move to the district, and then end up being carried out at the village level). It helps if this process of change is anticipated and planned for, or at the very least, if some allowance is made for the fact that changes will happen. This kind of planning requires special skills and attitudes.

There are generally two kinds of institutional realities that have to be managed in relationship to the PRA. The first is the formal establishment – government and officially sanctioned organisations. The second is at the village level – informal, local institutions. Each of these institutional realities has to be carefully considered when working with PRA-led projects.

Strong local organisations are needed to support the use of PRA and the process that follows PRA. The strength and cohesiveness of local leadership have an important impact on the success of PRA-initiated activities. Using local people and organisations to carry out PRAs in surrounding communities has proven to be a very effective strategy for spreading-out and scaling-up. Costs are lower and results are more rooted in local realities, resulting in more effective and more efficient use of all resources.

Institutionalising PRA requires a stable and legitimate institutional environment. Uncertainty about the future can be tremendously demoralising. Staff must be permanently allocated for a fixed number of years, and they must receive appropriate remuneration.

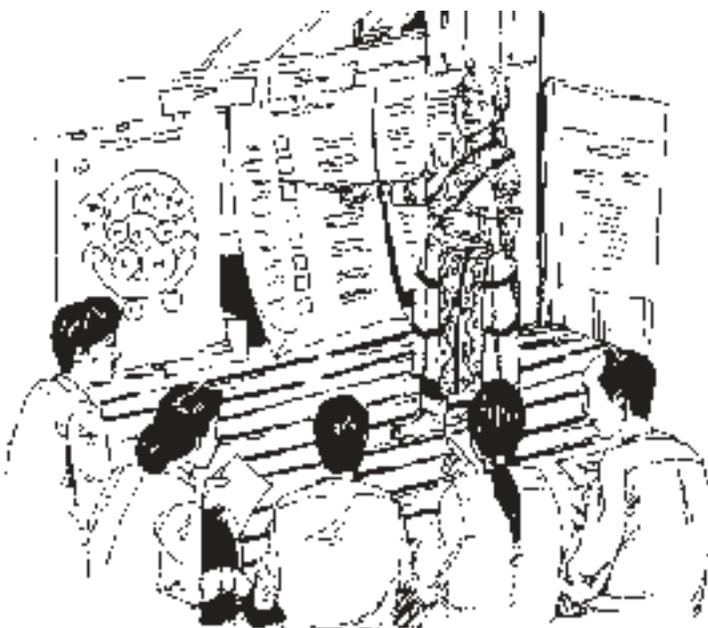
PRA usually works best with a multi-disciplinary group of people. However, there may be inter-institutional barriers that prevent the bringing together of people from different sectors and this must be considered in planning for PRA interventions.

Personnel and Training

PRA is totally people-dependent. It requires a minimal, critical mass of people with specific technical and communication skills. People must also feel motivated and not become sidelined due to a lack of appropriate salary or incentives.

It is especially important to have a few key people in the right place who really understand what PRA is all about (preferably from first-hand experience). One right-minded person can make a tremendous difference in the quality of the work that takes place. However, it is more often a matter of good fortune to have such people in the appropriate position, as it is seldom possible to influence this condition.

Training people to be effective PRA practitioners is not easy. Learning how to use the tools is relatively straightforward, but it often takes several years to gain sufficient understanding and self-confidence to move beyond this point and to become more creative and analytical. The most important learning takes place in the field. Classroom training on its own has limited value. Trainers themselves require special training. Very often there are not sufficient resources available for training, which means building these resources up before you can provide training to staff and farmers. This is a factor that can significantly delay the spread of the methodology.



PRA training is almost totally dependent on village-level field training. This in itself can be a major limitation for scaling-up. Using a village for training without the prospect of post-PRA activities in that village can limit the quality of involvement from local people and thereby compromise the usefulness of the learning experience. If training always has to be linked to a commitment for project-supported village development, it can limit the number of villages that can be used for training.

Another limitation linked to using a village as a training base is that there are only a relatively small number of persons that can be accommodated during a PRA. This can be a major restriction on the potential numbers trained.

Requirements for Scaling Up PRA

It is essential to distinguish between the techniques of PRA and the philosophy or spirit behind it. PRA is driven by a philosophy that dictates how it should be done – it cannot be done properly in any other way. What is often missed is how to carry this same philosophy into other aspects of the work that precede and follow the PRA. If we do not use the same attitudes and philosophy in other aspects of the work, the good outputs from the PRA can easily be distorted or even lost.

This reality is by far the biggest challenge to widespread use and scaling-up of the methodology. Allowances have to be built into projects and programmes for the “conversion” of those who will never experience a PRA, yet who will have some involvement in some part of the process that is generated by PRA. We all know how nearly impossible it is to teach PRA without any direct involvement, so what methods can be used to change the attitudes of those who will never be directly involved? What kind of training can be used for this purpose?

This poses a very serious challenge: how do we introduce the same approach to the rest of the system? Is there some systematic way this can be done? Has anyone attempted to do it? Because ultimately it requires major institutional changes to take place. Or is it sufficient to be satisfied with the small, yet important gains made through farmers’ involvement in processes and activities that affect them directly?

To summarise, the main requirements for scaling-up are:

- the use of PRA has to be carefully designed to fit within and be part of an overall development system;
- the development system has to be matched with existing institutional realities;
- methodologies used throughout the system have to be philosophically consistent; additional specialised training is likely to be required to achieve this;
- PRA requires sufficient numbers of trained persons if it is to be implemented on a large scale;
- training in PRA and related skills takes time, and requires specialised training resources which very often have to be built up;
- donors and recipients must allow sufficient time for the build-up of experience and skills before sustainable large-scale expansion can take place; and
- the use of PRA causes changes that cannot easily be foreseen – donors and recipients have to leave room for unforeseen operational and structural changes to take place.

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Participatory Monitoring: An Experience from Nepal



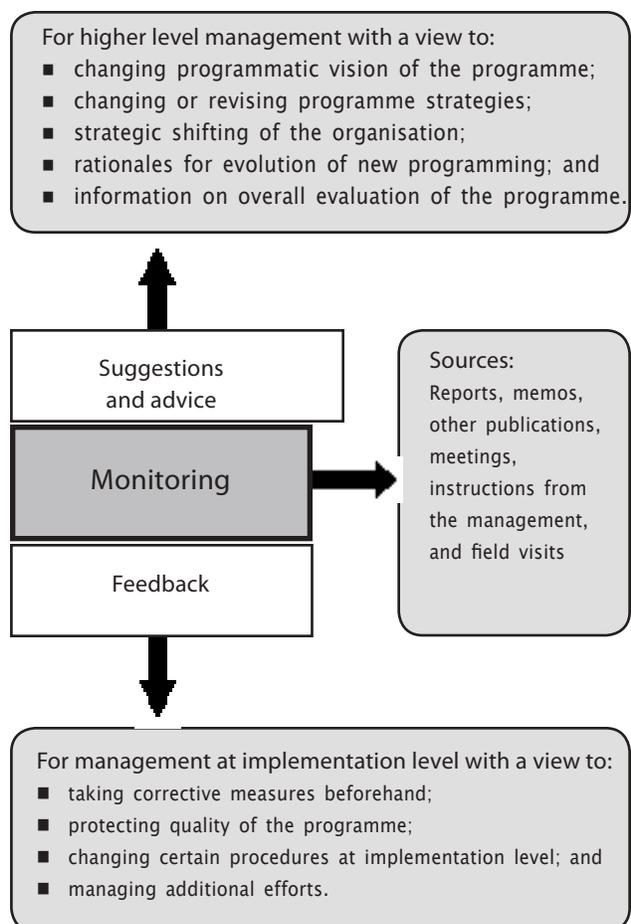
The participatory monitoring system in PDDP is contributing significantly to empowerment, resource management and confidence-building of community members. It helps them to improve understanding of the problems and find the solutions themselves, ultimately contributing to improve the livelihood of poor people.

Monitoring refers to the regular and systematic collection, analysis and distribution of information about programme activities. It is carried out continuously, as periodic reviews during programme implementation. An experience in participatory monitoring from the Participatory District Development Programme (PDDP) in Nepal is highlighted here.

In conventional development practice, monitoring used to be carried out by external personnel (e.g., programme reviewer). In participatory monitoring, all the stakeholders of the programme, especially the beneficiaries, are regarded as partners of the monitoring process. Beneficiaries are given access to whatever is needed to track the programme and to take corrective measures.

Participatory Monitoring Process

The overall objective of monitoring is to bring the programme on to the desirable path through feedback and suggestions.



Involvement of Stakeholders

Merely involving the beneficiaries in the monitoring team does not make the monitoring process participatory. Rather, the stakeholders should be involved in:

- deciding what to monitor and when;
- selecting indicators for monitoring;
- selecting tools and methods;
- processing and analysing information; and
- using information as outcomes of monitoring.

Responsible Levels for Participatory Monitoring

- **Grassroot level**
Field staff, other partners and beneficiaries who are directly involved in implementation
- **Project level**
Project manager along with support staff
- **State level**
Donors and counterparts in the region

Difference between Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are different but complementary processes. A programme could be small or big in terms of funding or areas of coverage, but its basic elements remain – i.e., inputs, activities, outputs, effects and impacts. There is a considerable overlap between monitoring and evaluation, particularly in the outputs they generate. However, the focus areas of monitoring and evaluation are different. Information and analysis generated by regular monitoring can be used in evaluating a programme. Thus, monitoring is a part of the whole evaluation process of a programme.

Differences Between Monitoring and Evaluation		
Area	Monitoring	Evaluation
Purpose	Quality control Correction	Learning lessons Not repeating mistakes
Frequency	Regularly	Mid-term, final and after project
Involvement	Mostly/only internal	Internal and external
Use	Project, beneficiaries and donors	Project, beneficiaries, donors, counterparts and other agencies
Focus	Inputs and outputs	Effects and impacts
Reporting	Internal reporting	External reporting

Areas for Monitoring

Inputs

- Are inputs (human, financial and other resources) for programme implementation reasonable? If not, what changes are necessary in the ongoing programme? If change is not required, what could be the status of the expected result of the programme?

Activities

- Are appropriate procedures that are visualised by the programme followed?
- Are the activities designed by the programme appropriate and in line with the programme goal?
- Are all the activities being implemented following appropriate processes and timing?

Outputs

- Have expected outputs been achieved?
- What are the qualities and quantities of the outputs?
- Do these match with the programme objectives?

Effects and impacts

- What indications of effects and impacts of the programme interventions are visualised in the targeted communities?
- Are the existing indications leading the communities towards the ultimate goal of the programme?

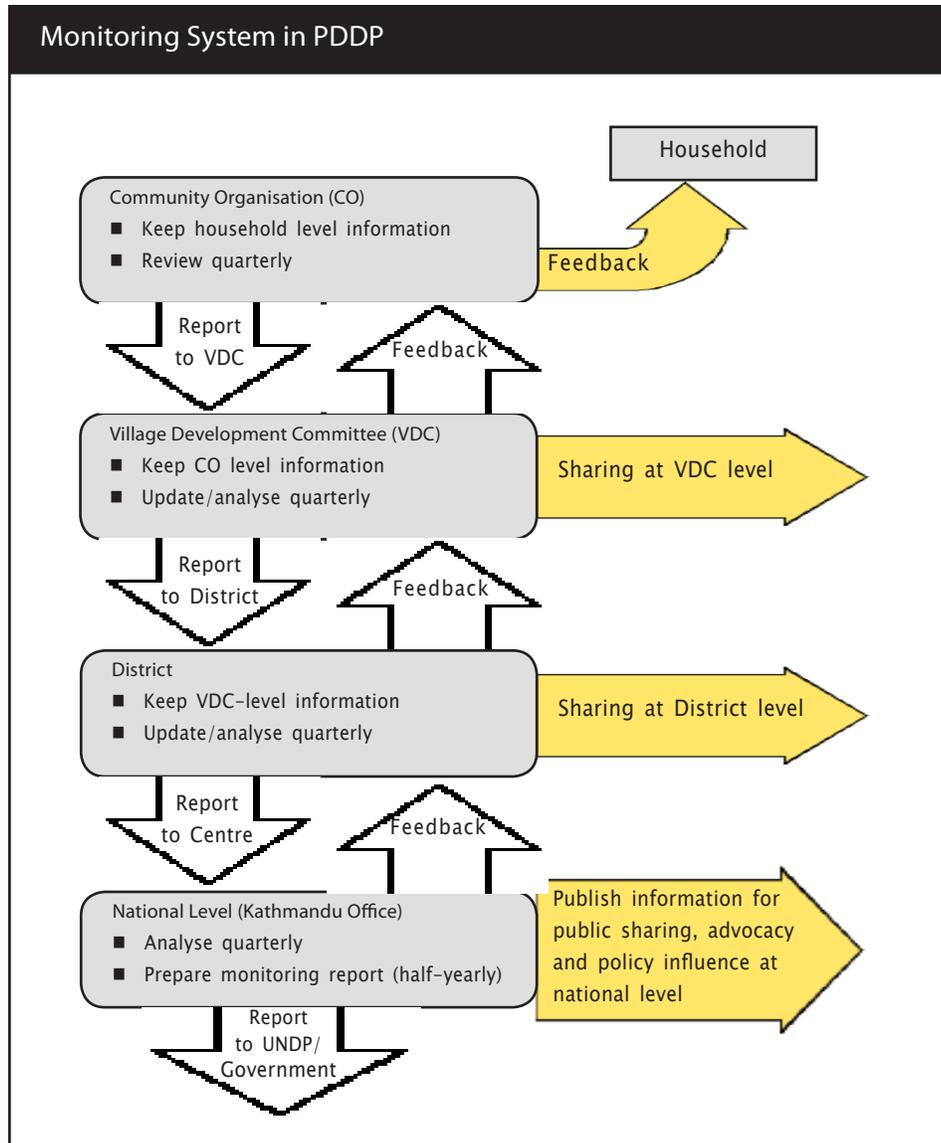
Programme Monitoring System in PDDP

At grassroots level, primary stakeholders sit together and analyse the information collected about the programme. This has been successfully practised and institutionalised in the Village Development Programme implemented by the PDDP.

All community organisation (CO) members sit together once every three months, analyse their progress and update the impact indicators. This is compiled at the village, district and national levels.



Nepal's Local Self-Governance Act (1998) made provision for monitoring sub-committees at the district and national levels. In this context, PDDP perceived that participatory monitoring is the main tool to improve programmes according to the needs of the villagers.



Some Features of Participatory Monitoring by PDDP

■ Empowering process

Participatory monitoring equips the communities with confidence and motivation so that they, themselves, can initiate a process of verifying activity-related strengths and weaknesses regularly. A good monitoring process involves a range of tools that fosters community empowerment and confidence-building.

■ Mutual sharing and learning

The process builds on existing local knowledge rather than on formal research processes. Trust is built by listening to each other's opinions and ideas.

■ **Enrichment of programmatic relationship**

The process aims to produce a multi-dimensional relationship among the stakeholders involved in programme interventions. Participants are involved in the decisions about the issues and changes that may happen from the information generated and analysed.

■ **Process of being informed**

The outputs of monitoring, such as reports and publications, must be made available to all the stakeholders involved in the monitoring processes. These publications enrich transparency and help the stakeholders to be informed.

■ **On-the-spot analysis**

Visual tools and methods are more important than the formal and exhausting process of information collection. Successful monitoring deserves on-the-spot analysis by the stakeholders.

■ **The public is on top of the process**

People at grassroots know how to check the progress if they are allowed to do so. They also know how to assess the strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions about corrective actions. Participatory monitoring is carried out for the people, by the people, and with the people. It cannot be imposed, but it can be adapted and modified as required.

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Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Some Concerns from the Field



Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) marks a paradigm shift in development thinking that promises far-reaching benefits. It has undoubtedly gone a long way towards making the development process more participatory. However, despite the rapid spread of PRA, there are concerns about the quality of the research, the degree of participation that is actually achieved and the interpretation of results. It must be emphasised, nevertheless, that these concerns have to do with PRA practice, and not with the approach or method.

This paper discusses a few recurrent themes with regard to the many articles that have criticised the way PRA is practised. Some key reading material is listed at the end. To this list we have added some concerns which have emerged from our own experience of using PRA.

Legitimisation of Agendas

Fears have been expressed about PRA being used to legitimise projects that communities might have challenged given more information, time and political clout.

The "Tyranny of Tools"

Although these concerns have to do with ALL participatory methods (including RRA, PRRA, PLA, etc.), the focus on PRA is basically because of its popularity and high profile.

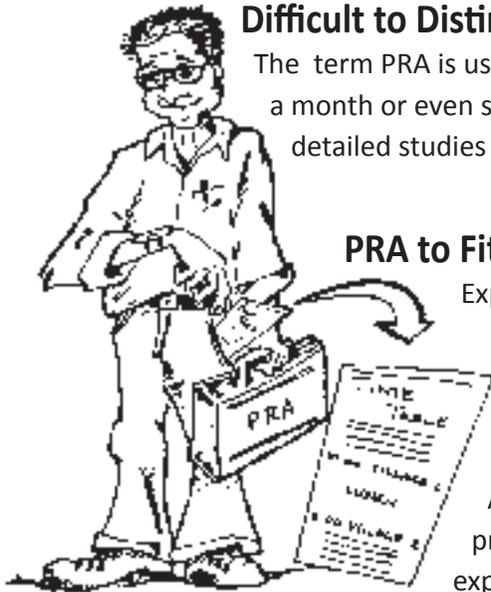


Depth of Coverage

Unless specified by the practitioners, or the project, it is assumed that PRA will cover all of the primary stakeholders. But this may not always be the case. There is no established norm for the depth that a PRA must achieve – for instance, what level of disaggregation of different stakeholder groups is appropriate? Some PRAs may stop at the level of caste or differentiating groups of men and women. But there can be many different subcastes or subcategories of people, and the women from these groups are also likely to have different allegiances. If the livelihood constraints and concerns are significantly different, then this could actually have an impact on the project or policy in question.

Difficult to Distinguish between Detailed and Shallow PRAs

The term PRA is used loosely to describe an exercise that could have taken a day, a month or even six months. This underplays the importance of really sound and detailed studies and gives credibility to hastily done or shallow studies.



PRA to Fit Pre-Defined Project Requirements

Experience shows that where PRAs have been undertaken after the focus of the project has been decided, practitioners may “facipulate” the process so that the communities also identify the project sector as “their” primary concern.

Added to this is the possibility of the “Pygmalion Effect”: If practitioners project their own preconceptions of the capabilities, expectations and development needs of the community on to community members, they may actually create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The Pressure of Deadlines

For many donors, the pressure of deadlines creates the dilemma of wanting to conduct a PRA thoroughly but having to rush the whole process through the system of project approval and formulation. As PRAs are now mandatory in most programmes, they must be incorporated; but the resulting process – rush to find suitable PRA persons, rush to get it done and rush to write the report – leads to poor participation, inaccurate results and shoddy reporting.

Varying Competence and Attitudes of Practitioners

The quality of the research depends not only on familiarity with PRA tools, but also on the attributes and competencies of the researcher: communication skills, personality, attitude and



nature, analytical skills. It also needs to be recognised that when a professional is being trained in PRA a lot of unlearning has to take place. Many old thinking habits have to be forgotten and this is often not achieved, say, through a three-day workshop. Also, under pressure to get funded projects, many professionals and institutions rush to proclaim themselves as “PRA experts”, even though they clearly lack the necessary skills (or attitude).

PRA practitioners have been accused of being unparticipatory themselves, while asking rural communities to participate. They may not be good listeners, may not treat people respectfully and equally, or may not share decision-making with others; they only display the “right” attitude when they are in front of an “audience”.

PRA's Yield Vast Amounts of Qualitative Information

More detailed PRA's may yield vast quantities of information that are difficult to assimilate for policy makers and other researchers. For instance, in the project design of a recent rural livelihoods project, 14 studies produced voluminous qualitative information on various aspects of project design, which were extremely difficult to compare and assimilate into one project document. In ongoing projects, project managers find it difficult to sift through the qualitative information produced – even by annual assessments of just 100 communities, on different aspects of the project.



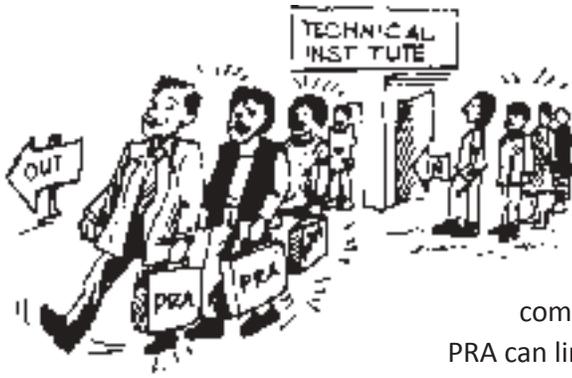
PRA Results are Difficult to Compare

The results between PRA's undertaken in the same area by different field teams at different points of time may not be comparable, due to differences in methods and the depth of the investigation.

Institutional Limitations

Many of the constraints experienced in attempting to scale-up or mainstream PRA are institutional. Established institutions that were developed on the basis of a certain understanding of poverty and its solutions may have difficulty in adapting to the new agenda and methods of PRA.





Contracting Out PRA

Several institutional arrangements are being piloted and a few early lessons have emerged. While contracting out of PRA by aid agencies and government has advantages - complementary capacity, more honesty in the process and better communication with communities - there are also problems. Contracting out of PRA can limit learning and policy feedback within organisations by compartmentalising the participatory element in projects.

A prime concern of practitioners is that they are asked to conduct a PRA for an externally defined purpose and their involvement in the process may not continue after the PRA exercise is over. They may not have any control over how the results are used. They also feel that such exercises leave them in a moral dilemma vis-a-vis their accountability to the communities they work with.

PRAs Focus on the Negative

PRAs may tend to focus too much on problems within a community and consequently people may be reluctant to go into details, particularly if they think that there is no direct or immediate benefit associated with it. A method like appreciative inquiry, in contrast, focuses on and builds on positive experiences and energies.



Some PRAs are Extractive

The purpose for undertaking PRA varies, and this determines whether the process is extractive or empowering. For example, if undertaken by a technical department to sharpen its own understanding of people's needs with respect to a particular output, there is a tendency to limit the exercise to that rather than seek opinions about wider issues or sharing of benefits. On the other hand if the PRA is conducted by those interested in social mobilisation, to encourage people to articulate their concerns and create awareness about their rights, then it is more likely to lead to genuine empowerment.

PRA's Raise Expectations

PRA's may have unintended consequences of raising people's expectations which may not be fulfilled. This is particularly stark where PRA is conducted for project design, and the community cannot be promised any benefits for a long time. Some practitioners have suggested undertaking "pre-project activities" in order to give something back immediately to the communities.

There are also instances where PRA's may be conducted and then a decision is taken to locate the project elsewhere.



Those who are not used to being innovative in the field have a tendency to follow PRA manuals rigidly and to treat them as commandments. This has led to ridiculous situations where PRA practitioners have insisted on using "traditional" materials such as dung and sticks to the amusement of villagers who may have been more comfortable with a blackboard.

PRA Fatigue!

Frequent PRA's on different issues can create community fatigue for future participatory initiatives, and could affect the participation and the quality of information that villagers are prepared to share.



PRA's Can Have Serious Personal Consequences For Information Providers

In faction-ridden locations or highly feudal societies, PRA's could actually trigger conflicts which can put vulnerable people in danger after the outside team has left. Imagine a situation where a bonded labourer speaks up during a focus group discussion. Even if the meeting does not include the landlord, word does get around. What happens to the labourer after the PRA team has left?



Indicative Suggestions for PRA Practitioners

Planning

- Draw up a plan of analysis, based on all available secondary information and discussions with resource persons, on the details of the planned PRA. This should include the reasons why the PRA is being conducted, the issues to be covered, the selection of appropriate tools, and the number of sites to be covered.

Appraisal

- Be innovative and adapt tools to fit the context, and not the other way around! Use complementary tools (like Appreciative Inquiry) when appropriate.
- Be honest and transparent about possible benefits to the community from the project (even whether or not the project will come to that village).
- Cover all socio-economic strata in the village, and not just the “visible” and articulate groups.
- Listen to what the villagers are saying and don't assume on their behalf; and don't listen only to the vocal.
- Encourage debate since this may bring up new and interesting issues and perspectives.
- Be sensitive to community conflicts and capture these in the analysis.
- Don't force respondents who are unwilling to speak out in a group - it may be out of fear – instead, meet them later to discuss the issue.
- Invite questions from the community; they may also want some information from you.
- Present findings back to the community, so that they can learn from the analysis.
- Facilitate community-level learning; the ultimate objective after all is to make the community an independent and effective decision-making unit.
- Leave information behind especially the tools and the maps.

Reporting

- Write a clear report, mentioning the final details of the process followed in the field, and changes from the initial analysis plan, with reasons.

What Now?

Such concerns have led to many discussions on the requirement for some kind of quality control and greater ethical standards in the practice of PRA. As far as ethics are concerned, greater introspection and self-evaluation is necessary. Peer review, especially in the case of PRAs conducted in sensitive areas and subjects should be considered. But it needs to be addressed in more detail.

The notion of introducing formal qualifications for PRA has been widely discredited because it would create centralised control mechanisms over a method that is essentially seen as free and for the people. At the same time, some kind of check on how PRA is done is necessary. Probably the most effective approach from the point of view of any user (of PRA results) would be to insist on certain minimum standards in PRA design and reporting.

Further Reading

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Critical Reflections on PRA and the Project Cycle: Practitioner Perspectives from Nepal



Most PRA in Nepal is understood and practised within the context of the project cycle. When used in this context, PRA is understood as a technique for gathering and starting to analyse information to inform project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Practitioners who use PRA for this purpose compare it favourably to other methods, especially surveys. They say it provides information that better reflects the local reality as seen by local people, it is faster, and the information is easier to analyse and record in reports. They also say that it can have empowering effects. However, the empowering nature of PRA is a major topic for debate and disagreement among practitioners.

The Pathways to Participation project, initiated by IDS in January 1999, aims to support critical reflection on PRA, in order to improve the quality and impact of participatory work. The activities embrace analysis of the successes and strengths of PRA practice, and also the challenges and weaknesses, looking back at the last decade of PRA experience. These reflections are based on a series of interviews with approximately 50 Nepali PRA practitioners about their own experiences with PRA, and about the general trends in PRA in Nepal.



This paper is a summary of the Practitioners' Critical Reflections on PRA and Participation in Nepal, 2001 by Garrett Pratt. The paper is published in IDS Working Paper No. 122.

Using PRA within the Project Cycle

Over the last ten years, PRA has been used at more and more points in the project cycle at which development organisations need to gather and analyse information – and to discuss with other project stakeholders. At first, PRA was used at the appraisal stage. Later, some organisations began to use it for monitoring and evaluation exercises, including impact-monitoring and evaluation.

With experience, some organisations have gradually expanded their use of PRA to other stages of the project cycle but many organisations “discovered” PRA very recently and are still learning to use it at the exploratory appraisal stage of projects. Rarely is PRA used for detailed planning of projects, this is usually done by development professionals based on the information gained during appraisal.

PRA for action

One standard by which practitioners judge “good” versus “bad” PRA is whether or not it is directly tied to development action. Many practitioners operating in a project cycle framework say that if PRA does not lead to action, it is an abuse of PRA. They worry that when there is PRA without clear follow-up, local people will be disappointed, and will become hostile to development workers who come to their communities in the future.

Some practitioners argue that PRA without action is an abuse even when PRA is used for another developmental purpose, such as policy or advocacy-related research. Practitioners who use

PRA in this research-oriented way argue that it is important to be honest about what follow-up will happen afterwards, but that follow-up does not necessarily have to happen in the form of development projects. For example, it is important to share the final findings of the study with community members.



Hidden agendas

Practitioners criticise the use of PRA by organisations that hide their agenda upon entering the community. Often, organisations taking a project cycle approach to development already have a specific budget in mind, or know which sector they want to work in even before they begin communicating with the community through PRA exercises. Outsiders may “facipulate” the PRA to see that the sector they have decided to work in is chosen by the community as “their” priority.

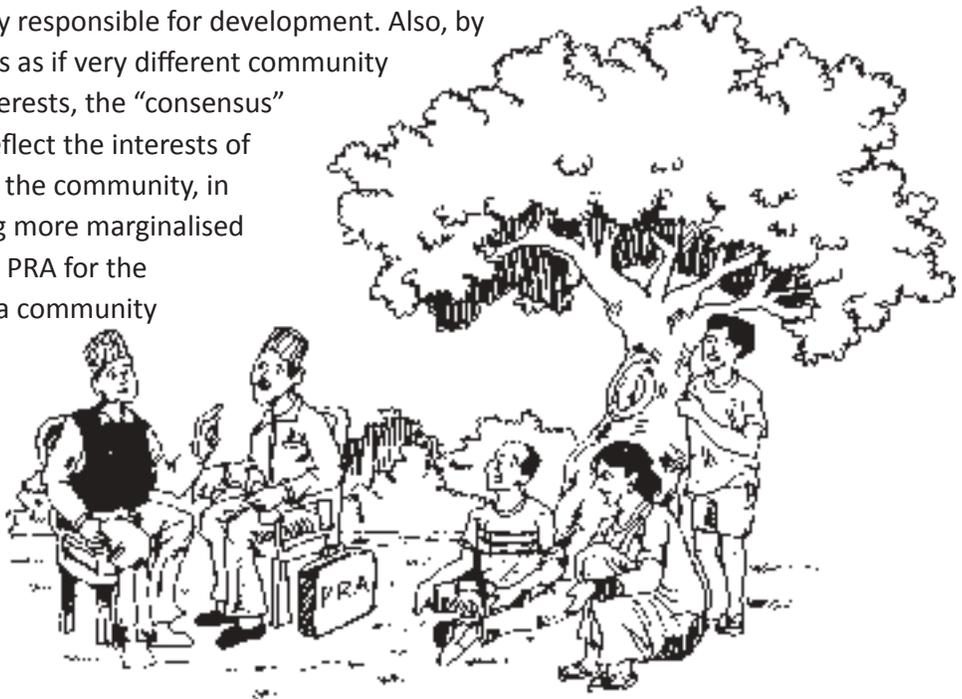
Practitioners claim that this is an abuse of PRA, as it makes a sham of participation while trying to enlist local people in outsiders' projects. To avoid this, organisations should be open about the decisions that have already been made, and the constraints under which they are working. If priorities do not match those of the outside organisation, it has some responsibility for connecting the local people to other organisations who can offer expertise and support in their priority sector.

Does PRA lead to empowerment?

Practitioners disagree about the extent to which PRA is "empowering" when used within the project cycle. Many say that they see local people gain confidence in their own knowledge and articulate that knowledge during PRA processes. Groups of people may develop new shared understandings of the problems and opportunities in their community, which can spark new development actions. Outside organisations also come to share this new common understanding which can reduce conflict and misunderstanding between them and local people.

But does an increase in the confidence by local people already deserve the label "empowerment"? As one practitioner said, "These tools are as strong or as weak as we make them and we are choosing to make them weak." After all, PRA does not automatically change the balance in power between the outside organisation, which has the resources for the project, and the community members. Using PRA does not lead all development workers to question their self-image as the people primarily responsible for development. Also, by being practised in many cases as if very different community members share the same interests, the "consensus" that comes out of PRA can reflect the interests of the more powerful people in the community, in effect further disempowering more marginalised community members. Often, PRA for the project cycle is not linked to a community organising process, or if it is, the organisations reinforce existing power relations in the community. And often, using PRA within the project cycle does not allow local people to escape project time-frames set elsewhere, that may not reflect their own learning and organising processes. The practitioners who raise these criticisms question not just PRA within the project cycle, but the project approach to development itself.

Does an increase in confidence by local people deserve the label "empowerment"? After all, PRA does not change the balance in power between the outside organisation and the community members.



Attitudes and behaviour of PRA practitioners

PRA has raised other issues for practitioners that reach beyond the project cycle. In Nepal, much of the analysis and criticism of PRA centres on attitudes and behaviours. Practitioners often say that PRA is a “way of life”. They argue that practitioners should internalise the characteristics and outlook of a “participatory” person, but that in reality, many people only do PRA as a job. Some practitioners do not even display good attitudes and behaviour during PRA exercises. But practitioners also criticise people who act in a positive way during PRA events, but otherwise fail to be good listeners, to treat people respectfully and equally, or to share decision-making with others, whether in the office or even at home. Practitioners observe that there are many reasons to display a “right” attitude and behaviour in front of some “audience” without internalising them more deeply. In the current professional climate, it is often considered necessary to make a display of being participatory in front of other development professionals to market oneself, even if one does not believe deeply in participatory ideals.

Some practitioners do not even display good attitudes and behaviours during PRA exercises. In the current professional climate it is often considered necessary to make a display of being participatory.



Exploring PRA Beyond the Project Cycle

Using PRA in new development frameworks

Some practitioners who deeply question the project cycle are exploring different development frameworks, and the way they can use PRA beyond the project cycle. For example:

- Some are drawing on the Freirean tradition of adult education. The Freirean approach to development concentrates on conscientisation, a process through which people explore their social situation and the social causes of poverty and marginalisation. In an approach called REFLECT, community members explore these questions through PRA-style diagramming and discussions.

Actionaid Nepal has been supporting a REFLECT circle of people from an untouchable caste, who have been analysing the social origins of their poverty and marginalisation through PRA diagramming and discussions. Their analysis led them to decide that as long as they continued performing their traditional but socially stigmatising role of removing dead animal carcasses from their village, they would continue to be marginalised by other members of the community. They organised a “strike”, refusing to perform their traditional duty. Another group of untouchable women in a REFLECT circle began analysing how their lack of education, and their inability to educate their children, traps them in poverty. The women directly lobbied with local government officials to grant their children’s right to waive school fees, a right for untouchable children that they had not been claiming before.

- Another development is the “rights-based” approach, which leads NGOs to focus on increasing the awareness, confidence and organisation of poor people to claim their rights as citizens to their entitlements from the State. The actions flowing from these applications can be more overtly conflictual and political, as poor people assert claims against more powerful people in their communities or against government.

Management styles in organisations

The logic of participatory interaction between development organisations and community members is being applied increasingly to interactions within organisations. For example, the manager of a new project waited until his newly hired staff joined the office weeks later, and only then sent them to choose their own furniture in order that they would be happy with it. When a funding NGO wanted to find partners to work with in a new district, the manager used matrix ranking in a participatory meeting among all the NGOs in the district so that the NGOs could decide among themselves which ones would be the best partners. When an NGO was deciding where to hold a staff meeting, the drivers were the ones who had the final say because of their knowledge about the security situation on the way to the possible venues. The participatory philosophy that has been transmitted along with PRA has reinforced a trend in Nepal towards participatory management.

Need for Critical Self-Reflection

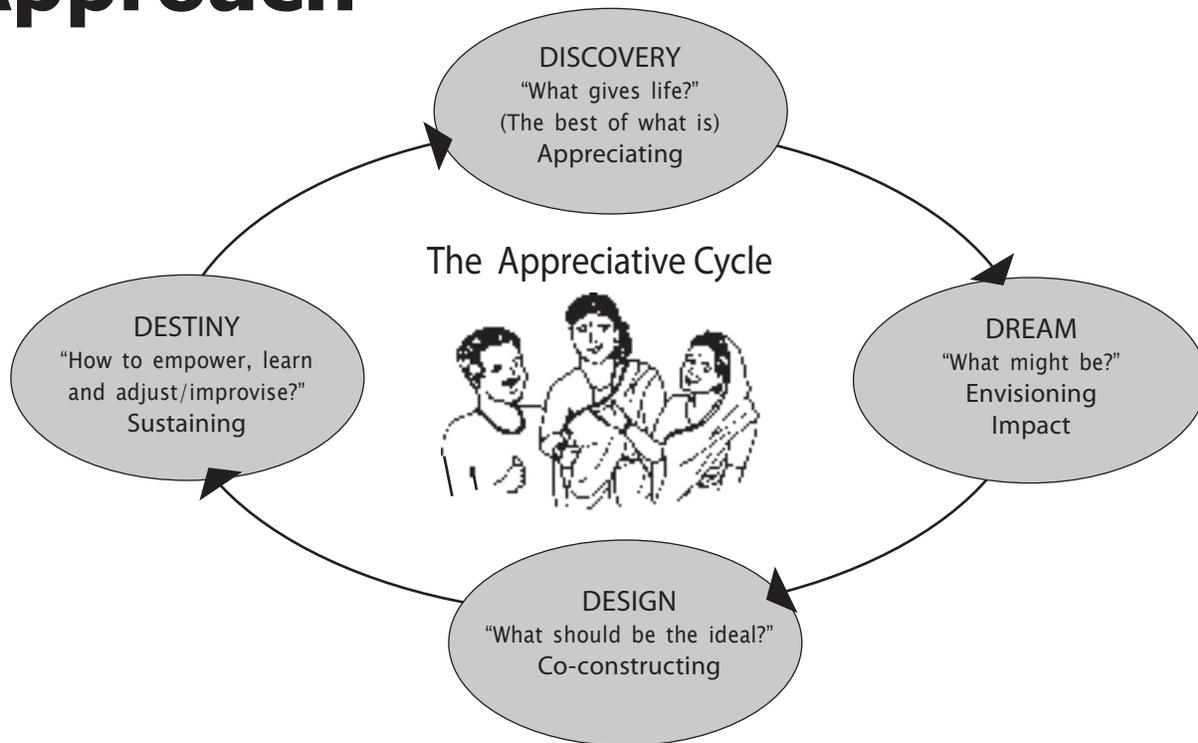
When PRA is used in any context including the project cycle, Nepalese practitioners argue that critical reflection is one of the most important factors in continued learning and improvement. Critical reflection has become institutionalised in the culture of PRA practitioners and networks in Nepal. Practitioners say that to honestly analyse oneself and the work one is doing, is often the greatest source of insight and learning. Observations, comments and questioning from other practitioners may help one to see one's own PRA practice with fresh eyes, whether from a senior colleague or a co-trainee on a PRA training course. But in the end, PRA practitioners must be willing to continue their self-analysis and learn to find their own pathways to participation.



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The Appreciative Inquiry Approach



“ All the greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally insoluble. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. This “outgrowing” proves on further investigation to require a new level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest appeared on the horizon and through this broadening of outlook the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms but faded when confronted with a new and stronger life urge.”

Carl Jung

This paper provides an overview of Appreciative Inquiry, an approach to organisational and social development that identifies peak moments within a community and discovers and reinforces the conditions that made past achievements possible. While the approach recognises that problems may exist, it encourages change by focusing on the positive and life-giving forces that exist within all communities. The paper presents the four stages of Appreciative Inquiry, explains the principles behind its success and explores possible applications and limitations of the approach.

Rationale for an Appreciative Approach

Most development projects are designed and delivered using a combination of participatory techniques – including participatory rural appraisal, participatory learning and action, and various workshop methods – to uncover local problems, resource constraints, deficiencies and unmet basic needs. These approaches encourage participation, emphasise the importance of local knowledge and address real problems.

Yet they often fail to sustain community participation after the implementing organisation withdraws – possibly because they leave local people with the impression that their community is full of problems and needs, most of which require the help of outsiders to overcome. The focus on needs entrenches a sense of dependency that reduces the motivation of local people to initiate their own development activities. These unintended consequences illustrate the need for a shift away from problem-oriented methods toward processes that build on local strengths and achievements and generate a sense of hope in the community.

The Appreciative Approach

Appreciative Inquiry is a strategy for purposeful change that identifies the best of “what is” to pursue dreams and possibilities of “what could be”. It is a cooperative search for the strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found within every system – those factors that hold the potential for inspired, positive change.

Appreciative Inquiry turns the problem-solving approach on its head. It focuses on a community’s achievements rather than its problems, and seeks to foster inspiration at the grassroots level.

Appreciative Inquiry was developed in the early 1990s by David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University, primarily to help corporations sharpen their competitive advantage.

The appreciative approach involves:

- collaborative inquiry based on interviews and affirmative questioning, to collect and celebrate the good news stories of a community; and
- being attentive to and affirming of the best and highest qualities in a system, a situation or another human being.

Appreciative Inquiry is consistent with a livelihood approach to development that recognises people as resourceful and adaptive to changing circumstances. A person is not simply a wage earner but part of a larger family unit with multiple skills and assets that are employed in innovative ways to create a resilient livelihood system.

The Four Stages of Appreciative Inquiry

1. Discovery

In this stage, development practitioners work with members of self-help groups, watershed management associations, or other community groups to identify significant past achievements and periods of excellence within the community.

During interviews, local people are encouraged to reflect on periods when the community was functioning at its best. This might involve storytelling about the construction of a local temple or school, the rebuilding of local livelihoods after a natural disaster, or the management of shared common property resources such as forests and water.

Participants then seek to understand the unique conditions that made the high points possible, such as leadership, relationships, technologies, values and capacity-building or external relationships. They deliberately choose not to analyse deficits, but rather systematically seek to isolate and learn from even the smallest victories.

Typical Appreciative Questions

- Tell me about a time when you felt really excited to be part of this group.
- Tell me about the greatest achievement this group has had.
- Who was there? Who did what? How did you feel?

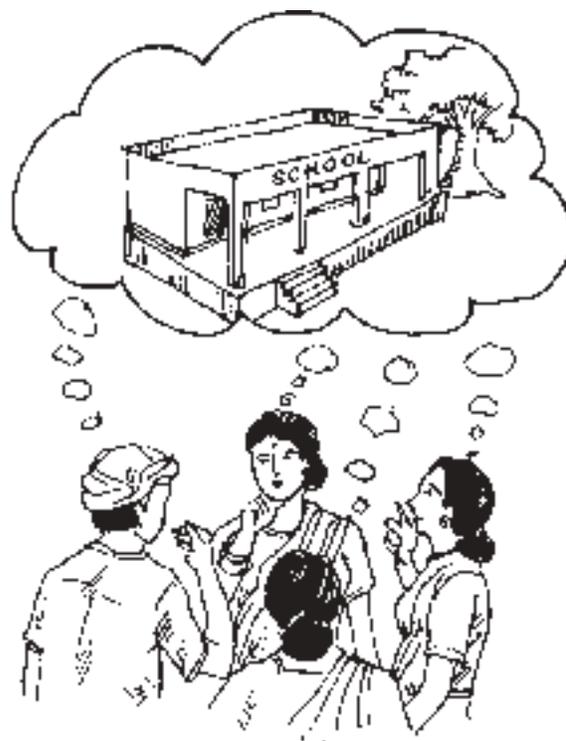


Remember when we built that temple? . . .

2. Dream

In the dream stage, local people discuss how they could build on the positive and unique characteristics of their group to create a better community. Through storytelling they have discovered what their group looks like when it is at its best. Now they begin to explore their purpose or destiny. What will the group be in five years? What will be its greatest achievement? What role will the group members play in the development of their village?

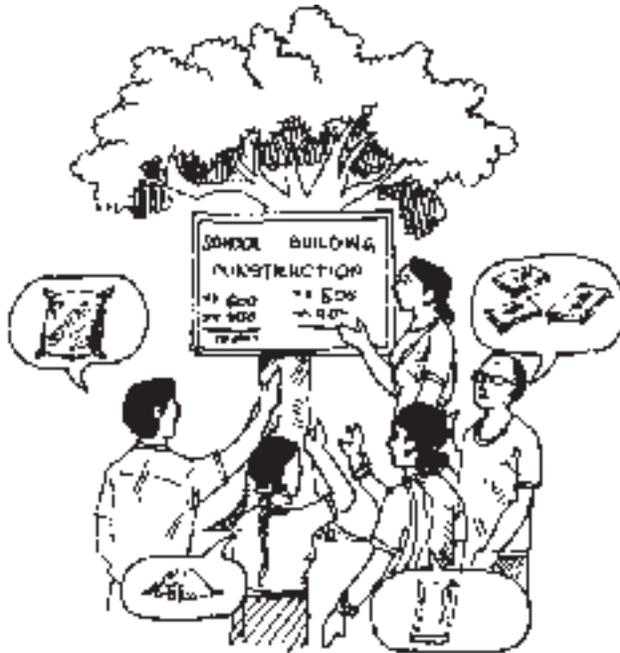
Aspects of the group's vision are likely to encompass social and economic relationships, cultural traditions, natural and man-made environments, governance structures, employment opportunities and social infrastructure. Because the images of the group's future that emerge are based on their past successes, they represent compelling possibilities. In this stage, the people become inspired and begin to understand the need for common action.



What about a school for our village? . . .

3. Design

This stage is intended to be provocative and aims to develop, through consensus, short- and long-run goals that will contribute to the community's overall vision. These goals are likely to take the form of statements such as:



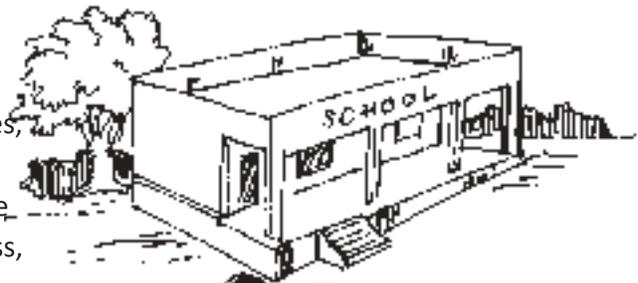
Let's plan for the school building. . .

- This group will mobilise the necessary resources and build a school within the next year.
- This community will plant one thousand trees over the next two years to ensure the forest's survival for future generations.
- This group will concentrate its efforts over the next six months on eliminating gambling and drinking in the village.

With these goals in mind, people begin to consider how to build a social architecture for their community that might, for example, re-define approaches to leadership, governance, participation or capacity-building. As they compose strategies to achieve their provocative propositions, local people incorporate the qualities of community life that they want to protect and the relationships that they want to achieve.

4. Delivery

In this stage, group members turn their imagination and inspiration into meaningful direction by establishing roles and responsibilities, developing strategies, forging institutional relationships and mobilising resources to achieve their goals. As a result of the appreciative process, local people gain a better understanding of the relevance of new initiatives to their long-term vision of the community.



We did it again. . . now let's. . .

5. Begin the cycle again

Because Appreciative Inquiry is a continuous cycle, a new round of discovery, dreaming, designing and delivery can take place at any time. After a community has begun to implement an action plan for example, Appreciative

Inquiry can be used to reflect back on peak experiences and to identify and reinforce those conditions that enabled these achievements. New goals and action plans emerge which address current priorities and build on recent successes. In this sense, Appreciative Inquiry is more responsive to the changing circumstances and preferences than a static action plan where targets are set and not revisited.

Why Appreciative Inquiry Works

Practitioners of Appreciative Inquiry believe this approach is true to human nature because it allows room for emotional response as well as intellectual analysis, room for imagination as well as rational thought.

Appreciative Inquiry is based on an understanding that:

- reality is a collectively defined interpretation of a situation based on a group's history, assumptions and expectations;
- reality is an evolving story that is constantly being co-authored as it is passed from person to person and generation to generation; and
- people derive their identities and devise their strategies on the basis of the reality that they see constructed around them. As such, their identity and destinies are interwoven.

Inquiry and change are therefore not separate moments, but occur simultaneously. Inquiry is intervention. The seeds of change are implicit in the first questions we ask. We can choose to inquire into the nature of alienation or of joy. We can choose to study moments of creativity and innovation, or choose to focus on moments of stress and failure.

Locating and sustaining the energy for change requires positive thinking and social bonding. By using positive questions to discover the strengths and successes that exist in every individual and community, a sense of hope is generated through which people can anticipate a better future. Buoyed by the confidence of their past successes and inspired by a vision of a better future, people are better able to take up the many challenges that they face in achieving their dreams.

Possible Applications

Appreciative Inquiry can be used to:

- stimulate change and redefine the purpose of a group, community or individual;
- establish goals and develop action plans to achieve them;
- generate constructive relationships and a sense of common purpose; and
- build on past achievements.

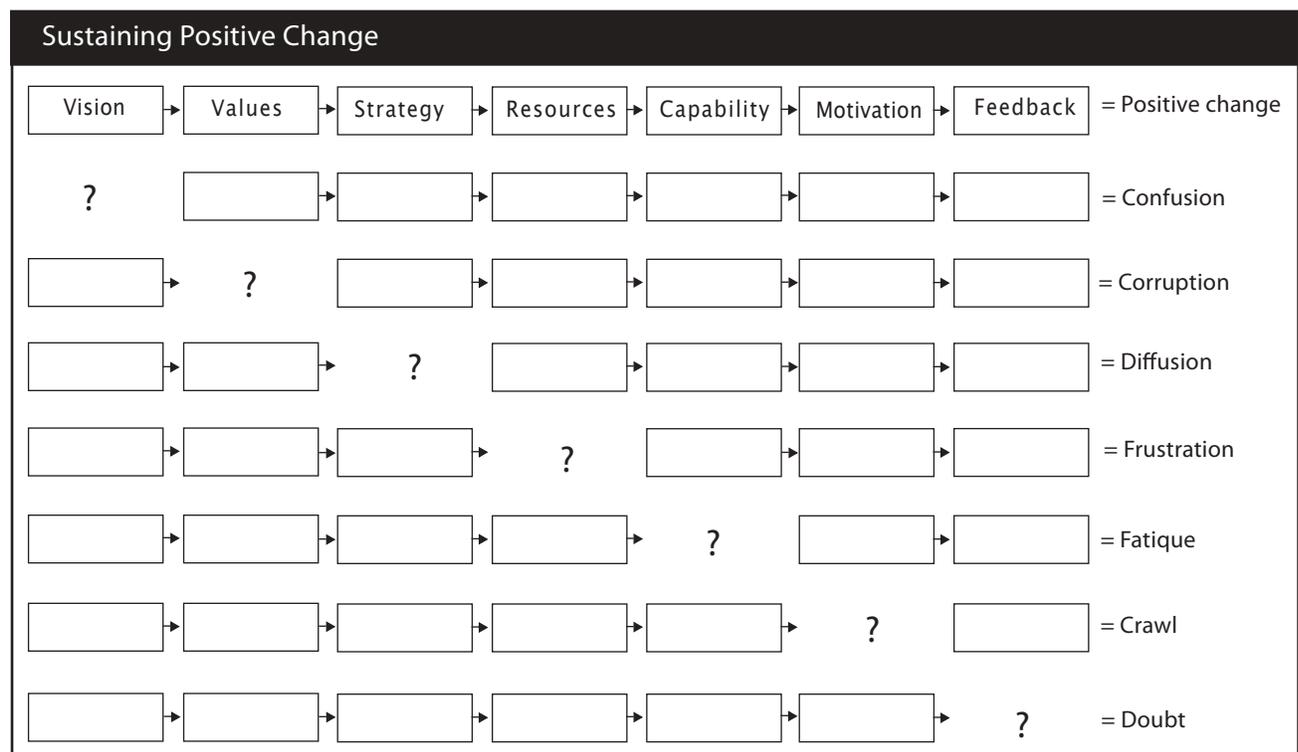


Potential Limitations

- Successfully applying Appreciative Inquiry requires creative and energetic facilitation, and an expectation that the group is capable of success. If the facilitator lacks these skills and attitude, the group members will not challenge themselves in their goals and may not come to recognise all of their strengths. Enthusiasm for the process will be low and initiatives may not be sustained.
- Appreciative Inquiry takes time. If it is attempted as a short exercise, energy and enthusiasm might initially rise, but a deeper analysis of strengths and a thoughtful vision-building and action-planning process will not occur.
- The process may also create conflict if there is an imbalance in power relationships which results in group members disagreeing on the vision and action plan, or not participating. Effective facilitation skills are necessary to return the emphasis to positive and shared values, and to ensure that all participants have a chance to tell their stories and contribute to the group goals and action plan.

Appreciative Inquiry Within a Broader Strategy

While Appreciative Inquiry is very useful in generating community visions and action plans that motivate people to collective action, it should be seen as part of a larger development strategy. To understand this better, the table below explains some of the more important factors that enable positive change. When one of the factors is not present, change may be difficult to sustain. The table suggests possible outcomes when a particular factor is absent. In the second row for example, a group vision is lacking which can result in people becoming confused as to their purpose. Similarly, in the third row, when values are not shared the process can be corrupted. Where no strategy exists to coordinate actions, efforts may be weakened, etc.



While the diagram greatly simplifies a very complex problem, it helps to clarify how Appreciative Inquiry contributes to a larger development strategy. Appreciative Inquiry can be very effective in establishing an inspiring group vision, articulating shared values, developing strategies and engendering interest in implementing them. Appreciative Inquiry creates a sense of ownership in new initiatives. It can also be a useful feedback tool. However, while it may be helpful to reveal hidden resources and skills, it does not in and of itself create resources, build new skills or establish new institutional relationships. These are areas where alternative measures need to be considered. And, as always, all of the key stakeholders need to be involved in the process to ensure that the strengths, goals and action plans are inclusive and representative. Nonetheless, by providing people with an effective tool to understand how they successfully addressed past problems, Appreciative Inquiry generates new ideas for more secure and sustainable livelihoods.

The Relationship between Appreciative Inquiry and Participatory Rural Appraisal

The relationship between Appreciative Inquiry and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) should be seen as complementary; one enriches the other. They can be used together.

- Appreciative Inquiry is a process to discover people's strengths and to use the momentum and energy generated to build a group vision and action plan. PRA refers to a set of systematic, semi-structured tools and methods for participatory learning and project planning.
- Both Appreciative Inquiry and PRA are based on values of mutual respect between various participants and an ethic of inclusion and participation.
- Appreciative Inquiry makes use of storytelling and personal reflection, while PRA focuses on cause-effect relationships, organisational linkages, time-lines, seasonal calendars, transects and other data collection exercises.
- While Appreciative Inquiry is most effective as a complete and continuous cycle, PRA exercises do not have to follow any particular order and are capable of standing alone.
- Both Appreciative Inquiry and PRA can be used in a variety of circumstances and for different purposes. Practitioners often use PRA to gather data on problems and needs, but the exercises themselves tend to be neutral. As such, they can easily be used to facilitate the discovery of strengths, the documentation of a vision or the development of an action plan.
- Due to its emphasis on stories of personal or group experiences, Appreciative Inquiry tends to have a strong emotional element. Participants and practitioners alike can find it quite transformative. When used in combination with PRA drawing exercises, images with metaphorical qualities are often produced. For example, an electrical pole might be used to represent "empowerment". Resource maps drawn in PRA tend to represent existing situations, whereas those drawn in Appreciative Inquiry exercises depict an ideal environment as envisioned by the participants.
- Community development practitioners require both accurate data of current conditions and inspiring images of what a community can be at its best. As such, they will find value in the use of both PRA and Appreciative Inquiry.



Case Study: Using Appreciative Inquiry in Resource Management Conflicts

In 1999, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) began a partnership project with Skownan First Nation to develop alternative resource management strategies within the community's traditional land use area through the use of Appreciative Inquiry. The project is intended to lead to a more effective partnership between Aboriginal people and decision-makers in the provincial government and resource industries.

Background

Skownan First Nation is an indigenous community located in a remote part of central Canada. With the signing of a treaty in 1871, the community members moved from a 7,100-sq km area in which they had lived in for countless generations to a 1,856-hectare reserve. Although the area around the reserve has great spiritual significance for the community and is integral to their identity as a people, they have had very limited control over the resources it contains. Consequently, there have been protracted conflicts between the community, and the provincial government and forestry companies over resource management decisions in the area.

Project Objectives

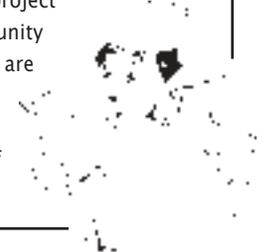
To move from a situation of conflict to one of cooperation, IISD, Skownan First Nation and the provincial and federal governments began a pilot project in order to:

1. Use Appreciative Inquiry to determine how an Aboriginal community values the forest around it through the course of a year. This valuation will be as holistic as possible.

2. Build a community vision and action plan based on the shared values that have been identified using Appreciative Inquiry.
3. Record the results of the Appreciative Inquiry on videotape and produce a set of programmes that portray community values accurately and powerfully.
4. Enable community representatives to communicate local values to decision-makers in the provincial government and to other stakeholders through focus-group sessions in which the video programmes are played and discussed.

Results

Although the project is still being implemented (July 2000) the results are encouraging. Local values were easily identified and the emerging community vision/action plan is very internally oriented, requiring little external investment. Further, the emerging vision is very holistic, going beyond cooperative economic development strategies to address family, health, educational, religious and recreational goals. For instance, instead of looking to the government to provide a new road, the community is looking to itself to reestablish community gardens, plant trees, organise community celebrations, teach their children traditional skills and values, develop eco-tourism, and revive their local language. And, although the project has only recently begun, the community is already seeing benefits – people are visiting each other more, self and community respect is increasing, and people are finding new ways of becoming independent.

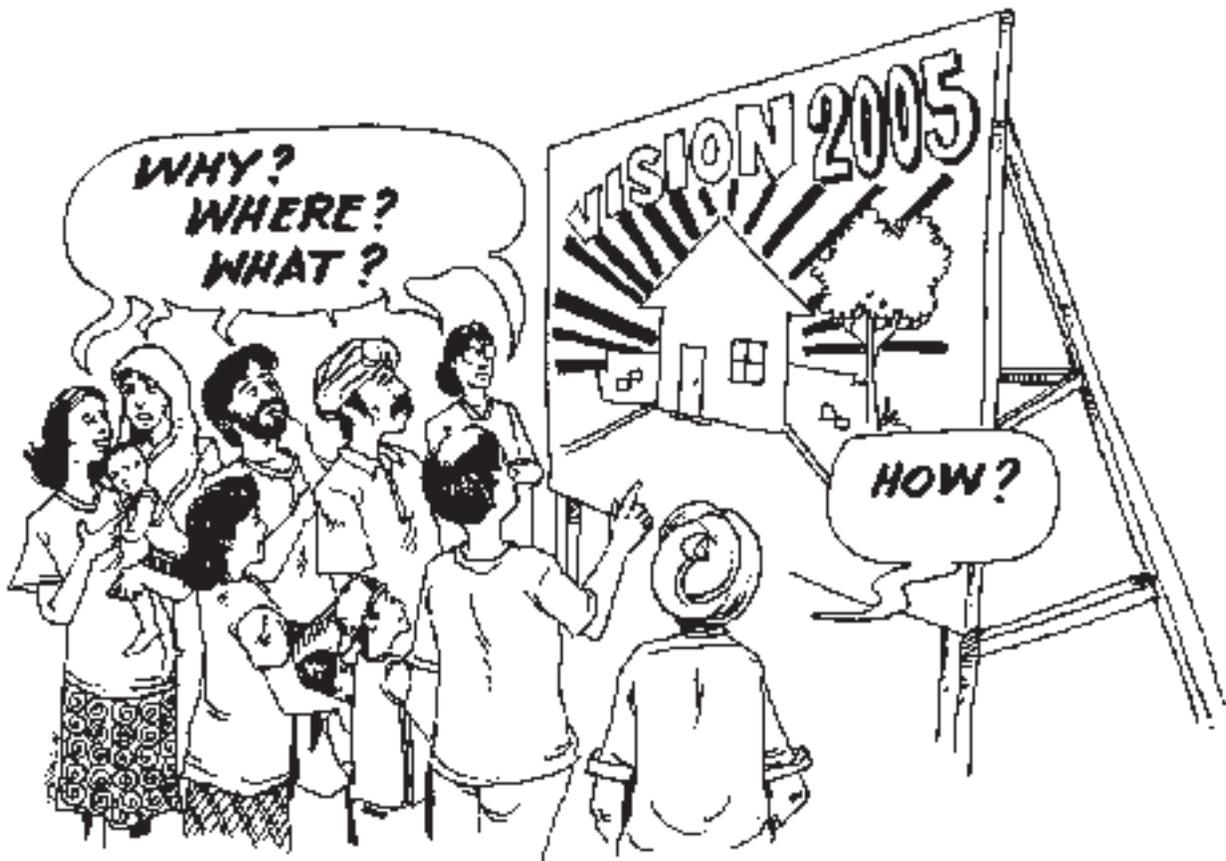


For more information on Appreciative Inquiry, please see website: <http://iisd.ca/ai>

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Building Institutional Capacity: The Use of Appreciative Inquiry in Rural Communities



Sustainable Development and Building Institutional Capacities

Looking toward sustainable development requires not only technical and managerial skills, but a vision. It requires collective thinking and effort. While much has been debated about sustainable development at macro levels, today's challenge is to go beyond rhetoric to actually work at the micro level. To keep a focus on the global issues while implementing the various activities at the field level, without losing sight of the values underlined, requires a delicate balancing act.

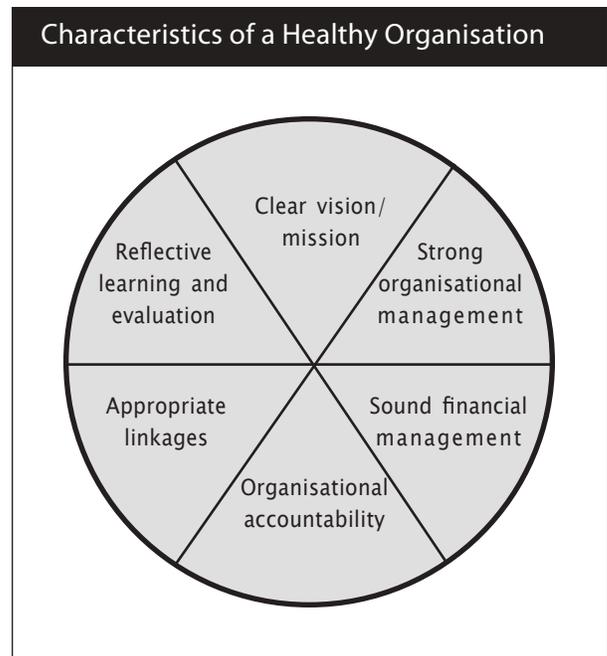
This paper outlines MYRADA's experience with the use of the appreciative inquiry approach to facilitate vision building and planning by local-level institutions with success. It looks at the need to strengthen institutional capacities so that rural communities can manage change with confidence.

In this context, participation has no meaning unless it results in building appropriate institutions. Building institutions takes time and commitment on the part the facilitator. A theoretical framework has been developed by MYRADA for the assessment of organisations using the characteristics shown in the diagram.

Experiences from the Field

During participatory assessments, it was found that many community-based organisations (CBOs) did not have a clear and written mission or vision. Some had Dream Books with a few needs listed as visions or goals but very few could articulate why their CBOs existed beyond solving problems related to credit or soil erosion.

Some doubts arose among the MYRADA staff. How far could such people participate in development initiatives let alone manage self-initiated programmes? Project staff realised that leverage could come only when institutions set a purpose for their existence, have long-term goals or visions and are guided by values.



Applying Appreciative Inquiry

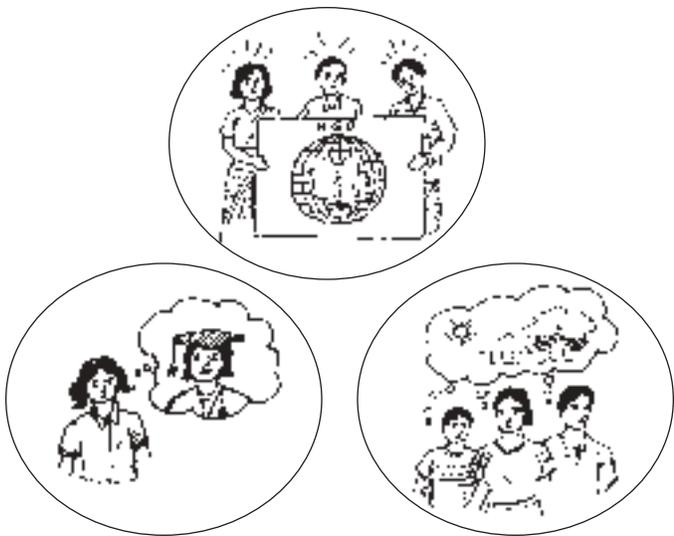
At the organisational level

- It draws on the strengths of individual staff, teams and projects and brings forth the reciprocity of strengths between individuals and the organisation.
- It can be used as an approach for self-renewal from individual to organisational level.
- It can help envision qualities that can retain and build excellence in the organisation.
- It can also help staff right down to the grassroots level to see the larger perspective that one gets from the top level.

Self-monitoring. Staff appraisals are much maligned because they tend to see “what there is not” in the staff. As a part of appreciative inquiry, staff on certain projects are trying to design appraisal systems that focus on achievements and factors that contribute to successes and build an action-learning programme to do better the next time.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry was introduced to MYRADA through the Canada-based International Institute for Sustainable Development, with financial support from the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development. Though new, the strength of the approach was striking and CBOs who participated were able to develop clear visions within the span of a single day. Over 200 CBOs have been involved and vision-building is a compulsory module in MYRADA’s capacity-building programme for CBOs.



In the communities

Appreciative inquiry is used as a capacity- and partnership-building process with the community with CBOs, children and families. The field staff facilitates the discovery, dream and design stages. The results so far have compelled the communities and institutions to work towards their visions on their own. The process has also helped MYRADA to plan and budget for future projects in congruence with these visions.

The Sarvashakti Story

In December 1999, a group of MYRADA staff facilitated appreciative inquiry in the Sarvashakti Federation in Talavadi. Federation members consisted of confident and enthusiastic men and women from several SHGs. Appreciative inquiry was then a new concept and the field team was apprehensive about the whole exercise. The discovery phase went along well. However, in the dream phase the facilitators were groping for words to describe visions and vision-building and what to do next.

One of the participants then stood up and said, "We are a small seed now, and you want to know what we will look like when we grow up to be a big tree. Is that all? All right leave us alone we will sort it out."

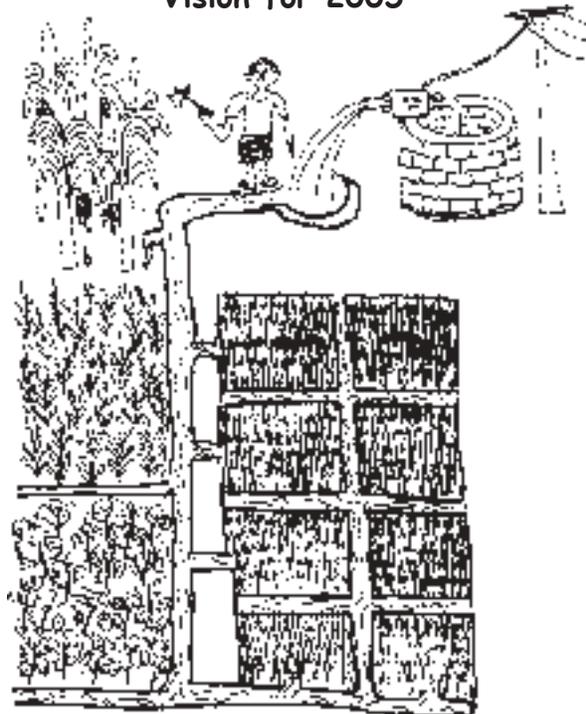
An hour later they called us in. On a chart paper was a beautifully drawn picture of a big well with an electric pump. Water from the well flowed into several paddy fields and a banana and fruit orchards. A farmer stood beside the channels regulating the water flow.

"Oh, no! They want us to electrify those old Government sponsored wells", exclaimed the Project Officer. And then the Federation began its presentation.

"We are like the water from this well, we will always be useful and life-giving. These paddy fields are the SHGs that form the Federation. Their prosperity will be the Federation's priority. The fruit orchards and banana plants are like other institutions and individuals in our community. We shall help them, too. Finally, the farmer depicted the Federation representative", who shall always be responsible to see that the efforts and utility of the federation goes to the right place." Saying this, they presented a list of activities and programmes they had planned for the next ten years.

Sarvashakti SHG Federation
(Mantapuram Talavadi, December 1999)

Vision for 2005



Issues in Facilitating Appreciative Inquiry

Facilitating skills

The quality of a good appreciative inquiry depends heavily on the skills and attitudes of the facilitator. This includes both process and contents skills as well as the ability to inspire. It is therefore important for the facilitator to have personally experienced the approach. Facilitation also includes the ability to be transparent, maintain confidentiality and not raise undue expectations from the participants. Experience shows that appreciative inquiry can foster self-directed initiatives and expectations can be levelled.

Can a young group go through Appreciative Inquiry?

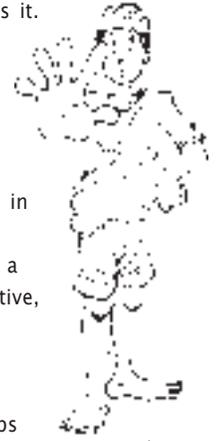
Facilitators need to work harder on younger groups who do not have the experience of working together. But as appreciative inquiry also helps individuals, the process has its own merits with younger groups, facilitators usually ask how individual strengths can support the strengthening of a group.

Appreciative Inquiry in heterogenous groups and stratified societies

Appreciative inquiry has to be applied carefully in heterogenous groups. In exploitative social structures, there will be conflict between visions of various constituent groups. The “ideal” community for the landlord would not be the same as for the tenant. Accepting appreciative inquiry as a useful approach for development does not mean that problems do not exist. It is the value of past successes that support us to even try to work in such difficult circumstances.

Limitations

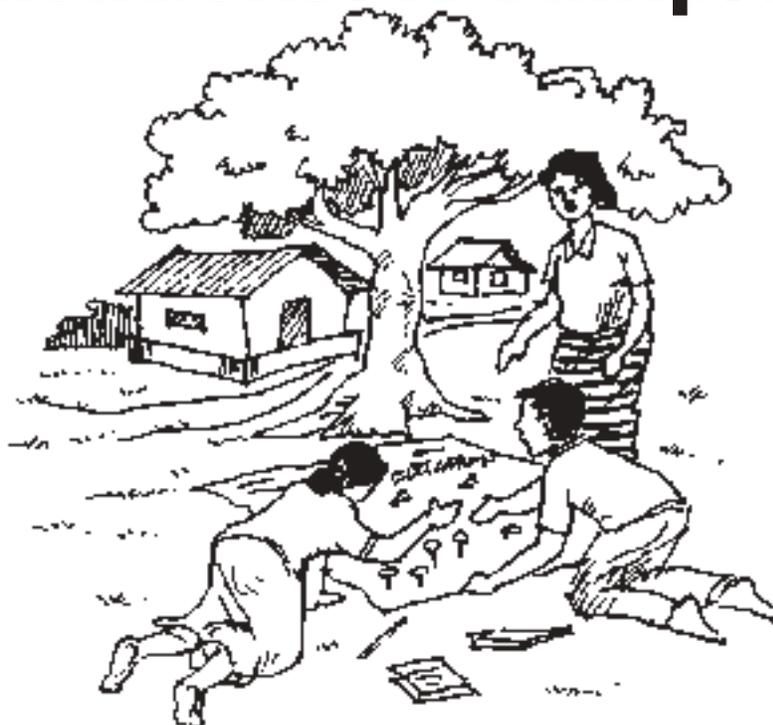
- Appreciative Inquiry like any other approach is as good as the practitioner that uses it.
- Appreciative Inquiry is an inspirational process that cannot be done by the uninitiated and that cannot be replicated in very short times.
- Experiences suggest a strong case for creative, honest and inspired facilitation.
- In a couple of very heterogeneous groups (a village progressive farmers' association and a local resources management committee) the process did not succeed, but better facilitation might have turned things around.



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Appreciative Inquiry With Community-Based Organisations: A Sample Module



Appreciative inquiry has been successfully applied around the world and it is increasingly applied in development activities. Personal experience in conducting appreciative inquiry is an essential factor for anyone intending to be an appreciative inquiry facilitator. The following is a suggested module for appreciative inquiry with community-based organisations (CBOs).

Purpose of the Module

- Enhance self-confidence and self-awareness of the human potential in each member of the CBO.
- Release the constructive potential of the CBO in working towards the development and empowerment of its members.
- Enhance their role in the community.

Objectives of the Module

At the end of the module, the participants will be able to:

- clearly state their individual strengths as well as their CBO's strengths;
- have a written vision, mission or credo; and
- develop a detailed plan to achieve their vision (incorporating values, qualities and physical targets to be met, responsibilities and time frames).

Duration

2-3 days in one or several phases

Materials

- Chart paper, pencils, erasers, markers, wax crayons, still cameras.
- Lunch for all participants plus tea with biscuits will help make the programme a success.

Facilitator Team Preparation

- Prepare a tentative methodology with contingency measures. The exact methodology will depend on the nature of the group and its age.
- Discuss the code of conduct that enhances the effectiveness of the inquiry.
- Set yourself a “Best Possible Outcome” for the exercise.
- Always have someone who knows the local language and dialect.

The Field Work

1. **Welcome and introduction:** Brief the community about the visit and introduce the visit as a relationship-building one or a “special” training programme. Clarify that the purpose of the exercise, in case they are apprehensive of your motives. Insist that, for this module, the focus will be on positive experiences only. Do not raise expectations.
2. **Introduction of participants:** Use this step to build good relationship with the group. Use social games or stories. During introductions, ask participants to include details of family, strengths or why people joined the group. If done well, it may lead to straight to the Discovery Phase.
3. **Learning more about the CBO:** Ask open-ended questions about the CBO, such as, “So this is the Jyoti Mahila Sangha, can you tell us some more about your group”. With such a background, move on to the “Discovery Phase” in a formal manner. Do not forget to take down notes. Keep track of how people react to questions.
4. **Discovering individual strengths:** This is perhaps the most important and also the most challenging part of the appreciative inquiry process. The key question is usually “Tell us the story of a time when you faced a challenge and achieved something that you feel happy about”. The quality of this stage determines all the others to come. Challenges include:
 - getting reticent members to speak;
 - getting the “right” kinds of stories, the one that are not tragic, or happy without an element of challenge and success in them;

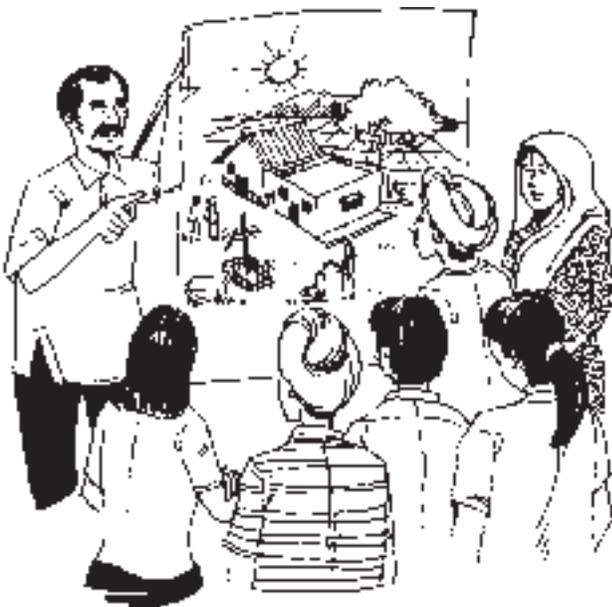


- getting out of the “problem” mode;
- managing emotions; and
- documenting the process in detail.

At the end of the exercise, you will surely have a huge list of strengths presented by the participants. Read this out to them and confirm.

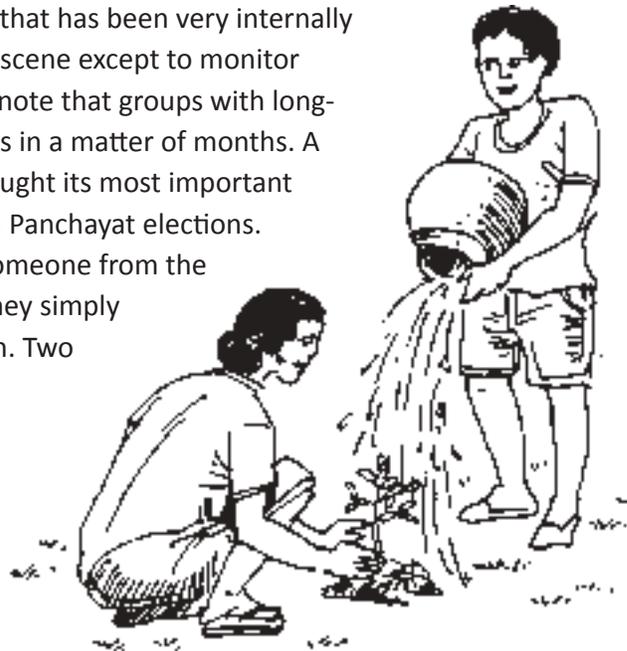
5. **Discovering the CBO’s strengths:** Examples of key questions are: “What are the greatest/various achievements of your CBO?” or “Why do you consider them your achievements?” “How would you rate them in terms of challenge and outcomes and why?” “What are the strengths in your group that have contributed to your successes?” “Did you know that you had these strengths in you?” “How has being in the CBO helped you personally?” Seek stories and not lists of facts.
6. **Once the strengths are gathered** take a break to allow time for the input to sink in.
7. **The Dream Phase – Visioning:** Based on the strengths discovered, ask them questions:
 - to envision what their CBO would like to be five years from now;
 - the emphasis is on what they will be; and
 - not really what they will do.

Drawing exercises work well here and in most instances, the quality and depth of the pictures are revealing. In case the group is literate, it may be possible to develop visions as “provocative propositions”. In fact, the CBO can remember these as a poem, credo or a song. Use a mix of verbal and non-verbal methods.



8. **The Design Phase – Co-constructing:** Guide the planning process where the CBO members can use their skills in project management to develop an action plan to achieve their vision. This requires them to state goals and objectives, prioritise them and then make a concrete action plan with indicators for achievement. Many groups can do this on their own. The exercise may take a day or more. This could be the last stage facilitated by the external agency. Thank the participants for their cooperation and invite them to reflect on the process. Obtain their commitment to take the process through.

9. **Do/Delivery – Making it happen:** This is a stage that has been very internally driven for CBOs. Facilitators are really not in the scene except to monitor progress for the project itself. It is interesting to note that groups with long-term visions have managed to achieve their goals in a matter of months. A new self-help group (SHG) in Gulbarga, India thought its most important achievement was to file a candidate to the Gram Panchayat elections. Their vision for the next five years was to field someone from the SHG for the Gram Panchayat president's post. They simply went ahead, lobbied for their candidate and won. Two months after another group indicated that they wanted to get all the poor women in their village into a SHG; the process was completed in two months.



Notes from the Field

The protocol for PRA holds true for Appreciative Inquiry though there are other considerations such as:

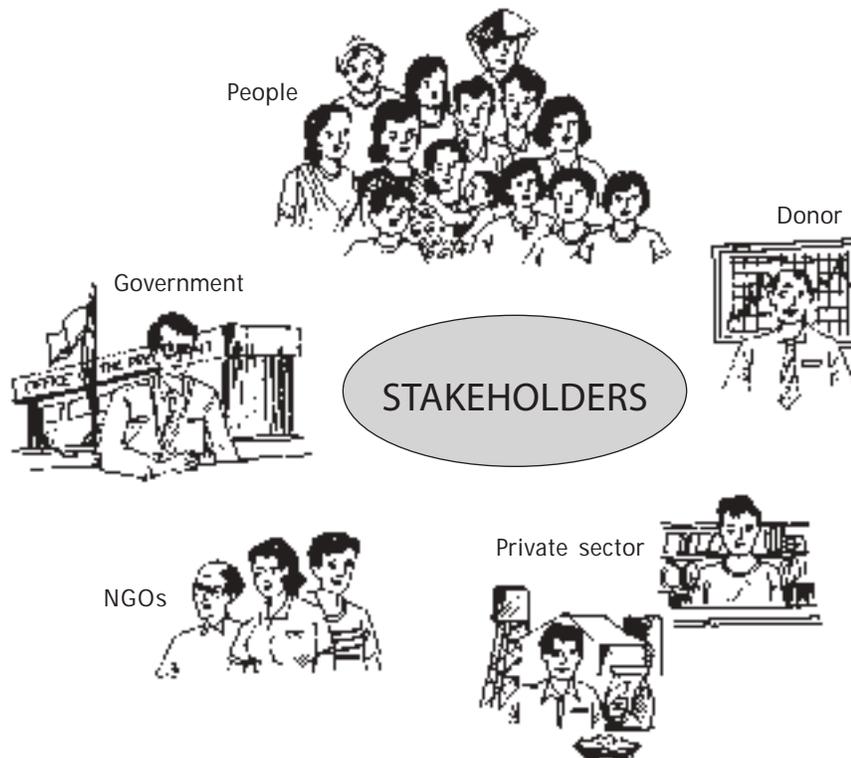
- Appreciative Inquiry works best in a team.
- Prepare well, phrase your questions clearly and keep examples handy.
- A facilitator is like a midwife. What finally emerges in an Appreciative Inquiry process should be the community's vision for themselves and not yours for them.
- The Appreciative Inquiry interview should be "rapport talk".
- Appreciative Inquiry deals with the personal and very deep emotions; give people time to think, reflect and then respond. Do not push them to give you answers right away.
- Assign a person in the team to warn you if you are going into a "problem" or "criticising" mode.
- Relax and be creative.



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Stakeholder Analysis: A Process Approach



The Risks of Overlooking a Stakeholder

The establishment and implementation of community forestry in Nepal has considerably improved the status of forest resources. However, the closing of areas under community forestry to “outsiders” meant that pastoralists from the northern areas who used to take sheep and goats to the south for trade (carrying salt and other goods) as well as to bring their herds to greener pastures, lost their traditional rights of transit through some of these forests.

As a consequence, pastoralists had to slaughter or sell their animals, thus losing their most important livelihood assets.

Failure to identify all stakeholders can have severe implications in development initiatives/projects:

- It can have devastating consequences on the livelihoods of some people;
- It can slow down project implementation. For example, the disregard of some government agencies and/or private sector (middle-level traders) may lead these stakeholders to “boycott” project initiatives;
- It may even stop implementation altogether. For example, watershed projects often fail to recognise the stakes and the ensuing competition between communities (upstream and downstream interests with regard to water, soil conservation, etc.), between individuals (commercial vs. subsistence agriculture) and/or between national interests vs. local livelihoods. This often leads to conflicts that may, at times, bring projects to a grinding halt.

Stakeholder analysis is crucial in project design and implementation as it seeks to identify all stakeholders, in particular the disadvantaged and less powerful groups – who are generally voiceless – and seeks to integrate their interests and concerns. Stakeholder analysis is critical for the identification of appropriate project initiatives as well as for targeting them. Stakeholder analysis is an integral part of participative diagnostic studies (*see related topic on Participatory Diagnostic Study in Project Formulation and Beyond: A Process Approach*) which focus on primary beneficiaries, particularly the poor and the marginalised.

Who is a Stakeholder?

In the context of a development project, a stakeholder can be defined as any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, any initiative undertaken by that project.

What is a Stakeholder Analysis?

“Stakeholder analysis can be defined as an approach for understanding a system by identifying the key actors –or stakeholders – in the system and assessing their respective interest in that system” (Grimble et. al. 1995).

It refers to a range of tools for the identification and description of stakeholders on the basis of their attributes, interrelationships and interests related to a given initiative or resource.

Why do we Need a Stakeholder Analysis?

There are several reasons to carry out a stakeholder analysis:

- empirically discover existing patterns of interactions;
- improve and target interventions;
- as a management tool in policy-making; and
- as a tool to predict and/or manage conflicts.

What is the Purpose of a Stakeholder Analysis?

The basic objectives of stakeholder analysis are to:

- identify all those – people, groups or institutions – who might be affected by an intervention or can affect its outcome;
- identify local institutions and processes upon which to build; and
- provide a foundation and strategy for participation.

Categories of Stakeholders

- **Primary stakeholders:** These are project beneficiaries. IFAD regards the poor and marginalised groups as the primary beneficiaries and tries to focus its efforts on fostering their participation.
- **Secondary stakeholders:** They comprise government agencies, NGOs, research institutions, etc. They participate in the project because they either have a stake/interest in or can contribute to it.
- **External-or other-stakeholders:** These are people groups and/or institutions that are not formally involved in specific project activities but can have an impact on or be affected by a project.

Stakeholder Analysis: Steps and Tools

- Identify the main purpose of the analysis;
- Develop an understanding of the system and decision-makers in the system;
- Identify principal stakeholders;
- Investigate stakeholders' interests, characteristics and circumstances;
- Identify patterns and contexts of interaction between stakeholders; and
- Define options for management.



Although differentiation between stakeholders is a necessary step in stakeholder analysis, the distinction is often based on qualitative criteria that are difficult to generalise. The use of matrices is a common tool in stakeholder analysis, in which stakeholder groups appear on one axis and a list of criteria or attributes appears on the other. For each cell, a qualitative description or a quantitative ranking is given in the table.

The identification of stakeholders is best achieved through a series of brainstorming sessions at various levels, whereby a list of all likely stakeholders is drawn up. Then, depending on the type of stakeholders, interviews, workshops and participatory analysis are undertaken during the project formulation process, to ensure that their voices/concerns are heard and their interests are identified. The table below illustrates how the methods that best fit different types of stakeholders can be identified.

Questions to Ask for Identifying Important Categories of Stakeholders

- What issues are at stake for this category of stakeholders?
- How important is this stakeholder for the success of the project?
- How much influence does this stakeholder have over the project?
- How can this stakeholder contribute to the project?

Plan for a Stakeholder Consultation					
Stakeholder	How to be Consulted	Methods to be used			When to be Consulted
		Interview	Workshop	Participatory Diagnostic	
IFAD evaluation committee					Choice of evaluation
Cooperating institution					Prior to and after mission
Co-financier	Review TORs				Prior to and after mission
Country Programme Manager (CPM)	Review TORs, participate in workshop and wrap-up meeting		X		Prior to, during mission wrap-up and during writing and review
Office of Evaluation (OE)					
Borrower (MOF)		X			Etc.
MOA HQ		X	X		
MOA district			X		
Front line implementing staff			X		
Implementing NGOs		X	X		
Environmental lobbies/ NGOs			X		
District local government			X		
Private contractors		X			
Local leaders			X	X	
Ordinary households				X	
Poor farmers				X	
Women and youth				X	
Ethnic groups/caste				X	

An essential step in stakeholder analysis is to identify all primary stakeholders, especially those who are less “visible” and voiceless, e.g., the marginalised groups.

Process in Stakeholder Analysis

1. Brainstorming: list all possible stakeholders in project
2. Group stakeholders: public sector, private sector, NGOs, intended beneficiaries, other affected people
3. Assessment of stakeholders’ interest and potential impact of the project on these interests (Table 1)
4. Assessment of stakeholders influence and importance (Table 2)
5. Outline of a stakeholder participation strategy (Table 3)

Identification of Stakeholders

Likely Primary Stakeholders

- Farmers: smallholders, commercial, landless households
- Male/female, young/old, wealthy/poor, ethnicity
- Crop growers, mixed farmers, pastoralists, fishermen, forest dwellers, casual labourers, handicraft producers, etc.
- Producers for local market, export crop growers
- Food secure; food insecure
- Local groups (formal/informal): cooperatives, women’s groups, self-help groups, exchange labour groups, etc.

Likely Secondary Stakeholders

- Local government (village, ward, district)
- Implementing agencies (ministries, departments, NGOs, etc.)
- Private input suppliers, traders, transporters, processors, etc.

Tables 1 to 3 show analytical grids that can be used to identify: (a) which stakeholders are most important for the programme; (b) which stakeholders are most able to make their voice heard; and (c) which important stakeholders are likely to be bypassed unless special efforts are made to consult them.

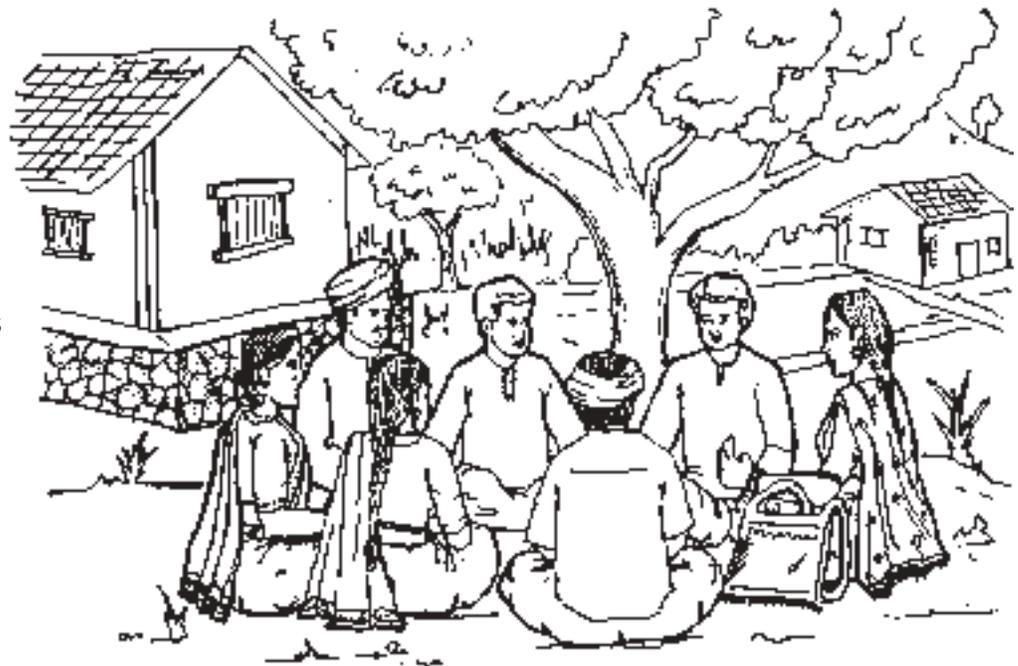


Table 1. Identification of Stakeholder Groups, Interest, Importance and Influence

Stakeholder Groups (Illustrative list)	Interests at Stake Relative to Project (list)	Effect of Project on those Interests positive/negative (insert +, 0, or -)	Importance of Stakeholder for Project Success (1 - highest, 5 - lowest)	Degree of Influence over Project (rank 1 to 5)
Farmers - Smallholders - Commercial - Landless - Women				
Other private sector - Input suppliers - Agro-processors - Farmers' association - Farm lobbies - Local NGOs - Universities - Consulting firms - Elected councils				
Borrower (MoF) - Central - Districts - Other				
Other ministries - Planning - Agriculture - Natural resources - Others (land, women, etc.)				
Donors/ Major NGOs				

Note: Influence refers to the power which a stakeholder has over a project. Importance relates to which achievement of project objectives depends on the active involvement of a given stakeholder group.

Table 2. Mapping Key Stakeholders' Relative Influence and Importance

Influence of Stakeholder on activity (+)	Importance of Activity to Stakeholder (0)					
	Not known	Little/No importance	Some importance	Moderate importance	High importance	Critical player
Unknown					+ 000	
Little/No influence						
Some influence						
Moderate influence						
Significant influence						
Very influential						

Note: Each stakeholder has a set of grids by type of activity or component.

Table 3. Formulation of Stakeholder Participation Strategy

Stage in Project Process	Type of Participation			
	Information sharing (one way flow)	Consultation (two way flow)	Collaboration (increasing control over decision-making)	Empowerment (transfer control over decisions and resources)
Project formulation				
Appraisal				
Implementation, supervision and monitoring				
Evaluation				

Note: Insert specific participation strategies for key stakeholders, e.g., information campaign for general public, workshop with ministries and NGOs; PRA with communities and groups, etc.

After the stakeholder analysis is carried out, a series of consultation meetings at different levels (local, regional and/or national workshops) are organised in order to identify areas of convergence/divergence among key stakeholders. Given the unequal distribution of power among stakeholders, care must be taken that those with less power (women and other marginalised groups) are provided with the necessary “space” to voice their concerns and priorities. In some circumstances, external partners/agencies need to play, at least in the beginning, an advocacy role in favour of the powerless group.

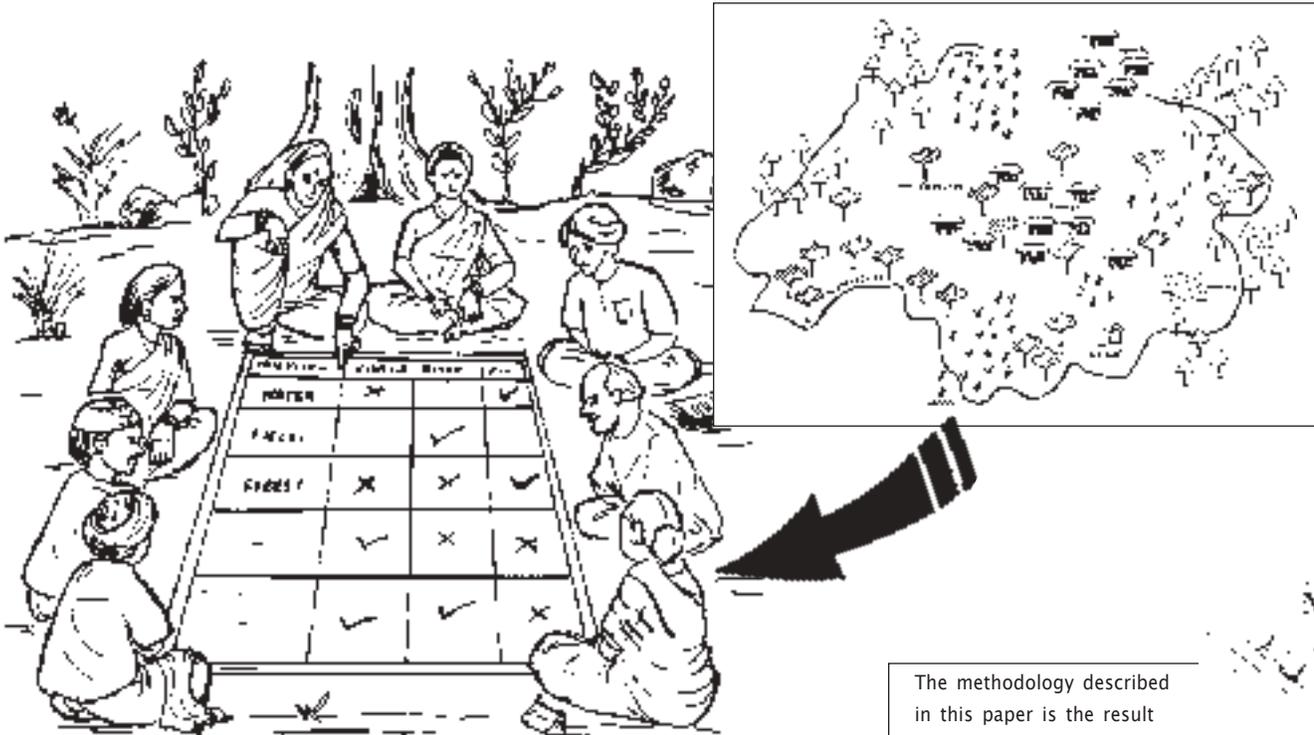
In case of divergence of interest/concerns, negotiations/conflict management tools need to be employed.

Since changes are likely to take place during project implementation, stakeholder analysis is not a discrete activity but rather a process – though an intermittent one. Therefore, groups/individuals/agencies who are not stakeholders at project formulation may become such during implementation either owing to project activities or to totally external factors. Thus, the need for flexible projects and a “learning” approach based on re-diagnosis and planning. This will allow, among others, for inclusion of new stakeholders.

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Participatory Diagnostic Study in Project Formulation and Beyond: A Process Approach



It is now widely recognised that participation of all stakeholders is crucial during the whole project cycle, including project formulation. This holds particularly true for projects meant to be innovative, demand-driven, poverty-oriented and based on the principles of decentralisation and support for bottom-up village initiatives. For this type of projects, in fact, it is important that all stakeholders are involved early on and participate in project design and formulation so as to ensure the following:

- a common understanding of the issues that a project expects to address;
- capacity-building of would-be implementors and all other stakeholders in the process; and
- fostering beneficiaries-and other stakeholders-ownership of the project concepts and methods.

The methodology described in this paper is the result of progressive learning and adaptation by the staff of TCII over 15 years. It draws upon the work of many colleagues, especially Ms. Alice Carloni.

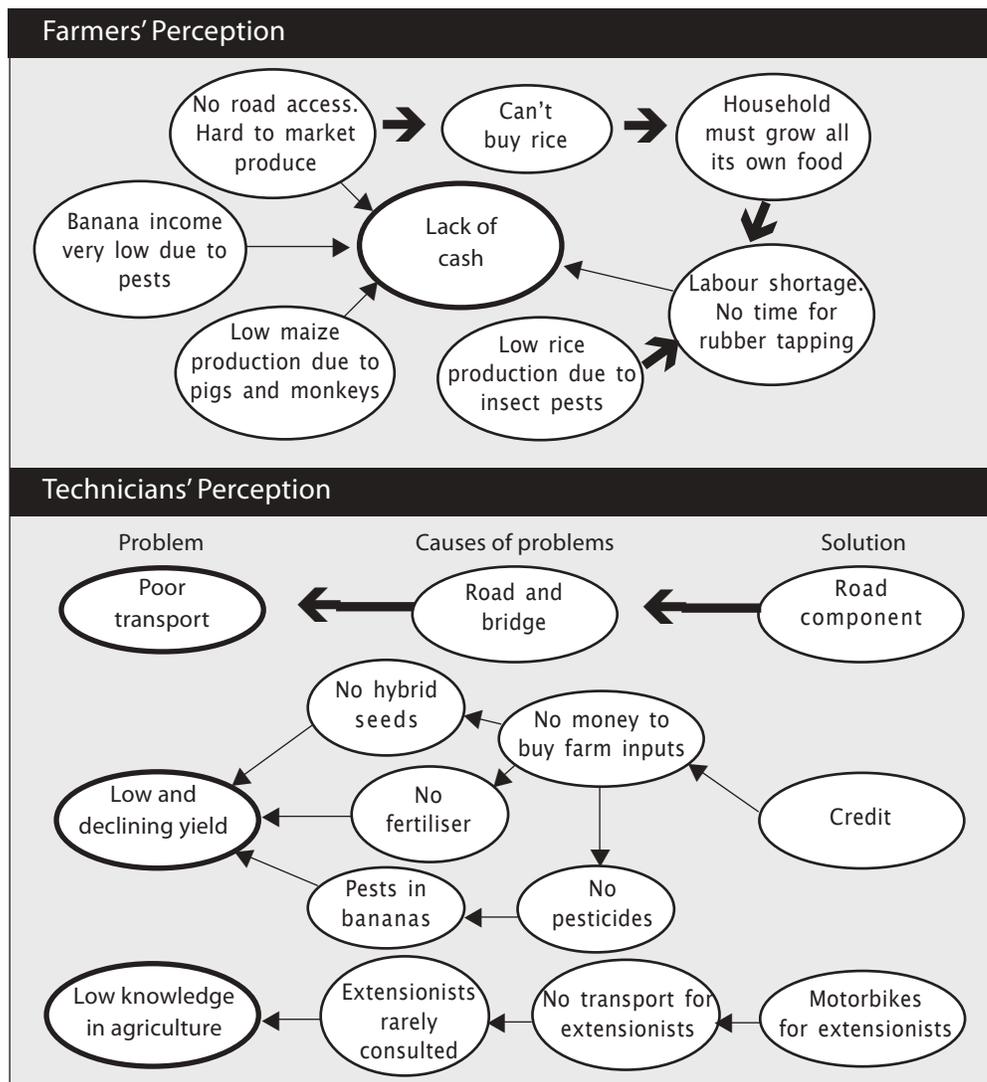
A participatory diagnostic study (PDS) is an analytical instrument and an iterative methodology which allows for:

- establishing a typology of livelihood systems;
- identifying causes and effects of their evolution
- focusing on the vulnerability contexts of different socio-economic groups;
- revealing the untapped potentials, strengths and priorities of different groups; and
- rapid and progressive learning.

Why a Participatory Diagnostic Study(PDS)

Several reviews of investment projects conclude that problems encountered at implementation stage can be traced to misjudgments that occurred during the course of project design formulation. These problems are attributed to poor diagnosis of the issues the project was meant to address or to poor institutional arrangements. Similarly, governments formulate most proposals for investment projects in response to national priorities, i.e. increasing production, reducing regional disparities or poverty alleviation, but the success of these projects rests upon beneficiaries' perceptions, motivations and priorities. It is therefore important to understand the latter – differentiated by socio-economic strata, caste and gender – and to examine whether the priorities of the intended beneficiaries converge with those of government. The convergence (or lack thereof) is best illustrated by the diagrams below which indicate farmers' perception of their problems versus the problems as perceived by technicians in South Kalimantan, Indonesia, during a diagnostic exercise.

Problems as Seen by Farmers and Technicians, Aniungan Desa-Halong, Indonesia



Source: FAO/TCII. 1997. South Kalimantan Agricultural Area Development Project - Social Assessment Report.

Process in Project Evaluation/Design (TCII Experience)

- Establishment of a mentoring team
- Stakeholder analysis (see paper on Stakeholder Analysis: A Process Approach)

Participatory Diagnostics Study

- Establishment of diagnostic team
- Training of diagnostic team
- Review of secondary data and key informant interviews
- Zoning of project area
- Study design and analysis plan
- Village-level diagnosis
- Cross-cutting analysis
- Local-level workshops
- Project planning workshops (national)

- Formulation

- Appraisal
- Pre-implementation activities

The farmers perceived their main problems as economic; poor road access caused low income by making it difficult to market produce. Income from rubber was low due to labour shortage. Lack of cash was a result of a series of problems, not the reason for non-adoption. According to the technicians who accompanied the diagnostic team, the main problem in the area was low production – attributed to lack of high yielding seeds, fertilisers and pesticides – which, in turn, was traced to lack of money and low knowledge of agriculture. Inevitably the solution became credit and agricultural extension.

As a result of participating in the diagnostic study and of talking to farmers, government technicians gradually saw the problems through the farmers' eyes. Farmers' views prevailed and consensus was reached on the project concept and its components.

What is PDS?

PDS is an analytical instrument, which uses comparisons between a limited number of cases to facilitate analysis of differences between agro-ecological zones, livelihood systems, and type of villages and of households, as a basis for project design. Each case is analysed as a **system**, to shed light on the relationships between the parts and the whole (see chart on the next page). Cases are grouped into types, which are then compared in order to generate hypotheses about cause and effects and the evolution of the livelihood systems over time. PDS can reveal untapped potentials, strengths and priorities of different types of communities and categories of people, but it cannot tell us how many villages are of a particular type or how many households belong to the same category. It relies on qualitative methods, e.g., participatory rapid appraisal (PRA); it is an **exploratory and highly iterative methodology** which allows for a process of rapid and progressive learning to take place.

The purpose of a PDS is to:

- acquire a thorough understanding of the people in the project area, of their livelihood systems and of the vulnerability context of each group – differentiated by socio-economic strata, gender, ethnic groups/caste – of the strengths, potentials and priorities of each sub-group as a basis for project design;
- facilitate a dialogue between the key stakeholders – intended beneficiaries (smallholders, landless households, rural women and youth, ethnic/caste households), government agencies, NGOs and financing agencies – as a basis for reaching a consensus about project objectives, scope and activities; and
- generate information required for project preparation, which can then be used for several other purposes.

Main Techniques Utilised in a PDS

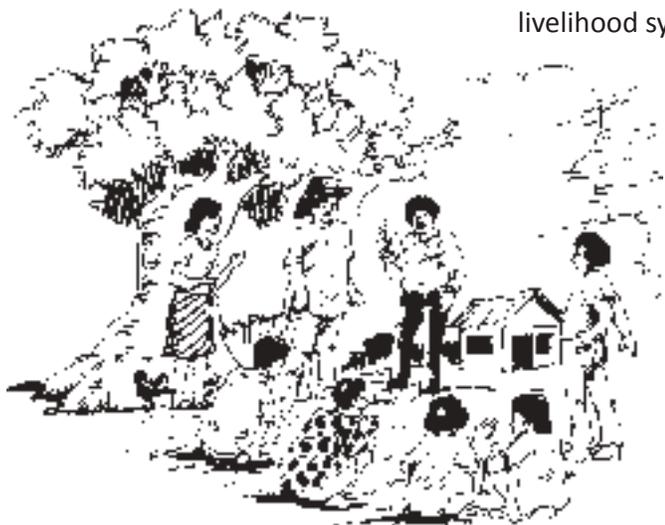
In the sample villages, the main data-gathering techniques consist of the following.

- Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools
- Key informant interviews: district/local officials, line agencies' extension workers, village leaders and other knowledgeable persons
- Site visits to community projects, if any
- Focus group meetings (separately with men, women, landless, youths, etc.)
- Household interviews

How Do We Carry Out a PDS?

Generally, the work for the diagnostic study is divided into several phases.

- **Review of secondary data**, especially "grey" literature
- **Key informant interviews**
- **Zoning of project area**: a number of homogenous areas, each with similar agro-ecological conditions and production systems (e.g. similar soils, topography, dominant crops, market opportunities) are delimited. These zones are then overlaid with zoning based on human settlement patterns and/or distance from main roads, tribal/caste areas, poor versus non-poor areas, etc. Sample villages are then selected within each zone to represent the range of variation in natural resource base, livelihood systems and socio-economic conditions.

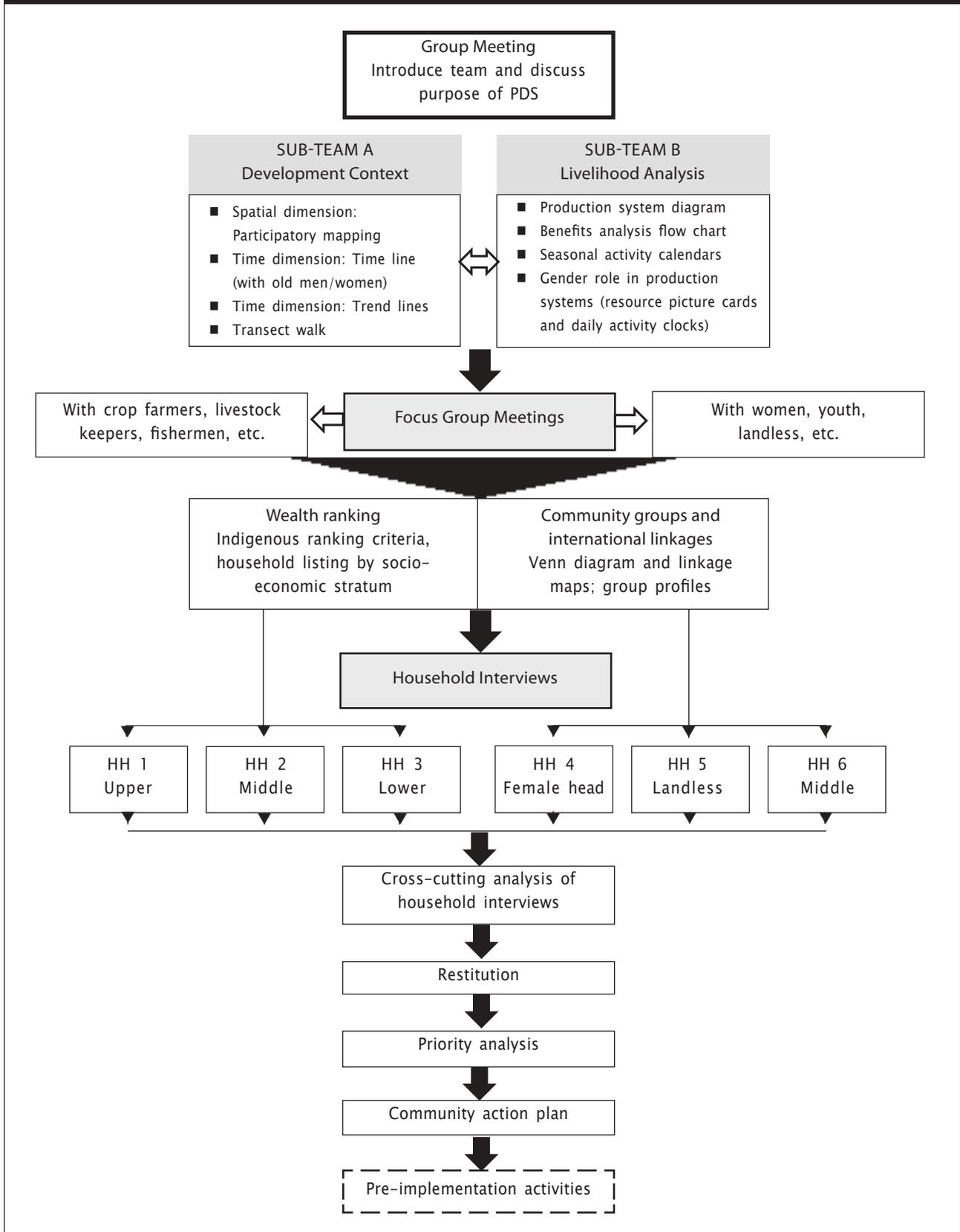


- **Field work**: participatory consultation and interviews in villages
- **Preliminary data analysis**: one full day of data analysis after completing each village; the teams come together in the same place and compare and contrast findings from the villages. After completion of diagnostic work in a cluster of 4 to 6 villages, they draw a preliminary typology of villages, livelihood systems and households characteristics of the cluster



- **Cross-cutting analysis and synthesis** of main findings by agro-ecological zone and socio-economic strata

Village Level Participatory Sequence (2-3 days per village)



What PRA Tools Do We Use?

In each village, after explaining the purpose of the study to village leaders, a group meeting is generally held with up to 50 farmers (men and women). During this group meeting several PRA tools can be used. Some of the tools that may be considered are shown in the box here beside and an example of the output of an exercise is presented on the next page.

PRA Tools Used	
Development context tools	Livelihood tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Village resource map ■ Village social map ■ Time line ■ Trend lines ■ Transects (or cross section) ■ Institutional profiles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Venn diagrams - Institutional linkage map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Livelihood systems diagrams ■ Benefits analysis flow chart ■ Seasonal activity calendar ■ Daily activity clocks ■ Resources picture cards

■ Focus group discussion

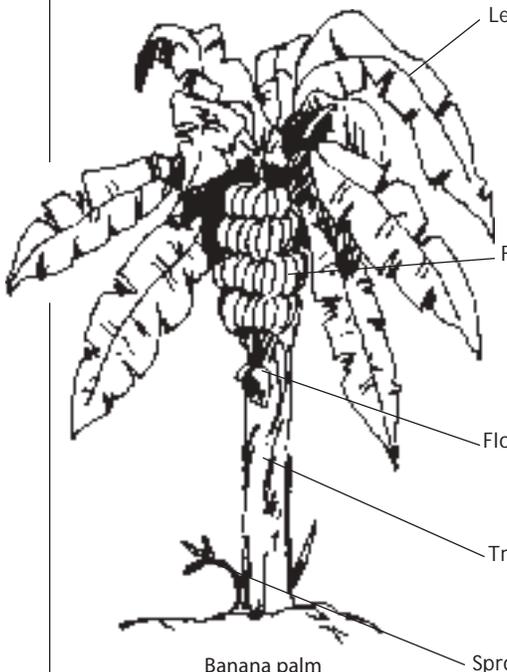
In each village, focus group discussions are then held with separate sub-groups of 10-20 people per group. Each focus group selects a spokesperson. At the end of the group discussion, he/she, or a literate person on her/his behalf, will write down each strength, skill and potential identified and the group's views on the initiatives to undertake. Recently, through the use of appreciative inquiry, there has been a shift from identifying peoples' problems to highlighting strengths, potentials and opportunities of each group. Attempts are currently being devised in Nepal to link the results of appreciative inquiry with inventories of assets and (untapped) potentials of natural resources of each locality. Visioning this encompasses the people and their institutions as well as their natural resources.

■ Household interviews

During the focus group meeting, at least six households are selected for interviews. The selection is based on representation of different types of villagers, as exemplified by the wealth ranking exercise. For instance, a very poor landless labouring household, a tenant farmer, an average smallholder, a better-off smallholder, a farmer/innovator and one or two female headed households. Household interviews are usually conducted at peoples' house at a previously agreed upon time. These have been found crucial in providing insights on the strengths and potentials of different socio-economic groups and in trying to address issues related to the poor segments of society.

■ Restitution and planning meeting

After completing the household interviews and at a time agreed to with villagers, a public meeting is held in the village, chaired by the village headman (or someone designated by him). At this meeting, a spokesperson for each of the focus groups presents the initiatives selected by the group. The villagers then discuss the proposals, agree or disagree, and suggest changes. The proposed interventions are entered into a matrix and scored on several criteria selected by the people (e.g., extent of impact on livelihoods, number of people able to benefit, feasibility and ease of implementation with local resources, etc.). On the basis of the scores obtained, interventions are ranked in order of priority. The diagnostic teams make a copy of all the tools prepared by the villagers/groups as well as of the results of the micro-planning exercises and leave the originals in the village.

	By-Products	How used	Who decides on use	Who does it	If sold how cash is used
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Umbrella to protect from sun and rain - As dish or platter - As wrappers for foods 	Anybody ♀	Anybody ♀	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sold at local markets and stores - Given to friends/family if asked (social exchange) 	♀ ♀♂	♀ Children ♀♂	To buy household food needs and other basic necessities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home consumption: eaten boiled, fried or raw - Processed and sold at local social events 	♀ ♀	♀ ♀ Children	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home consumption: eaten as vegetable or salad - Given to friends/family if asked (social exchange) 	♀ ♀♂	♀ ♀♂	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shaved into pig feed 	♀	♀♂	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transplanted onto household plots - Given to friends/family if asked (social exchange) 	♀♂ ♀♂	♀♂ ♀♂		

Source: Buenavista and Flora. 1993. AMECOGEW Case Study, Blacksburg, VA.

From Diagnosis to Implications for Project Design

After completion of all fieldwork, the diagnostic teams undertake cross-cutting analyses (by clusters/districts, agro-ecological zone, by household type and gender). Preliminary results are then presented and discussed at a series of local area (district or equivalent) workshops, which generally last for two days. These workshops are also occasions for “ground truthing” the results of the diagnostic work. Implications for project design are discussed and consensus is reached – or areas of divergences noted, if these exist. Participants to these local area/ district workshops include all local stakeholders: elected representatives, representatives of line agencies and of international NGOs operating in the area, representatives of private sector, representatives from the villages studied, etc. The diagnostic team then prepares a report based on the analysis of the information gathered and the results of the local workshops.

The Mentoring Team

The mentoring team and the financing agency then review the report. The syntheses of the PRA findings and of the implications for project design, discussed at the local area workshops, are then presented at a

Why an Advisory and Mentoring Team

the formulation process. It is also meant to champion the goals, strategies and approaches proposed by the project. It generally comprises committed, experienced and respected nationals (six to 10) who, on a voluntary basis, are prepared to act as resource persons. Their profiles may vary. The concept of the mentoring team has proven successful in the Asian context, especially in the case of innovative projects (viz. Bihar/ Madhya Pradesh Tribal Development Programme).

National Project Planning Workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to build consensus of all stakeholders on the project's approach, concept and components and to jointly prepare the project logical framework. Participants to the national workshop include representatives of the implementing agency(ies), of participating service providers and NGOs, of districts and intended beneficiaries and of the financing agency(ies). Members of the mentoring team and of the formulation team also participate in this workshop.

Project Formulation

On the basis of the results of the diagnostic work, workshops and field visits, a formulation team comprising national and international experts prepares a detailed design of project components and a costing of project activities, refines the implementation arrangements and estimates foreseeable project benefits. The results of the formulation work are then discussed in a wrap-up meeting with the concerned Ministry (Finance, Planning and other concerned line Ministries) to clarify issues and agree on design and implementation arrangements.

From Formulation to Implementation

Since, in general, there is a big gap from the time of formulation to when the project is really effective on the ground, pre-implementation activities are sometimes carried out to capitalise on the momentum created by the process described above. Experience indicates that pre-implementation activities facilitate project implementation a great deal.

Lessons Learned (from 15 years experience)

The participatory diagnostic process described here has proven relevant throughout the project cycle:

■ For implementation purposes

The initial diagnosis undertaken at formulation is deepened and/or enlarged to other communities during implementation and communities/groups develop their own action plans. Moreover, in demand-driven and flexible projects that adopt an adaptive learning approach, this methodology has been used for yearly re-diagnosis and planning.

■ For monitoring purposes

Concerned communities/groups use the tools they have created during the diagnosis (their own maps, matrices, activity plans, etc.) to monitor their own progress.



■ For the purpose of conflict management

Participatory diagnosis is utilised to work backward and forward from the points of conflict to prompt collaborative mechanisms. For example, existing resources uses, changes and competition are analysed in sequence; different options aimed at conflict management are subsequently jointly identified. Options ranked by different stakeholders are then discussed during reality-check workshops to reach consensus.

Limitations

Time and funds are required to undertake a proper participatory diagnosis. This has proven a limitation as funding agencies are often pressed for time, and funding provisions are either inadequate or non-existent, especially at the design stage.

PDS is quite demanding and requires a mix of attributes and competence (commitment, attitudes and analytical skills) that is not always locally available. The single most difficult skill found lacking is the translation of the results of the diagnostic studies into implications for project design. Until now, this phase has been supported by TCII staff.

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Monitoring and Evaluation of Participatory Research



Participatory research is a term used to describe different levels and types of local involvement in and control over the research process. It encompasses a variety of methods, tools and approaches, including participatory rural appraisal (PRA), participatory action research (PAR), farmer participatory research (FPR), etc.

Types of Local Involvement in Participatory Research

For evaluation purposes it is useful to differentiate between different levels and types of participation in order to understand how this influences research results. Depending upon the level of community control over the process, the stage of research where participation occurs, and the level of representation of different stakeholders and community groups, participatory research has been characterised in the following ways (Biggs and Farrington, 1991):

- **Contractual**
Farmers lend land to researchers.
- **Consultative**
Researchers consult farmers and diagnose their problems.
- **Collaborative**
Researchers and farmers are partners in research.
- **Collegiate**
Researchers encourage existing farmers' experimental activities.

Degrees of Participation

- Consultative participation (e.g., researchers consult with local people in order to make decisions about community needs and to design interventions)
- Active participation in experiments or monitoring (e.g., partnership between researchers and farmers in on-farm experiments)
- Decision-making and problem-solving (e.g., facilitating local people to develop new management practices and resource boundaries, priority setting for research or development interventions, etc.)



Different Types of Participation in Research (McAllister and Vernooy, 1999)

Type of local involvement in the research	Who* controls and makes decisions?	Who undertakes activities?	Who benefits from the results?	Are the process and results separated by social group?
Investigation and problem identification				
Setting research priorities and goals				
Choosing options, planning activities and solutions				
Taking action and implementing activities				
Monitoring of activities Evaluation				

* "Who" can either be interpreted as distinguishing between researchers and local people, or between different subgroups in the community who may have different interests in the research.

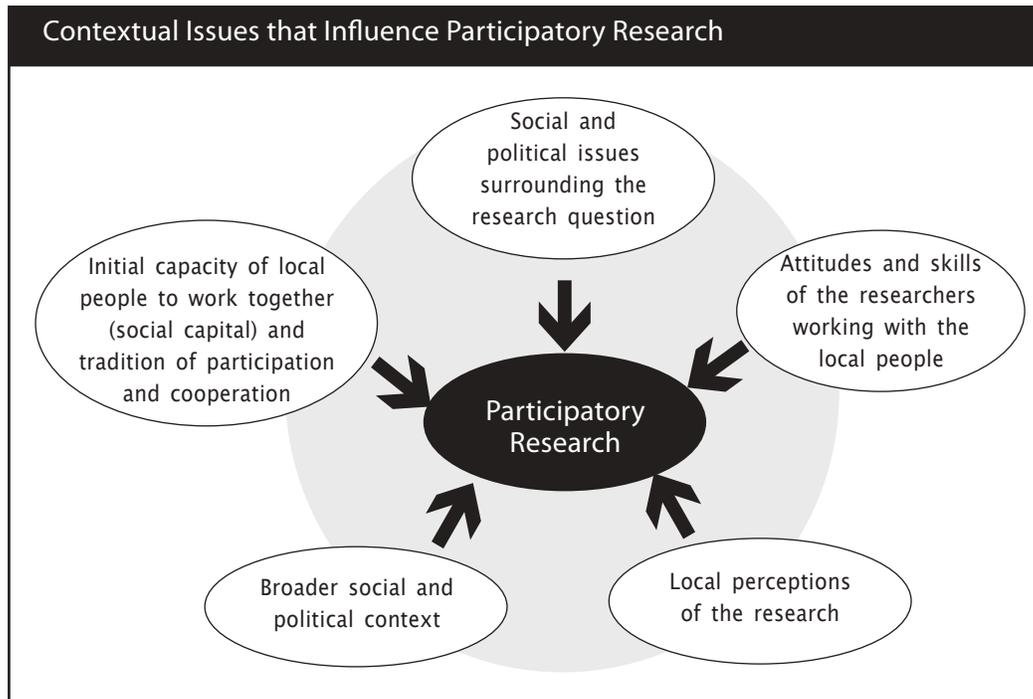
Rationale for Encouraging Participatory Research

- **Functional or empowering**
To encourage involvement of local people to improve effectiveness of research and enhance its usefulness. To empower marginalised peoples and communities by strengthening collective and individual capacity and decision-making power.
- **Participation at different stages**
Problem identification, prioritisation, data gathering, monitoring, analysis, evaluation, etc.
- **Level of control or ownership**
People have their own research process.
- **Sectors**
Agriculture, fisheries and health may influence the appropriateness of different participatory research approaches.



Contextual Issues in Monitoring and Evaluation of Participatory Research

Participatory research needs to be understood within the context in which it occurs. Various parameters define what is appropriate and feasible in a participatory research project. These guide what we can realistically expect from the process and results of the research and therefore need to be considered in monitoring and evaluation of participatory research.



Why Monitor Participatory Research?

The main clients interested in monitoring and evaluating participatory research are donors, researchers and the community.

- To assess project results
To find out if objectives have been met and have resulted in desired changes.
- To improve project management and planning
To better adapt to social and power dynamics that may affect the research process.
- To promote learning
To identify lessons of general applicability, to learn how different approaches to participation affect outcomes, impacts and reach, to learn what works and what doesn't, and to identify what contextual factors enable or constrain participation in research.
- To understand different stakeholders' perspectives
To allow different people involved in a research project to better understand each others' views and values, and to design ways to resolve competing or conflicting views and interests.
- To ensure accountability
To assess whether or not the project is effective, appropriate and efficient in order to be accountable to the funding agency.

Kinds of Results Generated from Participatory Research

- Processes describe the methods and approaches used for the research.
- Outputs describe the concrete and tangible products of the research, as well as the occurrence of the research activities themselves.
- Outcomes describe the changes that occur within the community (or with the researchers) that can be attributed, at least in part, to the research process and outputs. These can be negative or positive, expected or unexpected. They encompass both the “functional” effects of participatory research (e.g., greater adoption and diffusion of new technologies, changed farming practices, changes in institutions or management regimes) and the “empowering” effects (e.g., increased community capacity, improved confidence or self-esteem, improved ability to resolve conflict or solve problems).
- Impact describes overall changes that occur in the community, to which the research project is one of many contributing factors.
- Reach describes who is influenced by the research and who acts because of this influence.

In practice, differentiating between process, output, outcomes, impact and reach can be difficult. For example, an output such as a community plan can become an input to the establishment of a community organisation, which can be considered either as an output of the research or an outcome of the plan.



What to Monitor and Evaluate in Participatory Research (Monitoring Impact in Participatory Research)

Quality of the outputs

It is important not just to assess the “production” of outputs (whether activities occurred or certain products materialised), but to consider also the “quality” of the outputs. (What was the nature of the activities? Were all those interested in the project able to participate? Are the outputs useful and for whom? Did the outputs provide concrete benefits to the local participants and communities?)

Quality of participation and representation of different social groups or stakeholders in the process are affected by:

- **The level of social analysis**
Were the different groups and individuals that may be affected identified, and how were their differing or conflicting interests managed?
- **“Genuine” participation or representation of different stakeholders/social groups**
Indicators for representation can include quantitative information such as “how many people” or “who attends meetings”, but should also include selective qualitative observations. (Who was vocal and who was silent? What were the social dynamics of the event? How were conflicts managed? How were decisions made? Whose interests were served?)
- **Disaggregation of methods and results**
In situations where underlying relations of power affect individuals’ and groups’ willingness to express themselves in participatory exercises (particularly group exercises), it is best to hold separate exercises with different social groups or individuals. This will better allow marginal groups to openly express

themselves. It is especially important if the research deals with issues that may place the less powerful against the interests of the more powerful (e.g., land or resource rights).

■ **Perceptions of non-participants**

It is sometimes useful to seek opinions of local people who are likely to be interested in or influenced by the research but who are not actively involved. This can reveal why people choose not to participate – whether this is because of the methods being used, because the research does not seem relevant, because they are not traditionally involved in such activities, because they are too busy with livelihood activities, or for some other reason. This information will help researchers adapt the process to accommodate the needs of special groups in the community.

■ **Motivation of local people and other stakeholders participating in the process**

Was participation truly voluntary or was it coerced (e.g., the village headman may tell people they must attend the “participatory” exercises)? Are people mobilised by the issues that the research intends to address? If not, perhaps the focus of the research is not relevant to the local situation or not locally defined.

Sustained change

A key question for evaluation is what it is that we want to “sustain” and “how” do we know if we are moving towards this. Communities are positioned in a quickly changing global and natural environment with new and evolving external and internal pressures on their resources. Sustainability of the positive effects of the research is not only the “persistence” of the outputs (technology, resource management practice); it is more related to building local capacity to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. Key questions to consider in assessing sustainability include:

- Did the research strengthen local capacity to adapt to changing circumstances?
- Did the research build local capacity to measure and assess change and to make informed decisions based on this information? Was this learning retained?

Reach

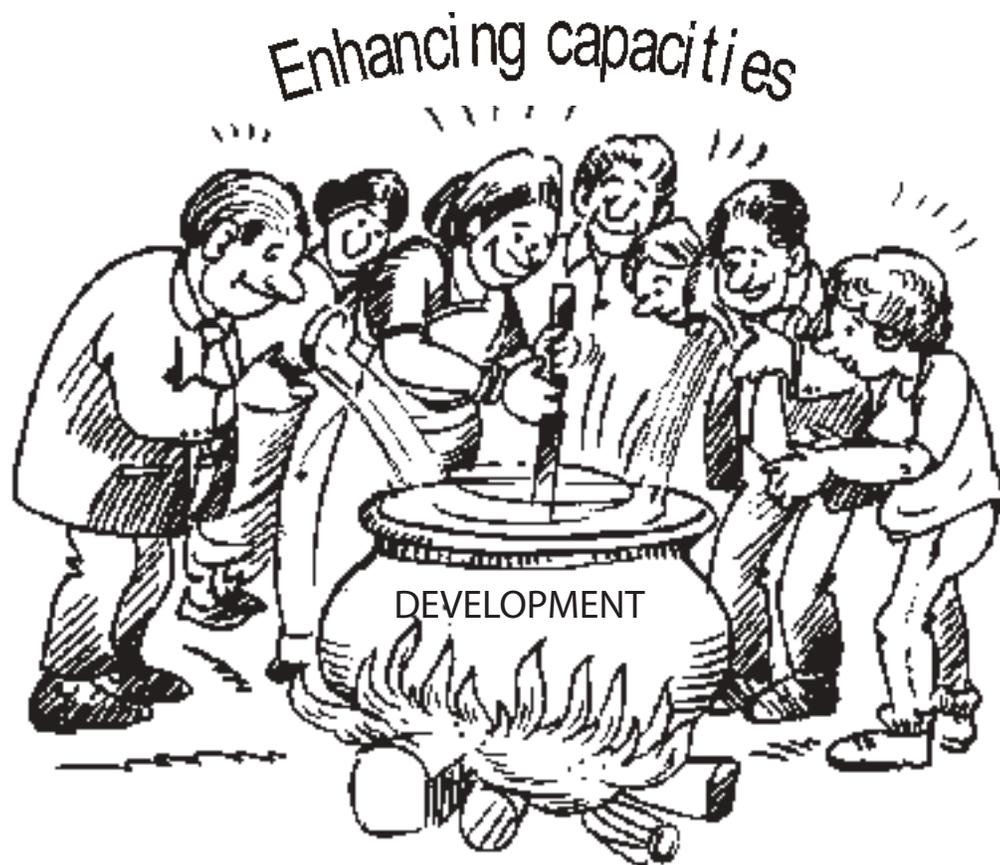
Reach cross-cuts all participatory activities, by asking who was influenced by the research, and who acts because of this influence. It can be considered for various levels of stakeholders (local people, researchers, government officials), and can also include different sub-groups in the community (women, men, landless, etc.), and so is closely related to equity. Reach will be affected by “who” participated and was represented in the research process. Questions to ask when thinking about “reach” of influence of participatory research include:

- Who was influenced by the research? Who was empowered?
- Did the benefits/learnings from the project reach beyond those who participated in the process?
- What is the scope for “scaling up” the impact of the research to other areas?

Prepared by:
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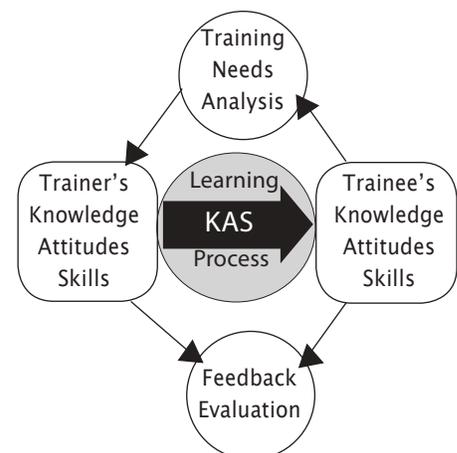
Training in Participatory Approaches



In the context of the wide acceptance and spread of participatory approaches, the role of training is becoming increasingly significant. The success of development efforts lies in the application of participatory approaches. Meaningful application depends on the capacities of the actors involved – both primary and secondary. It is in this context that the role of training requires emphasis – more specifically on enhancing capacities for facilitating a process. It is more the participatory way it is done that matters than the technique itself.

What is Training?

Training means “encouraging learning”. It is a shift from being a trainer to a facilitator or an agent of change. The capacities developed through training in the context of participation enables the participants to use the skills and knowledge gained “to change their behaviour and attitudes about themselves and others, modify the institutional contexts in which they work and initiate more participatory processes and procedures in their work.” (Pretty, Guijt, Thompson and Scoones, 1995).



The stakeholders involved in the process of participation in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation require the capacities for making it happen – through orientation and training. Stakeholders are “those affected by the outcome – negatively or positively – or those who can affect, the outcome of a proposed intervention” (World Bank, 1996).

What Should the Training Content Be?



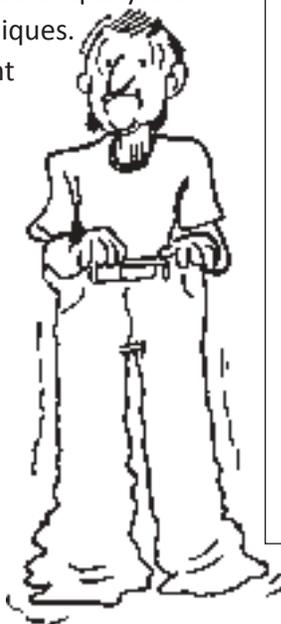
Training content in participatory approaches depends on:

- who the stakeholders are;
- the positions they occupy in the organisational hierarchy;
- the participatory approach the organisation wishes or needs to apply; and
- the output required from the trainee after the training – these might be project formulation, social analysis, stakeholder analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and designing research activities.

Key elements in the training content for secondary stakeholders

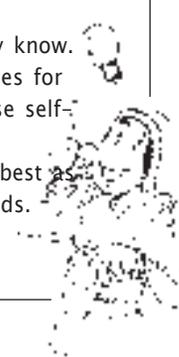
- Different participatory approaches with emphasis on the conceptual background and principles.
- The use of tools/techniques applicable to various stages of the project development cycle and focused on community-based participatory information generation, analysis, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.
- The attitudes and behaviour that must accompany the process of applying the tools and techniques.
- How to facilitate a learning environment

It is important to have tailor-made approaches in training specific to participatory approaches catering to the needs of different stakeholder categories.



Qualities of a Good Trainer in Participatory Approaches

- Has a clear understanding of concepts and principles underlying the approach.
- Has skills in using associated tools/techniques.
- Demonstrates the attitudes and behaviours underpinning the use of tools.
- Emphasises and demonstrates, during practical exercises and in the field, that the tools are only a means and not an end, to allow the people to participate in information generation and analysis, through which learning and awareness takes place.
- Instills in the minds of the participants that “participation” can only be as effective as the facilitator who provides space for participation.
- Builds on what trainers already know.
- Includes adequate field exercises for experiential learning to increase self-confidence.
- Understands how adults learn best as trainees in participatory methods.
- Is committed to facilitating genuine participation.



Training Design Suggestions for Different Stakeholder Categories

Stakeholder category	Training content	Training duration
Policy makers	Brief orientation on the need for and use of participatory approaches, followed by a field visit.	½-1 day
Top-level management	Conceptual background on participatory approaches and their implications for institutional policy/procedural adaptations.	1-2 days
Middle-level management	Familiarisation of conceptual background and tools and focus on attitudes and behaviour. A field-based component emphasising on application of tools with the community is important.	5 days
Field-level functionaries <i>It is useful to have a combined training programme – with different stakeholders coming together as participants.</i>	Knowledge of concepts, principles, skills in the use of tools/techniques, sequencing of tools and focus on attitudes and behaviour that need to accompany application along with a field based component. Review aiming at consolidation after a period of practice.	2 weeks

Based on the experience of the Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development (IPID) in Sri Lanka

Training in the Context of Scaling-Up

Participatory approaches gathering momentum and going to scale/mainstreaming have raised many concerns. Inadequacies in the number of competent trainers and the demand to produce results within short time frames have resulted in poor quality training programmes by those who become trainers overnight. This is a serious concern affecting the quality of training, which ultimately affects the participatory process itself. This is especially true in instances when practice of a participatory approach becomes conditional to funding.



How Adults Learn

- Adults are voluntary learners. They perform best when they have decided to attend the training for a particular reason. They have a right to know why a topic or session is important to them.
- Adults usually come with an intention to learn. If this motivation is not supported, they will switch off or stop coming.
- Adults have experience and can help each other to learn. Encourage the sharing of that experience and your sessions will become more effective.
- Adults learn best in an atmosphere of active involvement and participation.
- Adults learn best when it is clear that the context of the training is close to their own tasks or jobs.
- Adults are best taught with a real-world approach.

Sources: Smith, Robert. 1983; Rogers, Alan. 1986; Rogers, Jenny. 1989.

Negative impacts of the scaling-up of training

- Neglect of one's own behaviour and attitudes.
- Top-down training.
- Training in classrooms by people without field orientation or experience.
- Opportunists claiming to be trainers and using participatory approaches without sensitivity.
- Systems which emphasise targets for disbursements and for physical achievements (often donor-driven) without emphasis on quality.
- Field workers rushing in and out of communities in order to achieve pre-set targets for villages covered and amounts disbursed.
- Routine and ritual use of participatory methods.
- Training used for one-time extractive appraisal without analysis, planning or action.
- Interaction only or mainly with those who are better off and visible.
- Generating community initiatives and empowerment before the institution is ready or willing to respond.

" During the training of village heads, the trainers tended to rely on overhead transparencies producing text directly from the training manual, provided too much direction for exercises to be completed by community groups, asked leading questions and provided lengthy correct answers themselves. The fundamental principles of learning and discovering together with their trainees seemed incomplete with their own perception of their role as trainers."

Nilanjana Mukherjee



Addressing Quality-Related Concerns

Some training-related suggestions

- Adopt a learner-focused approach to training in participatory methods that encourages creativity and reflection by the trainees and leads to changes in attitudes.
- Provide opportunities for interaction among trainers. Networks, newsletters can play a significant role in sharing experiences/learning and thus contribute to the improvement of the training quality.
- Invite master-trainers as observers during the initial training conducted by new trainers – to give feedback and suggestions for improvement.
- Set-up feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement in training quality.
- Promote self-reflection by trainers using a self-evaluation tool.
- Train a critical mass of trainers or core groups of trainers within large organisations and independent practitioners.
- Build field-based and on-the-job-training into training designs.
- Prepare a code of ethics as has been done by many PRA Networks.
- Develop a code of conduct for trainers.

Some institution-related suggestions

- Allot more time for participation and institution-building in the early stages of programmes and provide projects with adequate budgetary provision for training.
- Promote internal working groups in organisations for following up on quality and research, e.g., participation groups in World Bank and FAO (Chambers 1997).
- Keep a provision for unspent budgets to be rolled over from year to year.
- Change project procedures to allow for participation and diversity.
- Follow a process approach permitting continuous revisions in on-going projects.
- Include PRA types of activities involving the community and not just follow LFA or ZOPP.
- Ensure continuity for a longer period by facilitating/backstopping.
- Promote stability in the form of supportive senior management.
- Promote participatory management cultures in organisations.
- Provide opportunities for sharing experiences/reflection and evolving corrective measures – specific to locations and contexts.
- Promote training as a part of the overall programme and organisational strategy.

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How to Make Log-Frame Programming More Sensitive to Participatory Concerns



Sustainable development means empowering people, the primary stakeholders, to enable them to influence initiatives and decisions which affect their lives. Participatory planning therefore forms a key element/foundation in the project development cycle. The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) placed in the above context provides a framework for participatory planning and management. In recognition of this fact, most of the funding organisations, bilateral donors and international development organisations use LFA to plan projects.

The logical framework approach (LFA) originated in the USA in the 1970s. It was further developed and adapted by GTZ as ZOPP in 1984. It was adopted in all GTZ-funded projects. Similarly, LFA was widely used by donor agencies in Scandinavian countries, Japan, Canada, Australia and among the UN agencies, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), to mention a few. Funding support for project proposals became subject to the use of the LFA to project formulation.

What is LFA?

It is a planning and management tool, which lends itself to be described as a “participatory planning tool”. It encourages participants/stakeholders to come together to achieve consensus on key project objectives and planning decisions. It provides a systematic framework for the planning process and for developing project concepts.

The LFA Process: Analysis and Planning

The planning and designing process is usually undertaken at a workshop of about 5-10 days duration. Participants usually consist of project staff (local and expatriate), heads of relevant departments, specialists, consultants, field officers and NGO representatives.

Steps of the LFA process

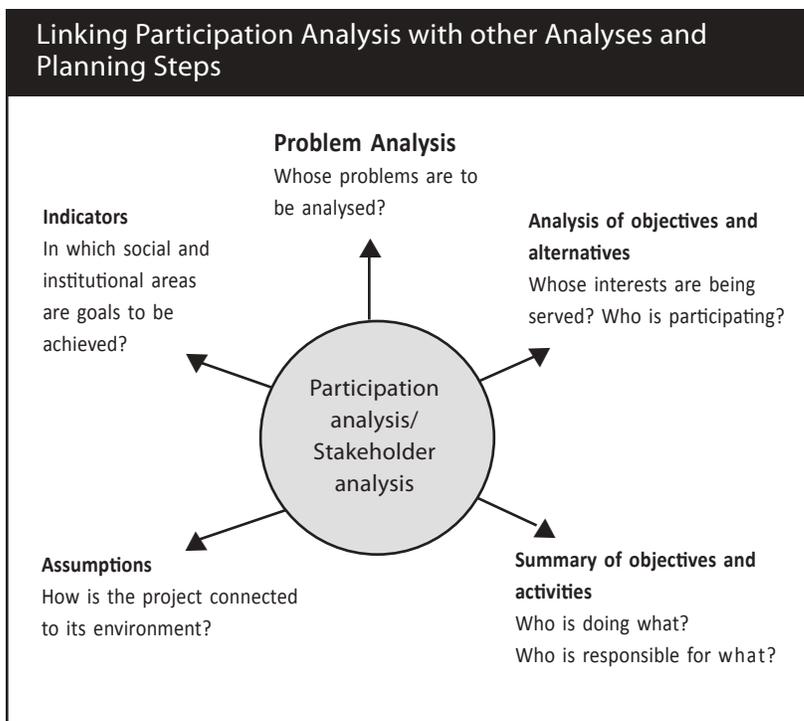
- Situation analysis
- Project/programme planning matrix (PPM), also known as logframe
- Action/operational plan

Situation analysis

Situation analysis consists of participation analysis, problem analysis, objectives analysis and alternatives analysis.

■ Participation analysis/stakeholder analysis

The first step in situation analysis is to identify the key stakeholders of a project – any group/individual/organisation – who can affect or is affected by any intervention under the project, either positively or negatively.



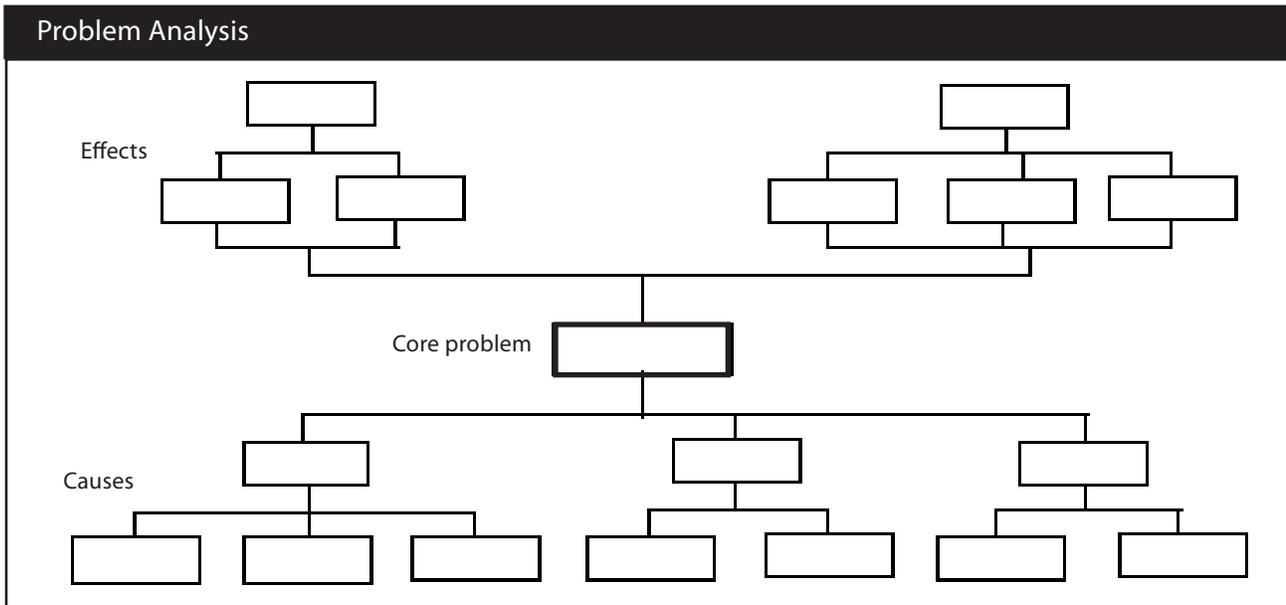
Format for Participation Analysis					
Groups/institutions/individuals	Interests	Problems	Potential		Implications for planning
			Strengths	Weaknesses	

The data is collected for each category identified. The analysis helps to identify whose problems and priorities should be taken up for deeper analysis. It also indicates what might be the implication to the other steps in the analysis.

■ Problem analysis

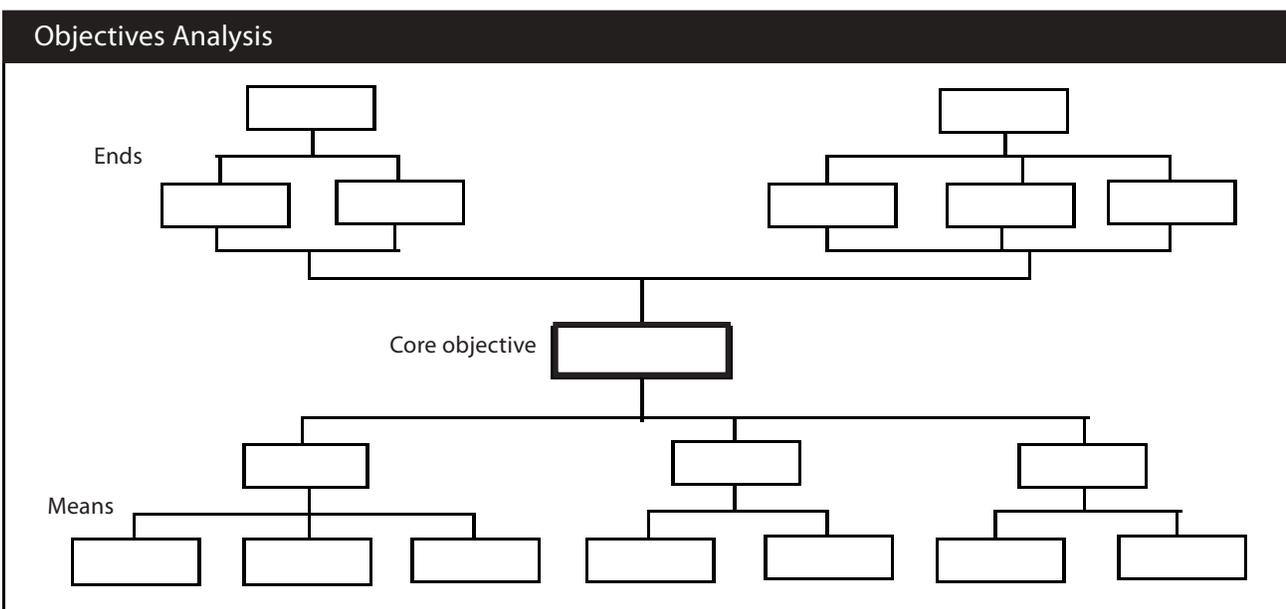
Problem analysis is the second step in the process of situation analysis. It is done in two stages:

1. Brainstorming on the problems: some issues have already been identified during the participation analysis.
2. Identification of the “core problem”/starter problem, followed by analysis of the causes and effects of the core problem.



■ Objectives analysis

Objectives analysis is the third step in situation analysis. Using the foregoing problem analysis, objectives are derived by converting each of the problems into a feasible, achievable and desired state.



■ **Alternatives analysis**

The fourth step in the process of situation analysis is alternatives analysis. Using the objectives analysis, specific “ladders” of possible strategies are identified. It could also be combinations of the “sets” of objectives. These are assessed on the basis of their technical, social and financial feasibility.

Preparation of the Project Planning Matrix (PPM) or Log-frame

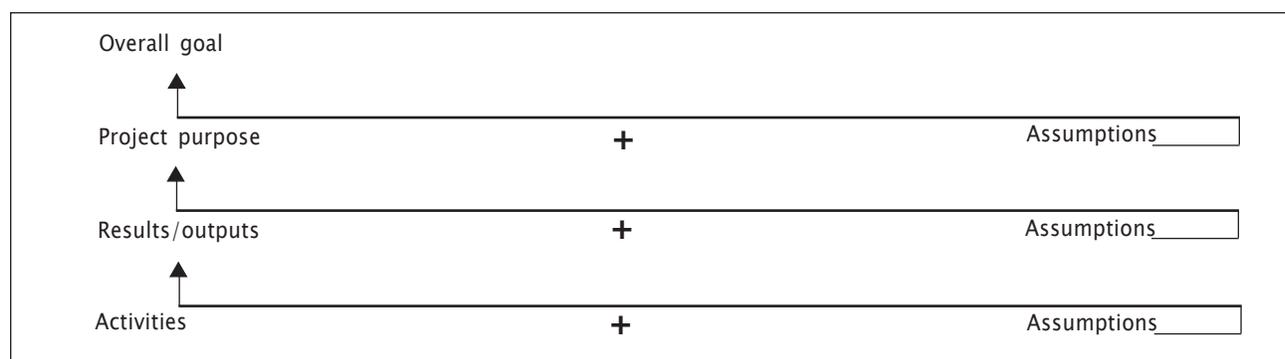
The following format is used for the preparation of the PPM matrix.

Project Planning			
Summary of objectives	Objectively variable indicators	Means of verification	Assumption/external factors
Goal (vision)	Impact indicators	Where/how to find the information	For long-term sustainability
Purpose (mission)	Outcome indicators		For contribution to the goal
Outputs (results)	Output indicators resulting from completion of activities		For achievement of project purpose
Activities	Resource inputs/costs Local and external Personnel Funding Materials and equipment		For achievement of project outputs/ results
			Pre-conditions for achievement of activities

The preparation of the log-frame continues at the workshop, using the results of the situation analysis. The PPM is based on a vertical and horizontal logic.

■ **Vertical logic**

The different levels of objectives are achieved only if the relevant assumptions prevail positively. In the matrix, the assumptions refer to the level above in the levels of objectives as follows.



■ **Horizontal logic**

The horizontal logic runs across the first three columns at each level of the PPM, as follows.



The PPM/Log-Frame gives an overall picture of the project concept – useful for understanding the rationale and achieving a common understanding among the stakeholders and between governments and donors. It provides a tool to describe the project even to those who did not participate at the planning workshop.

Project Rationale in the PPM/Log-Frame

- Why the project should be carried out?
- What the project is to achieve?
- How the project plans to achieve the results?
- What external factors are important for achieving the objectives?
- How to measure the extent to which objectives have been achieved?
- Where the data to evaluate the project is located?
- How much the project will cost?

Preparation of the Plan of Action

All activities related to the outputs/results in the PPM/Log-Frame are arranged in a sequential order, so that the different sets of activities are clearly linked to each other. Sub-activities are identified, thus, enabling the assignment of responsibilities. The action plan itself becomes a monitoring/management tool during project implementation. It details the operational plans. **Stakeholder participation in preparation of the plan is essential, as the different activities and the responsibilities can be classified and agreed upon, and collaborative efforts can be enlisted. Realistic time-frames can be set. The plan is formulated in the form of a Gantt chart below.**

Format for Plan of Action					
Outputs/activities	Time-frame	Indication of completion (interim indicators)	Responsibility	Collaboration	Cost
	By year/month/week				

It is noted that key monitoring and evaluation activities can be built into the Action Plan, e.g., periodic progress reviews, mid-term reviews and end-of-project evaluation.

The steps of the analysis are further strengthened by the use of visualisation techniques and moderation. Ensure that the moderator is strong in facilitation skills as this goes a long way in getting active and open participation from the participants. Building consensus on key issues increases the commitment of each stakeholder.

The success in using the method however depends **very much on the enabling framework conditions, attitudes and behaviour**. Many limitations arise by trying to apply the method rigidly. Experience shows that the flexibility and space for adjustment can only be effective if the users develop a **learning perspective and a process-oriented approach**.

Critique of LFA

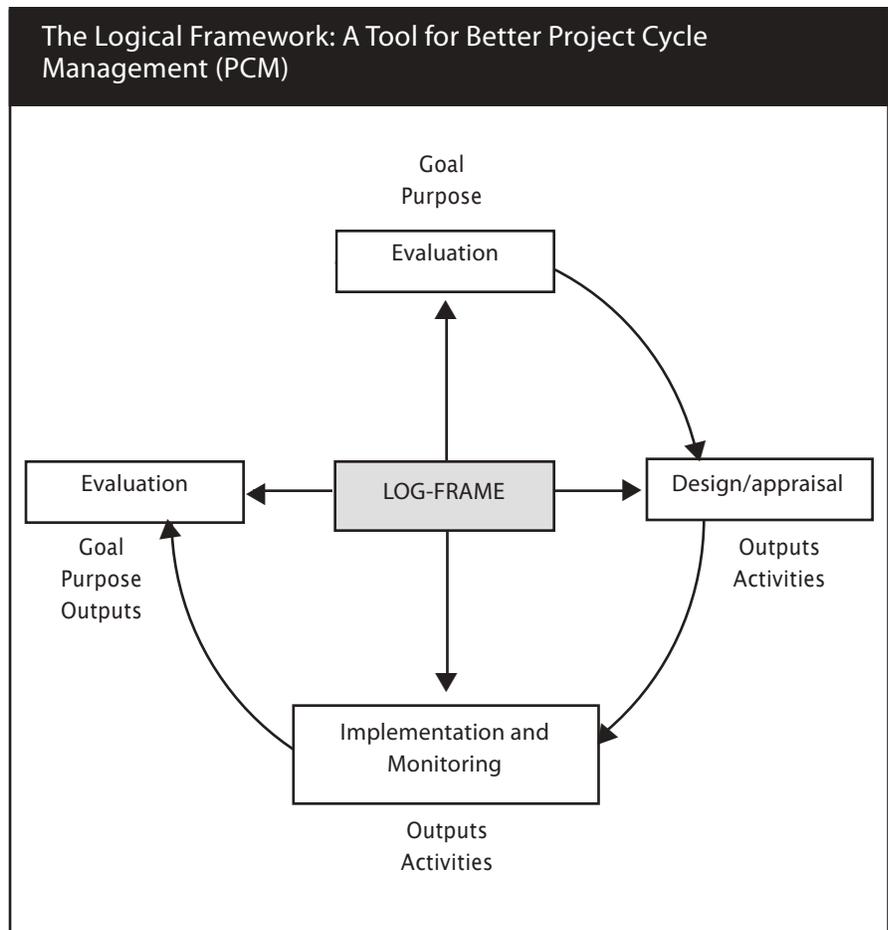
The use of this tool came under heavy criticism from project managers during the early 1990s. This was the time when participatory approaches like PRA were gaining ground, with their emphasis on the need to involve the primary stakeholders in situation analysis, project planning and implementation. The article “Whose reality counts?” (Chambers) highlights such issues.

As LFA was used for development and technical cooperation by funding organisations in bilateral aid agreements, adjustments were made to make the framework more relevant in addressing ground realities. It was a positive turn of events, as LFA continues to provide the basis for project formulation and planning.

GTZ provides an example of how such adjustments were made to their official planning and management instrument, ZOPP, which is based on LFA. Bernd Schubert (1996) refers to the changes that occurred after the late 1980s: “Then came 1990 and its [ZOPP] slide into disrepute for inflexible and ritualistic use. A general overhaul in 1995 in response to massive criticism, the new flexible and reformed ZOPP became the core of a Project Cycle Mangement (PCM) approach.”

Concerns over LFA/ZOPP

- People as targets – people are treated as objects rather than subjects.





- Who is present? Who participates? And on what terms? How frequently and with what degree of empowerment (to express their reality) have poor women been involved in LFA/ZOPP workshops?
- The top-down descending sequence of LFA/ZOPP workshops.
- Reductionism to one core problem. Life simply is not like that. Different people have different problems and different mixtures of problems.
- Language – fluency in language used, usually English – enables some participants to dominate and marginalise others.
- LFA/ZOPP is a sequence of procedures which has tended to impose the reality of “uppers” and “lowers” and reinforce the tendency (Chambers, 1996. GTZ Workshop

Report: ZOPP marries PRA)

- The imperative of consensus – can reflect the interests and wishes of the powerful and the articulate, rather than those of the weak and inarticulate (in LFA/ZOPP workshops).

Use of Quantitative Indicators

Being oriented to results, the emphasis, when formulating indicators, is often on quantitative rather than qualitative aspects.

Predominant use of quantitative indicators forces the implementation of the project into a supply-driven orientation. The project staff tends to “teach” the community that they definitely need training on some pre-determined subject areas while their priorities may differ.

Who Participates and Whose Needs?

LFA/ZOPP workshops are often conducted in a “seminar” atmosphere and community representatives are often out of place. The project personnel and high-ranking officers who are used to such surroundings are at an advantage and dominate the discussions. Often, NGOs represent local communities, thus, depriving adequate representation to local people.

Understanding the Logic

Linkages to the several steps are often not easily understood. When carefully explained, participants appreciate the overview – how activities lead to outputs/results along

Whose needs? Who decides?

In a crop–livestock integration project, a LFA/ZOPP workshop was organised. Going through the list of participants, the moderator found no community representatives. The organisers were advised to bring in community members. The initial response was that the field officers/NGOs could represent their views. The “language barrier” was not mentioned. Translation was offered. Finally two farmers were identified and invited to the workshop. When goat farming was proposed, the farmers raised their hands in protest. “We want cattle – very useful for our cultivation work and for organic fertilizer.” The technicians responded: “It cannot be done, as the experts have suggested that the area is suitable for goats and funding is specifically for that.” Farmers went on describing the advantages of cattle rearing as opposed to goat farming and counter–argued expert advice. “At this workshop, nothing can be changed. We have to go back to our principals at the headquarters”, was the answer of the expert. The farmer’s question: “Then, why are we here?” Finally the moderator agreed to include their proposal in the report for consideration. The workshop continued with the pre–determined outputs, but much later an “open fund” was initiated in addition to goat farming. Thanks to the farmers’ arguments.

with specific assumptions and the levels that follow. Analysis of the assumptions/external factors provides early insights to undertake corrective action in the design. The LFA planning methodology lays heavy emphasis on the assumption of a desirable level of inter-institutional cooperation.

Planning as an Inflexible Blue-print

The technocratic view that all that is needed is a good, technically-sound plan adversely affected the participation of the various stakeholders and particularly the primary stakeholders. They were brought in only at the time of implementation and therefore the community ownership was lacking.

How Can Participatory Concerns be Built into LFA/ZOPP?

Efforts could be made along the following lines:

- LFA should not be taken out of context and be treated as an end in itself. **It should be treated as a means of achieving the desired objective (related to the concerns of the local communities).**
This means a shift of emphasis from planning to process. It must be recognised that planning itself is an on-going process – with flexibility for adaptations/changes/innovations.
- Changes in staff behaviour and attitudes must be given due emphasis in staff trainings. Flexibility is needed in the application of the tool by planners during appraisal and planning, and by project personnel during the implementation stage. LFA/ZOPP trainers need to be exposed to participatory learning approaches so that changes in the role and application of LFA can be internalised.
- Field based training with the communities in village locations is useful for building sensitivity to ground realities. The World Bank initiative of Village Immersion Programmes (since 1996) for Bank staff – particularly for managers – can be cited as an effort to increase their sensitivity to community perspectives and to the need for recognising the value of community participation in planning.
- Impact and outcome monitoring indicators can be developed along with community participation and included in the Log-Frame. Both qualitative and quantitative indicators could be included to ensure process monitoring is given adequate emphasis.
- Recent efforts have been observed in integrating participatory approaches with LFA/ZOPP. The example of GTZ efforts to change and adapt ZOPP procedures in the light of PCM is encouraging. Procedures cannot change overnight. Institutionalisation of processes takes time. PCM is a step forward, but much remains to be seen in its operationalisation. Practical modifications in response to field realities will be necessary. This also means creating an organisational structure which is committed to a management culture that promotes participatory concerns. Adaptation of the policies and procedures of funding/donor agencies is also required.

PRA-type processes can be applied very early on, involving the poor and marginalised, etc. in their own analysis and identification of their needs and priorities.

*Chambers, 1996,
ZOPP Marries PRA Workshop*

“ ZOPP decisions can no longer be looked upon as the all-determining measure for monitoring success. Results from self-evaluations and participatory evaluations must receive their institutionalised place next to ZOPP measures.”

Dieter Gagel (1996)

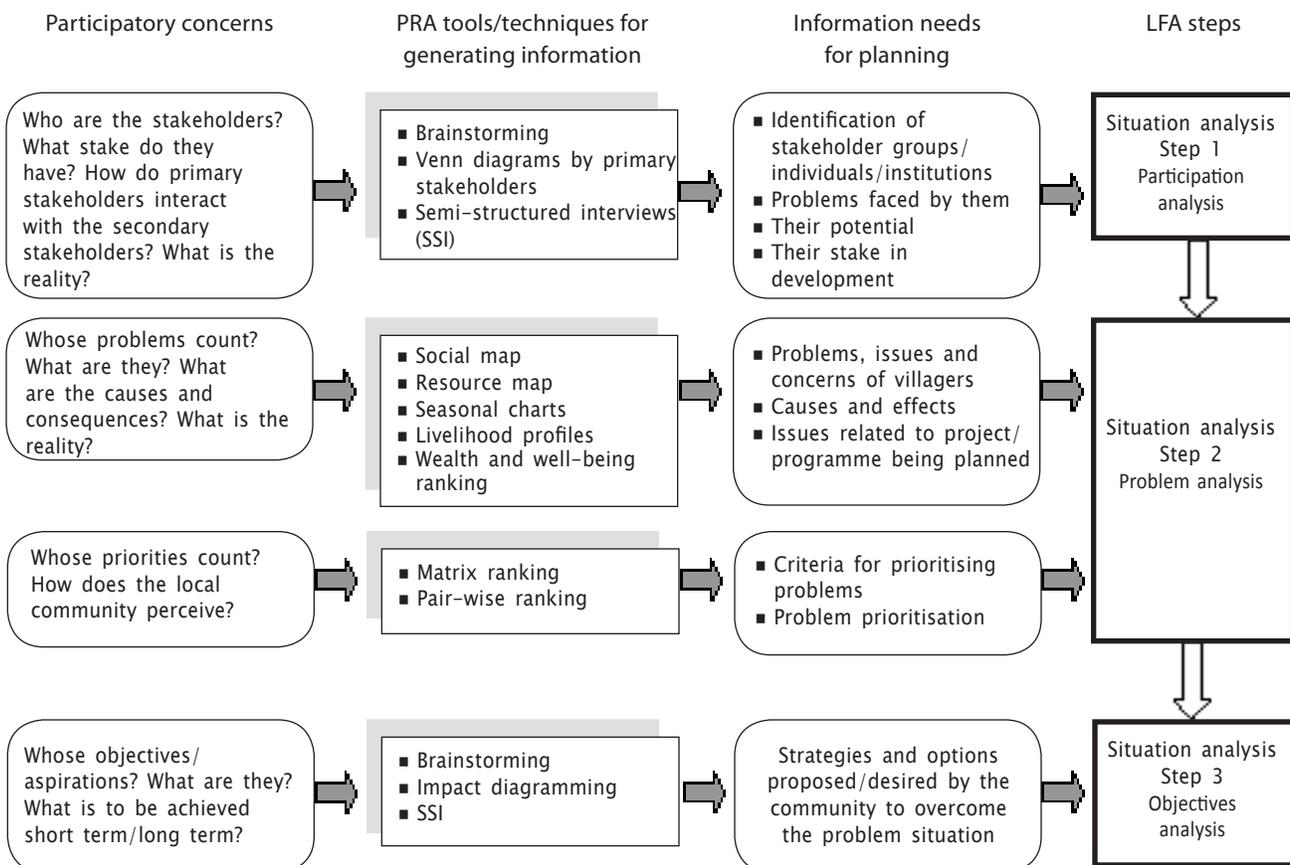
- Micro-planning exercises using PRA methods for information generation and analysis by the communities and later using the LFA framework for consolidating the project concept was found to be useful in many cases in Sri Lanka. Projects which used PRA in the context of LFAs in Sri Lanka are the: conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants project by the Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medicine (supported by World Bank); village development planning in Weerana village as part of the Self-Help Learning Initiative Pilot Project of the World Bank; Fisheries Community Development and Resource Management Project (GTZ); and the Ratnapura Integrated Rural Development Programme (Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council).

Funding organisations such as NORAD in collaboration with the Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development (IPID) in Sri Lanka, is initiating training in the integrated use of PRA and LFA for NGOs.

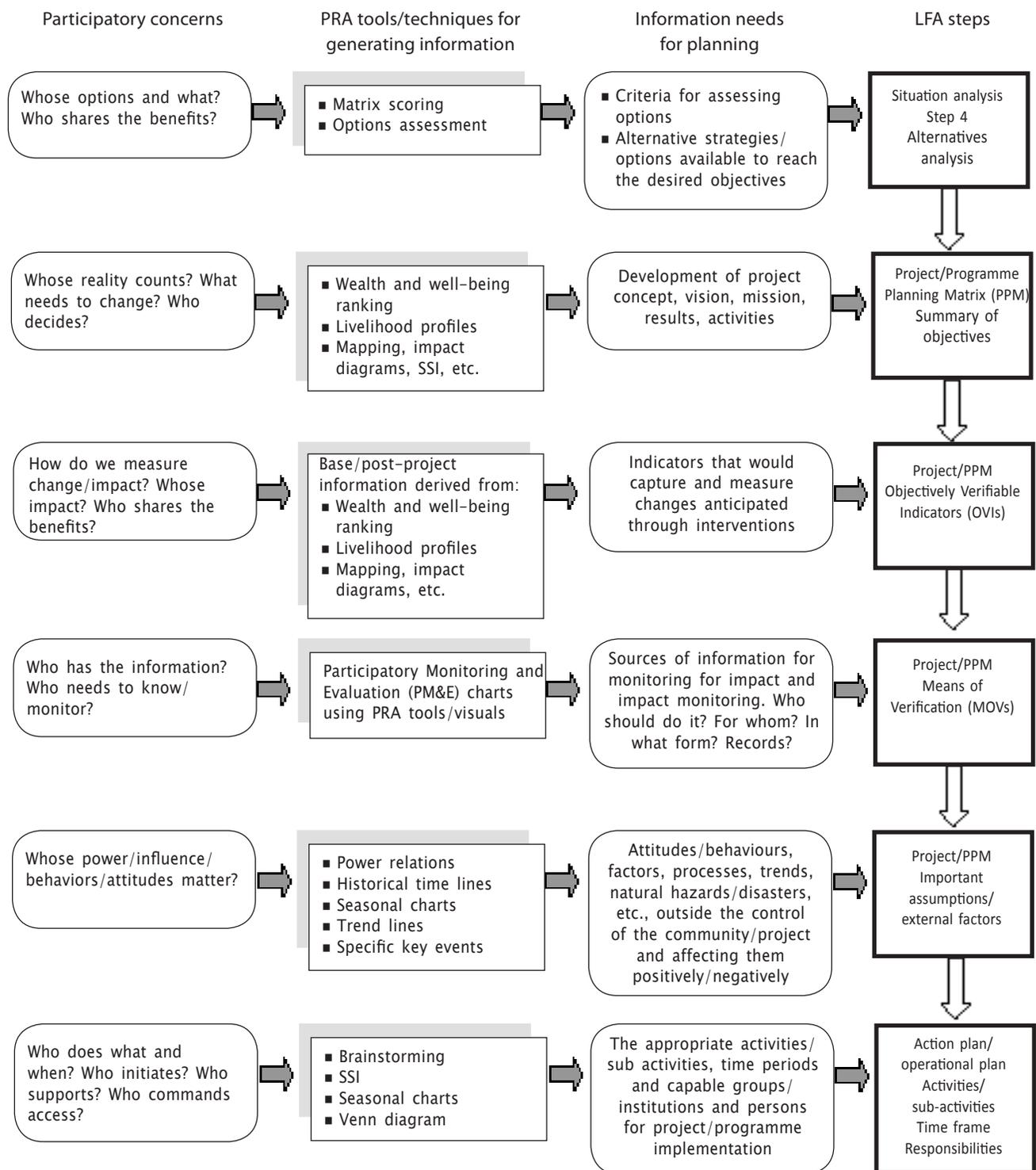
Such experiences show that the rigidity and non-flexibility of the LFA approach has been recognised, and conscious efforts are being made to adapt it to accommodate participatory concerns.

Based on the experiences of IPID in Sri Lanka the following conceptual framework has been elaborated to meet the much-needed requirement of building participatory concerns into the LFA/ZOPP methodology. It builds the PRA/PLA approach to ensure that the community concerns are the key determinants of the sustainable development processes.

Linking PRA to LFA: Addressing participatory concerns



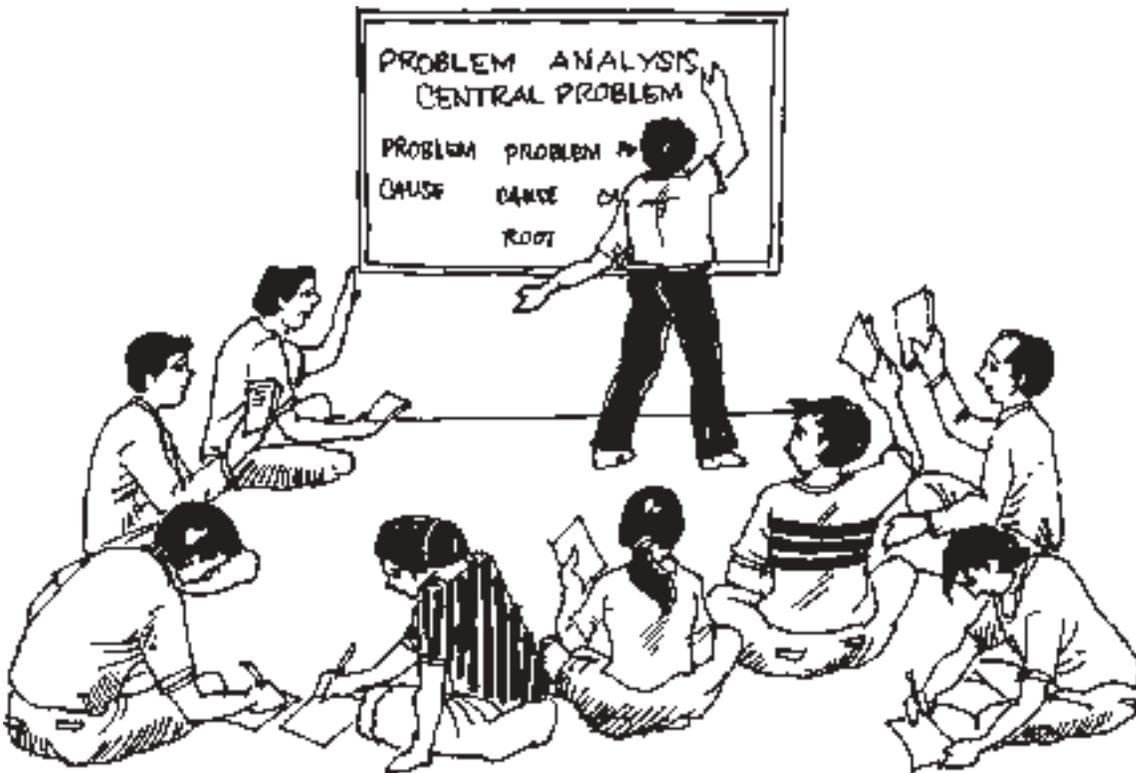
Linking PRA to LFA . . . continuation



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Result-Based Project Planning



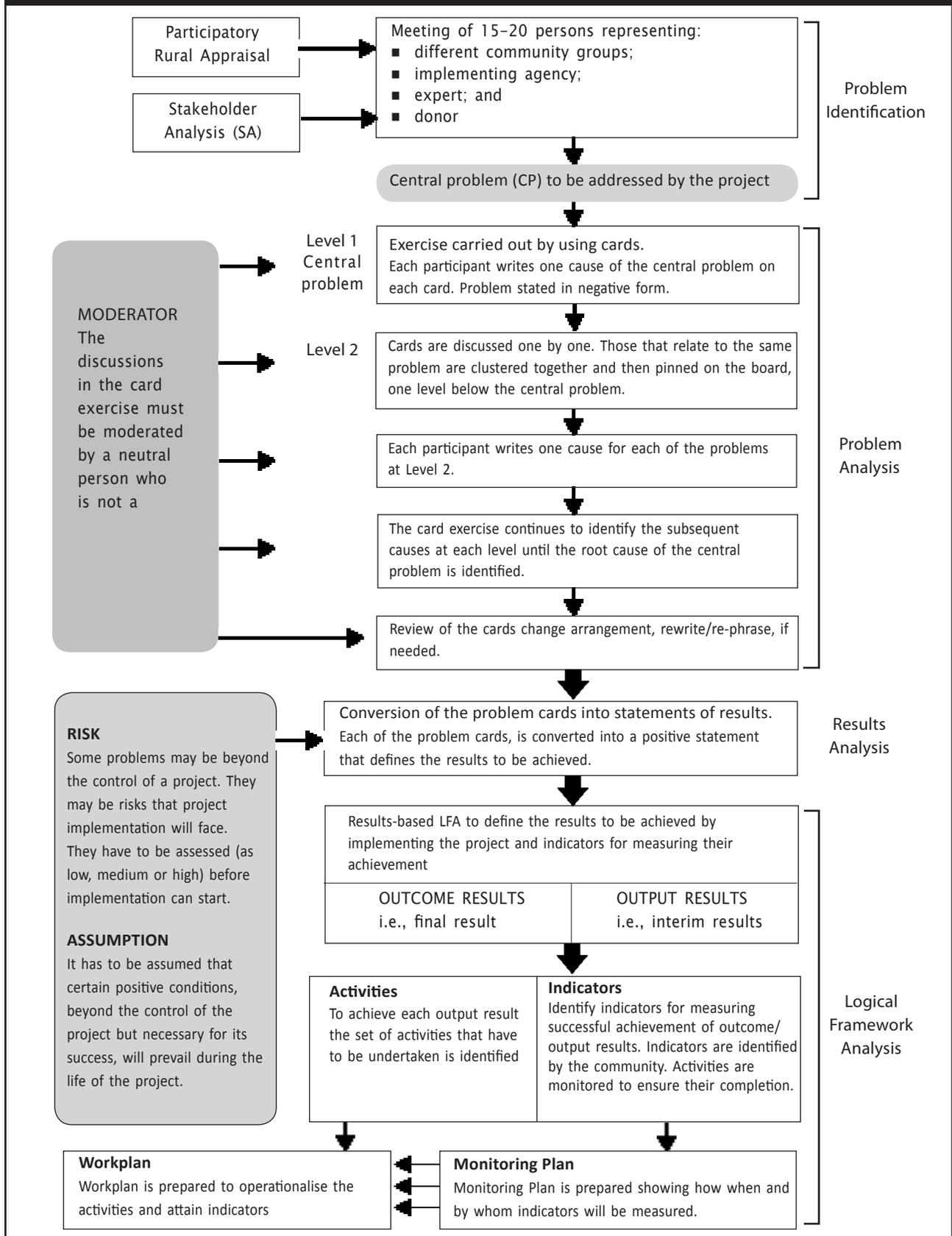
This paper discusses how result-based project planning is undertaken. Result analysis helps determine what results are expected to be achieved in a project. It therefore provides critically important information in preparing a result-based logical framework.

An important first step in this process is usually problem identification often undertaken using participatory rural appraisals (PRA) and stakeholder analysis. The goal of these methods is to identify the central problem to be addressed. This is best done when representatives of different groups get together to define what that core problem is, root causes and cause-effect relationships. (Refer to Levels 1 to 4 in the chart on page 139.)

Development problems, especially those involving people, are viewed differently by different individuals and groups. A comprehensive picture of the problem as viewed by different categories of people, must be put together. This is best done when their representatives contribute to defining the problem, identifying the factors causing them and determining what the desirable results should be.

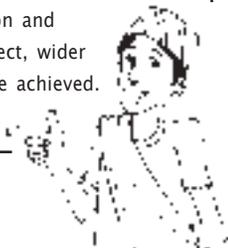
When we understand the range of problems and their root causes, the discussions must shift to defining the desirable results. An important next step is to identify the indicators of achievement (this enables monitoring). This information is critical in a logical framework analysis (LFA) effort. Once the LFA is defined the work plan (for project implementation) and monitoring plan are prepared.

Result Analysis Process



Ownership

When the different groups or their representatives are involved in the formulation and design of a project, wider ownership can be achieved.



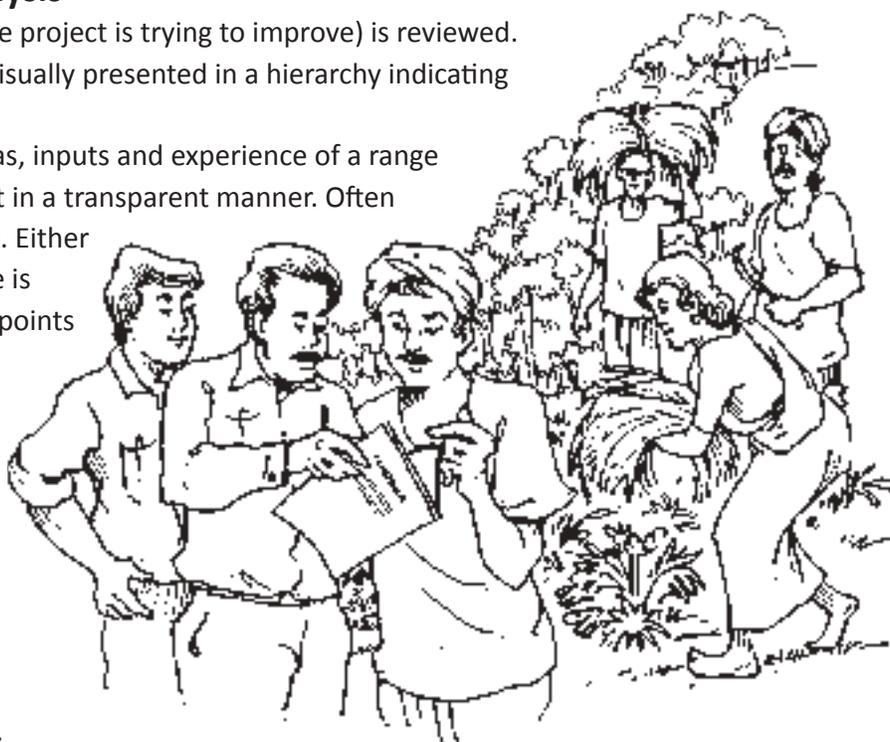
Monitoring Results

If the (problem solving) strategy being pursued is effective, periodic monitoring will indicate that the objective is being achieved. If it is not happening, the strategy will have to be reviewed.

Indicators should be discussed with the members of the community. They should monitor the progress towards the results to be achieved. Failure in achievements are discussed with the community and corrective measures.

Learning from Result Analysis

- The existing situation (that the project is trying to improve) is reviewed. Problems are identified and visually presented in a hierarchy indicating cause-effect relationships.
- The process captures the ideas, inputs and experience of a range of affected groups and does it in a transparent manner. Often opposing ideas are expressed. Either consensus is reached or there is scope to accommodate both points of view.
- The process is dependent on effective moderation of the discussions and on participants being willing to arrive at consensus.
- The process calls for a certain level of articulation that may not always be found amongst community-level participants.



Prepared by:
Jaya Chatterji

RESOURCE BOOK PRODUCED IN A PARTICIPATORY WRITESHOP ORGANISED BY THE International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), South East Asian Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN), MYRADA and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR).

Participatory Technology Development and Dissemination: Some Key Principles



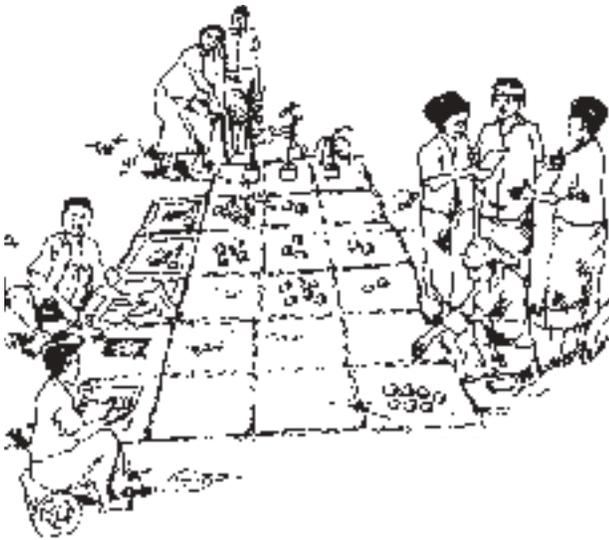
Participation of a wide-range of stakeholders at various stages of programme design, implementation and evaluation is being increasingly emphasised. For far too long, “outsiders” have attempted to determine what is best for local communities. It is essential to recognise the value of involving the primary stakeholders or end-users in the process of identifying, refining and disseminating relevant technologies. This process is generally referred to as Participatory Technology Development and Dissemination (PTD&D).

Some General Guiding Principles

Acknowledge contributions from indigenous knowledge and modern science

Some of the more successful and sustainable interventions have evolved out of efforts to build upon existing knowledge and practices. The strategic contributions of science are featured within an overall framework that builds on, blends and forges links between indigenous practices and contributions from modern science.





Emphasise and use participatory approaches of relevance to the poor

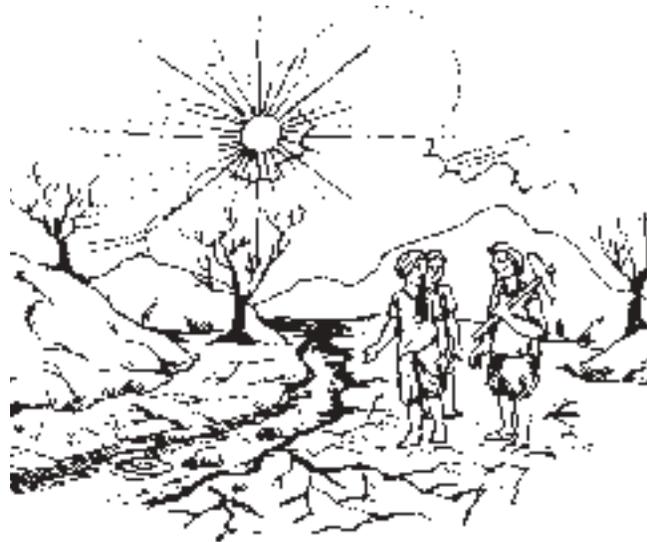
Many technologies are not scale-neutral and might only be relevant to the wealthier farmers. To reach the poor we might have to be deliberate about the choice of technologies, i.e., those that are known to be pro-poor. Poverty mapping and other participatory tools can help improve the relevance of technologies to the poor. A wealth of approaches are available:

- Participatory poverty analysis and poverty mapping
- Participatory rapid appraisal/participatory learning
- Participatory technology development
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation

Blend conservation (protective) and development (economic) considerations

The long-term sustainability of livelihoods are invariably affected by the state and quality of the natural resources. Wherever possible, interventions should address economic as well as conservation agenda.

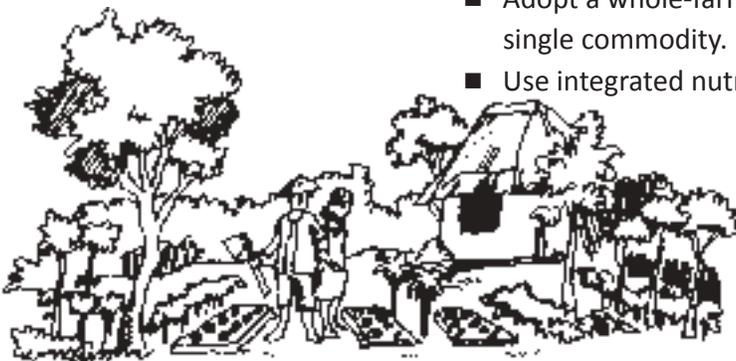
- Introduce and adopt sustainable-resource use indicators
- Integrate conservation and development activities and programmes



Use an integrated systems approach

Integrated systems meet the needs of the poor by reducing risks and lowering the costs of production and by diversifying outputs and income sources and sustaining the resource base.

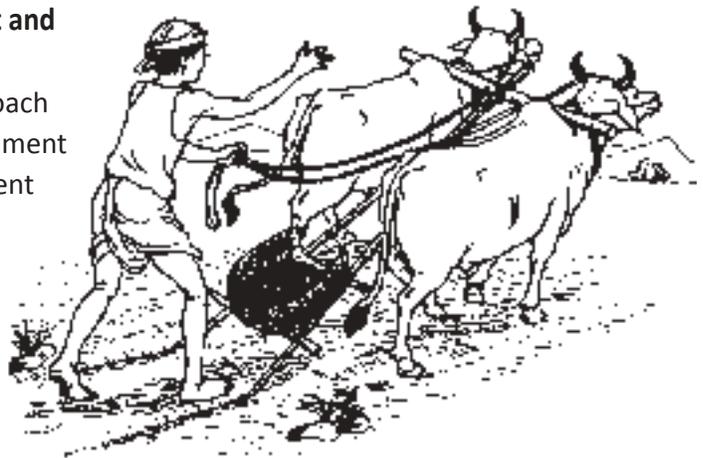
- Focus on smallholders: small increases amongst large populations can make a more significant and lasting impact on poverty alleviation and food security.
 - Assume holistic resource management approaches.
 - Adopt a whole-farm orientation rather than a focus on specific, single commodity.
 - Use integrated nutrient management principles to promote recycling, reduce costs and sustain productivity.
- Promote integrated pest management that emphasises the value of balanced ecosystems, healthy crops and soils.



Build in a component for technology refinement and adaptation

An on-going learning and problem-solving approach is ensured if farmers can work within an environment that permits the testing, validation and refinement of options.

- Provide people with opportunities to choose from a range of options (internally derived or introduced from outside).
- Promote information exchanges on local innovations at the community and local-government levels.
- Nurture and strengthen farmer capacities to innovate so they can adapt to future changes.
- Be aware of technology-fatigue among farmer trainers, extension agents and the farmers themselves.



Consider farmer-to-farmer extension as a core strategy

Farmer-centered approaches are increasingly being recognised as relevant, cost-effective and appropriate long-term strategies to support information and capacity-strengthening of primary stakeholders, farmers and fisherfolk.

- Feature cross-visits to successful farms and project sites.
- Deploy farmer scholars selected by and accountable to the village community. Ensure that the farmer scholars are not drawn from the wealthier sections, that they truly represent the poor.
- Revive mutual-help work groups (for labour-intensive operations).
- Recruit farmers to serve as lead trainers with an additional role for follow-up.
- Assign extension workers to serve as orchestrators of the farmer-to-farmer process (not as front liners).



Decentralise and disperse farmer-managed demonstrations

We need to critically review the role of conventional approaches such as institutional demonstrations, i.e., model farms, training centres, demonstrations, etc., and the package-approach to disseminating technologies.

- Institutional demonstrations serve primarily the need for specialised training, remedial training, foundation-seed production and for demonstrating a range of available options. They are not, however, considered as primary strategies for dissemination or sharing of ideas.
- Acknowledge and accept that specific technologies or basic principles will be adopted, not entire “packages”. A focus on principles builds farmer capacities to continue to innovate and adapt technologies.

- Emphasise the role of field study programmes for policy-makers and GO/NGO decision makers.



To scale up, use a multiple agency strategy to enhance the utilisation of research-knowledge and exemplary practices

- Broaden the ownership of technologies/practices/approaches by conducting consultation-meetings for key stakeholders and users.
 - Compile exemplary practices using information kits. Participatory writeshops (workshops) can bring together field practitioners along with artists, editors and desktop publishers to produce information materials for wide use.
 - Build horizontal and vertical linkages (micro-macro links). Involve networks and coalitions in promoting field-tested practices in order to scale up, institutionalise and sustain successes/impact.



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Empowering Women and Facilitating their Participation for Better Resource Management



This paper proposes a particular strategy for facilitating women's participation in natural resource management, that is, organising women in exclusively women's organisations and giving them long-term lease over common wastelands. This strategy helps to:

- facilitate the capacity-building of women in land development and technical matters;
- give them control over resources from common lands for income-generating activities; and
- empower them to participate in natural resource management.

"Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the advancement of equality, development and peace."

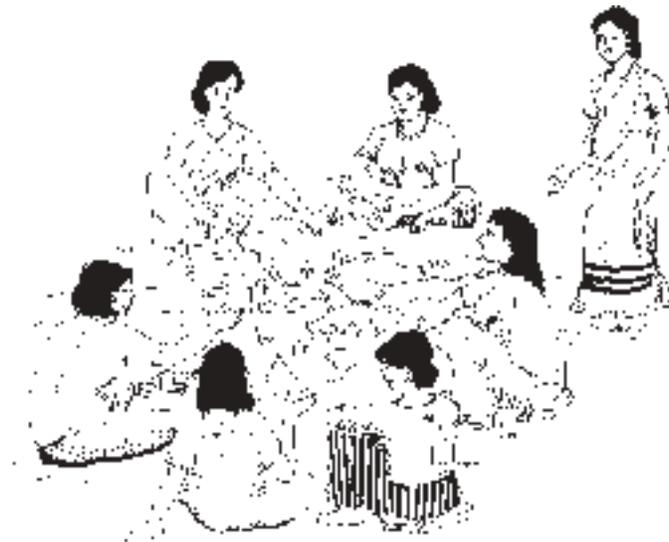
Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995

Poor women in India suffer from a triple and usually overlapping disadvantage – of poverty, of social backwardness and of being women. In the coming decades, conflicts will centre on the access to, ownership and control of natural resources. Participation in decision-making processes regarding the management and use of natural resources is the first step towards equitable and sustainable management.

The strategies described here would be applicable even to the most challenging circumstances – in economically and socially stratified communities with conservative attitudes towards women and where there is considerable environmental stress.

PRA Tools

There are PRA techniques that offer a structured approach to understanding the concerns, resources and needs of women. These exercises such as, gender analysis matrix, daily and seasonal activity calendar, Venn diagram, wealth ranking, resource and social mapping, may be conducted specifically with women.



Identifying Homogeneous Groups and Understanding Their Concerns

Rural communities are differentiated by caste/tribe, class and religion and, within each of these groups, by age and gender. Generally, it is the relatively better-off or more powerful constituent groups with visibility and voice that corner the benefits of development. Special efforts must therefore be made to identify the poorest and most marginalised women for participation in developmental activities.

The first step in facilitating women's participation is to understand their needs and concerns as well as their resources.

Guidelines for Building Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

- Women (as with any disadvantaged group) derive strength through numbers. Poor and socially disadvantaged women sometimes lack the self-confidence – that emanates as much from lack of self-esteem as from economic dependence on the better-off sections – to express their concerns and their needs in an economically and socially mixed group.
- The members of an SHG should live close to each other for effective day-to-day participation. SHG size should be reasonably small to permit closeness in terms of proximity, affinity and cohesiveness of its members. Homogenous social and economic groups usually have informal arrangements for mutual help and it is easy to build on such relationships.
- SHGs should address the central concerns of its members and take on decisions that affect their lives.

A common concern amongst poor women is their lack of savings and access to credit. Up to 20 members from the same locality can come together and form an SHG for savings and credit. Women also come together to address other common concerns such as grain banks, creches, drinking water, non-land based income generating activities, domestic violence, etc.

Savings and Credit through SHGs

The effectiveness of SHGs in assisting women to break out of the downward spiral of poverty and indebtedness has been widely demonstrated. SHGs are effective in generating savings and effecting loan recovery. Once the SHG has demonstrated its ability to manage savings and mutual lending and recovery, it can successfully attract institutional credit. The members can then graduate to taking up income-generating activities. The thousands of success stories of such SHGs in India and other countries are testimony to this. Savings and credit activities should, therefore, be used as a catalyst to initiate an organisation.



Empowerment through SHGs

SHGs are an effective first step in empowering women. They can be mechanisms for bringing women out of their homes, building their confidence and self-esteem, improving their skills and making them more aware and informed. Through SHGs, women can be trained to manage their savings and loans. Women's capacity may also be enhanced through functional literacy – in organising and keeping minutes of meetings, accounting, meeting with government functionaries and/or accessing government programmes.



Exclusive Organisations of Women

Despite the proven efficiency of women in managing their own savings, most men do not consider women capable of taking decisions on natural resource management. Savings is traditionally considered to be a woman's task and from the men's point of view, savings undertaken in a group does not qualify women for participating in decision-making regarding natural resources. Many organisations that have both men and women as members often do not give priority to women's needs, which are different from those of men.

Women's Organisations: A Powerful Force

The prohibition movement in Andhra Pradesh began with an organisation of women discussing the issue of alcoholism; similarly, the Chipko movement in Uttar Pradesh was spearheaded by women. There are documented and undocumented development initiatives undertaken by women against all odds even when the men have given up.



Integrating Women into the Mainstream

Quotas set aside for women on decision-making bodies have proven to be effective in many countries. Women are better accepted when they speak from their own experience.



Land Resources for Women

Land in India is the most significant form of property. It determines economic well-being, defines social status and proffers political power. Legally, both sons and daughters are entitled to have equal rights to property but customary practices have come in the way, ignoring women's share.

Private landholding is not the only productive land resource that women can use. Women in rural areas tend to depend more on common property resources for meeting survival needs due to their negligible ownership of private property. Yet, the degradation of common property resources and the decline in access (to what remains) means harder work and lesser resources for women to meet the needs of their families.

Independent access and entitlements to common property resources has particular significance for resource-poor women.



An estimated 53 million hectares of common land in India is defined as cultivable wastelands, permanent pastures or grazing lands. The management of these is largely with government departments. These lands are largely treated as open access resources and thereby highly degraded. These common (waste) lands would be beneficially used if leased to exclusive women's organisations for at least 30 to 35 years with rights to the produce. To sustain this:

- Public funds may be made available to develop these wastelands.

- Poverty alleviation funds can be channeled on a priority basis to the poorest of the poor to make these wastelands productive.
- Savings and credit activities may be used as a catalyst to initiate women's organisations.
- Finally, homogeneous compact women's organisations that have grown from SHGs may be given joint long-term lease over common wastelands.



In brief, the land becomes a source of raw material for the women to subsist on, or to process for the market.

Income-Augmenting Activities

The lack of confidence among poor women to stand up for their needs partly emanates from the economic dependence on men and the better-off. If women have control over alternative sources of livelihood, this improves their confidence and strengthens their bargaining power. This requires that women be assisted to process the produce of the land as a source of income.

Some Income-Augmenting Activities

- Animal husbandry
- Bee-keeping
- Basket weaving
- Vegetable, mushroom and horticulture processing
- Pisciculture
- Growing and processing medicinal plants
- Nurseries for forest plantation
- Rabbit rearing

This calls for better women's access to credit and training. Existing government programmes and institutes can deliver this. Initiatives should start small, stay in the control of the women and grow correspondingly as the capacity of the women increase. The women must have control over both the raw materials and the processed products.

Sensitising the Men

To reduce the potentials for conflict, it is important to sensitise the men and better-off sections of the community on the need to address the needs of women, especially the most disadvantaged. Experience shows that the process of acquiring access (lease) to even degraded, commonly-owned wastelands, which lie unutilised, is fraught with difficulties.

Denying Women Access

An NGO working in a village in one of the semi-arid villages of Rajasthan organised the poor women and gave them access to degraded common wastelands. The lands were so degraded that raising even the most hardy varieties was difficult. This access to a new resource, however degraded it was, angered the big landlord in the village. He retaliated by denying the women access to the only well in the village from where they drew water for drinking and irrigation.

Men also need to be sensitised to share some of the home-related responsibilities with women. All these need to be addressed through well-developed gender sensitivity programmes.

Capacity-Building of Women

In many instances, whenever there are activities to be undertaken by men and women, women are usually employed as labourers. Even in trainings, women are often seen to be “also included” rather than as rightful “participants”.

Empowerment through Capacity Building

Successful natural resource management activities adopting the strategy of exclusive organisations of women have created a tremendous sense of achievement and identity among the women. This has been seen in initiatives undertaken by organisations such as, AKRSP (1), SEWA and Deccan Development Society.

The poor women in Bunkura, West Bengal, wanted access to their own land. They were organised in women’s organisations by an NGO. Degraded, private waste lands were donated to them by the local landowners. The women raised “arjun” trees that are hosts to “tussar” silk worms. Gradually, over a period of 10 years the women were undertaking a variety of enterprises and have become an organisation with a strong voice, including in the political arena.



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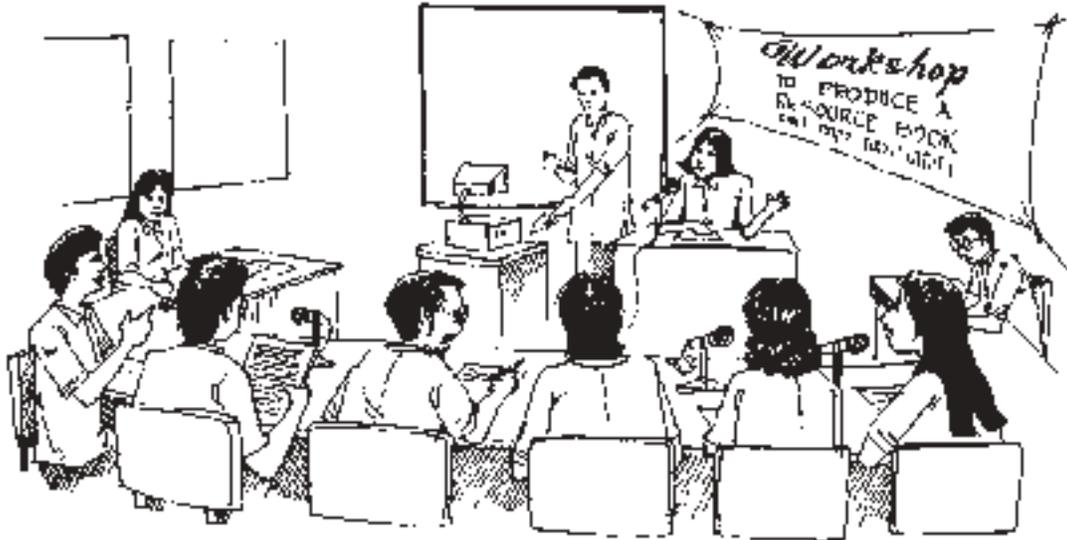
In exclusive organisations, women would have to handle all aspects of an income-generating activity – from land development to production, harvesting, distribution, processing and marketing. Their capacities must be built on technical, managerial and organisational matters. This will increase their skills as well as their confidence.

Women gain the respect of the men who begin to negotiate with them. The community at large also begins to accept women in their new role and acknowledges their contributions in public gatherings. Their status within the household also improves.

Conclusion

It is ironic that there are women who are poor, disempowered, asset-less, unemployed and illiterate, when millions of hectares of public wastelands remain unutilised. This requires policy decisions to invest public funds to make these lands productive and to lease them to the poorest women brought together in small, cohesive organisations. A beginning could be made in watershed projects where benefits accrue to landless women. Women should also strive for equitable access as users to other common property resources like forests and water, as well as to private resources.

A Participatory Workshop Process to Produce User-Friendly Information Materials



Increasingly, field practitioners and managers are expected to document their experiences and to share them more widely. Unfortunately some of the best field experiences do not get documented because the practitioners are often too busy out in the field (doing what they do best). Or, they might lack the necessary writing and visualisation skills to be able to tell their own stories. It is “outsiders” who write, claim sole credit, repackage others’ ideas into neat “concepts”, copyright the material, and claim their rewards in the form of book royalties and university degrees. Fortunately, this situation might be changing with the growing emphasis today on an increased role for field practitioners and managers in documenting their own exemplary practices and on giving them authorship or at least co-authorship.

Another dimension less talked about is the relatively poor utilisation of information generated through research efforts. So much valuable information remains on the shelf and is underused. There is a huge need (in this day and age when resources are limited) to ensure that the investment on research shows up, in terms of better utilisation of research results. Much of the materials generated will still have to be presented in conventional form: printed materials which can be adapted and translated into local languages. We cannot and must not ignore the wide gaps in access to information even as we explore the opportunities presented by new electronic communication technologies.

While new information technologies can be expected to improve information exchange and networking, it is likely that this will still be confined to the level of support institutions. Printed materials, in the form of resource books, will still be important for field managers, project leaders, trainers and local government officials.

Producing these information materials can take a great deal of time - one has to write the drafts, edit the text, prepare illustrations and lay out the publication. The resulting prototype is then reviewed by subject matter specialists before final revisions are made. This tedious process often discourages practitioners from coming up with documentations of their experiences.

A participatory workshop process (also known as writeshops) pioneered by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and tested for 15 years in over 30 workshops provides new opportunities for retrieving best practices and packaging them into forms that lend themselves to wider use.

These workshops can speed up and improve the production of printed materials. The aim is to develop the materials, revise and put them into final form as quickly as possible, taking full advantage of the expertise of the various workshop participants.

The workshop process is very different from scientific conferences that many are familiar with. It is an extremely flexible process that allows for repeated presentations, critiquing and revision of drafts, giving way to a substantial review of each paper.

The Participatory Workshop Process

To prepare for the workshop, a steering committee lists potential topics and invites resource persons to develop first drafts on each topic. Guidelines for preparing these materials are provided. Participants bring the drafts and various reference materials to the workshop.

During the workshop, each participant presents his or her draft paper, using overhead transparencies of each page. Copies of each draft are also given to all other participants, who critique the draft and suggest revisions.

After each presentation, an editor helps the author revise and edit the draft. An artist prepares illustrations to accompany the text. The edited draft and artwork are then desktop-published to produce a second draft.

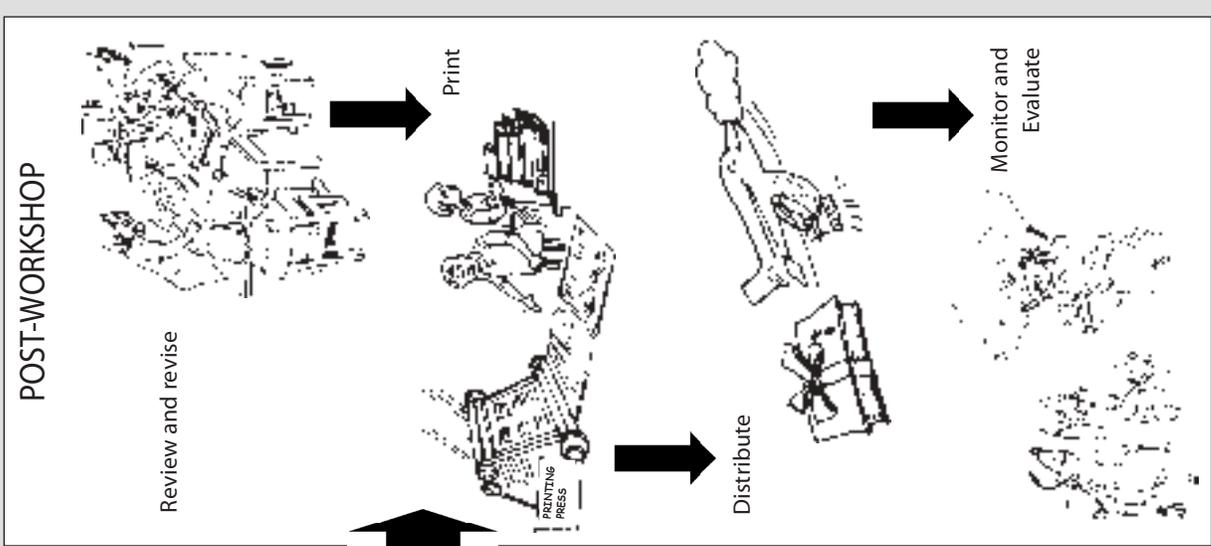
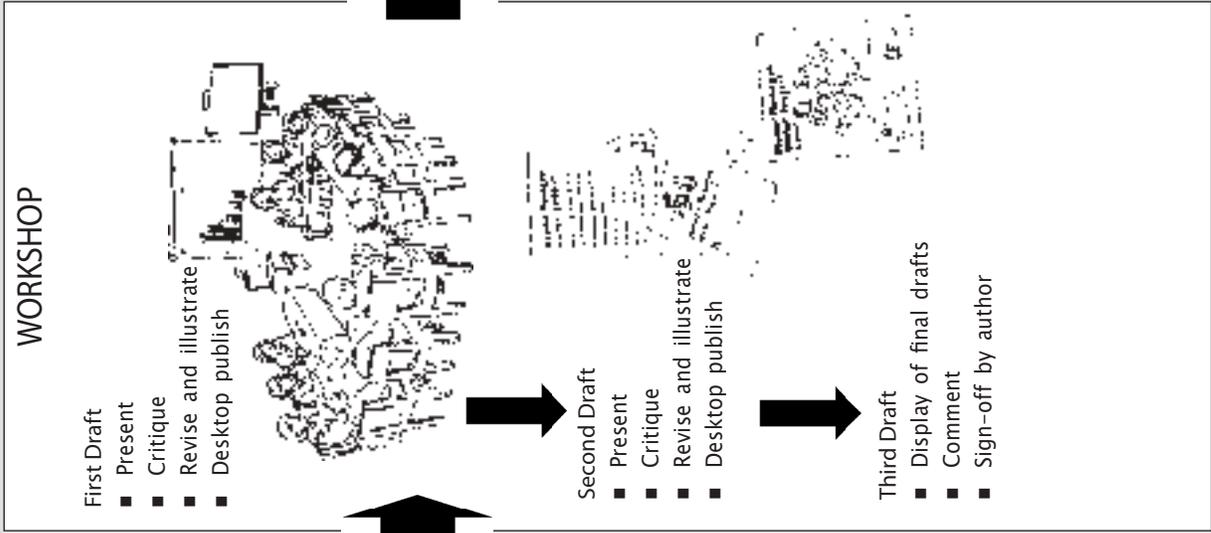
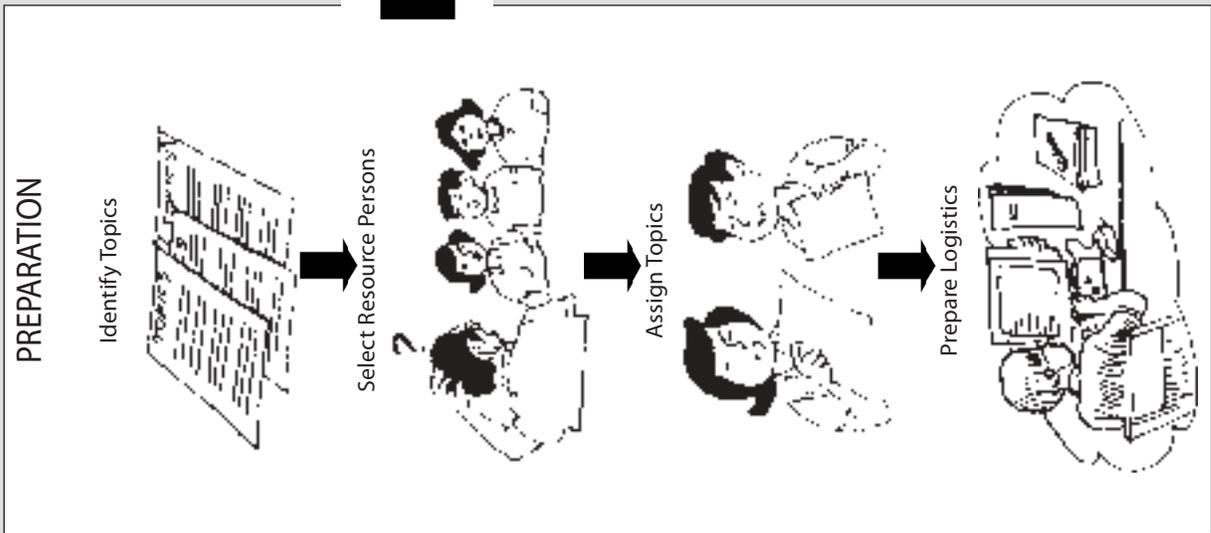
Each participant then presents his or her revised draft to the group a second time, also using transparencies. Again, the audience critiques it and suggests revisions. After the presentation, the editor and artist again help revise it and develop a third draft.



Towards the end of the workshop, the third draft is made available to participants for final comments and revisions. The final version can be completed, printed and distributed soon after the workshop.

A workshop usually lasts from 10-14 days.

The Participatory Workshop Process



Advantages of Participatory Workshops

■ The workshop allows ideas to be validated by a range of field practitioners representing different disciplines. Inputs from participants are incorporated, taking advantage of their diverse experience and expertise. The diversity of skills, organisations and backgrounds of participants is key to ensuring that diverse ideas are represented in the materials produced. The gathering of resource persons, editors, artists and desktop-publishing resources at one time and place also enables materials to be produced far more quickly than is typical for similar publications.

■ Members of the intended audience (e.g., trainers, extension personnel, project managers) who are also participants in the workshop help pre-test the texts and illustrations during the workshop.

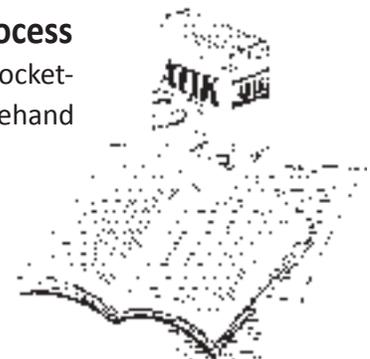
- The repeated presentations and critiquing of drafts allow each paper to be reviewed and revised substantially. Further, new topics are developed during the workshop; papers may be combined, dropped or split into parts.
- All materials undergo a significant transformation as a result of this process and subsequent drafts are presented until a generally wide level of satisfaction and acceptance is ensured. Group ownership of the product is developed.
- Products generated through a participatory workshop process gain wider acceptance, use and ownership.
- The sharing of experiences among participants during the workshop allows the development of networks that continue long after the end of the workshop itself.
- Workshops also provide an opportunity for a crash course on the workshop theme.

When is a Participatory Workshop Approach to Producing Information Materials Relevant?

- When there is a need to pull together diverse experiences (and proponents) working on specific thematic areas (to avoid competition, confusion, duplication, etc.)
- When impact must be demonstrated
- When a project wants to share its lessons and findings more widely
- When a pilot project or other small-scale experiment or activity merits wider expansion and use
- When a program is to be scaled-up by widening the "user" base (e.g., NGO attempting to mainstream its work at the government level)

Characteristics of Information Materials Produced Using the Process

- The publication resulting from the workshop can be loose-leaf, a set of pocket-sized booklets, or a bound book. The format and design can be set beforehand – or decided by the participants during the workshop itself.
- The broad theme is divided into smaller topics, each of which is covered by a manuscript prepared by a workshop participant.



- Each topic contains line drawings to illustrate and simplify key ideas. These are drawn during the workshop itself, and participants are asked to check the drawings for accuracy and ease of understanding.
- The publication contains only relevant and practical information. It is not a vehicle for lengthy literature reviews or for presentation of unnecessary details. Whenever possible, it provides technological options that show more than one way of doing the same thing.
- The concepts presented are compatible so that readers can easily select and combine those that are suitable for their own situation.

Key Findings (Based on 15 years of using the process)

- **There is no need to reinvent the wheel.**

Today, a huge amount of research outputs and field experience already exists, and there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The focus needs to shift on better use and application of research findings and previously learned lessons.

- **Most field practitioners and those closely linked with field experience are generous and willing to share information on best practices.**

Practitioners are almost always willing to be invited to share their experiences, accept positive criticism and suggestions for improvement of their papers. In a typical workshop, the number of papers invariably increases as people may volunteer to write new papers in response to the (information) gaps identified during the workshop itself. It is also during this time when participants might decide to organise a focus group to develop ideas for a “new” paper.

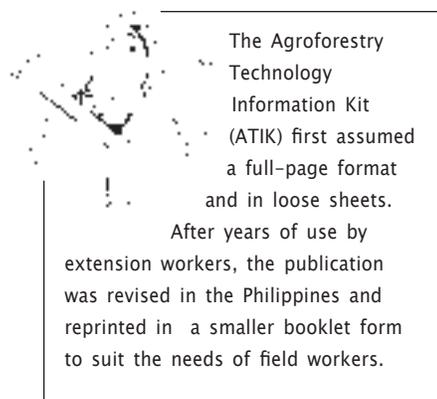
The participatory workshop process is also adapted by other organisations. The Asia-Pacific Agroforestry Network (APAN) and the Forest, Trees and People Project (FTPP) used the process to produce a publication on agroforestry promotion in Thailand after attending the workshop on the “Resource Management in Upland Areas in Southeast Asia”.

- **Enthusiasm for the process is generally ensured.**

Field workers and project managers often value the opportunity to get away from their work to sit down, reflect and write about their experiences. It is rarely a problem motivating them on the need for this, but what is invariably needed is the peer support that is demonstrated during the critiquing process and the 10-14 day period provided for revision.

IIRR and International Federation for Women in Agriculture (IFWA) collaborated in the production of a publication through a participatory process on “Environmentally Sound Technologies for Women in Agriculture”. A large number of researchers, extensionists, artists and production staff prepared scripts on subjects covering various areas. The publication has served as a resource material for enriching lectures, training sessions, radio and TV presentations and extension literature. Extensionists and trainers in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, etc., have extensively used the kit in their field extension work.

Writeshops enable practitioners to tell their own story. Field workers become “authors” of papers based on their own experiences. Academics and researchers, too, are able to present and share information in simplified language and formats, thereby ensuring wider access by a range of people.



■ **A consultation process characterises all stages.**

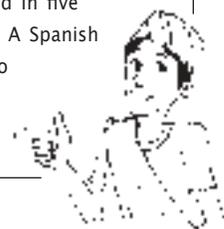
Consultation is featured at all stages in the workshop process. Right at the outset, when partners and sponsors are being identified, a huge amount of flexibility is demonstrated. If an agency is considered a major stakeholder and a major user of the publication it could be featured at the same place as the major donor. Workshops also provide a platform for all major players to be represented. A multi-agency effort is usually going to result in wider use of materials, thus contributing to scaling up and hopefully reduced competition.

Topics and authors are also selected through a consultative process which continues even through the workshop. Even the format, the cover and the size of the book are all determined in consultation with all the partners. The variation in shapes and size of the book is deliberate and designed to suit the preferences of those who ultimately will be the major users of the publication.

■ **The lack of a copyright is especially attractive to field workers concerned about intellectual property issues.**

There is an upsurge in awareness of intellectual property rights (IPR) issues including the matter of “outsiders” packaging field findings generated by field practitioners (or those close to the experience). The fact that photocopying is also often restricted when publications are copyrighted is also another concern (especially in countries with strict IPR legislation). One could find oneself in a situation of not being able to photocopy one’s own article included in a publication with copyrights.

Organisations and individuals are free to translate the information materials. The information kit, The Bio-intensive Approach to Small-Scale Household Food Production, has been adapted and translated in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Laos, Nepal, Thailand and in five Philippine dialects. A Spanish adaptation has also been published.



In contrast, materials produced under the participatory workshop process are not copyrighted. In fact, potential users are even encouraged to photocopy the material. Field workers and managers also come to the workshop to utilise the publishing facilities (editors, artists and desktop publishing staff) for their own purposes and needs.

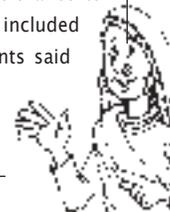
■ **Focusing on basic principles and processes allows for wider application and use.**

The workshops encourage participants to focus on principles drawn from practice rather than on very specific technologies. The emphasis on principles allows for wider application/extrapolation of a practice found to be exemplary in a specific setting. Materials based on this principle foster further testing and adaptation. Focusing on principles and processes (rather than on specific technologies) allows for wider use in scaling-up efforts.

■ Fostering adaptations in other settings

Participants attending such workshops return to their respective organisations with a better appreciation for the role of quality materials, the value of subjecting materials to peer review, and the need to carefully scrutinize what goes to print. Feedback from the field has also indicated that staff returning back now write better reports (more useful, reader-friendly and with an increased use of visuals).

The resource book "Regenerative Agricultural Technologies for the Hill Farmers of Nepal" was adapted by the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) to cater to the needs of women. ICIMOD decided to use a gender screen in revising the materials to ensure special relevance to women. Ironically, some of the materials included in the earlier version (which the proponents said were of special relevance to women) were the first to be rejected by the women in the villages.



■ Adequate follow-up can be assured by partnering with the right players

Generating good materials is not enough. Follow up, utilisation, translation and adaptation of the materials to community settings are equally important. By partnering with Southern "support" institutions and broadening the ownership of the publication, there is an increased assurance of quality follow up beyond the mere generation of materials. This is less likely to happen if materials are copyrighted.

In 1999, MYRADA adapted the "writeshop" methodology to develop its manual on Capacity Building of Self-Help Groups. Instead of completing the entire production at once, a series of workshops lasting 3-4 days each was conducted within six months. In each workshop, teams of trainers from MYRADA's projects listed out possible modules, developed and presented them to the plenary. Each of the 24 modules was critiqued, modified and taken back to the field for testing. The tested modules were modified in subsequent workshops. To keep costs low, two computers were used during the workshops, while the desktop publishing was completed after the fourth workshop.

The "writeshops" not only helped MYRADA put together its training experiences into a book (which was a challenge in itself) but also share and disseminate learning among various persons and projects.

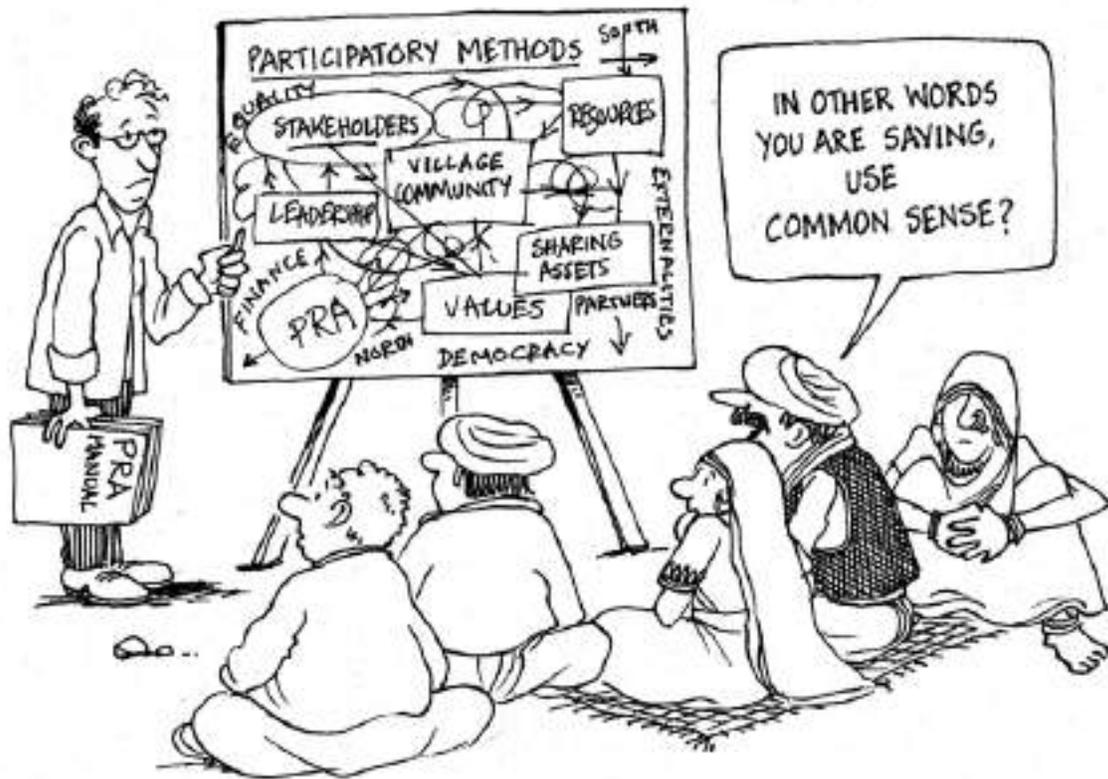


Challenges

- Participatory workshops are logistically demanding and it takes a lot of time, effort and resources to bring together the various components to ensure a quality product (multi-disciplinary participants, competent production staff, reliable equipment, etc.).
- Working with multiple partners can at times slow down the post-workshop phase as every partner wants to have a stake on the final product.
- Feedback from the field on the use of the materials is encouraging, but the systematic monitoring of impact at the community level remains a challenge.

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part 3

Participatory Project Planning and Implementation

Searching for Participatory Approaches in China: Findings of the Yunnan PRA Network



The implementation of the Yunnan Upland Management Project, a Ford Foundation funded project initiated in 1990, created a demand for participatory approaches in Yunnan Province of China. The project, with a staff of more than 50 researchers and officials from 13 institutes, aimed at preparing approaches for sustainable development in Yunnan's upland areas. The project selected four sites that reflect different geographical conditions. From 1990 to 1993, project staff were trained in and practised the skills for interviewing, rapid rural appraisal (RRA), monitoring and evaluation. Projects in each of the four sites went through processes of surveys of household demands, design of project activities, including agricultural and livestock interventions, and other income generating activities.

Participatory approaches were introduced in Yunnan Province, the People's Republic of China, in 1993. Since then, a group of practitioners in Yunnan has started to search for ways of implementing participatory approaches within the Chinese context. This paper summarises the major findings of the practitioners' experiences in research, action and extension projects, and presents the current state of practitioners' thinking on participation.

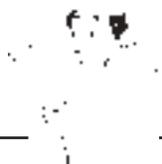
The project staff and local officials decided on what project activities to undertake and when to conduct them. Villagers could only present their needs. In 1993, it was found that the project staff felt very happy about the project's outputs, such as increases in grain yields, household incomes and services to the poor. These outputs met some of the villagers' needs as well as the project's preset objectives. However, project staff were concerned that the villagers often ended up as passive "receptients", either waiting to join in the designed activities or expecting to be "motivated".

"Thank you very much for your help, but what do you want us to do next?"

At the same time, the project staff discovered the richness of the villagers' knowledge about their farming systems, knowledge which was not fully recognised in the project activities. Villagers often utilised these practical skills and knowledge to solve difficulties during project implementation. Yet, the project staff began to realise that their earlier approaches only helped to strengthen the villagers' dependence on outsiders and this could not lead to sustainable development in the long run.

PRA Potentials in China

In a poverty alleviation planning exercise undertaken in Qianmai Township [funded by the Network to learn PRA potentials in Chinese context], local officials were trained in participatory methods, and undertook in-depth planning exercises in sample villages. They also held extensive consultations on specific topics to enlarge the scale of the planning. These measures can fill the gap between the limitation of villagers' knowledge at the small scale and the requirements of planning on a larger scale, leading to better quality planning. The trial also revealed several issues, including the need to take into account the perspectives of different stakeholders and their roles during the planning process, and issues concerning integration of participatory with existing and conventional plans.



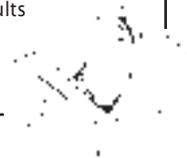
Around this time, a book entitled *Rural Appraisal: Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory* by Robert Chambers came to our attention. The theory and methods presented in the book appeared to be very relevant to our problems. Dr. Chambers was invited to conduct a training workshop on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) at Kunming in December, 1993. This signified the formal introduction of participatory approaches in Yunnan, and the PRA Network was established after the workshop to learn and promote participatory approaches for rural development in China.

The Yunnan PRA Network funded ten pilot projects to help some members to apply PRA as tools in their researches. Other members started to apply PRA to their own projects.

In 1995, PRA practitioners in Yunnan gradually realised that the potential of participatory approaches depends as much in action projects as in surveys and assessments. It was recognised that communities should be recognised as key stakeholders in decision-making processes, in operational management and in the sharing of benefits.

Villagers' Contribution

Another monitoring and evaluation exercise of government projects at the township level using villagers' evaluation criteria found that participatory monitoring and evaluation could reveal practical constraints to project achievements, many of which would not have been thought of by outsiders. Local officials are willing to accept such results and appreciated the capabilities and knowledge of villagers.



Applying PRA to Action Projects

Social forestry

Although considered as simple and quick methods for forestry [departments] operations, the conventional approach to reforestation projects excludes villagers from decision-making about where to plant what kind of trees and how to manage them. This often leads to low survival rates of trees. The Yunnan Forestry Department has experimented with social forestry approaches in three villages. Beneficiaries are now involved in the whole project cycle, and most important of all get a share of the benefits. One current concern is to develop suitable methods and criteria to evaluate the impact of the new approaches.



Improvement of shifting cultivation practices

Villagers see shifting cultivation as an important part of their livelihood and farming systems and biodiversity specialists regard it as a central practice for maintaining biodiversity in tropical uplands. However, officials believe that shifting cultivation destroys forests and must be replaced by sedentary practices. The challenge has been to seek improvements or alternatives to these practices. Participatory approaches have been applied to this issue in an action-research project that involved villagers, local officials and researchers in a joint search for solutions. The resulting action-research recommended ways to decrease the negative impact of shifting cultivation which were acceptable to stakeholders, thereby leading to action.

Community-based conservation and development

The Caohai Nature Reserve in Guizhou Province is densely populated. Poor villagers around Lake Caohai have to produce grain by converting wetlands to farmland. They are often regarded as destroyers of the environment because their activity threatens the habitat of endangered birds. Facilitated by outsider PRA practitioners including the reserve staff, the local villagers have developed their own systems and rules for the management of 'community trust funds', thus developing a mechanism to

create opportunities for non-farming income generation. This strategy has helped to make villagers the beneficiaries as well as the protectors of the environment, rather than its destroyers. The reserve management office has had to adapt its management style from that of controller to that of facilitator, even to the point of agreeing to being monitored by the villagers. This change in institutional approach has been essential to sustaining the villagers' action. Similar findings have been shown by the experiences at Zixishan Nature Reserve, Yunnan Province.

Main Learning

It is not enough for practitioners to have knowledge, skills and experience of participatory approaches. They must also be equipped with the necessary capabilities, coordination and facilitation skills, etc.

Applying PRA to Other Projects

Through our Network activities of training, learning by doing and experience-exchange, PRA practitioners in Yunnan now provide services to projects initiated and funded by the donor community. They advocate and provide support to projects initiated by the government. In the first kind of project, PRA practitioners introduce participatory approaches by providing training and technical assistance at different stages of the project cycle. Such projects have included those of a wide range of donors and international

non-government organisations (NGOs). Several provincial government agencies (Forestry Department, Education Commission, Scientific and Technology Commission, Health Department, Yunnan Office for Poverty Alleviation and Environment Department) have started to test participatory approaches to their projects. Our main learning is that it is not enough for practitioners to have knowledge, skills and experience of participatory approaches. They must also be equipped with training capabilities, coordination and facilitation skills, advocacy tactics, organisational management, project development and consultancy skills. A lot of PRA practitioners in Yunnan now recognise the change of their roles, i.e., to be trainers, facilitators, project managers or advocates. However, few practitioners have reflected on the effectiveness and efficiency of these measures for extending participatory approaches.

Learning from Participatory Approaches

Theory and philosophy

Perspectives on participatory approaches differ slightly among PRA practitioners in Yunnan. Some regard participatory approaches as a method for conducting surveys or assessments. But an increasing number see participatory approaches as a philosophy and an important part of development theory.

The theory of participatory approaches is based on assumptions which imply that, given the opportunity, one would participate in discussions or actions that affect one's interests. Being concerned with one's own interests, one also participates in collective initiatives with the hope of achieving gains during the process. This theory further implies that as the subject (not object) of development, project beneficiaries (not others) should make decisions about their own destinies. Many PRA practitioners in Yunnan point out that for effective and sustainable participation, it is necessary for government officials and scientists, not just communities, to cooperate in planning, decision making and implementation.

Enabling environment

The adoption and application of participatory development in China requires changes in policies, institutional arrangements and working procedures. Although essential, changes in personal behaviour and attitude are not enough because a person's role is largely determined by institutional policies. Participatory development requires an enabling environment, which differs from country to country due to differences in culture and political systems. In debating the required changes, PRA practitioners in Yunnan often focus on the changes needed in the respective roles of government, communities and development workers.

Key Learnings about PRA from Action Projects in Yunnan

Social Forestry Projects

Participatory approaches require:

- changes in attitude and behaviour of foresters;
- skills in participatory approaches and community organisation;
- openness and flexibility in project design and management;
- mechanisms for community-based management; and
- more time and human effort investment in the initial stages.

Community-based Conservation and Development Project

Participatory action requires:

- respect for villagers' desires and trust in their capabilities;
- transparency in the process of development;
- an enabling environment for villagers to operate; and
- staff capabilities, institutional capacities and appropriate management styles.

Improvements to "Shifting Cultivation" Practices

Key factors for success include:

- building communication channels between the different stakeholders;
- assuring transparency of project components and funding arrangements;
- drawing on indigenous knowledge and practices;
- strengthening of conflict resolution mechanisms;

Source: Zhou 1998, Wang, et al. 1997, Lu, X, et al. 1998, Xu 1998



Summary of Changes Needed to Support the Practice of Participatory Development

Changes required in the government	Changes required in the community	Changes required among development workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Decentralise decision-making processes and focus on macro measures. ■ Make policies, procedures and management styles more open and flexible. ■ Create space for bottom-up approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop their own organisation and institutional mechanism for conflict resolution. ■ Enhance their abilities and skills to tackle problems and opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Change their attitudes and behaviour. ■ Enhance their capabilities in advocacy, training, coordination, facilitation and management as well as participatory practice.

Prepared by:
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Introducing Participatory Processes among Ethnic Minorities: Challenges in Vietnam



This paper focuses on the challenges in introducing participatory processes amongst ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The Poverty Alleviation Project funded by Bilance, Netherlands focuses amongst others on:

- infrastructure;
- income-generation; and
- capacity-building through participatory processes.

Vietnam is an agricultural country with about 78% of the population living in rural areas. Based on its natural and socio-economic conditions, Vietnam is divided into eight agro-economic regions of which the Central Highland is one of the poorest. In this region people from different ethnic minorities live in harsh natural conditions with little or no infrastructure, low literacy, high school drop-out rates and “backward” customs. The region also has a very high poverty rate of 40% compared to the national average of about 27%.

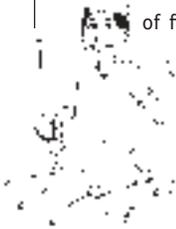
Shifting cultivation is widely practised by the ethnic minorities and this has led to environmental degradation, loss of soil fertility and even floods in the lower regions. To help improve their living conditions, the government, in 1997, initiated priority projects on agricultural development and poverty alleviation in three provinces of the Central Highland.

Use of PRA in Poverty Alleviation Project

Keeping in mind the target group's capacity to understand and participate in the process, PRA tools, such as mapping, matrix ranking, group discussions, etc., were used to:

- collect basic data of villages;
- analyse the data collected;
- identify common problems;
- evaluate agricultural productivity;
- evaluate forestry activities and cropping patterns;
- wealth ranking; and
- assist village development planning.

Throughout the entire exercise farmers are the main actors. The project staff only facilitates the appraisal method, analysis of information, summing up of findings, recording the results and writing the report.



Putting People First

People's participation is crucial to the sustainability of any project; developmental activities cannot succeed without their active participation. To achieve this:

- inform them about the objectives, the activities and the benefits of their participation;
- tell them about their responsibilities for the sustainability of the project;
- inform residents about the work to be undertaken in their community; and
- involve representatives from different ethnic groups in all meetings and other processes of monitoring and evaluation.

This will not only empower them but also help them in decision-making.



Challenges in Using PRA

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is a relatively new concept for the ethnic minorities of the Central Highland province. Although efforts were made to involve local beneficiaries in all aspects of the project cycle, the mobilisation of farmer participation, particularly those from the ethnic minorities, was a major challenge. The following are some of the challenges faced during the process:



- The ethnic minorities are made up of various small groups with diverse dialects and cultures and little or no knowledge of Vietnamese (the national language). Such communication gaps have limited effective use of participatory tools and methodologies.
- The minorities live in isolated scattered areas and long distances make it difficult for them to gather for meetings or PRA exercises.
- The people find it difficult to understand that participation is their right or responsibility. In many instances, people do not participate in PRAs as they think it as a waste of time and resources.

- The illiteracy rate is high at 70% and the average level of literacy is only up to Class 3. The men are usually more educated than the women. This hampers the participation of women.
- Getting willing local facilitators is another major problem not only because of the low literacy rate but also due to the people's perception of PRA exercises as not immediately useful.



- Understanding the tradition and culture of numerous ethnic communities is another major concern as it determines people's participation.
- Matrilineal is prevalent in some areas but this has had no effect on the participation of women even in issues related to them.
- More men attend meetings, as they are held in higher esteem than the women.
- Convincing the locals about the benefits of participating in PRAs has been more difficult because of their casual attitude to the process.
- The people are normally very shy and usually do not open up during meetings.
- The project facilitators summarise the data or information collected for the communities to learn and understand the purpose of the exercise.

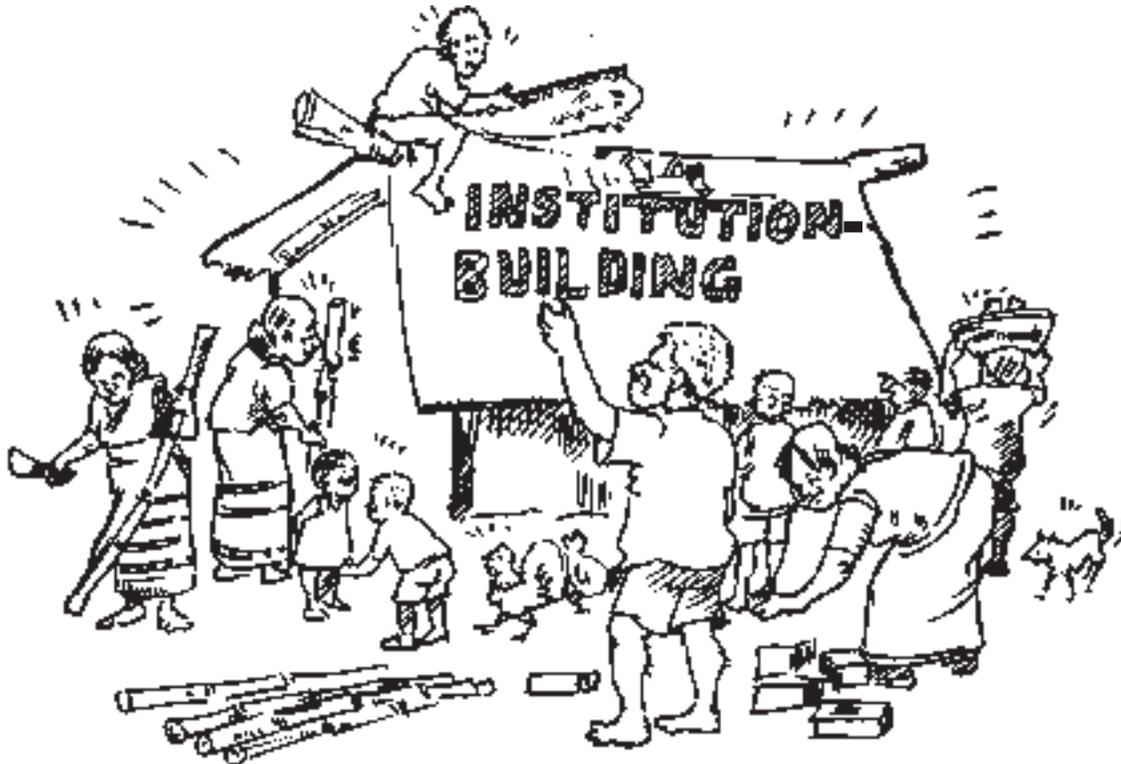
Lessons Learned

- Encourage communities to take part in planning meetings and project management activities.
- Ensure that both men and women attend meetings and that the *Kinh* (major Vietnamese groups) of different social and economic groups are well represented. The participation of different people can prevent unforeseen negative impacts on project activities.
- The project facilitators must always keep in mind the different challenges and problems during all stages of the project cycle.
- Improve the capacity of project facilitators through further trainings.
- The project staff must be patient with the people.
- Make people comfortable and encourage participation.
- Proving alternatives might be necessary but it is not easy. It must not conflict with the customs and traditions of the communities concerned.
- Arrange or plan PRA meetings, keeping in mind the people's free time, e.g., avoid harvesting or planting seasons.
- Ensure that the meeting place is convenient and comfortable to encourage people to attend.

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Prepared by:
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Participatory Process in Institution-Building: Experiences from Northeast India



Northeast India is home to more than 250 different indigenous ethnic communities with very diverse cultural and socio-economic bases. The region presents a complex socio-cultural framework with a unique set of challenges. Agriculture is the primary occupation and most of the communities have a strong dependency on forests and their resources. Increases in population and the continued diversion of forestlands for the traditional system of shifting cultivation have resulted in serious environmental consequences in these areas of high biodiversity.

Many development initiatives have been launched in the region but most of them have not succeeded because the projects were technically inappropriate, socio-culturally insensitive or because of the incapability of implementing agencies (both local and state government). The most important factor in this region remains the strong traditional systems.

The North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas was initiated by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to address the issue of livelihood from a natural resource management perspective. The project extends over six villages in the three states of Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam. It aims to search for more sustainable economic bases in a participatory approach, keeping in mind the local contexts and institutions.

The Traditional Institutions

Most traditional institutions are not very broadly based; the village councils are composed of elders and clan representatives who generally come from the “elite” of the village community. Women are usually excluded. The traditional institutions differ within the three states but most of them have functional similarities. Their major functions are land management, enforcement of traditional and customary law, settlement of disputes, management of forests, collection of revenue, etc.

The traditional institutions are generally not very democratic in nature as all sections of the community do not get represented in decision-making processes. The village chief with his council of elders decides on almost all issues regarding the development of the village. This has an inherent disadvantage, especially on issues related to equity and poverty. Of late, a number of government development programmes are being implemented through these traditional institutions but experiences have shown that many of the latter lack transparency and accountability especially when it comes to management of funds.

Natural Resource Management Groups (NaRM-G)

Sustaining long-term interventions, especially in development activities, requires strong institutional arrangements. Institution-building becomes necessary not only to respond to the preferences of the people but also to efficiently utilise the natural resources and traditional knowledge of the areas. The institutions must provide services consistent with people’s aspirations, tastes and preferences.

Site-specific choices can only be made through the full participation of the local communities. Bringing decision-making to the point of action can also significantly reduce the cost of information, in which case locally built people’s institutions become the keystone.

It is in this context that the North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas facilitated the formation of the NaRM-G to supplement the existing traditional institutions and to help the communities to develop a more development-oriented institutional framework.



Salient Features of the Natural Resource Management Group (NaRM-G)

- The NaRM-G is a complementary institution to existing institutions in the villages.
- The NaRM-G comprises both women and men from each household of the village; 30% of the executive body members must be women.
 - One of the three signatories for the NaRM-fund operation is a woman.
 - No funds can be withdrawn or utilised without a written resolution passed by all members of the NaRM-G.
- All members must attend meetings which are held at regular intervals.
- Built-in mechanisms, such as community action plan charts, monitor the activities of all members and strict sanctions, are imposed against defaulters.
- The NaRM-G is democratic and participatory in decision-making assuring transparency and accountability to all members.

The Institution-Building Process

A team consisting of project staff, local NGOs and government line departments visits the villages a number of times to discuss various issues relating to their day-to-day life. The team explains the project and its objectives. Several discussions are held with the village headmen, chiefs and other local leaders; after the initial visits, the community and the team jointly hold a three-day camp at the village. The village community usually provides a place to stay, cook food, etc. During these camps, various tools of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) on development and livelihood contexts are applied. These exercises help the community to analyse into their situations leading to lots of debate amongst themselves. PRA tools like Venn diagrams and institutional linkage maps are used to discuss existing institutional arrangements within the community.

Rapport-building between the team and the community

- Clearly state the objectives and purpose of visits
- Conduct discussions on issues and problems.
- Meet with individual households through house visits.
 - Be sensitive in understanding the community.
 - Make overnight stays compulsory.
 - Visit the village in adverse conditions (during rains, in the evening) when they are at home.
 - Never visit the village with politicians and public leaders.
 - Do not stay in the house of the village headman or other socially important people.



Facilitating Conflict Resolution

The Dimasa Kachari village of Gurubari is located at the north Cachar hills of Assam. The Gava Burha (traditional village institute) not only enforces the customary laws and administration but is also the custodian of the village lands and forests. Women are not admitted into the council.

The project team visited the village to explore the possibility of establishing a NaRM-G, which will include women as members. The menfolk objected to this saying that women will not only find it difficult to attend meetings but also that this will add to their burden. The team and the villagers failed to reach an agreement, so the team decided to meet the women separately. During the discussion, the women expressed their desire to be part of the NaRM-G, but wanted to set up a separate woman's group that would act as a pressure group. A women's self-help group (SHG) was therefore formed; within one month, they initiated a meeting with all the village community where they demanded their participation in the NaRM-G.

Today, the NaRM-G of the village has both men and women as members and they take decisions jointly. Facilitating the dialogue between the two groups and not imposing objectives upon the community was an important learning because doing things otherwise might not have yielded the desired results.





Participatory exercises through PRA

- Focus on institution-building.
- Hold discussions with the community on the purpose of the exercises.
 - Involve all members in the discussion.
 - Never generate information which cannot be used by both the community and the team (the principle of optimal ignorance).

Facilitating to build new institutions (NaRM-G)

- Relate to the PRA exercises.
- Understand relationships between the institution and the community.
- Emphasise why women should be part of the institution. Make sure that the women are heard and actively participate.



- Ensure participation of all members of the community.
- Discuss the project and how it can be achieved with the existing institutional setup.
- Never suggest to build a new institution.
- Never have discussions without the presence of village elders and the village headmen.

People's Institutions: The Strength Within

Chandigiri is a village in the Garo hills of Meghalaya. The community consists of the ethnic Garo group where the head of the village is the Nokama or custodian of the village land and resources. In this community, women own the land and it is the husband who is called the Nokama. The village already had a resource management committee consisting of both men and women to look after their natural resource. The committee also imposed strong sanctions against those who break the rules.

When the project initiated the formation of a NaRM-G, the village committee was willing not only to accept and adopt the project principles but also strengthen their institution and function as the NaRM-G. Today, this committee has all the women in the village in their general body. This shows that it is not always necessary to build new institutions, but that it is possible to build upon existing institutions.



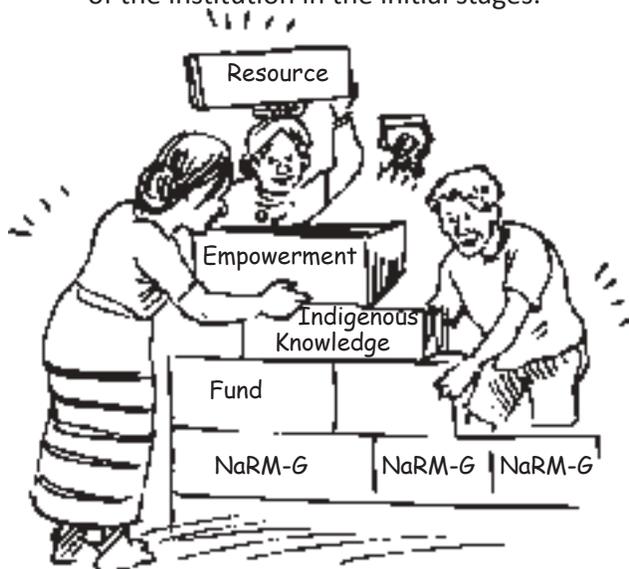
Social agreement

- Discuss the objectives and role of the institutions.
- Facilitate the formulation of rules and regulations with the community.
- Discuss the mode and method of operation.
- Discuss the functions of the newly-formed institution.
- Discuss the relationship between the newly-formed institution and the traditional institution.
- Make sure that all agreements are based on consensus and not only on the views of the majority.



Consolidating and strengthening the new institution (NaRM-G)

- Conduct adequate training at the village level on institutional management.
- Develop a self-monitoring system to strengthen the institution.
 - Try and avoid conflicts of interest among the members during the formation stage.
 - Facilitators to regularly attend the meetings of the institution in the initial stages.



People's Institutions: They Know Best

Halang Village in Ukhrul district of the state of Manipur has 365 households. On deliberations with the village authority and elders, they voiced their apprehension of such a large NaRM-G where every household is represented. It would not only be difficult to sit together and plan but also make it difficult for the poor and the resource-poor people of the village to be heard.

After a prolonged discussion, the villagers proposed that each Tang (sector) could have a NaRM-G. This will not only be easy to manage but also be more effective. Moreover, each Tang can represent the resource-poor from their respective Tang. They also suggested that the apex body could be the village authority to take decisions on activities like roads, drinking water, etc. The apex body decided that it will not operate any bank accounts but help to consolidate the common infrastructures and activities. An important learning from this experience is that, given the right facilitation, existing institutions are capable of undertaking their own decisions.

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Stakeholder Involvement in Participatory Practices: An Overview of Bangladesh NGOs



CARE-Bangladesh has carried out a long range strategic planning (LRSP) exercise for setting programme and organisational directions. One of its strategic directions is to promote stakeholder participation in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development programmes. Documentation and sharing best-practices on stakeholders' participation form an integral part of the LRSP.

A task force (team) was set-up to learn about varied experiences relating to stakeholders' participation in development programmes.

Methodology Followed

The team identified participants, project staff, Government of Bangladesh counterparts, partner non-government organisations (NGOs), donors, research/academic institutions and CARE International as the primary stakeholders. Information and data were collected from both primary and secondary sources.

Selection of Projects for the Study

The team randomly selected three projects each out of three sectors namely: agriculture and natural resources; rural infrastructure; health and population. One partner NGO was selected purposively from the small economic activity development sector. In all, 10 projects implemented by CARE-Bangladesh were selected for gathering information and data.

The purpose was to select both international and national NGOs working in Bangladesh. Criteria used were: regional coverage and size of the organisation. The organisations that were practicing participatory approaches and had partnership with CARE were given preference. External organisations selected were: Scheme for Underprivileged People to Organise Themselves (SUPOTH), Action-Aid, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), CARITAS, SAMATA, BANSTESHAKA and Barisal Development Society (BDS).

Data collection

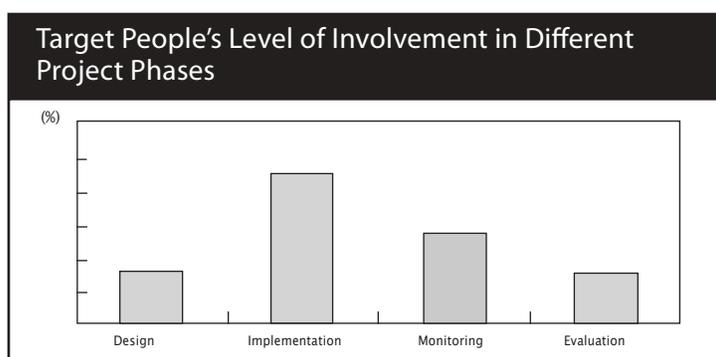
Data was collected through:

- focus group discussions (FGDs) at different levels;
- interview of key persons; and
- review of documents.

Major Findings

Participation of target beneficiaries

An attempt was made to determine the extent to which participatory approaches were practiced by different NGOs to involve participants/beneficiaries in different phases of the project. The participation was measured against the elements under each phase of the project. The following diagram shows that different organisations and the projects under study are using participatory approaches in different degrees. The survey indicated that the beneficiaries (target people) participated the most during implementation (93%) and least in designing and evaluating the project (32% and 31% respectively).



Elements of Project Phases

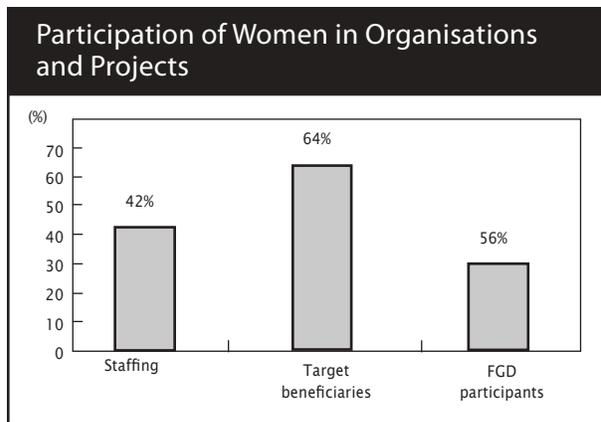
- A. Design Phase
 - Need assessment
 - Problem analysis and prioritisation
 - Goal, log-frame and strategy formulation

- B. Implementation Phase
 - Activity planning and targetting
 - Activity implementation
 - Negotiated indicators [participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME)/ participatory learning and action (PLA) process, etc.]
 - Problem identification and solving (on-going phase)
 - Negotiated changes in strategy (on-going phase)

- C. Monitoring Phase
 - Baseline activities and expectation setting
 - Progress monitoring
 - Analysis of results
 - Result sharing

- D. Evaluation Phase
 - Evaluation of technical, social and economic changes/impact due to the project
 - Result sharing
 - Sustainability and replication
 - Future programme direction articulation

Similarly, variations in the participation of beneficiaries in inter-organisation and inter-project levels were analysed. In most cases, the target beneficiaries were involved in some of the stages of project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However, their participation was not found to be effective in all phases of the projects.



Women’s participation

The study also investigated the level of women’s participation in project activities, their number among project staff, target beneficiaries and focus group discussion (FGD) participants. The data show that the participation of women had been quite appreciable in all the phases.

Overall participation

The field staff and the participants felt that they were suitably involved in the process of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of the projects and that this contributed significantly towards improving their analytical and decision-making skills. They were more confident and had developed a sense of ownership in their organisations.

Participatory practices in different phases

The study revealed various similarities and dissimilarities in participatory practices used by different organisations at different phases. An attempt was made to document different best/exemplary practices of ensuring participation in the project cycle including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The experiences drawn at different phases are presented below:

A. Design Phase

Potential Participatory Practices

- Conducting needs assessments deploying holistic approaches (e.g., HLSA, ZOPP, REFLECT method) or applying participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools (e.g., transect walk, community mapping, large group discussion, focus group, wealth ranking, key informants, seasonalities, household interview, etc.)
- Needs assessments by applying PLA process.
- Problem identification meeting at the village level.
- Beneficiaries’ opinion surveys (on-going phase).
- Taking views from the staff in meetings.
- Design workshops involving different level of stakeholders.

Experience

Involvement of the community/target groups at the design phase was minimum. The senior programme officials did most of the designing. Although many organisations/projects were following a bottom-up approach in designing projects involving people and different levels of stakeholders, they did not ensure meaningful involvement of the people at all stages of the design, e.g., needs assessment, problem analysis, formulation of goals and strategies.

For smaller NGOs, costs and lack of in-house expertise were the main limiting factors to conduct an in-depth needs assessment and design involving different levels of stakeholders.

B. Implementation Phase

Potential Participatory Practices

- Activity planning through PME/PLA, group discussion.
- Regular monthly meetings with groups.
- Regular monthly, bi-monthly/quarterly meetings with field-level staff.
- Monthly and semestral local chapter/ federation meetings.
- Weekly group meetings (mainly savings and credit groups).
- Monthly courtyard sessions.
- Doorstep meetings with target groups.
- Need-based seasonal meetings with target groups.
- Annual review and planning meetings with project field staff.
- Group elections to change the leadership (annual/every two-years).
- Annual general meetings of local committees (chapter, federation, union).
- Local bodies elections (chapter, federation, union).

Experience

Involvement of different stakeholders, particularly project target groups and field workers, was observed to be high at different stages of implementation. Target groups and ground-level extensionists were very much involved in activity planning and implementation. There was a wide variation in approaches to ensuring the involvement of stakeholders (particularly target groups) in progress monitoring, problem identification and changes in strategies. In most of the projects, only the senior management/Government of Bangladesh counterparts and donors had designed the broader implementation framework. According to their needs, the participants and grassroot-level field workers prepared field level implementation plans, keeping in mind the broader implementation framework. They also applied participatory approaches to their work.

C. Monitoring Phase

Potential Participatory Practices

- PME/PLA sessions.
- Monitoring by local committee.
- Open discussions with villagers.
- Progress review at the group level.
- Receiving feedback from the groups.
- Progress review and analysis with the staff in monthly meetings.
- Result-sharing at the group level (monthly, seasonal, annual).
- Sharing output/progress at the annual general meeting by the local chapter, federation, union).
- Sharing the monitoring report at different levels.

Experience

Some organisations provide assurance of involvement of stakeholders particularly direct project participants in monitoring the progress or results. Involvement of the people, however, was not ensured at all stages, like result monitoring, analysis and decision-making. Organisations provided for increased participation in PME/PLA/group sessions.

D. Evaluation Phase

Potential Participatory Practices

- Seasonal evaluation applying PLA/PME.
- Self-evaluation engaging different stakeholders.
- Sharing evaluation findings with the participants and staff.
- Sharing evaluation findings in the chapter, federation and union meetings.
- Sharing evaluation reports.

Experience

Both summative and formative evaluations were done externally or by the senior staff of the project/ organisation using log-frame indicators and pre-designed methods and tools. Few organisations/projects were applying participatory approaches like PME, PLA, self-evaluation, sharing of evaluation findings and involving project participants, community and field-level staff in the process.

It was observed that there were some exemplary practices of sharing evaluation findings at different levels, particularly at the project beneficiary level, during annual general meetings. Future directions are also articulated through this process.

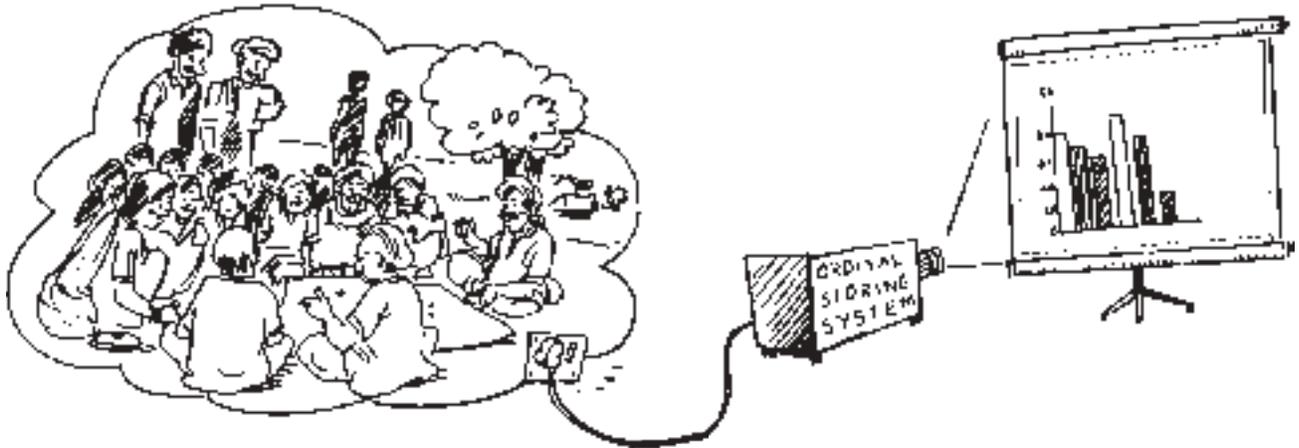
All the development organisations brought under the purview of the study are making serious efforts to involve different stakeholders by applying different participatory practices. But full-scale/meaningful involvement of both male and female target groups/beneficiaries and other stakeholders in different phases of the project cycle was hardly observed. In spite of these conditions, national, international, regional and local NGOs are trying to adapt different participatory practices to ensure involvement of different stakeholders.



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RESOURCE BOOK PRODUCED IN A PARTICIPATORY WRITESHOP ORGANISED BY THE International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), South East Asian Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN), MYRADA and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR).

Enhancing the “Assessment” in Participatory Assessments



Ordinal scoring systems convert qualitative information from participatory assessments into numbers, and assist the analysis of such information. But there are several pitfalls in this process – villagers may find it difficult to self-score, the scale categories may not capture field reality, or the ordinal scoring system may not capture interesting and relevant project processes – which affect the validity and reliability of results. This is unfortunate given the rich possibilities of ordinal scoring systems to complement participatory assessments. This paper presents and draws on two recent participatory assessment exercises to highlight concerns and illustrate good practices. It also describes how such assessments can be extended, for instance, for use in project geographical information system (GIS), to exploit the possibilities offered by a sound ordinal scoring system to complement participatory assessment methodologies.

The PLA and the MPA

The term methodology for participatory assessments (MPA) was coined by a multidisciplinary team working on the global participatory learning for action (PLA) Initiative study for the Water and Sanitation Program. The PLA study assessed 88 communities in 15 countries using the MPA.

Key features of the MPA

- A specially developed analytical framework which identifies the main factors affecting sustained and effective use of project facilities, and hence, the key indicators and sub-indicators to be assessed. These were developed after intensive discussions with community men and women, project field staff, NGOs and resource persons in different countries. Special attention was paid to prevent the process from becoming extractive, and to include indicators sensitive to gender and poverty.

■ **A number of commonly used participatory tools** such as wealth assessments, transect walks, card scoring, matrix voting and stakeholder meets. Tools were carefully chosen to suit the context as the same information can be generated using different tools.



- **A codebook** which specified ordinal rating scales (from 0 to 100) to capture field realities accurately and to assist field workers experienced in participatory assessments to translate qualitative field experience into ordinal scores.
- **Community folders** to note the raw (tool-specific) information from the community assessments, and special qualitative issues which explained the scores given.
- **Basic ordinal statistical analysis** including frequency analysis, cross-tabulations and correlation analysis, done using a spreadsheet software and without specially developed software.

Strengths of the MPA

While the individual elements of the MPA have been used before in participatory assessments, it is the way these have been combined into a single methodology that is its real strength. In particular, four aspects of this methodology stand out:

1. **A holistic approach to assessing sustainability.** This links sustainability with gender, poverty, participation and demand-responsive approaches, using participatory assessments. It also links community, institutional and policy levels, visualising sustainability as a goal that must be pursued simultaneously at these three levels.
2. **Emphasis on capturing processes.** The response categories of the ordinal scoring system seek to capture not mere quantitative aspects or subjective value judgements, but the nature of the underlying process. This enables easy identification of good and bad performance across project communities, and also permits meaningful comparison of community experience across regions and even countries, in terms of graphs and tables, and basic statistical analysis.
3. **Retention of supporting qualitative information.** Normally, participatory assessments using ordinal scores do not report why a particular response was given. The use of community folders ensures that users at the project and programme levels can always go back to individual community folders to understand these reasons.
4. **Multiple-use of information.** A single round of assessments generates information that can be used, in appropriate formats, by the community (e.g., maps, achievement ladders, etc.), and also by project management and policy-makers (graphs, tables, spreadsheets, etc).

Applying the MPA Principles: the DOON Watershed Study

A socio-economic and environmental impact study of the 7-year-old Doon Valley Integrated Watershed Management Project (Dehradun, India) was conducted in 1999-2000, adapting certain features of the MPA to the new context, namely, participatory assessments, ordinal scoring systems and multiple-use information.

The adaptation of the MPA to the watershed context, and its focus on socio-economic and environmental impact rather than on sustainability, necessitated a complete re-definition of the indicators and the ordinal scoring system.

Significant aspects of the DOON study

Ordinal community scores for soil erosion control

Assessing the impact of soil and water conservation measures on erosion damage to fields usually requires the collection of extensive and continuous field-data, and detailed technical analysis. Instead, villager perceptions were used to document the rough dimensions of change. On a village resource map, they first marked the areas affected by erosion where the project had worked. For each site, they scored the effectiveness of soil erosion measures: score of 0 meant that the problem continued unchanged, while a score of 100 meant that the problem had stopped completely. Villagers identified immediately with the scoring system (since it paralleled the money scale: 1 rupee = 100 paise), and in fact, suggested a local variation, the 16 anna scale (16 annas = 1 rupee or 100%, while 8 annas = 50 paise or 50%, etc.). Since the scoring system was easily understood, the discussion of what (ordinal) value to give for each site produced a consensus quickly. The resulting scores also enabled project management to easily identify problem areas and villages where project activities had produced the desired result (in the eyes of the villagers).

Village Scores on Erosion Control							
Village	Division	Scores on erosion control					
		Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Average
Tachchila	Dehradun	50	75	100	40		66
Majhara	Dehradun	100	100	100	100		100
Rainiwala	Dehradun	100	100				
Hasanpur	Dehradun	25	100	100	100		81
Bhopalpani	Song	0	0	0	0		0
Bharwakatal	Song	50	25	75			50
Kalimati	Song	75	75				
Marora	Song	50	75	50	100		69
Dudhai	Kalsi	75	100	50			75
Nahad	Kalsi	50	25	75			50
Singli	Kalsi	80	100	100	40		80
Sorna	Kalsi	100	100	100			
Koti May Chak	Rishikesh	75	100	75	50	100	80

Frequency of Village Scores on Soil Erosion Control								
Score	0	25	40	50	75	80	100	Total
Frequency	0	3	2	7	8	1	17	38
Percentage	0 %	8 %	5 %	19 %	22 %	3 %	46 %	100 %

* Excludes sites in Rishikesh villages which were affected by the recent earthquake and flash floods.

Capturing impact of social processes

Relatively simple indicators were used to assess changes in the number of women who attended village meetings, before and after the project; the change in numbers who felt confident enough to speak out at such meetings; and changes in the number of households where men consumed alcohol (a major problem in hill villages).

Use without baseline information

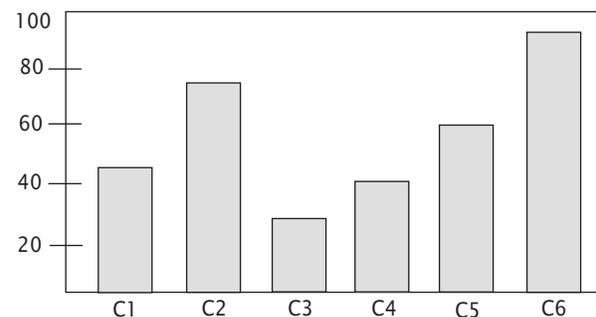
As reliable baseline information was not readily available, community perceptions were used to assess project impact. When asked, "If pre-project crop income is given a score of 100, what score would they give to post-project agricultural crop income?" Villagers were able to give a consensus figure (in terms of their own 16-anna scale).

Although crude, such methods may well have an "acceptable level of imprecision"; i.e., even with baseline data, and full evaluation techniques, the margins of error may turn out to be roughly the same. They are certainly cost- and time effective (getting the last 10% of accuracy may account for 80% of the cost of conventional methods).

Scoring Women's Participation in Community Management Committees

Options	Score
■ Women are not members of the management committee	0
■ Women are members but do not attend	25
■ Women members attend, but do not speak up	50
■ Women members attend and speak – but do not influence decisions	75
■ Women members attend, speak out, and are able to influence decisions	100

Women's Participation in Community Management



Note: C1 = Community 1; C2= community 2, etc.

Good Practice in Using Ordinal Scoring Systems

Although the MPA uses commonly used elements, experiences with problems on the field prompted the following guides for good practice in using ordinal scoring systems.

Design

■ Use a 0 - 100 scale with “gaps”

In comparison with 1 - 3 or 1 - 5 scales, this has two advantages.

First, it avoids the problem often experienced in the field with a 1 - 3 or 1 - 5 scale: villagers feel their situation is neither 2 nor 3, but somewhere in between (3.5? 3.75?). If options are scored with “gaps” (e.g., option 1 = score 0; option 2 = score 25; option 3 = score 50, etc.), it is easier to score an in-between situation as say 30 or 40.



Second, actual percentages can also be shown to avoid the problem of “squeezing” percentages into an ordinal scale (e.g., 0 - 33% = 1; 33 - 66% = 2, etc.). Depicting percentages in full gives more information to the person (e.g., project manager or project monitoring and evaluation unit) who expressed the need in the first place.

■ Use descriptive ordinal categories as far as possible

It is difficult to compare scores from ordinal scales devised to pick up people’s value judgements (e.g., good = 100; average = 50; bad = 25; etc.). But “descriptive ordinal categories” – which arrange descriptive categories in a certain order (*see, for instance, the scoring for women’s participation in community management given in page 182*) – can capture processes much more meaningfully than, for instance, “percentage of women on management committees”.

On the field

■ Do not prompt respondents

Even team staff members (either drawn from local NGOs or part of the project’s staff) with experience in conducting PRA exercises should not prompt scores, or attempt to score for the community, for these defeat the purpose of self-scoring. This can also initiate biases (where the community feels it must give scores that project management will “like”). Conflicting opinions, in fact, initiate clarificatory debate.

Reporting assessment results

■ Describe respondents

When reporting results, detail the nature of community respondents (e.g., how many were present, out of how many) so that users of the final results can distinguish between scores given by a small sub-section of the project community and those given by a majority (or all members).

Potential Uses

Although the MPA has been used so far in different contexts (e.g., watershed projects) and purposes (e.g., assessing sustainability or socio-economic or environmental impact), the potential of the MPA is much larger. Potential uses are described below.

Decision support

■ Project design

The global PLA study identified key variables underlying sustainability in water and sanitation projects, which, if used to design such projects, can improve their sustainability. Work is underway in India to identify key variables for other types of projects (e.g., poverty alleviation projects, and rural livelihoods projects).

■ Policy performance review

The stakeholder meetings can be useful tools to bring policy decision-makers, project management and community representatives to review project performance on the basis of both ordinal scores and qualitative detail. Such a relatively simple and quick representation of qualitative information could enrich and improve policy and institutional review.

Acknowledgement

This paper draws on joint work by a team (of which the present author was a member) from the Water and Sanitation Program, which includes the "Methodology for Participatory Assessments with Communities, Institutions and Policy Makers" (Dayal, Wijk, Mukherjee, 1999) and the final global synthesis report (under preparation). It also draws on the report (by the present author) of the "Socio-Economic and Environmental Impact Study" of the European Community funded Doon Valley Integrated Management Project, submitted to WS Atkins International, UK, April 2000.

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■ Community decision-making

MPA can be used as part of a project management's participatory learning approach, training the village community to use ordinal scoring for self-management and village-level decision-making, with appropriately modified visual representation of ordinal scores.

Community-level M&E of project performance

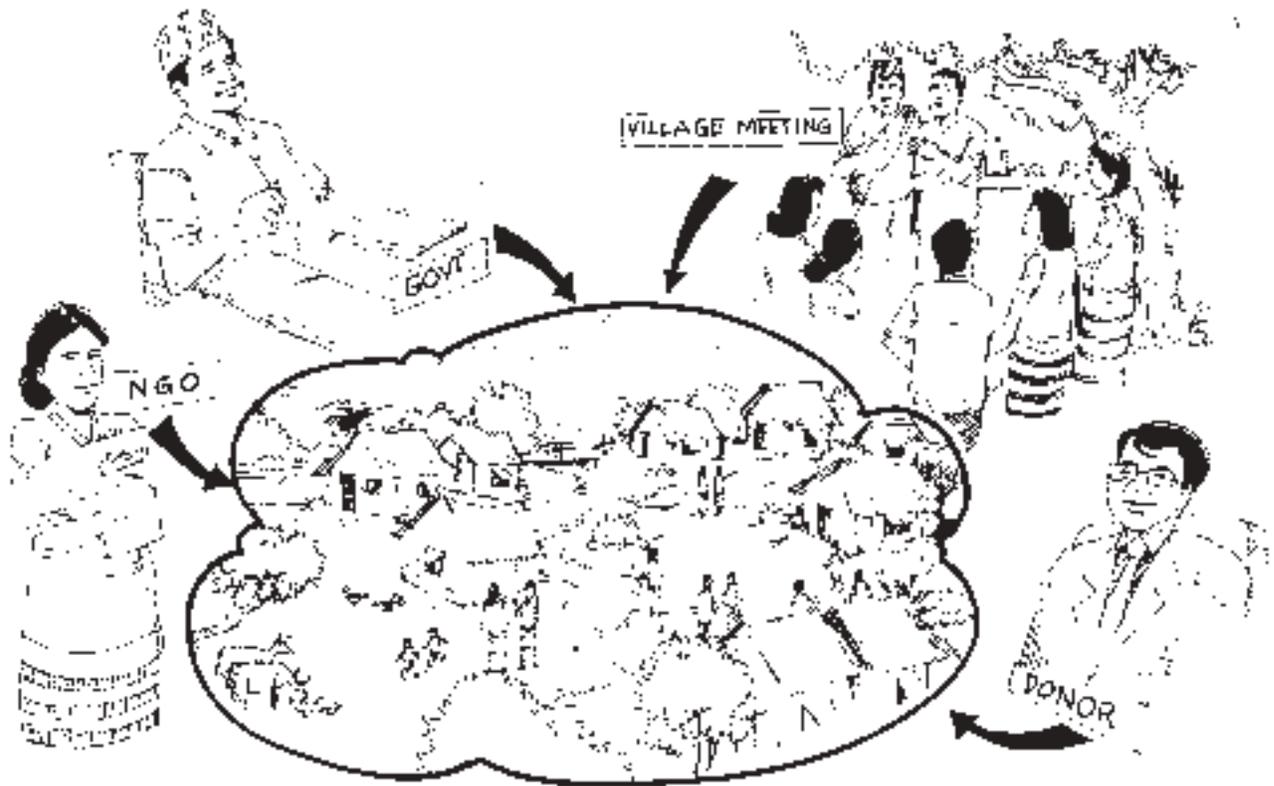
■ Use in GIS-linked M&E

Since an ordinal scoring system generates numbers, scores on even "soft" social and institutional issues (such as capacity-building, women's empowerment, transparency and accountability of community organisations, etc.) can be added to a project's GIS, which normally tracks only financial and technical information.

■ Continuous monitoring

With comparable annual assessments, a well-designed ordinal scoring system can help communities and project management to track progress over time. It can also improve end-of-project evaluations by providing a trend over time, rather than a comparison of mere baseline and final figures.

Participatory Planning in Nepal



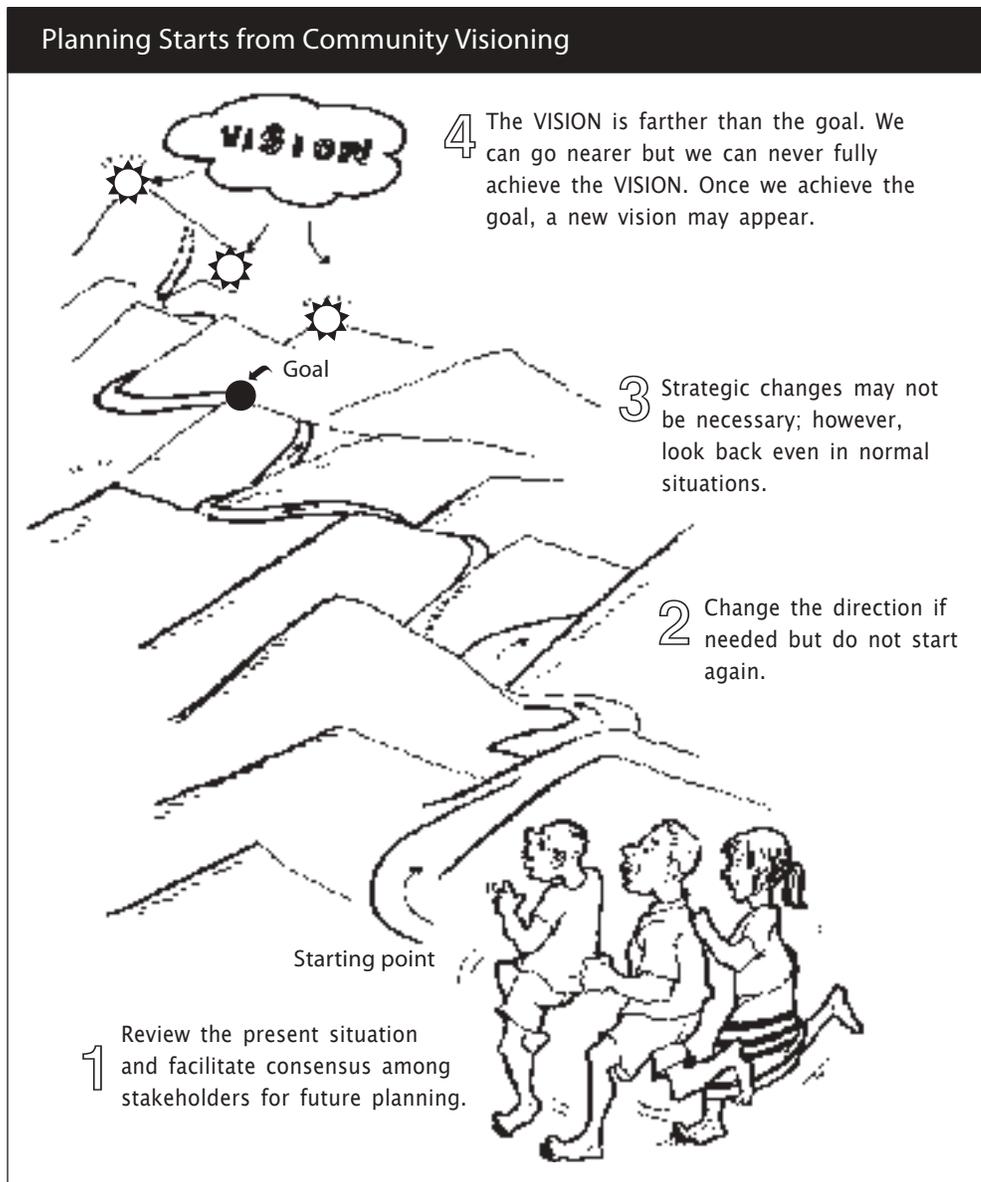
Nepal has had a long tradition of development interventions. Planned development formally started in 1956 and efforts have been recently made by the government to make the planning process more participatory and transparent. Promulgation of laws and acts, restructuring of the bureaucracy and modification of the political structure are some of the efforts made in this direction.

Besides the government sector, several external agencies have joined hands in strengthening planned development in the country. These agencies have largely influenced the state policies related to development. As a consequence, the local Self-Governance Act (1998) and Associated By-laws (1999) were passed by the parliament. These marked the beginning of the “one-door policy in planning” within the legal framework of the state. This new policy has encouraged many groups in the non-government sector to join and support the mainstream of government planning structure.

Realising the importance of participatory planning, the Government of Nepal has introduced the Participatory District Development Programme (PDDP) and the Local Governance Programme (LGP) with the technical assistance of the UNDP. These programmes cover 60 out of the 75 districts of the country, covering some 16 million people.

One-Door Policy in Planning

The multiplicity of agencies, including NGOs, has sometimes posed problems in planning and implementation of development plans. The one-door policy of the PDDP envisages the convergence of all such efforts to one stream through participatory planning. This will not only facilitate the planning process, but also make the process more transparent and location-specific.



Participatory planning encourages a bottom-up approach that will promote local autonomy and discourage the tendency to follow guidelines and instructions from the top. PDDP believes in convincing local leaders, bureaucrats, etc. of the effectiveness of genuine decentralisation in the system.

Objectives of PDDP

PDDP seeks to empower people to take increasingly greater control of their own development and enhance their capacities to mobilise and channel resources required for poverty alleviation. PDDP works simultaneously at the local and central levels to achieve its objectives.

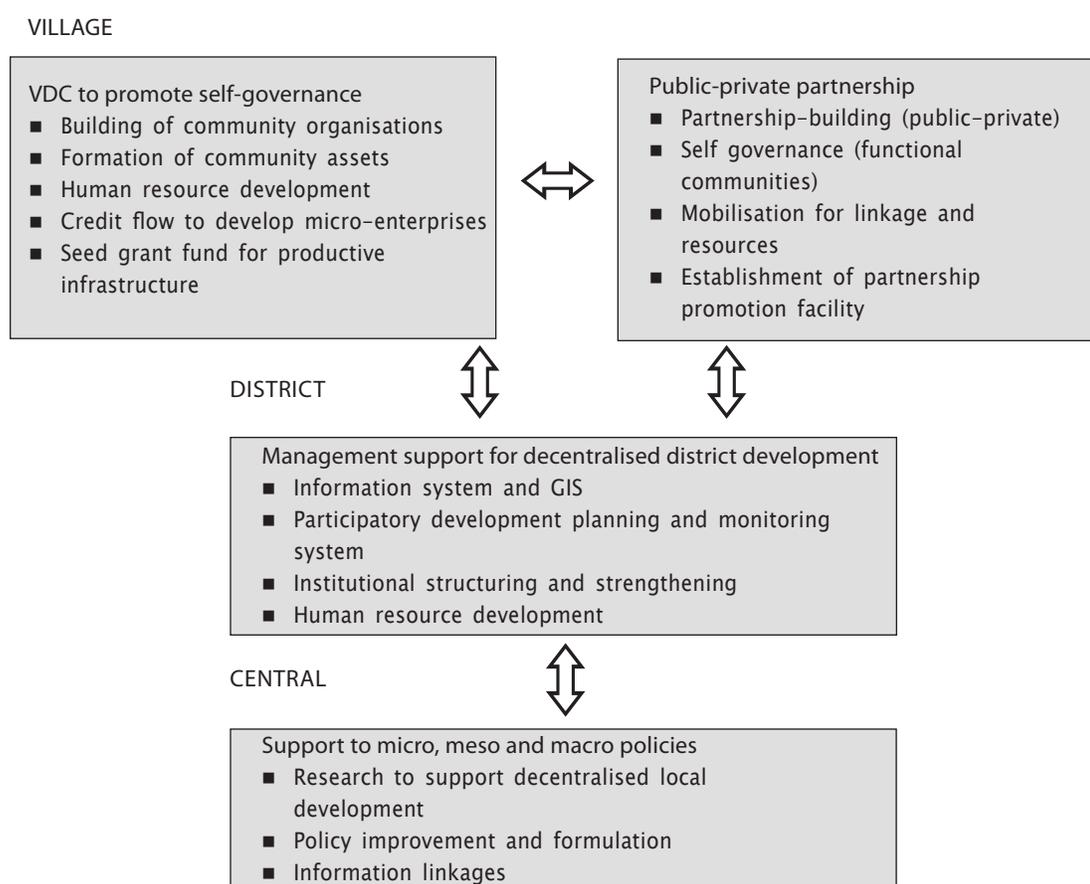
At the micro level

PDDP supports the improvement of the governance system and social empowerment processes at the village level through the development of self-governing community institutions.

At the meso level

PDDP supports the strengthening of development programming and management capabilities of District Development Committees (DDCs).

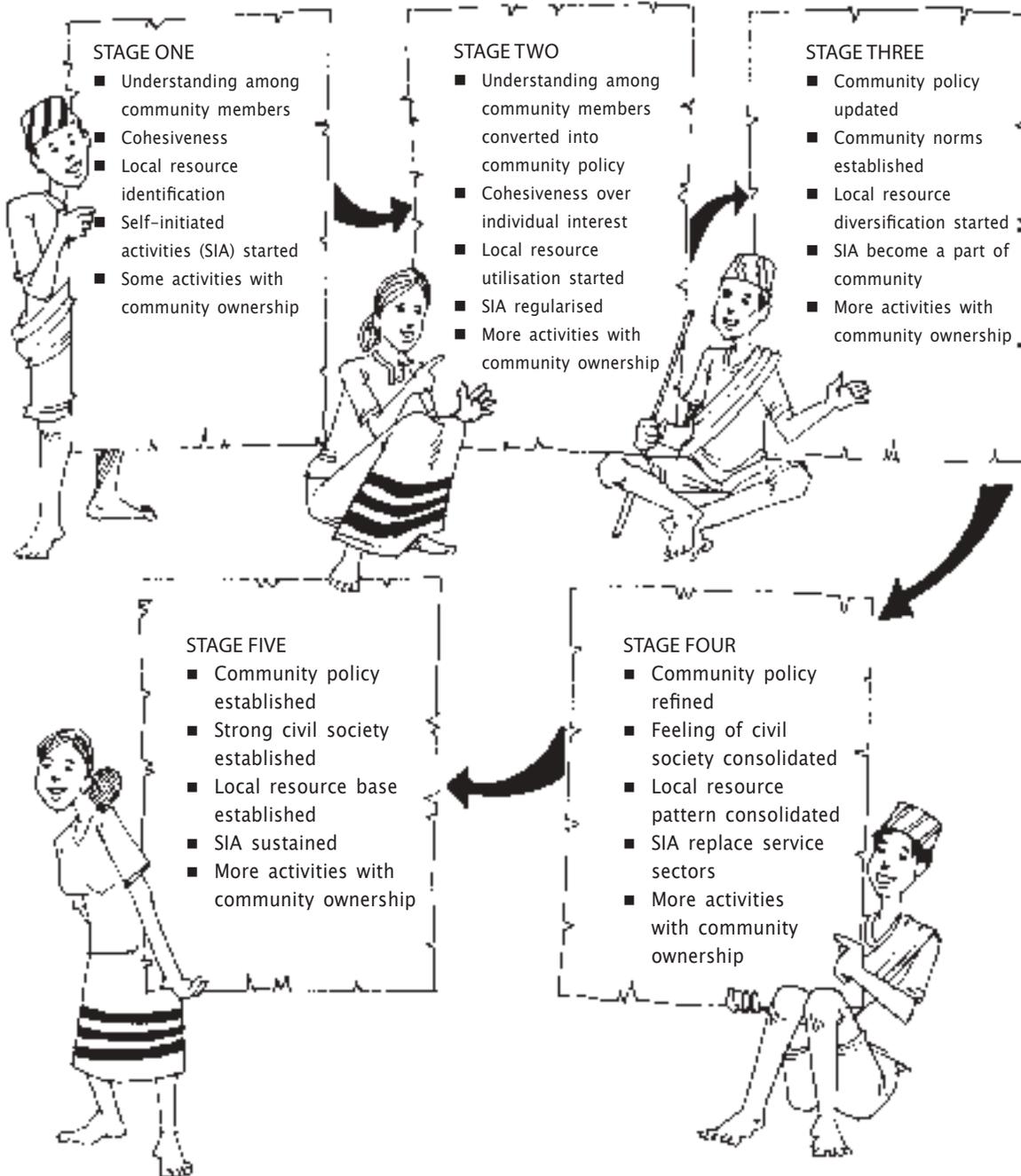
PDDP at a Glance



At the macro level

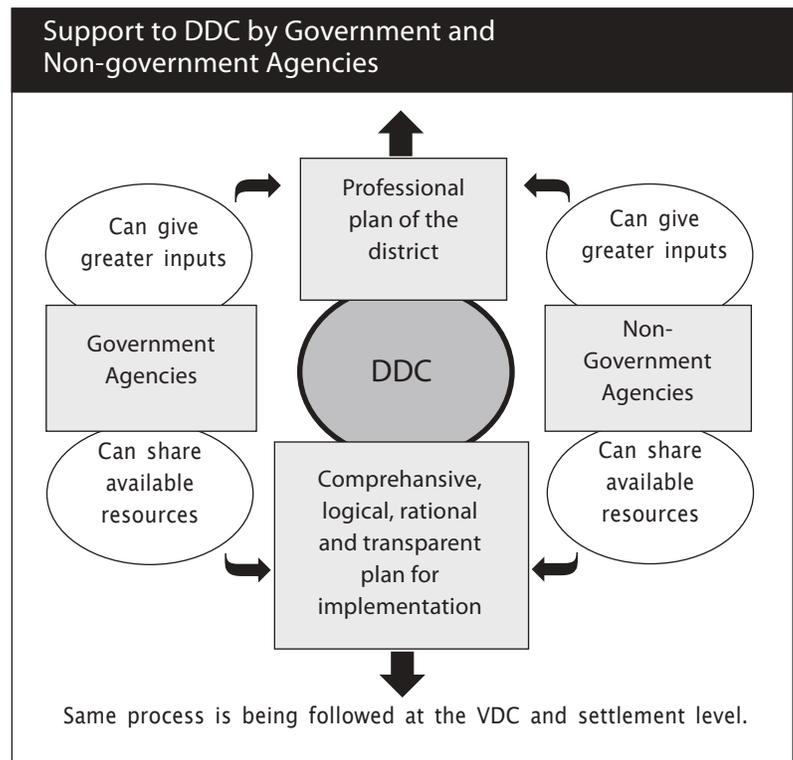
PDDP supports the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the Ministry of Local Development (MLD) towards policies that reflect and support local-level development initiatives.

Stages of participatory planning



Major Learnings

- PDDP has recognised importance of people's participation in the planning process, encouraging them to make their own plans.
- A step-by-step approach is used to avoid attempting to do too many things and not doing anything well.
- PDDP helps communities to formulate their own visions and plans to meet their development needs. Visioning sets the stage for broad-based planning and specific operational plans.
- PDDP makes plans flexible and enables the people to make periodic revisions at various levels.
- PDDP advocates that the planning process has to start at the community level. Complicated planning concepts like periodic plan, strategic plan and so on may confuse the people and they may not cooperate.
- A professionally-sound district plan document is necessary to avoid possible manipulation, political favouritism and subsequent cuts in the budget imposed from the outside. Although adequate human resources, skills and equipment are available in the districts, plans are often unprofessional, leaving scope for manipulation from the centre. On the other hand, professional district plans with specific activities and justification for budget requirements discourage impositions from district and central officials.
- It is often believed that grassroots institutions are incapable of handling a development process, on the grounds that trained manpower and adequate resources are not available at this level. PDDP advocates a greater role for NGOs and civil society organisations and the government has mobilised internal and external resources to build capacity at the grassroots level through training.



Policy Shift in Local Governance

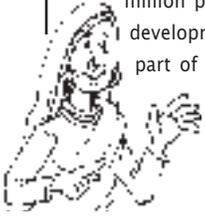
The passage of the Local Self-Governance Act of 1998 has given a major impetus to the promotion of decentralised local governance in Nepal. The Act has provided extensive authority and responsibility to DDCs and VDCs at the district and village levels, respectively. The authority of the local bodies can only be exercised if their capacity is enhanced. The new Act and its Regulations, when fully implemented, will have substantial impact on the role of the state and local authorities in Nepal. DDCs and VDCs are expected to have:

- substantially increased revenues;
- greater responsibilities for the services presently carried out by sectoral line agencies;
- periodic plan and annual plan for implementation; and
- policy feedback to and from the High Level Monitoring Committee.



Development Fund

As a part of decentralisation of financial powers, the DDC and the VDC are empowered to spend around Rs.2 million and Rs. 0.5 million per year respectively on developmental activities that are part of the approved plan of DDCs and VDCs.



- The multiplicity of development agencies often creates confusion because of individual activities and funds. PDDP calls for a single vision at the district level, providing a common ground for various activities in the district.

PDDP has given a new direction to the development planning in Nepal. It has made the planning process more democratic, professional and transparent. It will enable people to reflect their aspirations in the plans and to prioritise their own needs. PDDP also enables them to mobilise their own resources and make best use of the capital grants made available to them.

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Participatory Self-Monitoring System: The Maharashtra Rural Credit Project

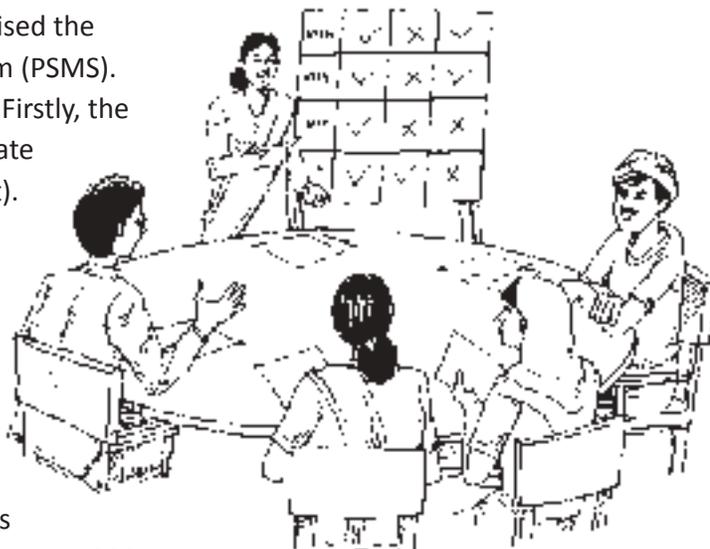


In the early 1970s, groups were promoted as an extension of the delivery system of the extension agencies and banks in India. But two decades later, with the change in refinancing policy of the national bank, groups could borrow large amounts from the banks and distribute these to members at ceiling-free interest rates. The Maharashtra Rural Credit Project (MRCP) was designed within this changed framework for the functioning of small informal groups – the self-help groups (SHGs). The changes implied that the groups virtually could have an indefinite life, much beyond a project or a programme of fixed duration. It also required groups to take decisions on lending terms such as interest rates, repayment period, etc. Groups, thus, became management units by themselves and required effective planning and monitoring systems. Although this need was identified by the financier, no system as such was suggested. Group activities were monitored on selective basis using a survey-based concurrent monitoring system implemented by one of the banking training institutions promoted by a consortium of state-owned banks.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)-assisted Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project began in India in the late 1980s, with MYRADA as the lead non-government organisation (NGO). When the project was implemented, some of the operating parameters changed; instead of banks collecting the savings and utilising it in the manner they liked, savings were kept at the group level. In due course, these savings were internally lent to the group members. Thus the philosophy for which groups were formed changed. In early 1990s, the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development changed its refinancing policy and the groups were recognised as financial intermediaries. The Maharashtra Rural Credit Project (MRCP) was designed by IFAD in this background.

Why PSMS?

Those involved in promoting groups soon realised the need for a participatory self-monitoring system (PSMS). A number of factors triggered this realisation. Firstly, the amount saved was increasing at a very rapid rate (partly contributed by the high rate of interest). Secondly, groups started showing significant variation in terms of performance and thus, some sort of rating system had to be developed to facilitate the loan appraisal process. Thirdly, as this project had some very innovative features, the pressure to report on outputs and impact from the central and state governments and donors was high. As the number of groups had already crossed 4,000, even a sample-based external monitoring system would be expensive. A widely-used participatory system was also considered necessary in order to facilitate the process of loan approval.



Highlights of the PSMS Manual

Principles

- For sustained existence, the quality of groups needs to be ensured.
- A system should evolve from among the members themselves.
- Since many members are illiterate, PSMS should be in the form of pictorial charts.

Operationalisation

- PSMS should have two subsets: monthly and annual.
- After participatory self-assessments in the group meeting, members are required to rank the group on each indicator.
- The grading is represented in green for good, yellow for average and red for bad.
- "Impartial comparison" is possible with this system.

PSMS Design Process

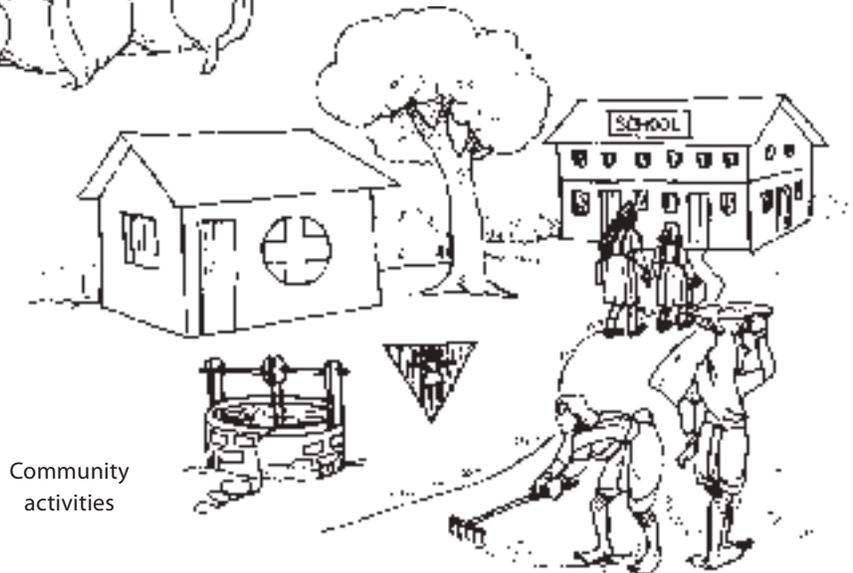
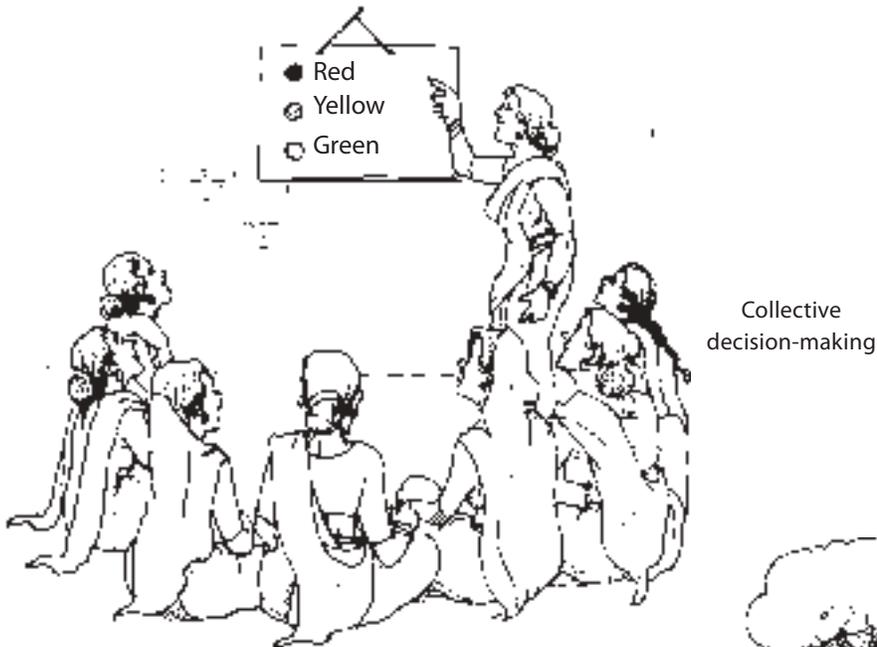
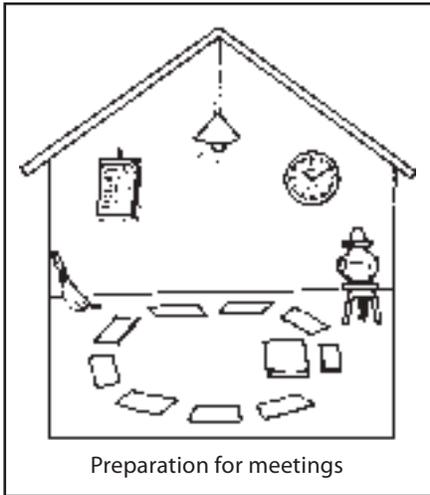
The design process began with the NGOs explaining to the groups the rationale for the monitoring system. Mature groups who had a significant amount of savings and who visualised the importance of groups as a permanent feature of the village, quickly appreciated the need for such a process. Bankers contributed to the process by specifying important indicators. After initial discussion with selected groups and obtaining a wide range of indicators, a meeting of group leaders was convened in various districts. Views naturally differed on the utility of various indicators. Project management invariably felt that a localised (as opposed to standardised) set of indicators would be too difficult to manage. NGOs however were willing to consider a more localised version but not a unique set for each group. With further discussions (spread over four months), two sets of indicators were finalised. A simple manual was produced, first in English and after initial testing, was translated into Marathi, a local language. The manual – Participatory Self-Monitoring System for Self-Help Groups – is the outcome of collective thinking of the National Bank, the NGOs and the project clientele.

The monitoring indicators chosen for the monthly and annual monitoring system under the MRCP are shown below.

Indicators for Monthly Monitoring Under the MRCP

Indicators	Grading Criteria		
	○ (Green) Good	◐ (Yellow) Average	● (Red) Bad
1. Preparation for meetings: activities should include cleanliness and arrangement for lamp, drinking water, sitting (on the floor), monitoring chart and a clock.	All necessary arrangements	More than half	No preparation
2. Regularity of the meetings	As scheduled	On dates other than predetermined	No meeting
3. Timeliness	As scheduled	Late (<2 hours)	Late (>2 hours)
4. Attendance in the meeting	All members	< 75 %	< 75 %
5. Recording the proceedings, decision of the meeting, and presentation at the next meeting	Recorded and presented	Recorded but not presented	Not recorded
6. Savings: deposited on the fixed date	All members	>90% of members	<90% of members
7. Account keeping for transparency	All financial transactions are recorded during the meeting itself	Accounts are completed after the meeting	Accounts are incomplete or not kept at all
8. Collective decision-making: all members are expected to participate actively in the meeting so that the group's functioning is democratic	Decisions are taken collectively	Only few members participate	Decisions are taken without discussion
9. Repayment of loans: for the credibility and sustainability of the groups	Repaid on time	>95% loans are repaid on time	<95% loans are repaid on time
10. Lending: to meet the credit requirement of the members	Up to 95% of the available resources	<95% of the available resources	No loan disbursement
11. Petty cash: for meeting emergency needs, but not too much as there is an opportunity cost of keeping the funds idle (fix a limit)	Cash within the prefixed limit	More than the limit	Entire savings kept as cash
12. Insurance: against damage to the life of the member or the assets	Insurance of members and assets acquired under the group loan	Insurance of some members and assets	No insurance
13. Community activities: discussion and action on social issues such as public health and sanitation, adult and functional literacy, tree planting, drinking water, shramdan (voluntary labour contribution), or gender issues, mainly to create social awareness among group members	Discussed and undertaken	Discussed but not undertaken	No discussion and no action taken

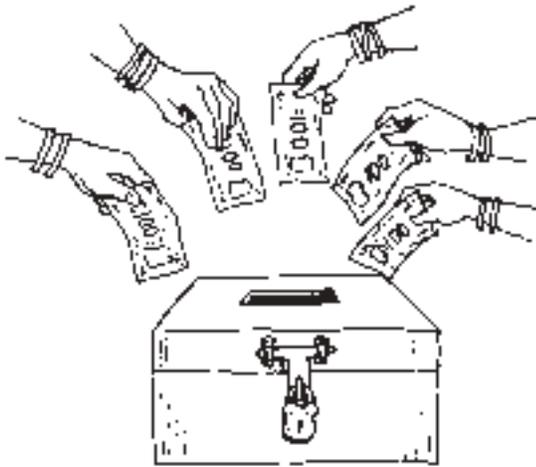
Examples of Visual Representation of Some Indicators for Monthly Monitoring



Indicators for Annual Monitoring Under the MRCP

Indicators	Grading Criteria		
	○ (Green) Good	⊗ (Yellow) Average	● (Red) Bad
1. Responsibility sharing: rotation of activities such as preparation for meetings, preparation of agenda, bookkeeping, dealing with banks, etc.	>50% members share responsibilities	<50% members share responsibilities	No sharing
2. Common fund: consisting of savings, interest received, penalties, etc.	Exists	No common fund	-
3. Lending: to meet members' needs	>60% of the needs met	30-60% of the needs met	<30% of the needs met
4. Income generation: to increase income and enhance living standards among those taking loans	>50% increase in income	25-50% increase in income	<25% increase in income
5. External financial assistance (e.g., from banks, as groups themselves usually are not able to meet all their financial needs)	Financial assistance taken	Financial assistance not taken	-
6. Insurance: against damage to life of members and assets	Facility availed with group loans by all members	Facility availed by some members and for some assets	-
7. Training: for skills development in managing SHGs such as book-keeping and accounts, vocational activities, transactions with banks, health, women's rights, etc.	As decided by the group, normally 4 or more training programmes	As decided by the group, normally 2 or 3 training programmes	Training is not imparted
8. Inter-group lending: for self-help and to maintain a balance between the resources needed and available	Lending resorted	Not resorted	-
9. Audit: by external knowledgeable persons/institutions but not necessarily by chartered accountants	Done	-	Not done
10. Formation of new groups to expand the self-help movement and help others, as a moral responsibility	Help extended	Help not extended	
11. Appointment of record keeper (not necessarily from outside)	-	Appointed	Not appointed
12. Repayment to the group by the members in time	100% as per schedule	95-99%	<95%
13. Formation of clusters of groups for cooperation with formal or informal body	Participation in cluster	No participation	-
14. Representation in local bodies (e.g., local village government, cooperative societies) as leadership ability increases by participating in the groups	Elected in local bodies	Not elected in local bodies	-
15. Community development (public health, tree planting, education, drinking water, family planning, village sanitation)	4 or more activities undertaken	1-3 activities undertaken	No activities undertaken
16. Annual meeting at the end of the year for review of income and expenditure, distribution of profit, group functioning, and planning for the next year	Meeting held	Meeting not held	No activities undertaken

Examples of Visual Representation of Some Indicators for Annual Monitoring



Common fund



Lending to meet member's needs



Training



Annual meeting



Inter-group lending

Monitoring charts

The charts provided for monitoring have the following format with illustrations for each indicator:

Monthly Monitoring Chart									
Monitoring period	Indicator 1			Indicator 2			3	4	5...
	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Red
January ↓ December									

Annual Monitoring Chart									
Monitoring period	Indicator 1			Indicator 2			3	4	5...
	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Red
Year 1 ↓ Year 5									

The charts have been printed in Marathi and distributed to about 5,000 groups. NGOs have been oriented to further orient the groups on how to use the system. The current plan is to use a system for group-level monitoring only; there are no plans to “extract” information from the groups and aggregate it at successively higher levels.

Some Reflections on PSMS

- The system has been used only for a short period and lessons have yet to be systematically extracted. But many groups showed enthusiasm in implementing the system. Members felt that a comparison with neighbouring groups (at least for some indicators) would allow them to compare their own performance. They could also monitor their own group’s performance overtime.
- The self-help movement in India is only about two-and-a-half decades old. In a way, it is of relatively recent origin and it is difficult to visualise how it will evolve over time. Due to the highly decentralised nature of this movement, a “vision” of the NGO promoters or that of the bankers, may not actually reflect the likely course of this movement.
- Developing a common set of indicators that will be universally relevant is thus difficult. Moreover, the indicators chosen already will most likely represent only a short- to medium-term vision.

- Although the project has a strong focus on poverty reduction, the PSMS does not measure performance against this goal. It may be said that the PSMS is not necessarily for measuring performance against the project-level goals and thus limits itself to the groups of beneficiaries who design, maintain and use the system.
- The current system is more standardised than it was initially. This perhaps makes implementation easier but it does not allow groups to contextualise either the indicators or grading of the quantitatively assessable variables.
- Some improvements can also be introduced at the operational level. While the grading should continue to remain simple, a five-scale grading system or an ordinal system with values ranging from 1 to 10 could perhaps replace the current three-scale grading system to provide more nuances. The quantitative variables, such as the repayment rates, could be measured in percentage terms while still classifying them into one of the categories. The current grading of “bad” could be replaced by “needing improvement”. Non-performance against certain variables should not be classified as “average” as done in some cases. If they are not important as indicators they should be dropped. Additionally, the indicators could be categorised broadly into economic, social, institutional development, etc., and presented in sub-groups.
- While the system need not be “extractive”, groups can be encouraged to review the status at cluster level. Cluster-level committees may even review and follow up on the corrective actions taken by the groups.
- Finally, the principle of “criticality” should be applied in choosing indicators and monitor only the important aspects. But overly simplistic systems can miss important dimensions. The system used in the MRCP is financially oriented (mainly savings and credit), whereas the project also has a very strong empowerment element. Groups decide on interest rates and other lending and repayment terms on their own. Women have started feeling very confident and have demonstrated freedom from fear and from various dysfunctional social taboos. There is difficulty in defining and measuring empowerment but this impact on gender relations is an important dimension to assess.



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REFLECT: An Empowering Approach to Education and Social Change



When people become conscious of the fact that their livelihood and other socio-political conditions are in turmoil and state of flux, and begin to discuss their concerns, an appropriate environment is created for using the REFLECT approach.

REFLECT aims to empower people by raising their critical consciousness, enabling them to find solutions to their problems and enhancing their communicative skills. REFLECT draws upon and has evolved out of diverse grassroots experiences of more than 100 organisations in 30 countries, who have contributed to its continuing development.

“ REFLECT is a structured participatory learning process which facilitates people’s critical analysis of their environment... Through the creation of democratic spaces and the construction and interpretation of locally generated texts, people build their own multi-dimensional analysis of local and global reality, challenging dominant development paradigms and redefining power relationships (in both public and private spheres).”

Proceedings of REFLECT Practitioner’s Workshop, 1998.

Characteristics of REFLECT*

- A political process creating democratic space in which existing cultural norms and power relationships are challenged.
- Challenges the view of communities as homogenous entities, recognising diversity, stratification and the power imbalances (by gender, class, caste, race, age, language, physical ability, etc.) which it is committed to transform.
- Aims to provide the space, time and tools for an internal community process that challenges the traditional externally dominated model of development.
- A learning process that starts from people's reflection on their socio-economic, cultural and political environment and that aims to promote change in individuals, communities, organisations and societies. It is an intensive, extensive, horizontal, educational process.
- Draws from a wide range of participatory tools and techniques, including a range of visualisation tools, theatre/role play, story-telling and diverse forms of cultural communication.
- Based on the generation of texts (in both visual and printed forms) by the participants themselves, through which they can identify their problems, needs, interests, capacities, expectations and priorities.

Basic Principles of REFLECT

- Gender equity is integral to all aspects of REFLECT as it is essential for social transformation.
- The REFLECT process explores and analyses the causes of power inequalities and oppression.
- Stratifications and power relationships affect everyone involved in the process; through REFLECT, these stratifications can become an integral part of the process of critical analysis.
- REFLECT is an evolving process, which must be continually recreated for each new context. Innovation is integral to the process.
- The equitable practice of power at all levels in the REFLECT process is essential for determining empowerment outcomes.
- Institutional and individual change at all levels is an integral part of the process, making the networking of participants, facilitators, trainers, staff and organisations an essential part of REFLECT.



- Recognises literacy (in the sense of reading and writing) as part of a wider set of communication practices (including listening, speaking, language, discourse and media), all of which are crucial to challenging power relationships.
- REFLECT seeks to promote a multidimensional approach to literacy and these wider practices.
- An approach to transformation, that seeks to impact not only communities but also the people and institutions involved in the process.

* Compiled by the participants of the REFLECT Practitioner's Workshop held in London, United Kingdom, 1998.

Key Actors in REFLECT

Local community forum

The forum discusses the problems of individuals and community or exchanges information in an informal manner. It is also used as a venue for collectively discussing social aspects such as the celebration of festivals and for the resolution of conflicts between people within the village.

Facilitators

The facilitators are selected from the local community by the implementing organisation. They should have some degree of education. They are selected based on their interest and commitment, knowledge about problems faced by the community, and creative skills (reading, writing, communication, etc.). Training programmes are conducted for both trainers and facilitators.

Training of Facilitators

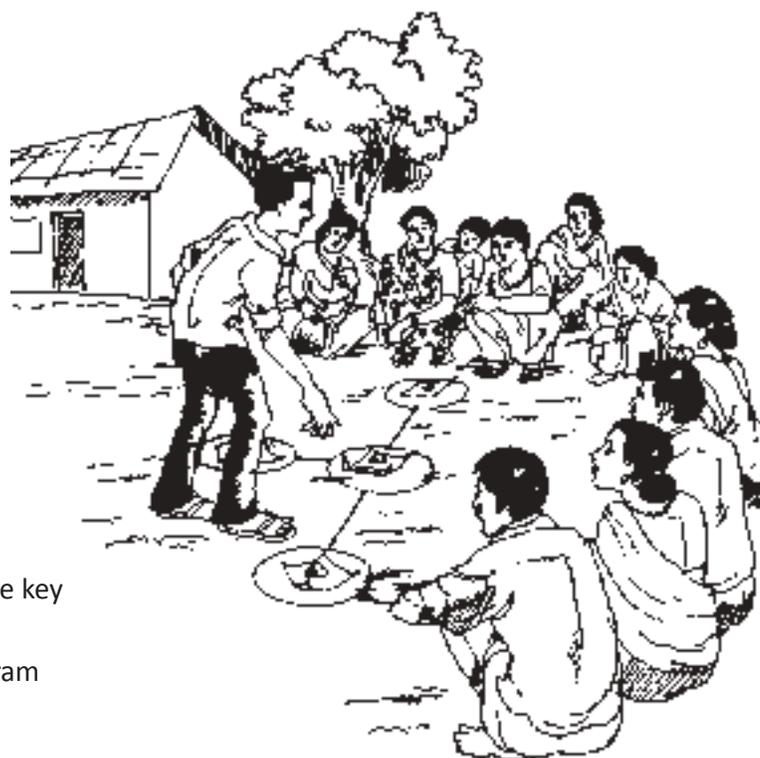
- Participatory research and analytical methods
- Conceptual clarity on development issues
- Communications (theatre)
- Teaching methodologies
- Pedagogy (literacy)
- Process documentation
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation
- Gender
- Livestock health, livestock production
- Human health



REFLECT in Practice: The Process

Visualisation of an issue

- People of the community prioritise the most important issues.
- The facilitator motivates the people to visualise the issue by using tools such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA).
- People use locally available materials (seeds, leaves, stones, sticks, ash powder, etc.) for construction of a map/matrix.
- The facilitator replaces the visual elements by picture cards (often, these are drawn on the spot by the facilitator).
- People spend ample time discussing the key issue, using the map/matrix.
- The facilitator transfers the visual diagram from the ground to the chart paper.



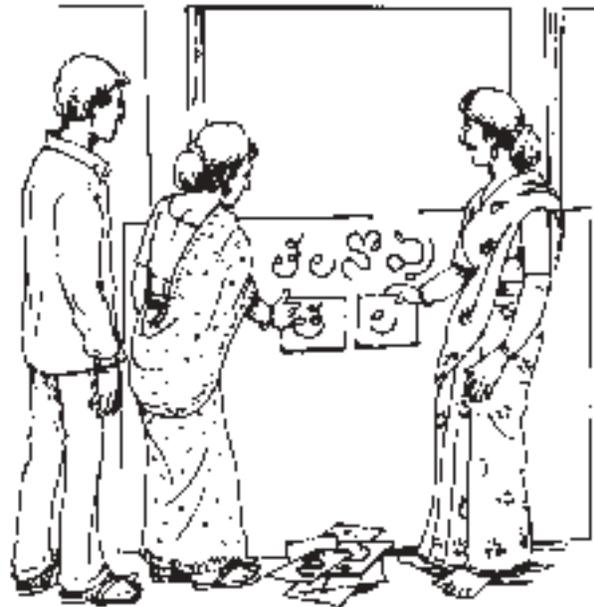


Analysis of the graphic representation of issue(s)

- People act out different elements of the PRA exercise (e.g., theatre). People share their knowledge systems and the issue is critically discussed to find possible solutions.
- The facilitator guides the participants in analysis by putting the issue in the larger context of the community.
- The facilitator documents the process on a chart paper along with the map/matrix to produce a complete “primer” of that particular issue.

Literacy programme

- The facilitator introduces the “primer” developed by the participants.
- He/she exhibits all the visual materials and initiates the discussion for a consensus to select the visuals for learning. Often, these visuals are closely related to the intensity of the issue (i.e., health, agriculture, indebtedness).
- When the group decides the words to be learned, the facilitator writes the text of the visual.
- He/she uses many innovative methods to involve people in learning (e.g., puzzle games; body movement to indicate shape of letters).
- Participants constantly refer to the manual developed by them and continue their discussion on how to address the issues.



Sustainable learning process

- The process documentation, regular debate, self evaluations and participatory monitoring help assess the progress of the process and to design the need-based training programmes for facilitators.

An Experience

Yakshi, a non-government organisation (NGO) was set up in Hyderabad in 1993 with the primary purpose of strengthening and supporting community-based peoples' initiatives and movements, and processes of participation. A major focus of Yakshi has been to use theatre as a means of education and communication. During the past five years, Yakshi has been working closely with Girijana Deepika located in the Adivasi areas of East Godavari district.

Girijana Deepika was set up in 1989 as an independent Adivasi peoples' mass organisation. It is an expression of Adivasi people's intent to struggle against oppressive forces, restructure the existing inequitable power relations, and gain control over their natural resources.

Anthra (in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra), is an organisation of women scientists that works on issues of biodiversity, people's rights over their natural resources, knowledge systems, health, livestock production and gender.

In 1996, for the first time in India, Yakshi, in partnership with Girijana Deepika and Anthra, practised the REFLECT approach to education and social change in the Adivasi villages of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Efforts of Girijana Deepika have been directed towards raising people's consciousness around critical issues such as land, agriculture, livestock, poultry, forest, health and conflicts between ethnic identity and contemporary or modern influences.

Yakshi and Anthra have played a critical facilitating role to strengthen Girijana Deepika through a process of capacity-building and finding practical means for strengthening participatory processes. The key actors in REFLECT is the gotti (local community forum). Theatre campaigns have been used effectively to revive the gottis in the villages. Both women and men are involved in the gottis.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Agriculture

- Community seed banks to preserve and make available seeds of food crops to farmers.
- Construction of water-harvesting structures.

Forest

- Debate and discussion on minor forest products amongst the community, especially women.
- Promotion of scarce/endangered plants through herbal nurseries or gardens.

Health

- Training of village community health workers.
- Preparation of local herbal medicines.
- Information dissemination and educational programmes using theatre, posters, slide shows and films.

Gender issues

- Regular capacity-building programmes for women leaders.
- Debates and actions on gender issues by the women's community fora.

Livestock and poultry production systems

- Training of community animal health workers in an integrated approach to animal health care.
- Educational programmes for the community using role plays, posters, slide shows, films, etc.
- Capacity-building of local healers.
- Preparation of a directory of local herbal medicines.
- Backyard poultry raising.



Impact of REFLECT

- Where people are living in abject poverty and exploitation, the REFLECT process has in a small but significant way enabled them to come together, critically analyse their social conditions and work towards some actions for change.
- A significant number of women have come forward to participate in the process. The work has been expanded from 20 to 200 villages, where women leaders of the community fora are involved in a process of leadership and capacity building.
- Adults involved in REFLECT have become more conscious of the importance of education for their children and show interest in local schools. Thus, REFLECT has indirectly created an impetus for improved educational opportunities for children.

- REFLECT has helped in designing developmental interventions, gender integration and organisational development process, monitoring and evaluation.



Lessons Learned

- Participatory learning processes are dynamic and help the people to directly link these with their lives and existing communicative practices. Conventional categories such as literacy, post-literacy and continuing education do not apply in participatory learning, as these are closely interwoven with one another. People's involvement in the process occurs at different levels.
- With the help of the facilitator, people create their own "primers" based on their concerns and critical analysis.
- People soon "demand" more information about a particular issue. This information is not only provided in the form of simple booklets/posters but also created by the people themselves.
- The success and continuation of REFLECT depends critically upon the commitment of

the facilitator and the implementing agency.

- The REFLECT approach can be used for development planning and implementation and for increasing awareness on human rights and gender rights. Its success depends on the political and ideological vision and goals of those who are practising it. A high degree of continuous motivation and innovation at all levels is essential.
- REFLECT requires skilled individuals to facilitate the process. Continuous need-based capacity-building and training is necessary for facilitators. A sense of ownership on the entire process invariably results from a well-designed REFLECT exercise.

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part **4**

**Monitoring
Impact**

Elements of Participatory Evaluation



What is Participatory Evaluation?

Participatory evaluation provides for the active involvement in the evaluation process of those with a stake in the programme: providers, partners, customers (beneficiaries) and other interested parties, and it takes place throughout all phases of evaluation: planning and design; gathering and analysing the data; identifying the evaluation findings; preparing conclusions and recommendations; disseminating results; and preparing an action plan to improve programme performance.

Characteristics of Participatory Evaluation

Participatory evaluations typically share several characteristics that set them apart from traditional evaluation approaches. These include:

■ Participant focus and ownership

Participatory evaluations are primarily oriented to the information needs of programme stakeholders rather than of the donor agency. The donor agency simply helps the participants conduct their own evaluations, thus building their ownership and commitment to the results and facilitating their follow-up action.

■ Scope of participation

The range of participants included and the roles they play may vary. For example, some evaluations may target only programme providers or beneficiaries, while others may include the full array of stakeholders.

Differences Between Conventional and Participatory Evaluation

	Conventional	Participatory
Who	External experts	Community members, project staff, facilitator
What	Predetermined indicators of success, principally cost and production outputs	People identify their own indicators of success, which may include production outputs
How	Focus on "scientific objectivity"; distancing of evaluators from other participants, uniform, complex procedures; delayed, limited access to results	Self-evaluation; simple methods adapted to local culture; open, immediate sharing of results through local involvement in evaluation processes
When	Usually upon completion of project/programme; sometimes also mid-term	More frequent, small-scale evaluations
Why	Accountability, usually summative, to determine if funding continues	To empower local people to initiate, control and take corrective action

Source: Narayan-Parker, 1993: 12

Arguments for Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

- Enhanced participation, especially of beneficiaries, in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) helps improve understanding of the development process itself.
- Increased authenticity of M&E findings that are locally relevant.
- Improvement of the sustainability of project activities by identifying strengths and weaknesses for better project management and decision-making.
- Increasing local-level capacity in M&E, which in turn contributes to self-reliance in overall project implementation.
- Sharing of experience through systematic documentation and analysis based on broad-based participation.
- Strengthened accountability to donors.
- More efficient allocation of resources.

Sources: Feuerstein, 1986; Rugh, 1992; Sommers, 1993; CONCERN 1996; Abbot and Guijit, 1997.

■ Participant negotiations

Participating groups meet to communicate and negotiate, to reach a consensus on evaluation findings, to solve problems and to make plans to improve performance.

■ Diversity of views

Views of all participants are sought and recognised. More powerful stakeholders allow participation of the less powerful.

■ Learning process

The process is a learning experience for participants. Emphasis is on identifying lessons learned that will help participants improve programme implementation, as well as on assessing whether targets were achieved.

■ Flexible design

While some preliminary planning for the evaluation may be necessary, most of the design issues are decided in the participatory process. Generally, evaluation questions and data collection and analysis methods are determined by the participants and not by external evaluators.

■ Empirical orientation

Good participatory evaluations are based on empirical data. Typically, rapid appraisal techniques are used to determine what happened and why.

■ Use of facilitators

Participants actually conduct the evaluation, not outside evaluators as is traditional. However, one or more outside experts usually serves as facilitator with a supporting role as mentor, trainer, group processor, negotiator and/or methodologist.

Why Conduct a Participatory Evaluation?

Experience has shown that participatory evaluations improve programme performance. Listening to and learning from programme beneficiaries, field staff and other stakeholders who know why a programme is or is not working is critical to making improvements. Also, the more these insiders are involved in identifying evaluation questions and in gathering and analysing data, the more likely they are to use the information to improve performance. Participatory evaluation empowers programme providers and beneficiaries to act on the knowledge gained.

Advantages of Participatory Evaluation

- Examines relevant issues by involving key players in evaluation design.
- Promotes participants' learning about the programme and its performance and enhances their understanding of other stakeholders' points of view.
- Improves participants' evaluation skills.
- Enables the community to measure its own progress.
- Mobilises stakeholders, enhances teamwork and builds a shared commitment to act on evaluation recommendations.
- Increases the likelihood that evaluation information will be used to improve performance.
- Gives people an opportunity to reflect not only about the project but also about themselves as a community.

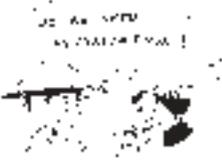
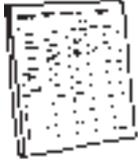


Disadvantages of Participatory Evaluation

- May be viewed as “less objective” because it involves programme staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders with possible vested interests.
- May be less useful in addressing highly technical aspects of a project.
- May require considerable time and resources to identify and involve a wide array of stakeholders.
- May be used as an opportunity for manipulation by some stakeholders to further their own interests.



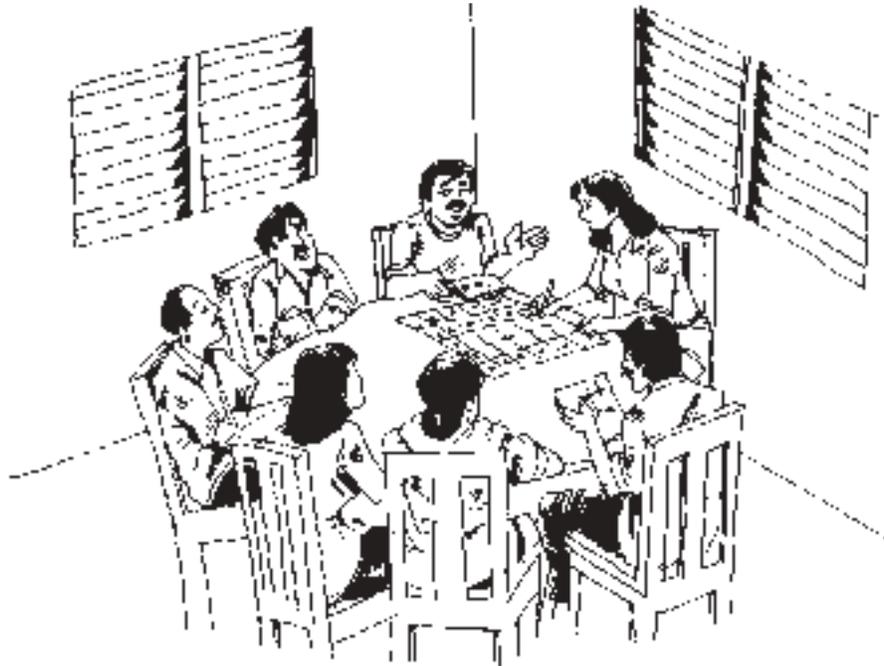
Levels of End-User Participation in Evaluation

Dimensions of evaluation	Levels of participation		
	Low	Medium	High
Evaluation initiator	Commissioned or obligatory evaluation done to, on, or about people, and typically part of programme development. Meets institutional needs.	External evaluator invites end-users to assist in one or more evaluation task(s).	End-users collaborate with external facilitator or among themselves to assess, review and critically reflect on strategies formulated for them.
Purpose 	Justify or continue funding. Ensure accountability. Determine levels of funding or sustained support.	Gain insights into development activity from end-users' perspective. Shift focus from institutional concerns to end-user needs and interests.	Promote self-sufficiency and sustainability by linking end-users to evaluation planning cycle. Develop relevant, effective programme decision-making based on end-users' views, opinions and recommendations. Increase ownership and responsibility for success or failure of development interventions.
Question-maker(s) 	Agency heads, administrators, outside clientele, persons from evaluation site.	End-users with external evaluator at various stages of evaluation generally determined by the evaluator.	End-users, external facilitator, persons affected by development intervention.
Methods 	Established research designs, statistical analyses, reliance on various quantitative methods. Product (findings) oriented (mathematical in nature). Dominated by math whiz kids.	Qualitative methods favoured but also include quantitative methods. Values a process focused on open-ended inquiries. Uses methods that give voice to the voiceless.	Relies on highly interactive qualitative methods but does not disregard quantitative tools. The process is the product. Inventiveness and creativity encourage adaptation of the methods to the context being evaluated.
Evaluator's versus facilitator's role 	Evaluator takes lead in designing evaluation; formulates questions/survey forms with no input from those evaluated; steers by setting design; assumes objective, neutral, distant stance.	Evaluator works collaboratively at various stages with end-users; partner in evaluation and imparts evaluation skills; shares lead with end-users.	Evaluator becomes more of a facilitator. Facilitator acts as catalyst, confidante and collaborator; takes lead from end-users, has few predetermined questions.
Impact/Outcome 	Reports and other publications circulated in-house. Findings rarely circulated among end-users; and loop into planning stage with little input from end-users.	Shared data-gathering but limited participation in data analysis. End-user views loop into planning stage. Increased understanding of end-user experiences.	End-user more capable of meaningful decision-making based on effective involvement in evaluation. Findings become the property of end-users or the community.

RESOURCE BOOK PRODUCED IN A PARTICIPATORY WRITESHOP ORGANISED BY THE International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), South East Asian Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN), MYRADA and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR).

Adapted by Rachel Polestico from material produced by the USAID Center for Development Information and Education, PME Tips, 1996 and other material (as cited).

Systematisation: Documentation and Sharing of Project Experiences and Lessons



Systematisation is a methodology which facilitates the on-going description, analysis and documentation of the processes and results of a development project in a participatory way.

New knowledge is generated through a systematic learning process, which is then fed back and used to make decisions about actions to be implemented to improve project performance. The lessons learned are shared with others.

Objectives of Systematisation

There are six related objectives of systematisation. Each objective, while important in and of itself, is also a step toward achieving the next objective.

1. Preserve project information through documentation

In recent years, development workers and project beneficiaries have expressed the need to describe, analyse and document

Systematisation is...

- a continuous process
- a comprehensive process
- a participatory exercise
- a planning tool
- a monitoring and evaluation tool
- a problem-solving tool

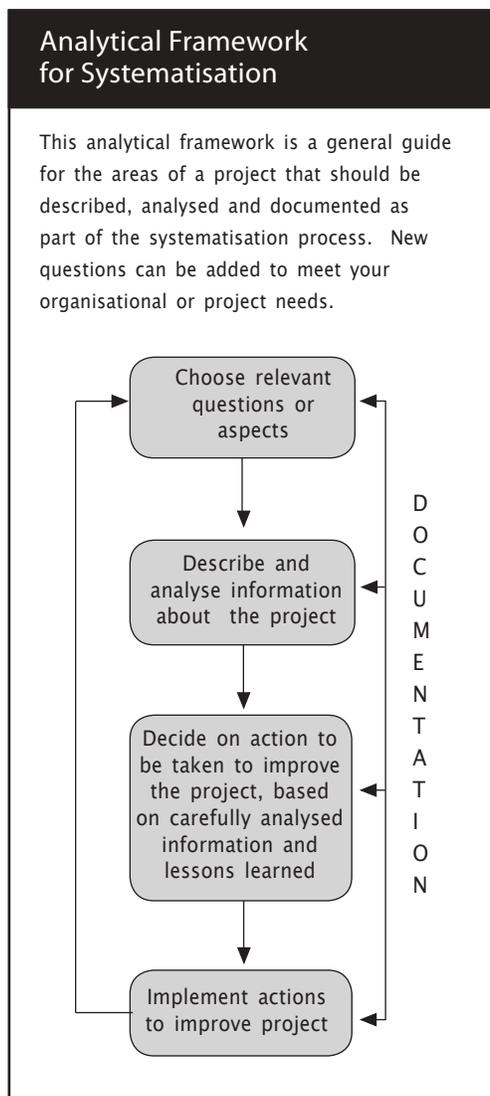
Systematisation is not...

- a one-time evaluation
- an external evaluation
- an impact evaluation
- a simple descriptive

their accumulated development experiences. In their daily work, these people often reflect on how development projects are planned and implemented, as well as on their impact and how they can be improved. Such informal lessons are rarely documented, so the experience and knowledge gained is lost over time. The systematisation process facilitates the documentation of these experiences so they can be used for analysis and learning in an organised and coherent manner. The information also serves as a basis for writing reports, articles, papers and training materials.

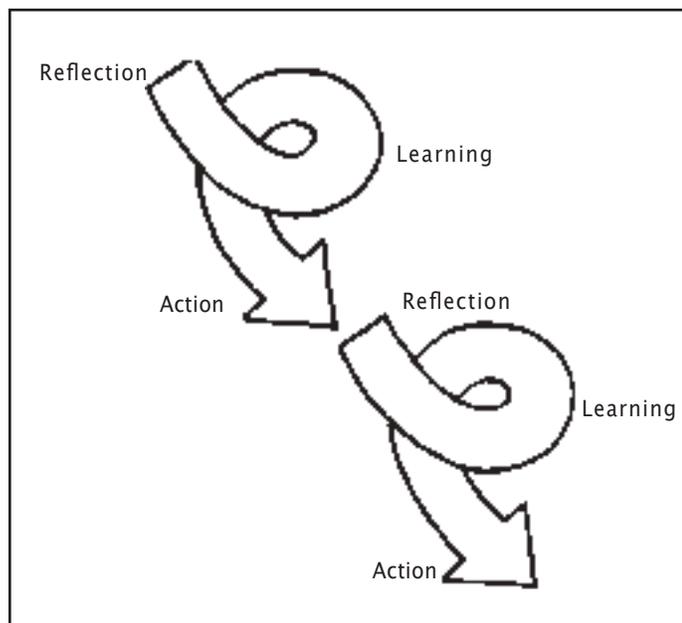
2. Continuously improve project performance and results

On-going reflection and analysis enable organisations to learn from their successes and failures, as well as from the different factors that hinder or facilitate project performance. The lessons learned through this process are fed back into the project to improve its performance which, in turn, will contribute to achieving better results and impact.



3. Promote empowerment, self-reliance and sustainable development through active participation

The process of systematisation requires a high degree of participation by all parties involved in the description, analysis and decision-making of a project. If genuinely participatory, this process can promote the empowerment of the intended beneficiaries, encouraging them to actively participate in defining and fulfilling their needs.



4. Contribute to mutual understanding and cooperation between communities and development organisations

Because systematisation is a participatory process, it facilitates reaching a common understanding between community members and the development organisation staff about the nature of community problems and the actions to be taken to solve them. On-going dialogue and partnership in the process of reflection, planning, implementation and evaluation of development activities is essential.

5. Enhance organisational capacity through development of skills

Systematisation helps participants to develop their ability to plan and implement activities, learn and manage resources efficiently. It also facilitates common understanding of a project by its staff. This process also allows organisations to develop skills for networking with other organisations (NGOs, GROs, GA, donors), thereby promoting cooperation and sharing of knowledge.

6. Strengthen organisations through the sharing of lessons learned

Sharing lessons learned is important for organisations to play a meaningful role in society. Sharing knowledge and experiences with other organisations saves time and resources as it will make them less likely to make similar mistakes. In this way, systematisation facilitates institutional learning, common problem-solving, capacity-building and networking. If information is shared with donor agencies, it gives them a better idea of the needs of various organisations and enables them to allocate resources more effectively. Sharing of lessons may be done through workshops, conferences, training courses, publications and formal or informal networks.

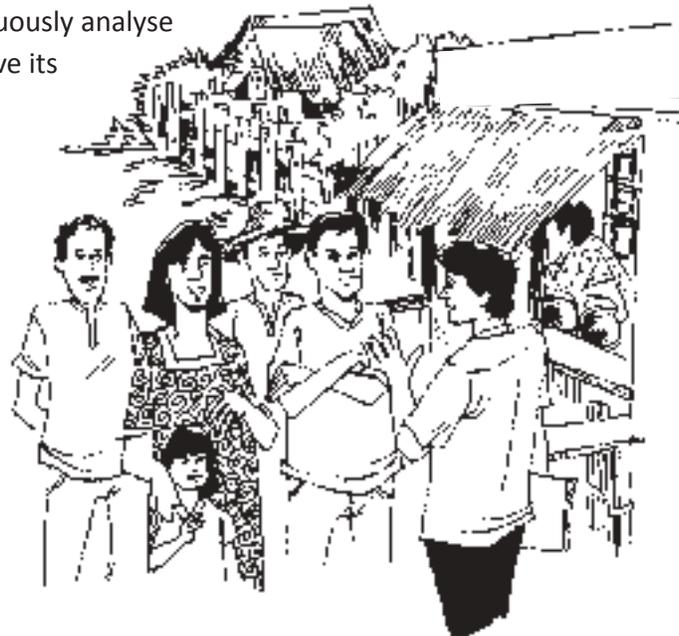
Why Should We Systematise?

The systematisation process allows us to continuously analyse project activities, generate knowledge to improve its implementation and impact, and share lessons learned.

The five on-going activities of the systematisation process are:

1. Description of project
2. Analysis of project activities
3. Decision-making and action to improve project performance
4. Documentation
5. Sharing lessons learned

All these activities must be documented in order to ensure that information is preserved for analysis, learning and sharing with other organisations.



Aspects to Consider Before Starting the Systematisation Process

Before starting the systematisation process, you must carefully analyse the following aspects with project staff and beneficiaries.

- Why are we going to “systematise” the project?
- What aspects of the project will be analysed?
- Who will coordinate the process?
- Who will participate in the systematisation process?
- What methods and tools will be used?
- What kind of data will be used?
- How will the collected information be recorded and organised?
- What procedures and time frame will be used?
- What language (local or otherwise) will be used?



Who Can Participate in the Systematisation Process?

Anyone who is involved in the design and implementation of a development project can participate in the systematisation process.

This can include:

- Project participants
- Community leaders
- Development workers
- Facilitators
- Technical staff
- Social workers
- Educators
- Researchers and evaluators
- Government officials
- Donors



When Can We Start a Systematisation Process?

Ideally, systematisation should begin with the planning of a project and continue throughout its life.

If this is not possible, systematisation can be started anytime after a project has begun. However, it cannot be conducted at the end of a project, as most of the experiences and the opportunity to improve the project on an on-going basis will have been lost. Such end-of-project activity would be limited to an impact evaluation.

We can systematise an entire project or just a specific component, such as different kinds of activities, training, community participation, or a given phase of it. Whatever the case, be sure that everyone is clear about what is going to be systematised and that this aspect is perceived as relevant and necessary by all involved.

We will also need to decide how general or detailed we want the information to be and to carefully select the aspects which are most relevant. Certain aspects may be emphasised over others, but some time and energy should be dedicated to each area. The more time we spend on each aspect, the more useful the systematisation process will be.

Choice of Methods and Tools

We will need to decide what methods and tools are to be used to elicit and analyse information and make decisions. We should choose tools that we and our colleagues know and are familiar with already, and that will be useful to systematise the project.

What aspects of the project will be analysed?

Conceptual Framework	General Context	Participants and Project	Implementation and Result
 <p>Ideology</p>  <p>Strategy</p>	 <p>Local context</p>  <p>Regional and national context</p>  <p>Global context</p>	 <p>Participants</p>  <p>Nature of the project</p>	 <p>Project implementation</p>  <p>Result and impact</p>
<p>Address issues bearing on the design and analysis of the general plan of action, or project implementation strategy of our organisation. This is important because it will help us have a clear framework of the strategies that guide the actions of the organisation or project.</p>	<p>Obtain information about the historical, political, economic, social and cultural characteristics which influence the organisation or project. This is important in order to understand the environments in which we work and the influence they may have in achieving objectives. Remember that these characteristics should be described and analysed in relation to the goals and objectives, and to the implementation of the project.</p>	<p>Know the characteristics of the different participants involved in the project, to better understand with whom we are working. Likewise, it is fundamental to have relevant information that will allow to better plan, implement and evaluate a project, based on community needs.</p>	<p>This helps us learn how the project is being implemented in order to improve its performance, to continuously analyse the performance of the activities being implemented and to understand the dynamics and changes in project activities.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the on-going analysis of project activities and the generation of lessons to be fed back to improve project performance and results.</p>

Possible Methods	Possible Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meetings ■ Field trips ■ Focus group discussions ■ Interviews ■ Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Problem tree ■ SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) ■ Planning matrix ■ Advantages and disadvantages table ■ Pros and cons chart ■ Logical framework ■ Others

Project-related Lessons: Key Questions

1. What were the most important lessons learned about the project?
2. What generalisations, assumptions, ideas and perspectives about the project are important to share with other organisations?
3. What theories have been generated based on the project experiences?
4. What problems or obstacles did your organisation face that could be avoided by other organisations or projects?
5. What advice would we give to others starting similar projects regarding project design, implementation and evaluation?



Why is it Important to Share Lessons Learned?

There are a number of reasons to share lessons learned:

- Present successful alternative development models, for planning and replication purposes, which have been well analysed and documented, and based on practical field experiences.
- Facilitate others in learning from our mistakes, thereby helping them to avoid making similar errors.
- Permit others to learn from the problems that were encountered in the project, and how were they solved.
- Increase the impact of our project by positively influencing the design and implementation of other projects, and the policies of other organisations.
- Promote networking through the exchange of knowledge and information, thereby increasing cooperation among different organisations.

For more detailed information, refer to:

Selener, Daniel. 1998. *A Participatory Systematisation Workbook*. International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), Regional Office for Latin America, Muirriagui Donoso 4451 y Av. America Apartado, Quito, Ecuador.

Prepared by:
Daniel Selener

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Innovative Experiences in the Use of Participatory Monitoring Tools



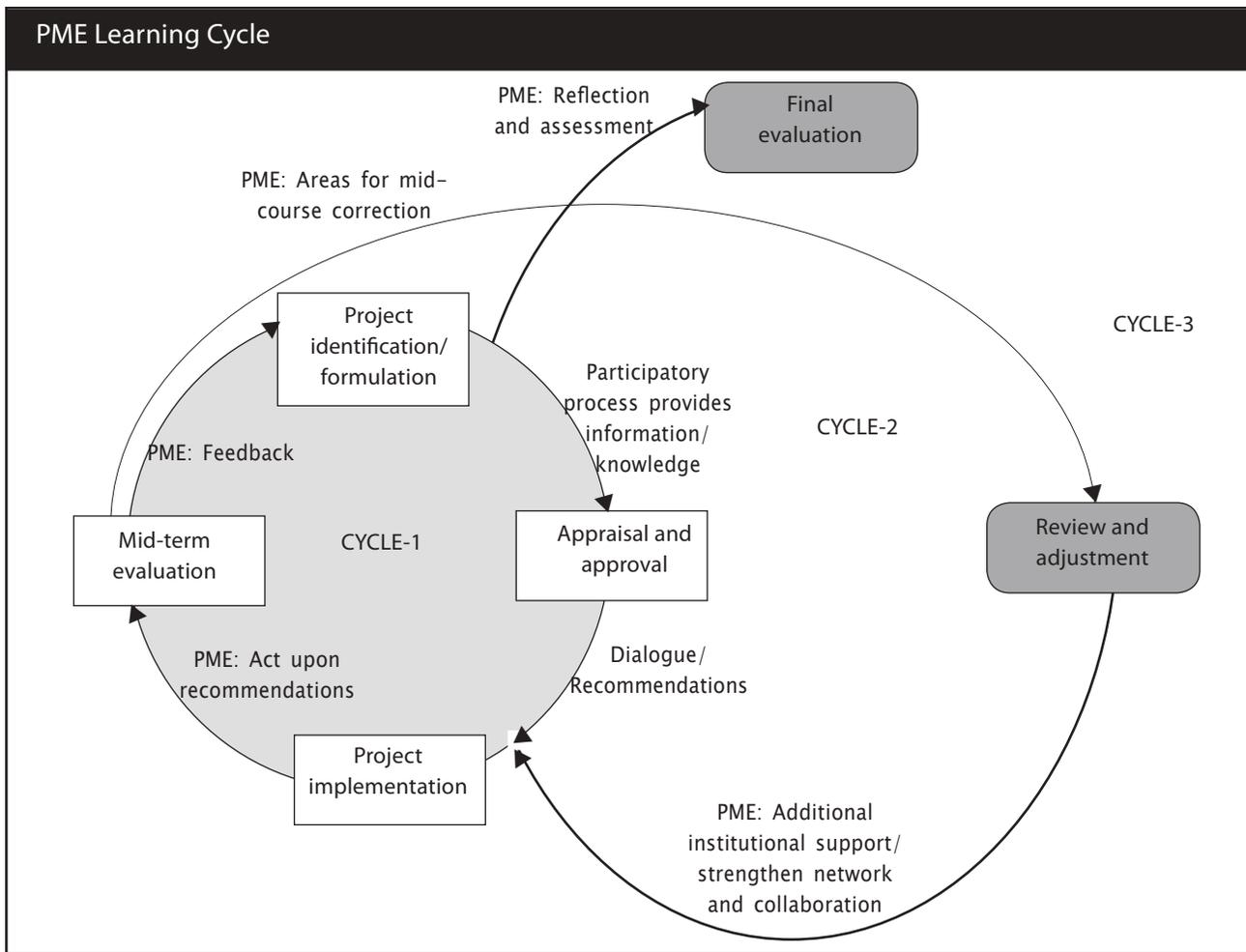
The stakeholders of a project need to track and assess whether the programme of targeted interventions is relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable. Monitoring and evaluation are important management tools to assist the process.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) involves the stakeholders in a collaborative framework for measuring, recording, collecting, processing and communicating information for use in problem-solving and decision-making. It enables them to review and re-adjust any of the project components or institutional arrangements as necessary.

There is no "final" definition of participatory monitoring and evaluation. There are several participatory approaches using the PRA methodology such as beneficiary assessment, participatory assessment, monitoring and evaluation, self-evaluation, participatory impact monitoring, community or citizen monitoring.

In PME, monitoring and evaluation get merged with participatory processes. Feedback mechanisms are not a one-time process but are built into the project design as a regular component of the project cycle.

The PME cycle is not only a learning process culminating in the heightened awareness and understanding of various stages and processes of the project, but also an empowering process through which stakeholders gain greater control over the development project. Besides being useful for planning any intervention, PME transmits knowledge and insights for joint learning among stakeholders. Quite often, this mutual exchange culminates in influencing and shaping the attitudes and behaviour of the stakeholders concerned.



PME contributes towards:

- Building capacities and negotiation skills by providing beneficiaries an opportunity to analyse, reflect and assess the progress and obstacles of the project.
- Enriching indigenous knowledge through interactive and participatory initiatives by providing a larger space for learning from past mistakes and taking corrective action.
- Promoting participation of stakeholders in the project by using a basket of participatory tools and techniques to analyse, plan and transform the given situation.
- Empowering people by putting them in charge of the process, so that they can demand accountability and exercise control over the project activities.
- Fostering coalition-building through participation on a sustainable basis and changing the 'mind-set' of all stakeholders.

From “know-how” to “do-how”

For participatory processes, attitudinal and behavioural changes are far more important than tools, techniques and “how to do” methodologies. However, a flexible “how-to-do” social methodology is a useful roadmap for the conduct of PME. (See related topic on An NGO-Designed Participatory Impact Monitoring (PIM) of a Rural Development Project on page 223.)

The Self-Monitoring Chart for SHGs

Participatory monitoring of self-help groups

The South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP) is under implementation in India, in three districts of Andhra Pradesh State. Under this programme, women self-help group (SHG) members monitor their own activities using a pictorial chart. Since most of them are illiterate, the project relies heavily on visual presentation. Visualisation, unlike written script, enables all the SHG members to participate in the exercise without inhibition.

Description and use of the monitoring tool

The chart includes twenty indicators for monitoring, such as:

- regularity of convening meetings;
- attendance of members in meetings;
- growth of savings of SHG members;
- increased access to micro-credit;
- participation of all group members in decision-making; and
- formation of new groups by SHG members, etc.

The monitoring chart may be used in the following manner:

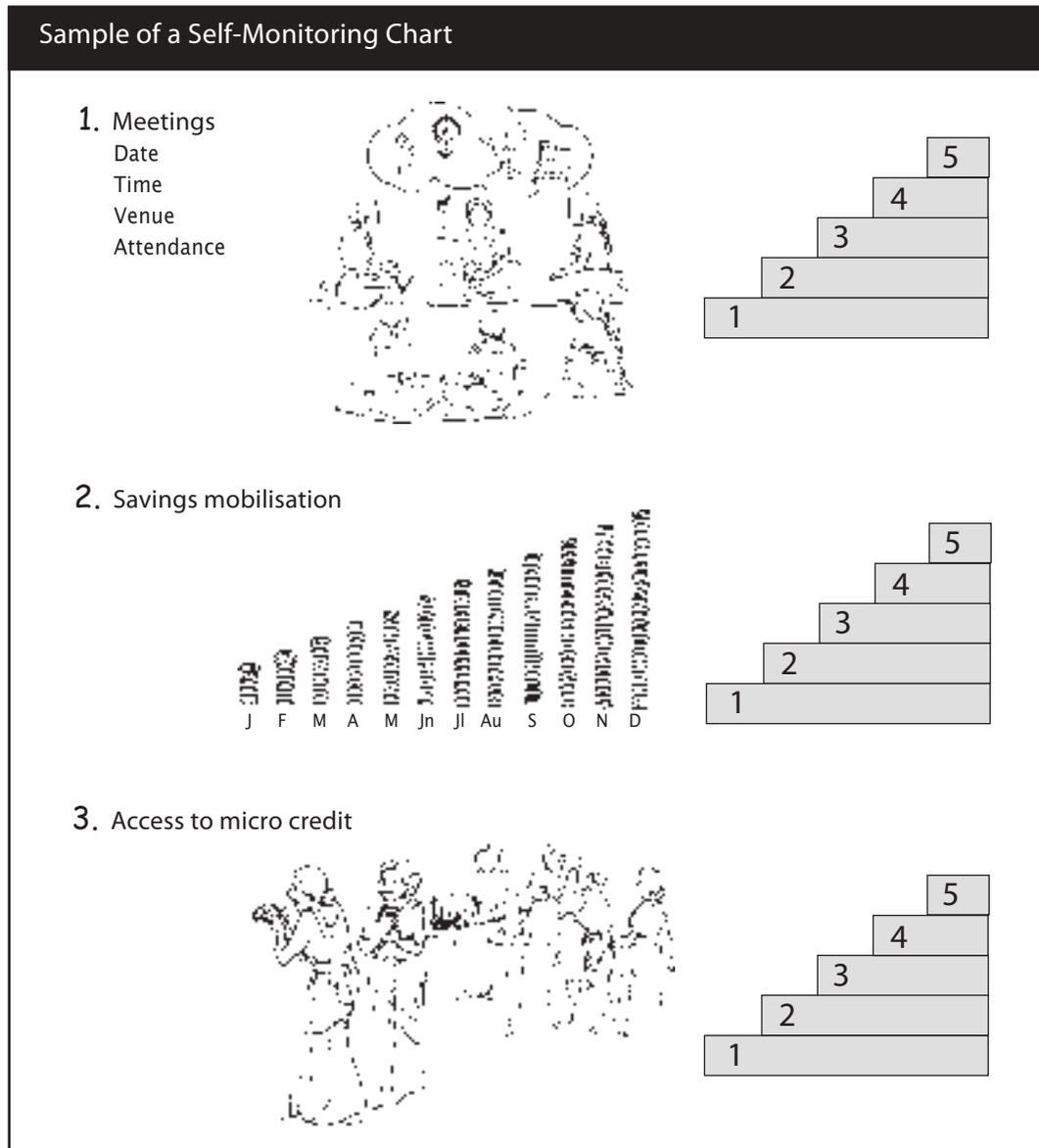
- Initially, the group animator explains to the women the twenty indicators listed pictorially on the chart for monitoring SHG progress.
- The women of each SHG discuss, assess and report the progress of their group once every month by using the chart.
- Each indicator may be scored on five points.
- The grading to be given to each indicator is decided on after it is discussed by SHG members. For example, take the case of convening meetings. If the group convenes the meeting regularly at a fixed date, venue and time, and if all members attend the meeting, then that group may decide to score five points for that indicator for that particular month.
- The scores for several months can be marked on the same chart. If a group has consistently low scores for some indicators, then it means that their performance in those areas is weak and vice versa.
- The monitoring chart is kept with the SHG.



Indicators and Measurement

In PME, the process of selecting indicators is a very important and difficult task. It should be done in consultation with the beneficiaries by following an iterative and participatory process. The indicators must be valid, reliable, relevant, sensitive, specific, cost-effective and timely. The aim is to collect information on the most essential components and not to compile huge amount of data, which rarely get. The process of selecting indicators should be kept flexible to accommodate new ones or to modify the old ones on the basis of experience and availability of relevant data.

This monitoring tool is used as a learning process by the group, to reflect on their own performance and to take corrective action.



Advantages of using the SHG impact-monitoring chart

- It is visual and easy to use.
- The chart remains with the group and they may compare over time how group performance has changed and discuss the reasons for this shift.
- The SHG members may use the chart at apex body meetings to compare the performance across SHGs.

The Ladder Approach to Monitoring Decision-Making Processes in the Family

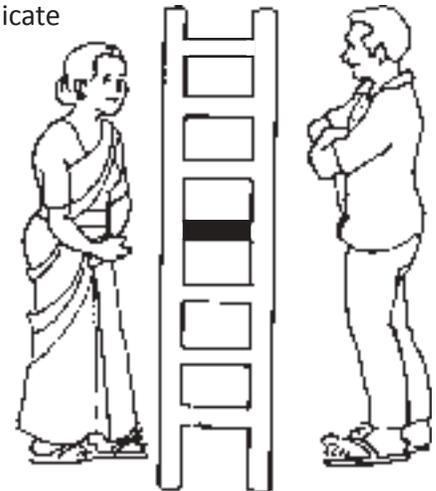
The Participatory Resource Management Project (PRMP) in Tuyen Quang, Vietnam, pursues participatory processes in all stages of the project cycle. The following is an illustration of how PME tools have been used by the project to monitor decision-making dynamics involving men and women in the family.

Description and use of the monitoring tool

To assess the PRMP's impact on the role of women in decision-making in the household, a "ladder of empowerment" was drawn. Each married woman was asked to indicate her position in the household vis-a-vis her husband's by asking the following questions:

"If your husband is placed at the centre of the ladder, where are you with respect to decision-making on:

- whether to attend village meetings;
- whether to attend women-related training programmes;
- how to manage loans;
- which products to buy and sell;
- which kinds of animals to rear and which varieties of crops to grow?"



Results of the monitoring exercise

Most of the women said that decisions are made jointly between husband and wife. The only exceptions were decisions as to whether women should attend women-related training, which are slightly dominated by the women.

Advantages of using the ladder of empowerment

- It is easy for uneducated women to decide on and visualise their position on the ladder, with respect to their husbands, related to specific areas of decision-making.
- The women are not embarrassed by having to explicitly make a statement of superiority or inferiority (in terms of decision-making power) over their husbands.

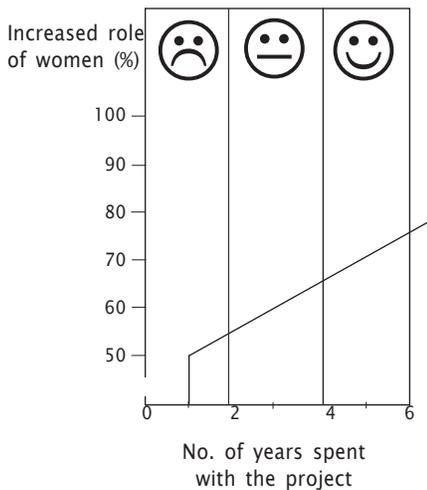
The Use of Semi-Structured Interviews to Monitor Decision-Making in the Community

Another monitoring exercise was used in PRMP to assess the contribution of women to decision-making at the community level.

Description and use of the monitoring tool

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to ask the women if they attended village-level meetings, spoke in village-level meetings, and whether their views were considered in village-level meetings.

Women in Decision-Making at the Community Level Example of a simple semi-structured questionnaire administered to women			
Indicators	Attended the meeting	Spoke during the meeting	Views were considered
Village production plan	✓	✓	—
Village regulations meet	✓	✓	✓
Village infrastructure plans	✓	—	✓



Results of the monitoring exercise

It is heartening to know that PRMP’s contribution with respect to the role of women in decision-making at the community level seems to be very significant: 80% of the women interviewed attended the village meetings and 50% of the women beneficiaries associated with PRMP for one year said that their views were heard and considered. Two-thirds of the women associated with PRMP for five years felt that their views were heard and considered. Therefore, one may say that PRMP certainly played a very positive role and contributed substantially to enhance the role of women at the community level.

Advantages of the semi-structured interview

This tool, by virtue of the questions it asks, captures the quality of participation in meetings in a way which the community can relate to.

Conclusion

PME empowers the stakeholders to steer the project effectively and efficiently. PME allows for better use of scarce resources. There are several participatory tools and techniques that can be used for PME, but the choice of tools, techniques and methods depends on the nature of the project. It is also possible to combine quantitative evaluation methods in PME-based approaches when attempting to assess impact.

Prepared by:
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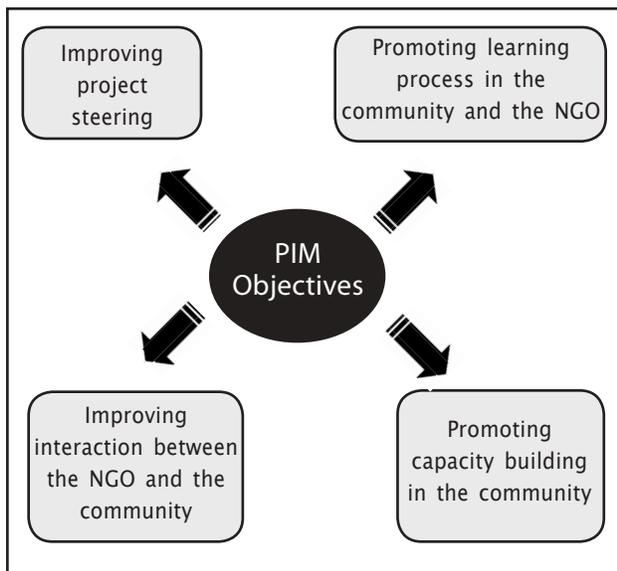
RESOURCE BOOK PRODUCED IN A PARTICIPATORY WRITESHOP ORGANISED BY THE International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), South East Asian Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN), MYRADA and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR).

An NGO-Designed Participatory Impact Monitoring (PIM) of a Rural Development Project

Participatory impact monitoring (PIM) is a complex task and is often neglected in favour of activity and results monitoring.

There is often a lack of effective, timely and handy to use methodology to assess impact. One attempt to close the methodological gap is the PIM process which was designed and used by an NGO (MYRADA) in Southern India.

The methodological guidelines for PIM are presented in a step-by-step approach which has evolved from practical experience gained during the first application. The approach may be adapted to suit the needs of a specific project.

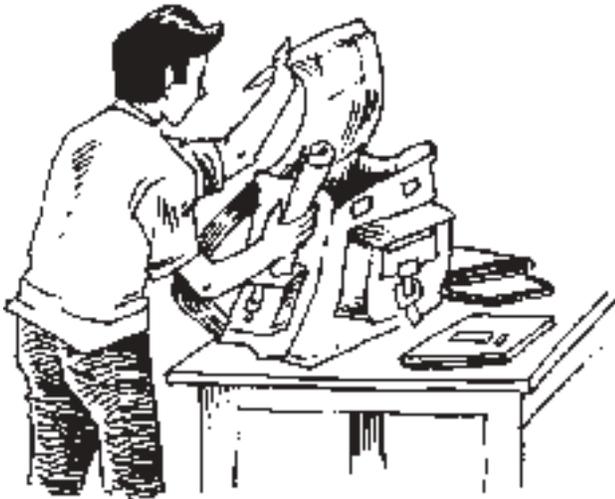


Definitions

- Participatory means that all stakeholders monitor impacts of their project self-responsibly and autonomously and exchange results with each other in a continuous and regular dialogue.
- Impact comprises all effects and changes that are caused by a project; they may be intended (planned), unintended (unplanned but imaginable) or occur unexpectedly (beyond the perception of the actors involved).
- Monitoring is a continuous and systematic process of observation, documentation and critical reflection.

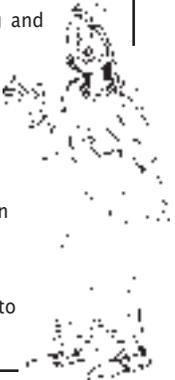
Phase I: Preparation for Monitoring

PIM starts with several decisions concerning the programmes and impacts to be monitored. In these decisions, various interests of the NGO and possibly its partner organisations have to be made transparent and reconciled.



The Importance of PIM

Funds for development assistance are decreasing and development agencies worldwide are being questioned to justify how and to what extent the expenditures benefited the rural poor and to what degree the efforts have affected development processes. A major concern lies in the sustainability of the project and the effect on poverty alleviation. In addition, the communities themselves must be empowered to monitor the impact of development interventions. PIM seeks to close the methodological gap.



Step 1: Decide on which programmes to monitor

An integrated rural development project usually consists of several programmes (e.g., health and sanitation, watershed development, micro-credit, literacy, etc.). A few or only one programme should be selected for monitoring.

Step 2: Identify possible impacts of the programme(s)

A list of intended and unintended impacts of the programme(s) must be developed during this stage. A brainstorming session is an appropriate instrument to facilitate the identification of impacts.

The guiding questions for this process are:

- *What positive changes do we intend to create with the programme?*
- *What unintended changes (positive/negative) do we expect or fear will occur in the course of our programme?*

Step 3: Clarify key terms and agree on the meaning of the impacts

Each individual perceives impact and defines key terms differently. There must be a common understanding of the meaning of the impacts and an agreement of their definitions must be reached.

Step 4: Decide on impacts to be monitored

A manageable list of selected impacts to be monitored is generated in this step. Criteria for the selection of impacts depend on the needs of the NGO. In order to get a holistic picture of a programme, the package can comprise socio-cultural (“soft”) impacts as well as technical-economic (“hard”) impacts.

Phase II: Reflection on the Impacts to be Monitored

During this phase, it is necessary to examine the relationship between project activities that result in a certain impact as well as other factors that may contribute towards creating this impact.

Elements for Successful Adoption of PIM

As with any successful introduction of a new instrument within a given project framework, the adoption of PIM requires change on both sides:

- The instrument has to be flexible enough to suit the needs, capabilities and constraints of the users.
- The users have to be willing to acquire new skills and to provide favourable framework conditions.

Practical experience indicates that, for PIM to be successful, staff should feel a need for it. Since PIM involves extra work, the project personnel must feel motivated to apply it and PIM should not be considered only as a donor or head office concern. It must also be remembered that additional inputs, especially in terms of finances and time, are needed. These should be realistically assessed before PIM is introduced.



Step 5: Investigate the relationship between project activities and impacts

During this step, all activities of the NGO that influence the impact must be identified and cause-effect relationships must be established.

A guiding question which may be used at this stage is: *“How and to what extent are the impacts related to the project activities?”*

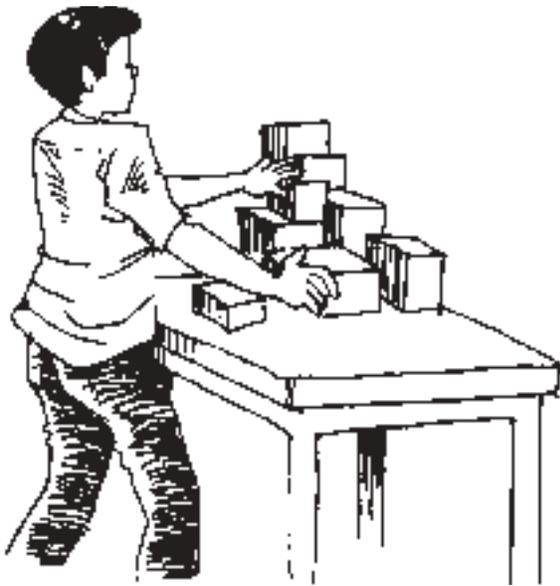
Step 6: Investigate the relationship between factors external to the project and impacts

Most impacts are influenced by a large number of external factors besides project activities. These can have fostering or hampering effects on the achievements of the project (e.g., government programmes and the media). The extent to which these factors influence each impact should be established.

A guiding question which may be used at this stage is: *“Which other factors might influence the impact?”*

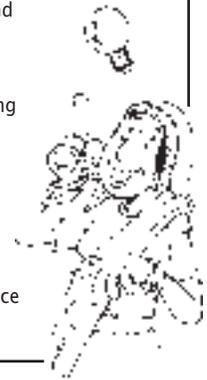
Step 7: Examine the existing M&E activities measuring impact

PIM must consult information and data already available in a project. These data refer to all background information that has already been monitored or compiled in the form of publications, lists, reports, files, etc. This step makes it easier to identify information needs and starting points for the integration of PIM into an existing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Furthermore, this step will be useful in to avoid “re-inventing the wheel” in the monitoring process.



Need for Training in PIM

PIM requires experienced facilitators and the most demanding task is training the field staff in indicator development and data processing as well as analysing measurement results. Experience with interviewing, facilitation and the use of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools is desirable. Furthermore, data processing will be much easier if staff has analytical skills and some experience with documentation and computer use.



Phase III: Development of Indicators

Developing indicators and methods that allow for measurement of the chosen impacts is the core and most challenging phase of PIM. In this phase, the involvement of the target group is absolutely necessary.

Step 8: Draft the indicators

In order to make an impact observable or measurable, indicators and methods have to be developed. Indicators are detailed descriptions of impacts, developed in order to assess the impacts. It is unrealistic to expect that good indicators and methods may be developed at one go. Instead, a step-by-step procedure is necessary, starting with the drafting of preliminary indicators and data collection tools. A preliminary list of indicators, missing information about the indicators, and the rationale for choosing these indicators have to be identified in this step.

Step 9: Consult the community and other resource persons for indicator development

The preliminary list of indicators developed previously must be reworked with the community. In Step 8, they have been formulated only on the basis of the experience of the NGO and on available information about the project. The community must be consulted to finalise the indicators since they are the most knowledgeable about their environment and often have their own indicators for assessing changes relevant to them.

“How do you notice that an impact has occurred?” and “Can you give a concrete example as to how you observe an impact?” are guiding questions for the community.

Any open questions concerning impacts, the indicators, their rationale and their limitations have to be clarified with the community.

Step 10: Select the most appropriate indicators

It may turn out that the number of indicators generated so far is too high. In view of limited resources, a decision has to be made as to which of the indicators (or sets of indicators) are most appropriate to measure various impacts to a satisfactory degree. The development of criteria for the selection of indicators must allow for a ranking of the (sets of) indicators. Matrix scoring is an appropriate tool to facilitate such a ranking. Criteria for selection of indicators may be: user-friendliness, low cost, precision, etc.

Step 11: Define survey units and decide on the sampling procedure

Survey units (e.g., community-based groups) and respondents (members) have to be defined at this stage. A further decision has also to be made on the sampling procedure and the minimum sample size, as sampling also has a critical influence on the reliability of the results.

Step 12: Design data collection tools

The data collection method is to a large extent already defined by the selection of indicators. For interviews, the staff has to decide on a limited number of questions per indicator. If the indicator is to be measured using PRA tools, detailed instructions for the facilitator must be developed.

Step 13: Design data processing and data analysis sheets

In order to handle data obtained during the measurement phase in a systematic manner, it is important to have data processing sheets ready for data entry. It is also necessary to have a clear idea about how the data may be analysed subsequent to the measurement phase.

Step 14: Pre-test indicators, methods and data analysis

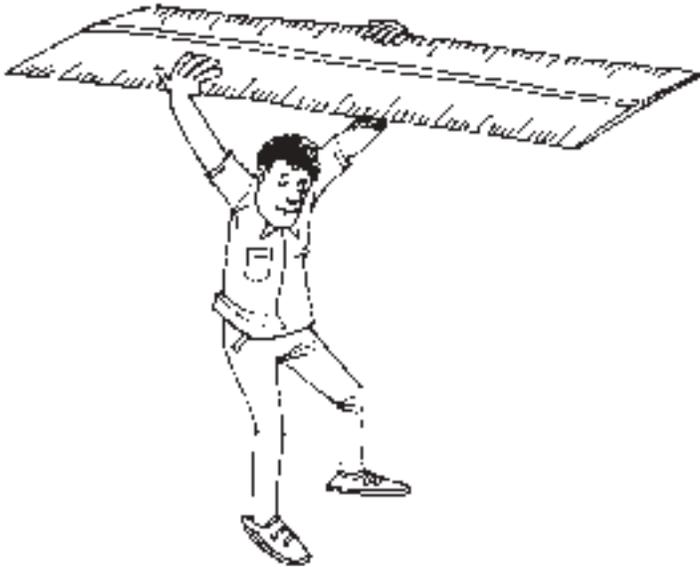
A pre-test is carried out to check whether the data collection instruments are adequate, unambiguous and manageable in the field. This step is absolutely essential in preparing for measurement since it is the last check of the feasibility and usefulness of selected instruments before they are applied on a broad scale.

Step 15: Determine thresholds and targeted achievements

The assessment of impacts is based on the comparison of results with “milestones” set in advance. In order to know whether an NGO and a community have achieved their goals, it is necessary to qualify and quantify their goals beforehand.

Phase IV: Measurement of Impact

Impact measurement in the field is the most “practical” phase of PIM. To ensure good data quality, the measurement needs to be well planned and supervised.



Requirements for PIM

The indicator measurement tasks should be simple and harmonised with regular and routine work. Good communication channels and appropriate systems for feedback between different project levels as well as between staff and the community are required. A close co-operation between planners, implementers and the staff responsible for monitoring is generally good. Monitoring should not be executed in an isolated unit, which may require some organisational changes within the project. Many other monitoring systems might already be in place and PIM can be only one of them. The introduction of PIM is much easier if some kind of monitoring system already exists in a project or in community-based organisations, which may be upgraded through PIM.



Step 16: Prepare for impact measurement

Data collection needs good preparation in terms of time, manpower management, logistics and materials. An operative plan must be detailed and staff has to be trained in survey methods.

Step 17: Collect and process data

To sustain quality, incoming data must be continuously checked and properly processed throughout the measurement phase. The completeness of filled questionnaires and other notes taken must be checked. Data processing sheets have to be filled in.

Phase V: Analysis of Impact Measurement Results

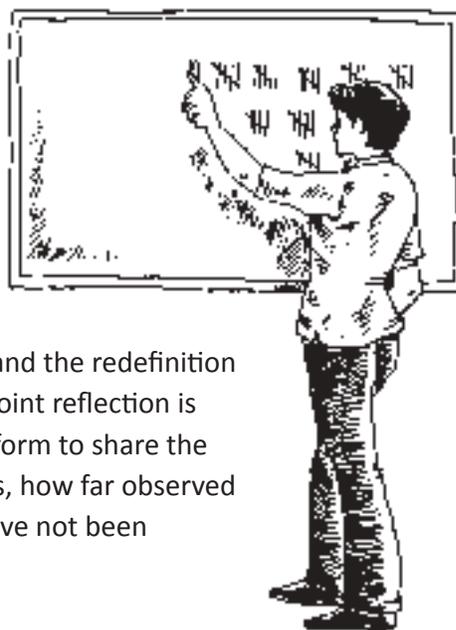
Data obtained during the measurement must be interpreted well in order to be able to assess the impacts correctly and arrive at appropriate conclusions concerning plan adjustments and redefinition of strategies. In this process, the active participation of the community is of vital importance. Methods used during impact measurement must also be evaluated and improved.

Step 18: Analyse and pre-assess results

Results of the measurement must be analysed and preliminary conclusions should be drawn.

Step 19: Draw conclusions in joint reflection with the community

After having identified possible weak areas of the project, the main tasks are to analyse the reasons for deviations from the targeted achievements, to draw conclusions for plan adjustments and the redefinition of project strategies. The active involvement of the community in joint reflection is necessary in this phase. Joint reflection workshops are a good platform to share the results of impact measurement with the community. Issues such as, how far observed changes may be attributed to the project or some of the targets have not been achieved, may be discussed with the community.



Step 20: Evolve recommendations for future monitoring

As monitoring is a continuous, repetitive activity, PIM must be institutionalised in the NGO and in community-based institutions. Recommendations for future monitoring must be made at this stage. Designing ways to institutionalise these activities into the existing M&E system is the aim of this step.

The steps described should not be seen as static. It is neither possible nor desirable to have a rigid single design of PIM to which all projects must conform in the same sequence and order. Developed indicators might be valid for similar projects, but it is also possible that indicators and tools may have to be modified and iteratively updated by the users to fit in their specific situations and needs. (*A practical example of how PIM has been introduced in a project has been described in the topic on Testing Participatory Impact Monitoring: Participatory Resource Management Project in Vietnam on page 236*).

Prepared by:
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Using PRA for Participatory Impact Monitoring: An Illustrative Example



This paper illustrates how a participatory rural appraisal (PRA)-based participatory impact monitoring (PIM) tool may be used both for the learning of the community, as well as for aggregating and analysing data for the monitoring purposes of the NGO.

MYRADA is a non-government organisation (NGO) which focuses on the formation of self-help groups (SHGs) and other local-level institutions. The core function of an SHG is the mobilisation of savings and management of credit. However, the SHG has repeatedly demonstrated its potential for being a credit-plus institution. By linking with other organisations in the environment, the SHG can increase members' lobbying power and access to services and information.

Selection of Impact for Monitoring

One of the achievements targeted by the staff for the SHG programme is:

“That the SHGs should have established strong linkages by the end of the third year, with the following institutions: federation (apex body of SHGs), bank or other financing institutions, *Gram panchayat*, *Zilla panchayat* (local government structures), hospitals, Block Development Officer (BDO), School Betterment Committee and other SHGs in the village.”

The impact to be monitored, “Development of Networks with other Institutions”, was chosen in order to investigate the extent to which this has been achieved by the project.

Indicators Selected for Measurement and Rationale for Choosing these Indicators

The indicators chosen to measure impact are:

- the number of linkages between SHGs and other institutions;
- the intensity of their contact; and
- the importance of each linkage for SHG members.

The number, strength and importance of linkages of SHGs with other institutions determine the quality of an institutional network. Therefore, investigating the development of these features can assess the growth and effectiveness of networks.

Adaptation of Chapati (Venn) diagramming for monitoring impact

Chapati diagrams have been successfully used by community-based groups for assessing linkages. However, one problem faced in using them for monitoring impact at the project level, is that *chapati* sizes, as well as their distances from the centre of the diagram, vary freely. Thus, analysing the *chapati* diagrams to allow for comparisons in the monitoring process becomes difficult. To aid the comparative analysis of *chapati* diagram results from different SHGs, the number of *chapati* sizes and their distance from the centre of the diagram have been limited to two categories:

- three different sizes of *chapatis* represent three degrees of importance (high, medium and low) attributed by SHG members to the institutions involved; and
- three circles around the centre of the diagram represent three degrees of interaction between the SHG and these institutions.

Limitations of the method

Despite modifications, the method still has some limitations.

- Since a *chapati* diagram is a participatory tool, the quality of the results depends strongly on the quality of group facilitation and detailed documentation of the process.
- Moreover, the results depend very much on the subjective point of view of the respondents, which makes their comparison difficult.
- Finally, the result analysis can, for the most part, only be done in a very descriptive way, which means that the drawings may at best support data analysis.

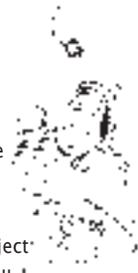
Use of the method

1. Instructions for data collection

- Prepare the tool before you go to the field.
- Introduce the *chapati* diagram and thoroughly explain the meaning of the three different circles and *chapati* sizes to the SHG members.



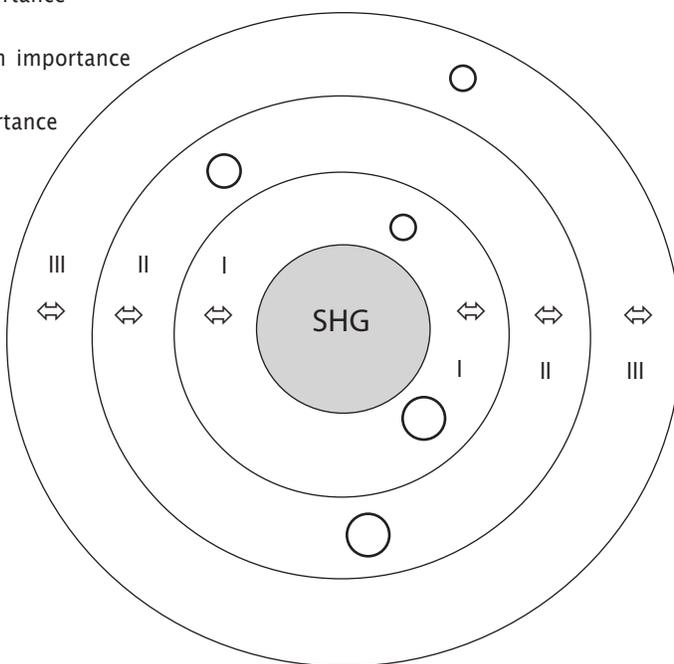
The stage of data collection has potential for being a learning exercise and a training tool for community members as they can evaluate in detail what linkages are important to them and whether these linkages have been made strong. It is important at this stage to also deal with issues of causality – why are certain linkages weak (if they are important to SHG members) and what may be done to strengthen them. The chapati diagram must be kept with the SHG members for future monitoring. At this stage it is also vital for facilitators to note the perceptions of members as to why a linkage is considered important or why it is weak. Collating these data for the entire project at the end of the exercise will throw more light on the final data analysis.



- Cross-check whether the SHG members have really understood what is meant by “institutions”, “importance of linkages” and “intensity of linkages”.
- Brainstorm and identify all institutions they are in touch with – within and outside the village – and write them down on a separate sheet of paper. Do not list them with numbers, as this may indicate priorities. Do not list institutions if participants are only aware of their existence without any established contact with them or institutions to which they have individual contact and not a group contact.
- Ask the SHG members to prioritise the institutions mentioned with regard to their importance (high, medium, and low) for the SHG. Note down the name of each institution on the appropriate size of the *chapati*.
- Identify the degree of intensity of contact between the SHG and the institutions by putting the *chapatis* in the three different circles (I, II or III). Let participants move the *chapatis* within the three circles until they come to a consensus.
- Crosscheck by verifying and clarifying their choices.
- Stick the *chapatis* with glue.

Chapati Diagram: Features of Linkages and their Scores

- A: High importance
Score: 3
- B: Medium importance
Score: 2
- C: Low importance
Score: 1



- I. Strong interaction, very good rapport, frequent/ regular contact high accessibility, benefiting very much from each other, mobilising each other.
Score: 3
- II: Some interaction, continuous but not regular contact, not benefiting very much from each other.
Score: 2
- III: Only sporadic contact, only knowing each other.
Score: 1

- Discuss their plans for building and strengthening linkages in the future, based on the results, e.g., if they have indicated that a relationship with an institution is important to them but their interaction is weak, then they may discuss why this is so and what they can do to change the situation.

2. Instructions for data processing

Enter the results of the *chapati* diagram in the data processing sheet following the sequence given below.

- Give codes for each SHG, indicating its age (e.g., 1, 3, 5) and its number within the sample (1, 2, 3).
- Allot one row for each linkage and one column for the importance of the linkage, one for strength of the contact, and one for the score of the linkage.
- Enter the importance the SHG has attributed to its linkage with a particular institution (A, B or C) and the strength of the contact as perceived by the SHG (I, II or III) in the respective cell of the table.
- For each linkage, multiply the scores for importance (A = 3; B = 2; C = 1) by the scores for contact (I = 3; II = 2; III = 1) and enter the result in the respective column “score”.
- Sum up all the scores to arrive at a total score for the SHG (except for the linkage with MYRADA)
- Count all the linkages of the SHG (except for the linkage with MYRADA) and enter the result in the last row of the table.



Data Processing Sheet (Example for a one-year old SHG)			
Name of SHG: Akka Mahadevi		Facilitator: N. Ram	
Village: Kithur			
Institution	Importance	Contact	Score
Agricultural Cooperative			
Agriculture Department			
Anganwadi	A	I	9
Apex Body			
Bank	A	II	6
Bank (other)			
Block Development Officer			
Education Department			
Forest Department	C	III	1
Gram Panchayat/Zilla Panchayat B		I	6
Horticulture Department			
Hospital	B	I	6
Karnataka Electricity Board			
School Betterment Committee	A	II	6
School	C	III	1
Sericulture Department			
Other SHG 1	B	II	4
Other SHG 2			
Other SHG 3			
Taluk Office	C	III	1
Temple Committee			
Veterinary Department/Hospital B		II	4
Village leaders			
WDA			
Weaving Association			
Youth Association			
Others			
	Total		44
MYRADA	A	I	9
	No. of linkages:		11

The shaded cells indicate the essential linkages for each SHG by the end of the 3rd year; see targeted achievements

3. Instructions for preparing the data summary sheets

Enter the scores from the data processing sheets into the data summary sheet as follows:

- Make sure that only data for SHGs of the same age is entered in the respective tables.
- Allot one row for each institution (in alphabetical order if possible).
- Allot one column for each SHG, one column for the sums of scores (Σ)¹ and one column for the average scores (\emptyset)².
- Copy the scores for the linkages from the data processing sheets of each SHG in a given age category into the respective cells in the table.
- Fill in the average of scores in each row in column (2).
- Calculate the average number of linkages per SHG.



Data Summary Sheet (Example for 1-year-old SHGs)

Institution	1/1 score	1/2 score	1/3 score	1/4 score	(...)	1/9 score	1/10 score	^[1] Σ	^[2] \emptyset
Agricultural Cooperative	2		9		(...)			15	1.5
Agriculture Department		6	3		(...)			19	1.9
Anganwadi	9	6	6	9	(...)		4	49	4.9
Apex Body	9		6		(...)		6	58	5.8
Bank	9	9	9	6	(...)	9	9	79	7.9
Block Development Officer		1			(...)	4		11	1.1
Education Department					(...)			3	0.3
Forest Department	4			1	(...)			12	1.2
(...)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Watershed Development Association					(...)	9		9	0.9
Weaving Association		6			(...)			11	1.1
Youth Association					(...)	6		17	1.7
Total	53	50	64	44	(...)	68	56	590^[3]	59^[4]
MYRADA	9	9	9	9	(...)	9	9	82	8.2
Number of linkages	11	11	12	11	(...)	9	10	100	10 ^[5]

The data summary sheet may be used by staff to compare SHGs of the same age category across the project for their number and strength of linkages with various institutions, e.g., the blank cells in each column indicate that the SHG has no linkage to a particular organisation, low scores indicate that the SHG has weak and insignificant linkages with institutions. The shaded cells indicate linkages which are essential to the SHG described previously as targeted achievements.

4. Instructions for data analysis

Enter the results from the data summary sheets in the data analysis sheet as follows:

- The first column lists various institutions with which SHGs can link up. Columns 2,3 and 4 stand for 1, 3 and 5 year old SHGs.

- Copy the average row scores from the data summary sheets into the respective cells of the table.
- Calculate the total sum of average scores per SHG-age and enter the results in the respective row. Also enter average number of linkages per SHG age into the respective cell of the table.



Data Analysis (Example)			
Institution	∅ score ≤1 year	∅ score ≈3 years	∅ score ≥5 years
Agricultural Cooperative	1.5	3.5	3.7
Agriculture Department	1.9	2.9	3.9
Anganwadi	4.9	5.1	3.7
Apex Body	5.8	5.3	8.7
Bank	7.9	8.1	9.0
Bank (other)	–	–	1.5
Block Development Officer	1.1	2.5	2.5
Education Department	0.3	0.4	0.6
Forest Department	1.2	2.5	3.5
Gram Panchayat/Zilla Panchayat	5.3	6.0	4.2
Horticulture Department	1.0	1.5	1.5
Hospital	3.2	5.7	6.0
Karnataka Electricity Board	0.3	0.4	0.6
School Betterment Committee	1.8	2.7	0.2
School	4.6	3.5	5.6
Sericulture Department	–	1.5	3.5
SHG 1 (other)	6.4	4.4	4.2
SHG 2 (other)	1.9	1.2	1.8
SHG 3 (other)	1.3	1.3	1.8
Taluk Office	1.5	2.7	4.4
Temple Committee	1.2	1.2	0.3
Training Institutes	1.7	2.1	0.7
Veterinary Department/Hospital	2.6	2.8	2.1
Village Leaders	–	–	2.0
Watershed Development Association	0.9	–	–
Weaving Association	1.1	1.0	1.8
Youth Association	1.7	–	–
Others: Rotary	–	–	0.7
Total	59	66	79
MYRADA	8.2	8.2	8.4
No. of linkages	10	12	15

The data analysis sheet may be used to assess whether project-wide targets for linkages have been achieved for different institutions. The table indicates which institutional linkages are generally strong in the project and which are weak. Whenever institutional linkages have been found to be weak or insignificant, the NGO should reinforce its efforts to improve these linkages.

Prepared by:
Anke Schuermann

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Testing Participatory Impact Monitoring: Participatory Resource Management Project in Vietnam

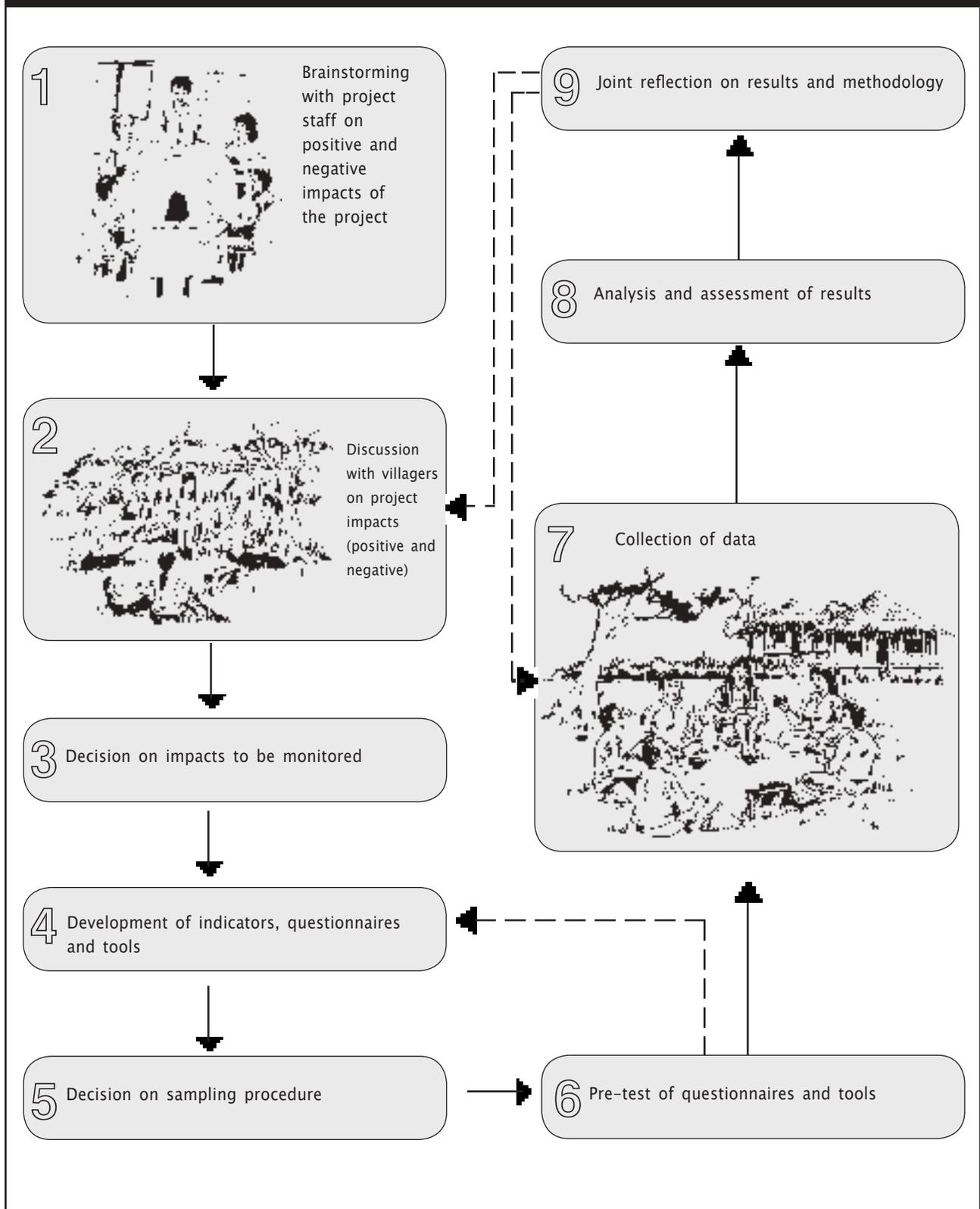


Participatory impact monitoring (PIM) was first introduced in the early 1990s by development institutions based in Germany. Since then, this methodology has been used by many agencies in monitoring the impact of development projects. PIM is the continuous observation, systematic documentation and critical reflection of project impact. It is done by the project staff and target groups, using self-generated survey results [*see related topic on An NGO-Designed Participatory Impact Monitoring (PIM) of a Rural Development Project on page 223*].

The main objective of the Participatory Resource Management Project (PRMP) in Vietnam is to improve the standard of living of the poor mainly by increasing crop and livestock production and by improving the access to social infrastructure. The major components are credit, labour-based roads, irrigation and support to extension, management and participatory processes. The project has introduced and actively used participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods in project design, implementation and evaluation. Thus, it provides a good basis to test PIM for further development of the methodology.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) aims to develop a participatory, cost-effective and user-friendly method of monitoring the impact of its projects. It considers participatory impact monitoring (PIM) to be a promising methodology and has tested it in July 2000 in the Participatory Resource Management Project (PRMP) in Tuyen Quang Province of Vietnam. This is the first time it has been tried out in a government project.

Steps of Participatory Impact Monitoring (PIM)



Positive and Negative Impacts of Participatory Resource Management Project (PRMP)

Perceptions	Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<p>Project staff</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Higher crop yields ■ Stable market for produce ■ Knowledge on crop and livestock production ■ Improvement of production skills and income ■ More stable water supplies ■ Higher capacity in the operation and maintenance of irrigation schemes ■ Awareness of women on the use of loans ■ Better education levels and gender equality for women ■ Increased women's role in decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New agriculture technologies may harm the environment (agricultural chemicals) ■ Inadequate investment on irrigation schemes ■ Small loan size per borrower, short loan repayment period and high interest rates
<p>Villagers</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase in rice yields ■ Increase in number of households with surplus rice production ■ Better management and maintenance of irrigation canals ■ More consultation and exchange of information among villagers ■ Trained women have more knowledge and experience and teach their husbands ■ Women are able to attend meetings; socialise (wear nice clothes and sing) and interact more ■ Women are better able to manage credit ■ Women's union supports women and enhances their capacity for credit management ■ Families can afford to send children to school and educate them to higher levels ■ Families can put money aside as savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase in workload of farmers due to double-cropping of rice ■ Conflict among villagers about alternative uses of water (turbine vs irrigation) ■ Increased indebtedness of farmers ■ Men use the credit of women for other purposes ■ Some become poorer; cannot repay credit (buffalo died, etc.) ■ Increased production but marketing is a problem ■ Lower market prices for produce

Selecting Impact Indicators and Defining Data Collection Tools

The core team deliberated on a number of possible impact indicators. In view of the limited resources, agreement was reached on a manageable list of impact as follows:

- Increased role of women in decision-making in the household and the community.
- Increased capacity of Village Development Boards (VDBs) to formulate and implement village development plans in a participatory manner.
- Improved food security of poor farmer households.
- Increased daily intake of nutritionally balanced food by project beneficiaries.
- Improved delivery of vital social and technical services to poor farmer households.

The survey units were defined and decision was taken on the sampling procedure and the minimum sample size.

The PIM Process: Steps for Developing Impact Indicators

Impact

Write down the final formulation of the impact statement.
Example: Increased role of women in decision-making in the household.

Definitions

Identify important terms and define each term in a simple manner.
Example:
Role: Accepted position a person has in society (family, village, etc.)
Decision-making: Decisions on attending meetings; management of loans (how to utilise them, how to repay, etc.); buying and selling of products; and selection of the breeds of animals to rear.
Household: People living under one roof.



Indicators

Identify one or more indicators to measure the impact.
Example: The percentage of women who acquired a stronger position to decide the following has increased:

- whether to attend village meetings or women-related training;
- how to manage loans;
- which products to buy and to sell; and
- which breeds of animals to rear.



Survey Unit

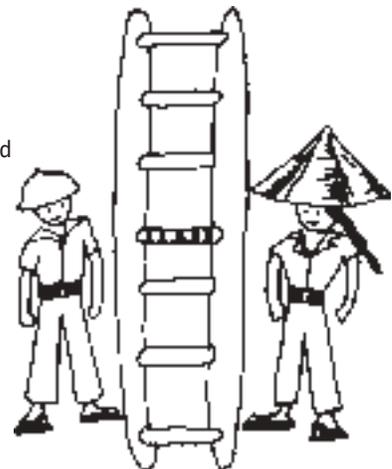
Identify what unit is relevant for the impact.
Example: Household, with both husband and wife.

Respondent

Determine whom to ask the questions to.
Example: The woman (wife) in the household.

Method

Select the method to be used (questionnaire or PRA).
Example: An interview method – an interview sheet with illustration was used. The respondents (women) were asked to rate themselves in relation to the man (husband), in terms of decision-making in the household. They could then rate themselves either below, at par, or above the man.



Sample

Select a sample that will allow comparisons of changes over time, or differences across populations or areas.
Example: A triangulation sampling method was used.

Rationale and Limitations of Indicators

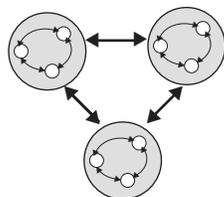
Finally, explain the limitations and why certain indicators were used. Clarify certain assumptions taken in the study.

Sampling Procedure

Triangulation method

About 9–10 households were selected randomly from four different income categories from each village, in a total of nine villages. These nine villages consisted of three villages per cluster in three different geographical areas. In each cluster, villages were selected on the basis of the length of the project in the area (i.e., 1, 3, or 5 years). This sampling allowed for two types of comparisons:

- based on the length of the project's presence in the village; and
- across clusters, or geographical/topographical conditions.



Pre-test of questionnaires and data collection

The questionnaires for data collection on different indicators were pre-tested in one of the project villages. Some questionnaires had to be revised and fine-tuned on the basis of the pre-test. Three categories of villages were selected for data collection based on when the project started its activities [1995, 1997, and 1999 (control group)]. Selected households, VDB, women's groups, water users' groups and village officials were interviewed.

Assessment of Results

The following were the key findings:

- Role of women in decision-making at the community level increased.
- No significant impact on women's role in decision-making at the household level.
- Food security and quality of food improved.
- Project impact on poverty was significant. In villages where the project has operated for five years, villagers estimated that the project had contributed about 25% of overall external efforts for poverty reduction, while utilising only 10% of external funds.



Reflections on PIM Methodology

Two joint reflection workshops were organised – one with villagers, VDB members, and farmers'/ women's groups, and another with the project staff – to present and discuss the preliminary results. Based on the discussion in the workshops, the following observations were made on the PIM methodology.

- The key to successful PIM is not whether a project is run by the government or by non-government organisations (NGOs), but whether the project design is based on participatory approaches.

- Some level of prior experience of project staff in PRA is essential since PRA methods and philosophy emphasise:
 - an inherent belief and confidence in the ability of people to objectively perceive and assess qualitative changes;
 - an appreciation on the part of the researcher for non-parametric measurements (e.g., rating scales) as opposed to relying solely on parametric measurements (e.g., amount of credit given, repayment rates); and
 - a sense of ownership among beneficiaries.

- PIM should be introduced at least one year after initiation of the project because it takes time for both the staff and the target beneficiary groups to understand the directions of the project and which impact indicators to use.

- The project had several negative impacts on the beneficiary household, but the most important ones had not been identified by the project staff (e.g., increased indebtedness of farmers, marketing problems and the use of women’s loans by men for other purposes).

- Although the methodology proved to be useful for impact monitoring, further simplification, particularly for data processing and analysis, will be needed.

- The indicators and questionnaires were relatively good in assessing the impact of PRMP in the areas of gender, food security and nutrition, institutional capacity-building and service delivery. However, the methods should be further fine-tuned to assess the capacities of village-level institutions (VDBs, women’s groups, etc.) in planning and implementing village development plans in a participatory manner.

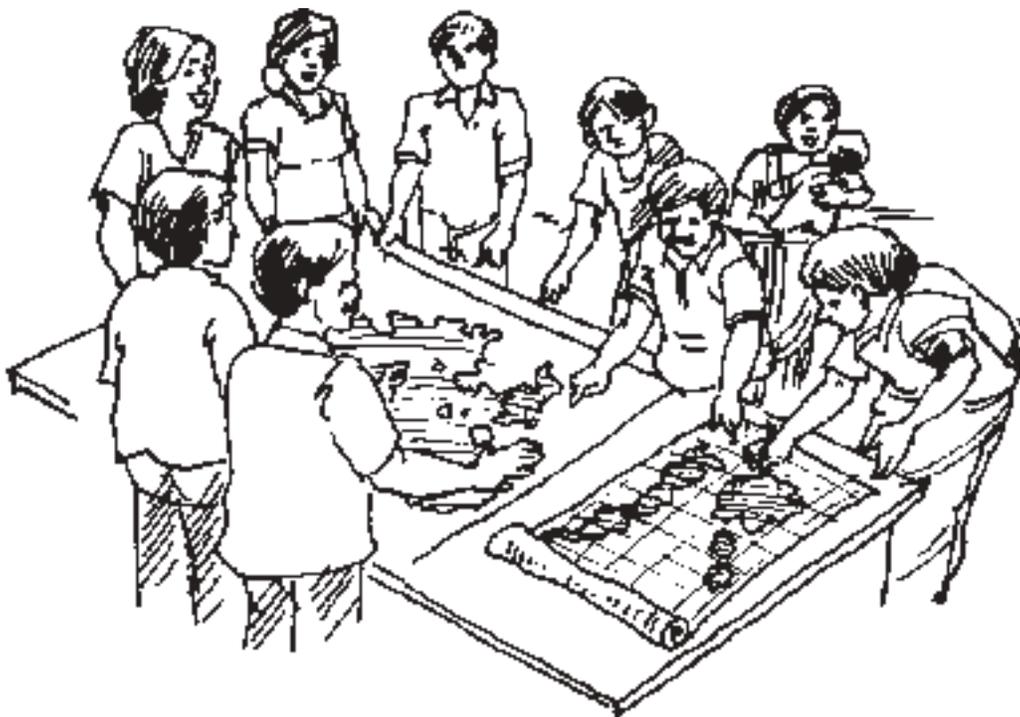
- The development of indicators was heavily influenced by the core team from the district-level monitoring and evaluation units, who require greater quantitative accuracy than would be feasible by institutions such as VDBs. There is thus a need to bring this analysis down to the beneficiary level (VDBs, farmers’ groups) so that community groups are empowered to monitor the impact of the project.

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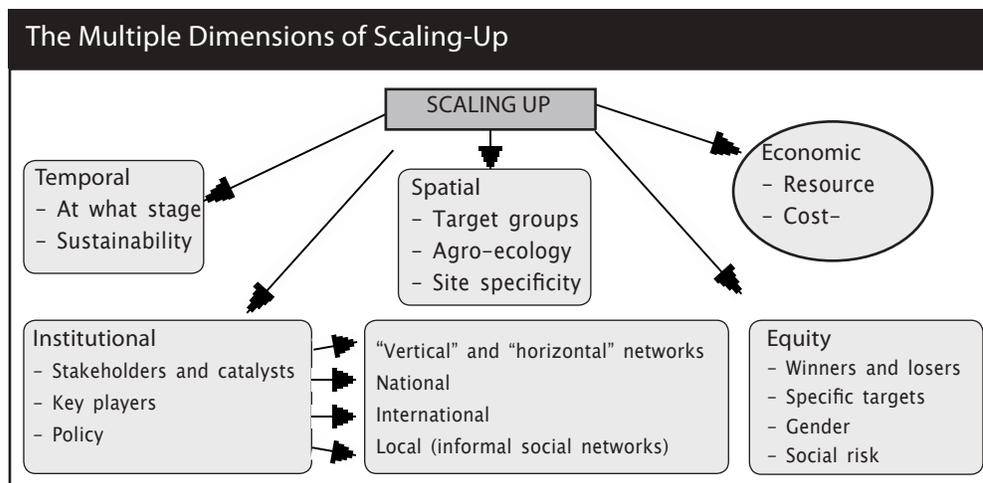
Scaling Up Local Successes



Scaling-up refers to efforts that bring more quality benefits to more people over a wider geographical area, more quickly, more equitably and more lastingly.

Institutions across the world are being asked to orient or re-orient their work towards poverty alleviation, to account for resources and to demonstrate the impact of their work. Achieving widespread and lasting impact are important indicators.

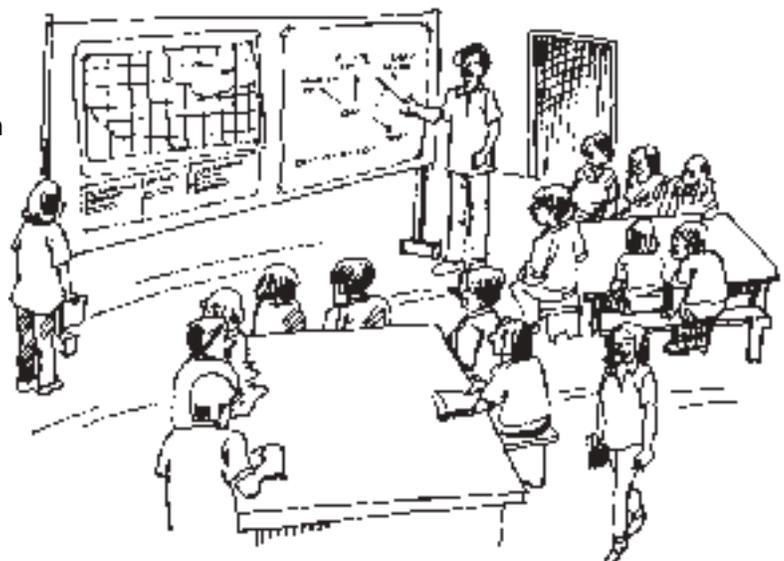
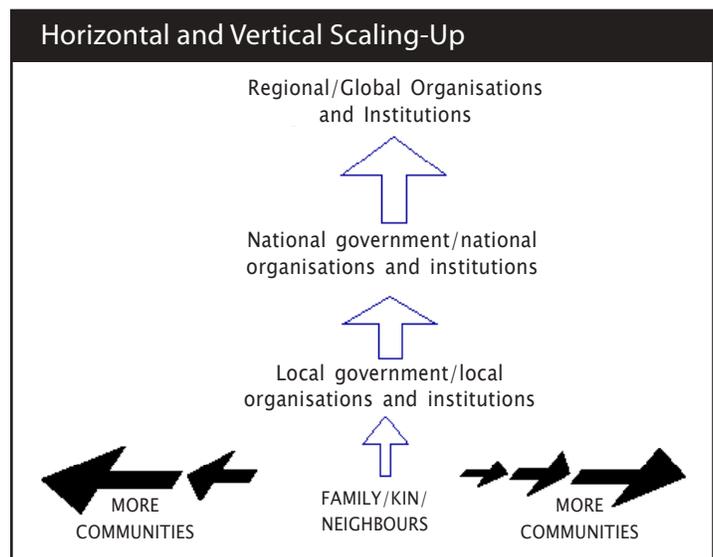
Scaling-up has multiple dimensions and contexts – institutional, spatial, economic, temporal and technological. There must always be a developmental context for scaling-up, i.e., empowerment and social change.



- 2 Scaling-up involves a learning and a participatory process and is about people. Because of the development and political contexts of going to scale, there is often a potential tension between participation and scaling-up.
- 3 The technology, the process and the institutional/methodological and policy innovations all go together (are integrated) in the scaling-up effort. The degree by which any of these are scaled up varies however, depending on the major concern/activity at each stage of the scaling-up process.
- 4 It is **not** technologies that are scaled up but *processes and principles behind the technologies/innovations*. This is consistent with the belief that scaling-up is not just replication, but involves adaptation and learning.
- 5 Going to scale, in general, connotes vertical movements across institutional levels and/or horizontal spread.

Horizontal Scaling-Up refers to the geographical spread, covering more people and communities. It involves expansion within same sector or stakeholder group. Others refer to it as a *scaling-out* process across geographical boundaries. Achieving geographical spread is also done by *scaling down*, i.e., by breaking down big programmes into smaller programmes/projects and thereby increasing participation and decentralising accountability.

Vertical Scaling-Up refers to the spread *higher up the ladder*. It is institutional in nature and involves other sectors/ stakeholder groups in the process of expansion, e.g., micro-macro links from the level of grassroots organisations to policymakers, donors, development institutions and investors at international levels.



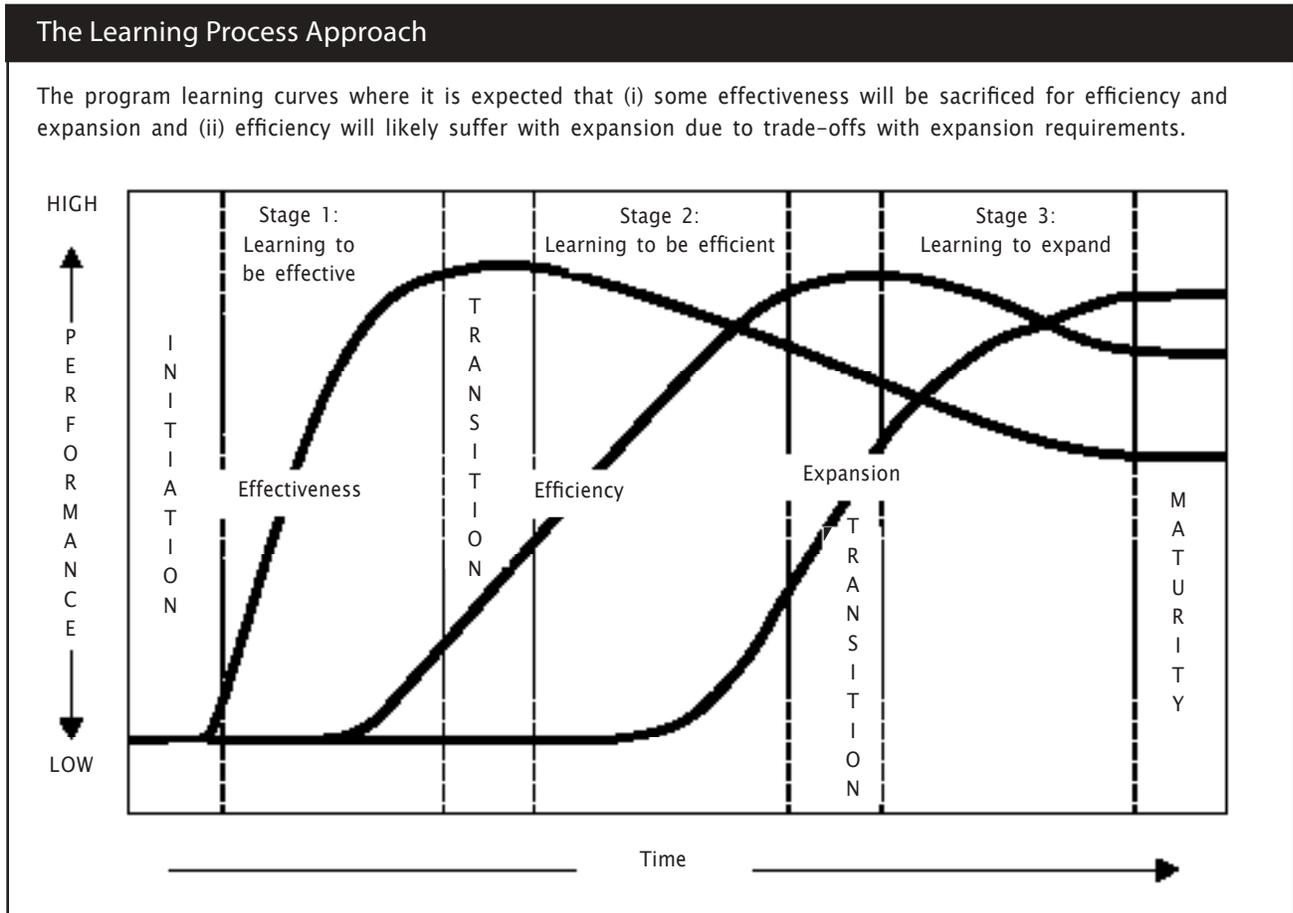
- 6 The higher up the institutional levels (vertical scaling-up), the greater the chances for horizontal spread; likewise, the farther geographically (horizontal scaling-up), the greater the chances of influencing those at the higher levels.
- 7 While these institutional and spatial/geographic dimensions normally are central to the discussions and strategies for going to scale, other aspects have been recognised as critical and integral to the whole process and cannot be treated in isolation. These are the technological, economic, temporal and equity aspects.
- 8 Scaling-up is really about communicating options to people. However, we need to balance the introduction of options with efforts to nurture farmers' ability to adapt. We also need to nurture local capacities to make better decisions.



Power or the ability to influence decisions determines what is scaled up. It is often the concerns of the more influential block that get scaled up. This dominant block could be the policy-makers, the aid supporters, the privileged professionals (researchers, scientists, academics, extensionists, etc.) or the local people themselves who are able to organise and position themselves strategically. If the overall context of scaling-up is bringing development to the poor, then people's empowerment is a critical dimension in the process.

- 9 Scaling-up almost always has a “power” and a development dimension – of contributing to social change and people’s empowerment. Benefits accrue to different actors at different levels of the process. Scaling-up therefore should be a subset of (or supportive of) people’s movements, where the driving force can come from either the recipient (demand-driven) or from groups convincing the recipient (supply-driven).

10 Building the capacity to innovate in order to facilitate local adaptation to changes is important to the scaling-up process. As such, scaling-up is integral to (and a stage in) the adaptive/active learning process – the *learning to expand* stage of the learning process approach to programme development as described by David Korten (see box below). The learning process approach to program development proceeds through the three stages, with each stage involving a different learning task, e.g., effectiveness, efficiency and expansion.



11 Participation of farmers and technicians in a process of exchange of knowledge, experimentation and adaptation strengthens local capacity to innovate. It is this participation which leads to success in local development.

12 Scaling up this process of strengthening innovative capacity assures sustainability because of an improved capacity to adjust to changing conditions (e.g., when the current technology is no longer appropriate).



13 The challenge of bringing development to a great number of people, particularly to the poorer segments of communities, can be addressed by going to scale – and can be speeded up by *planning* the scaling-up process instead of simply letting spontaneous diffusion to happen.

Issues Important and Critical to Success and Failure in Scaling Up Projects

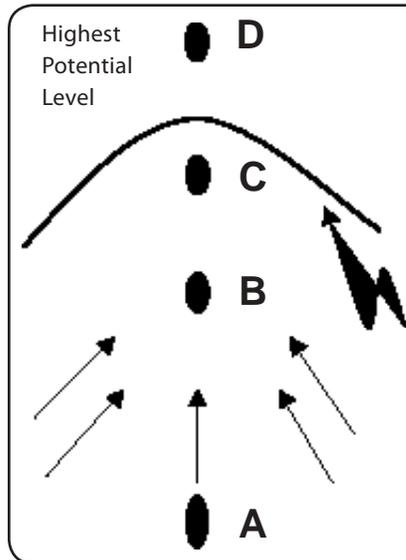
- **Projectisation:** Most projects in the past were very project-oriented rather than process-oriented. This means that implementers were over-conscious about meeting targeted outputs imposed by project management and financiers. The result was that, once the project ended and support was withdrawn, the beneficiaries did not carry on the projects.
- **Sustainability:** If the project is viewed as something to be accomplished in a span of time, the tendency is to rush, to comply with certain requirements and attain preset goals. Once the implementers assumed they have accomplished enough for the project, they pack and go. Sustainability, then, becomes a dilemma.
- **Partnership-Building:** Analogous to collaboration, partnership is active collaboration of individuals or groups involved from the onset of the undertaking until its accomplishment. The issue of ownership is also closely attached to “partnership”. When the terms of the partnership are not clear, the ownership issue becomes a problem.
- **Resource Constraints:** We need to locate ourselves strategically in order to maximise the use of limited resources.
- **Deterioration or Enhancement of the Quality of Processes and Outcome:** In scaling-up projects, we are faced with two possible scenarios; either the quality of outcomes are deteriorating and the processes are short-changed or they are enhanced, yielding more positive outcomes.

Source: Landcare, Philippines



Spontaneous and Planned Diffusion

A natural spread of initiatives is referred to as spontaneous diffusion or unplanned scaling-up. It just happens (A to B in the illustration). With proper interventions, these initiatives at Point A can be further scaled up from Point B to Point C (planned scaling-up expansion). The potential to expand the initiatives beyond Point C to Point D can be constrained by a “context roof”, e.g., policies, land tenure arrangements market forces, etc. Constraints could be institutional, political, technological and methodological in nature. Being able to overcome this context roof will determine if the highest potential level of scale is achieved.



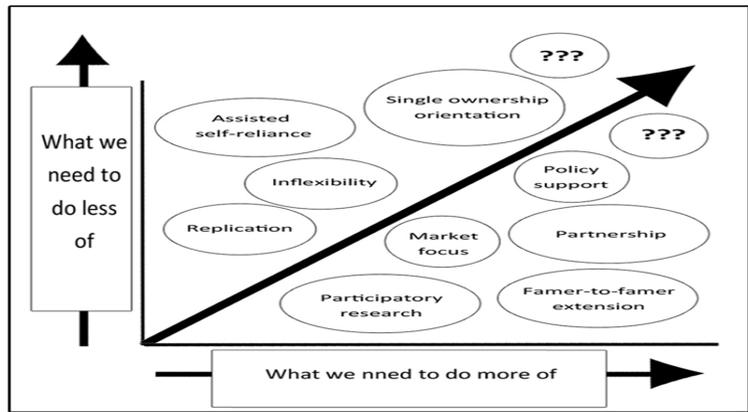
The challenge of bringing development to a great number of people, particularly poorer segments of communities, can be addressed by going to scale – and can be speeded up by planning the scaling-up process instead of simply letting spontaneous diffusion to happen.

Other factors that will facilitate or impede the process of going to scale

- Social organisation and processes
- Infrastructures
- Markets
- Stakeholder track record of experience
- Institutional mandates
- Policies and capacities (including human and non-human resources)
- Cultural and religious leanings
- Peace and order situation

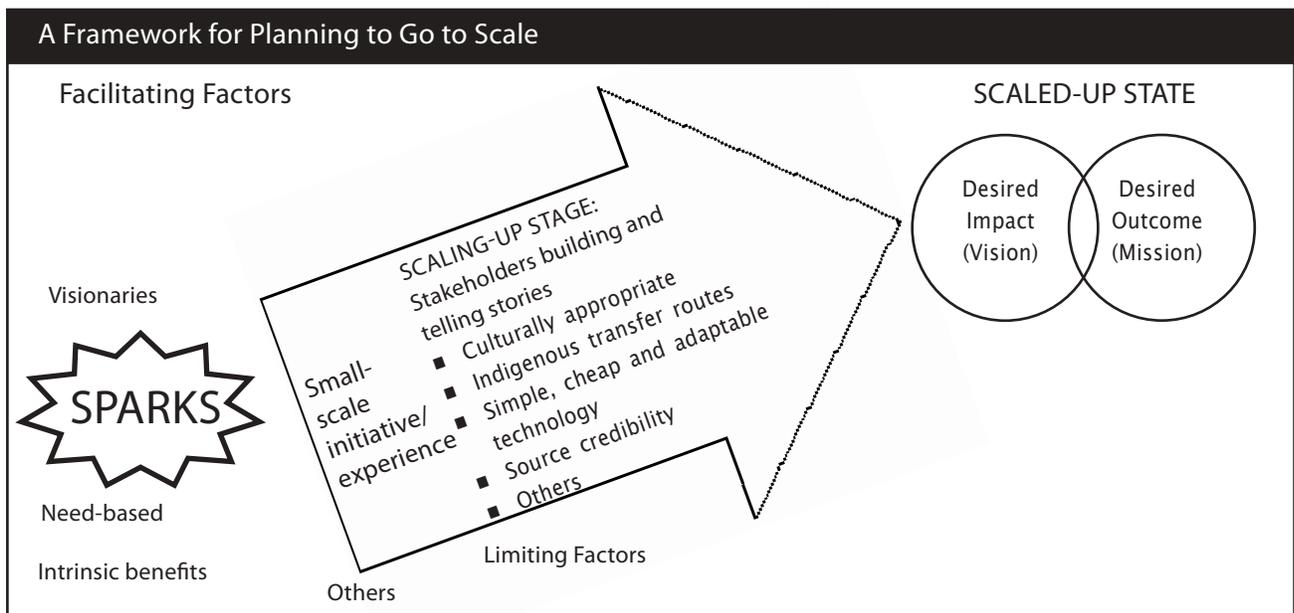
14 In order to succeed in scaling up our successes we need to engage in more participatory and farmer-centered approaches, pursue inter-institutional collaboration, engage in partnerships and be conscious of markets and policy constraints. We would, consequently have to de-emphasise single-orientation approaches, or inflexible stances. Replication is not the way to scale up!

Evolution of roles, rules and institutions in the process of scaling up with respect to what needs to be done less and what needs to be done more, and the assumptions for determining these, as the process progresses.



15 The urge to scale up is often associated with the need to expand initially successful pilot projects/ star cases. There are driving forces or “sparks” that cause technologies, processes, principles, programmes, organisations, etc. to be scaled up. Individuals, with vision and drive can also serve as sparks. While the initial gains/successes continue to be recognised as providing the sparks, the “timing” needs to be properly analysed. Sparks come unexpectedly – and they tend to come from everywhere

16 Scaling-up in the ultimate analysis is about people having a vision for themselves.



Compiled by:
Julian F. Gonsalves and Ric Armonia,
based on the outputs of the workshops
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PME Process Practised at the Field Level: Learning from the LIFE Project



A participatory approach to monitoring and evaluation was initiated by management of the Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR) Sector of CARE-Bangladesh to strengthen the interactive learning process among participants and field workers. The LIFE (Locally Intensified Farming Enterprise) project is managed by ANR. Its goal is to increase the food security of economically and socially vulnerable rural households. The project will address 126,000 people; 50% of them female. The majority of the project participants have up to one acre cultivable land.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) is an integral and vital part of extension work. It is an effective tool for strengthening decision-making processes and measuring the outputs. The LIFE (Locally Intensified Farming Enterprise) project provides technical support to farming families in agriculture [cereal crops (rice, wheat), vegetables], fisheries (pond fish and rice-fish culture, fish nursery) and agroforestry. The extension system of the LIFE project aims to enhance the decision-making capacity of participants (direct beneficiaries of the project) by improving their knowledge and skills through critical analysis. The LIFE project started piloting the PME process in Bangladesh in 1998.

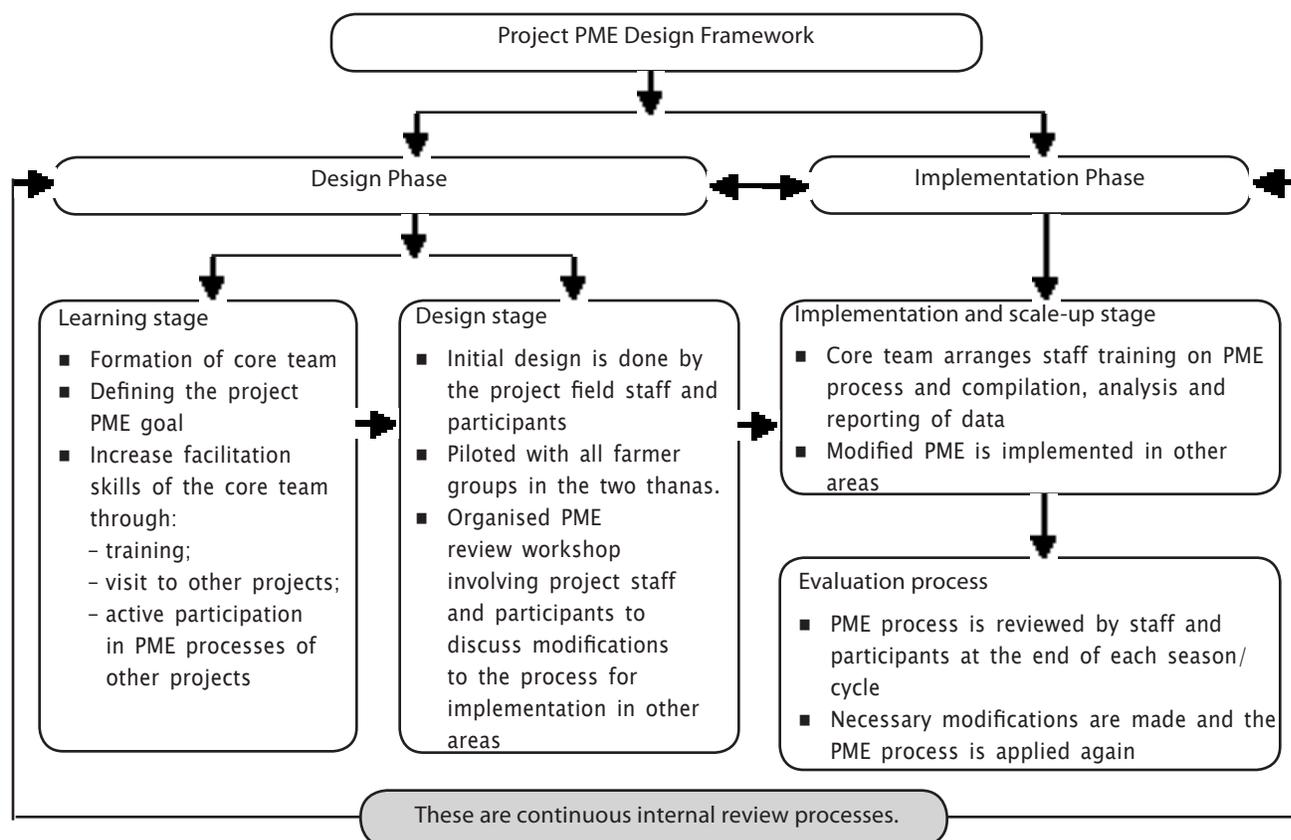
Design phase

The PME core team was formed with the following objectives:

- to train the staff on PME facilitation skills;

- to direct the ongoing PME process by re-designing its process and tools;
- to provide in-house follow-up support on common monitoring and evaluation goals;
- to provide training-of-trainers (TOT) support in the project and across the sector; and
- to share experiences.

Methods Applied for the PME Design



Defining the project PME goal

The goal is to develop a PME process which will enhance the capabilities of participants and staff to generate, analyse and use information for better decision-making in order to increase productivity and incomes of the participating farmers.

Piloting the PME system in the project

The PME process was piloted in 1998 in two *thanas* (government administrative unit), one each in Rajshahi and Kishoregonj districts, to acquire confidence, increase facilitation skills, identify appropriate tools and indicators, and establish ownership of participants.

The central QuEST team (Quantitative/Qualitative Evaluation Strengthening Team) of ANR assisted the project core team in providing training, communicating and sharing different issues and ideas/experiences on the PME process of different projects.

During the annual review of the pilot PME process, the team observed that the system is complex and time consuming. During the pilot phase, all components/ interventions had been included in PME, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. It was difficult to accomplish all components in one session and to understand all indicators and tools. Based on these observations, the PME process was simplified.

PME has increased farmers' analytical skills. They can now analyse problems and project activities more critically. PME has also increased farmers' confidence and ownership of the project activities.

Implementation phase

Expansion strategy

In 1999, the project was scaled up in 6 *thanas* (3 *thanas* in each of the two districts). A staff-to-staff training strategy was followed to build staff capacity in PME practice. Also, cross visits were arranged to learn from other project PME sessions.

Information flow

A bottom-up approach to information flow is established in order to maximise use of information for decision-making at all levels. Data are analysed at the farmer group level during the PME session. Then they are compiled at the *thana* level and a report is prepared. The data are again compiled at the district level, then the final report is prepared, and shared at all levels.

Process review and evaluation

An annual review of PME activities involving different stakeholders is conducted to find out how to improve the quality and articulate future directions of PME practices. An internal review process is established to institutionalise the PME process. Through this review, participants share their experiences and identify successes and mistakes. Thus, learning opportunities are created at all levels. This process of review and evaluation is practised regularly to bring qualitative improvement in the PME process.

When one group in Rajshahi was asked how the PME session benefited them, farmers responded that in the past they had never discussed their problems in a group.

PME at the Field Level

Participants use PME to articulate their existing situation. The PME cycle follows the *aman* (July-December) and *boro* (January-June) seasons. The project baseline is conducted once for each group of farmers, both male and female. Each group of farmers is provided with one year support and a new

group is recruited. During the baseline study, problems are identified and prioritised. Then the planning session is conducted and farmers identify different activities and also determine an appropriate time to accomplish the same. Field trainers provide support accordingly. Seasonal evaluations are done with all the farmers' groups.

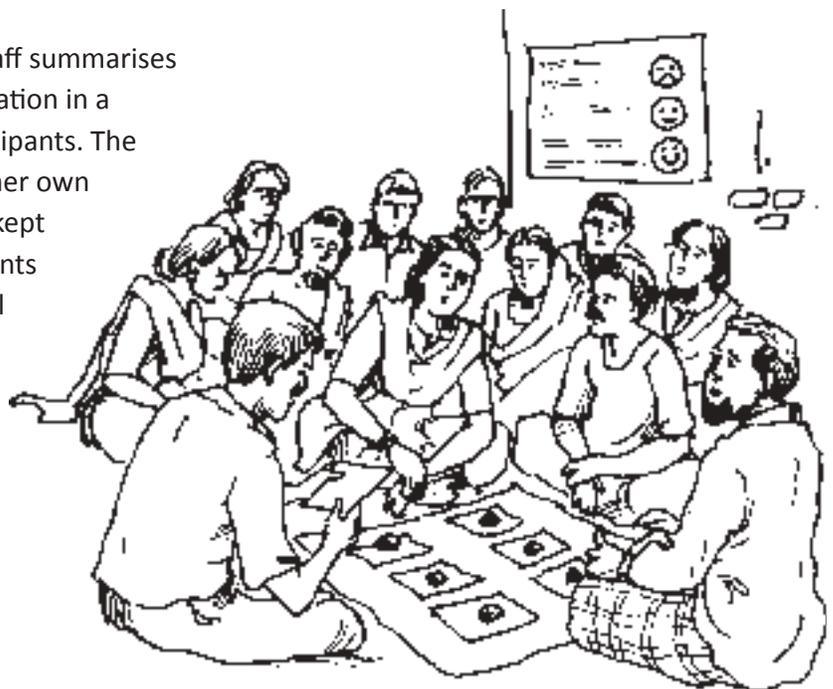


Application of tools

The project participants now use tools such as different sizes of wooden fish, a small bottle symbolising pesticides, wooden pest, rice plant, vegetable seeds, different types of fertiliser packets, seedlings/saplings, and different drawings (irrigation pump for *boro* season, umbrella for *aman* season, and different types of faces indicating “very happy”, “moderately happy” and “unhappy”).

The session is conducted on the ground and all information is visualised and explained by the farmers; reasons for being happy, moderately happy and unhappy, and for variation in production are also discussed, thus ensuring learning. Through this process, participants share their experiences and are informed about the utility of other practices, which helps improve decision-making and planning.

At the end of the session, the field staff summarises and helps in documenting the information in a record book, which is kept with participants. The staff makes copy for the staff or his/her own use. The participants' record book is kept with a participant so that all participants have access to it at any time. Then, all field staff compile information from the record books. They prepare the reports by *thana* and district and circulate these at different levels.

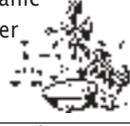


Example of PME Baseline

	Paddy yield 		 Vegetables	 Tree resources	 Nursery	 Pond-fish culture	 Rice-fish culture
	Jul-Dec  (Aman)	Jan-Jun  (Boro)					
 Very happy	••	•					
 Moderately happy	••••• •••••	••••• ••	•••••	••••• •		••	
 Unhappy	••••• •••••	••••• ••••• •	•••••	••••• •••••		•••••	
 Use of pesticide	•••••••• •••••••• •••••	•••••••••• •••••••••• •••••	•••••••• •••••				
Why are we unhappy? What problems do we face?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in paddy yield Top soil is very hard Fertiliser dose is not known Difficult to identify good seed which is not available Non-availability of organic fertiliser; also preparation and use not known Too much pest attack Irrigation problem Do not know modern cultivation techniques 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low price of vegetables in the peak season Low yield or decrease in yield Good vegetable seed not available Pest attack Irrigation problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits drop at the initial stage Pest attack Fruit size has reduced Do not know how to plant and take care of trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not get good fry/fingerlings Decrease in fish size (pond fish) Fishes do not grow fast There is no water during April-May 		

• Represents one individual group member

Example of Activity Plan for the Aman Season*

 Ashar (Jun-Jul)	 Sraban (Jul-Aug)	 Vadra (Aug-Sep)	 Ashwin (Sep-Oct)	 Kartick (Oct-Nov)	 Agrahayan (Nov-Dec)
Land preparation techniques 	Modern cultivation 	Integrated pest management 	Tree management 	Fish diseases and treatment 	Paddy crop preservation 
Preparation and use of compost/organic fertiliser 	Application of organic fertiliser 	Tree planting technique 	Vegetable seed and vegetable cultivation 	Collection and preservation of vegetable seeds 	Water management and irrigation 
	How to cultivate rice-fish 				

* Learning session on different topics planned in different months to overcome the identified problems in the baseline.

Example of PME at the end of Aman Season

	Paddy yield		 Vegetables	 Tree	 Nursery	 Pond-fish culture	 Rice-fish culture
	Jul-Dec  (Aman)	Jan-Jun  (Boro)					
 Very happy	●●●●●		●●●●				●●
 Moderately happy	●●●●● ●●●●● ●●		●●●●● ●●●●●	●●●●● ●●●●● ●●	●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●● ●●
 Unhappy	●●		●●	●●●●		●●●	●●●●
 Use of pesticide	●●●●●		●●●●●●●				
Why are we unhappy? What problems do we face?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Seed was not good ■ Old paddy seedlings ■ Crop management delayed ■ Too much pest attack ■ Fertiliser could not be applied in time 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Too much pest attack in eggplant ■ Seed was not good (poor germination) ■ Scarcity of water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tree seedlings did not survive ■ High moisture in the soil 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor water quality ■ Fish growth was unsatisfactory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fish escaped ■ Fish size is small ■ Rice yield was poor due to pest attack

● Represents one individual group member

Shortcomings and reliability

■ Qualitative aspects

The current PME design focuses mainly on changes in the status of farmers (evaluated as happy, moderately happy and unhappy) and does not provide detailed data on production, net returns and cost-benefit, etc. However, the PME results meet staff and project partners' expectations for qualitative and quantitative considerations as listed in the project logframe.

■ Quantitative aspects

An indepth socio-economic baseline is done to assess the present status thereby facilitating project mid-term and final evaluations. To satisfy the production and cost-benefit information of the logframe, the project carries out a short sample survey at the end of each season. This also helps cross-check the PME outputs.

■ Reliability

The participants themselves cross-check when the information is shared in the group. The quantitative sample survey creates scope for cross-checking outputs from the PME process. This ensures the reliability of information.

Lessons Learned

Participants level

- Builds farmers' confidence and enhances knowledge of and ability to use PME tools.
- Improves data reliability.
- Enhances problem identification skills.
- Through increased sharing, involvement of participants in different project activities increases.
- Ensures active participation.
- Creates team spirit and builds group dynamism.

Staff level

- Project staff need good facilitation skills and technical knowledge.
- Staff are able to identify community problems and plan to address those.
- Analytical skills of staff increases.
- Resistance is often encountered from staff initially, due to lack of clear understanding of the value of the PME process. The attitude changes when the benefit of the process is realised.

Tools and indicators

- Identification of appropriate tools and indicators is not easy. Moreover indicators identified by the project staff are often not acceptable to the participants.
- Tools need to be modified continuously.
- Tactile tools are more acceptable and effective than visual tools.

Process

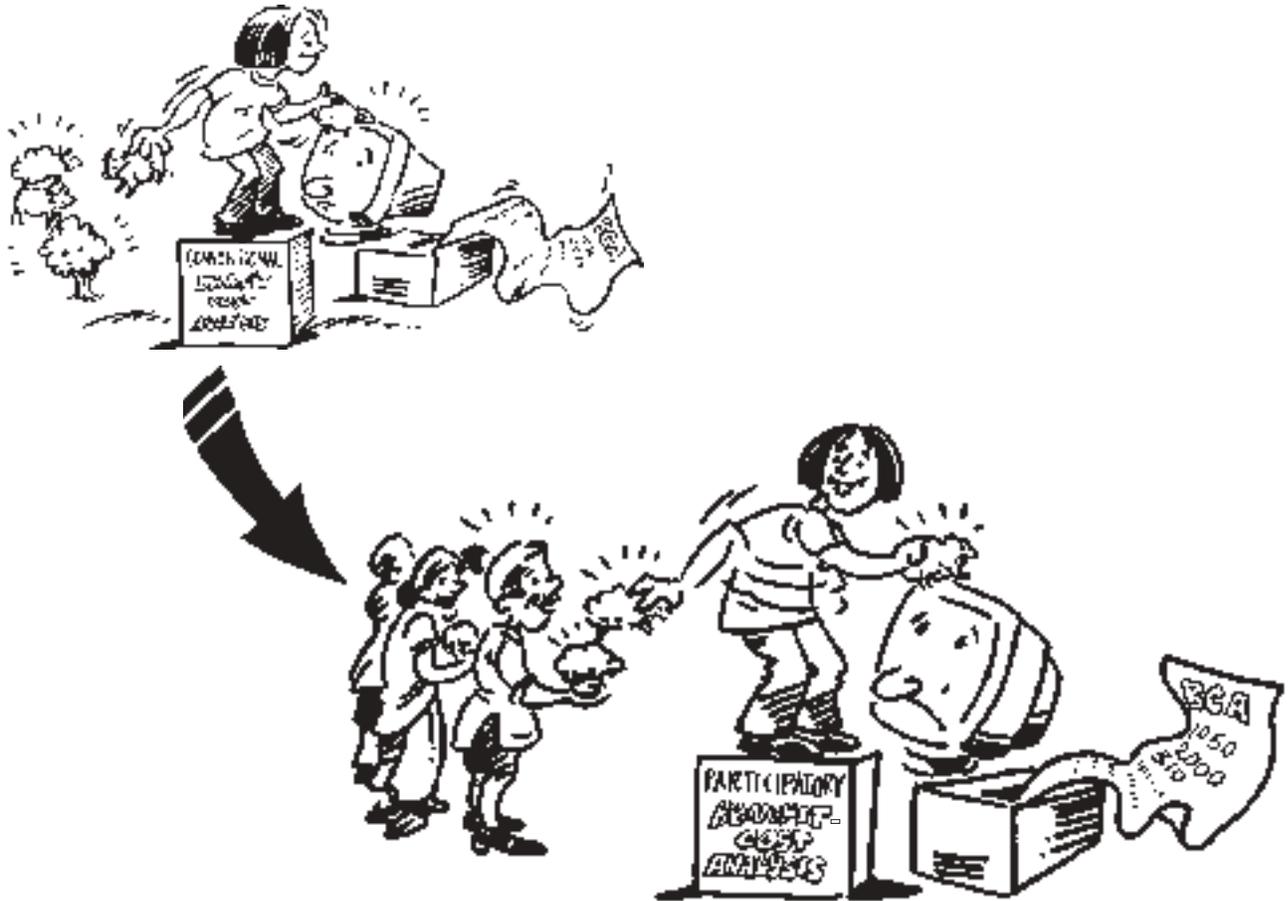
- PME design should be flexible and adaptive.
- During the rainy season, it is difficult to find a comfortable place to conduct the PME session.
- Adoption of the process in the initial stage takes considerable time.
- It helps to develop analytical skills.
- Frequent review is required to strengthen the PME process.
- PME enables reflection on the extension process and management.
- PME creates opportunities to check reliability of the information.
- Institutionalising the PME process takes time. The process has not yet been fully institutionalised particularly at the farmers' level; appropriate follow-up mechanisms could not be established. Yet, the field staff consider the "go slow strategy" to be good for beginners as it takes time to win the confidence of the participants and to establish a good process.

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The PME process follows the "apply-learn-apply" mode and contributes to the extension process of the project. PME creates an opportunity for interactive learning as it is designed and practised by and for the participants, according to their conditions and needs. The project staff also benefits through implementation exchange. They can understand both the needs of the participants and the effectiveness of extension activities, leading to a more farmer-led extension approach.

Building Participation into Benefit-Cost Analysis



Project benefits and costs can be calculated at the aggregate level, using a full-fledged benefit-cost analysis (BCA), or at the disaggregated level of project activities (to choose between several alternative options). But the latter is hardly ever done, and the former is usually done in an isolated and non-participatory manner. Yet, a participatory study of project benefits and costs can yield useful information from which the entire project team can benefit. To exploit its full potential, however, project management and project economists need to address the analysis differently.

Participation in the analysis of project benefits and costs can be increased in two ways: by discussing and presenting the aggregate BCA to project (design or implementation) team members; and by discussing the potential costs and benefits of different (technical or institutional) options with communities.

Analysing Project Benefits and Costs

Benefit-cost analysis (BCA)

A BCA looks at all project costs and benefits. This is usually done during project design – to assess whether the proposed project will be “worth” the investment – and/or at the evaluation stage – to check whether the actual project benefits were more than the investment. It calculates the internal rate of return (IRR) (see box on *Mechanics of BCA, step 5*). Rightly or wrongly, many funding agencies do not like to fund projects without “acceptable” IRRs.

At the design stage, a BCA is a convenient and comparable way for assessing (and distinguishing between) several different types of projects. It can detect those which may use up a lot of money but not provide lasting benefits – e.g., those which are “heavy” on overheads and administration costs and “light” on actual services delivered. But the real advantages come when a BCA is done along with project budgeting, time phasing and economic analysis, and when all these are discussed and shared with different stakeholders in the project.

The Basics

Benefit-cost analysis (BCA) checks to see whether the money spent on a project yields at least as much financial (or economic) benefit as it would if invested in the financial market at the going rate of interest. If only financial costs are taken, it is a financial BCA; if “economic” costs (i.e., opportunity costs) are used, it is called an economic BCA; if wider social and environmental benefits and costs are also considered, it is a social and environmental BCA – the most comprehensive of them all.

Marginal return analysis estimates potential costs and benefits associated with alternative (technical or institutional) options for the same project activity. For instance, choosing between different options to improve agricultural productivity, to improve non-farm employment and income, to check soil erosion, etc.

Mechanics of BCA

- Step 1: List all project activities (proposed or actual)
- Step 2: Calculate all possible project costs over the project period. For each project activity, estimate benefits, which may continue to occur (well) beyond the project period (e.g., 10 – 30 years). The nature of costs and benefits determines whether it is a financial, economic or social and environmental BCA (see box on The Basics).
- Step 3: Aggregate project costs and benefits according to the year they accrue. This is quite easily done on a spreadsheet (e.g., Microsoft Excel).
- Step 4: Calculate annual net benefits by subtracting costs from benefits for each year.
- Step 5: Calculate the IRR of this series of annual net benefits. The IRR is the interest rate received for an investment consisting of costs (negative values) and benefits (positive values) that occur at regular periods (i.e., annually). This is done automatically by the IRR function in a spreadsheet software.
- Step 6: Do a sensitivity analysis by increasing costs and/or benefits by a certain percentage (10 or 20%) and check the impact on the IRR. If the IRR is more than the market rate of return even when costs are increased and benefits are decreased, the project is usually considered (“financially” or “economically”) robust.



Limitations of BCA

- Tends to focus on tangible and monetary benefits and costs: Financial and even economic BCA (i.e., opportunity cost calculations) are easier to do than social and environmental BCA which calculates non-tangible returns to project investment such as capacity-building and “primary” goods like education, health and environmental improvement. Hence, these are often left out of calculations, especially if the IRR is acceptable with just the major tangible project benefits.
- Biased against projects where benefits occur later. Because discounting reduces the value of benefits that come later, the BCA is biased against projects where costs are incurred quickly and where benefits take time – such as capacity-building projects, or projects aiming at attitudinal and institutional change.
- Coverage and quality can vary. BCA can be done in “quick and dirty” ways, with heroic assumptions supporting superficial analysis of project benefits and costs. Also, the nature of benefits and costs included in the analysis and the extent of their measurement tend to vary according to the capability and inclination of the economist.

Marginal Return Analysis

At a more disaggregated level, benefits and costs can be estimated for individual project activities, to compare and choose between alternative options. This analysis calculates the (potential) marginal rate of return from each alternative option, which is then added to the social, institutional and technical features of the option, to permit a more informed choice. Project communities can be used as a rich source of information on potential costs and benefits of each option, and the results can also be shared with them, to aid participatory decision-making.

How to Make BCA More Participatory

Suggestions for project management

Project design

- **Involve the economist from the start.** It is important to involve the economist from the start of project design, so that the details and logic of project activities (and their phasing) are clear to her/him. Bringing in the economist at the end can increase information demands on other project members, or, worse, result in a “superficial” BCA with no learning for the project design team.

Such learning could include the following:

- deliberate inquiry into the economic dimensions of project components may unearth contradictions, incompletely considered time lines, mismatches between budget allocations and planned activity, etc.;
- if the project budget and BCA do not reflect all project components, activities may not translate into outputs;

Benefit-Cost Calculations for Beneficiary Decision-Making

As a part of participatory project diagnosis and formulation, an engineer and an economist on an irrigation project in Guyana worked out the costs and benefits of two alternative engineering options: only to rehabilitate existing irrigation channels or to add new ones also. When presented to the beneficiary community, it chose the second one because of reduced transport costs. As it turned out, this option had the best marginal rate of return.

- many social, technical and institutional problems have an economic dimension to them, and many community-level actions are also driven (and hence constrained) by economic forces. An economic perspective on even seemingly non-economic issues could therefore be useful during team discussions to plan project activities.

- **Discuss the BCA with the entire project team.** Rather than leave the economist to produce the “numbers”, the BCA should be discussed with members of the project (design or implementation) team. This ensures that each project component is understood clearly by members of the (inter-disciplinary) project team.

Drip Irrigation in Rajasthan

When farmers removed drip irrigation lines from their fields after two years of use, they were called “irrational” and accused of not appreciating technological advances in water conservation. But on inquiry, they explained that the cost of maintaining the drip system had simply turned out to be more than the benefit – an economic explanation behind the manner in which technology was used.



- **Coordinate the BCA, the budget and the economic analysis.**

Since all three use the same information, asking the same economist to do all three will save time and also reduce the risk of communication gaps.

Strengths of BCA in Project Design

If done well and in conjunction with project budgeting, time-phasing and economic analysis, the major strengths of BCA are the following.

- Lists project costs and benefits in one place. The budget and BCA provide two complementary ways of viewing all the different aspects of a project, including administrative overheads, financing routes, capacity-building budgets, specific project activities and contributions from other partners. It also brings various project components together, grounding them in cost and time lines which are important considerations of any project. When done in an open and participatory manner, it allows design team members to see how the institutional, social and technical features of a project fit together, especially across project phases.
- Clarifies detail. When the project design team is asked to specify time lines and cost details for proposed project activities, it can make them think a lot deeper about these issues. Often, contradictory assumptions about the same issue surface among design team members, prompting useful discussions.
- Provides a clear understanding of cash flows. Costs are important to any project. And, especially when funds have to move from one country to another, and at different periods of time, it is important to see how much has to move from where, when, how and why. And, so long as banks give interest, money will change value over time and it is important to see how this affects project funding.

Project implementation

- **Assess potential benefits and costs of alternative options.** Although engineers can produce cost estimates of technical options (say, for soil and water conservation measures or irrigation channel routes), it is useful to exploit the economists’ training and understanding of these potential costs and benefits. Not only will this ensure that all possible costs and benefits are included, but also that the most appropriate (of several possible) methods has been used to value them.
- **Collect economic information in project monitoring and evaluation.** If the necessary economic information is not collected systematically during the project period, several benefits may not be evaluated by the end-of-project BCA. If so, additional resources may have to be spent to collect

more information, or the BCA may end up being superficial for want of adequate information.

- **Re-assess benefit-cost situations annually.** Replacing assumed annual costs and benefits with actual figures can help assess project progress constantly, and can help suggest necessary corrective action.

Project evaluation

- **Provide all possible information.** Complete and up-to-date monitoring and evaluation (M&E) information about different aspects of project implementation is a considerable help to the economist. Otherwise, the economist has to spend more time chasing information scattered across project offices and files – or worse, in the heads of project team members.

Engineering Costs Versus Economic Costs

Engineers estimate the costs of project structures (e.g., check dams, school buildings, wells) differently from economists. They either use a fixed cost norm, which sometimes aggregates material and labour costs, or use only direct (financial) costs. Economists, in contrast, detail all possible costs and use opportunity costs rather than financial costs. Using an economic perspective and fresh information can deal with problems like the minimum wage being higher than the local wage, of depreciation rates being different for various components, and of local materials being cheaper than “standard” materials.



Suggestions for Project Economists

Project design

- **Discuss issues with other team members.** A pre-project economic appraisal is not easy. Secondary statistics and fieldwork “numbers” need to be interpreted, to gain insights into their causes. Discussing these may help to clarify the nature of project action – or, in the case of post-project evaluations, even the lack of it!
- **Discuss each project component thoroughly.** Instead of making assumptions about project activities and implementation (which may not be always be true) discuss each component with the concerned member of the design or implementation team. Often, this brings out details that team members may already be very familiar with but the economist is unaware of them!



- **Analyse even intangible benefits and costs.** Listing all potential benefits and costs – whether measurable or not – can be useful, if not for the full-fledged BCA, at least for informing project team members. Measure all components as fully as possible; today there are a host of valuation techniques to assess social (“soft”) and environmental benefits and costs. Where full evaluation is difficult, cost-effectiveness is a useful option. But if monetary values cannot be estimated for all costs and benefits, make a point of listing these non-monetary costs and benefits in the BCA Report.
- **Get first-hand information from the field.** Rather than simply asking project team members, government officials or NGO staff, go to the field as much as possible to gain first-hand knowledge about different project components. Each project is different and past experience may not always fit the new case. Combining this information with past knowledge makes analysis easier, more accurate, and hence more meaningful.
- **Present the BCA, economic analysis and budget to the entire project team.** Discussing the details of the finished analysis with the team helps check whether or not different project components ‘hang together’. If not, more time may have to be spent sorting out contradictions and problems which are pointed out, one by one, as other team members find time to read and grasp the budget and BCA. Getting project team approval means that they understand and agree with the results - and saves confusion later.
- **Write a report.** A BCA usually ends up just as a technical annex in a project proposal document, often leaving out the assumptions made in the analysis. Specifying these details in a short report, written simply and clearly, helps other economists (e.g., doing the BCA at the end of the project) and project managers understand the logic underlying the figures.

Timber Versus Non-Timber Benefits from Forests

Although many plantations aim at timber benefits, the fact is that high returns 10 or 12 years later have a relatively low value after time discounting (i.e., Rs. 1 million after 10 years is worth just Rs. 385,000 today, if discounted at 10%). Instead, it may be noted that revenues from selling (or charging for cutting) the grass that grows on protected plantations and the revenues from non-timber forest products comprise the bulk of the present value of forests.



MPA and Economic Information

The methodology for participatory assessments (MPA) [see topic on Enhancing the “Assessment” in Participatory Assessments on page 179] can be useful in collecting the required economic information in a participatory manner and on a regular basis. Such information can include income from agriculture, animal husbandry, non-farm activities, forestry, etc.

Project Implementation

- Discuss costs and benefits with the community. When working out economic benefits and costs for alternative technical options (i.e., their marginal rates of return), it is important to consult the community. Such local information is vital to making realistic and accurate estimates of the benefits and costs of alternative options. But it is equally important to share the results of these calculations with the community, to enable them to make informed choices.
- Plan for participatory information collection. Keeping in mind the need to do a benefit-cost analysis at the end of the project, design an economic information component for the project’s

M&E system. Making this information collection a participatory exercise involving the project communities keeps the community informed about the economic aspects of project progress. Be sure to do a pilot test to ensure that the project staff and the project communities understand the system.

- **Leave room for self-monitoring by the community.** Beyond keeping it informed of project progress, the community can be involved in collecting and using the information related to the economic progress of the project. But this has to be designed carefully, taking note of which aspects are of direct interest to the community and which it therefore wishes to monitor itself.

Project Evaluation

- **Discuss information requirements with project staff.** A preliminary meeting with project staff at different levels helps them to understand the information needs of a BCA. It also helps pinpoint who has “what” information and to identify information gaps. It is also useful to decide appointments and time schedules for receiving information from different project staff. Check, in particular, for other studies and the report of the initial BCA, if done.
- **Meet the village communities.** It is vital to crosscheck information through field discussions with village communities. A random check of stated benefits (e.g., time-savings from new water sources) is useful to gain an idea of field reality.

Community Monitoring versus Self-Monitoring

During the design of the M&E system for a new watershed project in Karnataka, the workshop participants arrived at a long list of project activity and progress indicators. However, subsequent discussions revealed that most of these were of direct use to project field staff and villagers were expected to collect the information on their behalf. Such “community monitoring”, is not the same as community self-monitoring – which focuses on indicators that are important in the eyes of the direct users, the community.



The Villager May Know Better!

When checking fuelwood use in hill villages in Dehradun Valley, India, the economist found household women in one village estimating daily collection ranging from 10 to 40 kilograms per person. Having carried two 20 kg suitcases (i.e., the flight baggage allowance), it was difficult for the economist to imagine women carrying 40 kgs and walking up and down the steep slopes. He was ready to put it down to exaggeration given the lack of local measurement devices. Fortunately, an urge to check for himself drove him to physically lift previously collected fuelwood bundles neatly stacked behind a village house. Indeed he found each one as heavy as his suitcases. He decided to ask the woman how she carried two such bundles – she said, “Easy, I make 2 trips a day!”



- **Note intangible benefits.** Capacity-building and empowerment of village communities are difficult to check using conventional input-output M&E information. While most BCA overlook these aspects of project impact, it is important to list them in the BCA Report, even if monetary values cannot be attached to them.
- **Present and discuss the results.** Presenting findings to project staff is useful, not just to clarify issues and assumptions, but also to enable project staff to better understand the process and the emerging findings.
- **Write clear reports.** A thorough, clear and well-written report can be of use not just to project management, but also to programme managers interested in learning lessons from the assessed project.

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part **5**

**Institutions,
Partnerships
and Governance**

Participation, Citizenship and Local Governance



For the last twenty years, the concept of participation has been widely used in the discourse of development. For much of this period, the concept has referred to participation in the social arena, in the community or in development projects. Increasingly, however, there has been a wider acceptance of the idea that participation extends to rights of citizenship and to democratic governance, particularly in the context of programmes for decentralised governance.

This paper explores:

- differing concepts of participation, and their intersection;
- evidence related to the barriers to participation in local governance; and
- new initiatives and strategies for overcoming those barriers.

Concepts of Participation

Two themes tend to dominate the concept of participation in the context of development: local-level participation in project or programme activities; and, state-level participation through political institutions and processes.



Social and project participation

Within development, perhaps the dominant concern with participation has been related to the community or social sectors, where participation referred to organised efforts to increase the control of marginalised groups over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations. In this sense, participation was located – at least initially – outside of the state, amongst those who had been excluded from existing institutions. It could take a variety of forms, ranging from social movements to self-help groups (SHGs).

More recently, the definition of participation in development has often been located in development projects and programmes, as a means of strengthening their relevance, quality and sustainability. From this perspective, participation could be seen in the level of consultation or decision-making in all phases of a project cycle – from needs assessment to appraisal, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation. While these projects could be funded by the state, participation within them was seen not as related to broader issues of politics or governance, but as a way of encouraging action outside the public sphere. Moreover, the focus was often on direct participation of primary stakeholders, rather than on indirect participation through elected representatives.

Political participation

Political participation refers to activities intended to influence the selection and actions of elected representatives. This might occur through participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies, or through voting, lobbying and protesting. Surprisingly, within development literature there has been little attention to notions of political participation, which involve the interactions of the individual or organised groups with the state, and which often focus more on mechanisms of indirect participation.

Participatory Methods

Each of the concepts of participation carries with it differing methods for strengthening or enhancing participation. Traditionally, in the field of political participation, such methods have included voter education, enhancing the awareness of rights and responsibilities of citizens, lobbying and advocacy, often aimed towards developing a more informed citizenry who could hold elected representatives more accountable. In the social and



community spheres, however, we have seen the development of a number of broader participatory methods for appraisal, planning, monitoring large institutions, training and awareness-building. Here, greater emphasis is placed on the importance of participation not only to hold others accountable but also as a self-development process starting with the articulation of grassroots needs and priorities and building popular forms of organisation

Linking the Spheres: Strengthening Citizen Participation in Governance

Increasingly, in response to donor and civil society pressure, governments have been urged to adopt participatory approaches in their ministries (e.g., forestry, health, irrigation) as a means of influencing policy and as a form of planning at multiple levels. Inevitably, the scaling-up of local-level participation leads those involved in development projects and programmes to engage with the state and with broader issues of governance, representation, transparency and accountability.

Citizen participation

The moves from government towards civil society, and from social and project participation towards governance, offer new spaces in which the concept of participation may also be expanded to one of "citizenship" – one which involves linking participation in the political, community and social spheres. This integration implies a transition from only being concerned with "beneficiaries" or "the excluded" to a concern with broad forms of engagement by citizens in policy formulation and decision-making in key arenas which affect their lives. Perhaps the best place to see and understand these new interactions is at the local level, where the concerns of the "grassroots" or locality intersect most directly with those of governance and the state.

Democratic decentralisation

One of the most popular state reforms that has opened spaces for a wider and deeper participation of citizens at the local level has been the decentralisation and deconcentration of financial and political power. Parallel to these developments, enabling legal frameworks and institutional channels for citizen participation at the local level have been developed in many countries.

Linking Participation in the Political Community and Social Spheres



Shifts in Participation

From	To
Beneficiary	Citizen
Project	Policy
Consultation	Decision-making
Local	National

Cross reference: Topic on Building Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

For the purpose of this paper we are interested in democratic decentralisation understood as the transfer of resources and power (and often of tasks) to lower-level authorities which are:

- largely independent of higher levels of government;
- democratic in some way and to some degree; and
- where persons in authority within institutions at intermediate and/or local levels are elected directly or indirectly by secret ballots.

Democratic decentralisation may be promoted for a number of reasons – administrative, fiscal, political or others. However, among the reasons often given is to bring government closer to people and enhance their participation and interaction with local government officers in the affairs of the locality.

The Barriers to Citizen Participation in Local Governance

The apparent gap between the promise of enhanced participation through democratic decentralisation on one hand, and the everyday realities of participatory politics on the other, suggests the need to understand more fully the barriers and dynamics to participation in local governance, as well as the enabling factors and methods that can be used to overcome them.

While few studies focus specifically on the dynamics, barriers and methods for strengthening participation, they do provide some general findings on the obstacles to more participatory local governance. Among the key themes are the following:

Unbalanced power relations

Citizen participation is about power and about its exercise by different social actors in the spaces created for interaction between citizens and local authorities. However, the control of the structure and processes for participation – defining spaces, actors, agendas, procedures – is usually in the hands of government institutions and this can become a barrier for effective involvement of citizens. Further, local elites, local governments and other actors operating on the local scene, such as political parties and even some non-government organisations (NGOs), have often been prone to co-opt popular movements in order to further their own agendas.



Low level of citizen organisation

Citizens find it difficult to counter existing power relations where there is no history of effective grassroots organisation or social movement. This is particularly true where popular organisations fail to place representatives in political posts within municipal governments.

Lack of participatory skills

As progress is made from lower to higher levels of participation (information, consultation, decision-making, management), participatory processes become more complex and demand different types of skills, knowledge, experience, leadership and managerial capabilities. The problem of weak participatory skills at different levels is a common constraint to effective citizen involvement in decentralised governance structures.

Inadequate financial resources at the local level

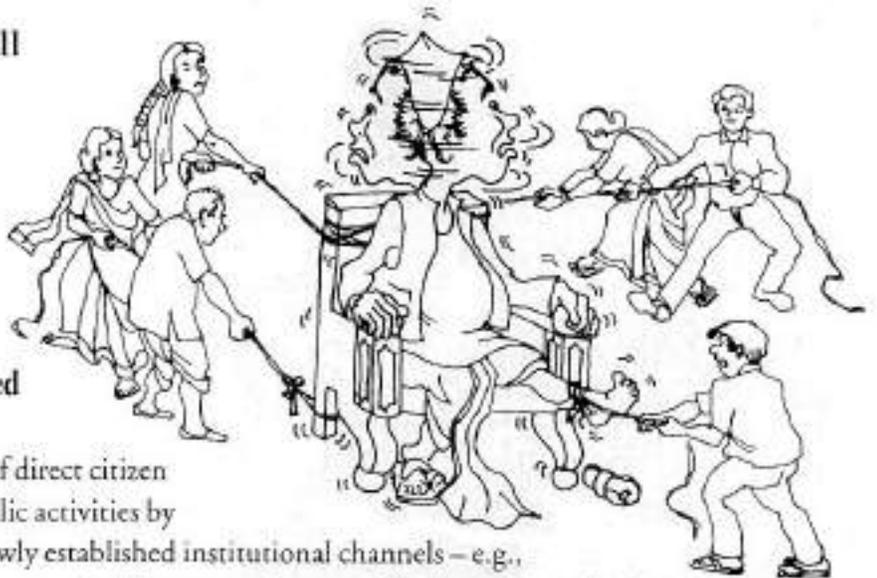
Financial resources to implement development activities influenced or decided by local citizens come mainly from two sources: central allocations and local revenues. A common barrier for citizen participation in decision-making is the control of financial resources by higher levels of authority and the meager resources available locally.

Insufficient political commitment

Another barrier to strengthening participation involves the absence of a strong and determined central authority to provide and enforce opportunities for participation at the local level, as well as the lack of political will by local government officers in enforcing the legislation that has been created for this purpose.

Difficulties in the ability to recall elected representatives

While in many countries legislation exists to recall elected representatives, this process can prove difficult in practice, given the time and organisational costs involved.



Participatory structures underutilised

Strengthening of participation in local governance requires the strengthening of direct citizen involvement in decision-making in public activities by individuals or groups, often through newly established institutional channels – e.g., monitoring committees, planning processes, etc. However, at the municipal level, the majority of these mechanisms have a consultative nature, where participation is associated with stages of plan formulation or execution of programmes, but not with decision-making. In other cases, legislation may exist which recognises the rights of civil society organisations to access information and address demands and petitions, but, the formal spaces created to allow these groups to participate are not widely used.

Overcoming the Barriers: Strategies and Approaches

Despite these significant barriers, the message is not that efforts to strengthen popular participation in local governance should be abandoned. Indeed, around the world we can find a number of important innovations and interventions which promise to make a significant impact in enhancing citizen participation in democratic local governance.

Participatory planning

In a number of countries, notably the Philippines, India, Senegal, Uganda and Bolivia, new legislation offers possibilities for new processes of participatory planning to influence the priorities of local governments.



Participatory Budgeting in Brazil

The participatory budget strategy was initiated in 1989, when the City Hall of Porto Alegre created participatory structures with decision-making power over the allocation of resources for the development of the municipality. The Municipal Council of Government Plan and Budget (MCGPB) is responsible for the coordination and organisation of the process of developing the investment plan, and checking the execution of the planned budget. It is constituted by elected citizens from the 16 areas of the city as well as by government representatives who have no voting right. Through a process involving people from all areas, the investment plan of the previous year is reviewed, priorities are defined and councilors for the MCGPB are elected.

An open and elaborate process with the population follows, which ends when the investment plan is approved by the MCGPB and sent by the Executive Power to the town councilors. Subsequently, a negotiation process takes place.



Citizen education and awareness-building

Another set of strategies has involved using popular education and communication methodologies to strengthen the awareness of local citizens of their rights and responsibilities under new local governance legislation.

Training and sensitising local officials

While some participatory education strategies have focused on building up the awareness and capacity of local citizens, others have focused on training elected officials and government staff. These strategies emphasise changing the attitudes within existing institutions and developing the skills of newly-elected citizens.

Advocacy, alliances and collaboration

A fourth set of strategies involve developing new skills of advocacy, as well as building effective alliances and collaborative partnerships, especially those that cut across existing power differences, or those that recognise and involve marginalised sectors of society (such as coalitions of the poor).

Participatory budgeting

Presently, one of the most successful experiences in citizen participation in decision-making at the local level is the experience of participatory budgets. In Brazil, at least 70 cities have

established a participatory budget system which allows citizen participation in decision-making over allocation of resources.

Promoting accountability of elected officials to citizens

While a number of participatory methods focus on enhancing direct participation of citizens in the governance process, others focus on strengthening accountability of elected officials and government agencies to the citizenry. Traditionally, in democratic governance, accountability is thought to be maintained in a number of ways, including local elections, strong and active opposition parties, media, public meetings and formal redress procedures. In the newer and more active forms of citizenship, citizens are developing other accountability mechanisms.

This paper presents just some of the strategies which are beginning to be used for strengthening citizen participation in the potentially new spaces found in democratic decentralisation programmes. Clearly, their potential for success will vary across contexts and will depend a great deal on broader enabling factors. Further research is needed to learn about the impact these interventions can have in helping to overcome the barriers to full and effective citizen participation in decision-making.

Examples of Accountability Mechanisms

- The women-led right-to-information movement in Rajasthan which demands a minimum level of transparency by local governments.
- Professional advocacy organisations such as the Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore which conducts research to produce "report cards" on local governments in the delivery of services.
- The establishment of "vigilance" committees such as those in Kerala which are empowered to sign off on local projects - inspecting for both quality and for proper use of funds - before final payments are made to contractors.



Prepared by:

**John Gaventa and
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Evaluating Governance Programmes



What is governance?

Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. Governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. Governance includes the state but transcends it by taking in the private sector and civil society. These are all critical. The state creates a conducive political and legal environment, the private sector generates jobs and income, and civil society facilitates political and social interactions - mobilising groups to participate in economic, social and political activities. Governance can no longer be considered a closed system. (UNDP, 1997)

Experiences from around the world continue to demonstrate that sound and sustainable social and economic development is unattainable without good governance. Consequently, a number of national and bilateral programmes have been developed and implemented to promote the principles and practice of good governance.

Governance programming and evaluation to date has tended to be quite narrow. It has focused primarily on public sector management and performance, thereby ignoring the contributions of civil society in a country's governance. Further, within the public sector, emphasis has tended to be placed on government effectiveness and efficiency (economic and institutional criteria), not on its legitimacy and accountability (political criteria). With the growing acceptance of a broader notion of governance that includes both civil society and the private sector, there is an increased awareness that virtually all development activities could be assessed for their influence on governance. This makes an assessment of the overall governance of a country difficult, given the need to be comprehensive yet responsive to changing local geographic, political, cultural and economic conditions.

These difficulties suggest the need for a multi-level approach to evaluating governance whereby development projects begin to assess their impacts on governance, and where specific governance evaluations consider a broader range of development issues.

The following table developed by Jim Armstrong (April 1999) shows some of the important elements that should be considered when evaluating governance programmes:

Major Interrelated Elements of Governance Programmes			
Criteria (For good governance)	Activities and programmes (To foster good governance)	Relationships (To ensure synergy and sustainability)	Institutions (And processes supporting good governance)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Transparency ■ Accountability ■ Participatory ■ Rule of law ■ No/low level of corruption ■ Equity ■ Security ■ Predictability ■ Effective responsible policy ■ Incentives for sustainability ■ Decentralisation ■ Political leadership, support and commitment ■ Efficiency ■ Legitimacy <p>Targeted goals and objectives Need to be “home grown” carefully developed and refined with recipients to reflect their circumstances and needs. Need for flexibility and responsiveness. In context of a country’s needs, culture and history.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Courses and workshops ■ Mentoring ■ Study tours ■ Coaching/Partnering/ Twinning ■ Learning from alliances ■ Publications ■ Diagnostic tools, gap analysis, organisational planning, institutional establishment, change management and other consulting-like interventions <p>Impact assessment Activities and programmes as a means to an end, part of a wider set of clear objectives rather than supply-sided approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Government and governed ■ Level of trust ■ Degree of participation ■ Central and local governments ■ Inter-institutional ■ Inter-sectoral ■ Civil society organisations ■ Inter-development agency ■ Network support ■ Recipient ownership <p>Data research, surveys, interviews Promote cooperation, involve different types of organisation, assess ownership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Legislatures ■ Judiciaries ■ Security (police, customs, military) ■ Electoral bodies and systems ■ Financial accountability (financial management, audit regime, auditor general) ■ Markets ■ Service delivery mechanisms ■ Professional public service (reformed, efficient, policy capacity, meritorious, high level of integrity) ■ Local governments ■ Public participation ■ Individuals <p>Institutional arrangement tools Emphasise organisational procedures, structures and cultures</p>

Adapted by Graham Ashford from the original article: Carden, F., S. Baranyi, T. Smutylo, J. H. Guilmette, S. Toope, A. W. Johnson, I. Kapoor and J. Armstrong. 1999. Evaluating Governance Programs: IDRC Workshop Report.

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Building Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships



Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships is one important mechanism in enhancing the participation of a larger and more representative grouping to provide inputs into an activity or project. Real and meaningful participation cannot be achieved by involving only a few key groups. In most development activities or projects, partnerships are often limited to a few stakeholders, e.g., donors, government and/or non-government organisations (NGOs) or people’s organisations (civil society organisations (CSOs), or community-based organisations (CBOs). This is now changing with a greater appreciation of the value and advantages that partnerships among wider groupings bring into the development scene.

Value of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

■ Better information

Key actors from various sectors provide critical inputs to the formulation of the framework and context for development assistance or the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of projects.

■ Representative perspective

Varied groups and sectors, rather than only a handful of so-called experts hired by donor agencies or by governments, help ensure a wider, more representative, even if divergent perspectives and approaches.

■ Wider ownership

Multi-stakeholder partnerships enhance sense of ownership of the outputs of the process.

■ Democratisation

Multi-stakeholder groups also promote and strengthen democratisation processes. A multi-stakeholder approach in conceptualising, identifying, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a project or an activity, ensures wider ownership, shared responsibility and collective accountability than would be otherwise be possible.

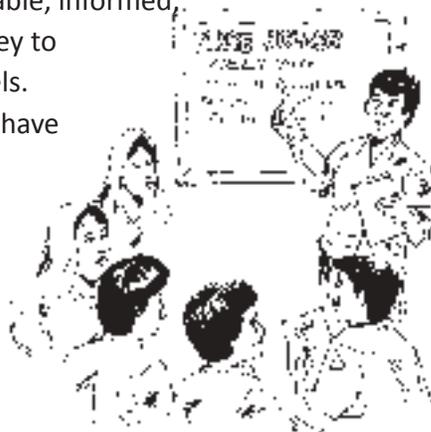
Multi-stakeholder partnerships and approaches should be promoted at the following levels:

- policy formulation at national and local levels; and
- projects at local level.

Building such partnerships and networks at any level, can be a formidable task, fraught with risks if the right stakeholders are not properly involved or if important stakeholders decide not to participate in the process of networking. It is, therefore, essential to be guided by certain principles that make for effective multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Principles for Effective Partnerships

1. **Proper groundwork.** In depth groundwork is necessary, including the following:
 - adequate briefing of all parties concerned;
 - providing them with enough background information and materials;
 - allowing sufficient time to develop the networking; and
 - enabling parties to feel they are all – to some extent – owners of the process.
2. **Skilled/quality staff.** Knowledgeable, informed, committed and skilled staff are key to building networks at varying levels. Important skills that staff should have include:
 - conflict management and resolution;
 - community organisation;
 - group-building;
 - communication;
 - facilitation; and
 - documentation.



Principles for Fostering Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

1. Proper groundwork
2. Skilled/quality staff
3. Proper identification of stakeholders
4. Clear aims of partnerships
5. Commitment of stakeholders
6. Determining level of partnership
7. Active participation of stakeholders
8. Availability of human/financial resources
9. Regular communication
10. Capacity building
11. Inclusiveness
12. Documentation

3. **Proper identification of stakeholders.** Stakeholder analysis is essential for ensuring a balance in representation of sectors/groups as well as a balance of power relations and dynamics among the groups and individuals (*stakeholder analysis is discussed on page 102*).
4. **Commitment of stakeholders:** Clarification of commitments of stakeholders to the process needs to be made, particularly of government which can affect the outcome of the activity or project.
5. **Clarification of aims of partnership:** The objectives and purpose of building a multi-stakeholder network/partnership must be clear to all parties concerned.
6. **Determining level of partnership:** Level and extent of partnership envisioned with various stakeholders should be determined.
7. **Active participation of stakeholders:** Active participation of key parties, particularly primary stakeholders, (the poorest of the poor and the most marginalised) should be ensured.
8. **Capacity-building:** Working with primary stakeholders who are the poor and marginalised entails also developing their capacity to voice their views and opinions to wider groups without fear of intimidation.
9. **Availability of human/financial resources:** Networking and partnership-building need time and investment in human and financial resources to be effective.
10. **Regular communication:** Regular communication among different stakeholders is a key element in building partnerships.
11. **Inclusiveness:** It is important to keep inclusiveness in mind while forging multi-stakeholder partnerships to ensure participation and sense of ownership of the process among the widest group possible.
12. **Documentation:** At all stages of building partnerships, documentation should be an essential element to assure a continuing learning process for everyone concerned.

Value of Consultations

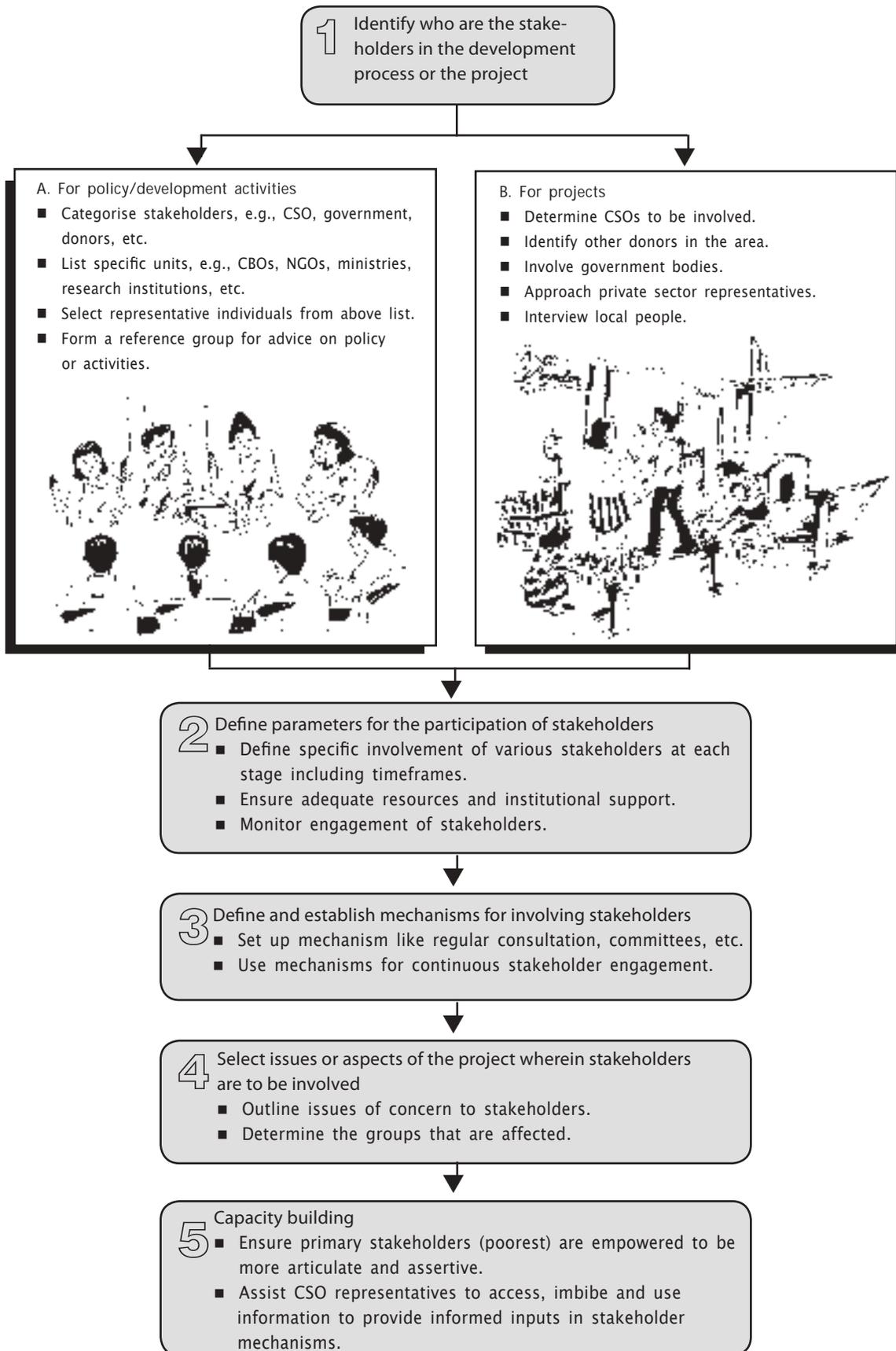
- A way to involve all stakeholders, particularly at the initial stages to explore possibilities for future collaboration and mechanisms for furthering the collaboration.
- Avenues for seeking opinions on issues that can affect policy or projects.



Process for Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Consultations

An important mechanism for promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships is through multi-stakeholder consultations. Ideally, these should be held regularly.

The aim and objectives of consultations may be viewed differently by different groups. Consultation involves a two-way communication where stakeholders have the opportunity to make suggestions and express their concerns. However, they have no assurance that these inputs will be used. In many cases, stakeholders do not give their inputs into the agenda or process.



Essential Elements for Successful Multi-Stakeholder Consultations

- Sufficient lead time for preparations
- Funding and other logistical support for preparatory work
- Prior circulation of documents in a simplified/summarised format (this includes the use of tables and diagrams and use of the local language)
- Involvement of a lead CSO or CSO network in the planning and preparation for the consultation
- Finding the “right mix” of participants among all stakeholders
- A separate, prior meeting/s among a few key stakeholders to clarify the consultation objectives, the agenda and expected output or even technical concepts
- Immediate clarification of the purpose, expected outputs and “ground rules” of the consultation
- Skilled facilitation and participatory discussions
- An immediate on-the-spot summary and feedback on the key points discussed, including all the major points of agreement and disagreement
- Post-consultation feedback to participants

Distinctions need to be made between and among the following:

- meeting – can be of a general nature;
- consultation meeting – has a more defined objective/s; and
- consultation process – involves a more drawn-out process of possibly several meetings/consultations, with informal discussions taking place outside the formal meetings.

The scope and purpose of the consultations must be made clear to all concerned at the start of the process. In this way, expectations among stakeholders will not be overly high and cynicism can be avoided. Transparent processes and methods must be communicated to everyone concerned, staff involved in the networking must be sincere and determined in pursuing the networking, despite constraints such as lack of interest, skepticism, even cynicism among some stakeholders.

Preparing the consultation process

- As government agencies at local or national level are key stakeholders in project or activities, ensure that there is adequate government awareness and commitment to the process; also clarify the extent of government involvement.
- Inform and convey clearly the aims, objectives, and scope of the consultation exercise to all parties concerned.
- Ensure that there is:
 - adequate budget and resources for the process, including follow-up if needed;
 - adequate time provision to prepare for the consultation meeting/process; and
 - sufficient and appropriate human resources, including adequate knowledge, skills and expertise, particularly for facilitators.

Prepared by:
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With inputs from:
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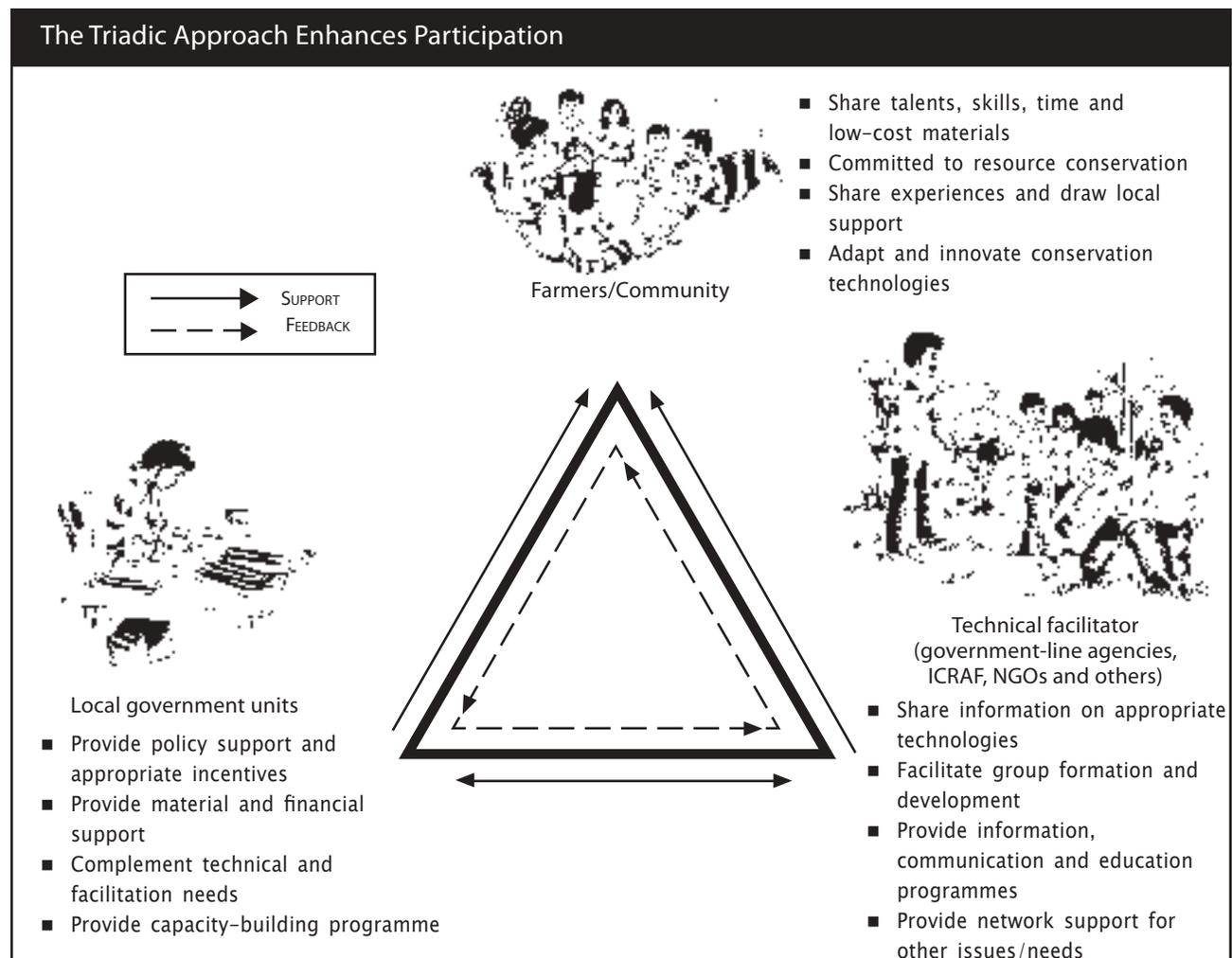
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Selecting participants

- Ensure that the participants to be invited are credible and that they are representative geographically.
- Seek advice from key informants in other organisations/sectors who may be familiar with CSOs, etc.
- Ensure transparency in the selection process which must be made available to anyone interested.

The Triadic Approach: Some Experiences in Landcare, Philippines

Landcare is a movement of farmer-led organisations supported by local governments and technical service providers to promote sustainable and profitable agricultural activity on sloping lands while conserving natural resources. This key institutional innovation for technology dissemination is a participatory process with everyone working together, depending on each other and supporting each other for the long-term benefit of the land and environment. The success of Landcare stems from the strength of a tripartite or triadic relationship of the three key players – the farming community, the local government and the technical facilitators.



Participation in Landcare

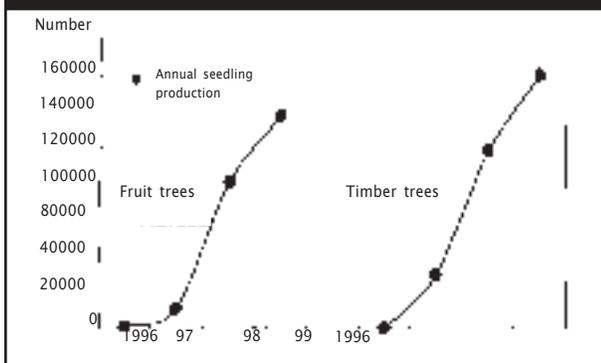
- Takes many forms (policy, time, skills, money, material, strategies, etc.)
- Varies among and between groups
- Is more than just numbers, it is quality of inputs and outputs
- Can be locally engaged
- Is a process, not an activity

In the triadic approach, farmers are centered in the triangle because they are the ultimate reason why Landcare exists. They practise sustainable agriculture and provide their own share for community activities in the form of labour, time and resources with low monetary costs. They share experiences, knowledge and skills with other farmers within the group. Local government units provide some materials for their projects, capacity-building programmes, support policies and complement the technical and facilitation needs of the groups. Technical service providers, on the other hand, backstop the technical, training and facilitation

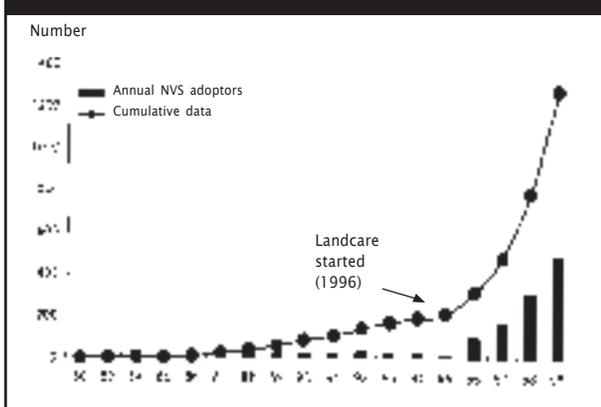
needs of the groups. In the end, the costs of implementing Landcare activities are shared by the three key players and both the direct and indirect benefits are shared by them.

Landcare has boosted farmers' adoption of soil conservation technologies and agroforestry practices including the production of seedlings. It promotes participation of the three key players because they make up the triad reflecting an interdependent relationship. Today, Landcare is evolving in the Philippines as a community-based experience designed to effect change in complex and diverse situations. Effective local community groups, in partnership with local government units and technical service providers constitute the core of the Landcare model. These groups respond to issues that affect them and are more committed to find solutions and implement them in their own ways rather than those imposed by external agencies. Landcare is about people; their success is based on how they interact and work together to build social capital for the improvement of their natural assets.

Landcare Impact on Seedling Production in Claveria (Philippines)



Effect of Landcare on Natural Vegetative Strips Adoption in Claveria (Philippines)



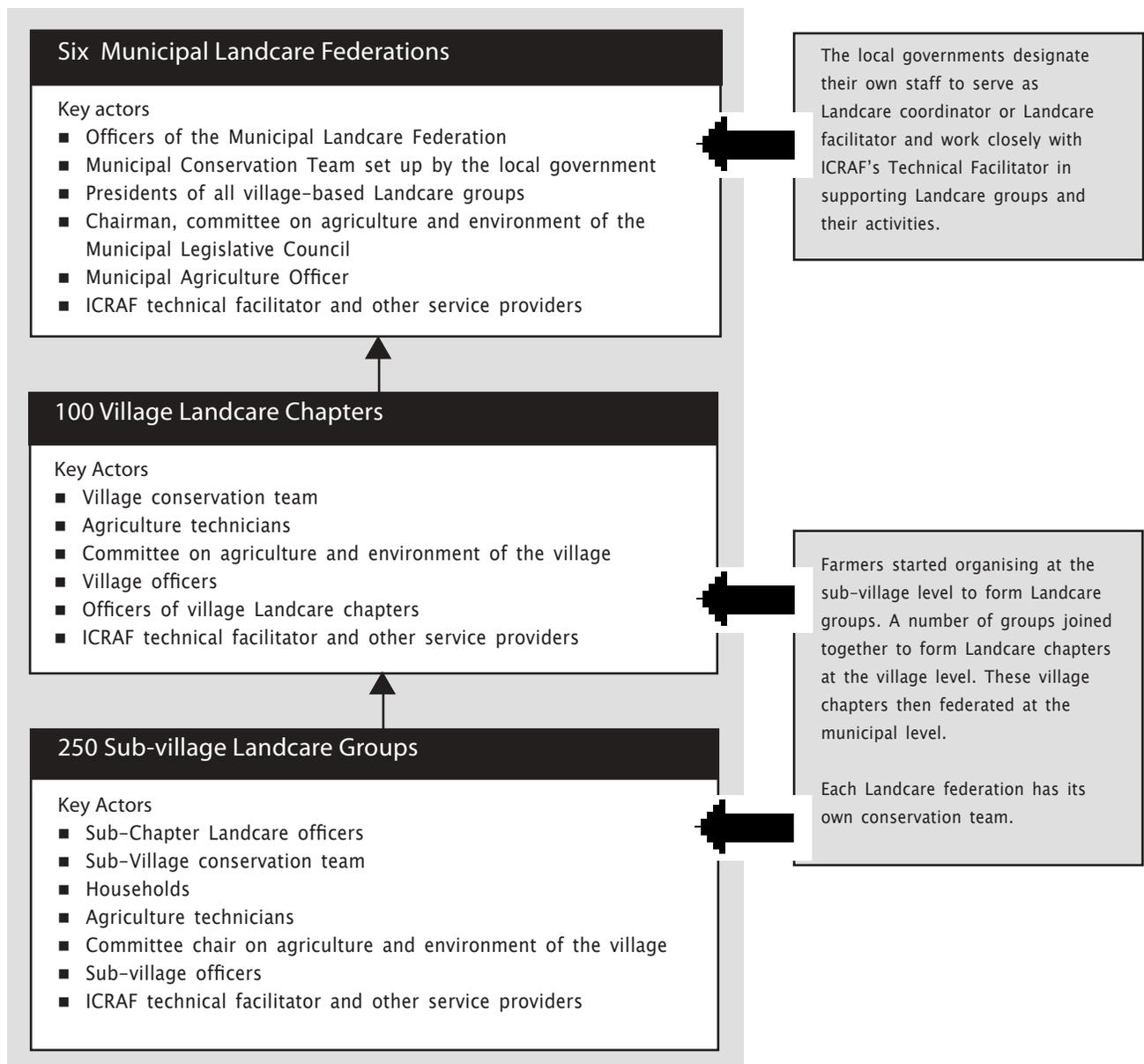
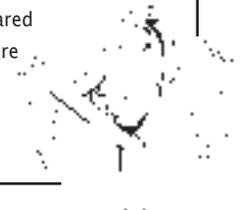
Making Landcare Work

Landcare is a demand-driven experience. It started as an informal group with unstructured planning and group management. As it developed, the village-based groups federated at the municipal level to formalise their structure and build their synergy. They sought representation in the local government for recognition and to access support. Now, Landcare operates from the sub-village to the municipal level and is registered as a legal farmer-based institution. Village groups still operate informally, but with

a set of norms and a culture. From shared labour at farm level, they have initiated a number of community-based activities such as stream rehabilitation, buffer zone management, draft animal distribution, farmer-to-farmer education and training, participatory action research and other small-scale agri-based livelihood projects. Support for these activities was largely drawn from external agencies working within the area who are anxious to support grassroots initiatives.

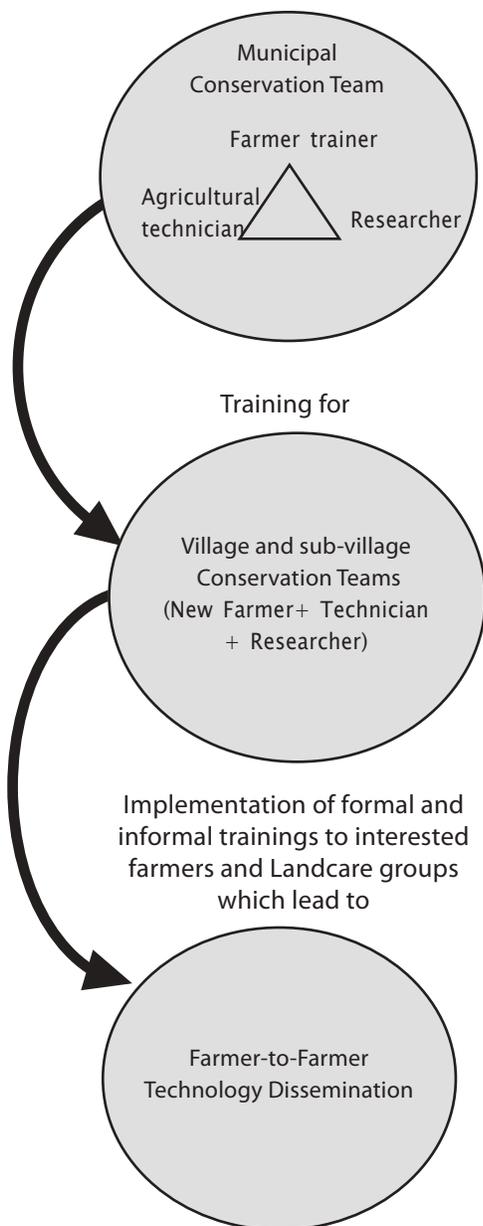
Evolution of Landcare

In 1996, 25 farmers from Claveria, Misamis Oriental, Philippines, requested a training from ICRAF on soil and water conservation technology and formed a group to share the technology with other farmers. This group evolved into a dynamic voluntary movement with more than 5,000 farming families. There are now 250 Landcare groups that have successfully shared conservation farming technologies with more than 3,000 farmers and established 300 household and communal nurseries for fruit and timber trees.



Conservation Team

Conservation teams are formed by the local government from the municipal to sub-villages levels. They are trained and tasked to implement formal and informal trainings to Landcare groups in coordination with the Landcare facilitators and Landcare officers.



Features of Landcare

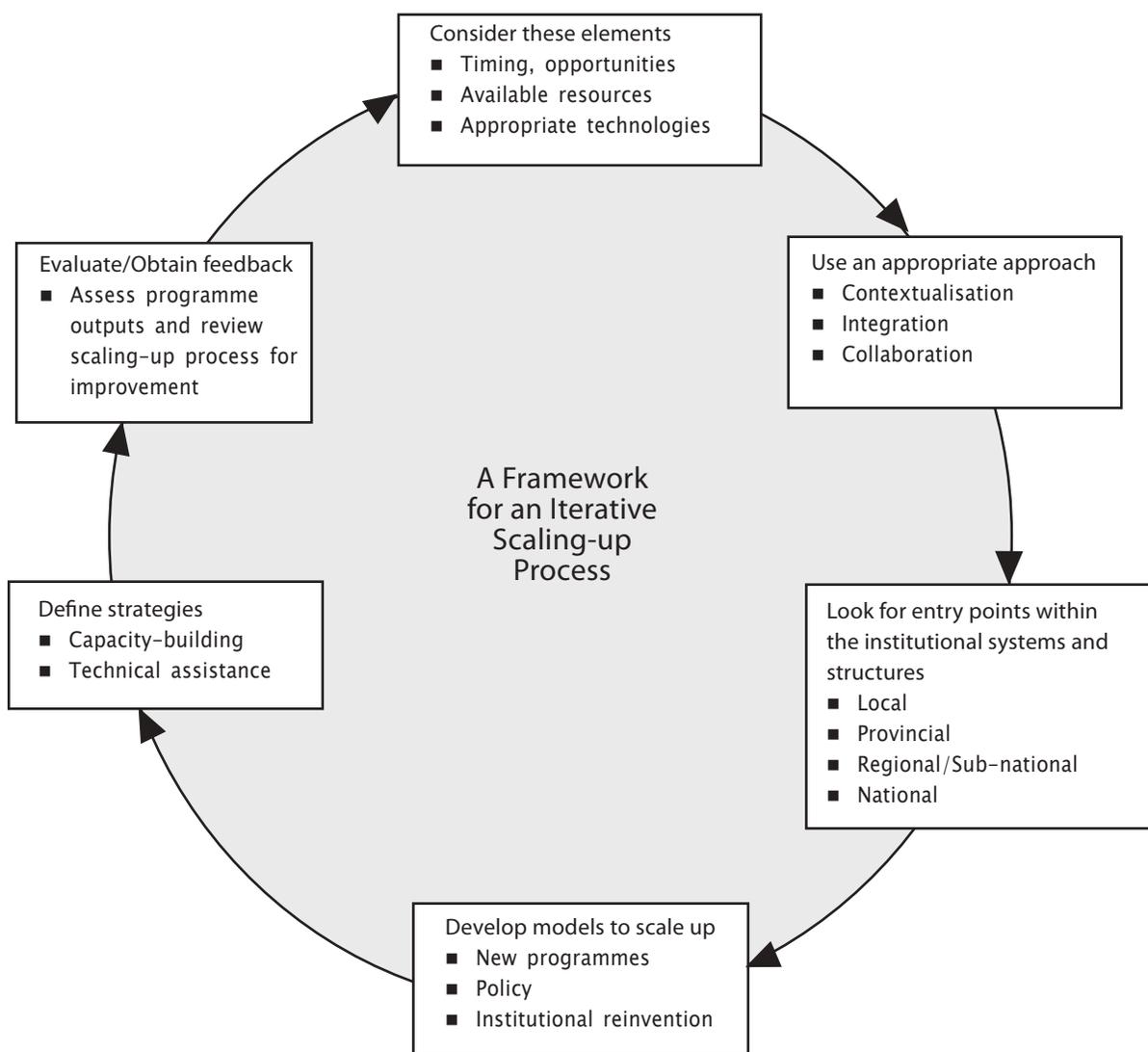
- Farmer-driven
- Triadic approach
- Interdependent relationship
- Issue and knowledge-based
- Reduces farmers' risk
- Provides benefits to:
 - Individual farmers
 - Groups
 - Communities
 - Local governments
 - Local agriculture, forestry and watershed extension service
 - Research and development groups
- Promotes:
 - Sustainable and profitable agriculture
 - Soil conservation
 - Environmental protection
 - Equity in participation
 - Self-help initiatives
 - Farmer-to-farmer extension
 - Networking/linkaging
- Builds up:
 - Public trust
 - Commitment
 - Ownership
 - Motivation
- Improves the natural assets
- Develops:
 - Social capital
 - Farmer extension service
- Harnesses:
 - Self-help
 - Mutual help
 - Public support
 - Policy and financial support from local governments



Challenges and Dangers of Scaling-up

The challenge to scale up Landcare is enormous because the approach, the processes involved, or both, can either be enhanced or corrupted. Landcare is faced with the dilemma of diluting the strength of the triadic approach once it is introduced on a large scale and the focus is shifted to meeting externally-driven targeted outputs, and away from the process of social capital formation that enables farmers to adapt appropriate technologies at their own pace. To replicate a demand-driven process is problematic, but it can be compromised by “creating” a demand which results in motivated participation.

In creating new arrangements, the issue of “projectisation” may surface and may weaken the triadic approach. This requires clear understanding of Landcare by all stakeholders at the inception period. The cost-effectiveness of Landcare as an extension approach provides a promise for wider application elsewhere. The proposed framework given below can reduce the risks of a deteriorating participatory process when scaling-up Landcare.



Some Dos and Dont's which may be Helpful in Engaging Community Participation in Landcare

DOs	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specify aims and expected outcomes. ■ Treat all participants as partners, not beneficiaries. ■ Keep processes clear, quick and simple. ■ Maintain open communication and regular feedback of progress, problems and solutions taken. ■ Maintain enthusiasm and momentum by two-way communication flow. ■ Make decisions by consensus. ■ Use effective facilitators for trust and relationship-building. ■ Disseminate timely results, progress and accomplishments. ■ Promote local resource mobilisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoid dole-out system. ■ Do not use the word "project" as nomenclature. ■ Do not encourage extrinsic motives.

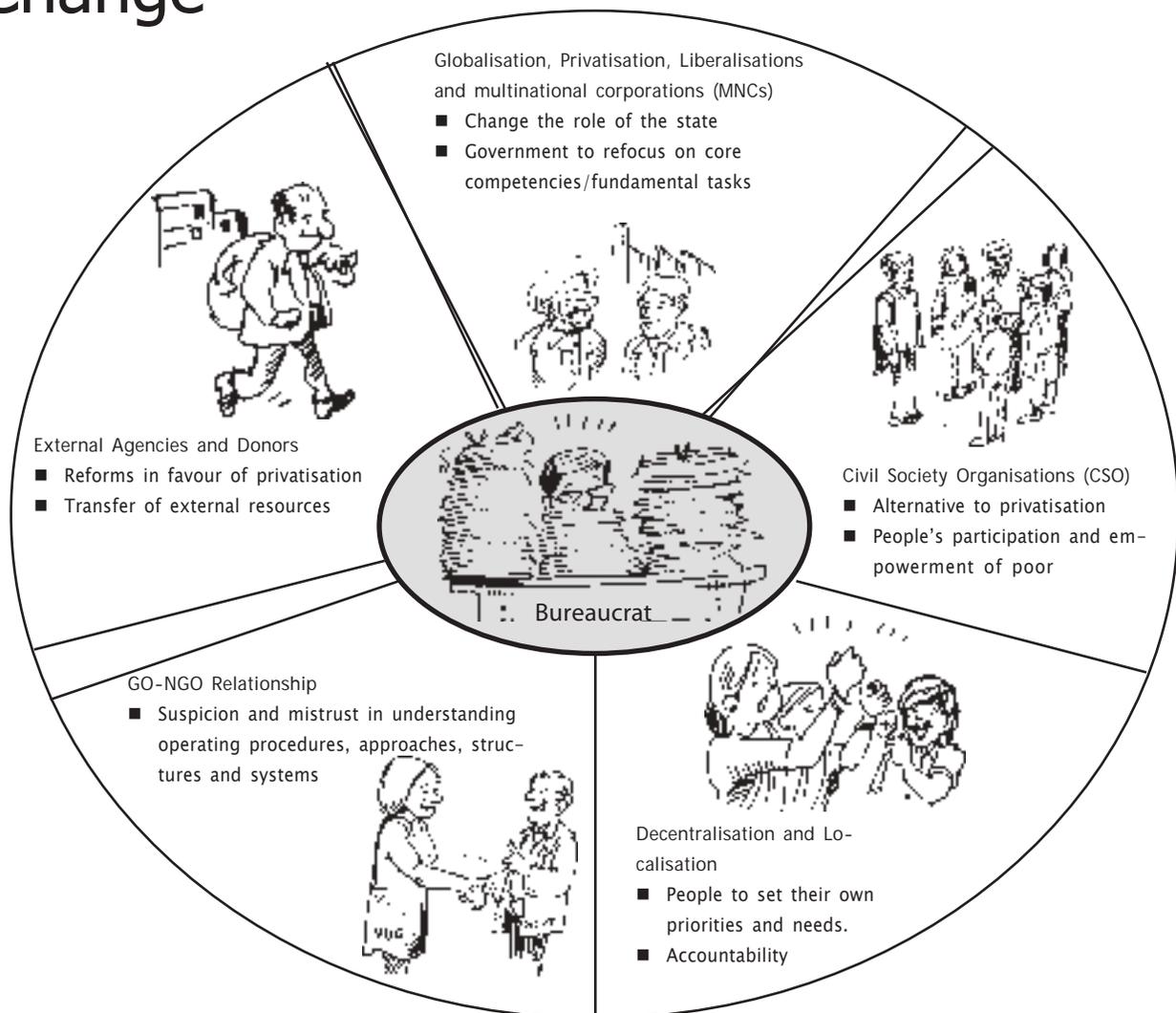
Lessons Learned

When more resources are made available to project management, we seem to be more liable to corrupt the participatory process in favour of pre-set quantitative outputs within a given timeframe. In such case, the initiative tends to be projectised so much that it compromises community ownership and sustainability. When financial resources are limited, there is a greater tendency to adopt participatory approaches to build partnerships with a range of stakeholders for project implementation. We are aware, however, that neither of the two extreme conditions guarantee high quality participation. It is not the case of either-or, but rather, of fully exploiting every opportunity to tap the potential of participation to the greatest advantage in order to obtain the desired quality of output and outcomes. It is our experience that a symbiotic environment is created by the tripartite interaction of the farmers, technical facilitators and local government units and that it fosters participatory planning, implementation and evaluation in a win-win situation, with spin-off benefits to the land and natural resources.

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Participatory Approaches in Government Bureaucracies: Facilitating the Process of Institutional Change



There is a school of thought which considers bureaucracy as a “necessary evil” of government. What is certain about bureaucracy is its omnipresence. Whether it is democracy, dictatorship, monarchy or military rule, it is the bureaucracy that serves them. Today, bureaucracy exists even without democracy. The socio-economic and the political conditions under which bureaucracies once flourished are changing very rapidly. This warrants changes in the bureaucracy. The changes are both external and internal and are emanating from all directions as shown above.

Why Participatory Approaches in Bureaucracy?

- One of the fundamental tasks of a government organisation (GO) is to serve its citizens as clientele. To provide good governance, governments should know the needs, aspirations, hopes and fears of its citizens, participatory approaches and processes facilitate this acquisition.
- In the ultimate analysis, it is this participation that builds ownership, commitment, accountability and sustainability.
- As protector of the poor, marginal, vulnerable and minority ethnic groups, governments need to proactively pursue policies of inclusiveness and reduce or eliminate the sense of alienation from these groups.
- Participation provides channels of communication and offers an enabling environment for consultations, negotiations and decision-making processes.

The Framework

Members of a bureaucracy are often characterised by their power-seeking behaviour, lobbying for their own personal gains, poor facilitation skills, and limited respect for dialogue and mutual learning. The system they operate is based on controls, set procedures and closed decision-making, leading to inefficiency and wastage. Structurally, a bureaucracy is hierarchical, rigid, top-down and dominating.

It follows blueprints rather than a process-oriented approach; there is little room for creative thinking. Bureaucracies are engaged in policy-making, plan formulation, design of programmes, preparation and implementation of projects. But its methods and approaches are often standardised, with hardly any feedback system from the clientele to whom the services are to be delivered.

Efforts in Enhancing Participation

It should, however, not mean that participatory approaches are not adopted in government systems. There are a number of initiatives at various government department levels that follow participatory processes and approaches. For example, the Rural Development Division, Ministry of Policy, Planning and Implementation in Sri Lanka, the Soil and Water Conservation Branch, Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya and the National Irrigation Administration in the Philippines, show how training has led to building up internal capacity in the participatory processes to facilitate the process of institutional change. In India, many state governments have institutionalised programs to enhance people's participation in watershed development and joint forest management programmes.

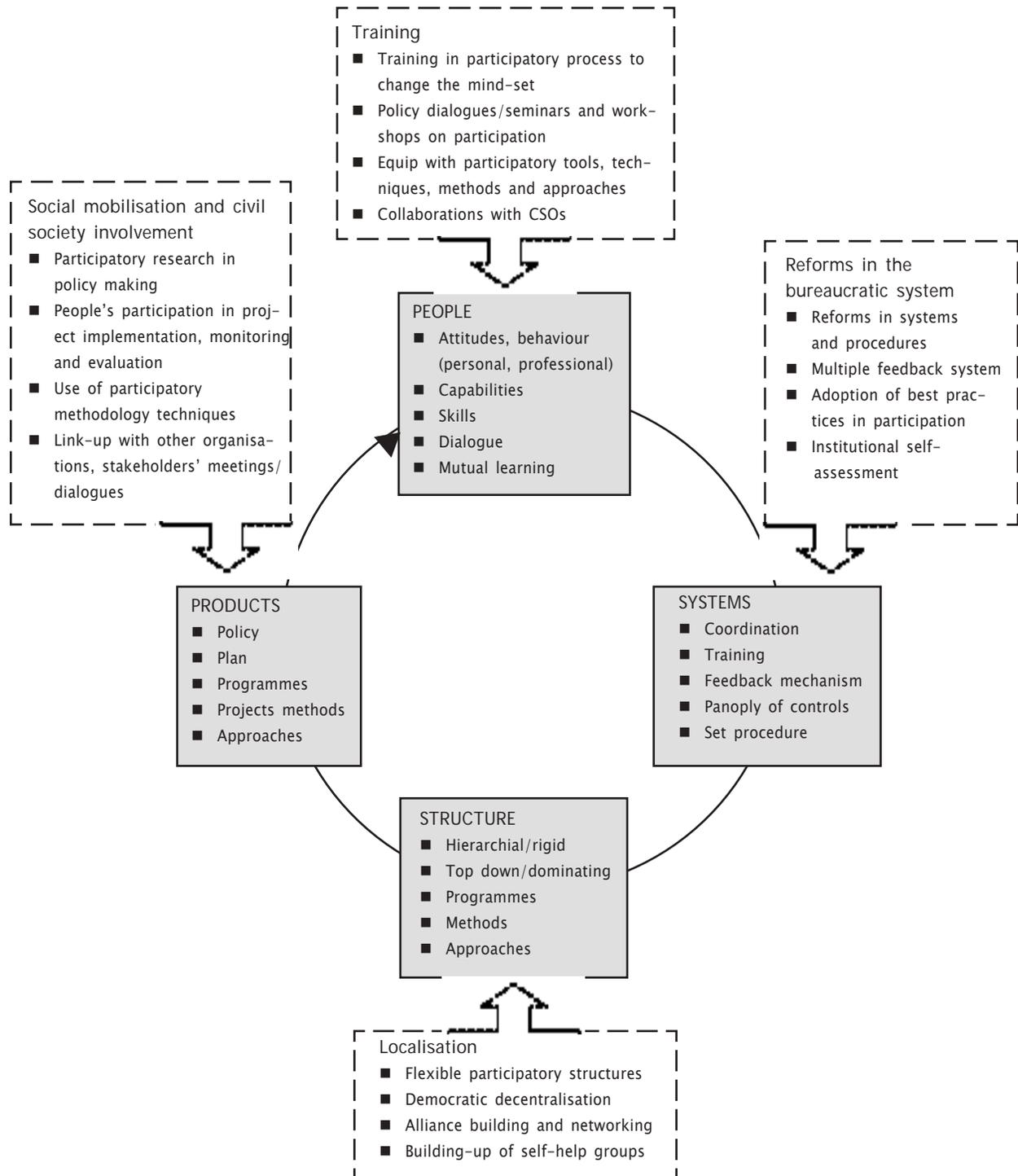
However, in order to deepen and widen the participatory approaches, a four-track strategy for facilitating institutional change is suggested (see diagram).

1. Training
2. Reforms in the bureaucratic system
3. Localisation
4. Social mobilisation and partnership with civil society organisations (CSOs)

Participation in Bureaucracy: A Conceptual Framework

The schematic presentation shows the characteristics of bureaucracy at its dis-aggregated level, and its inter-linkages.

- The boxes on the circle indicate bureaucracy that consists of people, systems, structure and products.
- The arrows facing the boxes are suggested interventions to facilitate the process of institutional change.



Training

- Training in participatory approaches, methods and processes could trigger a change in the “mind-set” of bureaucrats. Bureaucratic transformation requires changes in their attitudes and behaviour. Equip bureaucrats with participatory tools, techniques, methods and approaches. Training is a weapon for igniting the process of institutional change. This could be organised for field workers and middle-level bureaucracies.
- Policy dialogues/seminars and workshops on participation would sensitise and enhance the understanding of bureaucrats on the participatory processes. This could be organised for the senior-level officers and other policy-makers. This will lead to obtaining their support for bottom-up grassroots initiatives.
- Exposure-cum-study trips to projects that have successfully integrated participatory processes in all stages of the project cycle can be particularly effective.
- The nature and method of collaboration between NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) have prompted many agents, including bureaucrats, to reassess their style of functioning. Retraining is often needed to support these changes.



Reforms in a Bureaucratic System

- There is a need for updating and opting for more pragmatic and realistic procedures that can lead to new and multiple channels of communication through clientele assessments and participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- The accumulated knowledge and exemplary practices with participation in the NGO sector and/or in some departments of the government sector need to be studied for replication/adaptation by the government bureaucracy.
- Participation is to be promoted within the bureaucracy itself. Institutional self-assessments must be carried out to assess the extent of participation within offices or field-level operations or in the working relations between subordinates, colleagues and seniors.
- There is a need to create an enabling environment enacting a legislation which promotes participation and GO-NGO collaboration.
- A package of incentives and formal recognition (e.g., merit certificates, public announcements, etc.).

Localisation

- Marginal and disadvantaged groups should be enabled to get into the decision-making bodies of the local governance structure.
- Democratic decentralisation helps promote community involvement and facilitates the use of participatory approaches. It addresses two essential components – ownership and sustainability.

- Strong networks of organisations – consisting of NGOs, CBOs and some government departments – need to be promoted to facilitate consultations, stakeholder meetings and advocacy for participatory approaches in government bureaucracies.
- Power among the poor can be consolidated in the form of self-help groups. The success stories coming from these grassroots, indigenous initiatives can serve as testimonials for new groups.



Social Mobilisation and the Role of CSOs

- Participatory poverty assessments, now widely in use, are offering better perspectives on the needs of the poor and what they think should be done to tackle their poverty. It is also necessary to foster opportunities for poor people to meet the bureaucrats face-to-face. This will give the bureaucrats field orientation and hands-on experience in understanding and dealing with poverty issues.
- In all projects, there should be a concerted effort or mechanism to enable people's participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Government bureaucrats should study, learn and replicate successful NGO poverty initiatives that have encouraged participatory social enquiry.
- Government should do away with legislations which are obstacles to networking and alliance-building of NGOs and other CSOs.
- There should be ample space for all actors because participatory approaches are not the monopoly of NGOs, nor do they belong to any national government. The plurality of approaches is the crowning glory of participatory processes.

Limits to Participation

There are limits to what can be done. Such limits could arise from social, institutional settings, attitudinal and behavioural patterns (personal, professional and institutional), cultural, political and economic reasons.

- In some societies, the social norms inhibit participation; the institutional set-up is rigid and hierarchical, making participation difficult.
- Some bureaucrats are so conscious of their power and position that they do not want any participation to take place. When this is their mind-set, it will affect their personal, professional and institutional situations.
- Some cultures discourage participation of women. (*See topic on Getting around the Limits to Participation on page 300.*)

- Some regimes may not encourage participation for fear of losing their pre-eminent position. When power relations are held unevenly, those who benefit from the existing position may like to continue the status quo position.
- Sometimes the poor cannot afford the time that participation implies.

Conclusion

There is a strong case for facilitating institutional changes in bureaucracy to adapt to changing environments. A participatory approach and philosophy require support not only from the bottom but also from the top. This paper suggests a strategy through which this could be achieved: a) training; b) reforms in the bureaucratic system; c) localisation; and d) social mobilisation and partnership building with the CSOs. If bureaucracy embraces participatory approaches and promotes people's participation, this can lead to better pro-poor policies, sustainable rural development and poverty eradication.



Prepared by:
P. Subrahmanyam

RESOURCE BOOK PRODUCED IN A PARTICIPATORY WRITESHOP ORGANISED BY THE International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), South East Asian Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN), MYRADA and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR).

Understanding Resistance to Change



Development brings change and when change disturbs the status quo, it brings about resistance. On the other hand, there is no learning and no change without resistance.

Change is disconcerting: it makes people anxious, as the future becomes uncertain. When changes are pending, as a rule, three groups form: the pros, the indifferent, and the cons. Changes – whether technical, methodological, organisational, economic, social, political, or cultural – are always potential sources of conflict. Even if redistributions of power are not addressed openly, but are tacitly ignored, resistance is stimulated.

Poor people are the most vulnerable to the consequences of any externally induced change. They eke out their livelihoods from fragile ecosystems; they have little or no assets; they have limited opportunities. One bad harvest alone could wipe out a lifetime of savings and sink a poor family deeper into a chronic cycle of debt and misery.

Farmers' Resistance to Agrarian Reform

For hundreds of years since the Spanish colonial period, sugar-workers in Negros and Panay, Philippines have toiled and lived in hacienda plantations under powerful landlords. When agrarian reform was first introduced to these provinces in the mid-1990s, there was stiff resistance not only from the landlords, but also among landless sugarworkers. Many workers even refused to be identified as potential beneficiaries. To poor sugarworkers, agrarian reform meant cutting-off their dependence on the landlords, who were seen as local "gods", and their main source of loans, favour, patronage and sense of security.

Poor people resist change because they feel that it exposes them to greater risk and vulnerability. On the other hand, other people in a community may wish to preserve the status quo and the security and benefits that it brings them. Indeed, the greater the pressure of time to implement a change, the more of a problem and the more of a burden the resistance seems to be. Yet, resistance indicates where energy is blocked. Conversely, this means: Where there is resistance, energy can be released. In other words, resistance is not just a source of interference, but also a source of energy which we need to tap for changes.

Understanding Resistance

Resistance is often diffuse: We notice that something or other is “not quite right”. Suddenly things clog up, everything turns stop-and-go, there is endless debate over insignificant issues, the “thread” is lost, a sense of helplessness and disgruntlement prevails, an awkward silence develops.

The expressions of resistance are many and varied. The matrix below can be used to structure one’s observations and possibly compare them over a longer period of time. The verbal and non-verbal behaviours of individuals and groups are listed in the matrix as active or passive expressions of resistance.

Expressions of Resistance		
	Verbal (speech)	Non-verbal (actions)
Active 	Resistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Counterarguments ■ Accusations ■ Protests ■ Threats ■ Suspicion of others gaining advantage ■ Polemics ■ Stubborn ■ Formalism 	Agitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unrest ■ Disputes ■ Intrigues ■ Rumours of negative consequences ■ Formation of cliques ■ Sabotage ■ Boycotts ■ Withholding of information
Passive 	Evasion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Silence ■ Trivial debate ■ Debasing of individuals ■ Ridiculing and debasing of new ideas ■ Belittlement ■ Fooling around ■ Jibes ■ Sarcasm 	Apathy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bad moods ■ Sulkiness ■ Inattentiveness ■ Anger ■ Fatigue ■ Absenteeism ■ Withdrawal ■ Sleepless nights ■ Fear for one’s economic position ■ Sickness

To understand resistance, the following general rules may be applied:

- All resistance contains encoded messages which we need to decipher. We cannot do that without entering into direct contact with the persons and groups concerned. In this context, understanding means trying to see behaviours from people’s point of view.

- The various forms of expression of resistance mutually reinforce each other. Over time, this produces a climate of mistrust, which we can carefully attempt to break down by adopting an inquiring attitude:

- What objectives and questions do the actors have?
- What is especially precious and important to them?
- What are their interests, needs and concerns?
- What might happen if we proceed as planned?
- What ought to be prevented in their view?
- What alternative do they themselves see?
- How should things proceed in their view?
- What is acceptable and appropriate to them?



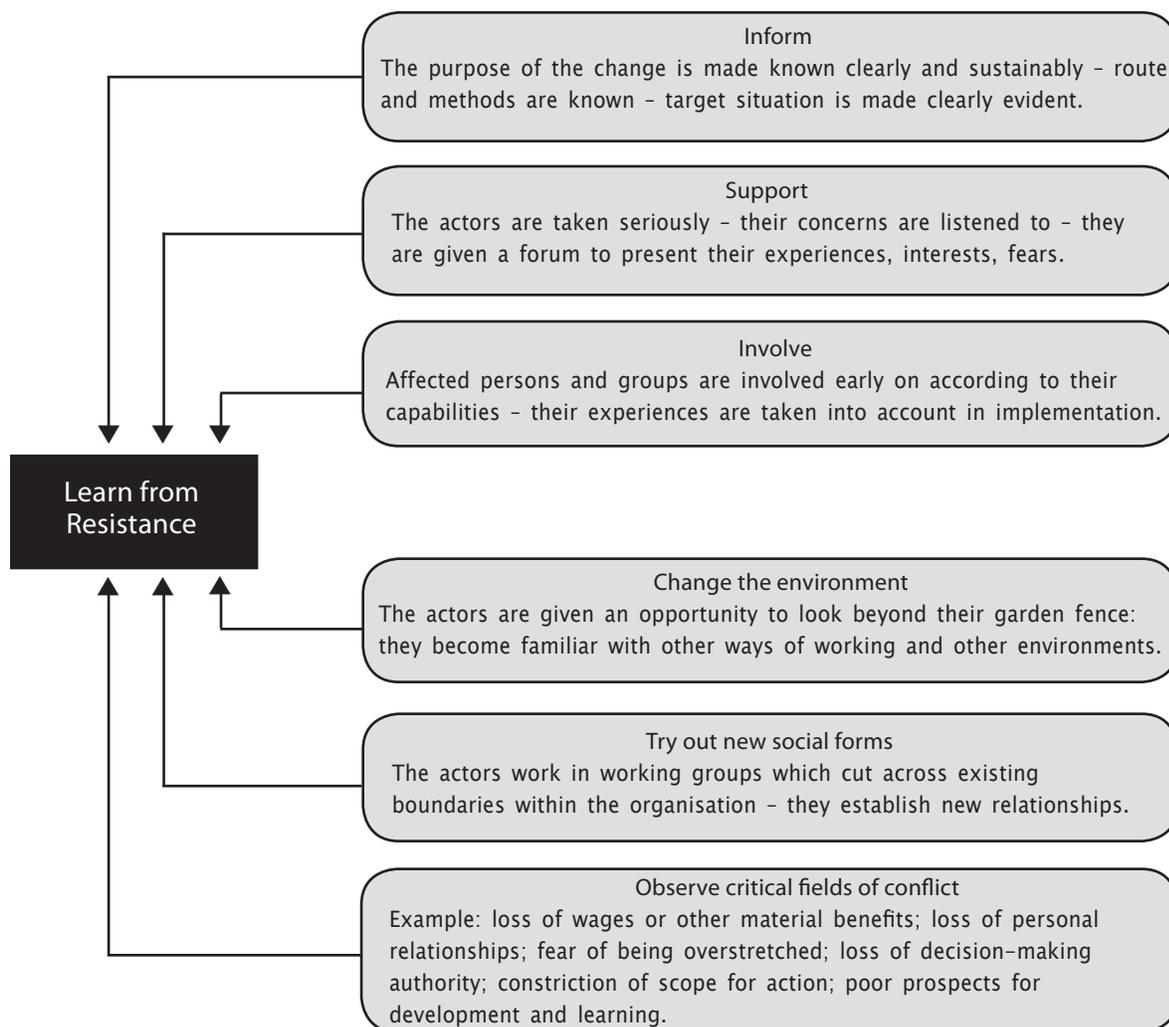
- To prevent different groups from reinforcing each other’s resistance and forming alliances, it is important to work with them separately according to their respective interests (= principle of separation of perspectives). In attempting to understand resistance, actions are guided by two rules:
 - We must encourage and support people in expressing and explaining their resistance.
 - We must transform non-verbal and passive forms of resistance into verbal active forms.

- We must transform resistance into dialogue. The field of energies between advocates and opponents of a change, between negative and positive forces for change, can be captured and illustrated by a simple chart:

Positive arguments, actions and behaviours		Actors who influence the change	Negative arguments, actions and behaviours	
+	++		--	-

Dealing with Resistance

The art of dealing with resistance is related to the Japanese martial art of “aikido”. Instead of launching a frontal assault on it, we have to absorb the energies enclosed in it. If we wish to reduce actors’ loss of control, help resistance be expressed and get the people on board, then we need to tread several paths at the same time. As seen in the flowchart overleaf, all paths lead to the common goal of learning from resistance by taking account of the experiences and arguments of the actors.



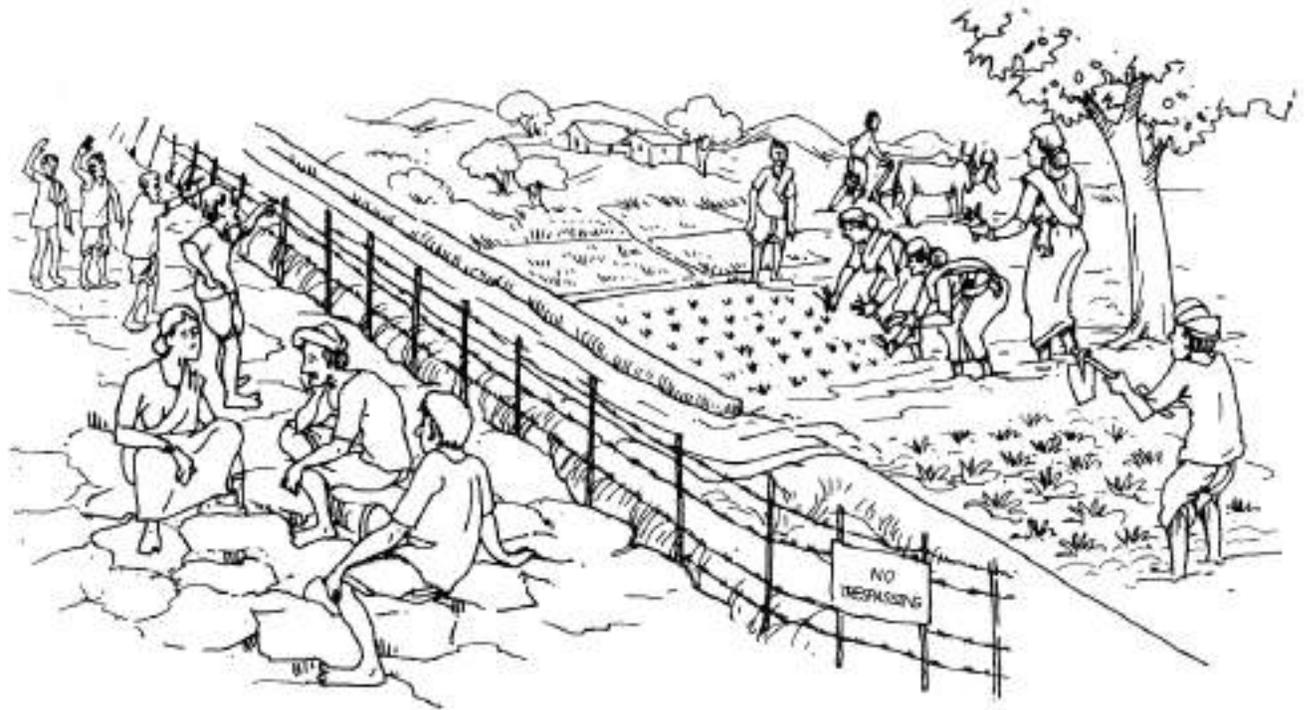
Change triggers conflict which takes the form of resistance to change. Understanding and observing the open and discrete forms of resistance can help one to adjust the change process to the given circumstances and the actors’ standards of acceptance and help steer it accordingly.

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Repackaged by:
Antonio B. Quizon

Adapted from:
GTZ. 1996. Process Monitoring: Work Document for Project Staff.

Understanding and Dealing with Conflict



Projects may trigger conflicts and fuel them unintentionally. They may draw new lines of conflict in the community, make conflicts more visible or accentuate existing tensions through targeted changes. For instance, a new land-use strategy may ascribe to women a new active role, shift the relationship of dependency between small tenants and landowners in favour of the farmer, or require a change in the prevailing land-use system. This may arouse tension between women and men farmers, heighten landlord-tenant conflicts, or create anxiety among users' groups (i.e., forest gatherers) whose livelihoods may be affected. In another instance, the construction of a new irrigation canal may arouse conflict among different water users' groups.

Many natural resource management projects aim implicitly to redistribute power - e.g., over access to land and management of scarce resources - and thus, they may trigger local conflicts. Yet, project actors often tend to underestimate the social forces underlying those conflicts. There are several tools for conflict management. Among them is the intergroup conflict management (ICM) method described briefly in this paper.

Conflicting claims on scarce resources place different interest groups in a competitive situation which can end in a life-and-death struggle. If the conflict remains unrecognised, it can soak up a considerable amount of energy and become costly. Competition becomes rivalry, perceptions narrow down, communication lines break, and misunderstanding becomes firmly established in the form of "enemy stereotypes".

Where users compete for scarce resources, questions arise: to what extent are we, ourselves, part of the conflict? And to what extent should we become actively involved in solving the conflict?

The Intergroup Conflict Management Method

Intergroup conflict management (ICM) has proven successful in a variety of practical situations. It reduces competition and selfish parochial group politics, creating greater scope for communication. The method steers the parties towards the following questions:

- What do we really want?
- How are we different from each other?
- What are we able and willing to communicate about?
- Which *modus vivendi* do we wish to achieve?

ICM is based on the following working hypotheses.

- **Equality:** Parties A and B are equal partners in terms of their right to express their own viewpoint.
- **Differing perspectives:** Parties A and B have differing perspectives of themselves and the other party which can be put forward and exchanged.
- **Openness:** The ability to listen, an effort to understand other viewpoints and the willingness to see things from the other's point of view can be learned and acquired more easily when the communication is structured by certain rules.



ICM consists of a planned sequence of conflict resolution conferences (CRCs) that last one-half to two days each. The objective is to establish direct dialogue between the parties through external moderation.

The tool CRC is based on the assumption that:

- the moderators are accepted by the involved parties;
- the parties wish to resolve the conflict;
- the groups are not larger than 8-10 persons, primarily those directly involved and with a major stake in the conflict;
- the parties are willing to invest time for an ICM process; and
- the moderators introduce and steer the process carefully, and insist on adherence to the schedule and rules adhered to.

The initiation of the process of dialogue is deliberately highly structured. Initial steps include:

- a preliminary discussion between the moderators and two representatives of the parties to the conflict, to lay down the ground rules;
- the representatives of the two parties inform their groups of the purpose and structure of the ICM process;
- the moderators hold one-on-one discussions and then prepare the first workshop; and
- the first CRC (workshop) begins.

Between the CRCs, the parties need time to digest the confrontation: to learn new things, to unlearn things, and to deal with unpleasant information that has been said.

Conflicts are a source of interference because they frustrate our plans. We are capable only to a limited extent of understanding and predicting the consequences of our actions and the actions of others.

We may tend to seek rash solutions. For many conflicts, however, there may be no final solution in the given time span and social framework. We may have to smooth them over or postpone them, even at the risk that they might erupt again. Or we may have to play an active role as mediator.

It is beneficial to examine the positive aspects inherent in such conflicts:

- **Signal effect:** Conflicts point to symptoms and open up new questions as to their underlying tensions.
- **Interests:** Conflicts reveal where people's real interests lie.
- **Stimulus:** Conflicts make self-observation more acute.
- **Cohesion:** Conflicts consolidate social relationships.
- **Change:** Conflicts push forward reforms and changes.

Understanding Conflict

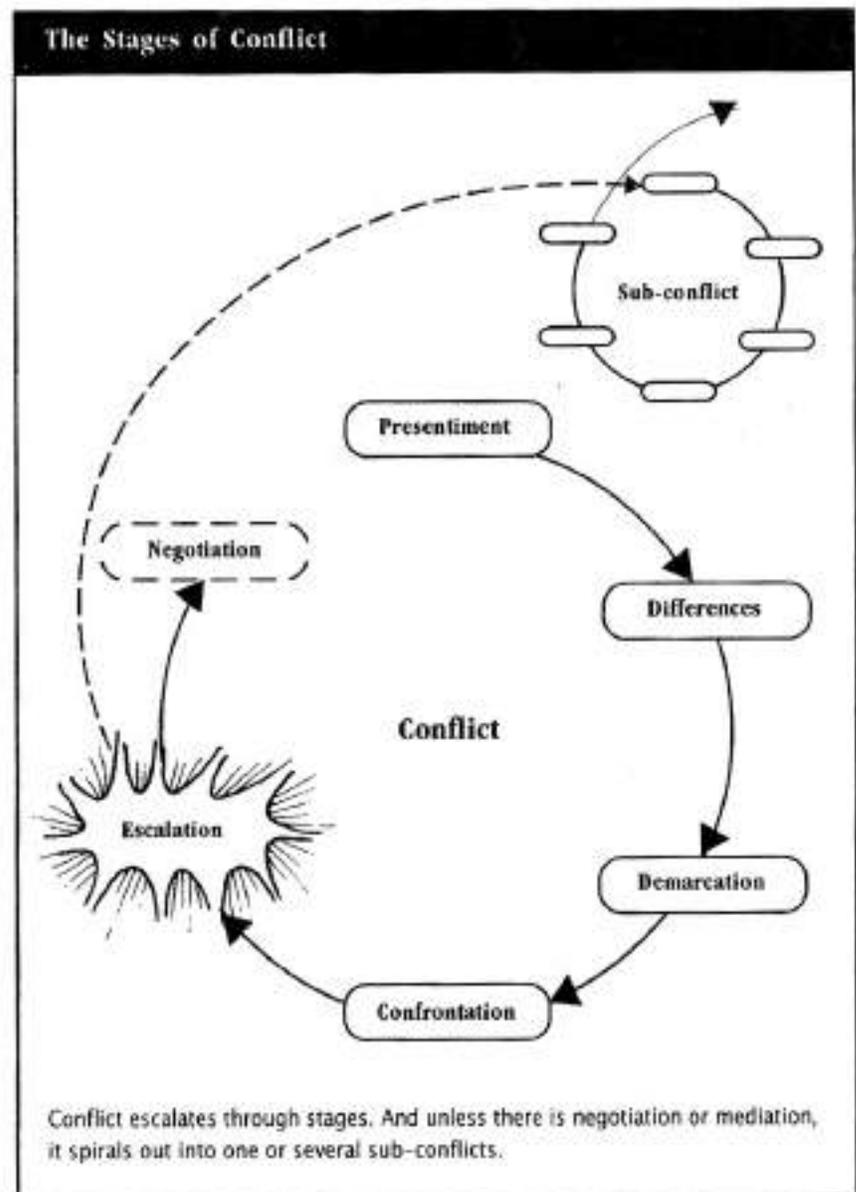
Conflicts develop in several phases and can escalate through several stages.

Presentiment

The parties to the conflict are aware of their differences yet are unable to articulate them. Outsiders are already able to identify growing conflict potentials.

Consciousness of differences

The parties become conscious of their differences, yet refrain from addressing conflict-related issues due to social and cultural barriers. They avoid direct encounters, form cliques and actively seek allegiances, especially among individuals with power and influence.



Demarcation of the arena of conflict

The parties mark out the arena of conflict with a selection of opinions, arguments and interests. They try to play down the importance of their adversary, or blot out the conflict.

Discussion and confrontation

The parties try to defend their own standpoint and interests in an uncompromising game of win-or-lose. This cripples the forces for compromise. Unless external mediators are called in (e.g., an appeal to civil or criminal law, or a decisive verdict by someone in power), the conflict escalates.

Types of Sub-Conflict

Conflicts become suppressed, deferred, or poorly resolved when the parties remain unclear as to the sub-conflicts of which it is comprised. Within a field of conflict, we can observe different types of sub-conflicts:

- **Conflict of values:** The parties judge causes and effects of situations differently, which in many cases is attributable to incompatible values.
- **Conflict of cultures:** The actors hold incompatible values as a result of their different cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds. These values include ways of encountering people and ideas from other cultures, and the "constructions" placed on those other people as handed down through one's own traditions.
- **Conflict of distribution:** The parties do not agree on access to and the (fair) distribution of scarce goods and services.
- **Conflict of goals:** The parties pursue conflicting goals, which may be detrimental to the other party.
- **Conflict of roles:** The mutual expectations of the parties are incompatible with the respective conception each side has of its own role.
- **Conflict of information:** The parties try to prevent each other from obtaining information, withhold information, or defame the information sources and the reliability of the information they supply.



Escalation

The further the conflict escalates, the more difficult and complicated it is to manage.

Negotiation

Unless there is negotiation or mediation, the conflict spirals out into one or several sub-conflicts.

Dealing with Conflict

Conflicts are often based on issues of the distribution of goods, resources, and power. In many cases, they only become conflicts because of the **different interpretations** people have of these issues. Field experiences show that it is often logical and easier to deal with conflicts on a **personal level**, and that we can best try to understand the underlying issues by looking back at their history from different people's perspectives. Yet at the same time, this poses a dilemma as it is more difficult for us to remain detached and to define the actual points of conflict.

There are a broad selection of possible ways to act in conflict situations. These range from observation, via inquiry, to active conflict moderation. Actions may be directed with differing degrees of intensity at the **causes** of the conflict, the **progress** of the conflict, and/or the possible **impacts** of the conflict.

The ability to recognise conflicts in good time, to influence them such that the damage is limited, and to steer the parties to the conflicts to reach an agreement on solutions, requires a great amount of social skill and life experience.

Role of the Moderator

If some form of mediation is deemed necessary, then conflict management requires professional expertise and a level-headed assessment by the moderator of his/her own role. The task confers prestige and power, but also entails risks.

Possible Ways to Act in Conflict Situations				
	Directed at:	Causes of conflicts	Progress of conflicts	Impacts of conflicts
OBSERVE	Become aware and observe	☹		☹
	Ask questions	☹	☹	
	Observe the areas of conflicts	☹		☹
	Examine the history from different perspectives	☹	☹	
MODERATE	Suggest a dialogue		☹	
	Establish a dialogue	☹	☹	
	Define roles		☹	
	Ascertain expectations		☹	☹
	Share emotions	☹	☹	
	Sound out scope for solutions		☹	
RESOLVE	Elaborate solutions	☹		☹
	Evaluate solutions		☹	☹
	Negotiate solutions		☹	
	Reach agreements or compromises		☹	
	Monitor impacts of agreements			☹

Conflict management aims to establish a process of self-observation among the parties to the conflict, and to halt or reverse the narrowing of perceptions. The role of the moderator shifts along the continuum between the two opposite poles of an **intervention by force**, which might be necessary under certain circumstances, and an **observational role of process facilitation**. Between the two lies the role of providing intermediary services and consultancy on request.

Repackaged by:
Antonio B. Quizon

Adapted from:
GTZ, 1996. *Process Monitoring: Work Document for Project Staff*.

Revised: KAPA MODEL is a PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP DEVELOPED by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDIAP), South East Asian Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLINI), MYRADA and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR).

Getting around the Limits to Participation



What is a System?

- A system is an entity that maintains its existence and functions as a whole through the interaction of its parts.
- Single atoms, cells, organs, organisms, families, projects, societies, the earth, the solar system and the universe are all systems.
- In essence, we are systems who live in a world of systems.
- The behaviour of a system is more than equal to the sum of its parts and interactions. **Change the structure and the behaviour changes.** Hence, we cannot break a system in two and expect to find two smaller but fully functional systems akin to the larger one; we get two damaged heaps. The arrangement of the parts is also crucial; they are connected and work together.



Participation within Systems

Participation must be understood within the perspective of the environment in which an initiative operates. Stakeholders will behave differently depending on the system they find themselves in. Certain structures enable participation, while others make it challenging or even impossible. Several factors limit participation. The key to sustaining stakeholder interest in any development initiative lies in robust analysis of the environment and locating areas of leverage. Enabling participation requires creative solutions.



In development work, a project can be considered as a system. A multilateral/bilateral project as a system is different from a project run solely by a non-government organisation (NGO); other contrasts are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Government partner | ◆ NGO partner |
| Women | ◆ Men |
| Indian village | ◆ Andean-Peruvian village |
| Empowerment projects | ◆ Agricultural development projects |
| Hierarchical organisation | ◆ Matrix/decentralised organisation |
| Armies | ◆ Country clubs |

Participation relates to interrelationships between various actors in a system.

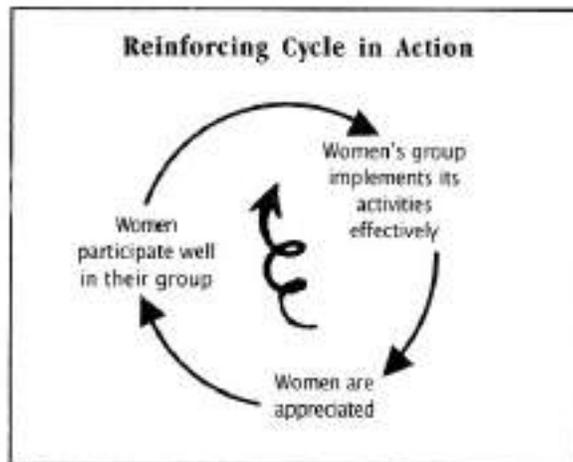
Systems Behave in Typical Ways

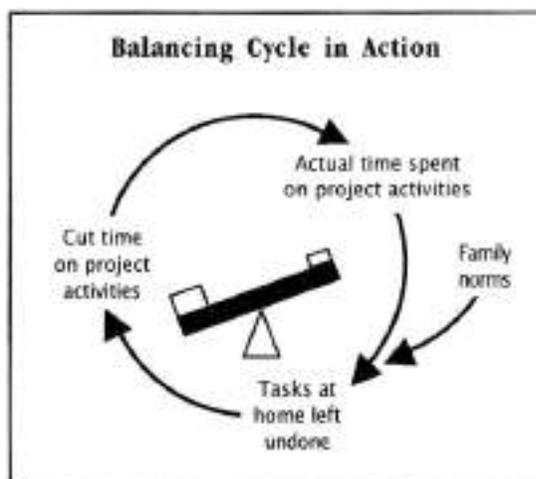
Systems display typical behaviour consisting of reinforcing cycles, balancing cycles and delays.

Reinforcing cycles

Reinforcing cycles are processes that move uncontrollably in set directions and are commonly called virtuous or vicious cycles, snowballing effects, or chain reactions. Often, systems in the development context also exhibit this behaviour.

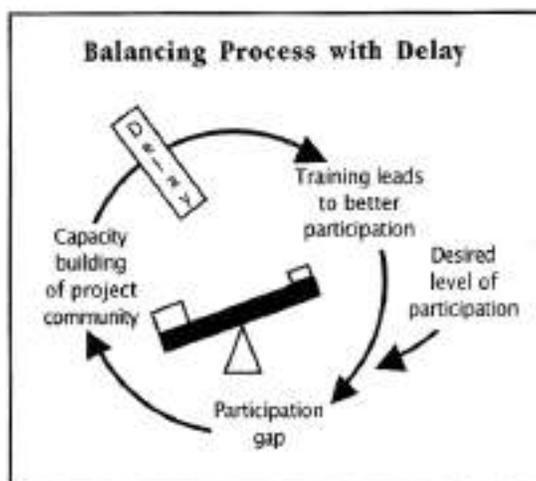
Let us take a simple example in participation. A group of women, if involved in a project, feel elated and confident of implementing activities. Therefore, they perform well and build their confidence further. This is an obvious case of participation leading to more participation.





Balancing cycles

Nature loves a balance. Systems do not like runaway processes. They find their own equilibrium. Therefore, any process will encounter a limiting factor and slow down. Such processes ensure stability and resilience in this world. A system has its own implicit goal, e.g., keeping to traditions (stability) in society. Men may not want to share power or work with women. If women spend more time on project activities, some of their work at home will either be left undone or will fall on the men. This may lead to conflict. Women who find that taking care of their reproductive and nurturing roles must be done to keep peace at home will cut down their involvement in project activities.



Delays

Cause and effect are separated in time. A headache vanishes 20 minutes after taking an aspirin. But delays raise doubts and reduce interest; if extended, they result in knee-jerk reactions. For example, if the aspirin takes a whole day to cure a headache, we are tempted to take more for quick relief, but then we are unsure of what really cured the headache. Development projects also encounter time lags between activities and benefits. If a project perceives that the level of participation in the community is low, it may invest more in capacity-building programmes. After a while participation improves, but the delay raises questions of attribution. Was it really the project's training that helped improve participation or was it media influence?

The Language of Systems: Recurring Themes

Reinforcing cycles, balancing cycles and delays work in various combinations to produce systems archetypes. The basic archetypes are limits to growth and shifting the burden. The archetypes could in turn combine to form more complex ones.

Limits to growth

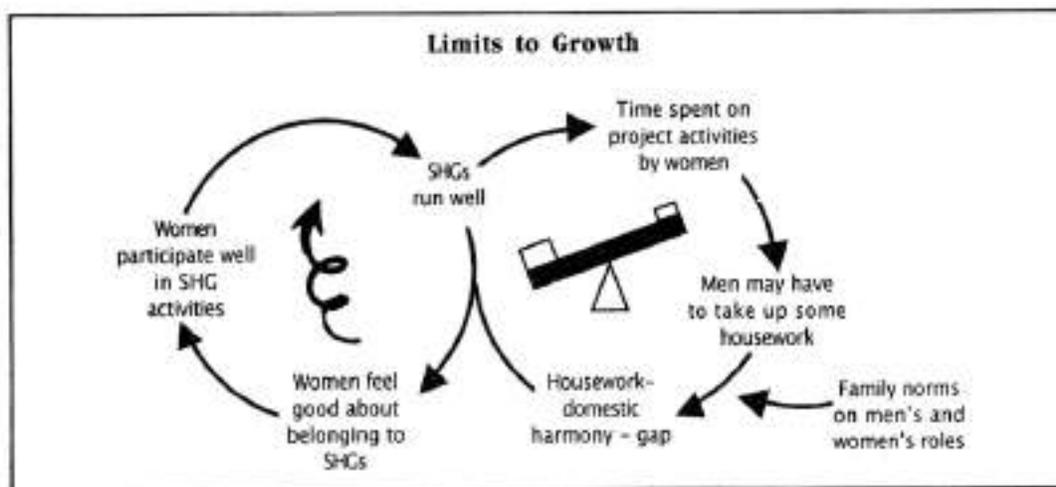
A poor farmer discovers the use of chemical fertilisers. The more he uses them, the greater the yield. Three years later, he realises that yields have dropped. He increases the fertiliser dosage, but finds the crops charred. There are limits to growth. Crop yields cannot go up with indiscriminate use! Could the farmer opt for integrated nutrient management?

Other Systems Archetypes



- Tragedy of commons
- Fixes that fail
- Escalation
- Growth and under investment
- Success to be successful

Similarly, processes in development, once started, take off quickly, but soon they plateau and sometimes drop. Typical examples are participation of women in project activities and replication of certain development models.

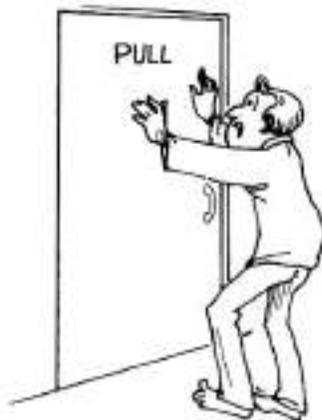


Example of Limits to Growth			
Growing Action	Condition	Slowing Action	Limiting Condition
Participation in self-help groups (SHGs)	Better functioning SHGs	Time taken off for housework	Family norms regarding women's and men's roles
Women's interest to develop income-generating activities (IGAs)	Increased incomes from IGAs	Slow movement of goods produced	Women's capacities to market goods
Participatory natural resources management	Healthier environment/ better livelihoods	Slow pace of activities/ no critical mass of uptakers	Capital availability/lack of clear titles on land/ social structures
Participation in multilateral projects	Better project management	Uncoordinated effort	Compartmentalisation of roles/adversarial attitudes
Bickering partners (this is a vicious cycle)	Project collapses	Joint reflection workshops	Commitment to project (prevents its downfall)

Even in the most beneficial interventions, there will be obstacles. Members of SHGs realise that they cannot spend more than a certain amount of time on the activities of their group without resistance from family or society in general. The reinforcing cycle—participation leading to more participation—will have to deal with the amount of free time they have. Participation in other meetings or training programmes may suffer.

Normal reactions of the development agency

When the women in SHGs do not spend enough time on group activities, the project schedule suffers, the staff panic and quite obviously try to improve participation by various means; e.g., incentives are given to attend training programmes, subsidies are given to groups, staff call women from their houses to the group meetings, etc. These measures may work up to a point, but growth never really peaks.



Management principle for limits to growth

Do not push growth; remove the factors limiting them.

Changing men's (or the family's) attitudes may be the key to increasing women's participation. Attitudes may change eventually as tangible benefits from the women's membership in the SHG reach the family. Simply pushing participation may only force women to drop out or retard their own initiative. In some projects, the design of various institutions may need to be reviewed.

Why is it tough to address the limiting factor?

The leverage in limits to growth comes from effectively tackling the limiting conditions. But these are very often subtle and definitely hard to break. Also, once we clear a set of limiting factors, we are bound to encounter another. In human systems (families, societies, organisations), these limiting factors have often to do with the mind. People's beliefs (mental models) about possibilities, roles and sanctioned behaviour need to be looked at. We need paradigm shifts.

Shifting the burden

Farmers use pesticides on crops to protect them. But pesticides also destroy natural controls. The pests come back stronger and in larger numbers, and higher doses of pesticides are used. Everything is ruined. When a project manager finds that participation of the community is lower than desired, the "participation experts" are called in. Project staff continue to work in non-participatory ways but begin to feel that "participation" is for the NGOs/'participation experts' only and not for them. The problem remains; the situation has become worse.

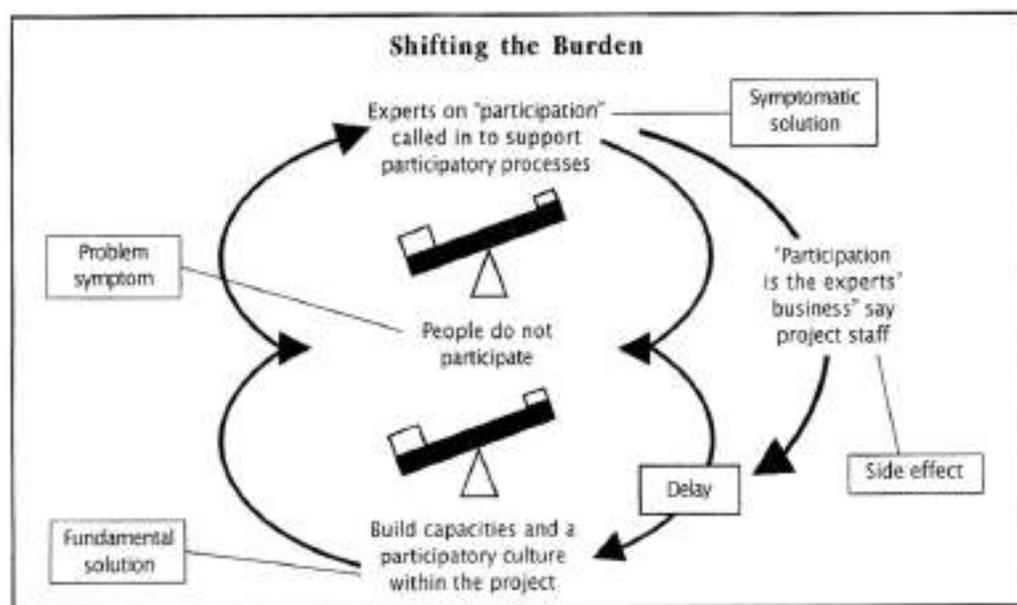
Management principle of "shifting the burden"

Symptomatic measures may provide short-term relief, but problems only get worse over time. Gradually, we may find ourselves incapable of taking up fundamental solutions.

In the shifting-the-burden scenario, a two-pronged solution is required.

1. Strengthen the fundamental response (build a participatory culture in the project itself and train project staff in participatory processes)
2. Weaken the symptom response ("So, let's avoid the consultant this time and try it out ourselves!").

To find solutions in shifting-the-burden archetypes requires a shared vision among all stakeholders, long-term orientation as well as skills to analyse clearly the cause-and-effect relationships. Finding root causes is difficult; that's why the shifting-the-burden archetype is so common in life. But participation itself may support the rigorous analysis required to deal with this. Also, there could be more than one solution in any scenario.



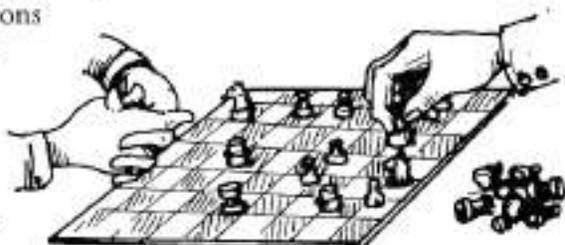
Other Examples of Shifting the Burden in Development			
Problem Symptom	Symptomatic solution	Side Effect	Fundamental solutions? There cannot be just one of them...
Low attendance at SHG meetings	Staff personally call the meeting	SHG loses initiative	Training/counselling, deeper analysis of women's time and timing of the meeting?
Lack of capital in poor households	Subsidies and grants to poor households	Dependency on outsiders	Credit and savings programmes? Institution building?
Project partners do not see eye to eye	Remove some of them	Mistrust develops in other partners	Dialogue? Change the institutional structure of the project?
Many poor do not participate in the village meeting	Put some on the executive committee of the village association	The well-to-do leave, but their participation is also crucial	Sensitisation? Capacity-building of the poor? Institutional representation of the poor?
Household incomes do not increase	Reduce project's standards for achievement	Lesser efforts by project commensurate with new standards	Study livelihood options in more detail? Study market?

The Choice of Solutions

When we encounter problems in our work, we often resort to symptomatic relief measures. Working on symptoms often makes the underlying problem worse as the side effects may add to the intensity of the problem. Fundamental solutions need to be found.

Structure influences behaviour

Limits to participation could arise due to social and institutional structures, capacities of all stakeholders to work in participatory arrangements, abilities to analyse, synthesise and find solutions; expectations (implicit or explicit); fatigue or any other. They are a part of the system in which the project functions. To know the system and to find the leverage in our work is a challenge that requires continuous learning and application. It is like a tough game of chess! It requires us to learn and act together in ways that are not ordinary.

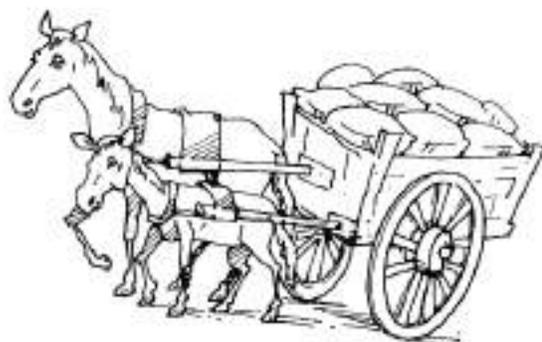


The weakest link

A system is as good as its weakest part. In larger development contexts, institutionalising participatory processes could be a place to start. We should look at areas under capacity-building and advocacy too. Can the quality of relationships between various stakeholders be addressed?

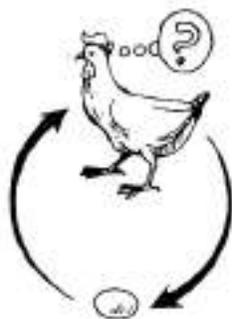
Too good to be true?

An equitable distribution of capacities between constituent parts supports a system better. How can we build these capacities? We may need to invest on good institutional designs to enhance participation.



The key influence

It is useful to target the part that influences the system the most ("opinion leaders", ministers, "head offices", clerks, children, parents, teachers, husbands and mothers-in-law). The experts say that the mind is a good place to start. But in systems, we must be prepared for surprises.

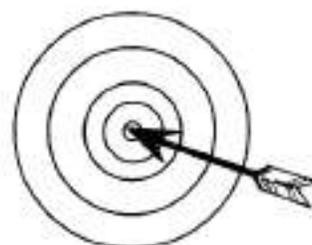


Thinking in circles

There are no linear relations in systems. Cause-and-effect relationships are circular. Learning how relationships work is key to finding leverage. The dynamic nature of interventions becomes obvious when we see the connections to learning and action, participation and capacity-building, participatory organisations and their effectiveness on the field.

Being proactive

We must envision the changes in the system, and project our “feel” into the future. We must see the possibilities before they happen. But in getting the facts right we must work effectively. Monitoring our situation and making sense of all the reams of paper requires the ability to see the big picture and collective effort. Participation itself could help get that complete picture.



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Prepared by:
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Research was supported by a participatory development grant from the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANCOC), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), South East Asian Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN), MYRADA and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IRR).

Creating Spaces for Partnerships to Work: NGO Involvement in Multilateral/Bilateral Projects



This paper is based on the experiences of MYRADA, a well-known Indian NGO, in partnering with the government in several multilateral/bilateral projects. It represents an NGO viewpoint.

Traditionally, multilateral/bilateral (M/B) agency partnerships have been with in-country governments (national/local) to include NGOs in joint partnership agreements and transform a dyadic partnership into a triadic one is a fairly recent development. Such projects now have three sets of interveners:

1. M/B agency;
2. in-country government; and
3. NGO partner.

Prerequisites for Successful Multilateral/Bilateral Partnerships

Critical to the success of M/B partnerships is the belief that they are preferred because of the comparative advantages that each partner can bring into the programme. It is important that all three partners share this belief. More specifically, it requires that the partnership be governed by certain conditions:

- That each partner recognises and respects the advantages that the other partners bring to the programme.
- That one intervener does not “muscle-in” to take the lead in an area where another intervener has proven expertise.
- That all interveners interact frequently and at all levels with one another to exchange feedback on programmes and resolve issues that arise during the project cycle.

NGO-Government Partnerships

NGO partnerships with governments are at times viewed critically as a strategy that makes the NGO vulnerable to being “co-opted” by the government. It is important, therefore, to make distinctions between:

- partnerships where NGOs are contracted (usually, though not always) through a “bidding” process to deliver certain goods and services; and
- partnerships where NGOs are sought out because of the particular advantages that they can bring to a programme in terms of experience and skills.

Although the former may make the NGO vulnerable to “co-option”, it is assumed that the latter are guided by the intention of taking advantage of the cutting edge of the NGO rather than neutralising it.

Other critical prerequisites to achieving synergy that should be fostered within all three interveners, include:

- the ability to absorb and institutionalise participatory strategies;
- organisational support for flexibility and innovation; and
- transparent work processes.

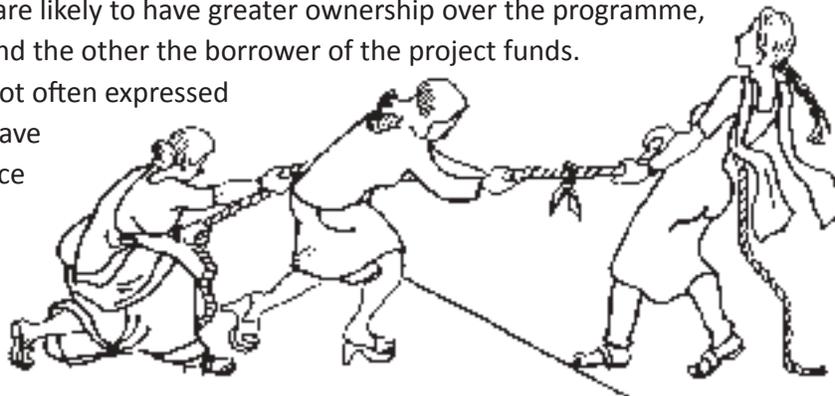
These attributes do not come easily – they must be fostered over a period of time. This calls for leadership of a high order in all the partners – one that has respect for collaborative relationships and a willingness to learn from them; leadership with vision, experience and commitment.

The Reality Today – Unequal Partnerships?

In most partnerships, however, project management structures and systems are set up mainly by the government in consultation with the M/B agency; the NGO partner has little say in them. The structures and systems, therefore, are conditioned by the organisational culture and operating norms of only two of these partners. Project functioning is conditioned by the pressures that the two interveners have to cope with – both from within their own systems and from the wider context within which they are placed. There are other characteristics of partnerships that are not inclusive of the NGO and which make the NGO an unequal partner in the triadic relationship:

- There are direct communication channels between the M/B agency and the government between the government and the NGO but not between the M/B agency and the NGO.

- Governments and M/B agencies have a long tradition of working together, leading to the growth of relationships and of a good understanding of one another. NGOs who are new entrants to the partnership still have to establish their status.
- M/B agencies and governments work within the context of sovereign agreements that locate their relationship in a particular project within the broader context of mutual over-arching interests. NGOs do not share the same background and do not understand it very well.
- Governments and M/B agencies are likely to have greater ownership over the programme, since one of them is the lender and the other the borrower of the project funds. Government's position (though not often expressed in so many words) is that NGOs have no right to space of their own since they have no obligation to repay.

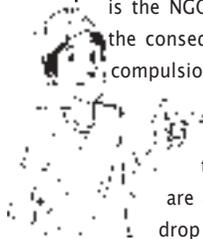


At the operational level, the NGO's "different-ness" is further emphasised by:

- Its exclusion from meetings between the M/B agency and government, except those where "NGO issues" are the subject of discussion.
- Its preference for (time consuming) participatory processes as against a straightforward delivery of materials, subsidies and services.

Tenures and Distortions

In M/B programmes, it is not uncommon for borrowing governments to give in to political compulsions and short-term interests in the investment of funds. Reviews are based on quarterly targets achieved, funds spent, and beneficiaries reached. Although quality aspects are discussed, they are not measured as often, or as regularly. Senior level government staff are often transferred. It is the NGO staff, the bank staff and lower level government staff, who face the consequences of distortions resulting from decisions taken under political compulsions and to promote short term interests. For example, the World Bank supported drinking water project in Karnataka included several villages that already had enough water for their needs. Refusing to contribute to the programme, one group of villagers said "You are offering food to someone who is already too full to eat". Yet to drop these villages was to challenge political choices and the NGO was criticised for not motivating the villagers to contribute.



Meeting the Challenges of Participation

Participation is a concept that is subject to a variety of interpretations. A truly participative strategy influences all stages of the project cycle, places empowerment above other project objectives and focuses on building local people's institutions with the specific objective of handing over the lead to them. The demands of such a strategy can often be uncomfortable and disturbing. It is not enough that planners accustomed to traditional planning tools start getting more comfortable with the newer and more participatory tools; it is not enough that "beneficiaries" are enjoined to become more aware and contribute to the planning process (participation after planning is quite well accepted). For participation to be effective – especially in a society where a small number of people hold economic, social and political power – requires structural changes in the socio-economic relations within society. This structural change is what the interveners must be prepared to address. To facilitate this, interventions often become necessary in the organisational culture and systems of the interveners themselves. Otherwise, one may foster participation up to a certain level and withdraw from meeting the challenges it generates.



- Its inability to understand the need of governments to standardise structures, systems and schemes irrespective of variations in local conditions.
- Its willingness to put faith (and funds) in “informal” institutions without insisting that they acquire a legal status through registration: an obligation that serves little purpose but seems to enhance their credibility in the eyes of other institutions, particularly governments.

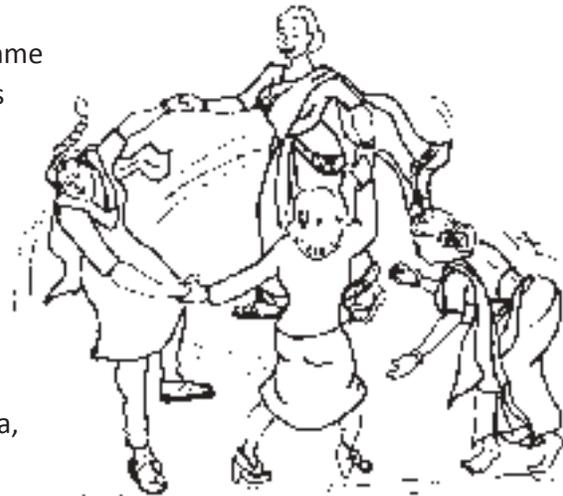
Creating Synergy in Multilateral/Bilateral Partnerships: A Few Operational Suggestions

Experience indicates that it is possible to create more synergetic partnerships between the NGO, the M/B agency, and the government. How does this happen? Synergy stands a better chance if:

- The organisational structure at the interface between the three partners has a blend of government and non-government staff, with different experience and expertise. This helps build stable working relationships. These staff must be assured of longer tenures – thereby ensuring a longer duration of accountability and commitment to the project, its outcomes and impacts.
- Emphasis is given to the capacity-building aspects of the programme (this includes staff of the NGO and the government at all levels as well as people's institutions). This requires at least a year of preparation before funds are disbursed. Capacity-building must focus on enabling a more consultative style of functioning, clearer job descriptions and transfer of skills needed for the job.
- Governments and M/B agencies are prepared to explore alternate funding and implementation logistics such as working through special institutions set up for the project purpose (e.g., District Societies in the North-east, India and KAWAD in Karnataka, India) or working through Development Corporations, etc.
- The pressure to disburse funds and achieve physical/numerical targets is balanced with greater emphasis on quality indicators (e.g., equity, empowerment, productivity). All parties must agree in advance that strong sanctions will be applied when these objectives are given low priority.
- All communication is open and documents are shared with all stakeholders. During supervision missions, workshops may be conducted in the project area in which all stakeholders participate.
- Dissemination of the results of all workshops helps improve communication to a large extent.

Consistency in Review Mission Feedback

A peculiar problem is created by review and supervision missions wherein one Mission makes suggestions contrary to those suggested by the previous mission. There must be consistency of thinking on how a project is expected to work.



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Mapping of NGO Initiatives: Building from Existing Experiences



Multilateral development agencies often seek the involvement of local non-government organisations (NGOs) in their programmes and projects in collaboration with government. In involving NGOs, many multilateral agencies and governments have utilised them as:

- sources of independent feedback and information;
- sources of innovation and experimentation;
- alternative delivery channels of development services, or as “change” facilitators in mobilising target poverty groups.

Distinct Abilities of NGOs

The built-in flexibility, complemented by committed staff and orientation to grassroots participation, have often been cited as the main strengths of NGOs. Yet, when it comes to implementing large-scale, public sector programmes, the comparative advantage of NGOs (i.e., capacity to scale-up, cost-effectiveness) has been much debated – notwithstanding the few exceptional “NGO star-varieties” that are often cited in development literature.

In terms of project implementation, a comparative review between government-led and NGO-led programmes (in the Philippines) shows that the niche of NGOs lies in two distinct abilities:

- First, the ability of NGOs for “nuancing” – that is, their ability to adapt programmes to specific local conditions or target groups. In the process, NGOs not only implement, but also experiment and innovate. In contrast, government-led programmes tend to be based on generalised “standards” (e.g., the conditions in a “typical” community, common perceptions of problems) and to apply standard delivery systems and procedures. Centrally-planned programmes are designed with *all* communities in mind, and *not* any *single* community. The need for “nuancing” is most pronounced, for instance, in work among different tribal or indigenous communities.
- Second, NGO participation is especially crucial when project outcomes (their post-intervention sustainability) depend heavily on community ownership of a project. An example is that of a community forestry project where upland communities are organised (and are expected) to undertake forest protection and resource management long after the project is completed.

However, successful collaboration with NGOs can only take place where governments create an enabling environment which encourages their formation and active involvement in development efforts.

Criteria for Selection of NGOs

Invariably, multilateral development agencies use three broad criteria for identifying NGOs with whom cooperation is desirable.

■ Skill and capacity

NGOs with a proven track record, the necessary administrative and operational capacities, and the desired thematic, sectoral or geographical expertise.

■ Governance

NGOs that are reliable and well-managed, well-developed in terms of accountability and transparency, with built-in participatory management, and free of nepotism.

Restrictive Policy Environments

In Asian countries, government policy restrictions against NGOs take several forms, for example:

- Anti-human-rights policies (against basic freedoms of speech and association)
- Non-recognition, or strict registration and accreditation requirements for NGOs
- National Security Acts, Internal Security Acts
- Stringent controls against foreign funding

Other constraints come in the existing social environment at the local level, for example:

- Internal conflicts
- Dominance by well-entrenched local elites
- Religious and cultural restrictions
- Criminality
- Attitudes of local officials

In restrictive policy environments, many NGOs may even refuse to be identified.

■ **Legitimacy and credibility**

NGOs that are acceptable to the target group and their organisations, with knowledge of the local situation and the target community, able and willing to dialogue with government and local power structures, with the necessary legal status, and that legitimately represent target beneficiaries or development interests.

■ **Other donor criteria**

There are two other (often, unstated) criteria used by multilateral development agencies in selecting NGOs – which NGOs themselves tend to question. These are outlined in the box below.

Donor Criteria	NGO Arguments/Views
"Acceptable to the government"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This criterion is unacceptable to NGOs. Often, NGOs who work for social change encounter problems with government officials and the local elite.
"Preference for developmental rather than advocacy NGOs"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The categories may not apply to grassroots NGOs, who integrate both advocacy and field operations. Thus, what is more important is to ensure that the issues being advocated are directly linked to field action and realities. ■ Advocacy NGOs have an important role in the project cycle (beyond direct service-delivery and project implementation) as independent sources of information and feedback. ■ Advocacy NGOs tend to be more articulate and visible. Thus special efforts must be made to identify and involve grassroots NGOs and SHGs. 

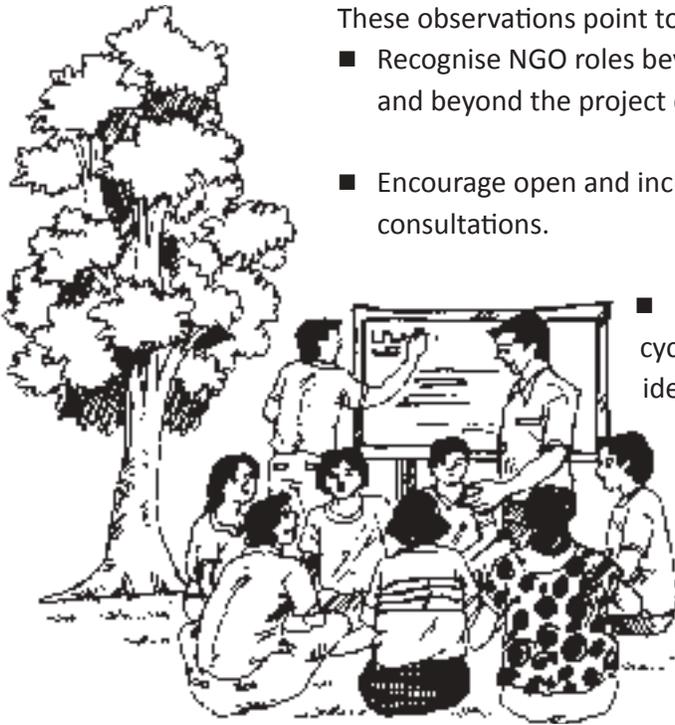
General Considerations for Promoting Cooperation with NGOs

Successful collaboration with NGOs depends on much more than the selection of capable NGOs and the preparation of an acceptable workplan. Two underlying facts about NGOs need to be considered:

1. NGOs often evolve in the context of social or grassroots movements as both critiques and alternatives to the top-down approaches of government;
2. People often create or join NGOs precisely to escape the stifling bureaucracy of the government system.

These bring about three working principles:

1. NGOs are likely to continue to take a critical stance, even within the context of a collaboration with government, performing their roles as watchdogs or as public interest groups.
2. NGOs are likely to resist attempts that fit them into pre-determined roles where they feel that their flexibility, autonomy and independence are compromised (non-cooptation).
3. The ideal relationship is one of equal partnership.



These observations point to the following needs:

- Recognise NGO roles beyond their service-delivery functions – both within and beyond the project cycles.
- Encourage open and inclusive processes, such as public dialogues and consultations.
- Involve NGOs in other phases of the project cycle, especially during the early phases of project identification, formulation and appraisal.
- Ensure public access to information.
- Institute forms of direct feedback, beyond the usual monitoring reports, and inform NGOs on how their feedback is being addressed.

Practical Problems in Identifying NGOs/NGO Initiatives

NGOs come in all shapes and sizes. Thus, the identification, screening and selection of NGOs are practical issues often raised by project officers. Specific concerns include:

- where to find reliable data on NGOs, particularly at the grassroots, due to the general lack of systematic information at country level;
- how to develop NGO selection criteria;
- how to distinguish development NGOs from “quasi-NGOs”; and
- how to find the right NGO for specific target sectors or project areas.

NGO Hybrid Varieties

NGOs often monitor their own ranks and have developed monickers for different “hybrid types”, as follows:

- GRINGOs: Government-Initiated NGOs
- CONGOs: Consultancy firm NGOs
- BINGOs: Business and Industry NGOs
- COME 'N GOs: “fly by night” NGOs
- NGIs: Non-governmental individuals

Mapping of NGO Initiatives

NGO mapping consists of a collection of brief institutional profiles of NGOs and self-help groups (SHGs) within a given target sector or target area. It shows the resources and self-help initiatives that already exist, and identifies which could serve as “building blocks” for development interventions. This could be undertaken as part of the existing project cycle.

Mapping exercises of NGOs have been undertaken for different purposes, at many stages of the project cycle. Some experiences are detailed in the next pages.

Some NGO Selection Criteria

- A farmer- or community-based approach to “delivery” or “extension”
- A focus on empowerment or building of local institutional capacity
- Broad actual coverage achieved in terms of target communities and groups
- Locally-recognised for its success and potential by peers in the NGO community



1. Country assistance strategies

- Documenting NGO initiatives with a potential for scaling up. Pilots rarely go to scale. Innovation and scaling-up are often separate processes. While designers hope that government or local people will replicate successful model programmes, scaling-up often remains largely rhetoric. Once the “book is published”, the “award is given”, or the “conference is held”, successes tend to be forgotten. While successes are very informative and sometimes inspiring, others tend to want to do things their own way. Identifying NGO innovations can lead to new project designs. Existing NGO initiatives with “capacity for scaling-up”, can be documented and used as the basis for the design of new projects. This also serves another purpose – i.e., as a counter-balance to government project proposal submissions and emphasis on top-down service delivery.

2. Project identification and formulation

- **Mapping of existing NGOs working within a target sector and/or area, e.g., as part of environmental scanning.**

Project identification and formulation missions tend to overlook the existing work of NGOs and SHGs. Individual NGO initiatives may be small and scattered but their efforts are often locally networked in some formal or informal way. Most grassroots NGOs shun “big-ness”, and prefer networking as the mode to achieve a level of scale and impact.

The mapping of local initiatives often requires the assistance of a knowledgeable local NGO or network. It may be done as part of the terms of reference (TORs) of project missions, or separately, as external inputs into missions. NGO-mapping exercises can be done through individual and group interviews, or with the use of “web-mapping” exercises.



3. Project appraisal

- **Making an inventory or directory of NGOs, for identifying potential sources of information, and understanding the local development context.**

Unlike project identification missions who come with broader development perspectives, project formulation and appraisal missions are often composed of technical specialists and consultants from different fields (e.g., livestock, credit, agroforestry, institutions, etc.). On 3-4 week missions, these external experts have little time to acquaint themselves with the local situation, so they tend to focus narrowly on their specific fields of expertise and interest.

At the point of project formulation and appraisal, NGOs are valuable sources of information and experience – especially for understanding the local context, the existing power structures and relationships, and what works/ doesn't work within the local community setting. NGOs could also arrange visits to local projects and communities, to give a clearer understanding and appreciation of micro-level realities.

4. Project start-up and implementation

Pre-screening of NGOs and identification of potential partners.

Knowledge of the local NGO sector requires certain investments of staff and resources over time.

NGOs often make the following three main observations:

- the project, itself, must explore broader parameters for cooperation with NGOs beyond the usual sub-contracting arrangements;
- the NGOs, themselves often do their own self-selection and tend to work out compromises among themselves; and
- the NGOs, themselves, should actively participate in drawing up criteria for cooperators, as well as the “terms of engagement” with the project.

Identifying Potential Cooperators

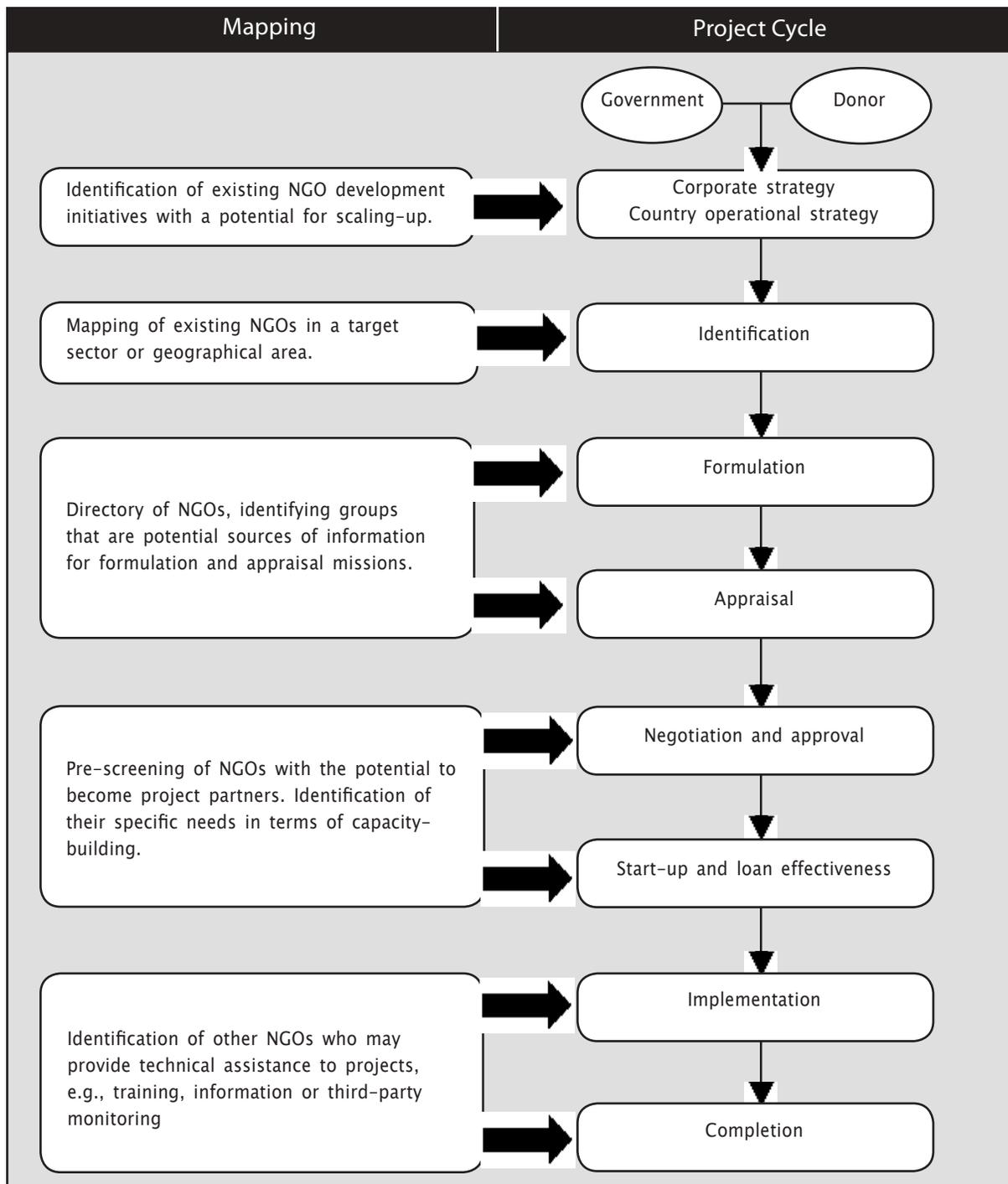
In identifying potential project cooperators, a combination of approaches may be used:

- NGO networks may be consulted as initial sources of information – to identify potential partners, or to provide lead contacts.
- As a starting point, existing databases could be used as initial references. For specific geographical areas, however, identification is best done on-site.
- Where few or no NGOs operate in a given area, other institutions may be tapped (i.e., universities, research and training institutions, farmers associations, village development councils). Sometimes, it is useful to tap NGOs operating in neighbouring districts or provinces, using the project as a means for NGOs to expand their scope for services.
- In some countries, it has been an increasing practice to engage the services of NGO networks for NGO selection and accreditation, project coordination and monitoring. Even where NGOs have been contracted on an individual basis, they have tended to band together to create their own project-based “sub-networks”.



NGO Mapping in the Project Cycle

In summary, various types of NGO mapping may be introduced in different phases of the project cycle.



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Prepared by:
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Learning Participation from NGO Experiences in Asia



Participatory approaches have gained increasing acceptance in official development cooperation over the last few years. Often rooted in the self-help and community development tradition of non-government organisations (NGOs) and self-help groups (SHGs), these approaches emphasise decentralised decision-making, joint learning and an orientation towards action and process. Development is seen as empowering people to help themselves and to participate in decisions which affect their lives. The people themselves, their needs and capabilities, are the focus of the approach, rather than the funding and operational procedures or the organisational realities of external agencies.

Most NGOs see development as empowering people to help themselves and to allow their communities to influence initiatives and decisions which affect their lives.

Among NGOs, participatory approaches are seen as more than just a new set of methods and techniques. NGOs emphasise the importance of changes in personal values, reversal of roles and institutional re-orientation, especially for the external agent or development agency.

What particular lessons, methods and approaches from NGO experiences in participation might be useful and relevant to a multilateral development agency? What exactly can be learned or adopted

from NGO experiences? How could such experiences be integrated into a project cycle? In the Asian context, these lessons can be grouped into three main categories:

1. **Strategies and approaches**, including: community-organising strategies, networking, the building and mobilisation of SHGs, and alternative development approaches that emphasise various forms of community empowerment.
2. **Practical skills, including facilitation**, negotiations and the handling of public consultations.
3. **Methods and tools**, such as the range of field-tested PRA practices and methods.

Learning Areas from NGO Experiences in Participation

Multilateral agencies might find it relevant to examine and learn from NGO experiences along the following five broad themes:

Learning Areas/Themes	NGO Experience
I. Participation in Policy Formulation	
<p>Civil society initiatives and participation in the formulation of development strategies</p> 	<p>NGO initiatives in the formulation of development strategies, utilising a broad-based participatory approach. These include area development planning or sectoral planning work involving primary stakeholders or influencing country assistance strategies of bilateral and multilateral institutions. Of interest here, are the methods and processes involved in data-gathering, analysis and consensus-building; GO-NGO policy consultations; experiences in the creation and functioning of joint GO-NGO policy bodies.</p>
II. Participation in the Project Cycle	
<p>Stakeholder participation in the project identification, appraisal and design process</p> 	<p>PRA poverty diagnosis; identification of target groups; local needs assessments; pre-appraisal studies; GO-NGO project consultations and workshops; joint project designing; participation in official project formulation and appraisal missions; negotiations; influencing the attitudes of officials and bureaucrats.</p>
<p>Enhancing stakeholder and beneficiary participation in project implementation</p> 	<p>Decentralised systems for project implementation, project delivery and decision-making; GO-NGO institutional working arrangements; participatory implementation; the role of beneficiaries in decision-making; capacity-building for local institutions; participatory approaches to scaling up local initiatives; developing local ownership within projects.</p>

Learning Areas/Themes	NGO Experience
<p>Beneficiary monitoring and impact assessments</p> 	<p>Methods, tools, systems and approaches for introducing beneficiary monitoring and impact assessments among poor communities and creating institutionalised systems for community feedback and response. Of specific interest here, are approaches for developing meaningful impact indicators; identifying primary stakeholders; building community capacity for local-level participatory planning and monitoring</p>
<h3>III. Working with Special Target Groups</h3>	
<p>Enhancing participation among particular target groups</p> 	<p>Enhancing and developing meaningful participation among particular target groups, especially rural women, landless and migrant rural workers, shifting cultivators, indigenous peoples, coastal fisherfolk communities, discriminated castes, internally displaced people, and the informal sector. Of special interest here, are practical tools and approaches in: (a) targeting development interventions; (b) overcoming specific cultural, religious and institutional constraints; (c) motivating, animating and sustaining interest and participation among the different target groups; and (d) negotiating and resolving conflicts at the local level.</p>
<h3>IV. Working within “Problematic” Contexts</h3>	
<p>Promoting participation in restricted policy environments</p> 	<p>Introducing beneficiary and stakeholder participation within restricted policy environments, in areas with authoritarian or highly centralised governance structures, or in situations of conflict. Key items of interest include: identifying the “right” project partners; dealing with public officials; developing decentralised project designs and motivating primary stakeholders. Adopting the best practices for negotiation, facilitation and advocacy.</p>
<h3>V. Learning from NGO and Community Innovations</h3>	
<p>Initiatives and participatory approaches in the mobilisation of target groups</p> 	<p>The ability to mobilise and empower communities is a distinct strength often cited of NGOs and people’s organisations. Of special interest here are experiences that highlight: (a) how local initiatives are multiplied or scaled up to achieve broader coverage and impact; (b) approaches to community motivation, education and local resource mobilisation; (c) innovative organisational systems and structures; (d) enhancing self-help and local initiatives; and (f) the use of alternative media.</p>
<p>Participatory initiatives and approaches in agricultural development and resource management</p> 	<p>NGOs and people’s organisations have undertaken various initiatives in agricultural development and resource management. NGOs utilise participatory approaches that depart from the existing paradigms and top-down formulas of highly centralised official bodies. These include innovations in, e.g., farmer-based extension, community-based resource management, environmental education and protection; agroforestry, forest resource protection and rehabilitation; watershed development; community-based health and education; local governance systems; agricultural research and development; fisheries development; promotion of agrarian reforms; resource and tenurial rights; dealing with resource conflicts.</p>

Constraints to Adopting from NGO Experience

In the view of multilateral agencies there are many constraints to adopting NGO experiences. Two such limitations commonly cited are: questions of scale and working through governments.

Questions of scale

Most of the NGO successes in participatory approaches have been implemented at the scale of a village or cluster of villages. Thus, donors have raised questions about NGO organisational capacities, the replicability of particular experiences, and the applicability of specific tools when participation is pursued over a broader area or target group.

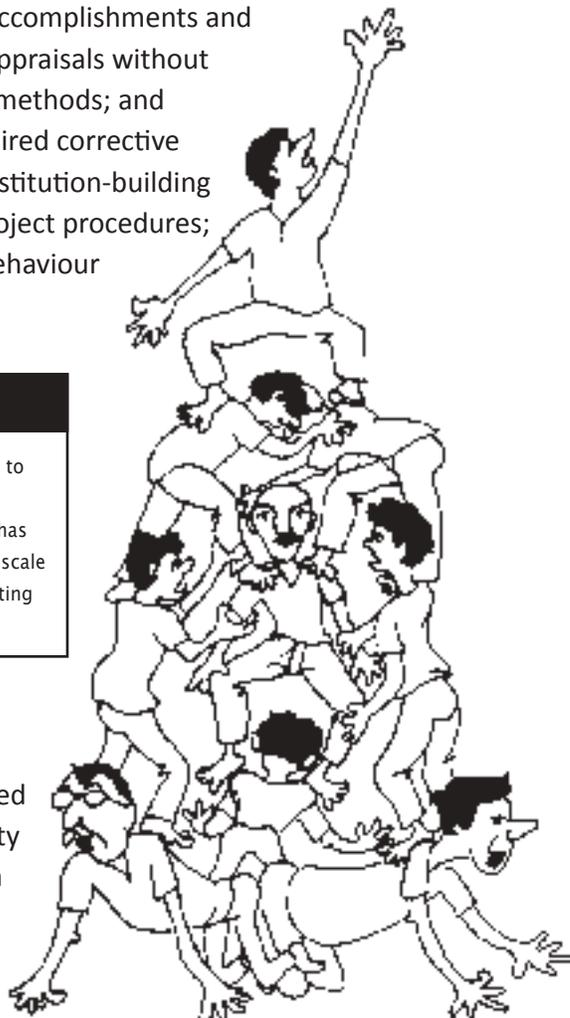
Indeed, many NGOs by choice prefer to make an impact in a small sector or area. Others see their role as piloting developmental innovations rather than scaling-up. On the other hand, many large Asian NGOs have successfully implemented PRA and participatory approaches on a wide scale, especially in forestry, anti-poverty and food security programmes, soil and water conservation, watershed management, water and sanitation, and urban programmes.

Going to scale also necessarily raises concerns about quality – due often to the rush to meet external targets for villages covered, project accomplishments and sums disbursed. The problems include: one-off extractive appraisals without community analysis, planning or action; the routine use of methods; and insensitivity to local cultures and social processes. The required corrective measures include: giving more time for participation and institution-building especially in the early stages of programmes; changes in project procedures; greater flexibility in targets; and giving greater priority to behaviour and attitudes in trainings.

An alternative approach to scaling-up participatory approaches in projects might lie in building on small-scale successes, through existing networking systems since “networks” have been the primary vehicles by which smaller NGOs are able to share skills and resources and scale up their operations. This networking approach has proven useful in carefully designed programmes that emphasise decentralised implementation and decision-making (e.g., targetted poverty alleviation programmes, dispersal schemes, micro-credit on lending schemes, and infrastructure- and service-delivery programmes directed at community-identified priorities). Networking could be institutionalised within project designs.

Networking

An alternative approach to scaling-up participatory approaches in projects has been to build on small-scale successes, through existing systems of networking.



Ultimately, however, the key decision will be where to act in the continuum between the “small and beautiful” and the “big and blotchy”. Small can be secure, personally satisfying and professionally safe, but impact is limited. Seen another way, the question facing NGOs is whether to go for big changes in small programmes, or for small changes in big programmes. Trade-offs between quality, scale and impact have to be part of responsible decisions about where to work, and what to do.

Scaling-up among NGOs

NGOs, such as BRAC, MYRADA and ACTIONAID, have successfully implemented participatory rural appraisal (PRA) on a wide scale. Well-being ranking, for instance, was used by MYRADA in the early 1990s in hundreds of villages in South India, and later by ACTIONAID for a population of 36,000 in Pakistan to identify the poorest and to select and de-select households in poverty programmes. In the Integrated Pest Management Programme in Indonesia where many NGOs were involved, at least 1,500 groups of farmers have made participatory maps which they used to plot the location and prevalence of pests, to plan action and to monitor changes.



Questions of working through governments

Multilateral agencies work through governments and tend to have a reduced role once project implementation begins. The very nature of development assistance affects participation. Often, there is greater flexibility in implementing grant-based technical assistance projects than there is for loan-based financial assistance projects. Loan-based projects which are implemented through (usually steep) hierarchies of borrower-governments have to go through stringent bidding procedures and financial auditing requirements. Thus, questions arise as to the extent to which participatory approaches or NGO involvement can be introduced in the project by multilateral agencies when it is the borrower-government that will take over direct responsibility for implementation.

Benefits of Participatory Approaches to External Developmental Agencies

- More appropriate and timely interventions that fit the needs of the community and users of local facilities
- Better implementation, sustainability and local ownership of project initiatives
- More complete utilisation of services provided
- Greater project efficiency and improved productivity
- Better match between human capabilities and capital investments
- Improved transparency and accountability
- Increased equity and benefit-sharing
- Willingness of local communities to share costs, and awakening of interest in sustaining the benefits
- Strengthened local capacity to initiate other development activities
- Improved learning and greater personal and professional satisfaction on the part of the external agency
- Improved cost-benefit ratio in the long term
- Reduced costs of development programmes



There are major differences between the institutional cultures of NGOs and governments. This must be taken into account when attempting to transfer participatory concepts from one institutional environment to another.

Further, the prevailing policy environment in each country often limits how far relationships can be built between NGOs and the government.

For sure, participatory processes have to be introduced into projects early on in the project cycle, and may need to be strengthened in negotiations with borrower-governments. Lending institutions could play an important role in seeking greater recognition, roles and “democratic space” for NGOs and peoples’ organisations, vis-a-vis government. One option is to introduce participation as a loan conditionality.



Bridging Institutional Cultures

- Major differences between institutional cultures of NGOs and governments must be taken into account when attempting to transfer a new concept from one institutional environment to another.
- It is important to provide for an orientation and training phase for project staff as well as beneficiaries.
- During project start-up, there is a need to invest in “social preparation” and targets for physical achievements should be low.

This may be relevant and useful, but it may not altogether be sufficient. Experience shows that there is a tendency on the part of government implementors to go through the motions of participatory exercises.

It is important to provide for an orientation and training phase for project staff as well as beneficiaries to introduce participatory practices in government-led projects. During project start-up, there will be a need to invest in “social preparation” and initial targets for physical achievements should be low. Otherwise, some people may later use the project as proof that “participation does not work”. Experience also suggests that the use of short-term consultants at this point may be of limited usefulness. Instead, what may be needed are persistent “change agents” coming from outside the project staff who are available over a longer period of time. NGOs within the country could fill in this role.

Presently, most practitioners of PRA and participatory approaches come from NGO backgrounds, and many tend to be overly critical of the attitudes and behaviour of government officials (seen as “wrong”, “too slow” or “unable to change”). While this view might be justifiable, it could also show a lack of willingness on the part of some NGOs to understand and accept people in their present state. Thus, the best framework for moving forward and for building NGO involvement in a participatory government-led project may be to construct it as a “joint learning exercise”. Further, in instances where there have been limited experiences in GO-NGO cooperation, some piloting may be necessary.

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