



UNDP/CSOPP Documents: Empowering People - A Guide to Participation

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Introduction

The notion of 'people's participation' is now widely recognised as a basic operational principle of development programmes and projects. Yet it is a complex process and there are few universal truths, approaches or methodologies. People's participation cannot be merely proclaimed, it has to be promoted. It takes time, resources, understanding and perseverance, but the end result should be a development process which is not exclusively in the control of external professionals but which also involves local people, their representatives, their ideas and their skills and knowledge. People's participation can ensure sustainability, it can make development activities more effective and it can help to build local capacities. But promoting people's participation implies a very different way of working, different approaches and methods and different expectations, and staff at all levels need to be aware of these.

The Guidebook has been prepared as a means to brief and to inform UNDP staff promoting participation in UNDP programmes. It is not an academic text but one which seeks to explain the various dimensions of participation in a way that UNDP staff can build on and develop according to the demands and context of their work. For this reason the text contains few references and no footnotes and can be read easily without these distractions. [Chapter 6](#) at the end provides bibliographic references for those who might wish to explore a particular issue in more detail. The content of the text moves from examining the concept of 'participation', to participatory methods and issues relating to monitoring and evaluation and institutionalisation.

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Chapter 1: The Concept of Participation in Development

1. Historical Background

While the past decade has been dominated by efforts to promote a more participatory approach, the concept of participation in development is not entirely new. By the late 1940s, the early initiatives of development assistance and of planned interventions in underdeveloped countries to promote development and change had commenced. However, it was in the 1950s, and particularly in the 1960s, that these initiatives, via the actions of processes of community development, sought to involve local people in efforts to improve their communities. Community development in the 1960s built the infrastructure of rural and urban communities; it also developed local skills and abilities and encouraged local people to play a part in and to take some responsibility for supporting and implementing a range of physical infrastructure works. Community development at this time also sought to build community-based organisations to serve as vehicles through which local people could get actively involved. It promoted literacy campaigns to enable people to better understand and relate to existing administrative bodies and it sought to generate a sense of cohesiveness and solidarity among community members.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the community development movement flourish and, particularly in Africa and Asia, national programmes sought to build community infrastructure and to break down communities' exclusion from development activities. The style was quite generalised (although in West Africa Animation Rurale was seen as more didactic), and the community development worker was seen as a government official working at the interface between the outside forces of modernisation and the natural conservatism and suspicion of rural communities. Community development did promote communities' involvement but it was for an already agreed purpose. Control was usually exercised externally and communities were seen as contributing to and supporting the national development agenda and not necessarily as being instrumental in determining its content or direction.

While community development as a basic strategy of community involvement persisted into the 1970s, it has largely lost its predominance. Changing analyses and examinations of underdevelopment in the late 1970s and 1980s began to offer different explanations of the causes of people's poverty and to suggest different forms of project design. Poor people were seen as excluded and marginalised both from broader societal participation and also from direct involvement in development initiatives. Simultaneously, development policy makers and planners began to argue for societal level political participation and also to devise strategies whereby poor people could become more directly involved in development efforts. In development terms the last decade or so has been largely dominated by efforts to promote people's participation in development, which would involve a fundamental shift - both in attitudes and in methodology - if it was to break decades of top-down, non-participatory practice. Since the early 1990s the major donor development agencies have put their weight behind and committed resources to promoting participatory development, recognising the problems caused by non-participatory development.

Box 1.1 Non-Participatory Development

- The existing planning procedures for the project are not based on the understanding of the critical ingredients of participation; namely participation in decision making, participation in implementation, participation in benefit sharing and participation in evaluation. When the villagers undertook projects on their own . . . the participation of the local people in terms of all these dimensions was total. But when it came to the planning of activities under the World Bank project, their participation was only partial and limited to the need identification and subsequent implementation of a few rural works projects . . . In most other sectoral activities the participation of the people at the village level was simply non-existent. (Nepal) (Uphoff, 1985)
- In the traditional approach to development it is well known that the administrators of development projects and the beneficiaries do not sit on the same side of the table. In fact they sit at different levels, the former being always at a higher level. What follows, therefore, is quite inevitable. Each looks at each other with suspicion. To the official, the villager is lazy, ignorant, unresourceful and irresponsible. To the villager, the official is conceited, unsympathetic, unconcerned and corrupt. Each does not take the other into his confidence. Instead of getting together they continue to stay apart. (Sri Lanka) (Talagune, 1985)

- Community participation is non-existent. At times the people of a given area are not even informed of project implementation in their area. At other times, after plans are made, the community is informed through formal meetings where the officers justify their plans, but modification is not considered. (Kenya) (Lele, 1975)
- Projects tend to be identified and designed by donors in consultation with central government officials, and the budgets and timetables are planned in a rigid way which make it difficult for the community to play a significant role. The emphasis upon the achievement of physical outputs within a limited period of time and with close supervision and accountability are added difficulties. (Bamberger, 1986)
- Overall, the principles guiding beneficiary participation in Bank-financed projects have been quite abstract and of limited operational impact. Beneficiaries were not assigned a role in the decision-making process, nor was their technological knowledge sought prior to designing project components. (World Bank, 1988)

2. Interpreting Participation

Since the late 1970s there has been a range of interpretations of the meaning of participation in development. The following are a number of examples:

'With regard to rural development . . . participation includes people's involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programmes, their sharing in the benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes.' (Cohen and Uphoff, 1977)

'Participation is concerned with . . . the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control.' (Pearse and Stifel, 1979)

'Community participation [is] an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view of enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish.' (Paul, 1987)

'Participation can be seen as a process of empowerment of the deprived and the excluded. This view is based on the recognition of differences in political and economic power among different social groups and classes. Participation in this sense necessitates the creation of organisations of the poor which are democratic, independent and self-reliant!' (Ghai, 1990)

'Participatory development stands for partnership which is built upon the basis of dialogue among the various actors, during which the agenda is jointly set, and local views and indigenous knowledge are deliberately sought and respected. This implies negotiation rather than the dominance of an externally set project agenda. Thus people become actors instead of being beneficiaries.' (OECD, 1994)

'Participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them.' (World Bank, 1994)

The above reflect the broad nature of a process of participation and the fact that interpretation is linked to an agency's development perspective. There are, therefore, no universal interpretations or models of participation applicable to all development programmes and projects. Many development agencies are now making explicit statements on what they understand by participation and such statements are instrumental in determining strategy and methodology. Cohen and Uphoff's interpretation has had a major influence in terms of identifying the key-stages of the project cycle in which participation could occur: decision-making, implementation, benefits and evaluation. In a different way Pearse and Stifel's interpretation has been similarly influential in suggesting a more structural and political role for participation and not one simply linked to development practice. Both of these interpretations set the tone in the 1980s for a considerable body of participatory practice, which evolved in the 1990s into the notion of stakeholding. Currently much of the debate and practice regarding participation is based upon the concept of stakeholders and the relative importance and

influence that different stakeholders can have on the outcomes of development activities.

We can identify interpretation of participation in two broad and distinct areas of development. The distinctions between these are neither clear-cut nor mutually exclusive, but they do represent two different purposes and approaches to promoting participatory development:

PARTICIPATION as a MEANS: participation is seen as a process whereby local people cooperate or collaborate with externally introduced development programmes or projects. In this way participation becomes the means whereby such initiatives can be more effectively implemented. People's participation is sponsored by an external agency and it is seen as a technique to support the progress of the programme or project. The term 'participatory development' is more commonly used to describe this approach and it implies externally designed development activities implemented in a participatory manner. This approach would appear to be quite widespread and essentially promotes participation as a means of ensuring the successful outcome of the activities undertaken.

PARTICIPATION as an END: participation is seen as a goal in itself. This goal can be expressed as the empowering of people in terms of their acquiring the skills, knowledge and experience to take greater responsibility for their development. People's poverty can often be explained in terms of their exclusion and lack of access to and control of the resources which they need to sustain and improve their lives. Participation is an instrument of change and it can help to break that exclusion and to provide poor people with the basis for their more direct involvement in development initiatives.

The critical issue to bear in mind is that people's participation in development is concerned with two things: i) structural relationships and the importance of developing people's capacities and skills to negotiate and to seek the resources and changes which they require in order to improve their lives; and ii) the methods and techniques whereby local people can be brought to play a part and to develop a stake in development programmes and projects. Both purposes are of equal importance; the former seeks to secure a more longer term and sustainable development for poor people, the latter is crucial in providing immediate access to the benefits of development.

Box 1.2 Interpretations of Participation

Form	Top-Down	Bottom-Up	Function
Nominal Instrumental Representative Transformative	Legitimisation Efficiency Sustainability Empowerment	Inclusion Cost Leverage Empowerment	Display Means Voice Means/Ends (White, 1996)

Box 1.2 synthesises the range of interpretations of participation along a continuum on which participation moves from being merely nominal and representing little meaningful or direct involvement in development; to a transformative participation which results in people's empowerment and in direct and effective participation. It is a useful exercise to see participation in terms of a continuum and, within the project context, to seek to develop it into this transformative role.

Another way of distinguishing between different forms of participation is to think in terms of levels or degrees of participation. These can be understood along a continuum and can range from participation as essentially an act of manipulation to a degree of participation in which stakeholders become partners in the development initiative and begin to assume full responsibility for its management:

- i. **Manipulation:** the lowest rung applies to situations of 'non-participation', where participation is contrived as the opportunity to indoctrinate.
- ii. **Information:** when stakeholders are informed about their rights, responsibilities, and options, the first important step towards genuine participation takes place. The main drawback at this stage is that emphasis is placed on one-way communication, with neither channel for feedback nor power for negotiation.

- iii. Consultation: this level entails two-way communication, where stakeholders have the opportunity to express suggestions and concerns, but no assurance that their input will be used at all or as they intended. Therefore, it could be said that at this level stakeholders are 'participating in participation'. The most frequent approaches to consultation are chaired meetings where stakeholders do not contribute to the agenda, public hearings, and surveys.
- iv. Consensus-building: here stakeholders interact in order to understand each other and arrive at negotiated positions which are tolerable to the entire group. A common drawback is that vulnerable individuals and groups tend to remain silent or passively acquiesce.
- v. Decision-making: when consensus is acted upon through collective decisions, this marks the initiation of shared responsibilities for outcomes that may result. Negotiations at this stage reflect different degrees of leverage exercised by individuals and groups.
- vi. Risk-sharing: this level builds upon the preceding one but expands beyond decisions to encompass the effects of their results, a mix of beneficial, harmful, and natural consequences. Things being constantly in flux, there is always the element of risk, where even the best intended decisions may yield the least desired results. Hence accountability is fundamental at this level, specially when those with the greatest leverage may be the ones with the least at risk.
- vii. Partnership: this relationship entails exchange among equals working towards a mutual goal. Note that equal as applied here is not in terms of form, structure, or function but in terms of balance of respect. Since partnership builds upon the preceding levels, it assumes mutual responsibility and risk sharing.
- viii. Self-management: this is the pinnacle of participatory efforts, where stakeholders interact in learning processes which optimise the well-being of all concerned. (adapted from UNCDF, 1996)

3. The Pros and Cons of Participation

There are arguments for and against the promotion of greater people's participation. These arguments are less concerned with societal level participation in democratic and representative institutions, but more with people's participation in development activities. They can be summarised as follows:

Arguments for PARTICIPATION:

- i. People's participation can increase the efficiency of development activities in that, by involving local resources and skills, it can make better use of expensive external costs;
- ii. it can also increase the effectiveness of such activities by ensuring that, with people's involvement, they are based upon local knowledge and understanding of problems and will therefore be more relevant to local needs;
- iii. participation helps to build local capacities and develop the abilities of local people to manage and to negotiate development activities;
- iv. participation can increase coverage when local people are able to assume some of the burden of responsibility and thus help to extend the range of activities of a development activity;
- v. participation can lead to better targeting of benefits to the poorest via the identification of key stakeholders who will be most affected by the activities;
- vi. crucially participation can help to secure the sustainability of the activities as beneficiaries assume ownership and are willing to maintain its momentum; and
- vii. participation can often help to improve the status of women by providing the opportunity for them to play a part in development work.

Arguments against PARTICIPATION:

- i. Participation costs time and money; it is essentially a process with no guaranteed impact upon the end product. Participation can greatly add to the costs of a development activity and therefore its benefits have to be carefully calculated;
- ii. processes of participation are irrelevant and a luxury in situations of poverty and it will be hard to justify expenditure on such a process where people need to be fed and their livelihoods secured;
- iii. participation can be a destabilising force in that it can unbalance existing socio-political relationships and threaten the continuity of development work;
- iv. participation is driven by 'ideological fervour' and is less concerned with seeking to secure direct benefits for people from development activities than with promoting an ideological perspective into development; and
- v. participation can result in the shifting of the burden onto the poor and the relinquishing by national governments of their responsibilities to promote development with equity.

Box 1.3: Key Findings with Regard to Participation in Donor Funded Projects in India

- Frequency of contact and information dissemination are the most important elements in determining the level of participation which a community feels in any project. Even when no physical or tangible benefits are immediately evident, information dissemination and community consultation prepares the community for subsequent activities and can facilitate their active involvement in the project.
- Participation is a process which unleashes unexpected demands. The project guidelines must be able to define clearly to what extent there is readiness to respond to them. There must be a commitment to an iterative process of planning.
- Projects should work through existing institutions wherever possible. To create parallel structures for participation is undesirable and results in the creation of ineffective and unrepresentative bodies. The inclusion of local leadership in project activities can assist and ensure community participation. In fact their exclusion will prove to be counterproductive.
- Government employees who are expected to facilitate participatory processes require training and support. Participation is not automatic nor are institutions or professionals who have had no experience with participation able to integrate these approaches easily without the appropriate backup.
- Projects which identify community participation as a key element for the activities must articulate the institutional mechanisms for channelling and supporting that participation. Multiple supports might be necessary and would extend the reach of the participation efforts.
- Contractual frameworks for collaboration in community participation activities between NGOs and Governments will benefit from a degree of flexibility. Providing room for negotiating the best operational strategies and procedural arrangements of that collaboration can give both parties greater freedom in finding case-specific norms and for manoeuvring concessions. (Society for Participatory Research in Asia: PRIA, 1995)

Participation can mean all things to all people and both its protagonists and its opponents marshal their arguments carefully. It is important, therefore, when promoting participation within a particular project, to be sure exactly what benefits it would bring, what would be its added-value and, equally, what could be some of the unforeseen consequences of its implementation.

4. Five Key Operational Issues in Promoting Participation

- i. It is critical that efforts to promote participatory development understand and examine the political and cultural context in which participation is to occur. Participation does not take place in a vacuum, but its development and progress will be influenced by a variety of factors inherent in the context. Time should be made available, therefore, at the beginning of any

participatory project, to identify and to analyse the factors which could influence the process. In this respect a stakeholder analysis is a useful first step.

- ii. In the preparation and design stages of the programme or project, it must be clearly understood that participatory processes do not necessarily follow structural, pre-determined and linear directions. Participation must not be seen merely as an input into a project, but as an underlining operational principle which should underpin all activities. Participation must be intrinsic to the project's development and not simply an activity which is used from time to time to provoke beneficiaries' interest.
- iii. 'Participation in development' is not the same as 'participatory development'. Projects must seek to promote a real and authentic involvement of people in the development process and not merely seek to make the more common, top-down and technocratic approach to project development more participatory. Participation implies a radical change in project operations and not simply the adjusting of the project planning cycle, for example, to allow for a degree of local involvement.
- iv. A key element in the promotion of a participatory form of development is the training which staff receive in its methodologies and techniques. In the past decade or so participation has revolutionised project practice and yet many staff have yet to move beyond the level of a general understanding. At the operational level it is imperative that staff be trained in participatory development in order that they can be effective in promoting and guiding it. At a higher level, this raises the issue of the mainstreaming of participation, its principles, its approaches and its methods across the board within an institution.
- v. In order to be able to understand its progress and to judge its contribution to the outcome of the project, it will be critical to set up and to operate mechanisms at the project level to monitor participation within the project and, subsequently, to evaluate its effect. To date this have proved to be a major difficulty in participatory projects and many development agencies are struggling to devise appropriate systems. We shall examine the matter in more detail in [Chapter 4](#).

Chapter 2: Strategies for Participation

In promoting participatory development it is important to consider and decide how this is to be done. It is not enough simply to declare a commitment to participation. A strategy must be devised which should purposefully guide the promotion of participation within the project. A major reason why people's participation is not consistent or effective in many projects is because time and resources have not been given to thinking through how it is to be promoted. Clearly a project cannot afford to spend an excessive amount of time on this promotion; hence the importance of devising a strategy and of promoting people's participation in accordance with the expectations of the project. Project management must be able to take a long term view of the expected development of the project and be prepared to promote the form of participation which would be most appropriate. We can structure this examination of a strategy for participation around four key aspects; the initial questions, the basic principles in promoting participation, participation as a sequence of actions and the key stages in a participatory strategy.

1. Asking the Initial Questions

- i. What might be the reaction of national and local authorities to efforts to promote participatory development? National and local political systems do have an effect upon the political climate at the local level and it can not be assumed that efforts to increase people's say in and responsibility for local development processes will be looked upon with approval. It will be critical to assess the potential for a participatory form of development within the context of the national political climate in order to avoid any major dysfunctions or adverse reactions once the project has got underway.
- ii. What are the social, political, and cultural factors within the area or region in which the project is to be developed, which could influence people's participation? This question is fundamental to understanding the likely reaction to a participatory project and will inform project management of the kinds of obstacles which the project might encounter. It should also reveal those factors which could facilitate local people's participation
- iii. What local traditional practices or organisations could play an effective role in promoting participation? The answer to this question will be fundamental in designing the methodology of the project and it has been shown that, where participatory projects can be built upon existing patterns or structures of participation, they can be more effective. Participatory development projects are introduced into areas and regions where traditional forms of community co-operation and support will already exist and such projects should seek to adopt their ideas to these existing mechanisms and not invent entirely new structures.
- iv. What would be the likely reaction of local people to efforts to get them more involved in, to make a contribution towards and to assume some responsibility for the proposed development project? In order to answer this question, it may be necessary to find out what other development initiatives have taken place in the area in the past decade or so and what consequences they had for the local population. Participation demands time, energy and resources on the part of local people and it would be useful to assess what demands the project might make upon them and what the likely response would be.
- v. What resources, skills and time does the project have to promote participation? A careful and realistic assessment of the project's own potential to promote participation is a prerequisite to the design of an appropriate strategy. There is no point in being overly ambitious if the skills and resources are not available! It is a difficult task to match the resources available with the nature of the participation which can be promoted. The promotion of participation does demand resources and these will have to be assessed carefully before the project begins.

Box 2.1: Critical Contextual Factors Which Can Influence The Promotion Of Community Involvement In Health : CIH

1. The political commitment within the country to the concept of people's involvement and hence the political support that might be required to secure its implementation. This political commitment will be particularly important at the local level where resistance from established interests will have the greatest impact.

2. The institutional orientation of the formal health and other development organisations within the country in terms of the support for the devolution and delegation of bureaucratic authority down to levels at which CIH will operate. Critical will be the decentralisation of health services and the corresponding strengthening of district health services which serve as the basic health unit for CIH.
3. The economic situation of the country which will largely dictate the emphasis and resources made available for health development. The implementation of CIH requires resources - staff, logistics support and pedagogic materials - and these may be difficult to obtain in resource poor countries where health is not a priority.
4. The level of development of local structures and organisations, which could serve as a basis for CIH, as well as the managerial and other skills which may be available in the community to enable the population to play a greater role in health development. (WHO, 1991)

The above QUESTIONS are illustrative and not presented as universally relevant to all project contexts. They are presented to emphasise the need to formulate an appropriate set of questions before the project begins in order to get a realistic assessment of both the potential for participation and the likely difficulties which the process would encounter. Therefore, the first meeting to discuss the implementation of a participatory project should begin with the question: 'What questions do we need to ask?'

2. Principles of Participatory Development

After the above questions have been asked (and answered) the next step is to establish the basis or the set of principles which will provide the overall framework of approach which the project will adopt. This is an equally critical step since, without such a framework, a participatory project will not be able to construct an appropriate strategy nor determine how the project is to be implemented. Participatory development is not 'blue-print' development but it is a strategy which constructs its approach in relation to the demands of the project context. In this respect, some basic principles will help to determine what this approach should be. In the practice of participatory development to date, the following are the kinds of key principles which have been seen to be more important:

- i. **The PRIMACY of PEOPLE:** whatever the purpose or ultimate goal of the project, people's interests, their needs and their wishes must be allowed to underpin the key decisions and actions relating to the project. It is not a question of including people as and when it is felt by project management to be convenient; people must sit centre-stage and their interests taken into consideration during the whole course of the project.
- ii. **People's KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS** must be seen as a potentially positive contribution to the project: a project which does not seek to make use of local knowledge and skills may not only be less effective but will also be squandering a useful resource. A participatory project should seek every possibility to base its activities upon local resources, both to avoid situations of dependence on external ones and also to help develop local capabilities, which will be important if the development is to be sustained. Participation is to do with developing people's capacities and this can best be achieved by building on and strengthening their existing knowledge and expertise.
- iii. **People's Participation must empower WOMEN:** participatory development should seek to improve gender inequalities through providing a means by which women can take part in decision making. Women's participation must be transformative, not be merely tokenistic; while there are often enormous social and cultural barriers which hinder women's participation, participatory development should seek to bring about change and to create the circumstances where women's voices can also be heard. This is a sensitive and critical issue, but efforts to involve women in an appropriate manner must be central.
- iv. **AUTONOMY as opposed to CONTROL:** as far as it is realistic to do so, seek to invest as much responsibility as possible for the project with the local people, and thus avoid having absolute control in the hands of project staff. Such a principle is not always realistic and it should not be pushed too far in such circumstances; but there must be a discernible move to

minimise the control of project staff and to maximise the potential responsibility of local people.

- v. Local ACTIONS as opposed to local RESPONSES: encouraging local people to make decisions and to take action within the broad parameters of the project, as opposed to merely responding passively to initiatives proposed by others. The more that these kinds of local initiatives can be encouraged, the more a sense of ownership will develop among local people; but the major obstacle may see project staff who are unwilling or unable to promote local ownership of project activities and outcomes.
- vi. Allow for some SPONTANEITY in project DIRECTION: promoting people's participation will mean that, as far as it is reasonably possible, the project should be allowed to develop in accordance with the abilities of local people to play an increasing role and to begin to assume some responsibility. Unless the project is able to plan for and to accommodate people's participation, it will remain a straight jacket and may push on to predetermined objectives regardless of whether local people are on board or not. Participatory projects do often take longer but, if they are truly participatory, the outcome is more positive and sustainable.

3. Participation as a Sequence of Actions

It is widely understood that participation is not a one-off input into a project but it is a process which should be an intrinsic part and characteristic of a project throughout its duration. This process evolves through a series of stages, but these stages will vary according to the nature and purpose of the project. There is no universal or common set of stages in the process of participation and development agencies at different levels will structure a series of stages which are most appropriate to the project. Already there are a considerable number of examples of how development agencies have gone about promoting participation as a series of actions at different stages during the lifetime of a project.

There should be a logical sequence of actions and events, which is an important feature of participatory development. Participation has to be developed and this development has to be projected over a period of time and the appropriate action taken at its different stages. This perspective is fundamental to participatory development and it will be essential for country office staff to adopt this approach in order to map out the likely evolution of people's participation. The danger is that staff will see participation merely as an input to be brought into activities as appropriate and will not recognise the critical importance of allowing it to develop over a period over time. Given that there is no universal model of the stages of a process of participation, the following are a series of examples which are intended to illustrate the kinds of stages which have been identified:

Box 2.2 Stages of Participation

URBAN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Definition of the arena of community participation within which the project operates in terms of complexity and openness of government

↳

Identification of actors

Point of entry of the community

Differing needs of the community

Needs of other actors

↳

Practical complementation

Role and relationships of different actors

Quantify intervention strategies

↳

Intensity of community involvement

Extent of consensus P Evaluation (Abbott, 1996) NGOs AND PROMOTING COMMUNITY

PARTICIPATION

Creating an awareness of the issues

Developing community leadership

Sharing in decision-making

Learning together

Analysing options

Planning together

Evaluation (Christian Aid, Kenya) **KEY ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN WORLD BANK FUNDED PROJECTS**

- Start with a pilot phase to test the participatory mechanisms
- Invite the participation of groups who support as well as those who oppose the project
- Share implementation responsibility with a range of agencies, both public and private
- Give local communities a choice of which organisations they wish to collaborate with
- Make a special effort to seek the participation of a range of community members
- Prepare participation agreements between project agencies and participating communities to outline the responsibilities of each
- Seek some contribution from beneficiaries, either in labour or time
- Facilitate exchanges of experience between communities by arranging field visits (World Bank, 1996)

The above examples show the range of actions which are undertaken in projects to promote participation. The purpose is not to suggest that such and such a way is how participation is promoted, but to underline the importance of seeing participation as a process with several dimensions and of the need to develop a plan for its promotion. The examples illustrate the range from a more technocratic approach, which sees participation more as a means, to a less structured looser approach which sees participation more as part of an overall goal of the project. All these examples, however, reinforce the argument that participation has to be planned and developed and that it should be seen as important as the other activities associated with project development. Indeed the central issue is that participation should be the basic operating mechanism within the project and should characterise all of the project's activities ranging from initial analysis, needs determination, planning, monitoring, evaluation and so on.

4. Participation and the Project Cycle

Projects are the basic instruments through which externally supported development initiatives are generally implemented. Projects provide the structure for planning and implementing development over a period of time and they involve a number of key and commonly recognisable stages. An important issue, therefore, concerns the relationship between participation and these different stages of the project cycle. Again there is no universal model which we can use to address this issue since different projects will follow different (if broadly similar) cycles and will promote different forms of participation in relation to the project's purpose and goal. However, we could construct the following as an example of the relationship between participation and the project cycle:

Project Cycle	Type of Participation				
	Inform	Consult	Active Involvement	Assuming Responsibility	Self-Management
Problem Identification
Project Design
Planning
Implementation
Monitoring & Evaluation
Impact

The left hand vertical column, which represents a hypothetical project cycle, shows the kinds of stages at which local communities and beneficiaries might participate; while the horizontal column illustrates the types of participation which could be used or which might be relevant at each stage. Within the context of any particular project there will be a need to examine in detail both the vertical and the horizontal column and to determine exactly what the process of participation will involve during the project's development. This detail can be broken down into two areas:

The ACTIVITIES in which People will PARTICIPATE in the different stages of the Project Cycle; for example, (a) attending a workshop to design the basic framework of the project; (b) involvement in session in which the planning of the project takes place; (c) assuming some responsibility for the implementation of a particular aspect of the project; (d) helping to run a project monitoring system; (e) being involved in evaluating the project, and so on.

The MECHANISMS which will be used in order to promote PARTICIPATION; for example, (a) project documents translated into local languages in order to inform people; (b) formal sessions at which people's views are sought; (c) participatory assessment sections; (d) joint project committees in which beneficiaries are represented, and so on.

The crucial thing about the above diagrammatic representation of participation within the project cycle is that it should not be used as a retrospective form of assessment of participation, but more importantly, it should be pinned up for all to see and should be the framework within which participation is promoted during the lifetime of the project. The diagram is a grid which can be used to plot and to monitor the development of participation and it can also be a critical reference point if action needs to be taken. While the project cycle will be a broadly common element, not all projects will be seeking to promote 'full participation' (self-management); in major physical infrastructure projects, for example, 'self-management' may not be a relevant goal. But in projects where the goal is to promote local capacities and to build the skills for self-management, then it will be critical to monitor people's participation to determine whether it is progressing to that goal. In development projects the evidence to date would suggest that in broad terms people's participation develops along a continuum:

PASSIVE
PARTICIPATION

Where beneficiaries basically welcome the project proposals and support them but are generally cautious (and even suspicious) in relation to project management

INCREASING
INVOLVEMENT

where beneficiaries begin to develop more trust in the project and more contact with its activities and staff; they may also begin to take on some responsibilities

ACTIVE
PARTICIPATION

where beneficiaries play the role of active partners in the project's implementation and development and assume increasing responsibilities

OWNERSHIP /
EMPOWERMENT

where beneficiaries are both willing and able to sustain and further develop the initiatives begun by the project

Understanding and monitoring people's participation along this broad continuum can be a useful exercise in terms of judging the level of participation which is occurring and taking the necessary action if the level of participation begins to slip below project expectations.

Chapter 3: Methods of Promoting Participation

1 UNDP's Programme Approach and Participation

The adoption of the programme approach by UNDP has major implications for the use of participatory methods. This requires new participatory methods which allow UNDP, national governments, donors and other stakeholders to work together in establishing national programmes. A much broader understanding of participation is required than was necessary for the traditional project approach to development.

The UNDP User's Guide How to Implement the Programme Approach makes it explicit that the participation of a broad range of stakeholders is fundamental to the success of the programme approach. There are five main categories of stakeholders:

1. National government
2. UNDP
3. Other donors
4. Civil society organisations, including NGOs
5. Local communities/beneficiaries.

In section 3.3 it sets out the roles of the different stakeholders in the programme approach process. More specifically, in relation to national stakeholders (civil society organisations, including NGOs, CBO's, private sector, academic institutions and local communities) it states that their role, 'includes as appropriate, organised and meaningful participation in the formulation, implementation, management and evaluation of the national programme framework and all donor-supported interventions'.

Another significant shift brought about by UNDP's adoption of the programme approach is the adoption of a thematic focus rather than a sectoral focus. UNDP's Global Co-operation Framework has four priority areas for Sustainable Human Development:

1. Poverty elimination and sustainable livelihoods
2. Gender equality
3. Environmental sustainability
4. Governance

Rather than focus on particular sectors, UNDP national programme interventions need to address these key areas in order to attain SHD in these countries. This calls for high-leverage, strategic interventions which draw on the comparative advantage of UNDP's global presence and perspective, and for cross-sectoral programmes that require the participation of senior officials from different government ministries and departments and a wide range of national stakeholders. Effective institutional mechanisms combined with innovative methods for multi-stakeholder collaboration are necessary to ensure that such a broad range of different stakeholders can participate in the process of developing a national programme, i.e.: policy dialogue; capacity/needs assessment; identification of UNDP and other donor support; implementation.

This requires new types of participatory methods to those developed for sector-specific, discrete projects. With the project approach, the key priority issue for participatory projects has been how to ensure the participation of project beneficiaries in all stages of the project cycle. For example, in the case of community forestry projects, what methods can be used to ensure that the forest users are actively involved in forest management. Or in the case of rural water supply projects, how can water users effectively participate in the design, implementation and long term management of water systems. There has been much progress in developing methods for involving community groups in rural development projects, such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA), farmer first, beneficiary assessment, formation of community organisations, workshops, drama and theatre. There is a wealth of published material on community participation, including many guidebooks on using participatory methods in particular sectors, much of which is included in the Resources chapter of this guidebook.

UNDP's new programme approach means that the focus for country offices is no longer primarily on community participation at the project level, but rather on the national programme framework level. That is not to imply that community participation in project implementation is no longer important - of course it remains a critical issue. Yet it is primarily a responsibility of the implementing agencies - government bodies and NGOs - to employ techniques for ensuring greater community participation in

development projects. The key task for UNDP in promoting the programme approach is to ensure that all stakeholders actively participate in policy dialogue and programme formulation at the national level.

While the principles of participation, as set out in Chapter 1, remain the same whatever the level (international, national, regional, local) the methods needed to ensure that genuine participation actually takes place are very different. For example, while PRA may be the most appropriate method for a community forestry project it is not an appropriate method for promoting the involvement of senior officials from government ministries, donors and NGOs in policy dialogue meetings. Rather, such methods as roundtable's or national selection committees are more appropriate for facilitating participation at this level. It is for this reason that considerable attention is given in this chapter to stakeholder analysis, multi-stakeholder collaboration and large group interventions. These methods are likely to be of particular value to country office staff in following the UNDP programme approach.

2 Overview of Participatory Methods

Participatory methods are the means by which the principles of participation are translated into the actual practice of development. Participatory methods ensure that all stakeholders become involved in a number of different activities which are integral to the development process. They provide a structured approach to participation with clear guidelines of who should be involved, when and to what extent. They are very important to programme and project planning when clear procedures need to be identified and approved, rather than relying on an ad hoc approach.

A wide range of distinctive methods have been developed over the last decade or two. This chapter provides a cross section of participatory methodologies. It is by no means a comprehensive list of all existing methodologies but is intended rather, to provide an example of the range of resources available to those who wish to expand participation at any level of their operations from the internal organisational level to the external programmes/projects supported. It should also be noted that none of these methods need be used exclusively; rather they can be used in combination. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses and different methods can be used for different purposes. The methods have been divided into five broad categories:

- i. Stakeholder Analysis which is an inherent part of any participatory approach. These exercises are intended to help planners clarify how an activity will affect people's lives as well as identify groups which may have been overlooked but who will be affected by the development activity;
- ii. Local Level Information Gathering and Planning which focuses primarily on local people's views, how they perceive their conditions, their lives and how to change them.
- iii. Project/Programme Planning demonstrates the more traditional models of planning based on the log frame;
- iv. Multi Stakeholder Collaboration where a cross-section of stakeholders (local, national, or international) work together on a particular issue to identify common ground for action; and
- v. Large Group Interventions which deal primarily with techniques that support organisational change and internal planning processes.

In an effort to minimise top-down planning and encourage a responsive approach, participatory development is inherently both process and content oriented. This process is essentially a learning approach through which planning and implementation are constantly updated and adapted during the life of an activity through a process of ongoing assessment and evaluation to take into account feedback, linkages and impacts (foreseen and unforeseen). This dramatically affects the nature of the content. Unlike the traditional evaluations which were usually performed by outside evaluators at certain points in a project/programme cycle (i.e. halfway, update, and final) a participatory evaluation involves the stakeholders and is constantly updated to redirect and keep the project responsive to stakeholder's needs and concerns.

The actual level of involvement may vary on a continuum of consultation to actual decision making but the participatory evaluation (including project/programme design & monitoring) is an integral part of the learning process. The methods listed below can be used in a variety of ways depending on the implementors intention. However, it is important for implementors to differentiate between participatory

evaluation as a part of a learning approach or evaluation of participation as a part of an external review (see [Chapter 4](#)). It may or may not be possible for implementors to combine these two processes depending on their goals and sensitivities, nevertheless the effectiveness of these methods are primarily as good as the implementor. Success lies in practitioners' willingness to use participatory methods, adapt them to their specific needs and respond to the recommendations and insights that emerge out of the participatory process. These processes must be built into the longer term planning process of an institution rather than being viewed as a one-off photograph of an institution if they are to be ongoing and sustainable.

The lines between these various methodologies becomes increasingly blurred as people adapt and change them to meet their needs. For example, the method known as Technology of Participation (TOP), which is described below, has been used both in corporations and at the community level and most recently TOP has been coupled with PRA in order to create a process that is responsive to many different levels of organisational needs.

Finally, it is helpful to distinguish participatory methods on the one hand from participatory techniques or tools on the other. Each participatory method draws on a number of techniques in order to involve the different stakeholders, providing the guiding principles as to how the techniques will be used. Some methods use a much greater range of techniques than others. PRA has developed the widest set of techniques, the most important of which are listed in the section on PRA below. Each technique involves the undertaking of a certain activity. For example, one technique would be to hold a focus group discussion in order to listen to the views of a small group of stakeholders. Another technique would be to involve a number of stakeholders in undertaking a mapping exercise. The purpose of using a certain technique will depend on the overall participatory method being followed. For example, when focus group discussions are used as part of gender analysis, then both the composition of the groups and the subjects of discussion are likely to be different to focus groups held as part of a PRA exercise undertaken to facilitate community forestry management.

3 Stakeholder Analysis

A variety of assessment techniques have been developed to capture different dimensions of an activity's impact on people and their environments (social, political, economic, and physical). An essential element of any of these techniques is a stakeholder analysis. A stakeholder analysis is the identification of:

'all those groups and individuals who have a stake, or vested interest, in determining the success or failure of an [activity]. Stakeholder groups can include: local and central ministry officials; line agency representatives; community based organisations; mass organisations; co-operatives; water user groups; local and international non-governmental organisations; international donor organisations; traditional leaders; religious leaders and groups; political parties; elders societies; the very poor or destitute; the subsistent poor; money-lenders; the landed and the landless; and the business community and local contractors.' (UNDCDF)

A stakeholder analysis helps planners to identify a variety of different groups of people that may be affected (adversely or positively) by the project, or which may have been overlooked. This process broadens the planners' perspectives of the broader impacts of an activity (including the unintended) which may be crucial in ensuring that the target achieves its goal and reaches the intended groups. In addition, by identifying such groups, planners may identify hitherto unforeseen potential conflicts that may arise to a particular activity or, conversely, certain potential coalitions of support. Table 3.1 Stakeholder Analysis adapted from an ODA private sector population project

	Primary Stakeholders* (i.e., middle income groups)	Secondary Stakeholders** (i.e., UNDP, Ministry of Population Welfare, Pharmaceutical Companies)	External Stakeholder*** (ie. Islamic Clergy, Traditional Birth Attendants)
Interests: women	(i.e., Reproductive Choice)	(i.e., Health & Population Goals, Profits, Public Image)	(i.e. Private Incomes)

Interests: men	(i.e., Role in decision-making)	.	(i.e., Social & Religious Influence)
Potential Project Impact: women	(+)	.	(+/-)
Potential Project Impact: men	(-/?)	.	(+/-)
Relative Priority Interests : women	1	2	3
Relative Priority Interests: men	1	2	3

* Primary Stakeholders: Targeted participants in an activity

** Secondary Stakeholders: Intermediary Participants

*** External Stakeholders: People and groups not formally involved but who may impact or be impacted by the activity

The table shown has been adapted from an ODA exercise in stakeholder analysis for a private sector population project. However, this exercise could be expanded and altered to meet the needs of planners in many different sectors or levels. For example, a similar stakeholder analysis would be useful for planners developing national or local level policies on health, in order to ensure that certain groups are not overlooked in developing such a policy. A stakeholder analysis could also be useful in an internal institutional exercise in which an organisation (such as UNDP) is developing an internal policy for employees health benefits. Once again, the breakdown of broader interests that may react to policies or be affected differently can help planners to plan better.

The table reflects the perceptions of ODA staff about the interests of different stakeholders. In order for planners to get a complete picture of what different stakeholders perceive are their interests and the interests of other stakeholders (as well as the potential project impact or relative priority of interests) it is important that this whole table be done with different stakeholders. This may help to clarify any misperceptions or stereo types which planners may have, as well providing new information. For example, unknown to project planners traditional birthing attendants may welcome this initiative as relieving them from birth control functions to focus on home births and infant health. In addition, the primary stakeholders may perceive the relative priority of the interests of these traditional birthing attendants of primary importance, since this has been their traditional role in society.

Sample Checklist of Questions for Stakeholder Analysis

- What are stakeholder's expectation's of the activity?
- What benefits/drawbacks are their likely to be for stakeholders?
- What resources will stakeholders wish to commit (or avoid committing) to the project?
- What other interests do the stakeholders have which may conflict or align with the project?
- How does the stakeholder regard others in the list?
- Are there other stakeholders they can identify?

One dimension of stakeholder analysis involves analysing the social relations between the different stakeholders. The question of socio-economic differentiation between stakeholders needs to be critically examined here. Of greatest significance here is that of gender. Men and women often have

very different types and levels of knowledge, involvement, and access to decision-making, which should be taken into account when planning for programmes and projects. Any new initiative will have an impact on men and women's roles and responsibilities at the community level, either positively or negatively. In order to plan for and integrate these differences into activities any of the approaches highlighted here, or any others for that matter, need to incorporate gender into their processes. There are a variety of exercises designed to analyse how projects will affect or be affected by culturally based gender roles as well as men and women's relationship to labour, time and access to resources and decision-making. At best these exercises can lead to a greater awareness on the part of all participants as to identify the existing inequities that can be addressed. Where as, failure to include these issues could lead to serious unforeseen effects on men, women and their households.

3.1 Gender Analysis

The purpose of gender analysis in the context of participatory development is to understand gender differences in access to resources and how such differences will affect the participation of women in development activities in order that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure that they are not excluded. Ideally, gender analysis should not be a separate participatory method but should be integral to all participatory methods. These other research methods, such as PRA, beneficiary assessment and stakeholder analysis, should include an analysis of gender roles and needs. However, the reality is that gender is often overlooked or given insufficient attention and there may be a case for undertaking a specific gender analysis in order to identify the particular obstacles to women's participation in development.

Unlike PRA, gender analysis does not utilise a specific set of participatory techniques. Rather it defines an overall approach in which the specific focus of analysis is of the factors that determine the relationship between men and women and the implications of this for programming. The actual means of undertaking the analysis will depend on the context, experience of staff and resources available. For example, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, workshops and mapping exercises could all be used. The key principle for using any of these techniques is not just to provide a conducive forum to enable women to express their own opinions, difficulties and needs but to also encourage them to analyse and understand their own relationships with men and related position in society.

The first task of gender analysis is to identify their gender roles. The starting point for this should be to ask women to identify their own roles and how they manage them on the one hand and the roles of men on the other. Men should also be asked separately to identify gender roles. It is helpful to think of women as having a triple role: a productive role, a reproductive role and a community management role. This can be represented in the following diagram.

Table 3.2 Women's Triple Role

Women's Productive Role	Women's Reproductive Role	Women's Community Management Role
Activities that generate income for the household: paid employment, e.g. labouring jobs; management or professional positions. income in kind, e.g. work on family farm	Domestic activities that increase household resources: creative role, e.g. bearing, looking after and educating children maintenance role, e.g. cooking food, washing clothes, growing food for home use.	Provision and allocation of community resources: creation and distribution of items for collective consumption, for example clean water, medical services membership of committees, but positions of leadership and influence are frequently occupied by men

(ODA 1995)

Given their different roles and responsibilities, men and women have different needs from each other. Gender analysis seeks to identify the gender needs in a particular society before development planning takes place. It is common practice to distinguish between practical gender needs and strategic gender needs. Practical gender needs refer to what people need what women and men need

to fulfil their established roles and responsibilities. An example of this is when women state that what they most need is a reliable, accessible water supply to assist them in undertaking their domestic tasks. A strategic gender need for women concerns empowering women and changing their position in society. It relates to changing women's access to resources, their legal status and cultural attitudes towards them. Strategic gender needs may not be readily identified by women themselves and, therefore, the facilitation of a process by which they come to do so is a crucial part of gender analysis.

Gender analysis is not something that should only be carried out at the design stage in order to ensure that development planning responds to gender needs. It needs to be integrated into monitoring and evaluation in order to assess the effectiveness of any development intervention on addressing women's gender needs.

4 Local Level Information Gathering and Planning

These approaches have been developed during the past two decades by development practitioners and academics. Primarily they arose for reasons including:

- a. a growing recognition of the depth and value of local knowledge;
- b. a dissatisfaction with traditional survey methods that tended to miss the more qualitative dimensions of peoples lives, the linkages and the effects of activities on a whole system or a particular population; a need for methods that included marginalised groups such as women, children, the poor who are not often visible to the evaluator and/or those who are illiterate and intimidated by questionnaires.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) or Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) are probably the best known set of tools although there are other participatory approaches that both incorporate PRA as well as other methods and approaches. These exercises are not inherently sensitive to gender issues and it is important for practitioners not to miss out women's local knowledge which tends to encompass different areas of specialist knowledge.

4.1 Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) & Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) is an umbrella name for a series of methodologies that use multi-disciplinary teams to develop a quick, systematic over view of village systems (initially agriculture systems). RRA was developed mainly by academics and its primary users have been academics and aid agencies. These exercises aided in identifying the needs of a community, its priorities, action steps to achieving priorities, feasibility of interventions and monitoring of development. The predominant mode of this data was elicitive and extractive. The information was gathered from the villagers and then analysed outside the villages. The objective was to educate outsiders on village systems. The long term outcomes of this method were plans, projects, and publications.

Out of RRA, practitioners developed participatory RRAs. These approaches have come under the umbrella of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). The major innovators of these methods were based in NGOs and the main users have been governments, field organisations and NGOs. The key resources, earlier overlooked, have been the capabilities of local people to participate in all phases of a project from planning, implementation to evaluation. The main innovations were more subtle in which the facilitator worked with villagers to create a project plan. PRA is an attempt to create local sustainable institutions versus RRA where information was extracted from the village and planning done outside.

The main techniques used in PRA are the same as are used in RRA but with more emphasis on local participation in planning and feedback. These techniques include secondary sources, semi-structured interviews, key informants, participatory mapping and modelling, transect walks, Venn diagrams, time lines and trend change analysis, oral histories and life histories, seasonal calendars, daily time use, livelihood analysis, matrix scoring and ranking, stories and case studies, team contracts and interaction, presentation and analysis.

Some of the areas where PRA has been used are: agroecosystems, forestry, fisheries, wildlife management, irrigation, health and nutrition, farming systems research, extension, pastoralism, marketing, disaster relief, organisational assessment, etc. Many institutions are adapting and integrating PRA exercises into their development efforts. For example, the World Bank has coupled

these exercises with more conventional planning for project/programme initiatives as well as policy formulation in what they are calling Participatory Poverty Assessments and Beneficiary Assessments. These methods are also being used by the Development for International Co-operation (DFID, the former Overseas Development Administrator) and Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ, The Society for Technical Co-operation), which (like many other organisations) are integrating the PRA methods with their own traditional planning tools such as ZOPP to form new approaches such as Project Cycle Management.

4.2 Participatory Action Research

Participation Action Research (PAR) is an umbrella term that includes several different methodologies. There are five main fields from which PAR has been developed : a) action research in organisations; b) participatory research in community development; c) action research in schools; d) farmer participatory research and technology generation; and e) participatory evaluation. It has been used mostly in academic research and community adult literacy programmes world-wide and its use is gradually being expanded into other aspects of community development.

Some of the major principles to this approach are: common values such as the value of local knowledge and a commitment to non-violent social change; ownership of the research lies with the community involved; commitment to action by the researcher in partnership with the community based on the learning that occurs; participants are to be include at every stage of the research and special effort should be made to include groups not usually included; research methods are selected based on their appropriateness to the situation and should be taught to local participants so that they can continue the inquiry process independently of the researcher; outcomes are intended to benefit the community; ownership of product in terms of methods used, interpretation of results, dissemination of results should be negotiated at the outset and resolved in fair and open manner.

5 Project/Programme Planning Tools

The more traditional project planning tools have focused on creating a detailed map of a project complete with budgets, disbursement dates, expected progress dates, implementation schedule and wrap-up evaluation. Although these models have provided a precise plan, they often neglected to take into account the broader perspectives of local people and the unpredictable conditions of their lives such as seasons, employment availability, sickness, etc. It is becoming common knowledge that in order for projects to be sustainable in the long run, as well as truly improve the lives of targeted groups, planners need to incorporate these groups more actively into the project cycle. In an effort to respond to this growing awareness, institutions are beginning to incorporate participatory approaches into the project cycle. For example, GTZ is attempting to combine the planning approaches of ZOPP with participatory methodologies under the newly developed Project Cycle Management.

5.1 ZOPP and Project Cycle Management (PCM)

ZOPP is a project planning tool developed by Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ, The Society for Technical Co-operation) which is under the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development. In ZOPP workshops, representative stakeholders meet together, identify challenges and develop a Project Planning Matrix (PPM) (similar to a Log Frame) which is revisited at stages during the project cycle. The main focus areas that make up the PPM matrix are:

1. Project Analysis in which the stakeholders are identified and classified into institutions versus interest groups and participant versus non-participants to determine whose concerns should be considered in planning for the project;
2. Problem Analysis to identify and prioritise the core problems and their causes and effects (as perceived by the stakeholders);
3. Objective Analysis in which each of the problems identified is reiterated and then possible solutions worked out which should be based on cause-effect relationship. The main techniques used in ZOPP are stakeholder workshops and matrix building.

As their understanding of participation expanded in recent years, GTZ has been developing the Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach which builds upon their experience with ZOPP. This

approach makes ZOPP one part of the process which may be coupled with other tools, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal, to include a much wider array of ideas and opinions. This stems from an awareness that communities are made up of many diverse groups with varying opinions which were often missed in the representative stakeholder meetings of ZOPP. In addition, this approach attempts to build more directly on the existing capacities of local people.

6 Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

With an increasing awareness that policy decisions with large scale social implications are often multi-dimensional and complex, both governments and development groups often congregate representative groups in order to analyse the issues at hand and present suggestions to the decision makers. Due to varying levels of individual power within these stakeholder groups, they may also vary in their ability to actually implement their recommendations or hold decision-makers to the recommendations made. These forums, however can offer an opportunity to channel feedback to senior level representatives of governments or other institutions represented.

6.1 Roundtables

One example of this approach was developed by the Canadian government in an effort to mainstream the concept of sustainable environmental development from the Brundtland Report into its policies and programmes. These roundtables are under the direct authority of the prime minister who appoints members with a commitment to gender balance in representation. The members are supposed to be a cross section of adversarial points of view from society consisting representatives from all levels of government, the private sector, and NGOs (such as ecology groups, academics and native groups). These groups are meant to: contribute to new frameworks, help define priorities, advance consensus on problem definition and action; advise the prime minister on how to integrate sustainable environmental development into federal government planning; and provide a role model by the representatives themselves leading their respective communities in adopting and implementing the recommendations.

These roundtables can sponsor research, call conferences, hold hearings and their structures are meant to be flexible. These groups draw their legitimacy not from their expertise or authority but from their responsiveness to the needs, concerns, and input of a variety of constituencies as they evolve and come to be known.

6.2 National Selection Committees

UNDP's numerous small-grants programmes (i.e., Africa 2000, Asia-Pacific 2000, GEF, LIFE, PDP) aim to address issues related to poverty, capacity-building needs of civil society and environmental problems in urban and rural areas. All share certain commonalities that enable them to be more responsive to local demands and contexts. In particular, each programme requires the creation of a National Selection Committee (NSC). NSCs are comprised of representatives of NGOs, CBOs, Government, UNDP and other bi and multilateral donors.

These bodies have a wide range of responsibilities which include formulating criteria for the selection of projects, based on programme objectives, as well as to monitor and evaluate funded projects. For UNDP, this has meant working in a tripartite fashion with CSOs and Government. NSC composition has facilitated a continuous process of consensus-building which has helped members to better understand different perspectives on how development activities can be pursued. The spirit of co-operation between NSC members has often expanded beyond the immediate functions of the NSC and overall programme objectives. For example, in Nicaragua initial interaction within NSC operations later led to joint NGO-Government planning for the rehabilitation of local communities in the country. Such instances indicate the inherent flexibility of these structures and their potential to create unforeseen multiplier effects.

7 Large Group Interventions

In the 1980s, organisational development has flourished, especially in the United States, in a climate where organisations at every level have been feeling the pressure to change. Private corporations are attempting to become more productive and customer focused, and social sector institutions are under pressure to collaborate and be more responsive to local conditions. The pressure to streamline has

resulted in large cutbacks in the workforce, while the workforce itself has tended to be more educated and qualified than ever before. In the face of social and economic uncertainty as well as a diminishing gap in qualifications between senior management and other employees, these methods have emerged. The new organisational development approaches reject the old hierarchical approach that rely on a small top group for the answers, for more collaborative and democratic systems. These approaches assume that people possess valuable information and knowledge that is often left untapped and that the only way to ensure staff commitment to an organisation is through involving them in decision-making.

Not only are these methods useful in restructuring institutions, they are an imperative for development organisations attempting to implement participatory processes at the national level. Unless these very institutions can become more responsive and adaptive to the types of innovation and requests emerging from local and national level participatory processes these processes will prove problematic to the headquarters and management levels. Thus participatory exercises such as PRA need to be coupled with institutional methods that will help to create the broad framework necessary for institutions to be responsive to bottom up stimulus from any level (i.e., local, national, regional or internal). The institutionalisation of participation is covered in Chapter 5.

7.1 Open Space

Open Space is designed by Harisson Owen based on the idea that some of the most useful parts of a conference happen during the coffee breaks. Open Space is an attempt to combine the synergy and energy of the coffee breaks with the substantive activity and results of a good meeting. It empowers individuals and the group by giving them the opportunity and responsibility of creating a valuable experience. It provides the structure for shared leadership with very little time spent on complicated logistics or planning. This has been used on groups as small as 5 to as large as 750 people. There are four very simple principles: whoever comes are the right people; whatever happens is the only thing that could; whenever it starts is the right time; and whenever it's over, it's over. Every person is allowed to move freely through the sessions or pursue one topic based on their own preference.

The process for open space in a nutshell are:

- a. people are given the theme of the meeting and a description of the methodology before the meeting;
- b. on the day of the meeting participants sit in a circle (or several concentric circles if the group is very large);
- c. people who have topics for which they are willing to convene a session are asked to come to the centre and tell the group about their session and then sign up for a room and time slot at the front;
- d. people are invited to the front to look at the different sessions, then the sessions begin;
- e. a rapporteur from each group reports back to the larger group at the end; and
- f. any necessary follow up steps are agreed upon.

7.2 Future Search

Future search has been developed in the last few years as a planning tool for helping communities (from small institutions, county activities to state) better plan how to improve their communities. This approach helps people identify their common ground and look at what they would like to do as opposed to what they think they can do by giving them a much broader range of choices to plan for. It provides a framework for planning to achieve these goals. The three main principles are: 1) representation of the whole system in the room (a cross-section of stakeholders); 2) puts problems in a larger global context and focus on possibilities for the future; and 3) in such a way that people take ownership for what they say, what they do and ultimately for what they agree to do.

This is usually is a very structured process run by a trained Future Search facilitator. The methodology calls for specific numbers of people who follow a very particular schedule over two days. The exercises that are covered over this time span with break out groups and focus groups help them

examine several areas: a) the past history of the individuals, the groups, the community and its global context; b) the trends (local and global) that have affected their lives; c) their vision of an ideal future (individual, small groups); and d) ultimately where they have a common vision for the future for which they can develop projects and commit to actions.

7.3 Process Consultation

Process Consultation was developed by UNDP to be used in initiating and operating projects for public sector change. In process consultation, the consultant works with the client to develop a clear understanding of expectations and roles; (i.e., the consultant's main goal will be to improve the system as a whole). The consultation is used to enhance the performance of an institution's mission, to reconceptualise the mission or to reorganise in response to changes in the mission. This is done by providing a space within which hierarchy and power is suspended and all members are able to participate in identifying the steps that need to be taken for change.

The consultant trains a consulting unit (CMU) which will become the change management team and play the role of the consultant for the rest of the institution. The CMU will model the relationship between the team and the consultant with its own institutions. In this relationship the leadership role is played by a consultant whose role is to: manage the task; guide the process; mobilise participation; clarify communication; and sustain momentum and morale. The consultant steers the conversation away from debate and conflict to mutual understanding by offering criteria for decision making and process rather than commenting on content. The consultant works with the teams to create: mutual respect; a shared purpose; a shared concept of how things will be done; agreed-upon roles; agreed-upon modes of interaction; capability for the tasks required of them; the discipline to let their egos serve the task rather than using the task to serve their egos; the discipline of openness; shared responsibility for leadership; and a spirit of collegiality.

7.4 Technology of Participation (TOP)

TOP has been developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) which is a federation of Northern and Southern NGOs with ECOSOC status. It was initiated to bring a new approach to urban renewal in the slums of Chicago and since then it has been applied world wide. ICA developed a series of skills consisting of consensus building through team work to create a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for these communities. Emerging out of this expertise as well as additional research, ICA went on to create a set of tools for problem solving for private and public institutions. These tools are called Leadership Effectiveness and New Strategies (LENS). This tool has helped to increase employee involvement in decision making and planning, therefore increasing motivation and commitment to the institution and its goals. Another major outcome of TOPs earlier work with human development projects was the Town Meeting Programme which was usually in a one day format where local people were given a chance to articulate their histories, hopes for their community, the challenges they faced and build practical proposals for action.

Out of their tools and techniques, ICA has developed a technology which focuses on inclusive decision-making that builds upon the knowledge and ideas that exist within a group. As a learning organisation its tools and techniques have changed and adapted to many situations and countries world-wide. The basic tenets of TOP are: 1) Participation is an ongoing, integrated, whole systems approach; 2) Participation is an evolving, organic and dynamic process; 3) Participation is a structured process involving learnable skills; and 4) Participation requires a commitment to openness from everyone involved.

The foundational TOP methods are: 1) the workshop, 2) the focused conversation and 3) the event planning/orchestration. These are used separately or together to enable communities and organisations to accomplish major tasks. They are most commonly used in strategic planning, leadership development, team building, philosophy and mission retreats, customer service and organisational transformation. Among these applications it is most widely used from community development to corporate planning in strategic planning. Another crucial aspect of TOP is the role of the facilitator who must 'inspire participants to become agents of change.'

It has been used world wide in corporations and in community development. UNDP has used TOP in programmes at the global, regional and country levels, including LIFE, GEF Small Grants Programme, retreats for SEED, SEPED, and MDGD.

In this section we have described only some of the methods which could be useful to UNDP and others. This is a dynamic area in which new approaches are constantly being evolved and adapted to different contexts. We would hope and expect to witness new innovations as more initiatives are encouraged to increase the levels of participation of both primary and secondary stakeholders in both specific developmental activities as well as policy consultations, dialogue and formulation

Chapter 4: Monitoring and Evaluation of Participation

1. Introduction

If the promotion of people's participation, in one form or another, is to be an explicit objective (of a development programme or project), then both its outcome and effect will need to be both monitored and evaluated. In this respect we are not referring simply to the notion of 'participatory evaluation'; this is an approach to evaluation, with its particular methodology and techniques, which is applicable across the whole range of development projects. Participatory evaluation is now a recognised form of M and E and is increasingly practised as a counterweight to the more externally led, blue-print approaches. The M and E of participation refers to efforts, within a project's overall M and E procedures, to monitor the development of people's participation within the context of the project's activities and to evaluate the outcomes and effect both in terms of the project's progress and also in relation to the development of people's knowledge, skills and understanding. However, this section will limit itself to examining participation in the project context, however, M and E will inevitably examine outcomes and effect in terms of people's changing relationships with other groups, the wider context in which they promote and defend their livelihoods, and their contacts with and participation in the institutional and administrative structures that govern the project context.

As shown in Chapter 1, participation in development means more than participation in economic benefits; it is a process which can range from information, consultation to local people assuming ownership of and responsibility for the development initiative. If the objective of a project is to encourage ownership and responsibility, then it will be important to monitor how people's participation in the project evolves over time from an initial more passive involvement to eventual active participation and responsibility. If indeed people's participation is critical for both the effectiveness and future sustainability of the project, then it will be vital that its evaluation should be built into the project's M and E system. Many development agencies are now confronting this crucial issue and devising appropriate systems.

2 Conceptual Issues

It is important to understand that in the M and E of participation it is necessary to move beyond existing dominant models of project evaluation and to structure an approach which recognises participation's quantitative and qualitative dimensions. As we have seen, participation is not merely a one-off input or action in relation to a project; it is an ongoing process which should underlie the project's progress. As such, therefore, it cannot be understood by a simple snap-shot approach; it demands a radically different approach to project M and E. In this respect, more traditional approaches to M and E are not wholly appropriate for the following reasons:

- over concern with effort, effect and efficiency and the tangible and material performance of the project
- built in bias towards favourable quantitative outcomes and rarely capture unforeseen consequences
- limited and static and unable to capture adequately the outcomes of projects which are not quantitative in nature
- usually externally conceived and implemented, taking little note of the experiences of local people
- often time-consuming major evaluation exercises which absorb the time and energy of project staff

Alternatives to the more traditional approaches have focused less on results which are quantitative and more on processes which are qualitative:

RESULTS ⊃ **QUANTITATIVE**
(Measurement) ⊃ (Judgement)

PROCESSES P QUALITATIVE

(Description) P (Interpretation)

The M and E of participation, therefore, will involve some tangible or physical outcomes, which will be visible and able to be quantified, and which can ultimately be measured and the extent of change can be judged. It also involves to a large extent, however, qualitative processes and these will have to be described and ultimately interpreted in order to obtain an understanding of the change which has taken place. The M and E of participation is concerned with both of these dimensions and appropriate systems will need to be put in place to monitor both. There is now an increasing amount of literature which examines and explains current alternative approaches to M and E, most of which stress its process and participatory nature and which argue that the more traditional quantitative approaches are inadequate for understanding the outcomes and effect of participatory development. One of the main problems with these traditional approaches is dependence entirely on external evaluators and their consequent failure to incorporate the views of local people. Yet the distinction between insider and outsider views is important and evaluation methods are needed which are able to bring these out. One of the great contributions of PRA has been the fundamental questioning of many areas of development where previously 'professional' opinions of outsiders were always given priority over those of local people. It challenges evaluators to ensure that the question of 'whose reality counts?', to use a term of Robert Chambers, is fundamental to the evaluation process.

3. Key Elements in the Monitoring and Evaluation of Participation

Over the past decade there has emerged an approach to M and E, which is not based exclusively on the measurement of physical or material objectives, but which seeks to explain the changes which are occurring as a result of a development project. Participation is both a process and an abstract concept and, while we can attribute quantitative dimensions to some of the activities involved (e.g. attendance at group meeting), these are inadequate in explaining the nature, quality and extent of the resulting participation. In other words, in the M and E of participation we will be concerned not only with results which are quantitative but, more importantly, with processes which are essentially qualitative. Participation is something that develops over time and it cannot simply be measured by a single snapshot form of exercise. Participation as a process unfolds throughout (and after) the life of a project and it has a range of characteristics and properties. The M and E of participation will involve a number of quantitative aspects and also a less predictable number of qualitative aspects. The key principles which should guide this exercise include the following:

Qualitative as well as quantitative:	Both dimensions of participation must be included in the evaluation in order for the outcome to be fully understood.
Dynamic as opposed to static:	The evaluation of participation demands that the entire process over a period of time be evaluated and not merely a limited snapshot. Conventional ex post facto evaluation, therefore, will not be adequate.
Central importance of monitoring:	The evaluation of a process of participation is impossible without relevant and continual monitoring. Indeed monitoring is the key to the whole exercise and the only means by which the qualitative descriptions can be obtained to explain the process which has occurred.
Participatory evaluation:	In the entire evaluation process, the people involved in the project have a part to play. It is not a question of an external evaluator solely determining the project outcome; the people themselves will also have a voice.

The key to the M and E of participation lies in the emerging concept and techniques of qualitative evaluation, which is based on the assumption that projects are dynamic and evolving and not simply following a predetermined direction. Qualitative evaluation takes us 'beyond the numbers game' and identifies the key characteristics or phenomena which could illustrate a process of participation and systematically describes and interprets activities and changes which occur in these. Qualitative evaluation is by definition:

- naturalistic enquiry, that is the study of processes as they occur rather than on the basis of pre-determined and expected outcomes;
- heuristic, in that it is subject to continuous redefinition as knowledge of a project and its outcome increases. It evolves by observable changes being followed up and new questions coming to the fore. It builds toward a comprehensive understanding of the activities being evaluated;
- holistic, in that it sees the project as a working whole which has to be understood from many different perspectives;
- inductive, in that it seeks to understand outcomes without imposing predetermined expectations or benchmarks. It begins with specific observations and builds towards a general pattern of outcomes.

Participation is not merely to do with outputs and results ; it is more to do with change in such things as organisational capabilities, people's attitudes and behaviour, institutional growth, differential access, the perceptions and reactions of other stakeholders and people's relationships with those who have power. It is a critical dimension of development projects since the changes which it could bring about in the political, economic and social aspects of poor people's lives are immense. For that reason, its M and E demands a more sensitive and relevant approach.

4. Indicators of Participation

M and E involves asking a number of broad questions concerning project output, effect and impact. Essentially, we need to know what has happened as a result of the project's activities, when and to what extent. We also need to understand the economic, political and social changes which have occurred and how these are perceived. In order to do this we need to identify and agree the indicators which will be used to describe and to illustrate the results and changes which we are looking for. The use of indicators is a prominent feature of most M and E systems and there is extensive literature on their nature, purpose and how they should be used. In particular, emphasis is placed on the need to ensure that the indicators selected for the M and E of a particular project are:

- valid
- relevant
- specific
- timely
- reliable
- sensitive
- cost-effective

The selection of indicators is a critical issue and the most important thing is to ensure that proposed indicators meet the above criteria. There is little point in selecting indicators which, for example, are over-complex, demand enormous amounts of staff time or appear to be un-related to the objectives of the project. Furthermore, indicators of participation will need to be both quantitative and qualitative; quantitative indicators to measure the extent and the magnitude and qualitative indicators to describe and to explain the nature and quality of the participation which has occurred. The following is a composite list of possible indicators of a process of participation which is drawn from a range of project level examples:

Quantitative Indicators of Participation

- Improved and more effective service delivery
- Numbers of project level meetings and attendance levels

- Percentages of different groups attending meetings (e.g. women, landless)
- Numbers of direct project beneficiaries
- Project input take-up rates
- Numbers of local leaders assuming positions of responsibility
- Numbers of local people who acquire positions in formal organisations
- Numbers of local people who are involved in different stages of project

Qualitative Indicators of Participation

- Organisational growth at the community level
- Growing solidarity and mutual support
- Knowledge of financial status of project
- Concern to be involved in decision-making at different stages
- Increasing ability of project group to propose and undertake actions
- Representation in other government or political bodies with relation to the project
- Emergence of people willing to take on leadership
- Interaction and the building of contacts with other groups and organisations
- People begin to have a say in and to influence local politics and policy formulation

The above are not a model list of indicators of participation; they are far too many and are presented merely as examples of the kinds of indicators which could be used. The two critical issues are (i) to work with the minimum number of indicators which could give a realistic understanding of the evolving process of participation, and (ii) to determine the indicators on the basis of the characteristics and purpose of the project. There are no generic indicators for the M and E of participation. A further question concerns who determines the indicators and how far indicators necessarily have to be external and supposedly objective; there is an increasing awareness that local people should also be involved in determining how their increasing participation could best be monitored and the more appropriate indicators. It should be borne in mind that 'indicators' is a term employed by external development projects and that it may need to be translated in a different way in the local context. Indeed, as we shall see below, there are even suggestions that indicators are not very useful in the M and E of processes like participation and that less structured and more flexible means are needed to evaluate qualitative change. Recent experiments broadly in the field of social development have begun to monitor qualitative processes such as participation, not on the basis of predetermined indicators, but by using a series of open-ended questions which project participants answer. The following is a brief explanation of how this approach functions:

Box 4.1 Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh

A particularly innovative line of enquiry has begun in the context of the work of the. Essentially this deals with the issue of the monitoring of qualitative processes of social change, which is at the heart of the M and E of social development, but with the deliberate abandonment of the use of indicators. In the place of indicators, the basis of the monitoring system was a simple question which was put to the participants: during the last month, in your opinion, what do you think was the most significant change that took place in the lives of the people participating in the project?

The first step in this monitoring process involves a selection of the domains of change to be monitored, which were as follows:

- Change in people's lives

- Change in people's participation
- Changes in the sustainability of people's institutions and their activities

The whole monitoring process around the above three ideas is then divided into a further eight steps: The Reporting Period, Identification of the Participants, Phrasing the Question, The Structure of Participation, Feedback, Verification, Quantification and Monitoring the Monitoring System. The two key features of this experiment are (a) the responses to the questions which are basically descriptive and explanatory, and (b) the evolutionary approach to monitoring with its emphasis upon the non-use of specific indicators, continual summaries, participant control, on-going adaptation and participant's interpretation. (Davies, 1995)

5. The Importance of Monitoring

A process of participation at the project level cannot be evaluated if it has not been monitored during the project's lifetime. Monitoring is the critical dimension of the M and E of participation and, from the beginning of the project, a minimum but effective system must be established to monitor the unfolding of people's participation. Given its largely qualitative nature, it will be impossible to try to evaluate participation by a one-off ex-poste evaluation exercise. 'Minimum but effective' refers to the importance of avoiding a complex and demanding monitoring system for one which will provide adequate data and information but within the limitations of the resources and time available. A monitoring system for participation involves measuring, recording, collecting, processing and interpreting data and information, it must involve both project staff and local people and it must be seen as an integral part of project activities. The key features of a monitoring system at the local level include:

- Participation of Local People: the monitoring system should be participatory and fully involve project participants and staff.
- Integrated not Separate: the system should be an integral part of project staff's work. It should not be seen as a tedious addition but as important as other project activities.
- Developed not Imposed: the monitoring system should not be designed beforehand and given to project staff to implement. Where possible an appropriate system should be designed and managed by staff and project participants.
- Continuous and Regular: the monitoring of participation must be maintained at a steady and continuous pace in order to ensure continuity in the data and information collected.
- Record not Remember: qualitative observations and descriptions must be recorded in written form and stored appropriately; it is good practice to record as quickly as possible and not to try and remember at a later date.

The monitoring of participation must be supported by a number of standard forms upon which recording can be made over a period of time. Such forms should not be too complex or demanding in terms of time, but should help to structure a continuous understanding of participation in the project. It is useful to bare in mind that a development project will be monitoring a range of activities at any time and, as a result, the demandings of the monitoring of participation must be realistic. In this respect a regular monthly session to record events, incidents and changes in relation to participation should suffice. The preparation of a form to record the quantitative aspects of participation should not be too complicated and can be designed on the basis of the project's characteristics and activities. Box 4.2 is an example of the kind of monthly form which could be used for the continuous monitoring of the qualitative indicators:

Box 4.2 Qualitative Indicators of Participation

Month/Year:

1. Organisational growth among project group
2. Links with other institutions or government bodies
3. Participation in project decision-making and implementation

4. Ability of project group to propose and to undertake actions

Once a month - or less if insufficient activity has taken place - project staff and local people would briefly review the above indicators and report accordingly. Again such sessions may take little time if there has not been much project activity. The key is that the monitoring must be undertaken regularly in order to obtain the unbroken description and explanation of people's participation. More detailed monitoring of participation could include the use of diaries kept by both project staff and 'leaders' among the project group, in which a more detailed record would be kept of one or two key project activities which would illustrate the participation developing.

6. Interpretation

While quantitative data can be measured and an assessment made of the extent of the participation which has occurred, the more qualitative recordings and observations will need to be interpreted in relation to the indicators used. Much of the description and observation on the qualitative indicators may be subjective and hence the need to base the interpretation around the indicators. Interpretation is a difficult task since participation can unfold slowly and project staff may not be experienced in this field. There are also a number of other important issues:

- Interpretation should be a participatory exercise involving both project group members and staff. The forum for the exercise is usually open discussions or review meetings but under the guidance of a facilitator and structured around the indicators. Both individual and collective memory will be important aspects of interpretation with different stakeholders playing a role in retrospectively drawing out the major conclusions on what has been the progress in terms of participation.
- Interpretation should take place regularly and not be left to annual 'mega' events. The regularity of the meetings will be dictated by factors particular to the context and to the project, but almost certainly periodic exercises of verifying what is happening will take place every three months or so. A regular three-monthly half day exercise, which allows a project to develop an understanding of participation as it unfolds, is to be preferred to the annual review which can often stall at the project's inability to structure in one go, all the change which may have taken place during the year.
- Wherever possible the verbal analysis and interpretation should be translated into some kind of visual diagrammatic form. In this respect there has been a very useful development of visual techniques in the past decade and there is much with which we could experiment.

Finally, the M and E of participation should itself be a participatory exercise: participatory evaluation is now an established approach to the M and E of development projects and it is entirely relevant to the evaluation of participation. In this respect the recent UNDP Participatory Evaluation Handbook should be used as a complement to this Guidebook on Participation.

Chapter 5: Institutional Supports for Participation

1 Introduction

A key question of the past few years in development has been how to scale up successful small initiatives. One of the constraints lies in the difficulties of designing and implementing programmes encompassing larger numbers of people in such a way as to permit their respective voices to be heard, listened to and acted upon. Many agencies have found themselves encumbered with attitudes, procedures and skills derived from an approach to development which had, at its heart, large scale capital infra-structural investment and support to the state. The move to an alternative type of development including projects such as the promotion of small enterprises, community based natural resource management and primary health care was accompanied by a greater emphasis on participation, greater flexibility in planning and the involvement of actors outside the formal state apparatus. This dual pressure for change has posed many challenges for official aid agencies and required changes at a practical level in procedures (for example, the project management cycle) and it has demanded new skills as well as a change of attitudes and of the underlying development paradigm underpinning their work.

This chapter will explore some of the issues and approaches related to ensuring institutional support for participatory approaches to development in larger agencies. First we will look at the challenges of 'downstreaming' participation followed by the equally important area of 'upstreaming', in particular the important role which can be played by UN agencies in relating micro concerns to macro policy debates. The chapter concludes with a selective reference to current issues in 'mainstreaming' participation.

2 Downstreaming Participation

The introduction of participation is not just a matter of holding a couple of PRA exercises to reconfirm preexisting programme designs or to be able to say that people have 'participated'. As illustrated in [Chapter 1](#), participation is more than merely a collection of field techniques - it is about a commitment to turning many of the previous approaches to development upside down. To take from the private sector, it is about putting the client first rather than prioritising the interests of the delivery system. Hence the distinction made between 'primary stakeholders' (those to benefit from the programme) and secondary stakeholders (such as those charged with implementation in the state system). Priority should be given throughout the project cycle to the clients needs and to establishing their views in order to provide a high quality development programme.

Downstreaming participation within an organisation requires that participation is not just seen as something to be practised at the project or programme level but rather as a central principle informing the internal management practices of the organisation. It is important for development agencies to think carefully about matching working methods, procedures and the style of management to the overall objectives of a specific programme or, if appropriate, to the country programme objectives. It is often the mismatch of these factors which undermines institutional attempts to improve levels of participation.

Any agency committed to participation has to ensure a consistency in their way of working. The organisational culture is unlikely to be conducive to participation in the programme if the internal tradition is one of hierarchy and a lack of participation by staff in the office routine. It is often difficult to change large official institutions which traditionally have been wedded to strict hierarchy and where the senior staff have not been required to discuss policies and decisions with other staff. In all walks of life this form of organisational structure is being challenged; from the commercial sector to public service the advantages of a more consultative, participatory style of management seems to pay dividends in terms of greater commitment and ownership of all staff to decisions made, and through drawing upon a much wider body of experience.

Can we really expect an agency which is still run like an old-fashioned bureaucracy to really inspire an interest in participation? Most organisations have found that there is a serious organisational challenge they must confront when they have tried to change the programme work without also looking at their own practices. Increasingly official agencies are realising the importance of greater transparency and a participatory form of management.

Box 5.1 Participation in Management: Some Ideas of Good Practice.

1. Regular office meetings where all members of staff have an opportunity to add things to the agenda. Try revolving the chair to breakdown the traditional hierarchy. Make it clear what is open for discussion, consultation, information, decision making and what is not.
2. Improve transparency, by updating staff on major policies regarding government and other stakeholders and provide to stakeholders written statements on policy goals on the in-country mission and programmes.
3. Encourage staff to feed in ideas and experiences to the programme process with incentives designed to improve the quality of the programme. Ensure that key learning points and experiences are not suppressed to the longer term detriment of the programme.
4. Ensure that staff who will have to manage or implement a programme contribute to the design process thereby avoiding mismatch between design and what is practicable, acceptable and desirable in a given situation.
5. Where necessary train staff in the skills and confidence building techniques to ensure that they fully contribute and participate in the office discussions and programme process.

It is also important to ensure that the way in which a programme is managed is appropriate to the needs of a participatory approach. Staff should not be regarded as too distant, they need to break down some of the artificial barriers constructed around status and approach. It is also the experience of many agencies that the initial investment in participatory programmes is greater than non-participatory programme design. It is therefore important that staffing levels and skills are adequate to cope with the time demands made by large scale participation. If an office cannot guarantee adequate staffing in numbers and quality then it may be best not to become involved in certain types of programme. Again it is important to ensure that the management capacity of the supporting office is able to meet the needs of the participatory programme, which may not always be easy if this represents a major change from the past. Therefore retraining existing staff may be necessary and several UN agencies and field offices have already recognised the need to re-equip their staff if they are to engage in participatory approaches.

Box 5.2 Staff Training: Some Examples

The UNDP office in Bangladesh encouraged many staff to become involved in PRA exercises not only to help them understand the advantages of PRA as a method of data collection and needs analysis but also as a way of encouraging them to adapt a new way of working and to reorientate staff towards sustainable poverty reduction focus.

The World Bank is also encouraging staff to make visits to and stay in rural villages as a way of understanding better the lives their key clients, the rural poor, actually live.

Some agencies have introduced monthly staff seminars where staff share experiences and lessons learned from their work in order to improve the institutional learning at office level.

It is sometimes difficult to change procedures to meet new types of programmes because, understandably, there are minimum accountability standards imposed by most agencies and their respective sponsors. There are ways of working which can mitigate the more constraining aspects of procedures and many agencies have found that they are often able to amend many procedures without compromising accountability. What is clear is that procedures, application forms and monitoring and evaluation systems, which have been designed for very different purposes, may need to be reviewed if they are to be appropriate for participatory programmes.

Internal Bureaucratic and Administrative Procedures should:

- Assist, not constrain, the participatory process;

- Be relatively flexible to allow for participation to be able to effect the design and implementation of the programme;
- Try to avoid long lead times during which many factors may have changed considerably casting doubt on the value of the original design;
- Permit participation at different points in the programme process; and
- Highlight the contributions of the different stakeholders and make it clear where priorities have been placed in light of these.

3 Upstreaming Participation

One of the major comparative advantages of the UN system is its ability to develop policy dialogue based on micro-interventions. Participatory approaches provide further ability to listen and to learn from people and to translate this into macro policy dialogue with government and others, including multilateral agencies. UNDP refers to this as 'upstreaming':

'participation should not be defined or confined to simply operating at the grassroots level (with or without the involvement of NGOs and CBOs). This aspect is significant within the context of UNDP's efforts to focus its interventions at the upstream or policy level'

Indeed, it is often this upstreaming which provides the justification for UNDP to become involved directly in programmes involving civil society organisations (CSOs). The additional benefit of being able to influence policy justifies the extra costs for large agencies engaged directly in grass roots development. This ability to provide a bridge between the micro- and macro has also been stressed by several parts of UNDP including the UNV which specifically recognises the advantages of being able to place UNV specialists, DDS Field workers, National UNVs and others at the grass roots and to use their experience to inform policy decisions. Furthermore, some of the recent PRA exercises have sought to provide direct feedback to policy makers through using participating villagers as facilitators in sessions with government officials. In Central Asia, the results of PRA exercises supported by UNDP and UNV through INTRAC were fed back to government officials and led to the local NGOs being incorporated into the national poverty forum because of the quality of the information gleaned through the programme from those rural communities undergoing rapid transition.

Box 5.3 Institutional Development in Central Asia.

In collaboration with INTRAC, UNDP has supported a Poverty Alleviation Programme in Central Asia which seeks to directly support the introduction of participatory development at the grass roots with rural people who have undergone a rapid process of economic transition due to the move away from collective farms and towards a market economy. The programme has placed UNVs in rural areas to work with emerging CBOs and local NGOs using micro-credit, PRAs and other interventions. These programmes act as demonstration/pilot programmes which can be used to inform and influence new national level NGOs about options in poverty alleviation and participatory approaches. These programmes are also used to inform government officials about new ways of working and provide a direct feedback from community groups into the policy discussions of the new government.

Through upstreaming participation we are also able to contribute to the increased democratisation of relationships between government and civil society organisations. Channels are opened for dialogue and information flow, CSOs are able to articulate their own perspectives directly rather than through several organisational layers, each with its own prejudices, self-interests and capacity for altering the message being heard and passed onto others. Upstreaming provides opportunities to improve governance and accountability of the state to its constituents by exposing government officials to the views of their clients.

In recent years UNDP has been able to facilitate the exchange of views between stakeholders from the State to CSOs through the means of the major international conferences. Each major conference; Rio and the environment, Copenhagen and social development, Beijing and Women, Istanbul and habitat, Cairo and population, has provided in-country opportunities for dialogue between different social groups and institutional interests. UNDP has a comparative advantage in being able to provide the forum, targeted resources and technical support to preparatory conferences, and follow up action

and monitoring of their outcomes and action plans. These events provide not only the opportunity to discuss policy related to the specific set of interests but also to strengthen the democratic processes through national level dialogue between different stakeholders.

Further enhancement of the dialogue around major development issues, whether oriented to an international conference or not can be promoted using some of the methods described in chapter 3. Specifically, roundtables and "open spaces", can be used as a means of bringing people together. To include larger numbers of people in consultations and dialogues it is also possible to arrange such meetings in "cascades", whereby participants at a national meeting might, for example, carry the debate to regional, sectoral, occupational and other groups. The results of these meetings can then be fed back through representative groups to a further national meeting. In some countries, National Selection Committees have been able to play a catalytic role in opening dialogue between the groups represented in the committee. The importance of this type of activity can be to contribute to democratic processes as well as to widen the range of views articulated in discussions of major national policy concerns. To this end, the UNDP, often in collaboration with other members of the UN family can play a strategic role through making the most of its comparative advantage in being able to bring into policy discussions different members of civil society, including the State as well as other external stakeholders such as bilateral donors and technical agencies.

Box 5.4 Linking Macro-Policy To Micro Interventions.

1. The UNDP is well placed to assist local communication and co-operation between different development actors : e.g. government officials, NGOs, CBOs and other CSOs.
2. Learning from micro-interventions can be used to provide high quality information for higher level policy discussions.
3. Community group representatives can act as facilitators with development workers, e.g. feeding back results from PRA; hosting development workers in their communities.
4. Direct evidence of the impact of policy change can be fed through to planners, e.g. effect of price changes, structural adjustment programmes etc.
5. Bringing both primary and secondary stakeholders together for: needs assessments, programme design, monitoring and evaluation.
6. Facilitating co-operative exchange of experiences within countries as well as across regions, South - South and more.

Many of the methods and approaches described in this handbook should also have a secondary but important effect of improving the levels of understanding between those working in State institutions and those in CSOs. In the past there was an unnecessarily divisive approach of each to the other. Improved dialogue facilitated by UNDP can help officials in government to understand the value (and values) of those in CSOs and their work as well as provide them with the skills to listen to, and opportunities to hear from, their constituents. Additionally, CSOs can benefit from the advantages of an improved understanding of the realities and constraints on state action and the range of options open to legislators. Through better mutual understanding we would expect improvements to follow in the environment and context in which CSOs and the state interact, sometimes called the "enabling environment".

4 Issues of mainstreaming

This section reviews common issues that need to be addressed when establishing participation a key principle in the procedures, policies and practices of an institution.

- i. Quantity or quality: there has been a rather sterile debate around participation which centres on the arguments as to whether participatory approaches are good for getting high quality information and feed back from clients yet not so good at obtaining a quantity of information in large scale programmes. Some agencies have tried to resolve this by arguing for a limited number of people within a programme to enjoy full participation or for organising a pilot programme with a high degree of participation.

- ii. **Sampling:** it is argued that if groups of foresters, for example, all share common views then it is only necessary to talk to a few groups to get an idea about their views rather than spend a lot of time and money talking to all of the foresters. The counter argument is that participation is not just about data collection yet this is an important purpose but not the only one. Indeed if data collection is the only objective, then sampling may make sense. However, participation goes well beyond this and the processes involved have far more objectives including a whole ideology of improved communication between service delivery and clients. Therefore all clients should feel ownership of a programme. For example, if the aim of the programme is about improved use of forest products, a sample of PRAs in two villages may provide all the information required, but will not bring into the programme the other communities. Furthermore, it will not explain to them the aims of the programme, nor allow communities to explore their present uses of forest products and their own feelings about options for the future.
- iii. **Going to scale:** it has also been argued that participation is only a process which could be promoted at the level of small scale NGO type programmes, but could not be managed or was not relevant for large national scale programmes. This has clearly been shown to be false. We now have many examples of larger scale programme encompassing high degrees of participation. The Bangladesh UNDP office, for example, incorporated participatory exercises from a large number of communities into the Bangladesh Human Development Report. Large international NGOs such as ACTIONAID have repeated participatory methods in many hundreds of villages. Furthermore, while Chambers has recognised that some of the approaches he has sponsored may get diluted through the process of scale, he has also noted that perhaps it is worth some weakening of participatory methods through having the opportunity of introducing a 'benign virus' into large agencies which can work away to improve the way they operate.
- iv. **Can We Have Too Much Participation?** In Chapter 2 a matrix was used which matches different levels of participation against the project cycle. If we refer to this and use it for different types of programmes, it should become clear that not all types of programmes will call for the same levels of participation. For example, the supply of capital equipment for a state railway will probably hardly justify participation; whereas road building might require some levels of consultation on the route to be taken but, once a decision is made to go ahead, it may not include communities if the building work is carried out by a contractor and maintenance is the responsibility of the Highways Department. On the other hand, a feeder road which assumes community maintenance will require far greater participation of local people, and their views to be heard and acted upon before they can be expected to assume any responsibility. Other types of programmes, such as community based forestry, also require very high levels of participation by communities at all levels if a sustainable system is to be established which could survive and prosper after the end of project funding.
- v. **Allowing time:** it is often argued that participation takes time. Indeed, time must be allowed for if we are to be honest about participation and this may delay project implementation. However, if we compare participatory to non-participatory programmes, analysis reveals the very long lead times created by the bureaucratic machinery. Rather than say that we do not have the time for participation, we should be looking to reform our procedures to reduce the time they absorb. Also, studies by the World Bank and others show that while there are extra costs in time and staff input demanded by programmes which are participatory and that disbursement is initially slow, it picks up speed later. This should argue for a programming which assumes low levels of disbursement in the early stages of a programme but higher levels later on. This may also avoid the common situation of high levels of initial disbursement in many traditional programmes, as the easy inputs are purchased (capital items, accommodation) and low disbursement later because of the inappropriate design, low take up and interest by the target population and low commitment by those having to execute the programme.
- vi. **Need to reinvigorate:** participation like any other element of development can easily become over institutionalised. It can become a part of the bureaucratic routine, something to be done to meet the criteria needed to get a programme through, even another box to tick. Development organisations need to be aware of this problem and take action to avoid it by rejecting the over-formalisation of participation, keeping an open mind to new methods, changing our approach, allowing experimentation and permutations of methods. Sometimes it

is necessary to re-invent organisations and approaches in order to introduce the dynamic and excitement lost. There are ways that organisational change can be costly and damaging, but managed well, they can bring new life to our work and reinvigorate programmes.

Chapter 6: Resources for Promoting Participation

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This section is not intended to be a comprehensive bibliography but rather a cross-section of the literature available on participatory development.

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2.2 Inter Agency Learning Group on Participation

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3 Sources of Participation on the Internet

<http://www.parnet.org>

The Participatory Action Research Website, located at Cornell University, Ithaca, U.S.A, contains:

PAR events at Cornell & around the world
Institutions, course offerings and faculty
Publications
Practical advice and techniques

<http://www.oneworld.org/iied/resource>

The Participatory Learning and Action Website, located at Sustainable Agriculture Programme, IIED, London, UK, contains:

Information on application on PRA methods (sectoral and regional examples)
Lists of PRA practitioners
Information on various other participatory methodologies

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/eldis/eldis.html>

Eldis is a gateway to information on development or the environment. Some of the information it contains is:

Large collection of descriptions & links to databases, full text materials, library catalogues, gopher sites, discussion lists
Participation/PRA information sources

<http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/sustdev/ppdirect/pphomepg.htm>

The Food and Agriculture Organisation Website, located in the People's Participation section of Sustainable Development Dimensions which is a service of the Sustainable Development Department of FAO, in Rome, Italy, contains:

Plan of Action for people's participation in rural development
FAO People's Participation Programme
Ongoing participatory project and research activities supported by FAO rural institutions & participation service (SDAR)
Case studies
Special -- toward sustainable food security

<http://www.worldbank.org/html/edi/sourcebook/sbhome.html>

The World Bank Participation Sourcebook Website, located in the World Bank, Washington D.C., USA, contains:

Forward, Table of Contents, What is the Participation Sourcebook
Chapter I - Reflections: What is participation?
Chapter II - Sharing Experiences - Examples of Participatory Approaches
Chapter III - Practice Pointers in Participatory Planning & Decision Making
Chapter IV - Pointers in Enabling the Poor to Participate
Appendices

<http://www.oneworld.org/oda/>

The Overseas Development Administration Home Page, located in London, UK. The following technical notes are available here:

Guidance Note on How to do Stake Holder Analysis of Aid Projects and Programmes
Guidance Note on Indicators for Measuring and Assessing Primary Stakeholder Participation
Note on Enhancing Stakeholder Participation in Aid Activities

<http://www.idrc.ca/corp/idrc.html>

The International Development Research Centre, public corporation created by the Canadian parliament to help researchers & communities in the developing world find solutions to their social, economic and environmental problems. Contains:

Projects
Networks
Publications
Documents

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/index.html>

Devline, located at the International Development Studies Department of the University of Sussex, UK. Provides information on issues of economic, social and sustainable development from the IDS and the British Library for Development Studies. Contains:

Databases

DS research, teaching, training, publications, events

A large library on Participatory Rural Appraisal and other participatory approaches
(for web site specifically on PRA, see <http://www.ids.ac.uk/pramain.html> - this also includes names and addresses of key people and organisations for PRA throughout the world)

<http://www.info.usaid.gov/agency/part-devel/partdev.html>

The USAID Participation Page, located in Washington D.C. Contains:

Administrators statement of principles on participatory development

Participation Forum papers which encompasses USAID activities taking place at levels of the agency.