

FINAL DRAFT

**MOLDOVA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND II
PARTICIPATION HANDBOOK FOR
COMMUNITIES**



May 2004

Moldova Social Investment Fund

Participation Handbook

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Introduction

Introduced in Bolivia a little over a decade ago, Social Funds have become one of the main tools of community-led poverty reduction. Through participating in social funds, communities can actively play a role in their own development and determine their own priorities. The first Social Fund was established as a temporary response to the social effects of an economic crisis and the accompanying adjustment process. The concept quickly spread to other countries also suffering the social impact of economic adjustment or change. Social funds have now been established in most countries in Latin America and have spread around the world, to Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Asia.

As social funds have increased in number, their objectives have become more diverse. Initially the focus was on employment creation, but over time these Funds have evolved to cover longer-term development needs, particularly investments in social sector infrastructure e.g. schools, clinics, water supply etc. Many now also support capacity building and participatory processes in local governments.

Social Funds share some common characteristics:

- They are second-tier financing agencies, which appraise, finance and supervise investments carried out by other agencies- typically line ministries, local governments, NGOs and community groups. This means the Social Fund will not implement the Project, but will support other organisations in doing so.
- They offer a choice or menu of multisectoral investments. Communities may choose from a menu of investment options.
- Investment is demand-driven, relying on project proposals submitted by a variety of local actors, generally including local governments, NGOs, line ministries and community groups. This means that you can define which project is most important to your community, based on the menu of projects, which the social fund supports.
- Social Funds have operational autonomy and employ modern management practices. Although they are in the public sector they operate like private firms. Social Funds will therefore not have the same 'bureaucratic' procedures of government agencies.

The Social Fund mechanism has been found to be a dynamic and replicable model, easily adapted and scaled up in diverse countries globally. There are now many social funds operating in countries all over the world. Participation is a basic principle of Social Funds, through local identification of priorities and in the implementation of small-scale investments. This participation encourages improved ownership and sustainability, and ultimately enhanced impact. Projects that communities decide are important to them will have a greater chance of being maintained by communities in the long-term.

Social Funds are agencies that finance small projects in several sectors targeted to benefit a country's poor and vulnerable groups based on.....demand generated by local groups and screened against a set of eligibility criteria.

Jorgenson and Van Domelen (2000)

Moldova underwent a difficult transition following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Faced with a serious economic crisis, the majority of the population, particularly in rural areas, experienced a sharp decline in living standards. The Moldova Social Investment Fund (MSIF) is a response to this crisis and is a key pillar of the Government's poverty reduction strategy.

Participatory processes are new to Moldova, where there is still a legacy of the centrally planned economy of the Soviet era. It is important that communities understand the value of participating in determining their development priorities and in implementing and sustaining their own projects. There is a danger, that benefits could be captured, by newly formed elite groups. This means it is very important to use the right tools and techniques to ensure that a proper participatory process takes place. Implementing demand-driven projects (projects based on community needs and demands and not decided by government agencies) in a participatory manner is a new challenge, which the MSIF has been addressing.

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide guidance to the implementing agencies and communities on how to participate in the MSIF and the tools that will enable effective participation.

Chapter 1 introduces the Moldova Social Investment Fund, its objectives and its project cycle. Chapter 2 examines the advantages of participation and what it entails. The entry-points for participation in the MSIF are discussed in Chapter 3, while the specific tools that may be used for successful participation in your communities are introduced in Chapter 4.

1. THE MOLDOVA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

1.1. Background and Objectives

The **Moldova Social Investment Fund (MSIF)**, was created by the Government of the Republic of Moldova with the technical support of the World Bank. The first pilot project started in 1997, and the official project was initiated in 1999. This 5-year project had 2 objectives:

- The empowerment of poor rural communities by strengthening their capacities in community decision making; and
- Improvement of the quality of basic social and economic services for poor rural populations

Box 1: MSIF Projects

Typology of Projects

Social Services: education (schools, kindergartens, early child education), health (PHC, health education etc)

Communal Services: water/sanitation, gas supply, roads/bridges, environment etc

Targeted Programs: children's social development, de-institutionalisation

Community Development Programs

Communities play an important role in planning and implementing projects, and contribute up to 25 percent of costs in cash or kind. The maximum amount of grant for projects is US\$75,000

The Moldova Social Investment Fund II builds on the successes of the initial Social Fund and will also be implemented over a period of 5 years from September 2004 to September 2009. The Project will contribute to the implementation of Moldova's Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy by empowering poor communities and vulnerable population groups to manage their priority development needs through:

- (i) improved delivery and quality of basic social and economic services; and
- (ii) development of the capacity of the community institutions and strengthening social capital.

The total cost of the MSIF II is US\$ 24 million, of which local communities are expected to contribute US\$ 2.5 million.

The lessons from the first SIF have indicated that:

- Communities must 'own' the project to make it successful, and must be involved at all stages of the project cycle

- Broad community consultation is important not only while identifying projects but also during the technical phases of implementation
- Communities need assistance in identification of priorities to make an informed choice
- Partnerships with other organizations and programs are very important for development impact
- Community involvement should continue in sustaining facilities for long-term impact
- Building the skills of institutions and communities is important for sustainability

The components of the MSIF II are:

Component I: Community Development

- Rural Community Micro-Projects
- Pilot Projects for Small Towns

-Capacity Building of SIF Partners (CBOs, LPAs, contractors, local consultants)

Component 2: Social Care Services Development

- Pilot Projects
- Capacity Building for central (social assistance offices) and local government and of service providers

Component 3: Capacity Building, Monitoring and Evaluation

- Contribution to capacity building of governmental institutions and learning of policy lessons
- Communication, dissemination and replication of best practice
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Component 4: Project Management

The MSIF II will continue and enhance the efforts of the MSIF at involving communities throughout the project cycle, and building the skills and capacities necessary to do so.

1.2. The Project Partners

The Project will be implemented by a number of partners, who will work closely together to ensure its successful implementation and sustainability.

National Board: The National Board is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of social sectors, with ten voting members from government, academia, NGOs (e.g. Soros Foundation, UNICEF, international and national NGOs and civil society), and bilateral donors (e.g. USAID, DFID).

Executive Office: The MSIF Executive Office is responsible for the implementation of the credit and grants, and will oversee all aspects of implementation. The Executive Director has four departments (see Figure 1), (i) finance and administration; (ii) community development and capacity building; (iii) micro-project implementation; and (iv) monitoring and MIS.

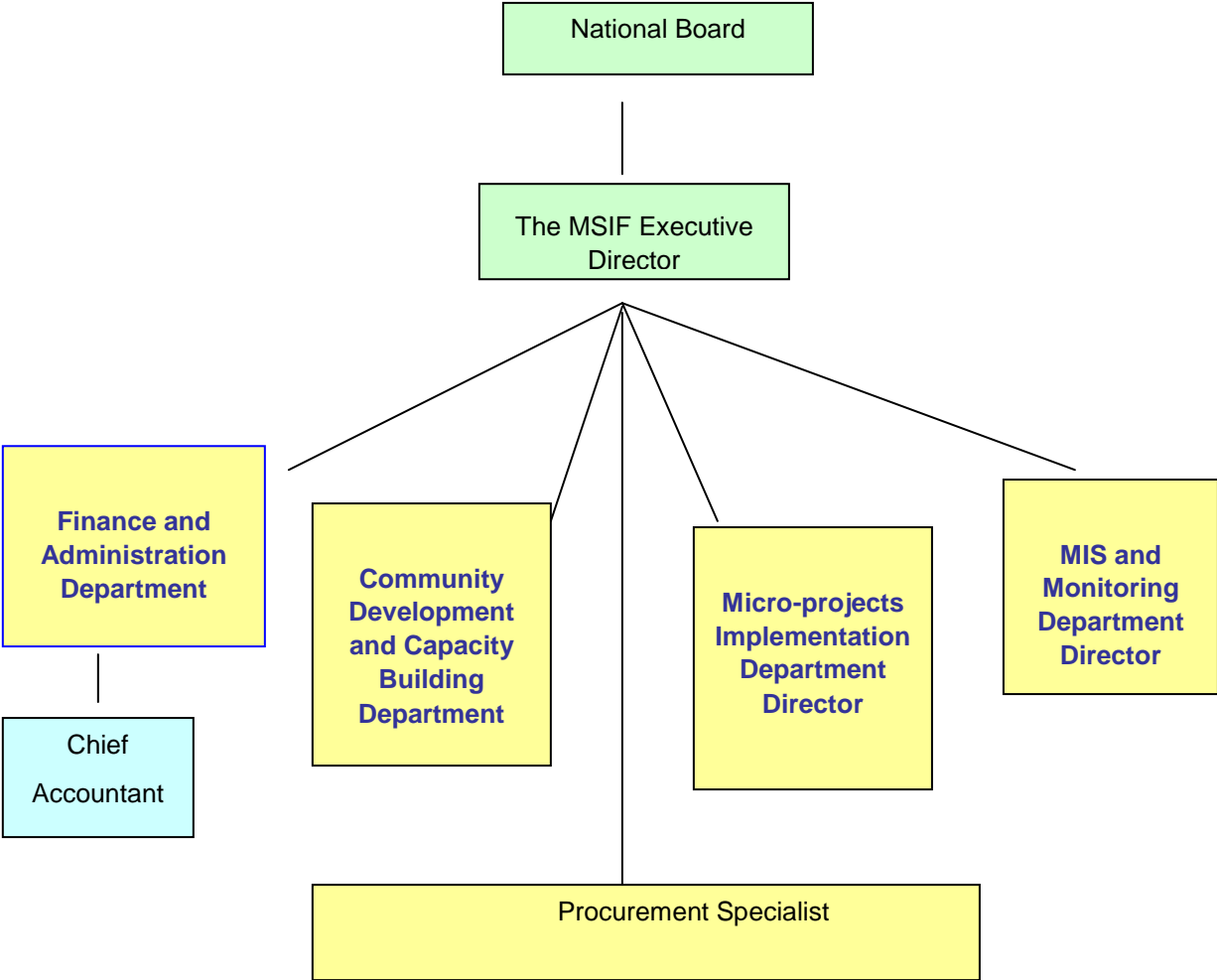
Implementing Agency: The Implementing Agency (IA) can be any local organisation (local government, NGO, CBO), which will manage micro-project preparation and implementation on behalf of the community. The IAs are expected to take responsibility for the assessment of needs, consultation with the population and beneficiaries, preparation of proposals, entering into grant agreements, microproject implementation, contributing to microproject operation and sustainability, planning and budgeting, and fund-raising.

Community Based Organisation: Community Based Organisations (CBOs) may be existing local organisations, or created specially for the Project, and if trusted by the community may serve as the Implementing Agency. The CBO may later become a registered 'Beneficiary Association' or BA.

Local Government: The local governments or Primaria will be important implementing partners. In micro-projects implemented in small towns, and for social care services projects, the primaria will serve as the Implementing Agency. An MOU will be signed with each local government for each micro-project.

Social Service Provider: This can be an organisation, NGO or other service provider contracted by the local government/IA to undertake delivery of social services.

Figure 1: MSIF Organisational Chart



Source: MSIF Brochure

1.3. The Project Cycle

The MSIF project cycle has several stages, involving the different partner organisations.

<p>Stage I</p> <p>Promotion</p> <p>Objective: Increase awareness and promote demand -driven nature of MSIF</p> <p>Responsibility: MSIF</p>	<p><i>Promotion and Needs Assessments:</i></p> <p>Promotion at 3 levels: (i) national; (ii) regional (judets); (iii) community</p> <p>Promotion includes a public education and awareness campaign, which is expected to stimulate micro-project proposals.</p> <p>The program will involve information dissemination through methods such as mass-media, workshops, seminars, round-tables etc.</p> <p>Communities will be informed about the MSIF and the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The MSIF Promotion Team will include specialists from different areas (social scientists, engineers) and will assess the needs and capacities of the communities.</p>
<p>Stage II</p> <p>Prioritisation of Projects</p> <p>Objective: To determine community priorities in a participatory manner and define the micro-project(s)</p> <p>Responsibility: MSIF, IA and Communities</p>	<p><i>Community Meetings:</i></p> <p>Potential micro-projects are prioritised through a community meeting.</p> <p>Where villages have less than 2,000 inhabitants a <i>General Community Meeting (GCM)</i> is held with a minimum of 25-30% of community members present.</p> <p>In larger villages with more than 2,000 inhabitants a <i>Meeting of Representatives</i> is held. Exact numbers are agreed with the primaria, community leaders and MSIF.</p> <p>The community decides which IA it will work with and the essential components of the proposal.</p> <p>A microproject must receive the support of at least 50% of the GCM to be taken further.</p> <p>The MSIF staff will present the results of the GCM and their assessment of the communities needs and capacity to the MSIF</p>
<p>Stage III</p> <p>Proposal Submission</p> <p>Responsibility: MSIF and IA</p>	<p><i>Proposal Development and Submission:</i></p> <p>The MSIF staff conduct a workshop with the IA on how to prepare a proposal.</p>

	<p>Based on the prioritisation through the community meetings, a proposal is prepared by the IA and submitted to the MSIF.</p> <p>Communities are expected to co-finance investments; 15% in the case of Community Driven Development Projects and 3% for community based social care projects.</p> <p>The community and local government are expected to pay 100% of the recurrent costs of the project.</p>
<p>Stage IV</p> <p>Appraisal</p> <p>Objective: To determine the suitability of the proposal, and consistency with the MSIF selection criteria</p> <p>Responsibility: MSIF</p>	<p><i>Appraisal:</i> The list of microprojects in the judets is appraised according to the MSIF criteria.</p> <p>A preliminary assessment is carried out by an Appraisal Engineer. If the project passes this stage it is presented to the Executive Committee (EC) for an initial approval for appraisal.</p> <p>A team then carries out a field appraisal, and provides technical recommendations to the MSIF. Projects pass to the second stage based on poverty criteria and will require further screening if additional studies are needed.</p> <p>The second stage of Appraisal involves more detailed field visits and discussions with beneficiaries and implementing agencies. The possibility of forming a <i>Beneficiary Association</i> is discussed, and capacity building needs identified.</p> <p>Technical specifications, BOQs etc are elaborated.</p> <p>Based on the appraisal report and available funds, the EC will decide whether to reject, approve or require modifications to the project.</p> <p>Approval, Conditional Approval or Rejection decisions are undertaken by the EC.</p> <p>A framework agreement is undertaken between the MSIF and the IA.</p>
<p>Stage V</p> <p>Implementation</p> <p>Objective: Ensure smooth and timely implementation, with attention to quality.</p> <p>Responsibility: IA, Communities with supervision by MSIF, Contractor, Local Supervisor</p>	<p><i>Implementation:</i> A contract is signed between the IA and the MSIF prior to implementation.</p> <p>The IA contracts a local supervisor to oversee the works. The MSIF follow up engineer and social scientist also supervise.</p> <p>Where works are below the amount of US\$10,000, agreement may be reached with the IA to execute the works.</p> <p>For larger projects the IA procures a local private contractor.</p>

<p>Stage VI</p> <p>Handover and Certification</p> <p>Objectives: To ensure that all necessary technical, financial and management issues are addressed to ensure adequate O&M by the responsible agency.</p> <p>Responsibility: MSIF, community, Local Government, IA, Contractors</p>	<p>As works progress, the contractor will supply a Statement of Accomplished Works or SAW.</p> <p>The follow-up engineer will assess the local supervisors rating for the MSIF database.</p> <p><i>Project Completion & Handovers:</i> Once works have been completed as per contract, the Contractor informs the IA. The local supervisor confirms the completion of works.</p> <p>The IA drafts an order of a Hand Over Committee, which is coordinated with the follow-up engineer and approved by the MSIF.</p> <p>Preliminary handover is attended by at least 5 persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Local Government representatives -Head of the IA -MSIF representative -Local Supervisor -Representative of organisation or government body responsible for future O&M <p>The IA hands over key documents to the Handover Committee</p> <p>The agency responsible will then keep all documentation related to the project. The Defect Liability Period starts the day after handover agreement approval, and can last from 3 months to 1 year.</p> <p>The final handover takes place 15 days after the Defect Liability Period is over. The same 5 persons as above must be present.</p>
<p>Stage VII</p> <p>Performance Contract</p> <p>Objective: To ensure post-project sustainability.</p> <p>Responsibility: MSIF, IA, Communities</p>	<p><i>Performance Contract & Sustainability:</i> The MSIF and the community enter into a 2 year post-implementation contractual arrangement. If the community successfully implements the actions included in the sustainability plans, it can receive a matching grant of US\$500 a year for developmental activities.</p>

1.4. The Results from MSIF

The MSIF has had a significant impact in the rehabilitation and development of essential social infrastructure, and in building the capacity of communities and local governments to participate in their own development. This is illustrated in the examples below.

Box 2: The Mladinesti School Project

The school in the village of Mladinesti in Lapusna county serves 253 students. The old school boilers needed 200 tons of coal per heating season, but the temperature would still not go higher than 12 degrees centigrade. Often the heating system would not function at all, because of frequent electricity black outs. A state inspection found that 30 percent of students got ill during the academic year, because of the low temperatures in the classroom.

The MSIF provided a ray of hope to the desperate community. The US\$ 26,727 helped fix the school's leaky roof, replaced the heating system and implemented basic energy conservation measures.

Coal consumption was reduced to 60 tons of coal per heating season and the estimated cost savings was US\$ 7,636. For the first time in many years the students in Mladinesti school could take off their winter coats in the classroom.

The impact of the changes was immediately evident. Absenteeism decreased from 12 percent to 5 percent. Educational performance improved and student and teacher sickness due to low temperature was reduced considerably. The recently created PTA managed to collect US\$351 in the school fund and the community was more than willing to participate in the solution of problems.

Source: Social Funds Innovation Update, MSIF, January 2002

Box 3 Pirlita Performance Contract

The village of Pirlita in Ungheni county entered into a Performance Contract with the NGO 'Mostenitoni'. The total cost of this 2 year Performance Contract is US\$ 2,000. The NGO deposited US\$1,000 up-front into its bank account and used these funds to finance the following activities:

- Procurement of modern didactic material, equipment for the gym
- Teacher retraining- with 12 teachers participating in training courses on critical skills development in reading and writing and facilitation techniques
- Health education programs
- Educational programs on democracy and civil society
- Visits to historical places in Moldova

Source: Social Funds Innovations Update, MSIF, January 2002

The MSIF II intends to build on the successes of this first phase and both deepen and expand its impact. Effective participation by communities will be an important factor for the success of the MSIF II.

2. AN INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPATION

Community based development and more recently its new form, community driven development (CDD), have become one of the main mechanisms for development projects. Community Based Development refers to projects that actively involve beneficiaries (people who benefit from projects) in their design and management. Community Driven Development refers to community-based development projects in which communities have direct control over key project decisions, including management of investment funds. Social funds are a good example of Community Driven Development as communities will determine how resources are going to be used.

Community based development relies on communities to use their 'social capital' to organise themselves and participate in development processes. Concepts such as participation, community, and social capital are critical to how community participation is conceptualised and implemented.

Community Driven Development

- Enhances sustainability
- Improves efficiency and effectiveness
- Allows poverty reduction to be taken to scale
- Empowers poor people
- Builds social capital
- Strengthens governance; and
- Complements market and public sector activities

It does this by

- Reducing information problems (getting development priorities directly from communities and allowing communities to identify projects and who should receive benefits)
- Expanding the resources available to the poor (through credit, social funds, capacity building and occupational training); and
- Strengthening the civic capacities of communities by nurturing the organisations that represent them.

Source: Community Based and Driven Development: A Critical Review, Mansuri and Rao, 2004, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3209

2.1. Defining Participation

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

Stakeholders: are all those affected by outcomes- negatively or positively- or those who can affect the outcome of a proposed intervention.

Community based development has a long history; starting with the cooperative movement, Gandhi's principles of self-reliance in India, and Paolo Freire's work on using education to liberate the oppressed in Brazil. Recently the participatory development movement has been led by Robert Chambers; focusing on allowing the poor to participate in their own development, with external agents acting as facilitators and funding sources.

The active involvement of members of a defined community in at least some aspects of project design and implementation is very important to community- based development. Communities are given both 'voice' and 'choice' through their participation, thereby empowering them to manage their own development. An important objective is to ensure that local knowledge is incorporated into the project's decision-making processes.

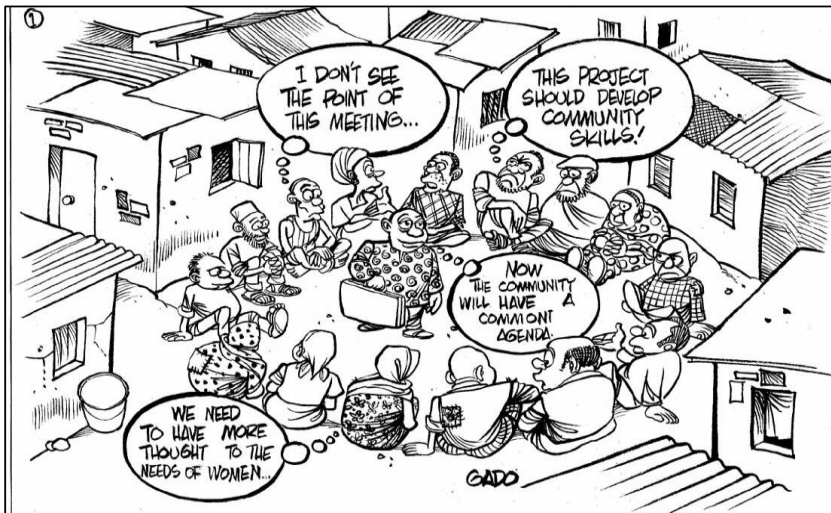
Participatory projects are typically implemented in a unit referred to as a community.

Community: any group of people bound with common economic, social and cultural interests and living in a clearly designated geographical area.

(MSIF)

Defining the geographical or conceptual boundaries of a community may not always be simple. In general the concept is used to denote a culturally and politically homogenous social system, which is at least explicitly internally cohesive, such as an administratively defined area (e.g. neighbourhood) or a common interest group (e.g. farmers). However, it may be difficult to define boundaries where administrative boundaries do not represent settlement patterns of communities, or where migration may have transformed the community boundary. Factional, ethnic, or religious identities may also complicate issues. Sometimes a defined community boundary may not take into account local structures of economic and social power, which may strongly influence project outcomes. It is also important to ensure that the definition of community boundaries does not exclude vulnerable groups with no voice e.g. women, the poor, elderly etc.

An important concept in community participation is social capital. Participatory projects are thought to build Social Capital. This term was first used in a developmental context in Robert Putnam's 1993 work on Italian communities (Making Democracy Work).



Social Capital refers to the ability of individuals to build 'bonds' within their own group, and 'bridges' to other groups. It is premised on the belief that the quantity and quality of group activity strengthens communities and their ability to work for their betterment. It has been recognised however, that social capital may also be negative. Groups such as gangs, for example, have strong bonds, but an overall negative impact on society. Social Capital amongst any one group, may exclude other groups from participating and benefiting from programmes. There are many different forms of social capital, and these need to be understood, so that positive forces are built on. Most importantly, social capital must be understood within each cultural and political context.

Social Capital: the features of an organisation, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated

Table 1: The Pros and Cons of Participation

Arguments for Participation	Arguments Against Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peoples participation can increase the efficiency of development by involving local skills and resources • It ensures that projects are based on local knowledge and understanding of problems • It helps build local capacities and the abilities of people to manage and negotiate their own development • It can increase coverage as local people assume responsibility and share in costs • The poor can be better targeted and corruption reduced • Activities may be more sustainable as beneficiaries assume ownership • It can help improve the status of women by providing them an opportunity to define their needs and priorities and by building their skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation is costly and time-consuming, with no guaranteed impact on the end product • Participatory processes are a luxury and the costs could be spent on other areas of poverty reduction • Participation may be destabilising, unbalancing existing socio-political relationships • It is more concerned with an ideology than with the end results of securing direct benefits for people • It can result in a shifting of the burden and costs of service delivery onto poor people, allowing governments to relinquish their responsibilities <p>Source: UNDP, Empowering People: A Guidebook to Participation</p>

2.2. The Participation Continuum

Participation can take many forms, ranging from information sharing and consultation methods, to mechanisms for collaboration and empowerment, which give stakeholders more influence and control and are transformative (i.e. can really change or transform the way a community can work for itself).

Defining the following forms of participation: information, consultation, cooperation and mobilization – is just one way of being clear about what participation means. Each partnership between government, the MSIF and communities may define their own forms of participation and create their own 'ladder'. The parameter underlying this ladder is 'increasing levels of decision-making'. As you go up the ladder, you can have deeper forms of 'participation'.

Information participation is a form of participation where communities provide information to the government/project and the government/project provides information about their intentions to the community. There is no feedback and no accountability. While this form of participation should not be seen as effective and empowering participation, the process of communicating, informing and being informed can be a starting point for more meaningful forms of participation.

Consultation participation is when communities are consulted on their views and it implies that their perspective will be taken into account, as the decisions have not been already made. It will require some degree of group formation and capacity building to carry out the consultative process.

Co-operation participation is a stronger form of participation in which the community plays a decision-making role and is a partner in the delivery process. This degree of participation may require support from organizations (such as NGOs) able to work with communities, requires group formation and capacity building, on an ongoing basis throughout the process. Communities and individuals are likely to be empowered by their involvement and role.

Mobilization is the term used to describe the process of communities having or taking control over an activity. This can lead the participatory process. Government/projects respond to the efforts of the communities rather than promoting the role the community make take. Communities are in control of decision-making processes.

Community involvement that is developed for exploitative reasons or without positive intention or meaningful end is not a form of participation. It is manipulation.

Many participatory projects have (whether intentionally or not) aimed for differing levels of participation in each stage of the project cycle. Given the institutional constraints on participation, the socio-cultural factors affecting participation, and the characteristics of each service, it is rare to find any two participatory projects that are the same. While one may prioritize project planning another may stress project construction and downplay project identification.

(Source: What is Community Participation: A Toolkit, GHK 2004)

2.3. The Factors Influencing Participation

The factors that affect participation may be cultural, social, economic, institutional and physical. Like so many other aspects about community participation, the most critical factors will vary in each context – in each set of circumstances. It is important to explore the particular factors that constrain or influence community behaviour.

Skills and Knowledge

It is true that participation improves with skilled and active participants. At the outset, communities may not have an understanding of what participation means, what procedures the agency/government must go through to develop a project, and what the financial constraints might be. The initial skills and knowledge of the community will be key factors determining how they enter the participatory process. Their political awareness, their technical know-how and their ability to work together to make decisions will affect the form and degree of their involvement. The development of management skills, financial and accounting skills and building trade skills may mean that they can play a direct role in the construction and management aspects of the project.

Yet participation is a process that creates learning opportunities. From case study material, three important lessons have been learnt:

- successful initiatives build on the existing knowledge and skill base of the community;
- as the skills of the communities are broadened and strengthened, the confidence of communities increases, and the nature of the participation will evolve; and
- community understanding of the problem will increase with their involvement and this may result in new and changing priorities.

Employment

People who are employed in daily jobs may not be able to dedicate long hours to participating in projects, but they provide a stabilizing force in the community and often the positive motivation for change. Having access to money means they might be able to afford more choices. They may be willing to participate in decision-making events if they are arranged at suitable times. Efforts should be made to help people participate, e.g. arranging meetings in the evenings or making childcare arrangements for women.

Unemployed members of the community may wish to provide their labour and skills in the project construction stage and thereby create an income-earning dimension to the project process. Their involvement may also provide an opportunity to bring about a more empowered, confident and trained group of people.

Education and Literacy

While experience is a great asset, it is not true that people must be educated and literate to participate in development projects. Many very successful participatory activities have involved illiterate women and men who are given the opportunity to express themselves and given the support to express their problems. Many projects

have developed effective communication, but at the outset, levels of education and literacy may affect the confidence of community members to articulate ideas and problems. The process of establishing participation can often incorporate trained coordinators with special skills – often called ‘facilitators’ because they guide the processes required for effective participation.

Cultural Beliefs and Practices

Agency staff/government must accommodate the cultural beliefs and practices of the people involved in a project if they are to develop relevant and sustainable participation. Many ethnic communities will have established traditional systems of decision-making. Other settlements may be made up of households from various cultures, with differing beliefs and practices affecting their participation in a different way. Implementing agencies need to be sensitive to the cultural constraints placed on participatory objectives and work with these limitations.

Gender

The gender of the participants is another factor affecting participatory activities, and influences the types of information collected. Many local governments, departments and agencies have realized that involving women is critical. Women often have a better idea of problems, solutions and the household impacts of service delivery, while men tend to focus on how deficient services affect them. Despite the clear benefits of involving women in the process, it can be difficult to ensure that women have an equal role in decision-making, and special efforts need to be made to ensure that they get the chance and the space to have their say, and that their say is heard and taken into account.



The participation of women can bring about important benefits such as empowerment and improvement in their status. Furthermore, their opinions, if heeded, create more effective projects. But the process is not without difficulties and complexities:

- women, poor women especially, already have significant workloads, at home, at work and caring for children, and a project that expects more of them places them under strain;

- women are not a homogenous group – they are not all the same – they may have different capacities and objectives;
- some women will dominate the participatory endeavour just as powerful men dominate mixed or male groups; and
- men may find their involvement threatening and attempt to block any meaningful participation by women-folk.

Other forms of Marginalization

The social inequalities within communities (arising from age, occupation, income and religion for instance) will affect the willingness and ability of each individual and household to participate. The dynamics in any one community are significant:

- powerful individuals may dominate;
- women, children and vulnerable groups may be marginalized;
- elected representatives may not be considered legitimate; and
- stronger groups (socially and economically) may capture the opportunities to participate.

The degree to which the process undertaken is able to address this marginalization and domination is a key factor in the extent of real participation achieved. Decision-making dominated by the ruling elite of the community is no better than the government officials deciding themselves. The needs of all groups must be addressed by the involvement of all groups.

Political influences

Irrespective of their capacity, many communities are influenced by a political agenda and may have a view on participation. They may not wish to participate if:

- a project is aligned with a particular political party;
- they perceive the participation as being exploitative (whether or not it actually is);
- their participation costs them an unacceptable amount of time or money; or
- they believe they have a right to be 'given' certain services.

It may be that they simply do not trust the agency, because they are tired of unfulfilled promises and conflicting messages. Agencies/government must work systematically to rebuilding relationships to encourage participation and remove these blockages.

In addition to these community factors affecting participation, successful projects will always be affected by the capacity of the of the agency involved. The skills and knowledge of officials and representative working with communities – as well as the real objectives of the organization – can be significant factors influencing the outcomes: well-intentioned officials working with socially responsible objectives may create a meaningful form of participation.

(Source: What is Community Participation: A Toolkit, GHK 2004)

3. PARTICIPATION IN THE MSIF

Through its project cycle, the MSIF allows Implementing Agencies (IAs) and communities to participate in activities in different ways. The MSIF II also provides for a deeper process of community participation through its selected CDD projects. Another element introduced is the participation of small towns as MSIF partners.

This chapter highlights some of the ways in which you, the community and the Implementing Agencies, can work with MSIF II to deepen and expand the process of participation. This will lead to better, more sustainable, projects and benefits for your community.

The tools and techniques mentioned in this chapter are all detailed in **Chapter 4** of this Handbook.

3.1. How to Participate in the Project Cycle

The ways in which you can participate at different stages of the MSIF project cycle vary, and some areas of engagement are highlighted in this section. Communities must make sure that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities at each stage.

Remember, how you start the process will be important for the future sustainability of your investments. Make sure you carry out a thorough 'Stakeholder Identification' process, and use the right tools to assess the situation in your community, before you identify the investments most appropriate for the community. You must ensure that the interests of all groups have been considered. The MSIF requires that the broad community agrees with the plans and priorities, not just a few individuals or groups. Do not assume that you know the best solution for your community or understand their priorities.

'The beginning is the most important part of the work'.

Plato- The Republic

To undertake the participatory methods, which are a condition of the MSIF, you will need to organise your community. You can either build on existing groups of people, or hold a series of meetings, which will explain the benefits of MSIF, what it can do for the community and the requirements for community action. Discussion methods with communities are detailed in section 4.

Stage 1 Promotion

During this stage, the MSIF will provide information on its objectives and what you need to do to become eligible for funding. You may be invited to stakeholder workshops or public meetings for this purpose, and you will have the opportunity to ask questions of the MSIF staff.

The MSIF will explain the importance of community participation and that micro-projects need to be demand-driven i.e. based on the needs and priorities of communities.

During initial workshops you will be asked to work with MSIF staff in defining the needs and priorities of the communities you belong to, as part of a **rapid needs and capacity assessment**.

It will be useful if you will have carried out some kind of a **stakeholder identification** (Chapter 4.3) exercise and gathered some socio-economic data as part of a rapid social **assessment** of your village, to inform this exercise. Use secondary data wherever you can, but supplement it with participatory exercises and **semi-structured** interviewing. Make sure you take into account women and vulnerable groups, through special focus groups or household interviews. (Chapter 4.1) Use these participatory exercises to explain the MSIF objectives to the community members.

Initial **focus group** (Chapter 4.6) discussions, during which you could **rank** (Chapter 4.4) the problems and basic needs and preferences of different groups in the village, will also help to inform this process. This will ensure that the needs and structure of your community are accurately represented to the MSIF. Some of the participatory exercises can be carried out in conjunction with the MSIF team of engineers and social scientists. For example, they can accompany you on **transect walks** (Chapter 4.4) through the community, or in developing **venn diagrams** (Chapter 5.4.4) to define community relations. You should have been able to identify potential micro-projects through these tools and techniques.

Stage II Prioritisation of Projects

You will be encouraged to hold at least one **General Community Meeting or GCM** (or Representatives meeting in larger villages) at this stage. This will be a good opportunity to present some of the findings of the participatory exercises you have carried out. You are required to prioritise your micro-projects during this meeting. It is suggested that you carry out a **preference ranking** (Chapter 5.4.4) exercise at this stage to determine the overall village priorities.

This is a critical stage in the participatory process, and it is important that the views of the entire community are reflected in the selection of the micro-projects. Remember that the micro-project must be endorsed by at least 50% of the GCM. The more participatory work you will have undertaken prior to the GCM, the greater the likelihood of consensus during the meeting.

You will also be asked to agree on an Implementing Agency or IA for taking forward your project. The IA should have the ability to represent and work in a participatory manner with all village groups, including vulnerable groups. Remember, the IA will be representing your entire community for this project.

Stage III Proposal Submission

The MSIF will work with the IA to develop the capacity to prepare a proposal. There will be opportunity at this stage for the IA to involve the community in developing the proposal.

This could be through examining issues through **seasonal calendars** (Chapter 4.4) for example, to see if there is any impact on project design.

Focus group discussions could confirm that the basic elements of the project are in accordance with community needs.

Stage IV Appraisal

Appraisal is generally the responsibility of the MSIF. However, the second stage of Appraisal will involve discussions with beneficiaries. The MSIF will discuss with you the possibility of forming a Beneficiary Association or BA. The BA will have a longer-term role in the development of your village.

You may also have the opportunity to participate in the technical design. It is suggested that you interact closely with the MSIF engineer, and ensure that designs are shared with community members. You may find that community members have important suggestions, which could improve the designs.

Stage V Implementation

The IA representing the community and the MSIF must ensure that the micro-project is implemented smoothly. In smaller projects the IA may actually implement the project, using local labour where possible.

In larger projects, the IA will contract a local supervisor to oversee the works. It is suggested that the local supervisor interact closely with the community, and community representatives be trained by the IA to help oversee the works.

Progress and the concerns of community members should be discussed in community meetings. The IA should agree on basic monitoring indicators with the community.

Community members must contribute to the project and the IA will be responsible for collecting this contribution. This contribution will enhance ownership by the community.

Stage VI Handover and Certification

The IA will play a key role in ensuring that works are completed to the satisfaction of all parties. At this stage the IA should also consult with the community members on their level of satisfaction at the quality and progress of the works.

The micro-project will be handed over to the organisation/agency responsible for operating and maintaining the facility. It is recommended that community meetings be organised between this agency and the community to discuss how the facility will be operated.

Stage VII Performance Contract

To ensure that the micro-project is sustainable, the MSIF will enter into a 2-year performance contract with the community. A sustainability plan should be developed in consultation with the entire community, initially through focus groups, and then endorsed through a general body meeting.

The plan will need to be monitored. Agree on indicators as part of the plan, for the Beneficiary Association to monitor. The Beneficiary Association can ensure follow-up by holding regular community meetings. (Chapter 4.7)

3.2. Community Driven Development Projects (CDD)

The CDD projects employ a slightly different approach to that used in the general project cycle. In this case, the MSIF becomes a 'facilitator' in technical, social and financial issues during the micro-project cycle and at the post-implementation stage. The community takes the lead role, and the emphasis is on community development through building management capacities of the community organisations and helping them to build partnerships.

This component targets communities who have already implemented an MSIF project, and who are holders of a Performance Contract. It is expected to deepen the process of community participation and development.

The MSIF will promote the competition in your area, and an application can be submitted by your Beneficiaries Association.

Funding to communities who participate in the CDD projects is agreed against **Community Strategic Action Plans**, and will be managed by a CBO/NGO, which is selected by the community. This is where this process differs from the conventional MSIF cycle. The maximum amount of grant is expected to be US\$25,000. The minimum community share is expected to be 30%, and where the community is able to mobilise a larger share, the total project cost may go up to US\$150,000. However, the MSIF share will remain the same.

Community Action Planning

Communities participating in the CDD component are expected to produce a 5-year action plan for socio-economic development. This plan is expected to be produced in a participatory manner, and discussed in focus groups and at a General (or Representative) meeting of the village, prior to approval by the Mayoralty Council.

Action planning emerged as an alternative to conventional planning in the early 1960's, and has now been adapted and used in a wide range of contexts. It is a reiterative and adaptive planning framework, which is flexible, simply structured, untied to any specific sequence of operations, and based on actions rather than lengthy surveys or studies. Participants are free to make mistakes and to learn by doing so.

Cheshire-Puss, "... said Alice, "would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "I don't much care where---" Said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. "---so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation. "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

-- Lewis Carroll, "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"--

Planners will often use the quote 'if you don't know where you are going- any road will do'. Developing a community plan involves systematically assessing alternatives and making choices in the context of a defined community vision. The vision is important, as you must know where you want to get to. Community Action Planning, will systematically take you through a process to get there.

A community plan is created by community members and should reflect the following:

- where you are now (community strengths, weaknesses, resources)
- where you want to be (the ideal future for your community)
- the general direction you want to take to close the gap between where you are and where you want to be
- the specific actions within each general direction required to close the gap
- the resources and capacity issues that need to be addressed; and
- what success will look like, and how you will tell when you have been successful

There are 7 steps in a community planning process:

1. Create a Vision: A community vision describes what is hoped for and valued by the community
2. Assess the Current Situation: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and resources are assessed
3. Set Goals: Broad goals for achieving the vision should be set.
4. Establish Objectives: These are specifics to determine how you will reach your goals, and are measurable.
5. Develop Action Plans: These will define who, what, when and how around the plan. The concrete steps to achieve the objectives need to be specified.
6. Implement the Action Plan: Implementation involves undertaking the commitments and activities outlined in your action plan. I
7. Evaluate Progress and Results: This will be important in ensuring that you are reaching where you want to be.

For the MSIF II steps 1-5 are to be undertaken prior to development of the proposal for MSIF funding. You can put together a 'planning team' which represents different groups in the community and different skills. In larger communities, planning can be done at the 'neighbourhood' level, with the village or town level plan aggregating the results of the exercise. The team must be representative and cover marginalised groups, as the 'plan' should be presented to the whole community for discussion, revision and approval. The Action Plan will then be discussed at the General meeting.

The proposal or Grant Application will include details of proposed micro-projects, including budgets.

There are a number of **participatory tools**, which may be useful within the community planning process. These include:

- **direct observation**- enabling the planning team to observe conditions themselves. You may observe the situation through a 'transect walk' for example.
- **semi-structured interviewing** to listen to the needs of various groups
- **resource surveys**- to determine what resources are available to carry out proposed activities
- **prioritising or ranking**- involves all stakeholders to determine and rank their needs
- **focus groups**- will assist in brainstorming various options according to the needs of different groups
- **diagramming**- at the early stages of the cycle, seasonal calendars, timelines, daily routines, venn diagrams etc. will help in determining information needs for the proposal or for implementation
- **mapping and modelling**- will help in documenting information and getting the views of specific groups and neighbourhoods

All these tools have been described in Chapter 4 and should be used in combinations appropriate to your local circumstances. They will help in the analysis of the community's problems.

One tool, which will help you in analysing the needs of your community and how to get there is 'Force Field Analysis'.

This is a visual technique based on 'before' and 'after' scenarios. The technique also facilitates the identification of potential barriers to change.

Figure 1 shows how Force Field Analysis is undertaken, while Figure 2 gives an example of such an analysis undertaken in determining what kinds of schools were needed in a community in Bangladesh.

BOX 1: Force-Field Analysis

- Divide participants into small groups
- Draw a Force-Field Chart (see Figure 3.1) on a large piece of paper and explain it as follows:

-the left-hand box indicates a 'current' situation ('where we are now')

-the right-hand box indicates the same situation that has been improved some time in the future ('where we want to be')

-the central arrow (the 'critical path') emphasises that the direction of movement is from 'now' to the 'future'

-the arrows pointing diagonally downward represent constraints or forces that are in the way of achieving the desired goals; and

-the arrows pointing diagonally upward represent resources that can assist in moving forward.

- Ask the group to discuss the current situation and summarise the 'problem' in the left-hand box, and then to visualise the 'improved situation' and summarise the vision in the right hand box. Then ask the group to identify the resources and constraints involved in moving to the improved scenario.
- Bring the groups back together to discuss the diagrams and brainstorm on how to build on the existing resources and counter some of the constraints identified.

Source: Deepa Narayan and Lyra Srinivasan, 1994, Participatory Development Toolkit: Training Materials for Agencies and Communities, The World Bank, Washington D.C.

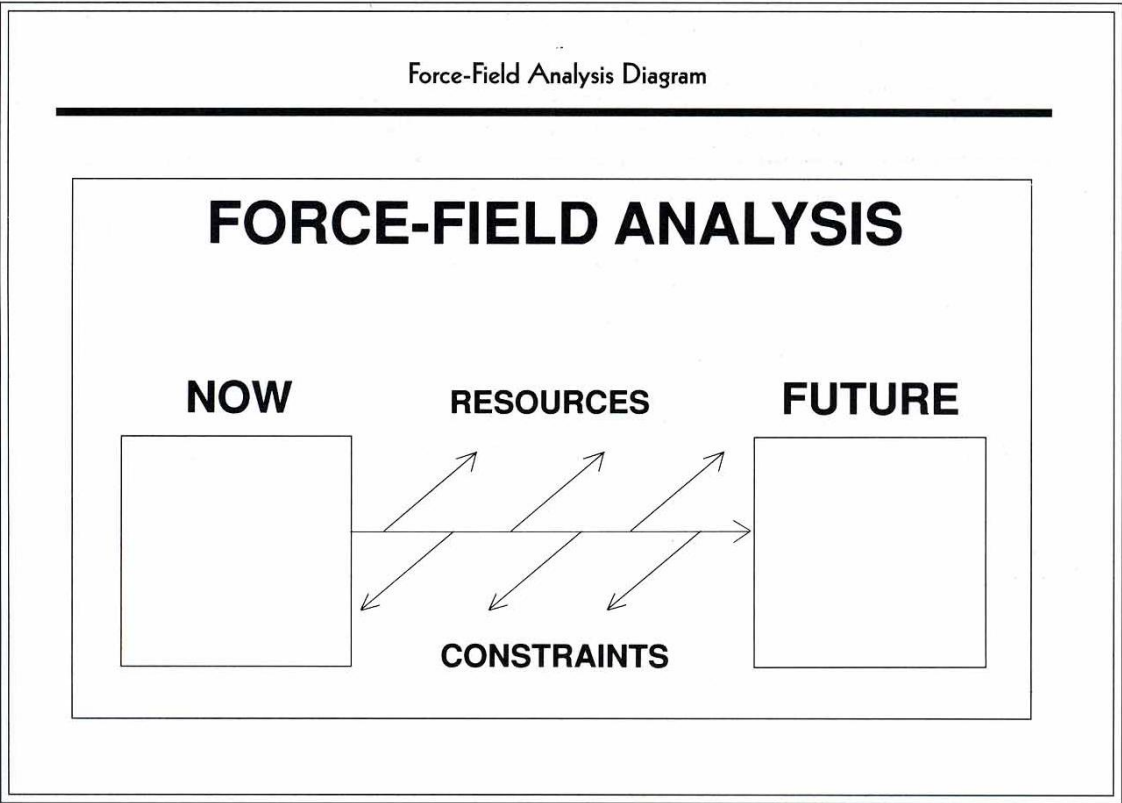
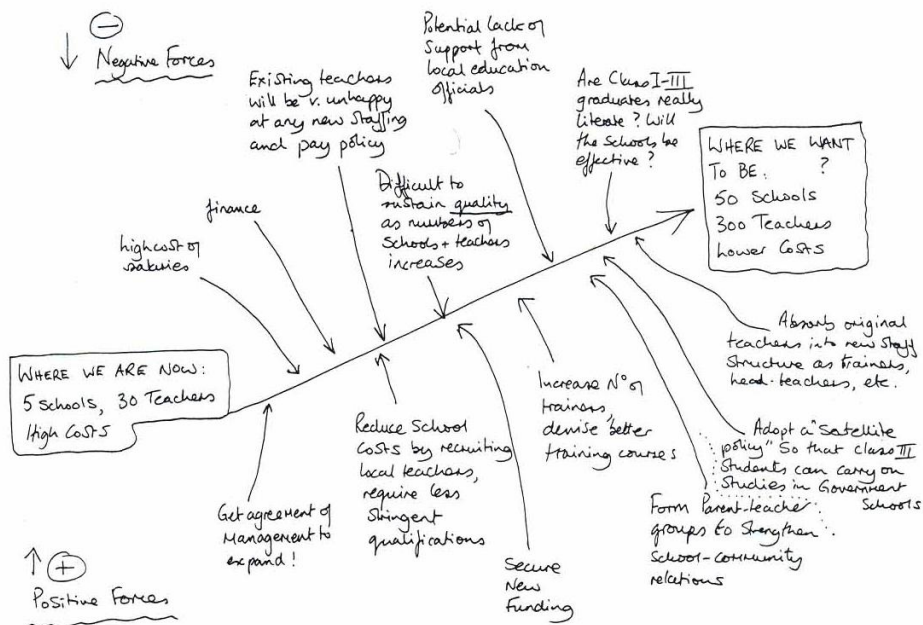


Figure 1 Force Field Analysis Framework

Teacher Trainers' Force-Field Analysis for Expanding a Rural Non-Formal School Program in Bangladesh

An evaluation of a primary school program run by Concern Worldwide, an NGO in Bangladesh, revealed a pressing need for more non-formal education schools to reach poorer families not being served by existing government schools. The NGO was already operating five pilot non-formal education schools and was considering expanding this program. The five teacher trainers involved in the program came together to discuss how best to plan such an expansion. They constructed a Force-Field Analysis diagram to examine some of the negative and positive factors involved. At the end of the exercise, which lasted about two hours, it was clear that a major task lay ahead. The challenge of the expansion was to make the schools less costly by recruiting more local people as teachers, while absorbing the existing, more qualified, and better paid teachers into other positions. The trainers concluded that this was possible as long as some changes to the program were made. They recommended ways to accentuate the positive factors and counter some of the negative ones, helping to ensure that the expansion would not compromise the quality and effectiveness of the program.



Source: Richard Montgomery, 1995, "Force-Field Analysis: Identifying Forces For and Against Change," International Institute for Environment and Development, PLA Notes No. 23, London.

Figure 2: Force Field Analysis for Education in Bangladesh

In addition to the Force-Field analysis you may also want to conduct a **SWOT analysis**. You may apply this to your community organisation, as it is usually used in the context of 'bounded' organisations. SWOT stands for 'strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats'.

Step 1: Conduct an analysis of your internal strengths and weaknesses, which you can build on. Then examine the external threats and opportunities available to you.

Step 2: Review them in your planning group and with other stakeholders if it is convenient.

Step 3: Decide on proposed actions that can be taken to build on your strengths, to eliminate or cope with your weaknesses, to exploit your opportunities and to lower your threats.

Step 4: Write a short statement of your overall strategy based on the objectives to be achieved and the SWOT analysis you have undertaken.

Your **action plan** should be time-bound and measurable. In the plan you must identify:

- specific actions
- who will undertake them
- by what time
- what the resources available are
- what the costs will be
- how you will measure the successful completion of the action and who will measure this

You should also identify risks and opportunities available. The actions identified should be stepping stones towards your goals and objectives. Your action plan should be monitored constantly so that bottlenecks are identified early and addressed.

Box 2: Community Action Plan: A Checklist

1. Clearly define your goals.**2. Conduct a survey to gather information on the situation in your community.**

- Identify the problem.
- Determine the causes of the problem.
- Establish the action to be taken.

3. Determine the scope and limitations of your action.

- How will the community benefit from your action?
- What are the costs associated with carrying out the project?
- What are the main obstacles that will be encountered? Can they be overcome? If so, how?
- How much time do you have to achieve your goals?
- How will the results of the action be disseminated?
- How will you assess the project results?

4. Consult with the community to obtain the support required to carry out the project.

- Who are the key people or key organizations (e.g. schools, school boards, municipal council, chamber of commerce, volunteer organizations, etcetera) that can support your project?
- What type of support can they provide?
- How will you involve them in your project?
- Allow for others input to modify your plan.
- Ensure that all members of your group agree with the plan.

5. Put your action plan in writing.

- Define the major steps in the action plan.
- Assign the various tasks among the group members.
- Establish a schedule with a deadline.
- Present a budget and verify expected sources of funds.

6. Implement your community action plan.**7. Conduct an evaluation of your community action.**

- Were your goals met?
- Were the results of your action plan what you expected?
- Did you accomplish your action plan within your budget?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of your action plan?
- How did your community react to your actions?

8. Disseminate the results of your community action.

- Publish the results in local newspapers, prepare posters and folders.

In addition to Community Strategic Action Planning, the community will also be responsible for:

- Procurement of local supervisor processes
- Development with MSIF technical assistance, of detailed estimates
- Procurement of a design company's services for detailing the technical aspects
- A participatory evaluation of the developed technical design (this can be done through community focus groups or meetings)
- Defending the Grant Application
- Collection of Community Contribution
- Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Preliminary and final handing over
- Implementation of the Strategic Plan developed

3.3. Small Town Projects

A new element in MSIF II is the introduction of an urban community development component through small town projects. Small towns are characterised as those with a population of less than 20,000. Targeting will be undertaken through using the results of the recent poverty assessment.

It is expected that about 42 small towns will participate, and will be selected through a competition based on criteria such as technical quality, poverty impact, level of participation in developing the proposal, and demonstrated ability to mobilize the community share of the investment. Communities will be expected to contribute 15% of the cost. While the maximum size of the project is supposed to be \$75,000, where communities can mobilise a larger share this can go up to US\$150,000.

The participatory process in the case of these towns is likely to differ slightly, particularly during the initial stages where projects need to be identified. To gain access to funds, however, it is important that an effective participatory process be undertaken.

Projects need to be determined on the basis of where in the town the maximum number of people will benefit from a high priority intervention. A process of '**strategic planning**' has to be undertaken to determine what these projects may be.

The responsibility for this planning process will be with the '**primaria**'. However, community leaders and representatives will play an important role in the process.

Strategic Planning provides a framework, which can underpin and guide municipal actions. The benefits include:

- ensuring that the allocation of resources, best matches local demands and priorities
- improving the coordination of community infrastructure initiatives with city-wide municipal activities

- ensuring that the municipality recognises longer-term needs as well as more urgent short-term priorities

The voices of poor communities are generally reflected through targeted inclusion of selected sample groups, or representation by community leaders. In the case of the MSIF II, it is recommended that community leaders and representatives undertaken consultations with the areas they represent, using tools such as, **transect walks** (sometimes called a windscreen survey in, an urban context) and **ranking exercises**, to determine the people's perspectives on their needs and priorities. This information will enhance the Strategic Planning exercise. (See Chapter 4.4)

While a number of techniques for strategic planning exist (e.g ZOPP), we are highlighting an approach, which has recently been pioneered in India. In the state of Andhra Pradesh a DFID supported project has developed an approach for Municipal Action Planning for Poverty Reduction (MAPP). The MAPP process is one way in which the Primaria can determine the sub-project priorities in small towns.

The MAPP

Objectives:

- provide a detailed analysis of the main problems of the poor in the municipality
- listing, ranking and mapping communities and wider environmental problems according to the level of poverty and infrastructure deficiency using proxy indicators
- identification of the poorest communities in the municipality along with those having the worst infrastructure provision i.e. the most vulnerable and needy communities
- develop an environmental statement reviewing

Participants:

- officers and staff from the municipality including engineers
- councillors or political representatives
- representatives of community groups or CBOs
- others

Method:

A '**Working Group**' approach is used where these participants come together for the analysis.

The WG should review existing data to determine the location of poor settlements and poverty and infrastructure provision to these areas.

Sources of data will include the **Asset Registers** and any poverty surveys undertaken.

Process:

Activity 1 Compile Background Information (Town Level)

Background information on the town is compiled for each ward or unit (population, density, location of poor settlements)

Activity 2 Compile Poor Settlement Information

Compile a list of the poorer areas in the town, with any additional information as needed.

Activity 3 Compile Information on Town-Wide Environmental Hazards

Where relevant, and in particular for the consideration of environmental infrastructure projects, an Environmental Statement should be prepared. This covers natural features, areas of flooding, water quality issues, coverage of environmental infrastructure etc.

Activity 4 Poverty and Infrastructure Deficiency

During this activity, poverty indicators are used to rank each settlement, ward etc. Then each area is scored according to the status of infrastructure deficiency and deterioration.

Activity 5 Poverty and Infrastructure Deficiency Matrix

Poor settlements are plotted using rankings from activity 4, and the poverty and infrastructure deficiency rankings are combined.

Infrastructure Deficiency



Poverty →

Score	1	2	3
1	1/1	2/1	3/1
2	1/2	2/2	3/2
3	1/3	2/3	3/3

The worst settlements are those in square 3/3 for example, while those which are very poor but slightly better off for infrastructure and services will be in square 2/2.

Activity 6 Technical Screening and Rough Cost Estimates

A technical screening should be carried out to examine the infrastructure situation and update information not already available. For environmental infrastructure linkages with town-wide systems will also be considered.

A rough cost-estimation for priority settlements can also be carried out at this stage.

Activity 7 Integrate Findings

The findings can be integrated to prepare preliminary proposals for screening.

Activity 8 Strategic Planning Workshops

A Strategic Planning workshop needs to be held to determine which proposals should be submitted to the MSIF, based on the considerations of condition of assets and the needs of the local areas.

Following the MAPP cycle, community leaders should discuss the findings with the communities they represent, to explain the basis of the decision. Where one area may have missed out on being selected, they may have further opportunities in future project cycles.

After the submission of the proposal and selection of the micro-projects in the small towns, the basic MSIF cycle is then followed.

3.4. Community Networks

One way in which MSIF II contributes to the sustainability of the impact on communities is by providing support for the development of community networks at both the regional and national level.

There are three existing networks of communities in the North, Centre and South. A network of small towns will also be created in MSIF II.

By sharing information and best practice, community networks can improve their capacity to sustain investments and initiate further developmental activities.

Networks will assist in:

- organisational, leadership and decision-making capacity
- improving the quality of basic social and economic services for the population
- develop capacity to create and further develop community organisations, develop partnerships for identifying, planning and implementing social services, and carry out strategic community planning for development

The MSIF will fund local organisations to assist in the development of networking activities. These may include for example:

- consolidating information centres
- development of websites and e-discussion groups
- creation of community foundations
- supporting alliances of various interest groups such as small businesses, employers associations etc
- study visits between communities, regions, and to other countries.

The sustainability of community networks, is expected to be enhanced by regular strategic planning exercises, which aid them in developing a vision, goals, action plans and effective monitoring and evaluation systems.

3.5. Ensuring the Sustainability of Investments: The Community's Role

One of the main reasons for employing participatory approaches is to ensure that investments are based on the real needs and demands of the community, thereby ensuring their sustainability. If something is truly needed, and the community has been

involved in the identification, planning, design and implementation; then it should follow that the community has a stake in ensuring that the investment is used effectively and maintained. This has not always been the case in the past where investments driven by government departments and local governments have often deteriorated due to poor use and lack of maintenance. Often physical structures are built, but the human and material resources for running the facility have not been considered.

The MSIF is based on the principle that your community investments belong to you and should be maintained by you. The MSIF has NO responsibility for operational costs.- you must factor this into the preparation of your plans.

The identification of good implementing Agencies and the formatting of a 'Beneficiary Association' or BA- ensures that there is organisational capacity for long-term sustainability. The MSIF will discuss with you the possibility of forming a BA. This is one mechanism through which you can ensure that existing investments are sustained, and that there is a forum for on-going community efforts.

There are several things you can do to support sustainability.

- **Identification:** Make sure that the community is clear that the investments belong to them, and they will have an on-going responsibility for operation and maintenance. All user groups should be identified and involved at all stages.
- **Planning for Sustainability:** You are required to develop a 'sustainability plan'. Make sure that you have planned for and designed an investment, which it will be possible and cost-effective to maintain. If you 'over design' or put in place something too complicated, you may have a building or physical infrastructure which it is too costly to maintain. Make sure you understand the requirements for maintenance at the beginning. During your community planning, responsibilities, costs and indicators for operation and maintenance should be considered and discussed with the service provider or LPA. You should consider the recurrent costs, and the human and other resources needed for the physical investment to function.
- **Implementation:** Make sure you liaise adequately with your local supervisor and ensure that works are of the quality that is satisfactory to the community. As the community will pay 15%, they should be involved through the process of implementation. Community meetings should be held where progress is discussed and any issues resolved. The community contribution and their involvement will encourage 'ownership'.
- **Hand-Over and Certification:** At this stage discussions should again be held with the community to ensure that there is absolute clarity over the operating and maintenance roles and responsibilities. This is a good time to reassure yourself that the community is satisfied with the implementation of the project. If the community is not happy with some aspect- this should be resolved prior to this stage.
- **Performance Contract and Sustainability Plan:** You will have been encouraged to form a 'Beneficiary Association' at the start of the process. The MSIF wants to ensure that your efforts and the investment will be sustained. They will therefore enter into a 'Performance Contract' with you. This is a 2 year plan, whereby the MSIF will also provide some matching funds for maintenance of up to \$ 500.

- The service provider will be responsible for operating and maintaining the investment, however, you must be agreed on service charges and the modalities by which this will be done. You may want some community involvement in this process. You should have a plan for monitoring and evaluation on an on-going basis. There may be problems with community members paying service charges, or with the way in which the service provider is operating. You should be in a position to identify these issues through the on-going monitoring process, and have a 'forum' for meeting regularly with the service provider.
- **On-Going Support:** The MSIF encourages a range of mechanisms for sustainability. The community networks mentioned in Section 3.4 will help you to share experiences and issues with similar communities, and to build on best-practice. Forming a BA will have advantages for you- as you can capitalise on longer term opportunities which may become available to you.

The important thing to remember is that this is your investment and it is your responsibility to collaborate with your partners; the implementing agency, service provider or LPA and the MSIF to ensure that your efforts do not go to waste.

Table 1 Summary of Tools

Stage	Actions	Tools	Comments
Promotion	Workshops with MSIF staff Rapid Needs and Capacity Assessment with MSIF staff	- Secondary Data Review -Stakeholder Analysis -Transect Walks -Wealth Ranking -Historical Time Line -Social Mapping -Semi-Structured Interviewing with key informants and different groups Focus Groups-use: -Venn Diagrams -Problem Ranking	Consider forming a Beneficiary Association at this point. To do this you must hold meetings with the community members. You should agree on objectives, membership, constitution and a committee. You should form a group of multi skilled persons to carry out the participatory exercises necessary- including representatives from different groups.
Prioritisation of Projects	-Prioritise Projects during a General Community Meeting -Agree on Implementing Agency	-Focus groups -Preference Rankings -Force Field Analysis -General	A more detailed community action planning process will be carried out for CDD projects and for small towns. Choose your IA carefully- they will

		community meetings	be your representatives.
Proposal Submission	-IA develops proposal with MSIF	-Focus groups with community groups -Seasonal calendars and further transect walks to determine any possible issues	Make sure the proposal is presented to the community and discussed for possible issues.
Appraisal	-Appraisal by MSIF -BA Formation -Technical Design	-Focus groups to discuss technical design -Community meetings to follow up BA formation	<i>Community members of different groups should have an opportunity to contribute to the technical design and give their opinions on it. Focus groups or small meetings can help in this.</i>
Implementation	-Supervision by IA -Community contributions	-Group meetings -Direct observation of implementation by community members -Participatory M&E	The community should be satisfied with the implementation or there may be issues in collecting contributions. Ensure that they are kept involved in the process- report progress regularly in community meetings.
Handover and Certification	IA certifies satisfactory completion Service delivery agency takes over	-Community meeting to ensure satisfaction -Visit to facility by community members -Group discussions on operation and maintenance of facility	<i>Ensure that the community is well aware of its responsibilities and agreed on the operation of the facilities.</i> Indicators for M&E should be agreed and a forum for on-going discussions with service delivery agency agreed.
Performance Contract	-On-going operation and maintenance of the investments	-Focus Groups -Community meetings -Participatory M&E -Repeat initial participatory	-Ensure that you continue to meet to discuss the operation of the facility and to encourage further community action.

		exercises to determine new areas of intervention	
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4. ¹AN INTRODUCTION TO TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

This chapter introduces some of the tools and techniques, which can be used to promote participation. There is often overlap between these tools and methodologies, and they can be used in conjunction, using a selection of complementary tools from each approach.

Often the best participatory work involves a mixture of tools from e.g. Stakeholder Analysis, PRA, Beneficiary Assessments etc, which is most useful to the local context. A Beneficiary Assessment, for example, is typically carried out by donor and external agencies but the tools used can also be of value to implementing agencies and communities.

It should be noted that participatory methodologies are not an alternative to good quality formal surveys and quantitative techniques, but complement them, and often help to interpret them.

An introduction to some common principles is followed by a more detailed introduction to participatory techniques. The technique described in most detail, is the one that is expected to be used most commonly in the MSIF; the 'Focus Group Discussion'. The Focus Group can frame the use of other methodologies, e.g. community action planning (as described in Chapter 3), or PRA methodologies may be used within a Focus Group setting. However, it is important to note that these participatory methods must also be employed in more heterogenous community meetings (other than the Focus Group).

General guidelines on how to frame questions and conduct discussions, can also be drawn from the description of the Focus Group.

4.1. Common Principles

Some basic principles and methods apply across the range of participatory methods.

4.1.1. *Secondary and Quantitative Data Review*

Frequently it is valuable to review secondary data prior to undertaking a participatory exercise. This helps in the design of the participatory exercises and also may help to

¹ Material on Participatory Techniques is drawn from 'Participatory Tools and Techniques: A Resource Kit for Participation and Social Assessment. Compiled by Jennifer Rietbergen-McCracken and Deepa Narayan. The World Bank, Washington D.C., 1997

validate information prior to and sometimes after the exercises. The example below demonstrates some of the issues examined in an assessment in Kosovo.

Box 1 Secondary Data Review for Kosovo Assessment**-Preliminary Poverty Profile****-Sectoral Considerations in livelihood security and poverty analysis**

Food and Agriculture

Health Services

Urban Economy

Education Facilities

Mining and Industries

Social Protection System

-Cross-Cutting Themes

Extended family system, clientelism, patriarchy

Women in the post-conflict situation

Governance

-Data Gaps

Poverty

Urban Areas

Women

Seasonality

Youth

Social Institutions

Children

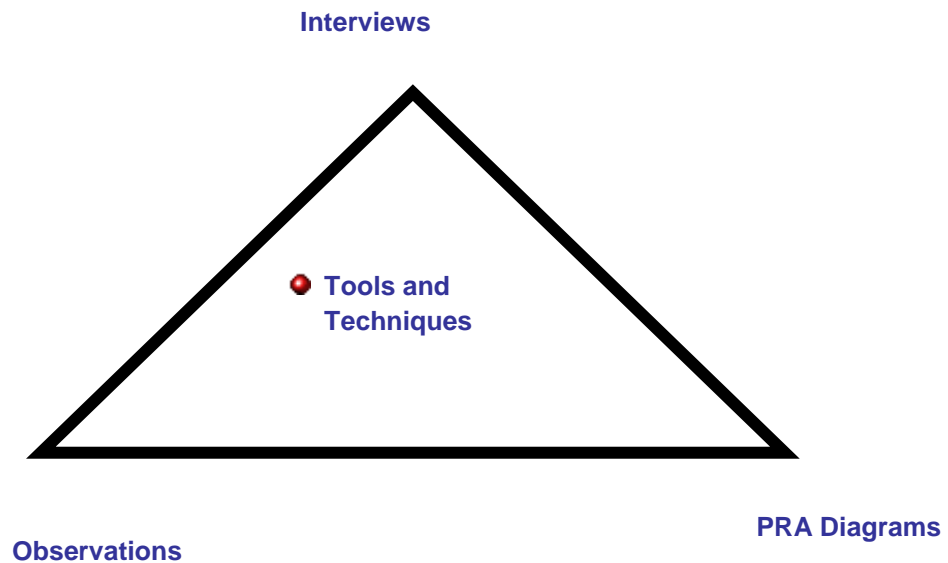
Source: *The Use of Participatory Methods for Livelihood Assessment in Situations of Political Instability: A Case Study from Kosovo*, Overseas Development Institute, 2002

Information can be obtained from a range of sources such as household surveys, census data, records, government agencies, donor reports, NGOs etc.

4.1.2. Verifying Information or Triangulation

Unless qualitative information is triangulated, there is danger of criticism that the evidence is only 'anecdotal' or 'stories'. Triangulation is achieved through using different techniques to cross check information. It means seeking different views through different methods, different analysts, different locations and different sources of information.

For example, a wealth ranking of people in the community undertaken by participatory methods can be triangulated in part by examining lists of people receiving social welfare benefits.

Figure 1: Triangulation

Information for triangulation can be obtained from events and processes in which we participate, places we visit and people we talk to.

4.1.3. Social Assessment and Stakeholder Analysis

Social Assessment provides a framework for incorporating participation and social analysis into the design and delivery of projects. As such it is generally undertaken at the beginning of a project to enable participants to design the participatory process on the basis of key social and institutional concerns. It may also be undertaken at other points in the cycle to improve participatory approaches.

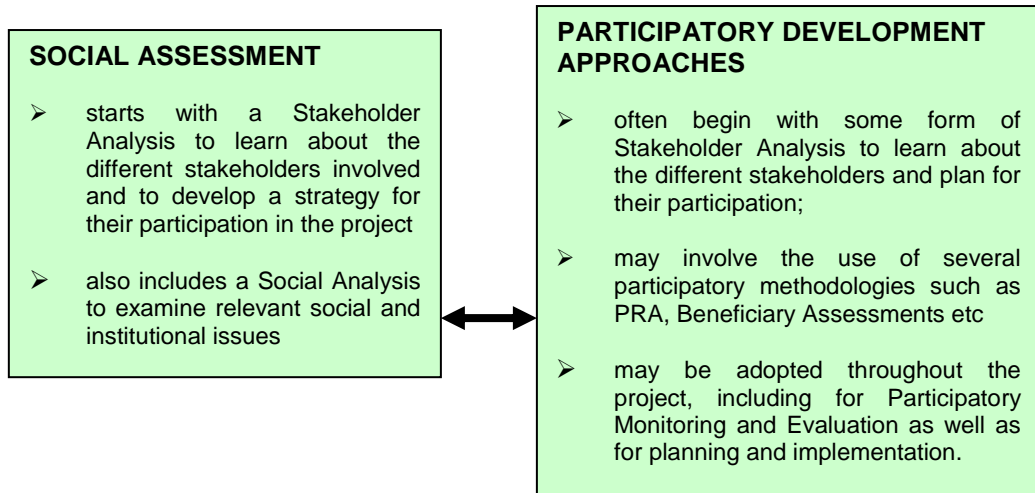
Stakeholder Analysis is the starting point of most participatory work and/or Social Assessments. It addresses the following fundamental questions:

- Who are the key stakeholders in the project?
- What are the interests of these stakeholders?
- How will they be affected by the project?
- How influential are the different stakeholders?
- Which stakeholders are important for the success of the project?

A Stakeholder Analysis can contribute to more in-depth analysis of the project's social and institutional context, and can sometimes be used to developing a participation strategy. This includes the identification of appropriate forms of involvement for the different stakeholder groups, based on an analysis of their interests in, influence on and importance to the project.

Figure 2 below demonstrates the relationship between Social Assessment and Participation.

Figure 2: Social Assessment and the Participatory Process



Source: Participatory Tools and Techniques: A Resource Kit for Participation and Social Assessment, World Bank, 1997

4.1.4. Gender Analysis

Gender issues need to be included at all stages of the project cycle. It is a high priority because:

- Gender equality is essential to poverty reduction and women often suffer disproportionately from poverty; and
- It is integral to a rights based approach to development, which is based on the equal worth and dignity of women and men.

Ensuring gender issues are integrated involves special and specific measures through the project cycle.

Gender-sensitive **stakeholder analysis** should ensure:

- Participatory consultation with women as well as men in beneficiary groups (separately if necessary)
- Women's involvement as well as men in decision-making at all levels

Through the **project cycle** there is a need to:

- Undertake gender analysis to understand the separate roles of men and women;
- Devise clear mechanisms to involve women at all stages of the project cycle and strengthen their role in decision-making
- Ensure that gender issues are monitored by including gender sensitive indicators in the log-frame

Figure 3 shows an example of how a gender analysis found differences in the assets a woman was entitled to under the stress of a divorce.

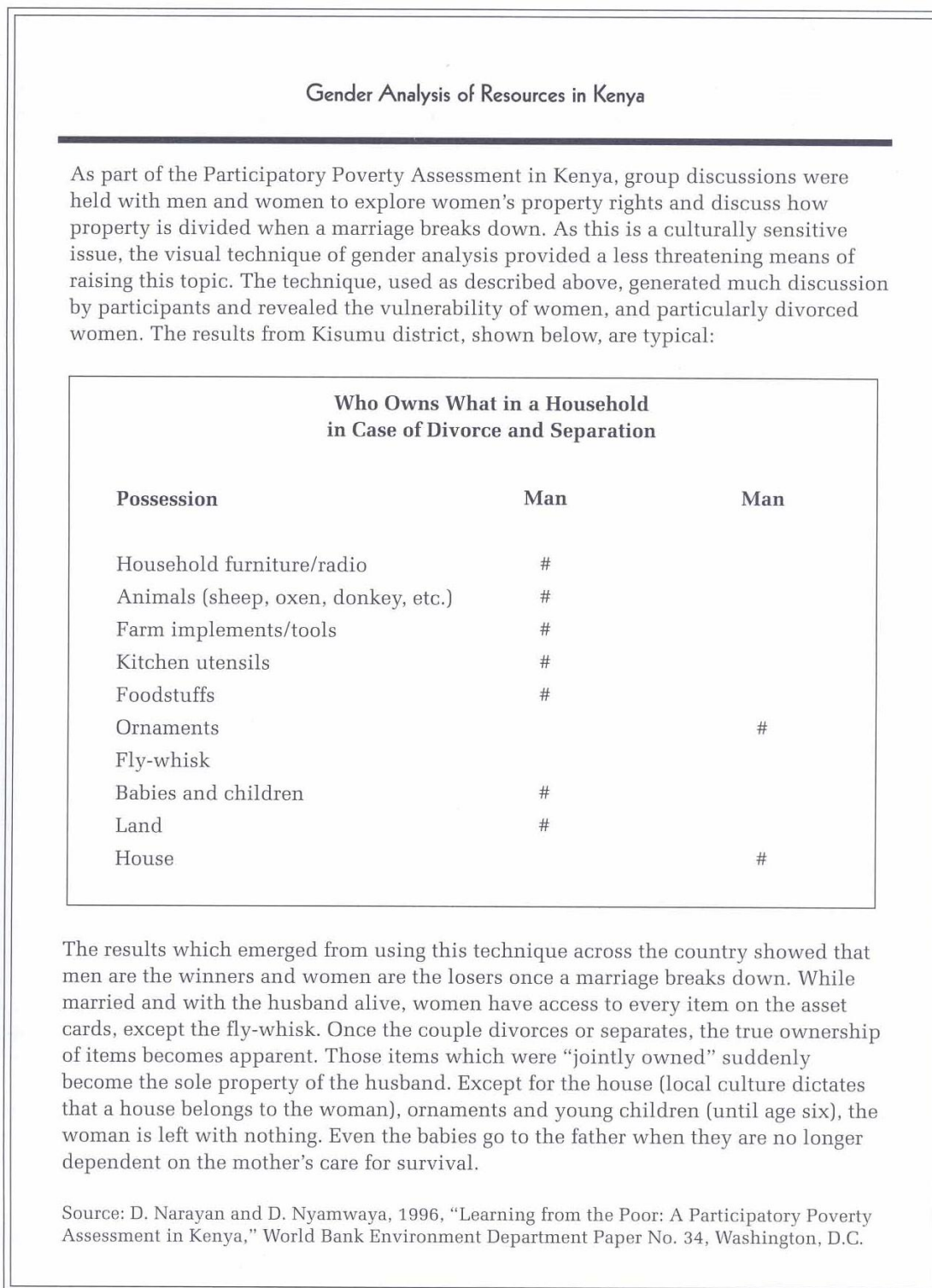


Figure 3: Gender Analysis in Kenya

4.2. Basic Elements of a Social Assessment

**Social Assessment Is.....
SOCIAL ANALYSIS + PARTICIPATION**

.....a *process* which provides a framework for prioritising, gathering, analyzing, and incorporating *social information and participation* into the design and delivery of projects and programmes.

There are many social variables, which may affect the impacts and success of a project and policies- such as gender, age, language, displacement and socio-economic status. Social Assessments enable planners in consultation with other stakeholders to prioritise critical issues and determine how to address them.

Social Assessment is a process for ensuring that projects are informed by taking into account the key relevant social issues and incorporate a participation strategy for involving a wide range of stakeholders.

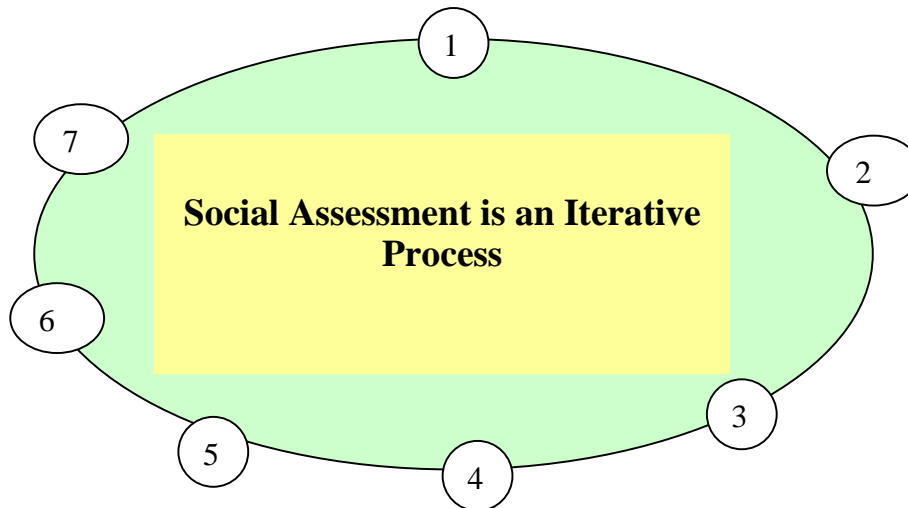
The factors that Social Assessment systematically considers include:

- **demographic factors**- number of people, their location, population density, age etc.
- **socio-economic determinants**- factors affecting incomes and productivity such as risk aversion of the poorest groups, land tenure, access to productive inputs and markets, family composition, kinship reciprocity, and access to wage opportunities and labour migration.
- **social organisations**- organisation and capacity at the household and community levels affecting participation in local-level institutions as well as access to services and information.
- **socio-political context**- goals, priorities and commitment to development objectives of implementers, control over resources, experience, relationship with other stakeholder groups.
- **needs and values**- stakeholder attitudes and values determining whether development interventions are needed and wanted, appropriate incentives for change, and capacity of stakeholders to manage the process of change.
- **institutional capacity**- the capacity of the implementers and other stakeholders to participate effectively.

This information helps planners to:

- account for social differences
- assess impacts and risks
- mitigate adverse impacts
- build capacity of institutions and individuals

Figure 4 The Social Assessment Process



- 1 **Consider Project/Program Context**
- 2 **Begin stakeholder analysis/involve stakeholders**
- 3 **Identify Social Factors**
- 4 **Analyze data and Assess priorities**
- 5 **Develop Plans in consultation with stakeholders**
- 6 **Ensure capacity**
- 7 **Adjust and apply with stakeholder involvement**

The **techniques** used for Social Assessment vary according to the context. It may be carried out by a single social scientist who contacts the key stakeholders and completes the assessment, or in more complex cases requiring more systematic participation, a team may be needed.

While Social Assessment activities can take place throughout the project cycle, the integration of social factors into project design works best at the identification stage. Methods include:

- **Workshop based methods:** Collaborative decision-making often takes place in the context of stakeholder workshops which bring stakeholders together to assess issues and design development projects more collaboratively.
- **Participatory Assessment methods:** Field visits can inform the assessment, including discussions with key local stakeholders and communities. The techniques in PRA, BA can be used. These methods provide tools for collaborative analysis and planning, and can lead to effective action plans and participation strategies.

4.3. Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder Analysis is a vital tool for understanding the social and institutional context of a project. Its findings provide us with timely information about:

- who will be affected by the project (positively or negatively);
- who could influence the project (positively or negatively)
- which individuals, groups, or agencies need to be involved in the project and how; and
- whose capacity needs to be built to participate

It therefore provides a foundation and structure to the participatory planning, implementation and monitoring which follows.

Stakeholder Analysis involves four key steps:

STEP 1: Identify Key Stakeholders

Assess:

- who are the potential beneficiaries
- who might be adversely impacted
- have vulnerable groups been identified
- have supporters and opponents been identified
- what are the relationships among the stakeholders

STEP 2: Assess stakeholder interests and the potential impact of the project on these interests

Assess:

- what are the stakeholders expectations of the project
- what benefits are there likely to be for the stakeholders
- what resources might the stakeholder be able and willing to mobilise
- what stakeholder interests conflict with the project goals

STEP 3: Assess stakeholder influence and importance

For each stakeholder group, assess their:

- power and status (political, social and economic)
- degree of organisation
- control of strategic resources

- informal influence (e.g. personal connections)
- power relations with other stakeholders
- importance to the success of the project

STEP 4: Outline a Stakeholder Participation Strategy

Plan stakeholder participation according to:

- interests, importance, and influence of each stakeholder group
- particular efforts needed to involve important stakeholders who lack influence
- appropriate forms of participation through the project cycle

Figures 5, 6, and 7 show an example of how a stakeholder participation strategy was developed using basic stakeholder analysis.

Steps 1, 2, and 3 of Stakeholder Analysis of Hypothetical Girls' Education Project: Identification of Stakeholder Groups, Their Interests, Importance and Influence in Community-Managed Schools

Stakeholder groups	Interest(s) <i>at stake</i> in relation to project	Effect of Project on interest(s)			Importance of Stakeholder for Success of Project U=Unknown 1=Little/No Importance 2=Some Importance 3=Moderate Importance 4=Very Important 5=Critical player	Degree of Influence of Stakeholder over Project U=Unknown 1=Little/No Influence 2=Some Influence 3=Moderate Influence 4=Significant Influence 5=Very Influential
		+	0	-		
Ministry of Education	Achievement of targets		+		4	5
	Control over resources, activities		-			
	Patronage of First Lady		+			
Teachers	Job security		?		3	2
	Support from community		+			
	Preference for urban posting		-			
Parents	School available in community		+		5	1
	Accountability of teachers		+			
	Girls' help with housework		-			
School-age girls	Employment opportunities		+		5	1
	Socializing with peers		+			
	Free time		-			
Traditional religious leaders	Concern over erosion of traditional values		-(?)		2	4
	Attendance at religious schools		-(?)			
Adult literacy NGOs	Increased literacy		+		1	1
	Financial viability		0			
	Improved links with MOE		?			

Figure 5

**Step 3 of Stakeholder Analysis (continued):
Mapping Key Stakeholders' Relative Influence and Importance**

INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER	IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVITY TO STAKEHOLDER					
	Unknown	Little/No Importance	Some Importance	Moderate Importance	Very Importance	Critical Player
Unknown						
Little/No Influence		literacy NGO				school-age girls, parents
Some Influence				teachers		
Moderate Influence						
Significant Influence			traditional religious leaders			
Very Influential					Ministry of Education	

Figure 6

**Step 3 of Stakeholder Analysis (continued):
Mapping Key Stakeholders' Relative Influence and Importance**

INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER	IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVITY TO STAKEHOLDER					
	Unknown	Little/No Importance	Some Importance	Moderate Importance	Very Importance	Critical Player
Unknown						
Little/No Influence		literacy NGO				school-age girls, parents
Some Influence				teachers		
Moderate Influence						
Significant Influence			traditional religious leaders			
Very Influential					Ministry of Education	

Figure 7

Techniques for Stakeholder Analysis involve combining desk research with participatory methods such as stakeholder workshops, local consultations and participatory analysis.

Box 2: Stakeholder Workshops

- Get the help of a trained workshop designer and facilitator
- Plan a series of linked workshops of different sizes and compositions and locations. For example, neighbourhood workshops with women, or youth, or other groups, can then build up to a village or town level workshop.
- Have a core team managing the workshops, and make sure you liaise with key agencies.
- Ensure that all stakeholder groups participate e.g. the rich and powerful, the poor, those not interested in the project, marginal groups (e.g. disabled), interested observers and of course the supporters of the project.
- Ensure that those with special needs (e.g. women's groups or minorities, or children) have special arrangements so they can voice concerns.
- In the design of the workshop, make sure you use the right participatory techniques to undertake the Stakeholder Analysis and get the information or results you want.

4.4. Participatory Rural Appraisal

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is an approach and a family of methodologies for shared learning between local people and outsiders to enable development practitioners, government officials and local people to plan appropriate projects and programmes together.

Although called 'rural' it is also used in the 'urban' context. In recent years the approach has further evolved and is called 'Participatory Learning and Action' or PLA.

PRA has 5 key principles.

Participation: local people serve as partners with other stakeholders in data collection and analysis

Flexibility: it is not a standardized methodology, but depends on the objectives of the exercise, resources, skills and time

Teamwork: it involves a team of outsiders and insiders to the community, men and women, and a mix of different disciplines (e.g. engineers, social scientists, local leaders, children etc)

Optimal Ignorance: it is cost and time efficient, but there is plenty of opportunity for analysis and planning (a PRA can take place over a period of 2-4 weeks). We assume that we are there to learn, and not there with solutions.

Systematic: sampling is partly stratified and the approach allows for validity and reliability through sampling methods and triangulation

PRA frequently uses visual and diagrammatic techniques to stimulate discussion and aid analysis. An important feature of the diagrammatic techniques of PRA is that they allow an on-the-spot analysis of the issues being visually represented. Visual techniques also make it difficult for any one person to dominate, as participants are usually physically involved in the process, and may not have eye contact with each other (eye contact and formal seating postures allow dominant individuals to take over an exercise).

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is an approach and a family of methodologies for shared learning between local people and outsiders to enable development practitioners, government officials and local people to plan appropriate projects and programmes together.

Although called 'rural' it is also used in the 'urban' context. In recent years the approach has further evolved and is called 'Participatory Learning and Action' or PLA.

The basket of techniques used in PRA is extensive, and the key to an effective PRA is to know which techniques to use and in what sequence. For example, a technique such as community mapping may be particularly effective at the beginning of a PRA, as it encourages shared learning and participation.

Box 3: Key PRA Techniques

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| • Interviews/Discussions: | individuals
households
focus groups/community meetings |
| • Mapping: | community maps
personal maps
institutional maps |
| • Ranking | problem ranking
preference ranking
wealth ranking |
| • Trend Analysis | historical diagramming
seasonal calendars
daily activity charts |

Semi-Structured or Conversational Interviewing (SSI):

The central technique on which PRA is based is Semi-Structured Interviewing (SSI). This does not involve any formal questionnaire, but instead uses a flexible interview guide to help ensure that the interviews stay focused.

Interviews can be conducted with:

Individuals from the community to learn about their own situation in detail, to discuss issues which would be difficult to address in group situations, and to reveal their personal perspectives on particular topics

key informants - people with specialist knowledge or those representing a particular group or viewpoint ; and

groups - either random groups encountered or focused discussion of specific issues with selected groups.

Sampling is generally purposive, and a stratified sample of different groups is often chosen for interviewing.

The interview checklist is indicative, and the prompts should not be followed rigidly, but flow with the direction of the conversation. e.g. if the respondent is giving a detailed description of his issues with the water supply system, do not immediately move onto questions about another sector, instead probe around this area of interest before moving on.

You may also find that you need to lead upto areas of sensitive questioning; establishing a rapport with the respondent, before introducing more sensitive questions.

Ideally, the note-taker should be separate from the interviewer, in order not to detract from the discussion. The team should share responsibility for interviewing and note-taking (rotate). This should be determined in advance, while planning for the interview.

Box 4: Semi-Structured Interviewing

- The interview team should consist of 2-4 people of different disciplines.
- Begin with a traditional greeting and state that you are there to learn.
- Begin the questioning by referring to something or someone visible.
- Conduct the interview informally and mix questions with discussion.
- Be open-minded and objective.
- Let each team-member finish their line of questioning (don't interrupt).
- Carefully lead up to sensitive questions.
- Assign one note-taker (but rotate).
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues (e.g. the body language of participants).
- Avoid leading questions and value judgements.
- Avoid questions that can be answered by 'yes' or 'no'.
- Individual interviews should be no longer than 45 minutes.
- Group interviews should last no longer than 2 hours.

Source: J. Theis and H.M. Grady 1991, Participatory Rapid Appraisal for Community Development: A Training Manual. Save the Children Federation and IIED, London.

Advantages of Semi-Structured Interviewing

- Allows you to probe around issues in depth
- The respondent can bring up and/or focus on issues important to him/her
- Its flexibility can help identify issues which had not been considered in the checklist or topic guide
- Allows solutions as well as problems to be discussed
- Is generally carried out in a relaxed and open environment, helping to build up a rapport between the respondent and interviewers and encourage open sharing of information

Potential Constraints to Semi-Structured Interviewing

- Requires the interviewer to be skilled at probing and sensitive to social, cultural and political circumstances
- Interviews can lose focus and necessary information may not be obtained in sufficient detail
- It is difficult to conduct interviews without interruption sometimes as other household members may want to participate in the discussion
- As the interviewer is ideally not taking notes, he/she must be skilled at remembering key points to probe or bring up at different points in the interview
- It may be difficult to analyse the qualitative information obtained from these interviews

Figure 8 below gives a sample interview guide.

Segment of Interview Guide Used in Zambia Participatory Poverty Assessment

Local perceptions of poverty, vulnerability, well-being

- Attributes of a poor person (man/woman)
- Attributes of a rich person (man/woman)
- Describe the life of a poor person (man/woman)
- Describe the life of a rich person
- Describe a poor family
- Describe a rich family
- (Rural) Are there poor villages and rich villages in the area—what is the difference? (eg. abundance of natural resources, infrastructure, services)
- (Urban) Are there poor communities/areas and rich communities/area in the town? Describe the difference.
- Do you know any proverbs/stories about poverty?
- What are the things that would make someone content in life?
- What was the effect of the 1991 drought on your community?
- Who in the community was best able to cope with the drought/characteristics of those households/people (*might be a social category —eg. young men, not a group of households*).
- Who in the community was least able to cope with the effects of the drought? Characteristics of those households/people.

Strategies for poverty reduction

- Events in life that can make a person (man/woman) or household poorer? (*note: these may be different for men and women, eg. loss of a husband is not the same as loss of a wife*)
- Has anyone in the community become richer in the last ten years? How?
- Has anyone in the community become much poorer in the last ten years? How?
- Ways in which a poor man/woman can improve their situation
- What actions can a community take to improve the situation of all of the people?
- What actions can a community take to improve the situation of the poor/vulnerable?
- What agencies from outside the community have helped the community in the last ten years, and how?
- Which agencies used to help the community twenty years ago? If no longer helping, then why not? (*note: try to probe for different views and expectations of government and non-governmental agencies*)

Major concerns and problems

- What are the main problems in your community at present? Probe causes of these.
- Main problems in your community ten years ago. If no longer there, what has removed them?
- What are the major problems for your household at the moment? Causes of these?
- What were the main problems facing your household ten years ago? If they have changed, why?
- Do you see all your neighbors facing the same problems? If different, what and why?

Source: *Zambia Poverty Assessment, op. cit.*

Figure 8: Sample Interview Guide for SSI

Transect Walks:

This technique involves a group of participants, walking through a village, while identifying key features of note at each point. This may include issues (e.g. sanitation, buildings needing reconstruction etc.), on-going initiatives (highlighting their strengths and weaknesses) and particular social, economic and physical characteristics

It is important to stop and hold a discussion at various points during the transect walk. It is also important to map the various issues as you walk through visually. It is helpful if the group conducting the transect walk is a multi-disciplinary one which can point out different dimensions of an issue. For example, an agronomist, a social scientist, an economist and a farmer may point out different features of the agriculture in a village while walking through.

A transect walk can be a very good introduction to a participatory exercise, as it helps a group of diverse people to focus on common issues from different perspectives, as well as introducing the group to the key problems faced by the community.

Participatory Mapping:

Mapping not only provides researchers with information about the physical characteristics of the community, but can reveal much about the socio-economic conditions and how the participants perceive their community.

The maps are usually drawn by groups of villagers either on the ground using chalk or on a large piece of paper. The final map is used for generating discussion.

A **historical map** can document changes which have occurred in the community and can be used e.g. to generate discussion on the causes and effects of environmental degradation;

Social maps illustrate the individual households which make up the community and different symbols can be used to show particular household-level characteristics- relative wealth, levels of resource use, number of school-age children in or out of school, membership of a community group or project activity etc.

Personal maps are drawn by individuals rather than groups, and can show different perspectives of different sections of the community (men vs women, rich vs poor etc). It will also show how these different types of individuals perceive the boundaries of the community, the places important to them, or their vision of how the community could be improved.

Box 5: Organising Participatory Mapping

- Decide with the local people what kind of a map will be drawn (historical, social, natural resources etc.)
- Conduct the exercise with people who know the area and the topic of the mapping exercise and who are willing to share their knowledge
- Let the participants choose a suitable place (ground, floor, paper) and medium (pens, sticks, stones, seeds) for the mapping.
- Help people to get started, but let them draw the map themselves. Be patient and do not interrupt.
- Sit back and watch (what is drawn first will be most important to them possibly, what is drawn biggest, what parts of the map generate discussion)
- Once drawn, ask questions about what is shown, and keep notes for issues to follow up in further discussions
- Keep a permanent (paper) record and the mappers names to give credit.

Source: Adapted from Theis and Grady (cited in PRA Module III: Participatory Tools and Techniques; The World Bank, 1997

Social Map Showing Wealth Ranking in a Village in West Bengal, India

A PRA in West Bengal focused on learning about local people's perceptions of rural poverty. Social mapping was used to enable villagers to identify the poorer households and to rank them using their own indicators of poverty. The social map of one village, Berapal, was drawn by a group of villagers gathered in a central meeting place. Once the map was drawn, the participants identified four different wealth groups, from the poorest of the poor to the richest. The locally determined indicators of poverty included households headed by widows and agricultural laborers who had no land and no regular source of income or food.

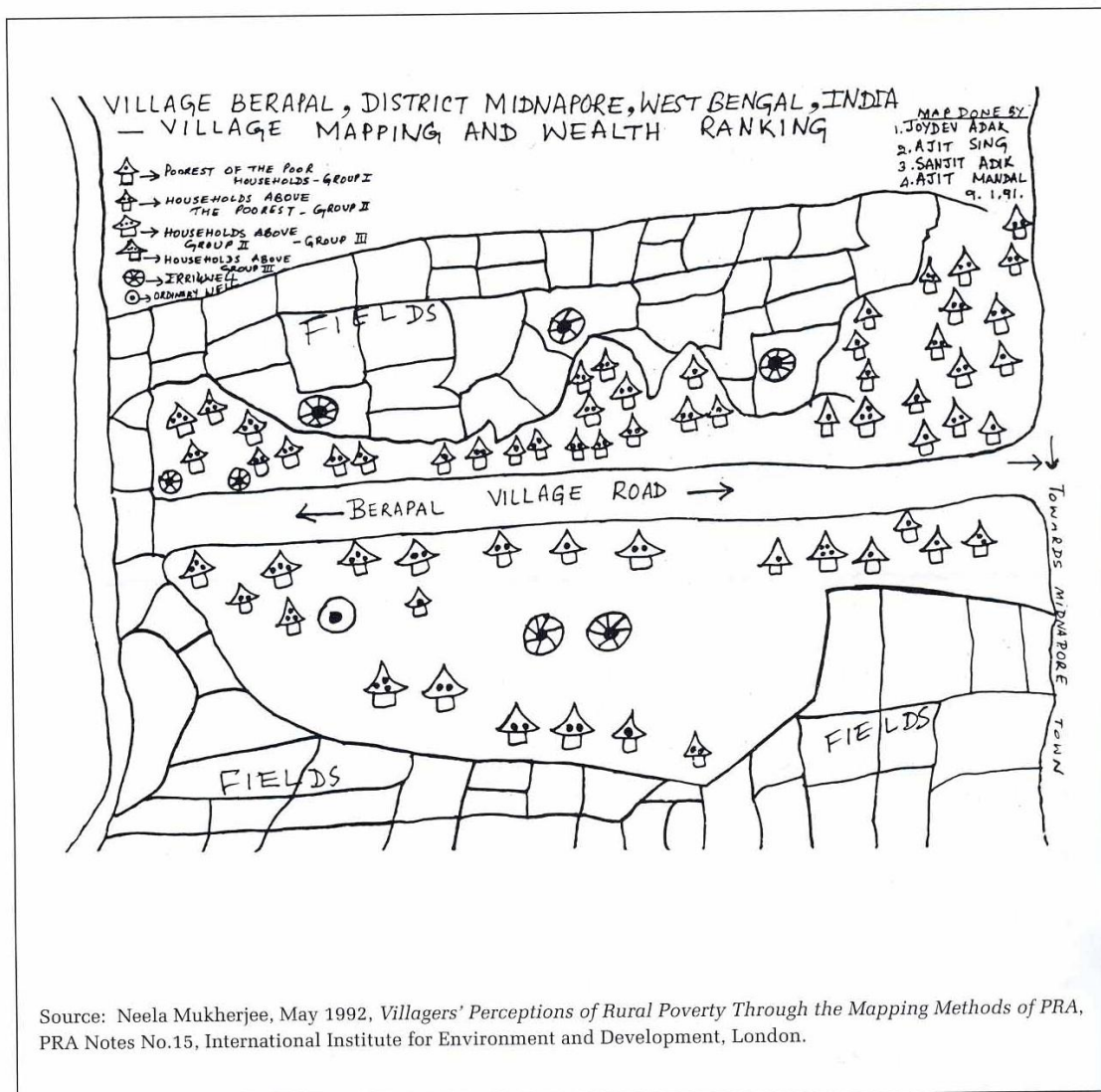


Figure 9: Social Mapping

Institutional Mapping or Venn Diagrams:

Institutional maps, sometimes called Venn or chapatti/roti (after the flat Indian bread) diagrams, are visual representations of the different groups and organisations within a community and their relationships and importance to decision-making. Participants are asked to use circles –either drawn on paper or cut out and placed on a table or the ground- to depict the different groups.

The relative importance of a group is shown by the relative size of the circle representing it- the larger the circle the more important the group. The extent to which the different groups interact with each other is represented by the degree of overlap shown in the diagram.

This technique can be undertaken as part of a group discussion, to generate a consensus view of the community's social infrastructure, or be undertaken by individuals to illustrate different perspectives e.g. of men or women, local government staff or community members etc. Box 6 provides guidelines for institutional mapping, while Figure 10 gives the example of an actual exercise produced by a focus group of 17 women in one community as part of the Participatory Poverty Assessment in Zambia.

BOX 6: INSTITUTIONAL MAPPING

- Ask participants to identify key institutions and individuals responsible for decisions in the community
- Cut out (or ask the participants to draw) circles to represent each institution or individual
- Ask participants to choose or draw circles of different sizes, depending on the relative importance of the individual/institution represented
- Ask the participants to arrange the circles as follows:

-separate circles = no contact among the individuals/institutions

-touching circles = information is shared between

-small overlap = some cooperation in decision making

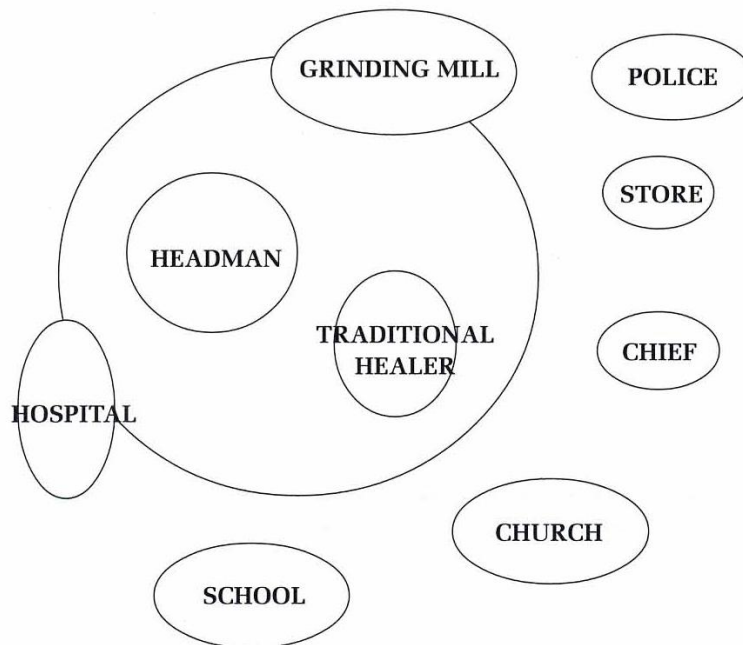
-large overlap = considerable cooperation

- When the diagram is completed, use it to ask participants about, for example, how things have changed in the past ten or twenty years; what kinds of improvements they would like to see regarding the institutions and individuals represented; and the size of the membership of various groups
- Keep a permanent paper record of the diagram including participants names to give them credit.

Source: Adapted from Theis and Grady

Institutional Map of a Zambian Village, As Seen by a Focus Group of 17 Women

MPEWA Village, Eastern Province, 28.9.93
 Drawn on ground with chalk.



The women explained their Venn diagram, saying for example:

- ◆ *the headman* is seen as very important — he helped bring the grinding mill to the village; he settles social conflicts and mobilizes the community to help the needy.
- ◆ the *traditional healer* is seen as more accessible (drawn inside the community) than the hospital (drawn outside).
- ◆ the *chief* is drawn outside the community since he does not visit.
- ◆ the *church* is placed outside the community as it “doesn’t seem to be helping much anymore” though its spiritual function is still seen as important.

The women then went on to produce a Venn diagram showing the “ideal” situation. This vision included, for example, the church back in the community (i.e. “belonging” to the community again) and the traditional healer less important than the hospital.

Source: Zambia Poverty Assessment, *op. cit.*

Figure 10: Sample Venn Diagram

Problem Ranking:

There are several different techniques that can be used to elicit local people's perceptions of the most important problems they face. One simple method is to ask participants to list the six or so main problems in their community (this could be general issues, or focused on particular sectors such as constraints to agricultural production, or health related problems), and then ask them to rank these in order of importance.

A more systematic pair-wise ranking uses cards to represent the different problems. The problem cards are shown 2 at a time, each time the group being asked to determine the larger problem. The results are recorded in a matrix. The final result is obtained by counting the number of times each problem 'won' over the other, and arranging them in appropriate order. An example of this pairwise ranking technique is shown in Figure 11 which shows the different reasons why some girls in a rural community in Gambia do not attend school. Another example of problem ranking looks at violence in urban communities in Jamaica (Figure 12).

Box 7: Problem Ranking

- Choose the theme of the ranking depending on the topic under discussion
- Ask participants to select the six most important problems related to the theme
- Note these problems on separate cards- use pictures and symbols instead of text where possible
- Place 2 cards in front of the interviewee and ask him/her to choose the bigger problem and to give reasons for the choice. Mark down the response in the appropriate box in the priority ranking matrix.
- Present a different pair and repeat the comparison.
- Repeat until all combinations have been considered (ie all boxes of the matrix have been filled up)
- List the problems in the order in which the interviewee has ranked them by sorting the cards in order of priority
- Check with the interviewee whether any important problem has been omitted from the list. If there are any place them in the appropriate position in the ranking.
- Repeat the pairwise ranking with other individuals and tabulate their responses.
- If appropriate, use the ranking to begin a discussion about potential solutions to the priority problems.

Source: Adapted from Theis and Grady

**Problem Ranking of Reasons for Girls not Attending School,
in a Village in The Gambia**

Pairwise Ranking Matrix

Problems	Lack of facilities	Pregnancy	School fees	Losing traditional values	Distance from home	Early marriage
Lack of facilities		pregnancy	lack of facilities	lack of facilities	lack of facilities	early marriage
Pregnancy			pregnancy	pregnancy	pregnancy	pregnancy
School fees				school fees	school fees	school fees
Losing traditional values					distance from home	early marriage
Distance from home						early marriage
Early marriage						

Problems	No. of Times Preferred	Rank
Pregnancy	5	1
Early marriage	4	2
Lack of facilities	3	3
School fees	2	4
Distance from home	1	5
Losing traditional values	0	6

Source: E. Kane, 1995, *Groundwork: Participatory Research for Girls' Education. A Manual to be Used with Groundwork: The Video*, World Bank, Economic Development Institute, Human Resources and Poverty Division and Asia Technical Department, Human Resources and Social Development Division, Washington, D.C.

Figure 11: Problem Ranking for Education

Problem Ranking of Types of Violence in Urban Communities in Jamaica

Greenland: Girl High School Students

Types of Violence	Seriousness	Frequency
Gun Violence	1	10 – 20
Drug violence	3	12 – 15
Rape	2	1 – 5
Fighting (bottles and stones)	4	10 – 10
Domestic violence	7	5 – 10
Verbal abuse	5	20 – 25
Physical abuse	6	20 – 15

* The seriousness of the crime was shown by a sequence ranking with one the most serious

** The frequency was fixed scoring out of thirty as the average number of incidents per month

The six school girls attending an after-school program who undertook the listing explained gun violence as having to do with: gang warfare, drug violence related to people stealing to buy drugs, and fighting as taking place among people with weapons other than guns. Gun violence was seen as the most serious problem because it prevents students from attending school and after-school programs when the shootings get very bad; also because it claims the lives of fellow students, as recently happened to a sixteen year-old boy. Rape was the next most important problem. Drug violence included the fact that drug users are sometimes beaten by 'the community' because of the habit. Although verbal and physical abuse were frequent, it was the least serious type of violence identified.

Campbell Town: Group of Mixed-Aged Women Teachers

Types of Violence	Ranking	Causes	Impact
Criminal	2	No job	Everyone
Child Abuse	3	Single parenting	Child
Gun Violence (Gangs)	1	No jobs	Community
Domestic	4	Jealousy	Children
Political	6	Dependency	Community
Drug Abuse	5	Peer Pressure	Community

The group of women teachers saw lack of jobs as the principal cause of both gang violence and criminal activities such as theft and burglary — some not wanting to work and preferring to gamble, steal and stay on street corners. They identified a number of specific implications in relationship to children. Some were unable to return to school because gang warfare meant they could no longer go into spatially defined areas controlled by conflicting gangs. In addition, when outbreaks of crime erupted, the school was forced to close. Abuse of children was quite common, and they also pointed out cases of parents giving drugs to children — so that parents can go out at night — with the children sleepy and unable to operate the following day.

Source: C. Moser and J. Holland, December, 1995. *A Participatory Study of Urban Poverty and Violence in Jamaica: Analysis of Research Results*, World Bank, Urban Development Division, Washington, D.C.

Note: community names are fictitious to maintain anonymity.

Figure 12: Problem Ranking for Social Problems

Preference Ranking:

This is similar to problem ranking and involves participants assessing different items or options, using criteria, which they themselves identify. For example a PRA on micro-enterprises could include a preference ranking of the different kinds of income generating activities found in the community. Or different types of health activities, sources of credit, types of social services etc could be ranked. Gender differences are important to bring out, as the women's preferences may differ from the men's.

A common form of preference ranking uses a matrix with items/options along the horizontal axis and the elicited criteria along the vertical axis, as shown in Figure 13 where a preference ranking of income generating activities in India is demonstrated.

Box 8 Preference Ranking

- Select the topic of the ranking e.g. alternative sources of healthcare, types of schooling, credit etc.
- Ask participants to list about six of the most common alternative items/options within this topic. Elicit the criteria by asking, for each item:
 - 'What is good about this item?' 'What else?' (continue till no more replies)
 - 'What is bad about this item?' 'What else?' (continue till no more replies)
- List all the criteria
- Turn negative attributes into positive ones (e.g. 'vulnerable to pests' becomes 'pest resistant')
- Help participants to draw up a matrix with criteria listed down the side of the matrix and options along the top- where possible use symbols or real life samples (e.g. leaves of trees being compared) and minimise text
- For each criterion, ask participants to assign scores to each of the items according to their relative performance- distributing a fixed number of stones or seeds (for scoring) among the different items
- When the matrix is complete, cross-check the ranking results by asking, 'If you could only have one of these, which would you have chosen and why?' This helps reveal the relative weighting which participants have given to the different criteria
- Follow up on the ranking results in subsequent discussions to explore different viewpoints

Source: Adapted from Theis and Grady

Preference Ranking of Income-Generating Activities in India

During a PRA by an Indian NGO, MYRADA, a group of village women ranked their preferences for a number of different income-generating activities using a simple matrix ranking technique. After selecting the items to be ranked, the women identified their own criteria, including the amount of time required by the activity and the level of profit possible. Pictures and symbols were used to represent the different items and criteria, and the women used a five-point scoring system to compare the different options. The outcome, shown below, reveals, for example, that brickmaking is one of the most profitable activities but also requires additional labor and a lot of hard work by the women themselves. Other activities, such as selling leaves as plates, are less profitable by also less time-consuming and labor-intensive ways of earning cash.

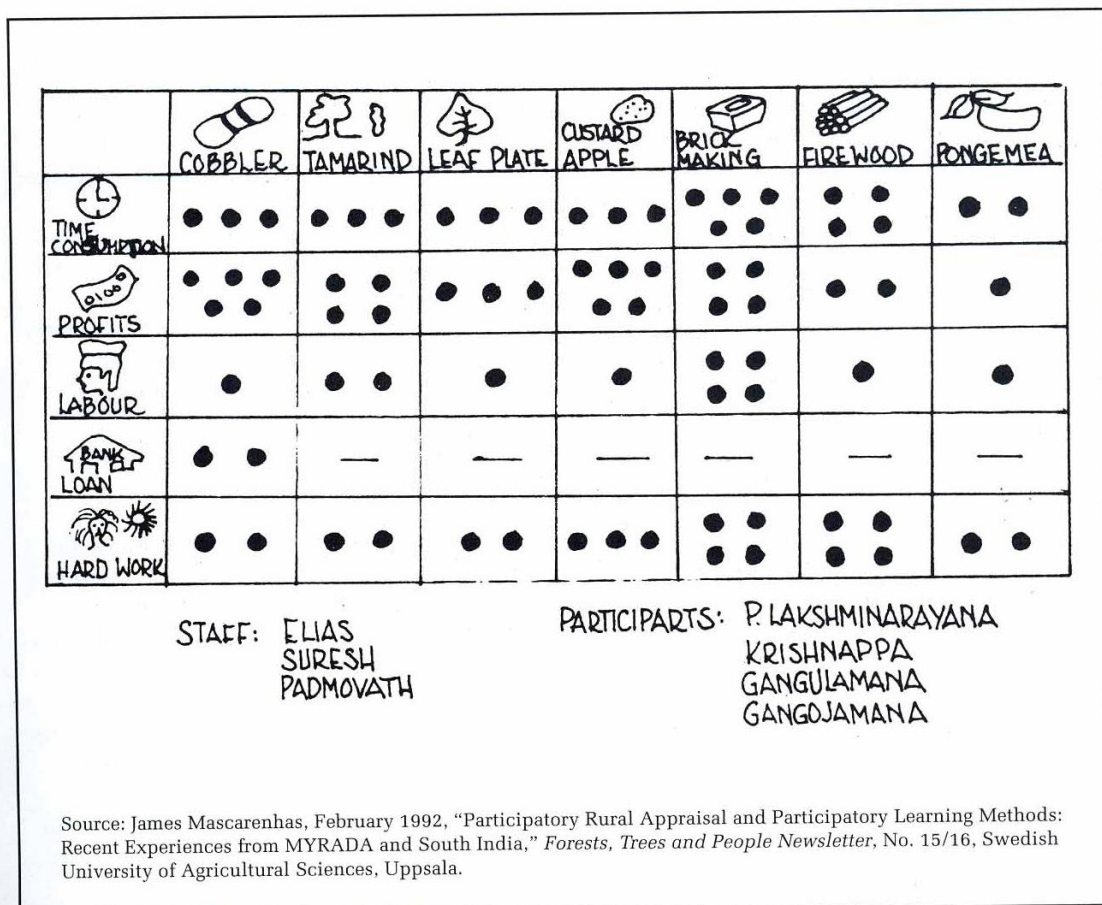


Figure 13: Women Conduct a Preference Ranking

Wealth Ranking:

Wealth or well-being rankings involve community members identifying and analyzing the different wealth groups in a community. It enables researchers to learn about the socio-economic stratification of a population and local people's definitions and indicators of wealth and well-being. It can also help in poverty mapping and in targeting benefits to the poor. The results of the wealth ranking can also help in stratifying a sample for further interviews during the participatory exercise.

Where possible, results should be cross-checked with key informants and secondary data.

The most common version of this technique involves a series of individuals, a focus group of community members, ranking their entire community (or a particular section of the community if there are too many households). The PRA facilitator must introduce the technique using local terms for wealth and poverty, and encouraging participants to discuss their own definitions of poor and rich households.

The actual ranking is done by sorting cards. A list of all households is constructed and cards for each household are divided into piles according to wealth. Participants generally decide how many groups they want to create.

An example of a relatively simple wealth ranking in Zambia is shown in Figure 14

Box 9: Wealth Ranking

- Construct a list of households to be ranked
- Write the names of the households on separate cards
- Ask participants to divide the cards into several piles to represent the different wealth groups in the community. Let participants decide how many piles to make. In some cases they may choose to distinguish only two or three different groupings (say, rich, medium and poor) but in other cases, they may divide the community into more piles
- Once participants finish the card sorting ask them to go back and check the piles, and make any adjustments they wish
- When participants are content with the results, ask probing questions about, for example, the factors determining a household's place in the ranking; what could lead to a household moving from one wealth group to another
- When using the wealth ranking for sampling, ask participants to identify 2-3 typical households in a group that you can visit later
- Record the results in terms of the characteristics of households in each wealth group and where appropriate, the names of the households

Some Cautions

-In some communities, relative wealth/poverty is a very sensitive topic and may only be discussed in a private setting. In some instances it may not be possible to do a wealth ranking.

-This technique is generally more successful in rural areas where communities are more cohesive, and may not work in urban areas.

-The results of the wealth mapping should be cross-checked by other means of addressing the issue of relative wealth, e.g. social mapping.

Wealth Ranking by Card Sorting in a Village in Zambia

Wealth Ranking by Cards, Jumbe, Eastern Province (Mr. Phiri)

The informant first ranked the thirteen households of the village into two groups, but then split them into three:

Group 1

“Nchasko” — those who are “not in a bad state.” These were five households, all male-headed, and all related by matrilineal kinship.

- ◆ mostly sell tobacco
- ◆ have all lived and worked in town
- ◆ all relatively educated
- ◆ one man owns a building he rents as a shop
- ◆ houses are larger, made from better materials

To be rich this group would need: fertilizer loans, tractor hire facilities.

Group 2

Seven households — three male-headed, four female-headed

- ◆ mostly rely on mat-making for extra income
- ◆ three female-headed households
- ◆ problems in getting money — lack planning
- ◆ low levels of farm production

To improve their situation, “they don’t need help from anyone, they just need to help themselves.”

Group 3

Muleme Banda is the only person in this category. She lives on her own — has no children or husband. She is old and incapable of carrying out basic domestic tasks like carrying water. She is often without food, and depends on charity and relatives for survival. She does grow some sorghum.

To be better off she needs: combined village assistance — money to buy essentials like salt and food. She also needs help in drawing her water, thatching her house and other major jobs.

A woman asked to rank the same households made four groups — with Muleme Banda again as the bottom category — her top category was also the same. She would not elaborate on the breakdown.

Notes: The situation of the really destitute was regarded as a matter for the community — not for outside assistance. The situation of the intermediate group was regarded as one of self-help. The situation of the relatively well-off was regarded as one that outside agencies could help to solve. A strong correlation again emerged of isolated women (no husband or living children) and ‘core’ poverty.

Source: Zambia Poverty Assessment, *op. cit.*

Figure 14: Ranking Wealth in Zambia

Seasonal Calendars:

These are a useful means for generating information about seasonal trends within a community and identifying particular stress and vulnerability. They can be very useful in planning project activities, or identifying priorities. These are best undertaken in the context of a group discussion to help verify the information obtained. Often they are drawn on the ground, using aids such as seeds or stones to show trends. Or else, simple line graphs can be drawn to show seasonal increases and decreases. Variables can include rainfall, crop sequencing, labour demand and availability, incidence of human diseases, outmigration, expenditure levels etc.

Overall trends only need to be shown as rough, qualitative ones. Quantification is not necessary e.g. man hours of labour. This tool can be particularly useful in determining e.g. when community members are particularly busy and may not be able to participate in project activities, or particular issues which occur at certain times of the year (e.g. fuel shortages).

Figure 15 shows a seasonal calendar developed as part of the Kenya participatory poverty assessment.

Box 10 Seasonal Calendar

- Ask participants to mark out the year using their local calendar.
- Use whatever material is available locally to show the trends- coloured chalk to draw line graphs, different sized piles of seeds, stones etc to show seasonal variations, or sticks broken into different lengths to indicate magnitude
- Combine all seasonal patterns into one diagram to show correlation between variables and identify any periods of particular stress
- Cross check and refine the seasonal calendar throughout the participatory exercise

Source: Adapted from Theis and Grady

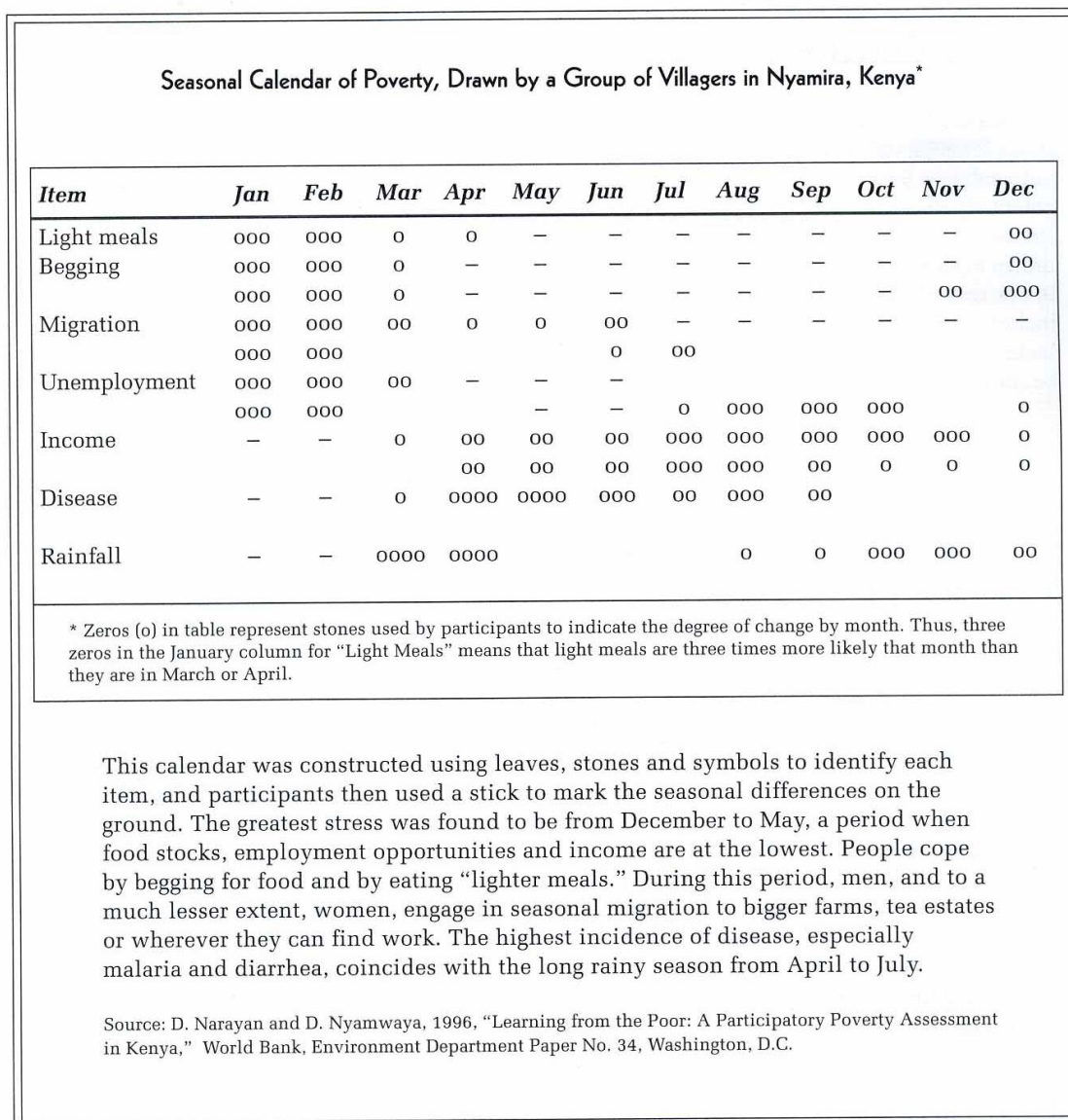


Figure 15: Mapping the Seasonality of Poverty

Daily Activity Charts:

Daily activity charts are useful for community members to show graphically how they spend their day. They can be used to compare the activities of different groups e.g. women vs men, employed vs unemployed, married women vs widows etc.

They will indicate the busiest times of the year and help to identify constraints, and for example the most appropriate times to arrange project activities such as e.g. training workshops.

Figure 16 shows the different activity patterns in the dry and rainy season for widows in a rural community in Zambia.

Box 11 Daily Activity Chart

- These charts are best done by groups of people in the same general situation
- Participants should work with any material they are comfortable with, if not pen and paper
- If comparing the charts of different focus groups, have representatives of each group present so they can explain their diagram and discuss the reasons for the difference
- Where possible cross check the information through direct observation and interviews

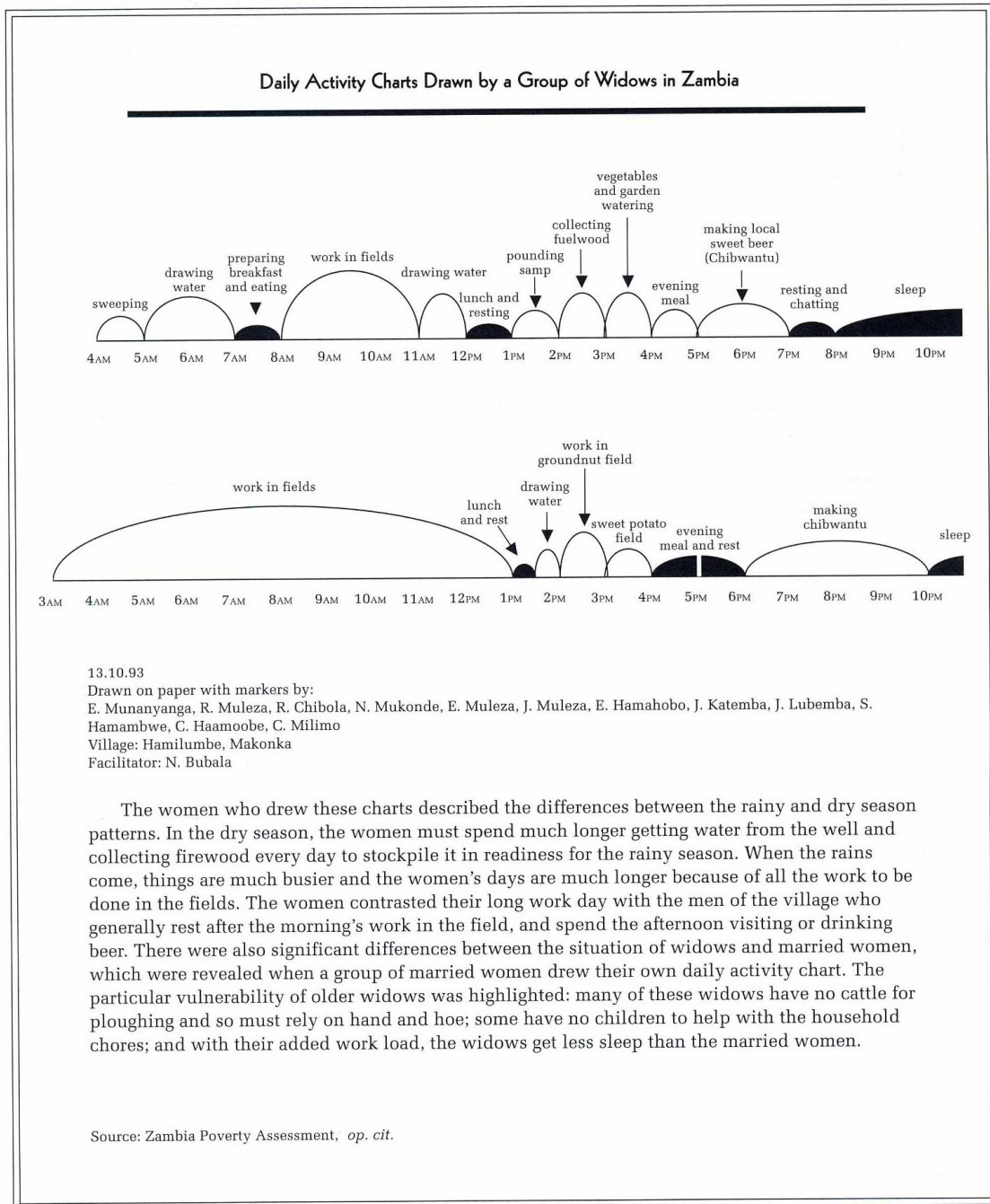


Figure 11: A Daily Activity Chart for Widows in Zambia

4.5. Beneficiary Assessment

A beneficiary assessment is a qualitative method of information gathering, which assesses the value of an activity as it is perceived by its principle users.

A Beneficiary Assessment (BA) is a consultative methodology which is used to gain insights into the perceptions of the beneficiaries regarding the project. The overall objective is to give 'voice' to these beneficiaries and local-level stakeholders.

Key features of a BA are that it is:

- qualitative, but quantified
- systematic, but flexible
- action-oriented
- targeted to decision-makers (tend to provide recommendations as well as findings)

Because BA is systematic, and findings are later quantified, there is a need for an adequately large and stratified sample size to allow this. Most of the assessment is carried out with the community, but other key actors may also be involved. The combination of techniques used allows for triangulation of findings.

The key **techniques** are:

Conversational Interviews: These provide the bulk of the findings and are similar to the semi-structured interviews of PRAs and are conducted using a thematic guide developed for each BA study. Note-taking is avoided during the interview. This technique has been described in detail earlier in the chapter.

Focus Group Discussions: These are conducted to complement the individual interviews, and generally comprise 6-12 people with common interests or characteristics (e.g. youth, young mothers, female entrepreneurs, cooperative members etc). The interviewer takes a facilitating role, guiding the discussion to cover one or two key topics from the thematic guide. The facilitator also ensures that everyone participates in the discussion. A researcher is generally present to take notes. Focus group discussions are described in detail in section 4.6 below.

Participant Observation: This entails a member of the research team living in a community over an extended period of time, ranging from a couple of weeks to several months. During this time the 'participant-observer' involves him/herself in the community's activities to get an in-depth sense of issues and understand contextual factors not apparent through interviewing.

Figure 17 below shows how participant observation helped in identifying key bottlenecks in a project in Pakistan.

Participant Observation Facilitates Institutional Reform in Pakistan

In the context of the Second Karachi Water Supply and Sanitation Project, both the government and the World Bank agreed that a large urban water utility was ineffective and in need of institutional reform. The utility was characterized by an emphasis on personal agendas, selective sharing of information, interpersonal and intergroup rivalries and power struggles, intimidation and coercion. Given that these and other problems were fundamentally behavioral and attitudinal in nature, any institutional changes would have to be initiated at a behavioral level through involving staff in planning and implementation. A participant observer was placed in the utility. Their role was not only to determine how the organization functioned, but to serve as a “process consultant,” helping the staff examine and evaluate “what was being done, how it was being done, and by whom, against agreed action plans.”

To this end, the participant observer took part in a variety of tasks, including attending meetings, developing checklists, monitoring progress, identifying and clarifying problems, holding informal discussions, making sure information was being disseminated, facilitating communication, and building trust. Observation, for example, revealed that 174 clerical steps were required before any payment could be made to a contractor.

Client staff participated fully in the process, creating an increased sense of ownership of outcomes and decisions. Over time, defenses broke down and trust developed, with fewer and fewer attempts to “mask reality.” The participation of the local institutions and their staff in planning institutional reform resulted in the adoption of appropriately tailored solutions and improved communication with the Bank. The process of change has already induced new behaviors of transparency and accountability at the individual level, and some similar changes are now being seen at the institutional level.

Sources: N. Boyle, 1994, personal communication; and Boyle and Wright, 1992, “Policy Reform: The Role of Informal Organizations,” World Bank, Infrastructure and Urban Development Department, Washington, D.C. Cited in Deepa Narayan, 1996, *Toward Participatory Research*, World Bank Technical Paper No. 307, Washington, D.C.

Figure 17: Using Participant Observation

4.6. Focus Groups and Discussion Skills

What is a Focus Group

Source: Focus Group Discussion Manual, Andhra Pradesh Urban Services Project, GHK, London

A focus group is a group discussion that gathers together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest to the researcher. The group of participants are guided by a moderator (or group facilitator), who

introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves.

A focus group is not a group interview where a moderator asks the group questions and participants individually provide answers. The focus group relies on group discussion and is especially successful where the participants are able to talk to each other about the topic of interest. This is important as it allows the participants the opportunity to disagree or agree with each other. It can provide insight into how a group thinks about an issue, about the range of opinions and ideas, and the inconsistencies and variation that exist in a particular community in terms their experiences and practices.

The discussion is usually "focused" on a particular area of interest. It does not usually cover a large range of issues, but allows the researcher to explore two or three topics in greater detail.

Focus groups are also "focused" because the participants usually share a common characteristic. To ensure that a group is able to talk naturally together you have to select members who have enough in common, socially and / or professionally to prevent some members from being "stifled" by those who may be considered to be superior, more expert or more conservative. For example, junior municipal staff may not be as forthcoming in their ideas and opinions in the presence of the Municipal Engineer and Commissioner, as they might be if they participated in a group of their own. Young mothers, widows, artisans, youth, disabled persons, farm labourers, are all examples of possible focus groups in a community.

The topic of discussion may arise out of earlier investigations, or as a priority concern in the community, which is worth investigating. Once the topic has been chosen, participants can be chosen on the advice of local agency staff, community leaders, or other key informants. Alternatively, they may be selected on the basis of the findings of a stakeholder analysis, or for example a 'wealth ranking' exercise which provides groupings of the rich and the poor.

Overall, focus group results are not intended for use in quantification or 'aggregation', although as later described it is possible to provide a tally of frequency of responses for example. The most useful outputs of these discussions are the qualitative insights to issues and direct quotes illustrating the concerns of the group members.

Advantages of focus groups

- They produce a lot of information far more quickly and at less cost than individual interviews.
- They are excellent for obtaining information from illiterate communities.
- If the focus group is used to explore relatively simple issues, it can be easily managed by people not trained in qualitative research methods.
- Because the questioning is so flexible, it means that you may discover attitudes and opinions that might not be revealed in a survey questionnaire.
- The researcher can be present at the session, which allows follow-up of responses if required.
- They are usually well accepted by the community as they make use of the group discussion, which is a form of communication found naturally in most communities.
- And, focus groups are good fun!

Cautions in using focus groups

The skill of the moderator is extremely important for the following reasons.

- The moderator who is not well trained can easily force the participants into answering questions in a certain way.
- Participants often agree with responses from fellow group members (for many different reasons) and good moderation is needed to draw less powerful members of the group out
- Focus groups can paint a picture of what is socially acceptable in a community rather than what is really occurring or believed, although this problem can be limited by careful participant selection and good moderating skills.

These should be the key problems that a good moderator is looking out for during any focus group discussion.

How is a focus group conducted?

Focus groups usually involve about eight participants. Although it is possible to have as few as 4 and as many as 12 discussants, the most successful groups consist of 7-10 persons. As already indicated, a person known as a moderator helps the group participate in a natural discussion. The moderator is aided by a pre-prepared question guide that is used to ask very general questions of the group. The question guide is flexible enough to allow the group to take the discussion in any way it chooses, while providing enough structure and direction to stop the discussion moving away from the original topic to be studied.

Box 12: Sample question guide on service delivery

1. What kind of services does the municipality provide here?
 2. How reliable are they?
- For each service which they categorise as unreliable, ask:
3. When the service fails do you contact the authorities straight away?
 4. How do you decide when to contact the authorities?
 5. Who would decide that in the settlement?
 6. What kind of response do you usually get from the municipality/local government?
- If the response from the municipality/local government is perceived to be inadequate.
7. Can you suggest ways that the service can be improved? .

Generally discussions are taped or even videoed, but where that is not possible an observer or note-taker records the discussion and other factors that may influence the interpretation of information. This involves noting down the not only the comments from the group, but also observing and documenting any non-verbal messages that could indicate how a group is feeling about the topic under discussion. The observer and the moderator roles may be swapped back and forward in a pre-arranged fashion. This has the advantage of making sure that both persons who are external to the group are able to be included in the group. If one person is seen only to be making notes, the group may come to distrust her or him.

Sometimes while acting as the observer you may wish to point out questions that are not well explored, questions missed, or suggest areas that could be investigated. However, you and the moderator have to be careful to work as a team. Thus, be judicious in your interventions!

Box 13: Guide for Focus Group Discussion

- Have a clear purpose for the group discussion, based on a few key topics
- Identify participants with the help of local leaders and key informants in the community. Make sure that you are aware of any biases in peoples suggestions
- After establishing a time when people can attend, let them know well in advance
- Ensure that there is a comfortable and pleasant atmosphere. Arrange snacks and drinks as appropriate.
- Start with a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the meeting.
- Facilitate the discussion with enough authority to keep the meeting on track, but with enough sensitivity to include as many people as possible in the discussions.
- Try to identify which issues are of general concern to the group and which issues are more controversial or personal in nature
- Look for potential 'spokespersons' from different focus groups who could be asked to meet together to summarise the concerns of their groups and discuss differences among the groups.

Source: Adapted from D'Arc Davis Case, 1990, The Community's Toolbox: The Idea, Methods and Tools for Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation in Community Forestry, FAO, Rome

The team will generally consist of a 'moderator', 'observer' and possibly an 'assistant'.

Moderator

The moderator is the discussion leader. It is a very demanding job, needing practice and confidence. The moderator is in control of the session and is responsible for the direction that the focus group takes. She or he will use techniques to help the participants feel comfortable and to encourage a lively and natural group discussion.

The moderator will be provided with a question guide that will provide the direction for asking questions to obtain the information of interest to the project. The moderator must be familiar with all the objectives of the study, as this is essential to explore responses that are given during the focus group and may not be expected by the planning team.

Observer

The observer has several functions. The main task is to observe the session and to take notes. How many notes you take will depend on how the session is being recorded. If you are relying only on the observer's notes, then you will need to get as close to catching every response as you can. If the session is being tape recorded, then less detail of the session is required.

In addition to noting responses, the observer is also looking at any nonverbal sign or body language that the group demonstrates. This can tell you a lot about how the group feels about the topic under discussion as well as give some indication of how many people hold the same idea. Sometimes people may nod their head in agreement or shake their head in disagreement without actually saying anything. Observing these signs can add a lot to the written notes of the responses. A more detailed discussion of body language will follow below.

The observer also acts as a "back-up" moderator. He or she can quietly pass notes to the moderator to point out any major question not asked, any area that could be followed up, or anything they think may help.

The observer is also responsible for any equipment that is being used, such as tape recorders, still or video cameras.

Assistants

If staff permits, it can be useful to have focus group assistants. These team members are used to help the moderator and observer run a smooth focus group. They are particularly useful in keeping down crowds during sessions held in the community, minding the children of participants, preparing any refreshments, and generally helping to host the session. They can easily be recruited from the community in which you are working for a particular session. They need not have any training or understanding of the project.

Formulating Questions for a Focus Group

The structure of the questions

Questions are asked in focus groups in a very different way from survey questionnaires. Surveys usually ask respondents questions to gain concise and direct information, often with closed questions and fixed choices. In focus groups, responses should be flexible and should encourage people to reply at length. As a result, the sessions are not tightly structured. Your primary aim is to try to understand a new area, or investigate people's attitudes and opinions, and you will not be able to know what the range of answers will be. You need to avoid forcing people into answering questions in particular ways, for you cannot predict how they will want to answer a particular question.

Focus groups and other related qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviewing allow respondents to answer in any way they want, and questions do not give away the type of answer required. These types of questions are called "open-ended" questions. For example:

"How do you feel about the project?"

This question allows respondents to discuss the things they are happy or dissatisfied with. It does not draw attention to any particular aspect of the project, and does not indicate to the respondent how the discussion should progress. What they actually choose to talk about first can show you what is the most important issue for them.

If you were interested in knowing whether people had difficulty recording or getting action on a grievance, the general questions may not lead to such discussions, and you may still want to explore that question in detail. This will require questions with a little more structure, pointing to an aspect of the problem. For example:

"What do you do if the street lighting is faulty? What is the response of the municipality?"

This question allows the respondents to answer in any way they choose, but it does point to a particular aspect of the programme that relates more closely to the objectives. Suppose instead you had asked, "What problems do you have with the grievance cell? ", it would have indicated to the respondents immediately that the grievance cell is a problem. It leads people to discuss the grievance cell in a negative way, when their experiences may be mainly positive!

It is important to avoid questions that will give you a "yes"/"no" answer. It may be necessary on occasion to get a quick "yes" or "no" which can then be explored further, but generally, these are not good questions because they do not encourage lively discussion. As in individual interviews, the best questions are those that encourage people to open up. You want them to tell you about a particular issue or experience. For example:

"A number of you have said that you enjoyed your experience in micro-planning. Could you give us some examples?"

Wording the questions

Although writing the questions may seem easy once you have decided on information you want, it may not be quite that simple. Sometimes questions can be confusing, or they may be misinterpreted. At other times participants may simply not know what you

are talking about: the focus group may be the first time they have ever given any thought to the issue. Do not assume people know what you are talking about, or that they have well developed ideas about the topic.

There are a few simple rules to follow when you are wording the questions.

- To avoid yes/no questions use question forms "how", "why", "whether", for example. BUT avoid using too many "why" questions. These questions give people the idea that there should be a sensible, logical answer. Sometimes people cannot provide such answers and may invent a quick response that sounds reasonable. "Why" questions also may sound like an interrogation, which could make them defensive and so answer in what might be a socially acceptable manner.
- Make sure the questions can be easily understood by the respondents.
- Use simple language.
- Be sure the meaning of the question is clear.
- Keep questions short.
- Do not have several parts to each question.
- Do not word the questions so that people are made to feel guilty or embarrassed.
- Do not indicate any judgement about what is acceptable and what is not.

Number of questions

Focus groups usually last from 45 minutes to one hour. Occasionally they may extend to 1.5 or 2 hours. Participants tend to get tired after this. It will depend, however, on the success of the discussion, how lively it is, and how interested the group is to continue. It is recommended that you write your question guide for just over 30 minutes, but let your participants know that it may last a bit longer. Keep your question guide short and focused. In the best focus groups only 2-3 key questions are explored for each topic.

Conducting the Focus Group

Beginning the Focus Group Discussion

This part of the session is important as it sets the atmosphere for the whole focus group. It needs to be casual, but people need to be aware that there will be some structure and that we need to follow a semi-planned format. It is important not to appear too casual, as people may not take the session too seriously. On the other hand, too much formality may restrict the flow of conversation.

Points for introducing the session

Welcome the participants and thank them for coming. Introduce the team. Explain the team's work. Provide a simple explanation of the study without using the exact nature of the research questions.

Explain the different roles of the team.

Explain why the participants were chosen. Include the importance of their contribution to the meeting and the community.

Make sure people understand that the session will be confidential.

Explain that you will be using a tape recorder (if appropriate) for the session in order to remember later what was said.

Try to keep the conversation "in the group" as other conversations going on between a couple of group members may distract the flow of discussion.

Tell participants you would like to hear from ALL of them about their feelings on the subject. Anything they want to say is important. Remember to give all in the group the chance to speak.

Vague comments cannot provide the group with adequate information. Ask participants to clarify points when necessary. "I agree" comments will usually be followed by requests for explanation. "It is difficult to..." may need to be explained a bit more, such as why is it difficult.

The group members introduce themselves.

Ask for any questions.

Start the session off with a question that will put the participants at ease. This can be a question that demonstrates that they all have something in common and can be comfortable about speaking freely. Or, it could be simply a very general question that is easy to answer and gets the group relaxed. This question may be rather long, certainly longer than in a survey questionnaire. This is because in general this encourages fuller answers in response. For example: "As I've explained, I am interested in finding out about the what hurdles there are to you, as municipal, staff, being able to carry out your job professionally. I wonder if someone can describe some of these problems to me." "

Moderator skills: Asking questions

The question lines have been created to meet specific needs to obtain the right information as quickly as possible. During the pilot sessions it may become obvious that some of these need to be revised, as the participants are not able to understand what is wanted of them.

The most important thing to remember is that the questions need to be asked in exactly the same way as they have been prepared. If you change the order or think that something is wrong, check with the team first.

Encouraging and controlling the discussion

Perhaps the area that requires the most practice is the control of the focus group. Perhaps the most powerful tool for encouraging participation by the group is to explain adequately at the beginning of the session the purpose of the meeting (in general terms) and how important their contribution is to the meeting.

Encouraging discussion

Atmosphere

Wherever possible maintain a friendly and warm attitude to make the participants feel comfortable. As previously mentioned, being non judgemental and open can help a lot. Also as mentioned before, aim to be somewhat casual, but not too much so in case the participants do not take the session seriously.

Pauses and prompts

Pausing to allow a participant to think more on the topic being discussed is a very useful technique. It can also allow a new speaker to comment. Some participants who are shy may not compete for time to speak, but these people will often talk if there is a break in the discussion.

The pause should not last more than five seconds (which can seem like a lifetime if you are anxious!). The pause used with confidence will also stop you rushing onto the next topic too quickly.

You can also use the pause to make eye contact with someone. This can encourage that person to speak. Just try not to embarrass anyone, particularly the shy ones.

Establishing eye contact can also be a means of prompting someone to continue to talk. Raising your eyebrows, nodding, and other gestures (which vary from culture to culture) may also encourage people to continue to talk. Other prompts are verbal - some have meaning ("I see, that's interesting, keep on ..."), others are simply reassuring sounds ("mmm", "uh-huh") to encouraging a speaker to continue his or her line of response.

The probe

This technique is so important, that we will need to prepare probes for each question we ask should no one respond. Generally, we try to avoid vague comments, and the probe can encourage a speaker to give more information. For example:

"Could you explain further?"

"Would you give me an example of what you mean?"

"I don't understand..."

The general probe is used often at the beginning of the discussion. This helps the participants know that we want precise answers.

Rephrasing

A question can be rephrased if the group members are finding it difficult to answer. Be very careful not to change the meaning of the original question and do not hint at the answer.

Reminder questions

This technique is supposed to keep the conversation lively. It also reminds the group of the question being asked.

"Mrs X, you told us that you have never registered a complaint with the grievance cell because it is too much trouble. Mrs Y (who has not yet said anything), does anything stop you from registering a complaint?"

Dealing with specific individuals

Not all participants will respond in the ideal way! For this reason we will look at some ways to deal with some of the more common group problems.

The expert

Often in groups there will be "experts". This can mean someone who is considered either by themselves or others to have a lot of knowledge on the topic in discussion.

Although "experts" can offer a lot of useful information, they should not be allowed to take over and they may prevent other group members from speaking. Opening statements should emphasise that all participants have knowledge on the subject, and that you want to hear everyone's opinions.

Dominant talkers

These are participants who want to answer all the questions for the group. They often answer questions immediately and prevent others from speaking.

Again, the introductory comments should emphasise the need for all participants' comments, and the initial discussion on this aspect should keep the potential problem alive in people's minds.

Dominant talkers are identified, if possible, during the reception time and are seated next to the moderator. This is done so body language can be used! This means turning slightly away from the dominant talker and looking other group members in the eye.

Should a dominant talker continue, then more drastic measures need to be taken!

- Look slightly bored while avoiding eye contact, but be tactful and kind.
- Thank the dominant talker for his or her comment, and ask for other comments from the group.

Shy respondents

There will always be shy people in a group. Again, try to identify these people in the reception time and seat them opposite the moderator to enable maximum eye contact.

If this does not help, try gently to address them by name. Be very careful with this technique as it could embarrass them and prevent them from speaking again!

People who can't stop talking

These people talk on and on about a topic. They cease to provide good information, and will prevent others from speaking. As you only have a short time for the discussion on several topics, it is essential that you keep these people under control.

Deal with these people by stopping eye contact after 20 to 30 seconds. Look bored, look at other participants, but do not look at the participant of concern.

As soon as the participant pauses, be ready to ask a question of another participant, or repeat the same question, if necessary, to other members of the group.

Moderator and Observer Skills: Observing Non-verbal Messages

As well as talking, people give many messages through body language. These are very important to understand if the meaning behind what people are saying is to be understood, and observers of focus groups need to take note of these as well as verbal responses to questions.

It is difficult to be expert at this without special training. Try to use common sense, by being aware of this. In the training and debriefing sessions, discuss body language, including common gestures and expressions used in your culture to indicate feeling or emotion.

The observer is the main team member watching body language and tone of voice. Although this will be a major part of his or her role, it is also important for all team members to consider body language during the discussion. The observer will note certain things during the session that he or she will want more information about, so practice observing signs people give that do not involve words and listen to what they are saying at the same time!

Things to watch for in "non-verbal" messages

Facial expression

The expressions people use whilst talking provide us with a lot of information about how they are feeling about what they are saying. Try writing a list of the types of facial expressions used to give certain impressions, and include the real message they are sending.

Body posture

This is as important as facial expressions. The way people are sitting can give you a lot of information about how they are feeling about the discussion. People use body language differently in different cultural settings. Try to list down some body postures that convey feelings (such as boredom, excitement, interest, impatience, anger or resentment, or lack of understanding), and include facial expressions in this exercise. If listing is difficult, try to demonstrate the body postures and facial expressions yourselves.

Observer Skills: Recording the Session

There are many ways of recording focus group discussions, but whatever method you choose for your project, it is the responsibility of the observer to record the session.

The interpretation of information relies on the quality of the record of the session, and so it is a very important part of the project.

Note-taking

In many circumstances, you will not have access to tape recorders or video cameras, and must therefore rely on paper and pencil.

If you are only taking notes and have no other method of recording, then the quality of your notes becomes very important. One way of getting as much as possible is to try and summarise each participant's response. You should try and include direct quotes where interesting statements are made, or even to show a common response.

Also be aware that if you are taking notes only, it is your interpretation of the response that you are recording through the summary. Be very careful to keep the summary true to what the participant intended.

If you are taking notes as well as recording the session, then the way you write your notes will change a little. If you have a tape recording that will be used to produce a full written or typed transcript of the whole session, then all you need to do is jot down words that can be used during the debriefing to remind you of what was said, and by whom.

Immediately after the session if possible, and certainly within 24 hours, you need to write up your notes in detail. This is especially important where your analysis will rely on these notes. Always ensure that you have the session written up before the next focus group. As you can't always remember details from one or two sessions ago, it is very easy to get confused. Check with the moderator: she or he may be able to remember some details you have forgotten, or have a different interpretation of various gestures or statements.

Do not forget to include your observations of the non-verbal messages in your notes. These can be of great assistance later for analysis.

Tape recording

This is a particularly useful method of recording the session. It can be used as a complete and accurate record when there are questions or confusions about responses or their meaning.

Perhaps the most effective use of the tape recording is the full written transcript. This is only possible where you have the staff to produce the documents. As it takes half a working day to produce a transcript of a 45-minute focus group, not many offices will be able to use this method. However, it is recommended if it is at all possible, as it will improve the quality of your results quite significantly.

You should always ask permission to record the session. It is probably better to use small microphones, as large ones can be a distraction especially if there are children around. Place the microphones in the centre of the group, and try to ensure that the voices of all participants will be heard.

Video recording

If you are using video follow the same principles as with tape recordings. Just ensure that people are not aware of the camera too much as this could easily stop a free and natural discussion.

Closing the Discussion and Meeting

Closing the discussion and having refreshments together can be as important as the discussion itself. This is for two main reasons. People should feel that their contribution has been worthwhile, and that you are really interested in them as people. The participants should leave the meeting feeling satisfied that the time taken from their daily duties was well invested.

Closing the focus group discussion

The last five to ten minutes of the discussion should be reserved for any extra questions that appeared necessary during the discussion. The observer may want to ask a question or may want to use this time to check that her or his notes are correct.

After the last question has been asked and adequately covered, and there is a pause in the discussion, advise the participants that the discussion is formally closed. Thank them very much for their valuable contribution and invite them to join you for refreshments and informal conversation.

The Debriefing

A debriefing is a meeting that is held after each focus group to discuss all aspects of the session. The debriefing is a very useful activity to include in the focus group session. It is very tempting to limit the debriefing sessions to a minimum, but it is extremely useful in evaluating the quality of the session, improving the skills of the team, checking the responses, and designing further question guides or changing question lines.

The full focus group debriefing

You may need two hours for the debriefing of each focus group, especially in the early part of a project. All team members should be present for this meeting. If you are using interpreters, it is especially important that they attend as they can provide a lot of guidance to the research team. They have often noticed things during the session that have not actually been recorded that may be of use. They can also clarify questions about responses that were recorded by the observer.

You should design your own agenda, but be sure to include specific points in the following main areas:

- Practical/logistical aspects of the focus group session (including equipment).
- Team skills and performance.
- Wording and comprehension of the questions.
- Information required by objectives being obtained.
- Cultural appropriateness of the session.

Managing the information you collect

It is possible to use only one method to record information from focus group discussions, or you can use a combination of methods. The size of the project, and what you are planning to do with the results, may determine the choice you make here.

Taking notes

The most simple method is for the observer of the focus group to take notes of the session, getting as much detail as possible. This may be just making a summary sentence of each response from each participant, or jotting down key words and then writing down verbatim any striking and important comments. Practice at note taking is also important.

Box 14: Notes from focus group on service delivery

Moderator asks question about the condition of the water delivery - what do you do?
 (To make it easy to take notes people are counted off from the left of the moderator. So LM1 is the first participants sitting to the left of the moderator, LM2 is the person sat to the left of LM1 etc.)
 LM1 says that she "just despairs when the water does not come when expected." Woman 2 - "I have been to the municipality many time about the irregularity of the water supply. They have started talking to us about how things can be improved." [Other women in the group smile - they agree?].

Immediately after the session, the observer will go back over the notes and add in further detail in order to give a full and clear account of the session. Observers must only write down what they are sure about. They are not supposed to make their own judgements at this time about what the participants meant, only what they said. Box 14 above shows the note-taker's comments in square brackets ([]); these include comments regarding non-verbal behaviour and comments regarding interpretation of information. Direct quotes from participants are marked with quotation marks.

Cassette recording

If possible, the use of a cassette recorder is ideal. Although it is certainly not essential, it does allow a more complicated and thorough analysis of the information if necessary. It also allows you to check sessions you did not attend, assess the performance of the moderator, and check translations, and it provides an accurate and permanent record of the session. It provides a true account that can be listened to again if there is confusion over the meaning of a comment made during a focus group session.

The use of the recording is up to you, but it can provide the basis for a full transcription of the focus group discussion. This full transcription is a written or printed account of the entire session.

Video recording

This type of recording is sometimes used in first-world industrial contexts. We discuss it only because many texts on focus groups refer to video recordings. Video cameras can be very distracting to participants in focus group sessions, but this will depend on how much exposure the community has had to such technologies. If you have access to a video camera and playback screen, and if you are sure that the camera can be used without distracting the participants from the session, then it can be very helpful.

Videos are sometimes used not to record the focus group, but to present information that can be the subject of discussion among focus group participants, for example, in the development of hygiene programmes.

Preparing the information for analysis

After every focus group it is very important to begin to prepare your information for analysis. For sessions that rely only on note taking, this means that all notes that are made need to be expanded into the fullest possible record as soon as you can.

If you are using a cassette recording then the tape will need to be written down (transcribed) as soon as possible. It can take half a day for an office assistant to write down all the responses from the entire session.

The same applies to the video recording. But instead of making only a transcript of the spoken word, you can easily add in any observations from body language directly onto the transcript.

Whatever recording method you use, it is important to prepare material for analysis within 24 hours of the session. It must be prepared while the session is still clear in your mind.

Analysis of the results

This section looks at what you do with all the information you collect. The analysis of focus group information can be done at a whole range of levels depending on what you want to do with the information.

When do we analyse?

In this type of study, analysis of your information is an on-going process that begins as soon as you enter the field, and continues until you write the final report. If you leave the analysis to the very end, you could discover large gaps in your results and at that stage it would be too late to correct any problems you have discovered. Early and continuous analysis serves three main purposes:

- to enable the study to focus quickly on the main issues that are important to the participants, and then explore these issues more closely;
- to check that the focus group discussions are being conducted in the best possible way (i.e., natural flowing discussion, participants not forced into answering in a particular way, and so on);
- to examine the results of the discussion early enough to be able to check that the information you require to meet the project object is actually being collected.

Who does the analysis?

This will depend on the process being undertaken, but it is recommended that all those involved in the collection of information should be included in the process. It is not reasonable to expect one person to be able to analyse everything.

Analysis of transcripts

This is probably the most difficult of the analysis activities and is certainly the most formal. This process should be carried out as the transcripts become available, not when all the focus groups have been conducted. A detailed description of one possible technique for analysing the information from the transcripts to the final analysis stage follows below.

Analysis of all focus group discussions

Once all the focus groups have been conducted, and you have the results from each session, then it is necessary to look at all the focus group discussions together and begin to describe findings that apply to the exercise as a whole. Do not forget that if you are using other methods for your study (like individual interviews and observation), as most often you will, it is useful to have a final report on the findings from the focus groups separately. At the end of this activity you should have produced a set of results with a detailed description of what you believe the results tell you in relation to your objectives.

Example analysis: From transcript to final results

Step 1 Analysis Of Individual Transcripts

When the transcripts have been completed you need to read them in several different ways. First of all you need to read them as a whole and to note your general impressions. Look for major opinions and attitudes that are expressed by the groups.

Next, you need to read the transcripts looking for very specific things. Take out your list of objectives, and the document that lists all the information you require. This is really only a list of what you think is important information to meet your objectives, but as a result of the focus group discussions, you may discover new areas that are also quite important.

Identify sections that were poorly transcribed and do not make much sense. In addition, there will be some statements that seem to be made simply because others have made them. You cannot be sure how strongly a participant believes something she or he has said, but if you strongly suspect a statement not to be truly accurate (for whatever reason), it does no harm to mark the statement as having less importance in the analysis than other responses. So some responses will be recorded with caution.

You should then code the transcripts. This means marking sections of the transcript in a way that indicates what the participants are talking about. For instance, every time a participant mentions street lighting, you mark the section to indicate this. Use code words or letters and numbers to make it faster. By the time you finish this exercise your transcript will have a list of code words or letters running down the side of the page. This will enable you to sort the whole of the information into categories.

Not all responses fall into neat categories of the information that you have expected to obtain. In fact, many do not. As you find a response that brings up a new idea or topic that you had not expected, simply code it under a new name and note down that a new idea has been introduced. It is essential to keep a codebook.

The final step in reading the transcripts involves using your list of required information and checking what information you have actually obtained. This will show you very

quickly if the focus group discussion is getting to the point or not, and if you are obtaining the information you set out to gather. If you code information as you go along, you'll be able to alter your question guide quickly to be more effective in the next focus group.

Step 2 Analysis

Sort your notes by topic and focus group. It is important to keep the tally of responses separate for each focus group. Sometimes, one person will make a statement, and everyone else will agree or say the same type of thing. If eight people say something in only one of ten focus group sessions which you held, this may be less significant than if eight individual people say the same thing in eight different focus groups out of ten. You will want to know how many times an issue was discussed across all the focus groups as well as how many times in total a response was given. SO, keep the results separate for each focus group.

Step 3 Writing The Results

It is important to use the original notes when writing up the notes because when you take the responses out of context it is possible to misunderstand the circumstances in which a particular response was made.

Many reported results from focus groups do not indicate how many focus groups or participants discussed a certain issue. You will read results that say "many respondents said..." or "only a few focus group discussions raised the issue of..." It depends on what you plan to do with the results, but it can be useful for others reading your report to know the frequency of particular issues raised. If you choose to indicate numbers of focus groups or number of responses, then it is simply a matter of adding up the tallies in your sorted Word table. In addition, your report should include a summary of the method, and a profile of participants derived from the initial registration.

Step 4: Interpretation

Throughout the participatory process, you should have been thinking about the significance of the information you were collecting, in terms of the questions you want to answer. The team should have some well-developed ideas about what the respondents are saying. Now is the time to look at the results and discuss them with the rest of the team at length. What do these results really mean? This careful look at the results will lead you into making recommendations.

Figures 18 and 19 show the results of Focus Groups carried out in projects in El Salvador and Ethiopia.

Focus Groups Highlight Teacher Dissatisfaction in El Salvador

A recent Social Assessment in El Salvador made extensive use of focus group discussions to reveal the viewpoints of different stakeholder groups regarding the present basic education system and a proposed set of reforms. All in all, twenty-four focus groups were formed, which included parents and teachers, in both rural and urban areas, and in both traditional and community-managed school systems. The results of these discussions complemented well the information obtained from other techniques (in-depth interviews with government officials, school principals, NGOs, etc.; and a case study of one school). Below is a summary of some of the concerns mentioned by teachers in the focus groups.

Why Teachers Are Unhappy

Lack of training

- “The training, as inadequate as it is, is given at the wrong time, in the middle of the school year without coordinating it with the distribution of books and materials”
- “[The ministry] should see to it that we have better training which is more applicable to the problem and less theory.”

Lack of social standing

- “It is very clear that we don’t have a good place in society.”
- “The mystique surrounding the teachers had begun to fade.”
- “Even though teaching is what is most sacred, in El Salvador teachers are the ‘pobresores’ [poorfessors, or poor professors].”

Arbitrary allocation

- “Posts are assigned arbitrarily and under political criteria...merit has nothing to do with assignment.”

Long working day

- “From 7:00 to 12:00 I work at a private school, from 1:00 to 4:00 in a public school and from 5:00 to 8:00 in another school and on my nights off I’m working on a master’s in mathematics.”

Source: Valeria Junho Pena, 1995, “Social Assessment: El Salvador Basic Education Modernization Project,” World Bank, Latin America Technical Department, Environment Division Dissemination Note No. 13, Washington, D.C.

Figure 18: Focus Groups Findings for Education

Focus Groups Highlight Conflicts, Facilitate Agreements in Ethiopia

As part of a reforestation program in the highlands of Ethiopia, hillsides were fenced off and guarded by paid and armed members of the community to prevent human and animal intrusion. These hillsides had previously provided grazing, fuelwood, and other benefits to the local communities (or, “Peasant Associations”), and their closing had led to a good deal of confusion about what level of resource use was permitted in the protected areas, and who was entitled to these benefits. Many people felt cheated by the loss of access to the hillside resources.

A participatory assessment in one Peasant Association involved focus group discussions with the main “interest groups,” including leaders of the Peasant Association (PA), community members employed as guards, women, old men, and livestock owners. These groups had very different views about the closures and how they could best be managed, and each group discussion served to clarify their concerns and elicit recommendations for resolving conflicts over the protected areas. Some of the perspectives are illustrated below:

Peasant Association Leaders:

“The closed areas will supply us with fuelwood, construction wood, grass for our animals from cut-and-carry, and they will stop erosion of the land. However, they also result in a shortage of grazing and farm land and hinder livestock rearing.”

Women:

“We are not allowed to go into the closed areas to get anything from there. I can not even take a stick for a toothbrush!”

Guards:

“Farmers come to cut the trees at night. We can hear them and see the remains of the trees in the morning. If we catch them and report them they will be our enemies and will threaten us and want to kill us. Sometimes we have to report our neighbors and friends.”

Livestock Owners:

“If you do not have enough grazing land, having cattle is like having a wife from a bad family.”

A final discussion group was then arranged for two or three representatives from each of the focus groups, where they exchanged their views and discussed differences of opinion. The end result of the meeting was a clarification on where the groups’ priorities overlapped, where they conflicted, and an agreement on what should be done next.

Source: I.C. Scoones and J.A. McCracken, eds., 1989, “Participatory Rapid Rural Appraisal in Wollo, Ethiopia: Peasant Association Planning for Natural Resource Management,” Ethiopian Red Cross Society, Addis Ababa, and International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

Figure 19: Focus Group Findings for Resource Use

4.7. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation is a process of collaborative problem-solving through the generation and use of knowledge. It is a process that leads to corrective action by involving all levels of stakeholders in shared decision-making.

Source: Participatory Evaluation: Tools for Managing Change in WATSAN, Deepa Narayan, World Bank Technical Paper 207, 1993

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation involves stakeholders at different levels working together to assess a project or policy, and take corrective action as required. The stakeholders include the end-users, both men and women in the community, intermediary organisations such as NGOs, private sector businesses and government staff at all levels.

A complementary Handbook on Participatory M&E lays out the key techniques used.

The key principles are:

- local people are active participants- not just sources of information
- stakeholders evaluate, while outsiders facilitate
- focus on building stakeholder capacity for analysis and problem-solving
- process builds commitment to implementing any recommended corrective actions

In addition to identifying the objectives and frequency of M&E, an important collective exercise can involve the identification of 'indicators'. The identification of 'process indicators', in particular, will be important to assessing the progress and effectiveness of the process of participation itself (e.g. quality of participation in meetings, understanding of project objectives amongst stakeholders).

An 'indicator' is a variable that describes or measures change in an activity or situation over time.

Indicators help you understand where you are, which way you are going, and how far you are from where you want to be.

Source: Changing Views on Change: Participatory Approaches to Monitoring the Environment, IIED, 1998

Indicators are impossible to identify unless the objectives of the project are understood. This can be undertaken through a Logical Framework Analysis, which shows the relationship between project objectives, activities and outputs.

Some of the techniques used in PM&E include:

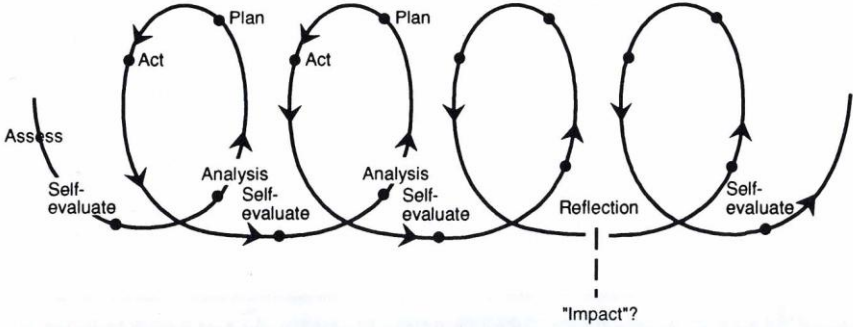
PRA Tools: visual methods, often to analyze 'before' and 'after' situations, through the use of community mapping, problem ranking, wealth ranking, seasonal and daily time charts etc.

Beneficiary Assessment Tools: conversational interviewing, focus group discussions on changes and impact.

Other: visual self-evaluation tools (generally for non-literate persons), testimonials (recording a persons thoughts, feelings and experiences), photographing the change, community records and indicators

Figure 20 below shows the Participatory M&E cycle, while Figure 21 shows how the psycho-social impact of an intervention can be determined through qualitative and participative monitoring and evaluation techniques.

The Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle



Source: From Jacob Pfohl, 1986, "Participatory Evaluation: A Users Guide." PACT Publications, New York, from an evaluation report by Ron Sawyer, Bangladesh, 1978.

Figure 20: The PM&E Cycle

Psycho-social Cost Profile मनो-सामाजिक मूल्य वृत्ति











<p>As a result of starting your own enterprise, do you experience any of these problems?</p> <p>अपना उद्यम शुरू करने के बाद क्या आपको इन समस्याओं से किसी का सामना करना पड़ रहा है?</p>	Does not exist	Existed before	Started after	Became acute
 <p>समस्या नहीं</p>	 <p>उद्यम के पहले से समस्या थी</p>	 <p>उद्यम के बाद समस्या हुई</p>	 <p>बाद में समस्या गंभीर हो गई</p>	
<p>Household conflict</p>  <p>घर में कलह</p>				
<p>Pressure of time</p>  <p>समय की कमी</p>				
<p>Neglect of family</p>  <p>परिवार पर ध्यान की कमी</p>				
<p>Community censure</p>  <p>सामाजिक बहिष्कार</p>				
<p>Breaking up of family</p>  <p>परिवार का टूटना</p>				
<p>Addiction/alcoholism</p>  <p>पति का नशाखोर होना</p>				

Figure 21: Example of PM&E Form

4.8. Citizen Report Cards

Citizen Report Cards were developed from the private sector practice of conducting Client Satisfaction Surveys. They are a tool to hold public sector agencies (line departments, local government) accountable. These 'Report Cards' ask the users of services their perceptions on the quality, efficiency and adequacy of public services (e.g. water supply, electricity, roads, gas etc).

A mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques are used, generally focus groups and questionnaires. For example, in Bangalore, a quantitative survey was complemented by focus group and individual case studies amongst slum dwellers who required a different approach, to ascertain awareness, attitudes and beliefs.

Media coverage and advocacy by civil society groups ensures that there is public debate and the tool is useful for holding public sector agencies accountable.

Citizen Report Cards look at the following issues:

- Availability of services
- Satisfaction with services
- Reliability/quality of services and the indicators to measure these
- Responsiveness of service providers
- Hidden costs- corruption and support systems
- Willingness to pay; and
- Quality of life

Citizen Report Cards may be developed by advocacy NGOs (e.g. Public Affairs Centre in Bangalore, India), or by donor organisations, or by government departments or local government agencies with independent responsibility for monitoring and evaluation. They are generally 'executed' by a different organisation, often a market research agency with adequate market survey and statistical analysis skills (e.g. ORG-MARG in India or Social Weather Station in Philippines).

While developing a report card is a resource intensive exercise, a variation in the form of 'community score cards', using qualitative methodologies can be developed on a smaller scale.

Limitations of Report Cards

- Requires an agency with market research and data collection skills to undertake the survey
- Requires the support of the media
- It is difficult to compare across services
- It is a costly exercise
- A large sample is required for a heterogenous population and lesser used services

- It takes effort and time to stimulate action by service agencies and civil society
- Sometimes user expectations can skew results and have to be factored into the analysis

Key Phases in Developing a Report Card

Source: Implementing Report Cards: A Users Manual (Adapted from Toolkit of Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore)

Implementing a report card normally takes from 3-6 months (depending on the scale), and will require significant resources.

Identification of Actors, Scope and Purpose

The key questions at this stage are:

What do you want to know? e.g. is the issue corruption in government, poor power services, inadequate water?

About whom? Do you want to focus on a single utility or service provider or do you want to focus on a range of providers?

How will you use the information? Who will see the results? Will you use it to reshape a program or develop new programs?

How can data be obtained? Key informant interviews, focus groups, surveys? Who are the broad group of users you hope to obtain information from?

How do you plan to collect the data? How are your questionnaires to be designed? Will you use random sampling or focus groups? What skills do you need to implement the card?

Who will pay for this? This is a key question. As earlier indicated significant time and resources are needed.

These questions will help you to design the Report Card approach.

Design of Questionnaires

Focus groups with both the providers and users of services will help in designing the survey instrument. Clear and coherent questions, with an appropriate choice of responses need to be designed. Questions can range along a scale of open to close ended. Questionnaires need to be pre-tested and coded.

Sampling

There is no rule on sample size. Sample size to population ratios has varied from 1:2400 to 1:40,000. Generally one sample precinct is allocated to each geographical location under study. Sample households can be chosen by a random start (randomly picking a street), and then by interval sampling. Within households, generally the head of household is interviewed. Sampling frames will depend on the nature of the survey; e.g. a street survey may involve all passers by within a reasonable time frame.

Execution of Survey

A cadre of surveyors must be trained and their work spot monitored. The work of enumerators should be pre-tested. Records should be checked and after deemed satisfactory, input using computer software.

Data Analysis

Data needs to be consolidated and analysed. It should be subjected to standard error analysis and tests of significance. Respondents rate services on a scale e.g. from 1-7 or -5 to +5. These ratings are aggregated, averaged and a satisfaction score expressed as a percentage.

Dissemination

The report card needs to be constructively critical. Preliminary findings should be shared with the service provider, and their constraints factored into the report. In disseminating findings the media can play a key role. Findings need to be launched at a high profile scale, and in a form useful to the media. IT can also be useful in disseminating findings through websites and other tools.

The service providers and users can be brought together for discussion in a 'town hall' setting to ensure constructive dialogue.

Institutionalisation of Survey

To provide useful information, report cards need to be carried out regularly to give a sense of how service provision or user satisfaction is improving or deteriorating. The agency responsible needs to consider how this may be undertaken on an on-going basis.

4.9. Sequencing of Participatory Tools

As earlier indicated, the basket of tools presented in this chapter can be used in various combinations, depending on the circumstances of the project and the local context. Flexibility is important and participants must always focus on the nature of information that will be most useful to the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the project. The tools are a means to get this information and need not be considered as rigid and unchangeable. You may wish to use only a few tools, rather than the whole toolkit.

Figures 22 and 23 below show the different tools used for analysis during an urban poverty assessment in Jamaica and a poverty assessment in Zambia.

Attachment 1.

PRA Tools Used in the Jamaica Urban Poverty and Violence Study

PRA Tool	Examples of issues raised
TRANSECT WALKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ice breaking: high visibility systematic walk through community with gatekeeper(s), critically important to dispel suspicion of outsiders ◆ Encouraged participants to discuss and raise issues, both spatial (e.g. identifying gang 'turf' boundaries) and non-spatial
PARTICIPATORY MAPPING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Spatial characteristics within the community of perceived importance highlighted and listed/ranked/discussed (e.g. location of police station; wealth of different households within a street)
LISTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Types of problems perceived by different groups ◆ Specific types of violence perceived by different groups, aggregated to show the frequency with which each type of violence was mentioned ◆ Characteristics of wealth and well-being (those who 'have it' and those who 'don't have it') ◆ Characteristics of 'good men' and 'bad men' ◆ Dreams and solutions
RANKING AND SCORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ prevalence and importance of: types of violence; types of weapons; types of employment ◆ Wealth or well-being ranking
SEASONALITY MAPPING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Trend analysis of violence in general or specific types of violence ◆ Activity schedule -seasonality analysis of police harassment; of different sources of income generation
TIME LINES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Perceptions of significant changes within the community or of community characteristics — relating to different types of violence and its intensity
CAUSAL IMPACT DIAGRAMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Analysis of unemployment, area stigma, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, lack of education and their relationship to violence
INSTITUTIONAL VENN ('ROTI') DIAGRAMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Analysis of relative importance and nature of individuals and institutions within the community and their interrelationships, particularly important in identifying 'good' social institutions and 'bad/dangerous/violent' social institutions

Source: from Caroline Moser and Jeremy Holland, 1996 "Can Policy-focused PRAs be Participatory? Recent policy-focused research on violence and poverty in Jamaica using PRA Methods," World Bank, unpublished paper, Washington, D.C.

Figure 22: Combining PRA Tools

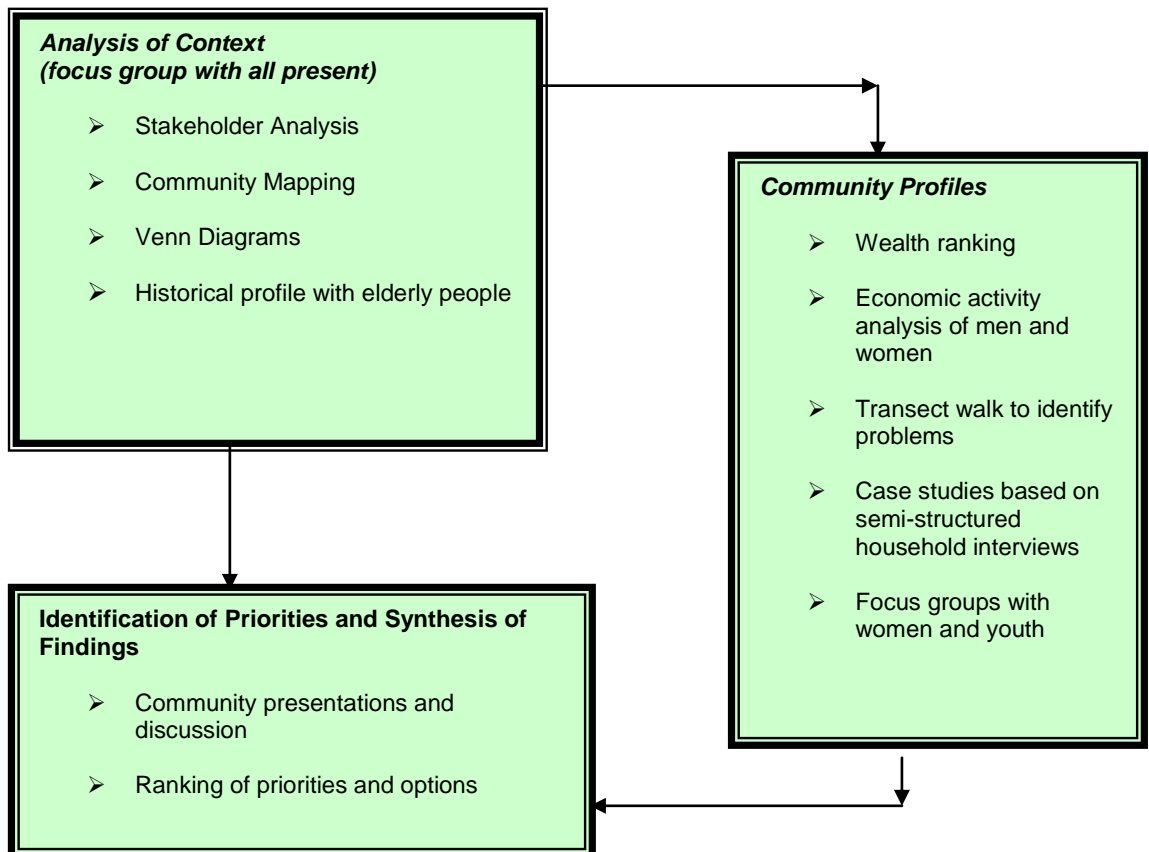
Matrix of Techniques Suggested in Zambia Participatory Poverty Assessment (Urban Context)	
ISSUES	METHODS
Perception and indicators of wealth, well-being, poverty, vulnerability, powerlessness. Local terminologies and their correspondence with such concepts. Differences in perception by gender.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Well-being/wealth ranking, for criteria and indicators – Semi-structured interviews
Perceptions of change over time in welfare, indicators, terms of trade, access to employment/income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Time-line – Matrix scoring over time for changes in the labor market
Access to services (and usage of services) such as health, education, credit. Perceptions of services, including views (or awareness) of recent change. Again, differing perceptions and values for men and women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Institutional diagramming – Semi-structured interviews – Time-lines of health and education services
Seasonal stress: food security, health, income, expenditure, activity (by selected occupational groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Seasonal calendar—by occupational/residential group-activity, income, expenditure, health
Assets of urban households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wealth-ranking/grouping livelihood analysis
Fallback strategies in times of crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Livelihood analysis – Semi-structured interviews – Ranking exercises
Perceptions of consumption levels in terms of food, clothing, and relation to well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Well-being grouping/ranking, social mapping – Semi-structured interviews
Local institutions of self-help and support for the urban poor (eg. market-traders' associations, trade associations, churches, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Institutional mapping – Semi-structured interviews
Role of community institutions in service/infrastructure provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Institutional mapping – Semi-structured interviews
Responsibilities, obligations within households (support to children, provision of food, payment of school fees, etc., by gender)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Semi-structured interviews – Decisionmaking matrix

Source: World Bank, November 30, 1994, *Zambia Poverty Assessment*, Report No. 12985-ZA, Vol.V: Participatory Poverty Assessment, Southern Africa Department, Human Resources Division, Washington, D.C.

Figure 23: Sequencing PRA Tools

Following is an example of how various tools can be sequenced.

Figure 24 Possible Sequencing of Participatory Tools



This introduction to tools and sequencing as earlier mentioned, is only an indicative 'tool box' which must be adapted to local circumstances and needs.

Remember!

- Use the tools that are relevant to your information needs. However, it is important to at least use 2-3 to give you a good perspective on the problems and priorities of your community.
- Carry out a stakeholder analysis first, to ensure that all key stakeholders, especially the vulnerable and marginalised are identified
- Make sure you do not rush the process or it will compromise the quality of your exercise
- Plan properly and try to draw on all community resources to help conduct the exercise
- At least one person should be a trained facilitator;
- You must feed back the findings to the community and keep them informed after the exercise; AND

- DO NOT go in with pre-determined ideas on what is right for the community.

If conducted well the whole participatory process will help you in identifying the right projects, which will benefit most of your community. This will ensure that your community 'own' and 'maintain' these projects, and will also help in building a strong and cohesive community.