

Introduction & Background

Over recent years, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has taken conscious steps to integrate participatory approaches in various stages of its project cycle. These have included expansion of the participation of civil society groups, particularly target beneficiaries, in its projects. In 1998, IFAD defined its two most important scorecard objectives for its work programme as: (a) emphasis on beneficiary-driven projects; and (b) development of systems for periodic impact assessments.

Beginning in the last quarter of 1998, the IFAD Asia and Pacific Division initiated a two-year project (1999–2000) entitled “*Participatory Processes: Learning from NGO Experiences in Asia (PLEA)*” — with the objective of widening its knowledge base on the range of experiences in participation. Managed and implemented jointly by the Centre for Integrated Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), this PLEA project seeks to review existing experiences, possibilities and constraints on participatory approaches within IFAD. It also examines the possibility of learning/sharing from the participatory approaches of NGOs and other civil society organizations (CSOs) that can be applied or adapted within IFAD’s Asia and Pacific Division.

The project involves several components:

(1) a review of the participatory approaches in IFAD; (2) a documentation of NGO best practices in participatory approaches, which is the subject of this paper, and from which lessons and approaches could be adopted; (3) NGO interventions in four selected countries in a specific phase of the project cycle; and (4) a directory of institutions involved in poverty-related training in Asia. The final activity would be a workshop in Rome for an exchange of learn-

ing among IFAD staff and the NGO participants involved in the project activities.

Specifically, the PLEA project aims to:

- ◆ Build awareness and capacities on participatory approaches among the IFAD Asia Division staff which can ensure wider participation of various stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries in the project cycle;
- ◆ Adopt participatory tools and approaches from existing NGO best practices in the region.

This Study, *NGO Practices in Participation: Asian Experiences* is one of three studies under the PLEA project, with the other two studies being: (a) a review of IFAD experiences in participation; and (b) a directory of institutions involved in poverty-related training in Asia.¹

Objectives of the Paper

Specifically, this Paper seeks to:

- ◆ Present an overview of NGO participatory approaches and tools practiced in the Asian region in the 1990s;
- ◆ Contribute to a better understanding of the context, issues and dynamics of participation, as seen from an Asian NGO perspective; and
- ◆ Present a few selected NGO case studies, as well as participatory tools and approaches that might be able to assist IFAD in strengthening the promotion and practice of participation, especially within its project cycle.

Working within the broader objectives and process of the PLEA project, this particular draft Study is issued as a discussion paper for the Second Steering Committee Meeting being held in Hanoi, Vietnam on 11–13 July 1999. Further documentation on NGO experiences may be undertaken as a result of the discussions. As such, and as a corollary objective, this draft Study seeks to provoke further discussion and thinking on two general sets of questions:

- ◆ What would constitute “NGO best practice”? from which perspective?
- ◆ What particular lessons, methods and approaches from NGO experiences in participation might be useful and relevant to IFAD?

METHODOLOGY

Data Gathering

Data for this Paper was gathered mainly from secondary sources, supplemented by discussions, and phone and e-mail interviews with NGO networks and practitioners in Asia. From these, a better understanding was culled on the broad range of participatory experiences of NGOs in the Asian region.

Further, a two-day, roundtable discussion was held with 12 NGO agriculturists/community organizers from four NGOs in the Philippines - to gain a better, first-hand insight into some of the practical issues in participation from a field-based perspective.

For the case studies, a three-part NGO Case Study Guide was formulated and initially circulated to 31 known NGO practitioners and trainors on participatory approaches, as well as possible informants (mainly national NGO networks) from the Asian region. From this list, eight potential cases were identified, and four cases are briefly described in this Study. (These NGO case studies are issued separately as handouts.) In an attempt to explore other media formats for discussion, one case - Land Use Planning in Infanta, Quezon, Philippines - has been produced in VHS video format.

Limitations

This Paper faced several limitations, especially the lack of analytical first-hand accounts of NGO practitioners directly writing about their own field experiences. Most of the existing NGO literature (on participation) were found to be either: (a) written by NGOs in the form of donor/ project reports that gave more

attention to broad participatory processes, rather than to specific details; or else (b) written by academics and focused on an array of tools and methodologies, but with limited descriptions or else divorced from their particular contexts.

Moreover, the huge volume of materials from the latter (*item b, above*) focused almost entirely on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques and experiences, as if to equate the entire NGO experience in participation itself to the practice of PRA. On the other hand, there were few analytical studies available on broader NGO participatory approaches and strategies, such as on community organizing, the building of self-help groups, networking and public advocacy. Further, to most NGO field workers, the term “participation” covered the entire process of their work and they could only narrate this as a sequence of events, without the labels; others had difficulty in extracting whatever constituted “participatory approaches, tools and techniques” without feeling that their own field experiences were being diluted in some way.

Further, there was little opportunity to interact face-to-face with IFAD CPMs and staff, necessary for the researchers to be able to better understand and to grasp - from IFAD’s own perspective — their specific needs, priorities and constraints in adopting participatory approaches.² Thus, the bias of this Paper has been to present the broad range of NGO experiences from an Asian NGO perspective, and to include a few selected NGO case studies. As mentioned, this Paper is issued as a discussion paper, so that subsequent documentations can focus on particular topics or sets of experiences.

Content and Organization of this Paper

This Paper is presented in four parts. Part I gives an overview of NGO participatory experiences in Asia, while providing an overview of

the Asian NGO sector and the policy environment in which they operate in selected countries.

Part II discusses the range of participatory approaches and tools as practiced by NGOs in the Asian region. This section also attempts to provide a useful matrix or framework by which to analyze the broad spectrum of NGO participatory experiences, while providing a few illustrative examples.

Part III is on selected NGO case studies on participation. It briefly describes four NGO

case studies - two from India, and two from the Philippines.

Part IV suggests a framework on how an organization such as IFAD could adopt participatory approaches from NGO experience. This section presents three useful diagrams that help synthesize the process of adoption and practice of participatory approaches - in the context of the project cycle, as well as the broader context of the institution and the individual.

Overview of Participation in the Asian NGO Experience

Participatory approaches have gained significant acceptance in official development cooperation over the last few years.

Often rooted in the self-help and community development tradition of NGOs and CSOs, these approaches emphasize decentralized decision-making, joint learning processes, and an orientation towards action and process rather than output. Development is seen as empowering people to help themselves, and allowing them to influence initiatives and decisions which affect their lives. The people themselves, their needs and capabilities are the focus of the approach, rather than the funding or the organizational realities and operational procedures of external agencies.

Thus, participatory approaches are seen as more than just new sets of methods and techniques. They emphasize the importance of changes in personal values, reversal of roles and institutional re-orientation, in particular for the external agent or development agency (Reiner, ed 1996).

Brief Overview of the NGO/ CSO Sector in Asia

Diverse origins

Asia's civil society sector today sprang from various and diverse origins - e.g., the Gandhian movement in India, the Bangladeshi struggle for independence and its post-war reconstruction efforts in the 1970s, social movements in the Philippines, and the growth of Buddhist self-help societies in Sri Lanka and Thailand. Each grew and took shape within its unique historical and socio-cultural context - driven by culture, faith, nationalism, ideology, idealism, service and survival.

Modern-day NGOs and People's Organizations (POs).

Most "modern-day" NGOs and voluntary agencies in Asia, however, began to emerge in the early 1970s, driven in part by the growth of ODA worldwide and in the Asian Region. Although many retained their traditional roots, new characteristics emerged - i.e., the entry of middle-class professionals, foreign funding, and use of the project approach (along with its methods and tools). These changes gradually brought about the need for a new self-distinction to be made between "NGOs" and "people's organizations" (also called LSM in Indonesia, or "self-help groups", SHGs in India). With increasing legitimacy and recognition, NGOs and POs gradually grew to cut across almost all sectors and areas of development in most countries of South and Southeast Asia.

Influence of the Legal/ Policy Environment

To a large extent, the growth, shape, priorities and approaches of the CSO sector in each country have also been shaped by their prevailing policy environments, and by their chosen responses to it. In certain countries, NGOs developed as part of popular resistance movements; in some, as appendages or extensions of government; while in others, they developed as a distinct and separate sector. Presently, countries with the most highly restrictive policy environments for NGOs (and weak NGO sectors) include China, Malaysia, Pakistan, Myanmar, Vietnam and Singapore. Next are Sri Lanka, Nepal and Thailand. The most open and highly favorable policy environments today are in India and the Philippines - countries where one might also find the most vibrant civil society movements in the Region and in the world. Interestingly, in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Cambodia, where restrictive policies do exist, NGOs have been able to carve out political space for themselves - precisely from those particular crisis situations that have

diminished their governments' capacities to rule.

NGOs and the Search for Alternatives

But whether Asian NGOs emerged as community expressions of self-help, or as part of social and political movements working for democracy and social justice, they all came to bear a common thread of shared values and characteristics — a desire to work among the poor and disadvantaged; a value for process; and a critical view of the “establishment” and of conventional top-down approaches. As part of their natural evolution, Asian NGOs in the 1970s began to more consciously explore various alternative ways of looking at, and of working in particular contexts. At first, there was emphasis on sectoral approaches to appropriate technology, community-based health, social forestry, micro-credit, community media and adult education. Along with this came various experiments with social technologies - particularly organizing strategies and approaches, and the setting-up of various forms of area-based community and sectoral organizations. Common to all such approaches was their emphasis on participation, the community, organized and collective action, and ultimately, empowerment. In the mid-1970s and early '80s, simultaneous efforts then began to appear in exploring cognitive processes associated with development, giving rise to participatory action-research, alternative lifestyles, women's rights and issues, and recognition of indigenous knowledge systems (as especially applied to sustainable agriculture and alternative health care).

Upscaling and mainstreaming

A few years later, different forms of civil society protest and positive action would converge in some way - as NGOs began to realize the need to upscale and mainstream their efforts, which erstwhile still remained at the margins. The “small is beautiful” concept came under scrutiny. Thus, starting in the mid-

1980s, many NGOs also began to scale-up their efforts through three main avenues - through direct expansion, through networking with similar groups, and by linking-up field activities with policy advocacy work (micro-macro linkages, and the use of mass media). With growing recognition, some NGOs opted to work more closely with government and with international aid agencies. Integrated approaches came into fashion, around integrated area development (IAD) approaches, and community-based natural resource management (CBNRM). Working for policies (advocacy/conflict model) no longer meant the opposite of working on projects (development work/consensus approach), and vice versa. To a growing number of development NGOs, doing on-the-ground alternatives itself became a form of advocacy and nonviolent protest — *i.e.*, “by building an alternative now to the society that we ultimately want to change.”

Facing up to the new challenges

Since the early 1990s, two major issues (and perceived threats) became more pronounced in the consciousness of NGOs and development agencies - continued environmental destruction, and the globalization of markets. Paradigmatically, and to many NGOs, these two issues came as a direct affront to the fundamental values that they stood for - particularly, their values for life and for community-led processes. Thus, the very concept of participation itself took on additional organizational forms in global networking - including the use of the latest in information technology. The 1990s, for instance, saw the rise of “cyber-networks” among NGOs, in addition to area-based and sector-based alliances. New forms of popular advocacy and protest also emerged.

Nevertheless, until today, most Asian NGOs still practice and consider participation in its original context 25 years ago - that of a (slow) process of empowerment, in direct face-to-

Table 1: The NGO Sector and the Policy Environment for NGOs in Nine Asian Countries		
Country	Description of NGO Sector	Policy on NGOs
Bangladesh	20,000 NGOs of various types are registered in the country. Largest national NGO network is ADAB, with nearly 800 NGO members. The number of foreign funded NGOs registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau is 1151 (1997 data). The estimate is that NGOs work in 78% of the villages in Bangladesh.	Most NGOs are registered as voluntary agencies with the Ministry of Social Welfare, but significant numbers are also registered with the Registrar of Societies, with the Courts (as Trusts) with Ministries of Religious Affairs, Youth, Women & Child Affairs, Cooperatives & Health & Family Welfare. Foreign-funded NGOs must be registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau. While there are many jointly implemented GO-NGO programs, levels of mutual mistrust persist. This is partly due to the fact that many donors prefer to channel their assistance through NGOs.
Cambodia	There are more than 250 local NGOs and over 200 international NGOs operating in the country. While international NGOs have operated since 1979, local NGOs are relatively new, created after 1990. For 1994 (mainly international) NGOs disbursed some \$74 million.	International NGOs are registered with the NGO Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Local NGO registration is confusing, although most NGOs pass through the Ministry of Interior. There is a draft law on Associations and NGOs.
Indonesia	There are an estimated 8,000 NGOs across the country, mostly established starting in the late 1970s. Further, there are many earlier-established organizations, usually charitable in nature (e.g. Islamic organizations).	<i>No new data available after sudden changes in government in 1998-99.</i>
Laos	Mostly international NGOs operate in the country (60, as of 1997). INGOs spent about \$11.6M in 1995. There are no local NGOs, although there are informal forums among local Lao staff of international NGOs. Local groups consist mainly of mass organizations, which are closely linked to government.	Government has no legal framework for local NGOs. Thus, the term "NGO" is used to refer to foreign NGOs. Generally, the gov't does not see the importance of local NGOs, as there are mass organizations operating from central to village level.
Nepal	By early 1997, 5,040 local NGOs registered with the Social Welfare Council. Most operate in the area of "community development."	Laws considerably liberalized after the introduction of democracy in 1992. The Social Welfare Act of 1992 reconstituted the former SSNCC (formerly under the Queen) into the Social Welfare Council, under which NGOs need registration. Most supportive laws for NGOs are contained in 3 Acts of 1991 that seek to devolve power to local government units. Government remains concerned about the accountability of NGOs, but lacks capacity to monitor NGO activities.

Table 1: The NGO Sector and the Policy Environment for NGOs in Nine Asian Countries (Con'd.)		
Country	Description of NGO Sector	Policy on NGOs
Pakistan	Estimated number of NGOs is 8,000 to 16,000 (UNDP, 1996) but these refer only to those registered as social welfare organizations. Most are generally weak community-based organizations. A 1996 CIDA publication states that there are less than 100 effective NGOs.	There are five registration agencies operating under 5 different sets of laws, with weak coordination. There were aborted attempts of the government in 1995 to tighten control on NGOs with the proposed passage of an amended Voluntary Social welfare Agencies Registration Act.
Philippines	There are 60,000 "non-stock, non-profit" organizations registered with the Securities & Exchange Commission as of 1995 - 50,000 are "NGOs", while 10,000 are people's organizations. In addition, some 35,000 cooperatives are registered with the Cooperative Development Authority. Development-oriented NGOs, however, are estimated at between 3,000 to 5,000.	The 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes the role of NGOs and POs in development. Other existing laws & regulations provide a highly supportive policy environment. A system of self-regulation of NGOs was launched in 1998, through the Philippine Council for NGO Certification, created by Administrative Order of the Department of Finance. Meanwhile, some 17,000 NGO & PO representatives officially sit in various government committees & consultative bodies, although most of these bodies remain inactive. (<i>Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan, 1999-2005/ May 1999 Draft</i>)
Sri Lanka	No reliable records exist on the number of NGOs operating, as records are dispersed among national, provincial and divisional authorities. The Social Service department reported a total of 2,192 organizations registered with it in 1990, until such function was devolved to Provincial Councils. Current estimates of all non-profit organizations range from 25,000 to 60,000.	Voluntary Social Service Organization Act of 1980 remains as the main regulatory policy on NGOs, although registration has since been devolved to Provincial Councils in 1990. Also, NGOs are variously registered with different GO bodies under different Parliamentary Acts. While successive governments have made various statements recognizing NGOs as important partners, the actual situation and attitude of officials is ambiguous. Many NGOs continue to look at government with suspicion and mistrust, especially after the creation of the Presidential Commission on Inquiry on NGOs (1990-93) intended to curb the activities of the SARVODAYA Movement.

Table 1: The NGO Sector and the Policy Environment for NGOs in Nine Asian Countries (Con'd.)

Country	Description of NGO Sector	Policy on NGOs
Vietnam	<p>Few independent NGOs exist, as most groups are closely linked to government, but operate on the style of an NGO. Term non-profit "NGO" is an inaccurate term, but is often used to broadly refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass organizations; • Independent policy research & training organizations; • International NGOs: 175 operate in the country; • Professional & business associations; & • Peasant & ethnic associations & collectives. 	<p>Confusing laws and regulations on NGOs. Government as well as international NGOs seem to favor working through mass organizations. No legal framework exists for local NGOs. The few independent local NGOs that exist tend to seek legal registration under Inter-Ministry Circular No</p>

(Data extracted from Pholsena, M, 1997; Kamal, S., 1997; Thacker, P., 1997; Soetrisno, L., 1997a; Soetrisno, L., 1997b; Quizon, A., 1997; Kamal, A., 1997; Sareoun, L., et al, 1997; Dao, V.H., 1997.)

face encounters with the poor and marginalized, in local community settings, with critical analysis and consciousness-raising, and in a context of mutual dialogue. The particular participatory approaches and tools that have been developed and refined by experience, are described in the next Section.

NGO Perspectives on Participation

Today, the spirit of participation as understood among most Asian NGOs is perhaps still best captured and summarized in the Credo for Rural Reconstruction (*Box A*), as formulated Y.C. James Yen, who had started a massive, highly successful literacy campaign for peasants in China in the 1920s. In the given perspective, participation is emphasized to be a two-way street. What is important is not that people participate in projects and programmes, but that it is the external change agent who participates in local community processes.

In most of the literature of the Asian NGOs, participation is also seen in the following contexts:

- ◆ It is a process of empowerment, towards self-help and social change;
- ◆ It is consciously pursued through organiza-

tions of the poor. Organized action is the principal form by which the poor are able to exercise and express their power - through

Go to the people.

Live among them.

Learn from them.

Plan with them.

Work with them.

Start with what they know.

Build on what they have.

Teach by showing; learn by doing.

Not a showcase, but a pattern.

Not odds and ends, but a system.

Not piecemeal,

but an integrated approach.

Not to conform, but to transform.

Not relief, but release.

Credo of the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) NGO Perspective on Participation

their numbers, productive work, and collective will.

- ◆ It seeks to enhance the in-built capabilities of the poor, and to heighten their critical consciousness and awareness - both as individuals and collectively, through their

families and social organizations;

- ◆ It often requires the intervention of a catalyst or facilitator, a role often played by NGOs/CSOs.

Overview of Participatory Approaches and Tools Used by NGOs

By and large, IFAD and NGOs agree on a common vision of development as articulated in the broader objectives of poverty eradication and capacity-building for the rural poor. There are further agreements on the approaches and methodologies needed to address these issues. However, as the review of IFAD's participatory processes in Asia shows, there are also major divergences in the way this common vision is perceived and attained.

What NGOs espouse as participatory approaches has been very much influenced by their concept of what development is all about. Ever since the First UN Development Decade, when people began to realize that economic growth of countries does not necessarily lead to better provision of basic needs for people, there was a conscious move among civil society organizations to ensure that the fruits of development are equitably shared through participation. "Growth with equity through people's participation" was the key message enshrined in documents such as the Peasant's Charter — drafted and adapted during the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) in 1978, and supported by subsequent global commitments to sustainable development.

Many NGOs were established to serve the most disadvantaged sectors of society. To them, these are the small farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, urban poor, women, children, the disabled, minorities, and victims of war, etc. who — through no fault of their own, but simply by being born into a particular race, religion, sex, class, caste, or ethnic grouping - often become condemned to a life that mocks the essence of human dignity. Deriving inspiration and legitimacy from their religious

beliefs, ideological persuasion, or from respect for basic human rights and decency, NGOs have worked for the well-being of the poor and have rallied behind the cause of the poorest of the poor.

Decades of working with the poor have made it clear to NGOs that the genesis of poverty can be traced to the poor's lack of access and control over resources needed to produce or purchase what they need in life. The reasons why these resources elude the poor are mainly due to their own incapacity, the inefficiency or unresponsiveness of the institutions entrusted to deliver basic services, and/or because these resources are controlled by a few who in turn perpetuate themselves in power and further consolidate their hold on these resources, to their further erosion and degradation.

Based on such analysis, NGOs have applied several strategies to eradicate poverty and to promote sustainable development; adapted or innovated several approaches and tools that have high potential of empowering the poor; compelled agencies to respond to the needs of their constituencies; and explored alternatives that allow maximum involvement and benefit of the poor in harnessing their own community resources. The following presents the broad range of NGO participatory approaches that have been applied:

A. Organizing the poor

The empowerment of the poor cannot come from the outside, but from themselves. The best that NGOs or outside agencies can do is to facilitate the process by which people understand the causes of their poverty and realize that they can overcome the structural barriers to development through collective vision and action. This requires that they develop themselves through training and by capitalizing on their experiences, as well as by learning to work with others through linking and networking.

1. *Focus and Identification of the Target Groups*

To focus on the most disadvantaged sectors requires the NGO to make a survey of a wide area. For an experienced NGO, this is sometimes done intuitively and the guess is often accurate, especially when the NGO is familiar with the area, or has undergone an initial process of social integration. Otherwise, this can also be done systematically by using well-designed survey instruments.

In Thailand and in the Philippines, the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) assessment survey has been used to rank different areas and groups. Areas which get the lowest scores in this assessment become eligible as priority target groups of the activities of the external agency or the NGOs. Based on the results of this initial survey, the NGO may conduct a situational or contextual analysis of the data in order to get a general idea of possible interventions, and which activities are appropriate. If the NGO is already engaged in the area, these activities could be done with the participation of some members or leaders of the community.

Once a particular area is identified, there is still a need to narrow down the focus in terms of addressing the most disadvantaged. Even in a small village, certain hierarchies and power structures can prevent the flow of benefits to the very poor. Therefore, it is important to use tools that can help identify the target groups down to the household level. NGOs use PRA instruments to narrow down the choice down to this level. Some examples are wealth ranking, demographic profile, analysis of difference, stakeholder analysis, etc.

2. *Consciousness raising*

The approaches that have been used by NGOs for consciousness and awareness raising are variants of the "action-reflection-action method" used successfully by Paulo Freire in Brazil. This method of empowerment har-

nesses the real life experiences of the people as subjects for deeper analysis, in order to prime them for more effective action. It is the very experience of doing that teaches people self-confidence that they can regain control of their lives. Over a period of time, small successes in minor ventures can build people's confidence to gradually tackle larger issues of their communities.

Consciousness raising can be done as a deliberate objective of one activity or exercise or it can be organized as a culmination of a series of activities, the reflection from which could help people discern the pattern and overall meaning from a series of interrelated events. A one-event awareness raising activity might consist of a short exposure trip to a slum area or a prison. The participants then later meet to examine the causes of the misery of the visited community. The long-term objective is to make reflecting part of the community culture such that when something happens in the community, the consciousness raising process can be triggered - "action-reflection-action".

Each of the PRA tools derives its power from its ability to trigger awareness raising and other subsequent insights as to how communities should be managed. Conducting the wealth ranking exercise, for example, helps the community define what their measures of wealth are, and the values that they attach to these indicators. They can use these measures to categorize groups in the community and to make a decision to allow interventions to address, first and foremost, those who need help the most. (*Chambers, R., 1999*)

Consciousness raising can be done at the community, national or even at the global level. Consciousness raising at higher levels will require the use of media - print, radio, television or through the intervention of important persons who are able to influence a large number of supporters. The fight for gender equity, the environment, and other global issues cannot be conducted at the community level alone but will have to be addressed in a

wider setting. In some community instances, such issues have been highlighted and presented via street theater, community plays or skits.

3. *Group and Organizational Formation*

The community should understand the need for organizing. This idea, for example, can be conveyed using the allegory of the broom to show that while one stick can easily be bent, a collection of 100 sticks is almost impossible to break. This notion can be explored further to help people understand the power in working together and how much of the many things that they lack can be compensated for by their ability to share and to work together. Asian NGOs invoke unifying principles such as the Gandhian philosophy, Christian social teachings, or Muslim social obligations to establish common basis for organizing. Thus in community organizing, value clarification and/or value formation that spring from philosophical, humanitarian, ideological, cultural, or religious sources are very important inputs for organizing.

Organizing work has been inspired mostly by the work of Paulo Freire with the *campesinos* of Brazil and by Saul Alinsky with the coal miners in the United States. Their work points to the critical role of a community organizer as the key facilitator of the transformation. Thus the formation/training and the activities of a community organizer are very important. Yet, it is precisely this kind of training that cannot be acquired from conventional education. It is different from conventional education because the community organizer learns at almost the same time as the community that he/she is involved with. It is a journey of transformation taken both by the community organizer and the community. This is a process that needs sufficient time. (*Tagisan Synthesis Report, 1987*)

Key elements or steps in community organizing have been identified as those involving

the integration of the community organizer with the community. This is a preliminary step taken for the community to accept the community organizer and for the community organizer to determine whether involvement in this particular community will be worthwhile. Along with integration, the community organizer conducts social investigation to find out what are the major issues confronting the community and who are affected by these issues. If there is a particular issue (*e.g.*, agrarian reform) that the community organizer is supposed to address, then the social investigation can focus on this particular issue. During this time, it helps if the community organizer keeps a process documentation or a diary of all his/her activities and observations. By the end of the period of integration, the community organizer can formulate a tentative plan of activities to help resolve some of the major issues in the community.

The community organizer spends time to conduct groundworking, a process of engaging the members of the community in discussing the issues informally and individually until there are some common decisions that need to be decided during a community meeting. During the meeting, the community organizer initially acts as the facilitator, making sure that the issues are discussed thoroughly and everyone participates in the deliberation and in the decision. The community organizer also mobilizes the community to synchronize all activities towards a common goal by stating and by letting known the details or instructions how to pursue a certain mass action or project as decided upon during the meeting or any collective decision-making process.

The community organizer is conscious that the community learns from its experience of success or failure. Therefore, venues for evaluating what happened and to analyze what went right and what went wrong are important components of collective learning. There are camps or retreats conducted precisely to learn lessons from experience and to reflect on

whether what the community went through has led them closer to accomplishing the common vision. The steps such as integration, social investigation, groundworking, meetings, mobilizing, evaluation and reflection are routine activities initially expected of the community organizer but should later be acquired by the community leaders. These community leaders would then become the core group that could later evolve into a community organization.

4. *Formal Organization*

The core groups formed during the preliminary period of organizing may be sufficient to carry out the work of mobilizing the community. However, sometimes it is important that in the interest of legitimacy and for greater recognition, the group formed in the community is formally recognized as an organization. This recognition only comes when certain important prerequisites have been met. The organization is known by its vision and mission statement, a set of dedicated and capable leaders, a plan or program of action, constitution and by-laws, assets or track record of laudable achievements, and most of all through its united membership. These may be required before a formal recognition in the form of registration or accreditation can be given to an organization. However, the formal recognition of an organization is not a substitute for the long and tedious process of group formation.

An organized group is the main vehicle for the participation of the community. This is why NGOs invest time in the formation of the organization. The leaders of this organization represent the entire community or sector in various negotiations or interactions where the interest of the group is at stake. Very often, the organized group is regarded as the means towards achieving the objectives of the community. For NGOs, however, the organization is not only the means but also the end or key purpose of their work. That is because the

sustainability of the NGO's work in the community depends on how strong and united these organizations are in carrying out the work it started. Organizational formation and strengthening are ongoing processes that employ various techniques and tools where the core values of participatory development are learned, applied, and passed on through the organization.

The organization is the venue through which the leaders and the members learn the skills of leadership and negotiation which would enable them to demand the rights of the community not only within the organization but also in dealing with external partners or opponents. There are many factors that affect how the majority chooses the leader, and skills in participatory and consultative leadership are some of the most important.

Other important activities that can foster participation of the community through the organization are linking and networking. In a network, each member remains autonomous but cooperates with others to achieve a mutually specified goal.

Organizations join networks to increase their reach in campaigns for specific issues, mobilize resources or share physical labor for the network or for the members, increase political support for a candidate or policy, advocate for or against a policy or program that impacts on all the members of the network, share perspectives and information internally among network members. (*CCS and PhilDHRRRA, 1997*)

As the relationships and linkages of an organization expand, there is a need to define how different groups should relate to each other or with the other partners they link with. An instrument such as a Code of Ethics jointly formulated and validated by the members can act as a unifying and harmonizing basis for the relationship. In some cases, this Code of Ethics is not written but form part of the applied culture of the network.

B. Participatory Action Research and Participatory Rapid Appraisals

Organizing the disadvantaged groups provides leverage to an otherwise silent majority. If participation is broadly defined as involvement not only in providing ideas but also in the whole process of developing the community, then the community should be involved in the whole project cycle. For this to happen, the methodologies used to operate the project cycle should be familiar and understandable to, and can be managed by the people. Fortunately, such methodologies as Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) lend themselves well to simplification and adoption.

1. Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Fals-Borda defined as an experiential methodology for the acquisition of serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power, or countervailing power, for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups and social classes - the grassroots - and for their authentic organizations and movements. Its purpose is to enable the oppressed groups and classes to acquire sufficient creative and transforming leverage as expressed in specific projects, acts, and struggles to achieve goals of social transformation. PAR involves collective research, critical recovery of history, valuing and applying folk culture; production and diffusion of new knowledge and combines this research with education and socio-political action.

PAR evolved as an adaptation of agricultural action research that moved out of the laboratory to farmers' land to test new agricultural technologies, a practice that became popular among agricultural researchers in the 1950s and the 1960s. It led to the realization that the insights of the farmers improved the quality of the product while the utility of the research validated the usefulness of folk wisdom or indigenous knowledge systems gained

from centuries of observation and guiding the farmers in their sustained use of local resources for livelihood. The conscientizing power of PAR and the highly scientific way in which the community progresses from situational diagnosis, to creative planning, to collective action combined Freirean passion with conventional project cycle management.

In 1983, as part of the WCARRD follow-up, the Asian NGO Coalition for Asia and the Pacific (ANGOC) and the Center for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) conducted village surveys in 10 countries in Asia using the PAR methodology. ANGOC and CIRDAP used the Community Information and Planning System (CIPS). In this approach, the project cycle management was made participatory by enabling an oversight committee within the community to manage the process of conducting the research, planning, and project implementation. A short questionnaire was designed, and a research committee was trained to undertake this survey. The results were presented to the community during the research consultation. The recommendations that came out of the survey became the basis for the plans or programs of the community. If the plans were approved by the community and resources were mobilized, then the project plans were implemented. (*Polestico et al, 1994*)

Subsequent modification of the CIPS model done in the Philippines in 1988 and later tried in 10 Asian countries through the Model Village for Rural Development (MVRD) project of CIRDAP showed community organizing as central to the CIPS process. The other critical factors that enhance the success of the projects were more simplified tools for research and planning, seed capital for community-identified projects, and the ability of the local people to link and to network with external resource agencies. The CIPS model became better known as the participatory project management cycle. It was supported by external agencies because of its logic and adapted by

communities because of its simple and participatory nature. The CIPS process gave the community entry points to participate in all the steps of the project cycle - from project conceptualization, to planning, resource mobilization, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, including the project oversight. (CIRDAP, 2000)

2. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

PRA builds on the techniques of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) pioneered by Gordon Conway and Robert Chambers to involve rural communities in their own needs assessment, problem identification and ranking, strategy for implementation, and community action plans. It is a cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral approach to engaging communities in development through interactive and participatory processes. It utilizes a wide range of tools which are easy to use, graphical in presentation, and uses intuitive approaches that are grassroots friendly. A PRA tool can be used as a consciousness raising device, an analytical tool, a program guide, and a monitoring and evaluation tool all in one. So it could be harnessed in community-based project management cycle.

Very often, the PRA tools are used solely for data gathering and for getting information about the community. However, they have in many case been used to facilitate community discussions held throughout the project cycle. There are specific tools for a particular kind of information and for particular steps in the project cycle. The results of the PRA can provide very important insights as to what the community really needs to alleviate poverty and to address their other problems. Concerns about gender equity or the environment could be asked during the analysis of the data.

(Wilde, V. and Polestico, R., 1999)

The following examples of PRA are appropriate for particular phases of the project cycle:

Consciousness or awareness raising

- ◆ Games, play, or theater to show or highlight a particular problem or issue
- ◆ Artistic ways of portraying the current situation as well as possibilities of the community

Overview of the situation

- ◆ contextual or situational analysis
- ◆ wealth ranking
- ◆ trend lines and time lines
- ◆ sketch map

Participatory research

- ◆ Household dynamics
 - demographic profile
 - gender analysis matrix
 - seasonal calendars
 - census mapping
- ◆ Structural/institutional analysis
 - Venn diagram
 - access and control profile
- ◆ Resources
 - sketch map
 - credit recording
 - resource mapping
 - indigenous knowledge systems

Participatory planning

- ◆ Prioritization using pairwise comparison
- ◆ Community action plans
- ◆ Web of life analysis
- ◆ Cause-Effect Analysis
- ◆ Problem Tree
- ◆ Objective Tree
- ◆ Strength-Weakness-Opportunities-Threat (SWOT) Analysis
- ◆ Project Planning Matrix, Logframe
- ◆ Gantt Chart
- ◆ Budget

Project Implementation

- ◆ Participatory methods of training
- ◆ Farmer-based extension methods

- ◆ Pilot projects
- ◆ Grameen banking
- ◆ Cooperatives
- ◆ Alternative medicine
- ◆ Alternative technical methods

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

- ◆ Household level monitoring
- ◆ House visits
- ◆ Community-based monitoring tools based on the PRA survey results
- ◆ Periodic meetings and consultations

3. Variants of Participatory Action Research and Participatory Rural Appraisal

Many tools that are coming up everyday may be considered as PRA techniques. Some of these tools are combined in particular ways to address certain issues or strategy. Some well known examples are the following:

a. Participation and Learning Methods (PALM)

PALM was pioneered by MYRADA, an NGO in India. PALM's strong suit is its premise that people can collect large quantities of accurate information, order it, analyze it, and start the process of development. PALM generates data using a variety of participatory approaches. In fact, PALM uses PRA tools such as sketch maps, wealth ranking, transects, etc. The PALM technique combines understanding of traditional practices and systems with highly technical data.

b. Productivity Systems Assessment and Planning (PSAP)

Productivity Systems Assessment and Planning (PSAP) is an approach developed by the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) in the Philippines to make the implementation of agrarian reform in the Philippines very participatory. It involves a people's organization

and a community organizer working together on data-gathering and analysis, consolidation of data and analysis of problems and opportunities, through "vision, validation, and planning". It also uses several of the PRA tools but applies the analytical tools used in PAR to develop self-critical awareness and promote confidence in villagers.

c. Methods for Active Participation (MAP)

The MAP approach involves a two-day planning seminar in which participants consider their vision for the programme's activity, their sense of the obstacles to achieving that vision, their views about strategies and tactics which address the obstacles, and specifics of implementation. The Institute of Cultural Affairs, a global network of affiliated non-profit non-governmental organizations developed and promoted MAP.

C. Mobilization of Local Resources

Organizing activities motivate the community to work for the common good; PAR and PRA techniques systematize such activities. For the community to participate fully in the reification of their plans and to contribute resources for the desired improvement, it is important that the techniques, approaches, as well as the material resources for implementation are available locally. Perhaps the main proponent of this philosophy is Fritz Schumacher who expounded this necessity in his book "*Small is Beautiful*". Although written as a reaction to the development of large scale, hi-technology that is beyond the reach of the ordinary people, "*Small is Beautiful*" set the standard for measuring alternative approaches to big-time development projects that impoverished the disadvantaged groups. (*Schumacher, E.F., 1975*)

Interventions at the community level are measured according to the extent to which they use technologies or approaches that are

culturally acceptable, socially sharable, economically viable, environmentally friendly, and locally manageable. In addition, these interventions should meet local needs first and ensure that the raw materials are sourced locally whenever possible. Another dimension that should be added to this standard is inspired by a message that was popular during the 1985 End of the Decade for Women Conference: "If it is not appropriate for women, it is not appropriate".

One of the results of simplifying and localizing technologies in this way is that the people can participate almost fully in the process because the interventions are something already very familiar and relevant to them. Developing their local resources become an act of creativity instead of a job that needs merely to be done. These are the kinds of alternative ways of developing such resources as land, aquatic resources, credit and markets, and human resources for that matter.

1. Alternative Pedagogical Approaches

People are the most important resource in the community. Therefore, approaches that best harness their potential are both relevant and appropriate. Alternative training methodologies have been explored by NGOs as a reaction to the "banking" method of teaching practised in conventional schools. "Learning by doing", "seeing is believing", "action-reflection-action", "classroom without walls" - are learning adages which are being rediscovered by alternative teaching and learning methods. A popular reinvention of this practical teaching style is the "Training for Transformation" (TFT) series which originated in Zimbabwe and is inspired by the teachings of Freire. The objective of the training is to enable the people to understand the structural causes of the problems. This approach makes use of small group interactions and self-discovery exercises, such as games, role play, drama, and discussions.

TFT is a variant of another training programme called Development Education and Leadership Teams in Action (DELTA) which was popularized by Anne Hope and Sally Timmel in Kenya. It has its roots in Freirean critical awareness, human relations training in group work, organizational development, social analysis, and a conceptualization of transformation derived from liberation theology.

2. Development of Land and Aquatic Resources

Land and water are critical natural resources that are becoming more scarce because of environmental damage and wanton extraction. There is a trend now to preserve the environment and rehabilitate land and water resources.

Sustainable agriculture is counterposed to conventional agriculture which uses chemicals and technologies that are beyond the reach of the ordinary farmer. Sustainable agriculture rediscovers the intimate relationship between humans and the earth and the give and take that make the two dependent on each other. It is a philosophy and a way of life in which the production of food is premised on seeking the permission and cooperation of nature. It adapts the seven dimensions of how technology should be assessed and harnesses anew the indigenous knowledge system that made agriculture a partner and not an enemy of nature. Within this philosophy, there are tried-and-tested technologies that provide an alternative to the destructive green revolution.

Community-Based Resource Management is a holistic way of looking at the interdependence among the upland, the lowland, and coastal areas with the aquatic and marine resources of the community. It uses several of the PRA tools to help the farmers and fisherfolk understand these interrelationships and the mutual benefit from taking care of these resources. Land use mapping, seasonal calendars, trendlines, historical maps and many other tools are very necessary for the community to express their knowledge about these

resources and how they could be rehabilitated or improved to ensure food and water security. (ANGOC, 1993)

3. *Alternative Economic Resource Generation*

Lack of capital is one of the most keenly felt problems in poor communities. To address this problem, innovative ways have been developed to enable the poor to mobilize their own capital and use it for their small enterprises.

For beginners, the practice of auto-savings is used as the first step to train the people in the practice of saving and foregoing immediate satisfaction (mostly vices like smoking, gambling, and drinking). The other credit scheme that is gaining worldwide acceptance is the Grameen Banking, which gives out loans to poor women and imposes minimum requirements like weekly payments and sharing of experiences in exchange for the promise of larger sums of loans. These small loans are usually invested in micro-enterprises.

The cooperative is also promoted for the mobilization of savings and loans. Although cooperative building requires a massive input in organizational development, the people will henceforth learn, if gradually, to manage their money instead of relying on usurers and capitalists in their community. The cooperatives can start as a consumer cooperative and then expand to provide credit. Later, it can take on larger enterprises, such as marketing, housing, transportation, health and other worthwhile investment of the savings of the community. (Todd, H., 1996)

4. *Intermediate or Appropriate Technology*

Many of the community's basic needs, such as food, water, housing, health, clothing, energy, small machines for farming, fishing, trading, food processing can be met using intermediate or appropriate technology. Many development NGOs started by introducing ap-

propriate technology as their main service to the communities. This is because the technology allows people to participate in analyzing the need for such a machine, or designing or improving on an existing technology, and because the technology is affordable, and easy to manage and maintain communally. (APPROTECH-ASIA, 1992)

5. *Social Audit*

Since NGOs look at the other dimensions of development and not just the economic dimension, it is important that their work be measured in terms of how these other dimensions converge to make an overall impact on the community. Fortunately, a technique called Social Audit has been developed to enable the community to measure the gains the interventions contributed towards such concerns as environmental rehabilitation, gender equity, peace and freedom, poverty alleviation, etc.

D. Participation in Institutional Decision-Making

Social institutions like the government, the church, businesses, the academe, the NGOs and civil society, cultural groups, media and etc., are set up in order to safeguard the rights of citizens. Society endows these institutions with the power (*i.e.*, through laws and policies) to control how resources and services are allocated to the members. As long as these institutions are run or managed by those who put the welfare of the people above self or vested interest, these institutions will remain true to their mandate.

If the people's interest is to be prioritized by these institutions, then the people's voice should be heard in decision-making fora of these institutions. The ability to speak on behalf of the poor develops from years of organizing work. But the specific substance and details of the contribution will have to come from participatory action research and/or participatory rapid appraisal activities.

There are several ways in which the people or their representatives could participate in the deliberations. Some of the techniques tried by NGOs are the following:

1. Building People's Organizations

NGOs' involvement in issues that have to do with social institutions is legitimized by the assumption that the NGOs speak for and in behalf of the poor sector. Since the poor sector composes the majority of the population, the NGOs can boast of a mass base whose power derives from their sheer numbers. The effort of NGOs to focus on community organizing is strategic in a sense that the masses of people that could be mobilized anytime for mass action or for mass protest is a powerful leverage in lobbying for certain issues. The issues brought to the table via mass action are acted upon almost instantaneously because of the political and economic implications of not honoring the wishes of the majority.

2. Gaining a Seat or Membership in the Decision-Making Bodies

Because of its achievements or through its advocacy work on certain issues, an NGO or PO may be invited to participate in decision-making meetings or bodies. Their participation may be token, or could actually be meant to incorporate input from the poor sector in decisions that affect their lives. There are many cases where a community leader is voted into office (such as in the local boards or council) and thus gets the right to vote on certain resolutions, particularly concerning resource allocation. Part of the agenda of an NGO in training the people is to develop at least one leader with sufficient leadership, negotiating, and networking capacity to be able to effectively represent the sector in the higher bodies.

3. Form Alternative Groups

When government, business, media, the academe, or other institutions fail to provide for the needs of the majority, NGOs sometimes form alternative groups to respond to the issues. If the local government is completely incapable of serving the people, NGOs sometimes take on the responsibility of providing the basic needs even if only as an emergency or temporary measure. When the military becomes abusive, NGOs can form citizen's security forces to make sure that a neighborhood is protected. When the business sector or when users become too exploitative, the NGOs set up business cooperatives to provide capital and market services to the community. If the media becomes hostage to one political agenda, the NGO can set up alternative media so that the voices of the people can be read, heard, and considered in deliberations.

4. Linkage and Networking with other Value-based Institutions

Collusion among the government, big business, and the military often if not always leads to oppression and the repression of basic human rights. In such cases, a countervailing force becomes necessary. Unfortunately, NGOs despite all their organized might do not have enough power to protect the people. power to protect the people. So it is good strategy for NGOs to form a broad coalition and alliance with media, the church, the academe, the cultural groups, and other value-based institutions in order to neutralize and, where necessary, replace the status quo. Recent political history is replete with examples of dictators who were ousted from power by pressure from such a broad coalition.

5. Sustained Effort to Build a Strong Civil Society and Transform the Social Institutions

Mahatma Gandhi called attention to the impact of unresponsive social institutions on the poor majority. He referred to transgres-

sions against the poor as “*The Seven Social Sins: politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, science without humanity, commerce without morality, worship without self-sacrifice*. The only way to redress these wrongs is to build through sustained effort a strong civil society founded on participatory and people-centered values. The bread-and-butter work of organizing, participatory action research, mobilizing local resources, creating alternatives for the people, participation in the deliberations to allocate resources in the direction of the poor, and taking every chance to remind us of the basic value of every human being - all contribute towards building a concerned civil society that when put in a position of power will make decisions in favor of the most disadvantaged sectors of society.

E. Participation in Macro-level Interventions

The last two decades of the 20th century was marked by international summits called either by governments or by the United Nations. These summits were necessitated by the urgency for certain adjustments in our policies, funding allocations, and programs of actions based on new priorities brought about by our new understanding of development. The WCARRD Conference in 1979, End of the Women’s Decade Conference in 1985, the UNCED Conference in 1992, the UN Social Development Summit in 1995, the Women’s Conference in Beijing in 1995, and the most recent FAO World Food Summit in 1996 produced documents that mandated nations to implement measures that could enhance the achievement of sustainable development.

These international events provided NGOs another opportunity to influence macro-level interventions in favor of the poorest sectors of society. This redirection of resource allocation can only occur if there is a major paradigm shift among decision-makers, and if the corresponding laws and policies are formulated

and implemented.

These various international gatherings have shown that the NGOs can participate in the formulation of global commitments. Parallel NGO fora were held alongside these conferences to provide immediate feedback and information on the major decisions taken during the official conference. The NGOs worked to ensure that the concerns of the poor, of women, children, and other disenfranchised sectors are included in these documents. The following are processes that NGOs have adopted in order to achieve these gains:

1. Massive Grassroots Consultations or Research on the Issues to be Resolved in the Meetings, Conferences, or Summits

There is a need to gather empirical evidence on how the issues to be discussed in the national or global conferences affect a particular sector. This empirical evidence can be gathered through a participatory research process or through multi-sectoral consultations. With their close contact with the grassroots, NGOs are well-placed to consolidate the learning from experiences that should compel the need for change or to formulate new documents to redress suffering or injustice. The proceedings of these consultations or the consolidated reports of the participatory researches made in preparation for the conferences can be used as inputs to higher level consultations that will follow.

2. Sponsorship of Grassroots Leaders to Participate During the Global Conferences

NGO leaders can speak for the poor but this is not nearly as effective as letting the poor speak for themselves in discussions. So NGOs should try as much as possible to raise the resources to enable these leaders to participate during these conferences. This experience can be very empowering for the farmer or fisherman or woman who takes the responsibility for

communicating the need for change. They in turn inform their constituency of how their message was received or considered during the conference.

3. Writing of Position Papers, Declarations, or Statements Embodying the Collective Thinking and Consensus of the NGO Community on Certain Issues

One of the tools used by NGOs to convey unity in their stand regarding a certain issue - be it the environment, food security, land reform, sustainable livelihood, gender equity, basic rights, peace, etc. - is through the writing of position papers, declarations, or joint statements. These instruments are normally products of assembly deliberations which are put together by a committee and submitted to the general body for approval and imprimatur. These statements become the official stand of the group and are promoted and lobbied for consideration or inclusion in the official documents. Even if the statements do not get included in the official documents, the NGOs still adopt it as their manifesto and abide by the commitments contained therein.

4. Tunneling into Official Discussions

There are some official meetings and deliberations that are off-limits to NGOs. As a result, NGOs are deprived of the chance to provide inputs that could be critical to the decisions related to an issue. Fortunately, most NGO leaders are contemporaries of those who are in the official positions and so are able to get invited to some confidential meetings or gain access to official documents. In most institutions also, there are people who are sympathetic to the cause of the NGOs and are willing to help in their personal if not official capacities. These are examples of "tunneling". Tunneling can also be done by using an influential person who is credible with the establishment to speak for the cause of NGOs. The success of Grameen Bank, the promotion of

the use of PRA in beneficiary participation, the attraction of appropriate technology were mainly due to the fact that these concepts are championed by the likes of Dr. Junos, Robert Chambers, Fritz Schumacher. For gender issues, there are the likes of Caroline Moser, Vandana Shiva, and Bina Agarwal who could make even the World Bank and IMF take notice.

5. Using the NGO Culture to Influence Decision Making

NGOs are very flexible and can resort to many creative ways to influence decision making. This was aptly demonstrated in NGO fora held side by side with official conferences during which NGOs conveyed their message via different art forms, such as songs, concerts, sculpture, street art, pamphlets, one-on-one discussion. The fiesta atmosphere at such discussions was a stark contrast to the official meetings which were characterized by monotonous reporting of the accomplishments of governments in helping the poor. Mass demonstrations and pickets are often resorted to by NGOs to put pressure on the power holders to decide in favor of the poor.

G. Linking the Macro with Micro and Vice-Versa

Paradigm change, modifications set out in policies and laws, new programs of actions, and promises of more resources for the poor are contained in voluminous documents and often in a language that is hard to understand. There is a need to translate these declarations of intent to action. There is an NGO infrastructure that facilitates the process of linking the macro with the micro, and vice-versa.

1. Sharing of Resources and Allocations

When NGOs are involved in program deliberations, they are able to lobby for resource allocation for the disadvantaged groups under their management. So the NGOs may be able

Participatory Tools in NGO Community Based Coastal Resource Management

Matrices

- Preference ranking
- Socio-economic ranking
- Problem ranking
- SWOT analysis
- Stakeholder analysis

Visualizing & Diagramming Relationships

- Problem trees and webs
- Venn diagram
- Commodity flow diagram
- Family portrait
- Presenting numeric data in diagram or charts

Surveys & Interviews

- Identification of key informants
- Survey of commercial fish landings
- Semi-structured Interview
- Family food analysis
- Assessment of income from fishery resources

Group Methods

- Focus Group Discussion
- Brainstorming

Temporal Methods

- Seasonal calendars
- Historical lines
- Daily activity
- Historical transect
- Historical narrative
- Trend line
- Flow charts

Spatial Methods

- Manta tow technique

- Using transects to build a coastal profile
- Underwater fish visual census
- Resource mapping
- Participatory coastal zoning
- Quadrat transect
- Random quadrat sampling

Assessment & Monitoring

- Planning for assessment & monitoring indicators
- Mangrove assessment & monitoring
- Monitoring the effectiveness of marine sanctuaries
- Fish catch monitoring
- Mangrove reforestation monitoring

Resource Enhancement

- Conservation & rehabilitation strategies
- Establishing & managing marine resources
- Mangrove reforestation

Education & Extension

- Issue-based environmental education
- Participatory technology development & dissemination
- Study tours

Advocacy

- Legal analysis
- Institutional analysis
- Building partnerships
- Media advocacy

Documentation

- Logbooks
- Making & using case studies
- Process documentation research

Cross-cutting themes

- Building on indigenous knowledge
- Gender analysis & responsive planning

(IIRR, 1998)

to get funding for certain projects or get support to disseminate the results of the conferences. Any document or commitment that will provide land, water rights, credit, market, technology, training, or services will be invoked by the NGO to ensure that these resources are accessible to the poor. The NGO itself may have the organizational capacity to facilitate the delivery of these resources in

such programs as agrarian reform, human resource development, technology promotion, etc. This works much more effectively, however, if the NGO itself can monitor and evaluate how well these commitments have been translated to tangible benefits that are accessible to the poor.

2. Sharing of Information/Documentation

Part of knowing which resources to access is finding out where and how these resources could be obtained. Since the NGOs know how the resources are used, they can then provide feedback to the agencies concerned. Documentation is a very important instrument in providing accurate and interesting information. Although documentation is not usually a strong suit of NGOs, there are some which specialize in this and can lend their expertise to other NGOs. Documentation facilitates the sharing of the success of the project to other social institutions, such as government agencies, the academe, media, the church and others.

3. *Alliance Building and Networks*

NGOs do not have much resources but they are able to make use of the massive social capital they have built up over the years of working on common or specific issues. These alliances sometimes transcend professional dealings and develop into friendship. Such informal networks of NGOs are just as powerful and useful in furthering a common agenda and consolidating support for various causes.

4. *Upscaling and Downscaling of Technologies*

NGOs create alternatives but these are small scale, peripheral pilot type efforts. This experimentation has tremendous potential if applied on a larger scale. The tripartite partnership of POs, NGO and government agencies, for example, was successful in fast-tracking the implementation of agrarian reform in 10 areas. It was upscaled when it was adopted as a strategy in the organization and development of 1,000 agrarian reform communities in the Philippines. On the other hand, there are large-scale projects which the NGO can downscale so that they become appropriate to the community.

5. *The Use of Media and Information Technology*

The NGOs can use conventional media to promote alternative ideas or to reach people in unconventional and creative ways. The use of modern information technologies, such as the internet, e-mail, electronic bulletin boards, and electronic conferencing are more and more being used by NGOs to further link the macro and micro.

Summary of NGO Participatory Approaches: A Roadmap to Poverty Alleviation and Institutional Change

In previous IFAD approaches, the emphasis has been on establishing mutually agreed bases for cooperation between two parties--IFAD and the borrower government. With PLEA, the hope is to bring in the third party--civil society as exemplified by NGOs and people's organizations. The commitment of IFAD towards beneficiary driven projects respects the insights from two decades of development experience indicating that only when the beneficiaries are involved in the process would the resources made available by IFAD and other resource agencies make a difference in alleviating poverty.

The main challenge of poverty alleviation is how to enable disadvantaged groups to gain access and control of resources. Since access and control of resources are mainly mediated by social institutions and structures, poverty alleviation measures cannot succeed unless directed towards empowering the people, on the one hand, and the transformation of pro-people institutions, on the other.

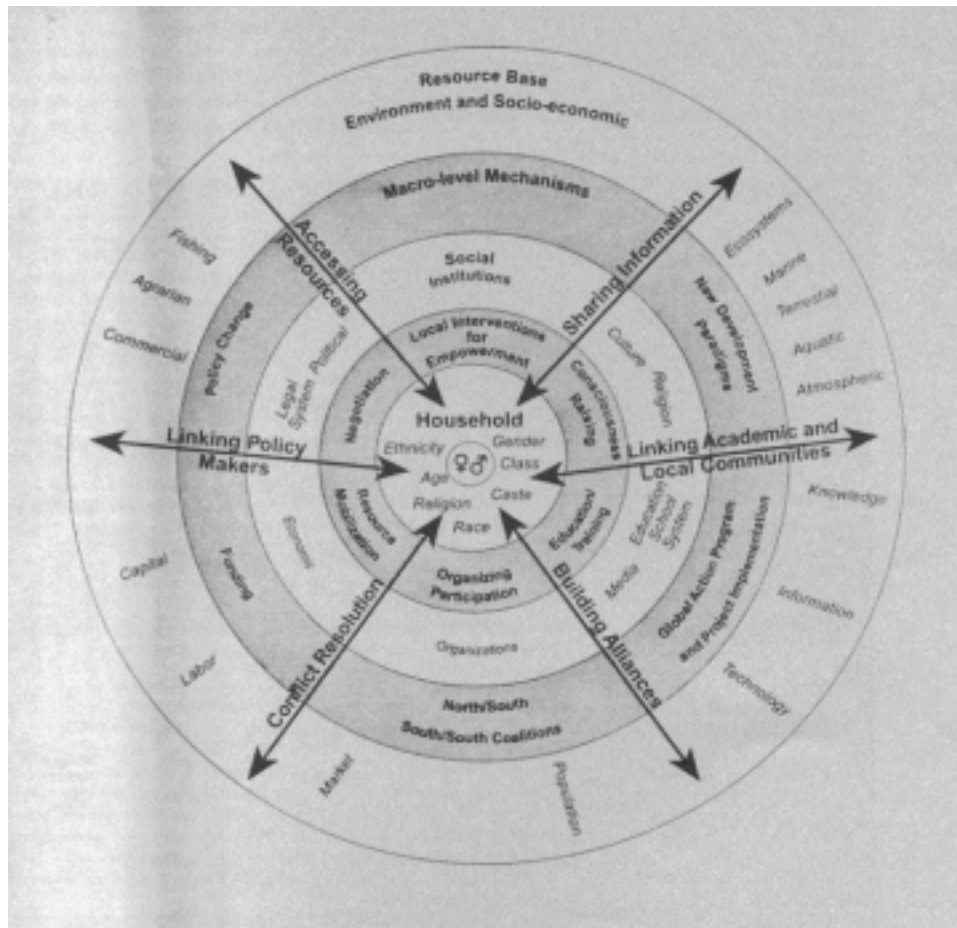
Central to the concerns of most NGOs is the promotion and enhancement of basic human rights among the poorest sectors of society. The right to food, employment, shelter, education, land (for farmers), and the right to life and freedom are rallying points for NGO advocacy and daily work. Indigenous groups,

the rural and urban poor, people of color, women, and other marginalized sectors suffer disproportionately from the deprivation of such rights.

People could provide for their own needs if they have the resources to generate and satisfy these needs. Resources are however unequally distributed, the greater proportion of which is enjoyed by the minority powerful groups. These groups gain access and perpetuate

themselves in power by seizing control of government, economic institutions such as businesses and markets, and structures that manipulate public opinion, such as the media. The concentration of power and the corruption of social institutions were so glaring in some societies that solutions toward freeing the poor required no less than the dismantling of these structures and summary execution of those perceived as power hoarders. The com-

Figure 1: Overview of the SEGA Model Processes Needed to Support Equitable and Sustainable Development



Elements of the Model

The model consists of light and dark concentric bands which are linked by radiating arrows. The light bands represent existing structures (individuals, households, social institutions, resource bases) that produce and reproduce inequities. The dark bands (local-level empowerment/participation, and macro-level mechanisms for change), and the dark arrows (linking external opportunities and local initiatives) represent the processes and interventions that can alter the problematic conditions and structures.

mitment of NGOs to peaceful means leads them to come up with other creative and effective ways to resolve social injustice. The participatory approaches outlined elsewhere in this article are ways of transforming society radically but nonviolently.

The general strategies are time-tested by NGOs. There is a need to empower the people, to make them participate in decision-making, to formulate policies, programs and projects that follow pro-poor paradigms, to develop our natural, economic and social capital in ways that are affordable to the poor, and to hasten these processes through advocacy, networking

and direct sharing of information and resources. These strategies are illustrated in the Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEGA) model illustrated in *Figure 1*. (Thomas-Slayter, 1995)

Selected NGO Case Studies on Participation

Selection of NGO Case Studies

Table 2 was formulated to provide an overall guide that would assist NGOs for selecting and preparing case studies. This Table provides four

broad categories that were drawn up, based on what researchers perceived as “IFAD’s felt needs” - *i.e.*, participation in policy, participation in the project cycle, dealing with problematic situations, and learning from innovative NGO & community approaches. The right hand column then matches the particular kind of NGO experiences from which practical lessons might be drawn.

Table 2: Guide for Selection of NGO Case Studies	
I. PARTICIPATION IN POLICY	
1 Civil society initiatives & participation in the formulation of development strategies:	Experiences of CSO initiatives in the formulation of development strategies, utilising a broad-based participatory approach. These include, <i>i.e.</i> , country assistance strategies of bilateral & multilateral institutions, area development planning or sectoral planning work involving primary stakeholders. Of interest here are the methods & processes involved in data-gathering, analysis & consensus-building; GO-NGO policy consultations; experiences in the creation and functioning of joint GO-NGO policy bodies; etc.
II. PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT CYCLE	
2 Stakeholder participation in the project identification, appraisal & design process:	NGO experiences in participatory rapid appraisals; poverty diagnosis; identification of target groups; local needs assessments; pre-appraisal studies; GO-NGO project consultations and workshops; joint project designing; participation in official project formulation & appraisal missions; project negotiations; influencing the attitudes of officials and bureaucrats, etc.
3 Enhancing stakeholder & beneficiary participation in project implementation	Cases of decentralized systems for project implementation, project delivery & decision-making; examples of GO-NGO institutional arrangements; participatory implementation; strengthening the role of beneficiaries & stakeholders in decision-making; strengthening & capacity building of social institutions; participatory approaches to upscaling local initiatives; developing local ownership and initiatives within projects;
4 Beneficiary monitoring and impact assessments:	Methods, tools, systems & approaches employed for introducing beneficiary monitoring & impact assessments among poor communities within development projects and initiatives; and for creating institutionalised systems for community feedback & response. Of specific interest here are approaches utilised for developing key impact indicators; identifying the major stakeholders; building community capacity for monitoring & local-level planning; developing appropriate PRA tools and workable participatory monitoring approaches that overcome/ adapt to existing limitations (<i>i.e.</i> , literacy & skills, time & resources) and constraints (<i>i.e.</i> , cultural constraints) of target beneficiaries; etc

Table 2: Guide for Selection of NGO Case Studies (cont'd.)	
III. WORKING IN "PROBLEMATIC" CONTEXTS	
5 Enhancing participation among particular target groups:	Experiences in enhancing & developing meaningful participation among particular target groups, especially of rural women. Others include: landless & migrant rural workers, shifting cultivators, indigenous peoples, discriminated castes, internally-displaced people, & the informal sector. Key areas to highlight, and of special interest here, are practical tools & approaches in: (a) targetting development interventions; (b) overcoming specific cultural, religious, and institutional constraints; and (c) motivating, animating & sustaining interest and participation among the different target groups; etc., (d) how are these target groups given roles as active partners and decision-makers in existing initiatives?
6 Promoting "participation" in restricted policy environments:	Practical experiences in introducing beneficiary & stakeholder participation within restricted policy environments (e.g. China, Vietnam) or in areas with authoritarian or highly-centralized governance structures (e.g. Myanmar). To be documented are "what specific interventions are possible". Key items of interest include: identifying the "right" project partners; dealing with officials; developing decentralized project designs; motivating primary stakeholders; etc. Since experiences in this area are still not well-documented, other key lessons are likely to emerge.
IV. LEARNING FROM INNOVATIVE NGO & COMMUNITY APPROACHES	
7 Initiatives & participatory approaches in the mobilization of target groups:	The ability to mobilize communities is a distinct strength often cited of NGOs and people's organizations. A key word is people's empowerment. Of special interest here are cases (as well as their tools and approaches) that highlight: (a) how local initiatives are multiplied or upscaled to achieve broader scale and impact; (b) approaches to community motivation, education and local resource mobilization; (c) innovative organizational systems & structures; (d) targetting and involving particular poverty groups and sectors; (e) enhancing self-help and local initiatives; and (f) the use of particular information and media tools, etc.
8 Participatory initiatives & approaches in agricultural development & resource management:	NGOs and people's organizations have undertaken various initiatives in agricultural development & resource management. These often utilize participatory approaches that depart from the existing paradigms and top-down formulas of highly-centralized official bodies. These include innovations in, i.e. — agricultural extension, community-based resource management, environmental education & protection; agro-forestry, forest resource protection & rehabilitation; watershed development; community health & education; local governance systems; agricultural research & development; fisheries development; and promotion of agrarian reforms, resource and tenurial rights. While the potential list is long, what we are looking for are those approaches with existing/possible potential for replication or upscaling.

One should note that the fourth listed category - *i.e.*, learning from innovative NGO & community approaches - was included here to reflect the broader range of NGO experiences that are not yet part of IFAD's project cycle nor institutional framework.

Brief Description of NGO Case Studies

Presented below are brief descriptions of four case studies - two from India, and two

from the Philippines. This initial set of cases come from three types of NGOs: (a) MYRADA in India is a large development agency that services a broad range of communities in South India, primarily in the State of Karnataka; (b) ICDAI in the Philippines is a small, community-based NGO that works in three coastal municipalities; while (c) PAFID is a medium-sized Philippine NGO that services a particular sector - that of indigenous communities. All three NGOs are well-established, and have been in operation for at

Case Study	Brief Description
<i>The Role of People's Institutions in the Management of Watersheds</i>	<p>Over the past years, MYRADA, an NGO in South India, has been able to develop a highly participatory programme for micro-watershed development. Presented in the case study is a comparison of two watersheds in Kolar District of Karnataka, India - Lakkenhali and Banahalli - to highlighting the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ How areas are selected for watershed development ◆ Organizing stakeholders in Watershed Development Associations (WDAs) ◆ Role of MYRADA & WDAs in planning, implementing & monitoring the watershed development programmes ◆ Capacity-building of WDA members in planning & implementing watershed programmes, mobilizing and managing resources, and building linkages <p>Lakkenhali is the older of the two villages. Experience on this helped the staff of MYRADA rework their strategies for enhancing participation on subsequent watershed programmes, of which Banahalli is an example.</p> <p><i>There is a videotape to accompany this case study. Though not filmed on the same location, the tape details the roles of people's institutions in the management of watershed programmes.</i></p>
	<p>The case focuses on how self-help groups (SHGs) play an important role in increasing people's access to and control over their own money. What begins as a process of savings and credit management can, and often does, lead to economic and social empowerment. The case of the Ranabeeramma Women's Self-Help Group, Village Dasegowdanoor will be used to illustrate this point. The case study covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The process of Self-Help Group (SHG) formation ◆ Stabilization of the SHG (including capacity-building inputs) ◆ Impact of the SHG on individual members, their families, and on their village. ◆ Linkages established by the SHG with other institutions, and resources mobilized by the SHG ◆ The SHG's growing self-dependence and reduced MYRADA involvement in its affairs.

Case Study	Brief Description
<p><i>Participatory Land-Use Planning in Infanta, Quezon, Philippines</i></p>	<p>THE ROAD: A documentary of the land use planning process in Infanta, Quezon, Philippines English; approximately 25 minutes running time</p> <p>This video presentation documents the process that led up to the municipal wide Comprehensive Land Use Planning (CLUP) exercise in Infanta, Quezon and provides a step-by-step description of the actual planning. Infanta's experience is one of the few cases where the land use planning exercise was implemented by the local government in partnership with a non-government organization, ICDAI. This case study likewise provides useful insight into how such an activity can be made as participatory as possible. Despite problems in sustaining the participation of ordinary residents, ICDAI fell back on the consistently active involvement of people's organizations which it built over two decades.</p> <p>Moreover, the Infanta case highlights the importance of a healthy collaborative relationship between NGOs and the local government in implementing development programs.</p>
<p><i>Mapping the Ancestral Lands and Waters of the Calamian Tagbanwa in Coron, Northern Palawan, Philippines: Using Three-Dimensional Planning in Community Resource Assessment and Planning</i></p>	<p>The 3-dimensional mapping is a technique developed by PAFID through the years, aimed at helping indigenous communities secure tenurial rights over their ancestral domain. A 3-D map looks like a real picture of a place, as it reflects important land and water marks of a certain place under study. On June 10, 1988, the first land and water claim of the Tagbanwa indigenous communities in Coron, Palawan was approved by the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). This case study tells that story for the first time.</p> <p>Other major accomplishments of PAFID over recent years have been: (a) securing 521,000 hectares of ancestral domains through various land tenure legal instruments; (b) delineating and surveying 568,000 hectares of ancestral domains; and (c) preparation of 40 maps indicating domain boundaries, land uses, conflict areas and overlaps.</p>

least 15 years. (Note that the Case Studies are issued separately, rather than as part of this paper.)

This initial set of cases focuses on community-level interventions. It is worth noting here that the perspective of a "community" varies in each case, and consists of: a large watershed area (an ecological unit), a village community (a social unit), a municipality (a political unit), and an indigenous community (an integrated cultural-ecological

unit). The respective NGO orientations and responses thus vary, according to their differing institutional orientations and development strategies.

All four examples fall under Category 7 in the previous Table, as leading examples on initiatives & participatory approaches in the mobilization of target groups.

Adopting Participatory Approaches from NGO Experience

When institutionalizing participation, one must be aware that participation is a process of empowerment, not a toolbox. Projects need to develop their own participatory approach, as there is no textbook for all cases.

Thus, the approach most commonly taken by multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank has been to identify specific mechanisms needed to facilitate participation within Bank-led operations. As an example, the Box below identifies the different areas for participation - *i.e.*, mechanisms for information-sharing, consultations, decision-making and empowerment - which are seen as important from the perspective of the ADB. In the same document, ADB bank staff are then directed to refer to the World Bank Participation Sourcebook to select their particular choice (cafeteria-style) from a range of available participatory tools which they deem as appropriate.

Such an approach is useful, insofar as it coaxes and encourages Bank staff to introduce participatory tools and approaches in their work, within internal Bank-led processes and operations. However, it tends to miss out on the larger context and rationale for participation - *i.e.*, people's empowerment — when the actual application of

participation is limited to specific tools, such as to PRA methods, or when internal institutional processes themselves remain untouched.

Participatory project approaches have long coexisted with structures, procedures and instruments of development cooperation, which have often proven uncondusive for decentralized decision-making, for flexibility and mutual learning processes (Forster, ed, 1996).

Chambers (1996) thus raises the key questions: Whose reality, needs and priorities count

Mechanisms to Facilitate Participation

Mechanisms for sharing information

- ◆ Translation into local languages & dissemination of written materials using various media
- ◆ Informational seminars, presentations & public meetings

Mechanisms for Consultations

- ◆ Consultative meetings
- ◆ Field visits and interviews (at various stages of work)
- ◆ Town hall" meetings
- ◆ Radio call-in shows

Mechanisms for Collaborative Decision-Making

- ◆ Participatory assessments & evaluations
- ◆ Beneficiary assessments
- ◆ Workshops & retreats to discuss and determine positions, priorities & roles
- ◆ Meetings to help resolve conflicts, seek agreements, engender ownership
- ◆ (Public) reviews of draft documents and subsequent revisions
- ◆ Joint committees or working groups with stakeholder representatives

Mechanisms to Facilitate Empowerment

- ◆ Decentralizing authority
- ◆ Delegation of authority for decisions to local organizations or groups
- ◆ Capacity-building of stakeholder organizations
- ◆ Strengthening the financial and legal status of stakeholder organizations
- ◆ Supervised transfer of responsibility for maintenance and management to stakeholders
- ◆ Support for self-help initiatives by stakeholders
- ◆ Creating an enabling policy environment

Source: ADB. Mainstreaming Participatory Development Processes

anyway? Whose knowledge counts? Whose priorities/ criteria? Whose appraisal? analysis? planning? He notes that, in reality, two simultaneous processes and planning paradigms often occur - that of external agencies, which is top-down with planning blueprints; and that of people, which is bottom-up, with participatory processes. He also notes that oftentimes, personal commitment to a coalition of people may prove in the long run to be much more important than scientifically-adequate project logic, but may require a totally different approach to planning. The question (and challenge), he poses, is whether the management of the project cycle can go far enough in overcoming these limitations and in proposing and legitimizing new ways of going about things.

Thus, within large institutions, changes in structures and planning procedures themselves are required in order to enable people to participate in the decision-making process (Osteria, Okamura, 1986).

Adopting participatory approaches from NGO experience

Figures 2, 3 and 4 suggest a framework for IFAD to adopt participatory approaches from NGO experience. Figures 2 and 3 represent two different, but related perspectives on the project cycle. Figure 4 presents a separate framework for institutional change — outlining the relationships among institutional, professional and individual concerns when participatory practices are adopted.

Figure 2 focuses on the incorporation of learnings from NGO participatory experiences. The left-hand column lists down the four broad categories of NGO case studies as earlier identified for this Project (refer to earlier Table 2, Part III). These four categories include:

- a) participation in policy;
- b) participation in the project cycle (planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation);

- c) working in “problematic contexts (target groups, restricted policy environments); and
- d) learning from innovative NGO and community approaches (mobilization of target groups, alternative approaches).

Each of the four sets of NGO case experiences is then matched to those specific stages of the IFAD project cycle (Column 2) where such cases may be most relevant and useful. Lessons from NGO experiences in policy participation, for instance, may be most relevant and applicable in the discussion/ formulation of IFAD’s corporate and regional strategies, and in the formulation of the Country Operational Strategy and Opportunity Papers (COSOPs).

Column 3 of Figure 2 then identifies the particular set of participatory tools and approaches that may be learned and adopted from NGO experiences for each stage of the project cycle.

In summary, two key conclusions can be made from Figure 2:

First: that participatory approaches can be introduced not just during and within the project development cycle itself, but also in the formulation of broader strategies at the level of the institution, region and country (COSOPs).

Second: that one essential ingredient in institutionalizing participation is a system for constant feedback and institutionalized learning. Whereas the strongest feedback systems are likely to come from established systems of beneficiary monitoring and evaluation, there should also be space within institutions such as IFAD to learn from other innovative NGO and community that lie outside the project cycle. This includes feedback or learning from other experiences - *i.e.*, in the mobilization of target groups, and in alternative community-based approaches (CBNRM, farmer-to-farmer exten-

Figure 2: Adopting from NGO participatory approaches within the project cycle

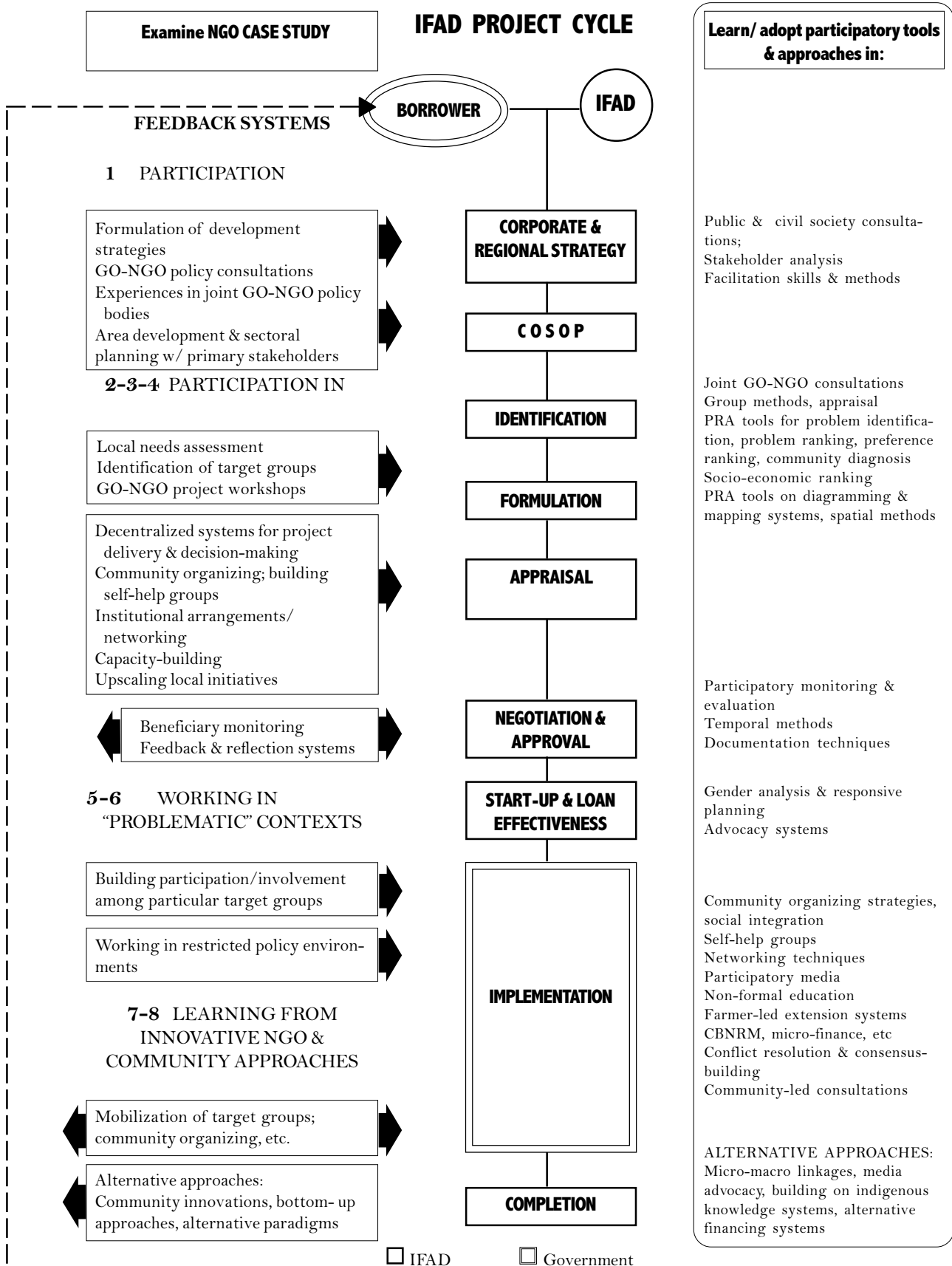
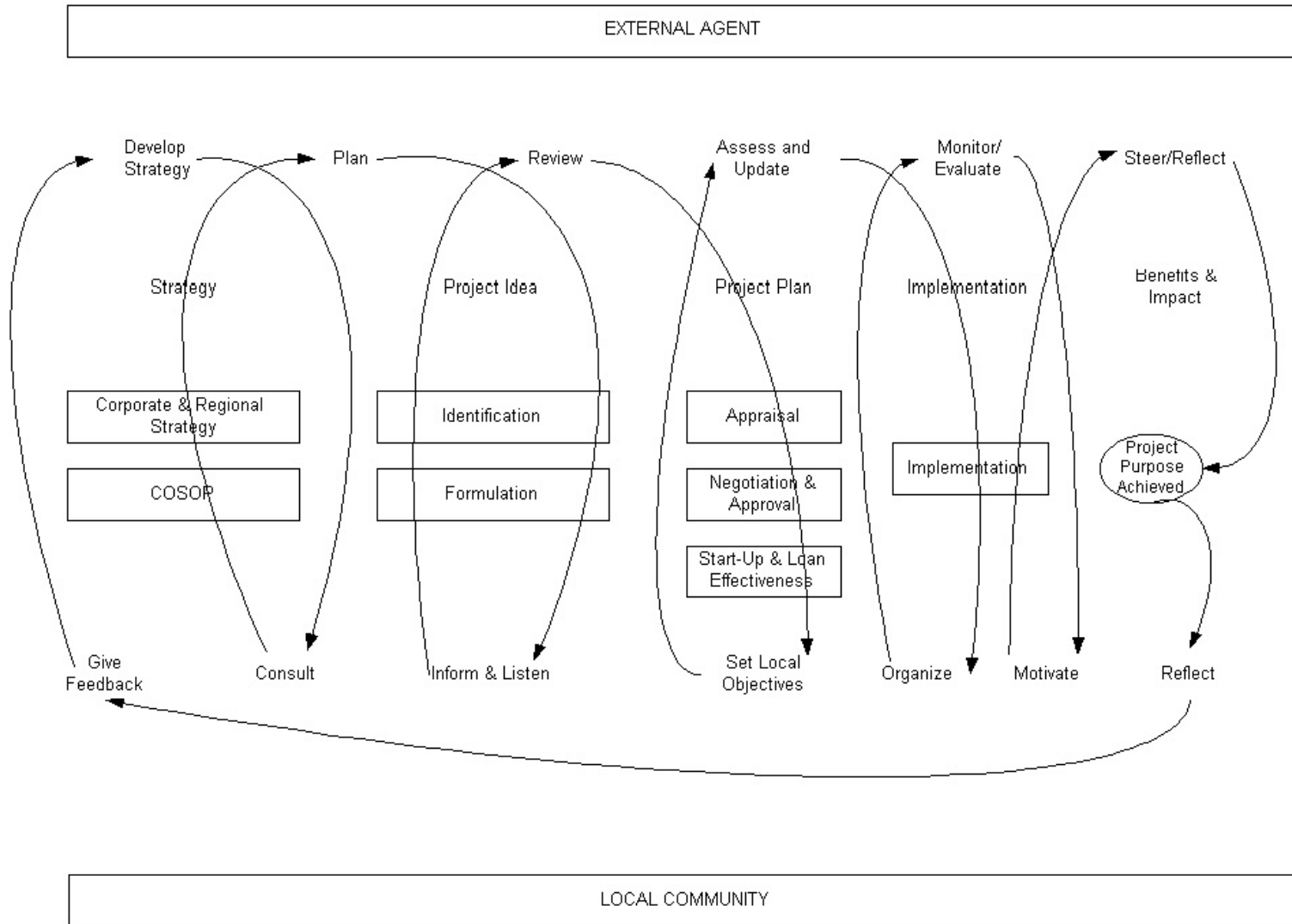


Fig. 3. Another View of the IFAD Project Cycle



Note: Figure 2 was adopted from Chambers, R. (1996). *ZOPP, PCM and PRA: Whose Reality, Needs and Priorities Count?* In Reiner, F. and Gutierrez, M., ed. (1996). *ZOPP Marries PRA? Participatory Learning and Action--A Challenge for Our Services and Institutions*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische

sion, etc.) that may lie outside of conventional practice.

On the other hand, *Figure 3* suggests an alternative view or perspective of the IFAD project cycle. As shown in *Figure 3*, each stage of the project cycle can actually be seen as a series of “mini-loops” — of joint learning, planning, consultation and feedback — wherein participatory processes can be introduced. It shows the relationship between top-down and bottom-up processes. The top processes refer to those activities and decisions usually taken by the external agency; whereas the bottom processes refer to those that are undertaken by the local community. In a real participatory approach, there is (should be) constant interaction between the external agent and the local “target” communities at each stage of the project cycle.

Figure 4 then presents a framework for motivating institutional change from within. As earlier mentioned, participatory approaches are more than just new sets of methods and techniques. They emphasize the importance of changes in personal values, reversal of roles and institutional re-orientation, in particular for the external agent or development agency. Moreover, as participation itself is a process of “shared learning,” changes are likely to occur at the level of the institution (mandates, internal processes), the individual (attitudes) and the profession (tools, approaches).

In *Figure 3*, the boxed arrows then identify a few of the interventions necessary to induce changes in terms of the institution, the individual, and the profession. The next question to raise here would be: Who then should facilitate such changes?

What are to be “adopted” or “learned”?

What exactly can be learned or adopted from NGO experience? In summary, these can be grouped into four major categories:

- ◆ Participatory tools and methods, particularly the whole range of field-tested PRA practices and methods;
- ◆ Broad participatory strategies and ap-

proaches, including: community organizing strategies, networking, the building and mobilization of self-help groups, and alternative development approaches that emphasize various forms of community empowerment. The latter includes

- ◆ Practical skills, including facilitation, negotiations, and the handling of public consultations;
- ◆ NGOs, POs and civil society organizations themselves, for experience suggests the importance of long-term engagement between an individual, team or training NGO and any large organization which seeks to adopt a participatory approach (*Chambers, 1995*).

Some limits to adopting from NGO experience

However, there are limits to adopting from NGO experience. Two are presented below: (a) addressing issues of scale; and (b) working through governments.

Issues of scale

Most of NGO successes in participatory approaches have been implemented on the scale of a village or cluster of villages. Thus, questions have rightly been raised about NGO organizational capacity, the replicability of particular experiences, and the applicability of specific tools when participation is pursued over a broader area or target group.

Yet, many large Asian NGOs have successfully implemented PRA and participatory approaches on a wide scale, especially in forestry, anti-poverty and food security programmes, soil and water conservation, watershed management, water and sanitation, and urban programmes. These have included groups such as BRAC, MYRADA, and ACTIONAID, to name a few. Well-being ranking, for instance, was used by MYRADA in the early 1990s in hundreds of villages in South India, and later

by ACTIONAID for a population of 36,000 in Pakistan to identify the poorest, and to select and deselect households in poverty programmes. In the Integrated Pest Management Programme in Indonesia, where many NGOs were involved, at least 1,500 groups of farmers have made participatory maps which they use to plot the location and prevalence of pests, to plan action, and to monitor changes.

Going to scale also necessarily raises concerns about quality - due often to the rush to meet external targets for villages covered, project accomplishments and sums disbursed. These include: one-time extractive appraisals without community analysis, planning or action; the routine use of methods; and insensitivity to local cultures and social processes. These problems will have to be addressed through corrective measures, such as: giving more time for participation and institution-building especially in early stages of programmes; changes in project procedures;

greater flexibility in targets; and giving greater priority to behavior and attitudes in trainings.

An alternative approach to scaling-up participatory approaches in projects has been to build on small-scale successes, through existing systems of networking, since “networks” have been the primary vehicles by which smaller NGOs link-up, in order to share skills and resources, and to scale-up their operations. This networking approach has proven useful in carefully-designed programmes that emphasize decentralized implementation and decision-making — such as in targeted poverty alleviation programmes, dispersal schemes, micro-credit re-lending schemes, and in infrastructure- and service-delivery programmes directed at community-identified priorities.

Ultimately, however, the key decision will be where to act in the continuum between the “small and beautiful”, and the “big and blotchy”. Small can be secure, personally satisfying and professionally safe, but impact is limited.

Seen another way, the question is whether to go for big changes in small programmes, or for small changes in big programmes. Thus, compromises will have to be made. Trade-offs between quality, scale and impact have to be part of responsible decisions about where to work, and what to do (Chambers, 1995).

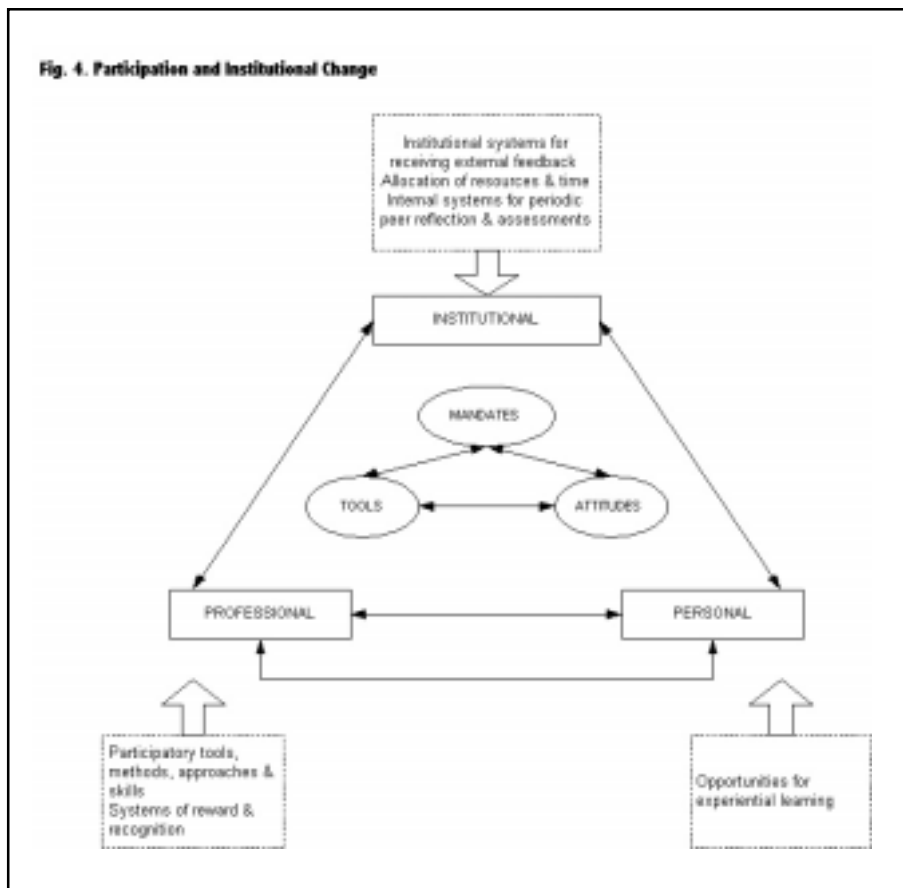


Figure 4 was adopted from Chambers, R. (1996). *ZOPP, PCM and PRA: Whose Reality, Needs and Priorities Count?* In Reimer, F. and Gutierrez, M., ed. (1996). *ZOPP Marries PRA? Participatory Learning and Action--A Challenge for Our Services and Institutions.* Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit 9GTZ), Eschborn, Germany. (Workshop Documentstion.

Working through governments

The very nature of development assistance affects participation. Often, there is greater flexibility in implementing grant-based Technical Assistance (TA) projects than there usually is for loan-based Financial Assistance (FA) projects, which have to go through stringent bidding procedures and financial auditing requirements, and which are implemented through (usually steep) hierarchies of borrower-governments. Thus, real questions arise as to what extent participatory approaches can be introduced when borrower-governments take over direct responsibility for the implementation of projects.

It is well-recognized that there are principal differences between institutional cultures of NGOs and Governments. This must be taken into account when attempting to transfer a new concept from one institutional environment to another. The objectives of these institutions, their institutional cultures and identities, as well as the forces driving them are entirely different. (*Backhaus and Wagachchi, 1995*) Furthermore, the prevailing policy environment in each country determine, to a significant degree, how far relationships can be built between NGOs and Government (*refer to earlier Table 1*).

For sure, participatory processes will have to be introduced into projects early on in the project cycle, and may need to be strengthened in negotiations with borrower-governments. Lending institutions such as IFAD could also play an important role in seeking greater recognition and roles for NGOs and civil society organizations, especially within restrictive policy environments. One option is to introduce participation as a loan conditionality. This may be relevant and useful, but this approach may not altogether be sufficient. Experience shows that even when participation is imposed as part of loan conditionalities, there is a tendency on the part of implementors to merely to go through the motions of participatory

exercises.³ Furthermore, there may be hesitance on the part of borrower-governments to introduce an orientation-phase during project implementation, because they fear a negative effect on a project's cost-benefit ratio (*Backhaus and Wagachchi, 1995*).

To introduce participatory practices in government-led projects, it will be important to provide for an orientation and training phase for project staff as well as beneficiaries. A solution might be to introduce a TA to set-up a system for beneficiary participation. Also, in the beginning during project start-up, achievements for physical targets and impacts should be low, for otherwise some people will later use the project as proof that "participation does not work." Several studies also suggest that the use of short-term consultants at this point may be of limited usefulness, and that what may be needed are persistent "change agents" coming from outside the project staff who are available over a longer period of time (*Backhaus and Wagachchi, 1995; Chambers, 1996*). NGOs within the country could fill-in this role.

Presently, most practitioners of PRA and participatory approaches come from NGO backgrounds. However, many tend to be critical of the attitudes and behavior of government officials (seen as "wrong," "too slow," or "unable to change"). While this view might be justifiable from the perspective of rural people and beneficiaries themselves, it could also show a lack of willingness on the part of some NGOs to understand and accept people in their present state. Thus, the best framework for moving forward and for building NGO involvement in a participatory GO-led project may be to construct it as a "joint learning exercise". Further, in instances where there have been limited experiences in GO-NGO cooperation, some piloting may be necessary.

Costs and risks of participation

It should be noted that from the perspective of IFAD (and of NGOs as well) there are costs

and risks to participation:

- ◆ Participation can be organizationally and logistically troublesome.
- ◆ It may involve more time and resources.
- ◆ It may lead to increased expectations that cannot be fulfilled.
- ◆ It requires skilled facilitation — conflicts may be aggravated among groups with different priorities and clashing interests.⁴
- ◆ Methodologies used may not be seen by some as “scientific,” thus subjecting the outcomes to questioning by experts. It is noted that policymakers have a normal inclination towards hard data (*i.e.*, numerical data & questionnaire surveys) which are relatively easier to interpret.
- ◆ Participatory processes may be co-opted by some powerful and more articulate elites, to the exclusion of the poor and disadvantaged.⁵

Further, while participatory approaches may appear to be the “new panacea” to international development assistance, one should be cautioned against “putting the burden of development on the poor”. One should constantly be reminded of the structural causes underlying poverty, and that “self-reliance” should not be used as a legitimizing rationale for the wealthy and powerful sectors of society to abdicate their responsibility to the poor (*Castillo, 1983*).

Benefits of Participation

The local benefits of participation have been well-established from numerous research studies and experiences. Seen from the per-

spective of an external development agency, however, these potential benefits can be summarized as follows:

- ◆ more appropriate and timely interventions that fit the needs of the community and users of local facilities;⁶
- ◆ better implementation, sustainability and local ownership of project initiatives;
- ◆ more complete utilization of services provided;
- ◆ greater project efficiency, and improved productivity;
- ◆ better match between human capabilities and capital investments;
- ◆ improved transparency and accountability;
- ◆ increased equity and benefit-sharing;
- ◆ willingness of local communities to share costs, and an interest in sustaining the benefits;
- ◆ strengthened local capacity to initiate other development activities; and
- ◆ improved learning, and greater personal and professional satisfaction on the part of the external agency.

Finally, several studies have suggested that participation also helps to reduce costs, and improves the cost-benefit ratio of development initiatives in the long-run. While this may be true, participation does require substantial investment in the beginning. Furthermore, other studies suggest that while participation may lessen the need for certain kinds of external inputs, that cost is actually transferred on to the local community, for it also takes people’s time away from their work and livelihoods. And rarely are these local efforts quantified or recognized in agencies’ balance sheets.

Written Sources

- ADB. Mainstreaming Participatory Development Processes. Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines.
- Appleton, J. (1995) PRA, Social Tremors and Rolling Heads: Thoughts on PRA and Empowerment. (Manuscript copy)
- Asker, J. (1995) "Participation: Is It Here to Stay?". The Exchange, No. 79 April-June. Heifer Project International, Arkansas, USA.
- Backhaus, C. and Wagachchi, R. (1995) Only Playing with Beans? Participatory Approaches in Large-Scale Government Programmes. (Manuscript copy)
- Chambers, R. (1996). ZOPP, PCM and PRA: Whose Reality, Needs and Priorities Count?. In Reiner, F. and Gutierrez, M., ed. (1996). ZOPP Marries PRA? Participatory Learning and Action - A Challenge for Our Services and Institutions. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), Eschborn, Germany. (Workshop Documentation)
- IIRR (1999). Farmers Changing the Face of Technology: Choices and Adaptations of Technology Options. International Institute for Rural Reconstruction, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.
- IIRR (1996). Recording and Using Indigenous Knowledge: A Manual. International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.
- IIRR (1998). Participatory Methods in Community-Based Coastal Resource Management. 3 vols. International Institute for Rural Reconstruction, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.
- IIRR. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Experiences and Lessons. Workshop proceedings. International Institute for Rural Reconstruction, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.
- Mascarenhas, J. Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Learning Methods: Recent Experiences from MYRADA and South India. (Manuscript)
- McPherson, S, ed. (1995) Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Abstracts. Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, England.
- Narayanasamy, N. PRA Exercise in an Indian Village: A Retrospective Evaluation of the First Exposure to the Process. PRA Notes 19, January 1994, pp. 19-23.
- Osteria, T. and Okamura, J. eds. (1986). Participatory Approaches to Development: Experiences in the Philippines. De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines.
- PHILDHARRA (1999). Forming Networks for People's Participation in Local Governance: Three Case Studies. Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PHILDHARRA), Quezon City, Philippines.
- Polestico, R. (1993). Training Manual for Participatory Planning. Southeast Asian Rural Social Leadership Institute, Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines.
- Prain, G., Fano, H. and Fonseca, C. Involving Farmers in Crop Variety Evaluation and Selection. (Manuscript copy)
- Quizon, A. (1995). Draft Strategy Paper for Implementation of the FAO Plan of Action on People's Participation in Asia. (Manuscript copy)
- Reiner, F. and Gutierrez, M., ed. (1996). ZOPP Marries PRA? Participatory Learning and Action - A Challenge for Our Services and Institutions. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), Eschborn, Germany. (Workshop Documentation)
- Salazar, R. (1996). Empowering Farmers' Research in Agricultural Biodiversity Management. Paper presented at the Conference on Food Security and Biodiversity. Held in Oslo, Norway, 3-4 June, 1996.
- Scarborough, V., Killough, S. Johnson, D. and Farrington, J., eds. (1997) Farmer-Led Extension: Concepts and Practices. Overseas Development Institute.
- _____ (1996). Sharing our Experience: An Appeal to Donors and Governments. Bangalore, India. (Manifesto)
- Stephens, A. (1988). Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Handbook for Training Field Workers. FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Shah, P. and Shah, M. K. (1995) Participatory methods: precipitating or avoiding conflict? (Manuscript copy)

Thomas-Slayer, B., Polestico, R., Esser, A. L., Taylor, O. Mutua, E. A Manual for Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis.

World Bank (1993). World Bank Participation Sourcebook. World Bank, Washington D.C., USA.

Notes

- 1 The Directory is to be issued in September 2000.
- 2 It should be noted that the other Study — A Review of Participatory Approaches in IFAD — was prepared simultaneously as this Paper.
- 3 Instead of mobilizing self-help and increasing self-reliance, government-facilitated PRA exercises have sometimes encouraged high expectations among villagers for project assistance, making some village resource management plans look more like “shopping lists” (*Backhaus and Wagachchi, 1995*).
- 4 An article by *Shah, P. and Shah, M. K. (1995)* Participatory methods: precipitating or avoiding conflict? presents and analyzes a well-documented case in Devalia village, Surendragar, Gujarat, India where a PRA exercise led to increased conflicts and violence over water rights. The authors contend that rapid appraisal tools may sometimes overlook the complexity of existing social relationships, which can inhibit community action and articulation of joint

priorities, and thus creating a false sense of a community willing to cooperate. Oftentimes, most researchers are more interested in extracting information in a very short time, and are absent when negotiation and bargaining takes place, and conflicts arise.

- 5 Real participation takes time. An interesting case example is provided in an article by *N. Narayanasamy (1995)* of Gandhigram Rural Institute, Deemed University, India. He describes a village-modelling PRA exercise conducted in a village called Pillaiarnathan, and noted that in certain cases, some high-caste women tended to dominate discussions, and low caste groups still had many problems that remained unexpressed at the end of the first day’s PRA exercise. It was only on the second day that the issues of Harijan women were fully expressed.
- 6 An illustrative example is cited by *Okamura (1995)*. In the Philippines, upland communities often cite the lack of health and education facilities as their primary felt needs. However, these are often not integral components of social forestry programmes. Although they may be seen to “participate” in social forestry programs, their reasons may have little to do with reforestation per se, which is the principal objective of government agencies and programmes in social forestry.