

# **Facilitating Community Participation Through Communication**

by

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### **Dedication**

This volume is dedicated to the life and work of Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal, Robert Chambers, Andreas Fuglesang, Saul Alinsky, Muhammad Yunus, and others like them, who believe(d) in people, and their participation.

Author's Introductory Note:  
**Participatory Intent and Attempt**

The present volume distills some of the main influential ideas, approaches, and tools in the realm of participatory communication and community participation. The landscape of theory and practice in “participatory communication” and “community participation” is so vast and complex, that most of the present author’s writing decisions about “what path to tread on” and “what path to skip” were often a function of ignorance and arbitrariness, than of informed guidance. That is why I especially emphasize the notion of distilling “some” of the key ideas in the opening sentence. If anything guided this journey, it was a desire to write an accessible volume of some use, relevance, and practicality, primarily for an audience of practitioners.

How was this volume compiled? This volume was compiled through a review of the pertinent academic literature, a scouring (to the extent possible) of participatory training manuals and reports, and surfing of Web-sites. Additionally, some two dozen individuals, organizations, groups – engaged in participatory communication and community development activities in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and North America, including a mix of practitioners, program officials, and scholars – were first identified (in consultation with UNICEF officials), and then contacted electronically to solicit ideas and inputs to this volume. Over half of them contributed generously of their time and ideas, including providing additional follow-up leads. It was during these electronic conversations, for instance, that Neil Ford of UNICEF pointed me to the community development method of “appreciative inquiry”. During this process, I also became aware of Gumucio Dagron’s (2001) newly-released review of 50 participatory communication projects, and could secure an advanced copy. I thank each of these individuals, groups, and organizations for their ideas and inspiration, and name them in the acknowledgements. I also drew upon my own field-based experiences, including some recent visits to community-based projects in India, Bangladesh, Brazil, South Africa, and Kenya, to inform this volume.

I’ll be amiss if I did not confess that the present volume suffers from a slew of well-meaning attempts. Notwithstanding my training and academic profession, an attempt is made to write simply without, hopefully, being too simplistic. An attempt is made to provide readers with food for thought, while trying to break prose sequences into digestible chunks. An attempt is made, wherever possible, to imbue the “spirit” of the “participation” topic into the writing process, by making the volume reflective, dialogic, and problem-posing. An attempt is made to embrace the narrative structure of story-telling, which undoubtedly represents the oldest form of community engagement, participation, socialization, and mobilization. And, finally, an attempt is made to center the discourse of this volume on ideas, not recipes.

In writing this volume, I was constantly reminded of what Robert Chambers said in his 1983 book, Rural development: Putting the last first:

***It is easier to write about what to do than to do it. Writing does not require courage, but courage can be needed for action.  
(Chambers, 1983, p.193).***

Perhaps some lessons and inspirations for actions lurk – both overtly and covertly -- in the present writing. The courage to act must necessarily, though not solely, rest with the readers!

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I also thank the following individuals who contributed their time, ideas, and resources toward the present project.

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## Chapter 1

### Development and Participation

#### The Development Challenge

- One-third of the world's workforce of three billion people is either unemployed or underemployed. Some 500 million employed workers are unable to keep their family incomes above US\$1 per day.  
For more information visit:  
<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-421.html>
- Some 1.2 billion people (20 percent of the world's population), live on less than US\$ 1 per day.  
For more information visit:  
<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-1360.html>
- Some 70 percent of the above 1.2 billion people living in abject poverty are female.  
For more information visit:  
<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-36.html>
- Some 2.4 billion people (40 percent of the world's population) lives without basic sanitation. Over 2 million people, mostly children, die each year of diarrheal disease.  
For more information visit:  
<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-445.html>
- Some 5.3 million people were newly infected with HIV in 2000. Some 36.1 million people now live with HIV or AIDS. Over 22 million people have died from AIDS since the epidemic began.  
For more information visit:  
<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-31.html>
- Over 13 million children have been orphaned due to AIDS by 2000.  
For more information visit:  
<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-32.html>
- South Asia is nearly self-sufficient in food but 294 million of its people still go hungry each day.  
For more information visit:  
<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-1746.html>
- Some four percent of the Amazon rainforest was destroyed between 1500 and the 1970's i.e. 470 years. An estimated 75 to 95 percent will be destroyed over the next 20 years.

For more information visit:

<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-169.html>

- Over 20 percent of primary school aged children in developing countries are not in school.

For more information visit:

<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-171.html>

- In the year 2000, there were 80 million unwanted pregnancies; 20 million unsafe abortions; and 500,000 maternal deaths (of which 99 percent were in developing countries).

For more information visit:

<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-24.html>

- Over 40 percent of the people in developing countries have never made a phone call. The city of Tokyo has more telephone lines than the entire continent of Africa.

For more information visit:

<http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-616.html>

Source: Adapted from Drum Beat -- 100 –Global Forces. <http://www.comminit.com>

The world faces enormous development challenges. Equally prolific have been policies, programs, and processes to address these development challenges. However, the past several decades of top-down and trickle down development programs, in aggregate, have yielded dismal results (Mckee et al., 2000; Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 1998). Barring some exceptions, most development initiatives, have often increased the vulnerability of the most vulnerable: The poor, the illiterate, the women, the children, and the marginalized. Strident questions have been raised about development for whom, with what purpose, through what means, and for what ends?

The discourse of “participation” gathered momentum in the 1970s, as discontent mounted with top-down and trickle down “modernistic” approaches to development (Uphoff, 1985). Julius Nyerere’s famous statement exemplifies the essence of “participatory” philosophy:

***People cannot be developed. They can only develop themselves.  
Julius Nyerere (1973, p. 60).***



But, really, the concept of participation is not so new. It is as timeless as the history of humankind. Long before participation was purposefully advocated for development, people had formed collectivities in order to farm, defend, and even destroy. So human history is necessarily a story of participation.

### **Parts of Participation?**

Flying over East Africa, I leaned over and asked the passenger by the window seat: “Is that Lake Victoria?” “Well, that is part of it”, she said.

#### ***What are the dangers of mistaking “parts” for “wholes”?***

Participation comes in all shapes and sizes. Participation has many “parts”. One way of understanding them are to consider the participation continuum.

### **The Participatory Continuum**

<b>Mode of Participation</b>	<b>Degree of Involvement of Local People</b>	<b>How Action Relates to Local People</b>
1. Co-option	Token representatives are chosen, who have no real input or power.	Working <u>on</u> the local people.
2. Compliance	Tasks are assigned with incentives; outsiders decide the agenda and direct the process.	Working <u>for</u> the local people
3. Consultation	Local opinions are asked for; outsiders analyze and decide on a course of action.	Working <u>for</u> and <u>with</u> the local people.
4. Cooperation	Local people work together with outsiders to determine; however, responsibility remains with outsiders for directing the process.	Working <u>with</u> the local people.
5. Co-learning	Local people and outsiders share their knowledge to create new understanding and work together to form action plans, with outsider facilitation	Working <u>with</u> the local people and <u>by</u> the local people.
6. Collective Action	Local people set their own agenda and mobilize to carry it out, in the absence of outside initiators and facilitators.	<u>By</u> the local people.

Source: Adapted from de Negri et al. (1998).

## Participation as a Means or Ends?

For many “participation” and “participatory” makes sense as means. That is, with participation, projects and programs become more humane, more effective, and more sustainable (Chambers, 1999, p. 8). For others, participation is an end in itself: A set of desired processes and relationships. Whatever the mix of reasons, a new consensus has put participation at the center stage of local development initiatives. Donors, including the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and other international agencies have embraced participatory processes, while NGOs and governments have sought to spread participatory methodologies on a formidable scale (Chambers, 1999).

## Human Dignity: The Compass of Participation

While there may not be a clean way of resolving the issue of participation as means or ends, the compass of participation rests on preserving and enhancing the “dignity” of the individual. Nothing is more important to a participant’s dignity than having the opportunity to influence one’s own future. As noted U.S. community organizer, Saul Alinsky emphasized:

*If you respect the dignity of the individual, you are working with his desires, not yours; his values, not yours; his ways of working and fighting, not yours; his choice of leadership, not yours; his programs, not yours. Always remember that “the guiding star” is the dignity of the individual. That is the basic purpose of organizing. To give people help, while denying them a significant part in the action, contributes nothing to the development of the individual. In this sense, it is not giving but taking – taking their dignity. Denial of the opportunity for participation is the denial of human dignity. It will not work.*

*Saul Alinsky (1971, p. 122).*

Handouts, charity, are an anathema to people’s participation. The government of Mexico once decided to pay tribute to Mexican mothers. A proclamation was issued that every mother whose sewing machine was being held by the Monte de Piedad (the national pawnshop of Mexico) should have her machine returned as a gift on Mother’s day. There was tremendous joy over the occasion. Here was a gift being made outright, without any participation on part of the recipients. Within three weeks the exact same number of sewing machines were back in the pawn shop (Alinsky, 1971).

The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, an icon of microcredit-based development organizing, holds dear this premise of preserving and enhancing the dignity of its 2.5 million poor borrowers. It attributes its success (with a loan recovery rate of over 98 percent) to its efforts in helping people unlock their own potential. The microcredit loans, not handouts, are looked upon as a “key” with which poor people can -- with dignity and resolve -- tap economic opportunities that eluded them before. Its founder, Professor Muhammad Yunus views its “intervention” of microcredit, as the most fundamental of all human rights, as it makes possible the realization of other rights like food, shelter, and housing.

In sum, if community participation and organizing are tuned into enhancing the “dignity” of the individual, and of the collective, their compass is pointing in the right direction.

<p><i>Never do anything for anybody that they can do for themselves.</i> <i>Saul Alinsky (1971).</i></p>
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## Chapter 2

### Participation and Communication

There can be no participation without communication. The notion of “participation”, as a desirable part and parcel of communicative approaches to development, goes back about three decades.

But, first, what do we mean by participatory communication? Participatory communication is defined as a dynamic, interactional, and transformative process of dialogue between people, groups, and institutions that enables people, both individually and collectively, to realize their full potential and be engaged in their own welfare.

#### Attributes of Participatory Communication Models

- The participation communication model begins with a belief in the potential of people. Everyone has the right and duty to influence decision- making and to understand the results.
- The participatory communication model recognizes, understands, and appreciates the diversity and plurality of people. It believes in upholding and enhancing the dignity and equality of people. Ordinary people are viewed as the key agents of change, and hence their aspirations and strengths are engaged in culturally appropriate ways.
- The participatory communication model emphasizes the local community rather than the nation state, dialogue rather than monologue, and emancipation rather than alienation.
- The participatory communication model emphasizes the strengthening of democratic processes and institutions at the community level, and a redistribution of power.
- The participatory communication model recognizes that authentic participation, while widely espoused, is not in everyone’s interest, especially those vested in guarding their privileged positions, i.e. the elite.
- The participatory communication model also recognizes that participatory programs are not easily implemented or replicated, nor are they highly predictable, or readily controlled.

Source: Servaes (1999); White (1999); Servaes, Jacobson, and White (1996); White, Nair, and Ascroft (1994).

## Communication: A Prerequisite for Participation

All participation is communication-driven, but all communication is not participatory. Gumucio Dagron (2001) provides a useful typology to distinguish participatory communication from other communication strategies for social change:

<b>Participatory Communication Strategies</b>	<b>Versus</b>	<b>Non-Participatory Communication Strategies</b>
<u>Horizontal</u> lateral communication between participants	Versus	<u>Vertical</u> top-down communication from senders to receivers
<u>Process</u> of dialogue and democratic participation	Versus	<u>Campaign</u> to mobilize in a short-term without building capacity
<u>Long-term</u> process of sustainable change	Versus	<u>Short-term</u> planning and quick fix solutions
<u>Collective</u> empowerment and decision-making	Versus	<u>Individual</u> behavior change
<u>With</u> community's involvement	Versus	<u>For</u> the community
<u>Specific</u> in content, language, and culture	Versus	<u>Massive</u> and broad-based
<u>People's needs</u> are the focus	Versus	<u>Donors' musts</u> are the focus
<u>Owned</u> by the community	Versus	<u>Access</u> determined by social political and economic factors
<u>Consciousness</u> raising	Versus	<u>Persuasion</u> for short-term

## Approaches to Participatory Communication

At the risk of oversimplifying, one may contend that there are two major, but interrelated, approaches to participatory communication (Servaes, 1999):

1. The first approach centers on the dialogic pedagogy of noted Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire.
2. The second approach, often broadly labeled as the participatory community media approach, or the alternative communication approach, centers on the ideas of access, participation, self-determination, and self-management, honed during the UNESCO New World Information Order debates of the 1970s.

While both sets of participative approaches share several commonalties, their arenas of communicative application have been somewhat distinct. For instance, the Freirean theory of dialogic communication is based more on interpersonal and group

dialogue in a community setting, and hence, has found more application in the practice of community development, participation, and transformation.

The participatory community media approach has focused more on issues of public and community access to appropriate media, participation of people in message design and media production, and self-management of communication enterprises. Its applications are thus more in community radio and television, street theater and folk media, participatory video, and community informatics, Internet, and tele-centers.

### **Paulo Freire's Dialogic Pedagogy**

Paulo Freire's dialogic pedagogy emphasized the role of "teacher as learner" and the "learner as teacher", with each learning from the other in a mutually transformative process. The role of the outsider (or facilitator) is viewed as working with and not for the oppressed to organize them in their incessant struggle to regain their humanity. In true participation, according to Freire, there is no subject-object relationship. There is only a subject-subject relationship.

***Subjects are those who know and act. Objects, in contrast, are known and acted upon. Man is a subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in doing so moves towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life, individually and collectively. The world is not a given reality which man must accept and to which he must adjust, rather it is a problem to be worked on and solved.***

***Source: Paulo Freire (1970), paraphrased.***

The Freirean process is dialogic and problem-posing with a view to raise the critical awareness of the oppressed, goading them to action.

***Every sentence I utter must be understood not as an affirmation, but as a question.***

***Neils Bohr, Nobel-prize winning physicist.***

In Freirean pedagogy, there is no room for teaching numeracy as "two plus two equals four". Such a pedagogy, according to Freire, is dehumanizing as it views the learners as empty receptacles, which need to be "filled" by expert knowledge. Freire criticizes this "banking" mode of education, which, he notes, characterizes the orientation of most development initiatives. "Deposits" are made by experts and the scope of action allowed to students (or intended beneficiaries) "extends only as far as receiving, filing,

and storing the deposits” (Freire, 1970, p. 58). Instead, numeracy, in the Freirean dialogic problem-posing mode may be taught and learned in the following manner:

Teacher: How many cows do you have?

Poor farmer: One.

Teacher: How many cows does the rich farmer have?

Poor farmer: Twenty?

Teacher: Why does he have twenty cows and you only one?

And so goes the dialogic conversation, which over time stimulates a process of critical reflection and awareness (or “conscientization”) on part of the poor farmer, creating possibilities of reflective action that did not exist before.

***Problem-posing means re-presenting to people what they think. But not as a lecture. Rather as a problem.***

***Paulo Freire (1970, paraphrased.***

Freire emphasizes that the themes underlying dialogic pedagogy should resonate with people’s thematic universe, that is, with issues and experiences of salience to them, as opposed to well-meaning but alienating rhetoric. Once the oppressed, both individually and collectively, begin to critically reflect on their social situation, possibilities arise for them to break the “culture of silence” through the articulation of discontent, and through action.

### **Dismantling the Banking Education Approach to Development**

Most development programs, especially the top-down and trickle-down types, follow the “banking” education model. This model is antithetic to people’s participation in their own welfare.

The challenge for participatory facilitators and practitioners is to assess their development programs, and dismantle the following pillars of the “banking” model of development:

1. The teacher teaches and the students are taught.
2. The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing.
3. The teacher thinks and the students are thought about.
4. The teacher talks and the students listen – meekly.
5. The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined.
6. The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply.

7. The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher.
8. The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who are not consulted) adopt to it.
9. The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students.
10. The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere Objects.

Source: Freire (1970, p. 59).

### **Freire in Practice: Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed<sup>1</sup>**

Inspired by the writings and teachings of fellow countryman Paulo Freire, and his own experiences with dramatic performances, Brazilian theater director Augusto Boal developed Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), an international movement to use theater as a vehicle of participatory social change. TO's techniques – based on Freirean principles of dialogue, interaction, problem-posing, reflection, and conscientization – are designed to activate spectators to take control of situations, rather than passively allowing things to happen to them. TO transforms theater from the "monologue" of traditional performance into a "dialogue" between audience and stage. TO's techniques have been used, through a network of thousands of drama troupes all over the world, by community organizers and facilitators as participatory tools for democratizing organizations, analyzing social problems, and transforming reality through direct action (Boal, 1979; 1992; 1995).

Theater of the Oppressed utilizes, among others, the following key techniques:

#1. **Cop-in-the-Head** are an entire series of TO exercises to ferret out internalized oppressions. Boal argues that most people stop themselves from taking political actions because they had "cops in their heads", that is, fear of oppressors. Through participatory theater, the "cops in peoples' heads" are identified and located. Strategies for overcoming these fears are then charted.

#2. **Forum Theatre** is a TO technique that begins with the enactment of a scene (or anti-model) in which a protagonist tries, unsuccessfully, to overcome an oppression relevant to that particular audience. The joker (master of ceremonies) then invites the spectators to replace the protagonist at any point in the scene where they believe an alternative action that could lead to a solution. The scene is replayed numerous times



with different interventions from different spectators. This results in a dialogue about the oppression, an examination of alternatives, and a "rehearsal" for real solutions.

#3. **Invisible Theatre** is a rehearsed sequence of events that is enacted in a public, non-theatrical space, capturing the attention of people who do not know they are watching a planned performance. It is both theater and real life, for although rehearsed, it happens in real time and space. Actors take responsibility for the consequences of the "show." The goal is to bring attention to a social problem for the purpose of stimulating public dialogue.

#4. **The Joker** is the director/master of ceremonies of a TO performance. For instance, in Forum theatre, the joker sets up the rules of the event for the audience, facilitates the spectators' replacement of the protagonist, and sums up the essence of each solution proposed in the interventions. The term derives from the joker (or wild card) in a deck of playing cards. Just as the wild card is not tied down to a specific suit or value, neither is the TO joker tied down to an allegiance to performer, spectator, or any one interpretation of events.

#5. **Spect-actor** refers to the activated spectator, the audience member who takes part in the action.

How did Boal hone the spect-actor technique? Previously, in the late 1950s, when Boal was experimenting with participatory theater, audiences were invited to discuss a play at the end of the performance. In so doing, Boal realized they remained viewers and "reactors". To facilitate audience participation, Boal, in the 1960s, developed a process whereby audience members could stop a performance and suggest different actions for the actors, who would then carry out the audience suggestions. During one such performance, a woman in the audience was so outraged that the actor could not understand her suggestion that she came charging on to the stage, enacting what she meant. For Boal this was the birth of the spect-actor (not spectator). From that day on, audience members were invited to stage. In so doing, Boal discovered that the audience members became empowered not only to imagine change, but to actually – and collectively -- practice it.

Boal and Freire shared much in common. Boal, like Freire, was tortured and exiled for his cultural activism by the military that ran Brazil in the sixties. Both returned to Brazil in 1984 with the removal of the military junta and were active in public service: When Boal served as mayor of Rio de Janeiro in the early 1990s, Paulo Freire was serving as the Secretary of Education in Sao Paulo. When Freire died of a heart attack in 1997, Boal said: "I am very sad. I have lost my last father. Now all I have are brothers and sisters."

As Mayor of Rio, Boal used theatre as a participatory political tool to make new laws (Boal, 1998). Here is how Boal described his idea of "Legislative Theatre" (source: <http://www.gn.apc.org/resurgence/issues/unwin204.htm>):

When I was a legislator and Mayor of Rio, I the theater company worked with nineteen groups of oppressed people. They would do plays about social problems, discuss with their own communities, dialogue with other communities, and make festivals for the population in general. Out of these activities many proposals and suggestions came to my office. We had what we called the metabolizing cell, which was a group of actors and also lawyers. They would transform all the suggestions into proposals for new laws. I would present those proposals in the chamber like any other legislator. But the proposals would come not out of my head, but from the people.

I presented 42 different proposals for new laws, 13 of which were approved. Thirteen laws that are now in existence in Rio are ones which were proposed by the population. ....For instance, in Rio we passed the first Brazilian law to protect witnesses of crimes. It is a very comprehensive law that includes physical protection, includes the transference of witnesses from the place where they live to another place where they are more secure, to be given a new identity during the period of danger.

For more information on the participatory dialogic pedagogy of work of Paulo Freire, visit the following Web-sites:

<http://www.paulofreire.org/>

<http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-freir.htm>

<http://www.vms.utexas.edu/~possible/freire.html>

<http://nlu.nl.edu/ace/Resources/Documents/FreireIssues.html>

For more information on Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed visit the following Web-sites:

<http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archive/boalintro.html>

<http://www.gn.apc.org/resurgence/issues/unwin204.htm>

<http://www.unomaha.edu/~pto/augusto.htm>

### **Participatory Community Media Approach**

Paulo Freire's dialogic pedagogy has greatly influenced the participatory community media approach, which, as noted previously has focused more on issues of public and community access to appropriate media, participation of people in message design and media production, and self-management of communication enterprises.

An excellent review of the participatory community media approach -- in the form of case-studies of 50 participatory radio, theater, video, tele-centers, and telephony projects -- is provided by Alfonso Gumucio Dagron's 2001 book, *Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change*, sponsored and published by the Rockefeller Foundation, New York.

Gumucio Dagron's (2001) book is available on-line. Visit the Communication Initiative Web-site at <http://www.comminit.com/making-waves.html>

For free hard copy request "Making Waves, Job # 3184" by emailing [webinfo@rockfound.org](mailto:webinfo@rockfound.org)

Or

write to:

Rockefeller Foundation  
Making Waves, Job #3184  
P.O. Box 545  
Mahwah, NJ 07430

A short blurb on the book is provided below

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**Making Waves - Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change**

by

Alfonso Gumucio Dagron

Gumucio Dagron reviews 50 participatory communication projects that are well-established at the community level, not just one-time projects with a lifespan limited by donor's inputs. Most projects are ones that have been appropriated, at least to some extent, by the community, including issues of financing, administration, training, self-management, and ownership.

To reinforce the key ideas presented in Gumucio Dagron's work, and to provide additional insights, the tenets of the participatory community media approach are highlighted here through four case studies involving (1) the use community radio, (2) community television in India, (3) participatory video in India, and (4) telephony and Internet technologies in Bangladesh. In addition to the above media-based community practices, traditional, cultural expressions such as theater, puppets, dance, and music have also played a special role in community participation and development processes.

To learn more about the use of theater, puppets, dance, and music in engendering community participation and development activities access Gumucio Dagron's book online at <http://www.comminit.com/making-waves.html>

## **Community Radio<sup>2</sup>**

Radio has clearly been the most widely used media tool for participatory communication. Thousands of community radio stations have mushroomed all over the world in the past five decades, including many that operate without a legal license. Some well known community radio efforts include Radio Mineras in Bolivia, Radio Enriquillo in Dominican Republic, Tambuli Community Radio in the Philippines, Radio Sagarmatha in Nepal, and others (Gumucio Dagron, 2001; Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 1998).

Perhaps the most exemplary community radio project, embodying total ownership and control of a radio station by its constituency, is the network of miners' radio stations in Bolivia (electronic communication, Gumucio Dagron, February 19, 2001). Established in 1949 (and now virtually disappeared), this radio network of 26 independent stations (at its peak in the 1970s) was conceived, established, managed, technically run, financed, and maintained by the miner's community. Further, Radio Mineras exemplified the paradigm of a communication initiative that was part of a larger political and social change project.

Kothmale Radio, another group of community radio stations in Sri Lanka, has converged the technologies of radio and the Internet (Gumucio Dagron, 2001). Radio listeners are encouraged to ask questions, answers are searched on the Web, and the results and appropriate data (for instance, the weather report for fisherman) are broadcast to the listeners in the local language.

Community radio offers several comparative advantages over other media (Gumucio Dagron, 2001). It is cost-efficient in terms of investment, provides content in the local language, can reach an illiterate population, and be respectful and relevant to local practices, traditions and culture. Once the initial investment in equipment is committed, sustainability is feasible, though dependent on the level of community participation. Radio also has a vast reach, is portable, and the convergence between radio and the Internet provides new networking and knowledge-centered opportunities.

To learn more about these community radio projects, access Gumucio Dagron's book online at <a href="http://www.comminit.com/making-waves.html">http://www.comminit.com/making-waves.html</a>
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### **Community Television: The Kheda Communication Project<sup>3</sup>**

A pioneering participatory experiment in using television for educational purposes in India was the Kheda Communication Project (KCP). KCP was a decentralized experiment in community-based television. While experiences of community-based radio abound (Gumucio Dagron, 2001), such experiences have been rare in television.

The site chosen for the experiment was Kheda District, an area near the city of Ahmedabad. What made KCP especially effective as a participatory project (Contractor, Singhal, & Rogers, 1988)?

1. The hardware consisted of one low-power transmitter located in Pij Village, about 50 kilometers south of Ahmedabad, which was connected to a local studio, the local Doordarshan station, and to a satellite earth station in Ahmedabad. Thus KCP could broadcast either local television programs or national satellite television programs. Some 650 community television sets were provided to 400 villages and installed in public places (frequently schools) where village audiences gathered in the evening to view the broadcasts. Technicians periodically toured these villages to service and repair the television sets.

2. Kheda District comprises some 1,000 villages with over 3 million inhabitants. In recent decades, it has become a major center for milk production in India, as part of the so-called “White Revolution”. The KCP collaborated with extension agencies working in dairying, agriculture, and health services, and with local banks, cooperatives and employment exchanges. Thus, the development infrastructure in Kheda District was tapped to facilitate the use of information transmitted by the television broadcasts.

3. KCP was independent of commercial interests, as it relied mainly on government funds for financial support. Managed by India’s Space Application Center, it enjoyed a great deal of political autonomy from the national government, and the support of the state government.

4. KCP relied heavily on audience research by conducting a needs assessment of village audiences and by carrying out formative and summative evaluations of Kheda television programs.

5. KCP promoted rural development and social change at the local level.

Audience participation was aggressively encouraged at all levels. Villagers were involved as actors, writers, and visualizers in the production of television programs dealing with such local problems as exploitation, caste discrimination, minimum wages, alcoholism, cooperatives, and local and national elections. Television serials, puppet shows, folk drama, and other popular local formats were used to address issues such as family planning, gender equality, and village sanitation. "Chatur Mota" (Wise Elder) and "Nari Tu Narayani" (Women You Are Powerful), for instance, were two popular entertainment-education serials produced by KCP with the active participation of its audience members (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). A campaign approach was followed, synchronizing television programs with local efforts by development agencies.

The Kheda Project represented a model of community-level decentralized television broadcasting in India. It received the prestigious UNESCO Prize in 1984 for rural communication effectiveness. However, the Indian government failed did not replicate the KCP community-based television model in other parts of India. Instead, in 1985, when a high-powered transmitter was commissioned in Ahmedabad with a range that covered Kheda District, the government ordered that the Kheda transmitter be transferred to Chennai in order to facilitate a second entertainment channel for its urban residents. Why spend money on running a rural community-based communication project when advertising incomes could easily be earned from metro audiences?

Nevertheless, the Kheda Communication Project stands out as one of the finest examples of community television in India, and beyond.

#### **Participatory Video SEWA<sup>4</sup>**

The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India is a remarkable story of women's organizing in India. A union of more than 100,000 members, SEWA organizes the poorest and the most vulnerable segments of Indian society – women, who are self-employed or work in the informal sector (Rose, 1992).

SEWA has a full-time participatory video unit, established in the early 1980s with the help of Martha Stuart's Village Video Network (VVN). Participatory videos, created by Video SEWA, give voice to muted women's issues, bringing them to the attention of

policy-makers and the public. Additionally, SEWA's videos reach tens of thousands of its members for multiple purposes of teaching, organizing, and inspiring.

What can participatory video do for poor women? Lila Datania of video SEWA narrates in her own words:

“We go out to the villages and markets and city slum areas where we live to make videos about women. I used to be a vegetable vendor, but I have left that work to my family now, and I work on video full-time. I do recording, editing, and replays. I am also the sound person when we shoot.

In the beginning, when Marthabehn (Martha Stuart) came to teach us, I thought: ‘How can I learn all this’. I have never been to school. I had never seen television then. But something in me said, ‘Maybe it will take a little more time, but I should learn it anyway’.

I think this video work is important because all the poor women who are working are so exploited. We interview these women who tell us how much they are working and for how little pay. Then we show these to women from all the trades, telling them, ‘See, we should all be together’. We also make videos about our protest marches, like when the vegetable vendors of Manekchowk marched to the Municipal Corporation to demand fair treatment, vending licenses, and space. This helps other women visualize the work SEWA does. It helps them understand that others have already done it; that these are not just ideas. It helps them understand that they are exploited workers, because other women like them are talking about their problems.

Once we showed the chikan (embroidery) workers in Lucknow the video of the Ahmedabad bidi (a hand-rolled cigarette) workers’ street march. They got so excited that they started planning the route for their own procession....

We women are living in hell. We do not know any other way of living in these slums. No one is bothered about us. We can make complaints for years about these conditions, but no one hears. When we make videos about these problems, though, things happen. For years we told the municipal authorities about the filth of our open trenches, but no one came to see. They do not like to walk in stinky places. Finally, they saw how bad it is when we made a video and showed it to them. Then they got worried because we had recorded it on film and said all these things about them ignoring the problem. They



are afraid the film will be seen elsewhere and they will be shown lacking, so they took action to fix the problem.

We also use the video for court cases, to show the condition of the women who have brought the case, like the Manekchowk vegetable vendors. We made the film from the vendor's point-of-view, describing our problems of police harassment. For the first time, the Police Commissioner understood the problem from our point of view".

Akin to Video SEWA, many innovative participatory video experiences have developed all over the world: New Dawn in Namibia, Television Serrana in Cuba, TV for Development in Uganda, CESPAC in Peru, the Capricorn Video Unit in Zimbabwe, Video & Community Dreams in Egypt, and Nutzij in Guatemala, and others (Gumucio Dagron, 2001).

To learn more about these participatory video projects, access Gumucio Dagron's book on-line at <http://www.comminit.com/making-waves.html>

### **Mobile Telephone Ladies in Bangladesh<sup>5</sup>**

Rural residents in countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America rarely have access to telephony services. Telephone service is difficult to provide in remote areas where there is no dedicated electrical power, and where the cost of installing and maintaining such services is cumbersome. The Grameen (rural) Bank in Bangladesh provides one answer to this problem.

Founded in 1983 by Professor Muhammad Yunus, the Grameen Bank is a system of lending small amounts of money to poor women so that they can earn a living through self-employment. No collateral is needed, as the poor do not have any. Instead, the women borrowers are organized in a group of five friends. Each group member must repay their loan on time, while ensuring that other group members do the same, or else their opportunity for a future loan is jeopardized. This delicate dynamic between "peer-pressure" and "peer-support" among Grameen borrowers is at the heart of its widespread success (Singhal & Rogers, 2001). The idea of micro-lending, based on the Grameen Bank experience, has spread throughout the world, and has everywhere proven effective in gaining a high rate of repayment of the loans. In short, interpersonal networks are effective collateral for poor women.

In 1996, in partnership with Telenor, the Norwegian telecommunications company, the Grameen Bank established GrameenPhone, a nationwide cellular network throughout Bangladesh. By mid-2001, GrameenPhone had over 300,000 subscribers, mostly in urban areas, and was turning a profit. Riding on GrameenPhone's nationwide cellular network is also one of the world's most innovative experiments in rural mobile telephony services, premised on the principle of "equal access". By mid-2001 (when the present author visited Bangladesh), some 5,000 Grameen bank borrowers in 5,000 of Bangladesh's 68,000 villages had become the mobile "telephone ladies" for their village. She operates a mobile pay phone business, with the cheapest cellular rate in the world: 9 cents per minute during peak hours and 6.7 cents in the off-peak (Yunus, 1999). Her "mobile" presence means that all village residents can receive and make telephone calls, obviating the need to install expensive large-scale telephone exchanges and digital switching systems. In 2000, a Grameen village-based mobile telephone earned three times more revenue than an urban cellular phone (for more information visit: <http://www.telecommons.com/villagephone>, 2000). By 2003, GrameenPhone anticipates one million Grameen telephone subscribers in Bangladesh, and 50,000 mobile "telephone ladies" owned and operated by Grameen Bank members, and a net annual profit in excess of \$25 million dollars.

Another Grameen telecommunications technology venture is the Village Internet Program (VIP), a pilot project in which borrowers obtain loans to purchase and operate "cyber kiosks" for profit. The purpose behind the "cyber kiosks" is for Grameen borrowers to have increased access to agricultural and market information for business use, to provide distance and virtual education through remote classroom facilities, and to provide computer-based employment (such as data-entry, transcription services, etc.) in rural areas, as an alternative to massive migration to the cities (Yunus, 1998).

The VIP is supported by established infrastructures and technologies within the Grameen family of companies. For instance, Grameen Shakti ("Energy") is now experimenting with photovoltaic solar systems to provide electricity to villages that lie beyond the national grid of central station electricity. Eventually, the plan is to have cyber kiosks that run on solar power and connect to the Internet by wireless, microwave, and laser connections. Each cyber kiosk will be run as an independently-owned and

operated franchise of Grameen Communications, in which the borrower will earn money by selling Internet, telephony, and other computer-related services (Yunus, 1998).

In response to the criticism that the poor do not need the luxury of a telephone or of Internet services, Yunus pointed to contributions made by the “telephone ladies” of GrameenPhone in spurring village-level businesses, and in increasing their efficiency. Further, the “telephone ladies” of Bangladesh generate enough revenues to repay their loans, earning almost three to four times the per capita income in Bangladesh (Yunus, 1998).

The key lesson of the Grameen Bank approach to the use of mobile telephony and Internet services is that poor people should not just be the passive consumers of communication technology, but rather its owners. As one of the village telephone ladies remarked to the present author: “The mobile telephone is like a cow. It helps me make money every day. And I don’t even need to feed it, clean it, and milk it. I just need to keep the batteries charged”.

<p><i>A true development professional does not express anything. (S)he helps people to express themselves</i> <i>Andreas Fuglesang (1973).</i></p>
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### Chapter 3

## Facilitating Community Participation

What is a community? A community is a collection of people linked together by communication within a physical environment (White, 1999, p. 29). Community participation and community building necessarily involves the creation of effective communication linkages. So communication creates, binds, and nurtures a community. It is also communication (or lack of it) that fractures community.

### Facilitation as an Art<sup>6</sup>

*There is no one profile of a good facilitator.  
Orlando Fals Borda (cited in Gomez, 1999, p. 157)*

Unfortunately, for the most part, facilitation of participation has been looked upon as something people can be told to do, not as a skill to be learned, or an art to be practiced, and still less as part of a way of being in the world (Chambers, 1999).

*Everybody talks about participation, but few can effectively facilitate.  
White (1999, p. 12)*

There are four key aspects of good facilitation (Chambers, 1999, pp. 9-10):

#### #1. Who Participates?

The first poses the question: who participates? Words such as “community” and “community level” can obscure deep divisions of gender, age, wealth, social, and religious groupings. Good facilitators are sensitive to these differences.

Good facilitators know that a dolphin is as unique as a cactus. But they also know that a dolphin cannot survive in a desert, and each entity needs special nurturing. So, at one level, they understand and appreciate the diversity of people’s gifts, talents, skills, and perhaps even their shortcomings.

At another level, good facilitators are deeply committed to empowering those who are weaker, more vulnerable, marginalized, oppressed, or otherwise disadvantaged.

*....and the last shall be first.  
The Bible, St. Matthew, Ch. 19, verse 30.*

## **#2. Unlearning**

Second, to be a good facilitator entails unlearning (Chambers, 1999). Good facilitators should recognize and counter the disabilities of their professional training, and the attitudes of superiority that come with it. Old attitudes and behaviors that they are ones who “know”, and the poor people “do not know”, need to be shed, and new ones learned. This attitudinal-behavioral shift is not easy; it is radical and very threatening. But, if practiced, it can also be immensely rewarding, satisfying, and transformational.

### **Respect Indigenous Knowledge**

Good facilitators should recognize, respect, and tap into rural people’s indigenous knowledge systems. These include knowledge, wisdom, and home-grown expertise (often spanning centuries) in linguistics, medicine, clinical psychology, botany, zoology, ethology, ecology, climate, agriculture, animal husbandry, and craft skills.

Green revolution enthusiasts in Bali, who introduced modern fertilizer, water management, and cropping practices to Balinese rice farmers in the 1970s, failed to appreciate integrated centuries-old Balinese system of water temples that governed indigenous agricultural practices, wreaking havoc on its complex ecosystem. Only, later studies by anthropologists and agriculture experts showed how Balinese indigenous water management practices achieved an ideal balance in rice yields, pest control, and water conservation (Lansing, 1987).

## **#3. Continuous Learning.**

Third, good facilitation is itself a continuous learning and development for the facilitator (Chambers, 1999). Facilitators learn and change through the process of facilitation. They learn by handing things over to local participants; by “letting go”; by trying things out; by making mistakes; and by improving through experience. This “letting go” is more than “the triumph of the broken egg when the chick breaks out. A

good facilitator, like the egg, gives up control, but unlike the egg, learns and grows through the experience” (Chambers, 1999, p.9).

#### **Facilitator or Expert?**

A facilitator needs to stop being an expert. An expert may see the time spent by a farmer, under a Banyan tree, in maintaining relations with other community members, as a gross waste of productive of hours. The expert may not realize that the production system in the village is communal, and in that particular rural agrarian context, sitting and talking constitutes neither a waste of time nor a sign of laziness. Sitting and talking with others cultivates and maintains social relationships. Quite possibly for the farmer, ensuring good social relations is as important as producing food.

#### **#4. Personal Commitment**

The fourth aspect of facilitation, underpins the first three (Chambers, 1999). Good facilitation flows from personal commitment. Whether the facilitator works with street children in a slum, or women in a patriarchal society, the key to good facilitation lies in the facilitator’s personal commitment to honor the realities of others.

Workers of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, honor the realities of the poor people through a strong sense of personal commitment in alleviating poverty. As part of their training, they spend a year in the field understanding poverty from “a worm’s eye” view i.e. from experiential proximity. As part of the training, many workers go hungry, walk many miles a day, and live in modest shared dwellings to personally experience, albeit in a limited way, what it means to be poor. This strengthens their resolve and personal commitment to make a difference.

#### **The Facilitation Paradigm: A Conceptual Guide to Action**

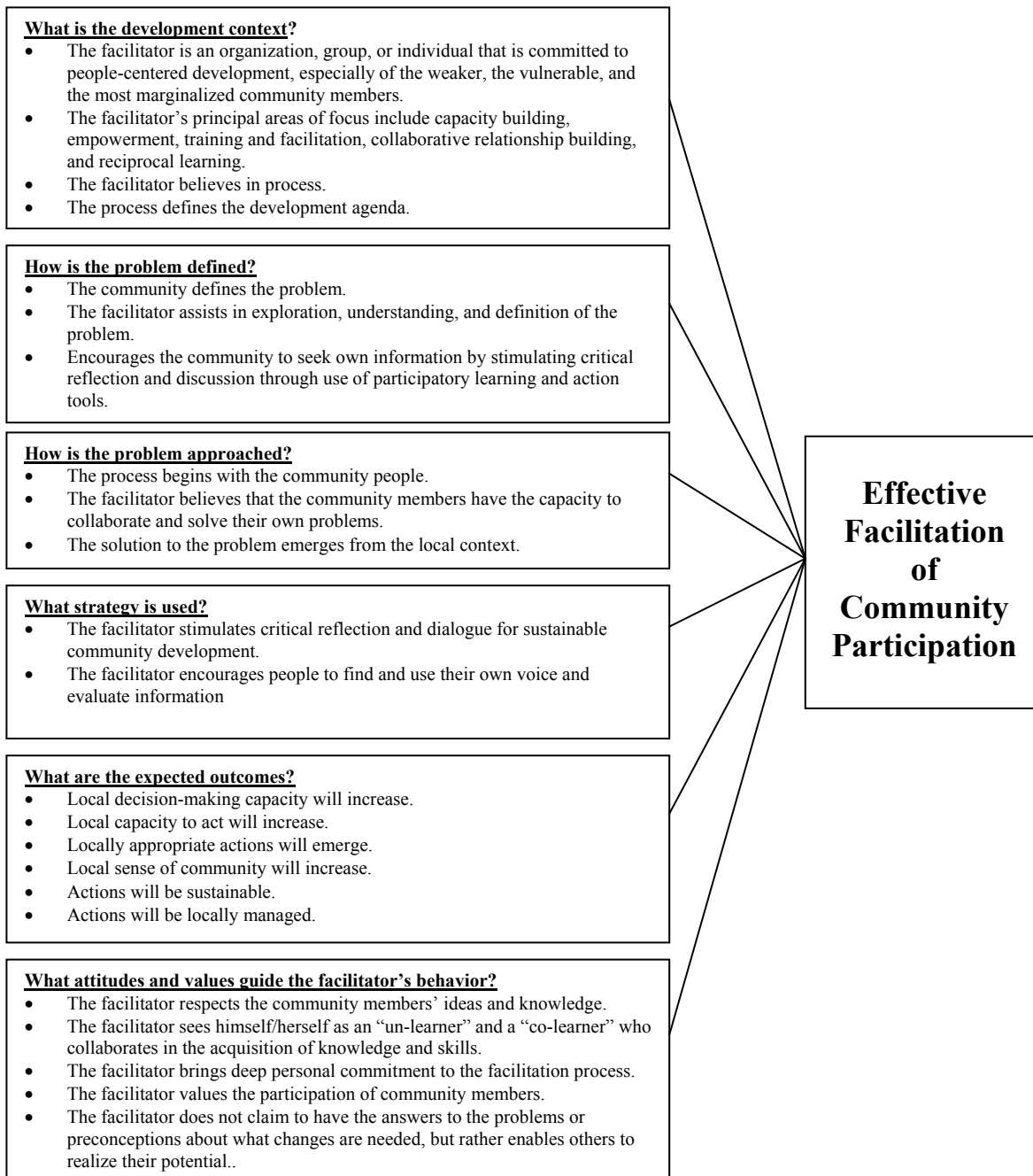
Facilitation of community participation is thus a skill to be learned, an art to be practiced, and perhaps a way of “thinking” “being” and “acting” in the world. Figure 1 attempts to presents a paradigm of factors that address issues of “thinking” being” and “acting” in the context of facilitating community participation.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework, drawing upon various works in the area of community facilitation and development<sup>7</sup>, to guide action. It places the facilitator in a matrix of six interrelated factors that influence effective community facilitation (1) the “situatedness” of the facilitator in the development context, (2) how the facilitator defines the problem in association with community members, (3) how the facilitator approaches the problem in association with community members, (4) what strategies are used in the facilitation process, (5) what are the expected outcomes of facilitation, and (6) what attitudes, values, and behaviors, including a sense personal commitment, does the facilitator bring to community participation and development processes.

**Figure 1**

**A Paradigm of Factors that Determine the Effective Facilitation of Community Participation.**

**Source:** Adapted from Kiite and Nielsen (1999).





## Nuggets on Facilitation<sup>8</sup>

Here are some “nuggets” about the facilitation process from the following participatory stalwarts: Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire; U.S. community organizer, Saul Alinsky; participation scholar and practitioner, Robert Chambers; development specialist, Andreas Fuglesang; and noted corporate leader and facilitator (and ex-CEO of Herman Miller furniture company), Max DePree.

Freirean challenge to readers: Paulo Freire would recommend that facilitators go beyond armchair reflection on these “propositions”; rather they engage in reflective participation, leading to action.

The following facilitator roles emerge from these “nuggets”:

### #1. Facilitator as “communicator”

*The facilitator’s tool is dialogue. Dialogue has to be loving, humble, and trusting.*

*Paulo Freire (1970).*

*If the field worker feels that (s)he is not understood by others, his/her problem is....to understand them. What language are people speaking and what language is he/she speaking?*

*Andreas Fuglesang (1973).*

### #2. Facilitator as “truster”

*Trusting the oppressed and their latent creative power is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. Whoever lacks this trust will fail to initiate (or will abandon) dialogue, reflection, and communication, and will fall into slogans, communiques, monologues, and instructions.*

*Paulo Freire (1970)*

### #3. Facilitator as a “server”

*A facilitator is a servant of the people. He removes the obstacles that prevent people from realizing their full potential.*

*Max DePree (1989)*

*Facilitators don’t inflict pain; they bear pain.*

*Max DePree (1989)*

*Facilitator’s are responsible for effectiveness. Peter Drucker says that “Efficiency is doing the thing right, but effectiveness is doing the right thing”. Facilitators can delegate efficiency, but they must personally deal with effectiveness.*

*Max DePree (1989).*

*Do not become a prisoner of a “circle of certainty”. A facilitator should keep future options open. This demands real discipline because there is always a great drive to pin everything down if possible.*

*Saul Alinsky (1971).*

#4. Facilitator as “enabler”

*To facilitate means to enable others to express themselves. To listen. And to enable others to realize their potential.*

*Robert Chambers (1999).*

*A facilitator understands the diversity of people’s gifts, talents, and skills. The art of facilitation lies in polishing, liberating, and enabling these gifts.*

*Max DePree (1989)*

#5. Facilitator as “relationship builder”

*Facilitators need to be more tribal than scientific, more adept at weaving relationships than prescribing remedies. Effective facilitation springs largely from healthy relationships among others. Facilitators need to foster environments and group processes within which people can develop high-quality relationships with each other, and with the group with which they work. When facilitator’s talk about quality and effectiveness, it should not just be about purpose; but about the quality of the relationships, the quality of the communications, and the quality of the promises made to each other.*

*Max DePree (1989).*

*Facilitators covet inclusiveness and intimacy. Intimacy rises from, and gives rise to, strong relationships. And intimacy, inclusiveness, and interdependency require lavish communications.*

*Max DePree (1989).*

#6. Facilitator as “learner”

*Facilitators who come from “another world” to the world of the people do so not as invaders. They do not come to teach or transmit or to give anything; but rather to learn with the people, about the people’s world.*

*Paulo Freire (1970).*

#7. Facilitator as “adapter”

*The facilitator may need to work at the farmer’s pace. It may mean a loss of clarity, a loss of control, and a loss of perceived professionalism.*

*Robert Chambers (1983).*

## **Comradeship with the Oppressed**

One role that facilitators should not take on is that of saviors. That is false generosity, a ploy to save themselves (Freire, 1970). Only through authentic comradeship with the oppressed can the facilitators understand their way of living, behaving, and the structures of domination that oppress them. Gandhi's work in India is illustrative.

When Gandhi returned to India from S.Africa in 1915, at age 46, to participate in India's freedom struggle against the British colonialists, he realized that India's political leaders, mostly city-based elite lawyers and businessman, were far removed from the country's teeming millions – the rural poor. In his first address to the leaders of the Indian National Congress, he chided them for making passionate, lofty speeches to each other, which made little difference to the colonial administration, and no difference to the 85 percent of Indians, who lived in its villages. India to him was not just a couple of hundred lawyers, living in Bombay and Delhi, who were trained in England and donned English suits, but the 350 million people, who toiled each day in its fields, under the hot sun, worrying about where the next meal will come from.

To mobilize the masses, and to plant the seeds for a participatory movement of unprecedented proportions, Gandhi adopted and encouraged other Indians to live, feel, and experience life as a poor. He practiced "voluntary simplicity", a life of no possessions, of spinning one's own cloth, of growing one's own food, of fasting, of traveling by third-class rail coach, of working shoulder-to-shoulder with the "untouchables" to clean latrines, and so on. Millions followed him.

The biggest participatory movements in India's freedom struggle, which mobilized tens of millions of people, had its roots in Gandhi's comradeship with the oppressed. For instance, in 1930, Gandhi mobilized the nation around "salt", the key kitchen ingredient of poor, Indian masses, which was taxed by the British. His famous 1930 salt march of 150 kilometers, from his Ashram in Ahmedabad to the Indian ocean (where he made salt on the beach), mobilized millions of Indians, showed the British the "power" (in numbers) of the poor Indian masses, and created a national "participatory" spirit in the freedom struggle, which eventually toppled the British government.

*A facilitator should abandon oneself to the strengths of others.*  
*Max DePree (1989)*

## Chapter 4

### Participatory Approaches and Tools<sup>9</sup>

On the ground, participatory facilitation in a community occurs through a series of processes that fall under what is commonly called the “participatory learning and action” approach. Participatory learning and action (PLA) is a community development approach whereby facilitators work with communities to help them analyze their needs, identify solutions to fill those needs, and develop and implement a plan of action.

Facilitators use a variety participatory approaches, tools, and methods to gather information about the community and its problems, and work closely with community members to help them prioritize the problems, and their solutions. In doing so, the facilitators work not as “experts”, but as facilitating experts.

***Facilitators watch out. Expertise is useful. But there is a problem with expertise. Those who are invaded, rarely go beyond the models that the invaders prescribe for them.***

***Saul Alinsky (1970), paraphrased.***

The present chapter is organized into two parts. First, some 10 key conceptual approaches (or methods) to participatory facilitation, drawing heavily from the work of Paulo Freire, are described. Second, 10 key participatory tools, often used in any PLA community-based intervention, are presented. The reader may notice that the participatory tools (discussed in the second part) represent creative ways of tapping the conceptual wisdom codified in participatory approaches (discussed in the first part).

#### Conceptual Approaches to Participatory Facilitation

The process of participatory facilitation can be conceptually approached in several ways. Here we describe ten conceptually-driven methods and approaches to participatory facilitation, drawing heavily from the work of noted Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire<sup>10</sup> (whose work was earlier discussed in Chapter 2): (1) codification, (2) conscientization, (3) consensual governance, (4) cultural circle, (5) decodification, (6) dialectical method, (7) dialogical method, (8) generating themes, (9) mystification, and (10)

problematization. Notice that these conceptual approaches to facilitation are not discrete; in fact, to nurture facilitative participation, they must necessarily interact.

#1. **Codification** is a facilitation process in which the participants represent their day-to-day situations in a symbolic manner. Codes can be in the form of a photograph, a drawing, a map, or even a word. As a representation, the photograph or word is an abstraction which permits dialogue between facilitators and participants, leading to an analysis of the concrete reality represented by the code. Codifications mediate between reality and its theoretical context, as well as between facilitators and participants who together seek to unveil the meanings of their existence.

#2. **Conscientization** is an ongoing process by which both facilitators and participants move toward critical consciousness. It differs from "consciousness raising" in that the latter frequently involves "banking" education, that is, the transmission of pre-selected knowledge. Conscientization means breaking through prevailing mythologies to reach a new level of awareness, especially the awareness of oppression: That is, being an "object" in a world where only "subjects" have power. The process of conscientization -- based on dialogue, reflection, and action -- involves identifying oppressive social structures, investigating contradictions in human experience, and becoming a "subject" with other oppressed subjects.

#3. **Consensual governance** involves decision-making by consensus. It requires the discussion of issues until all participants are more or less in agreement. This approach is in contrast to decision-making by voting in which rule by the majority is imposed on those who dissent. Decision-making by consensus is time consuming and difficult. At times, consensus represents the willingness of a minority "not to oppose" a decision, but the ultimate benefit of this model is that no one is excluded by a decision. Town hall meetings, where all people feel free to participate and express themselves, and other such forums, represent one way of initiating such consensual governance.

#4. **Cultural circle** is an ongoing discussion group in which facilitators and participants use codifications to engage in dialogue about the reasons for their existential situation. The peer group provides the theoretical context for reflection and for transforming interpretations of reality from mere opinion to a more critical knowledge.

#5. **Decodification** is a process by which participants dissolve the codified representation (a photograph, a map, or a word) into its constituent elements. By decodifying, learners begin to perceive relationships between elements of the codification and other experiences in their day-to-day life, and among the elements themselves. Thus, decodification is analysis which takes place through dialogue, revealing the previously unperceived meanings of the reality represented by that codification. Decodification is principally undertaken in cultural circles.

#6. **Dialectical method** refers to the process that creates a dynamic tension within any given system. It is premised on the belief that change occurs on the basis of that tension and resulting conflict. Based on the writings of Hegel, every concept implies its negation; that is, in conceiving anything (thesis), we must be able to imagine its opposite (antithesis). Change occurs as this tension leads to a new conception of reality (synthesis).

#7. **Dialogical method** is an approach to facilitative learning that is characterized by co-operation and acceptance of interchangeability and mutuality in the roles of teacher and learner, demanding an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and trust. In this method, all teach and all learn.

#8. **Generating themes** (or words) is the process of codifying complex experiences which are charged with political significance and are likely to generate considerable discussion and analysis. They are derived from a study of the specific history and circumstances of the learners. Generative themes can be codified into generative words, which can be used to identify new realities and possibilities.

#9. **Demystification** is the opposite of mystification, the process by which the alienating and oppressive features of culture are disguised and hidden. False, superficial, and naive interpretations of culture prevent the emergence of critical consciousness. For instance, unemployment is often "mystified" as personal failure rather than corporate greed or governmental economic policies, thus making it difficult for the unemployed to critically understand their situation. The task of the facilitator is to demystify, that is expose the oppressive features of a culture.

#10. **Problemization** is the antithesis of "problem-solving." In problem-solving, an expert takes distance from reality and reduces it to dimensions which are

amenable to treatment as though they were mere difficulties to be solved. To "problematize" is to engage a group in the task of codifying reality into symbols which can generate critical consciousness and empower them to alter their relations with nature and oppressive social forces. Problem-posing is a logically prior task which allows all previous conceptualizations of a problem to be treated as questionable. Problematization recognizes that "solutions" are often difficult because the wrong problems are being addressed.

### **Putting Participatory Approaches to Practice: Maria's Dilemma**

How can the above-mentioned conceptual approaches to participatory facilitation be put in practice? The case of Maria's real-life dilemma in a Central American country may be illustrative.

Brightly colored political posters, even more than mismatched chairs, worn carpeting, and unwashed windows, set this classroom apart from other schools. Eight Hispanic adults--three women and five men--gathered with their teacher to resume their lessons in literacy. Maria had arrived late, visibly distraught, explaining that her husband had threatened her. He didn't want her going out to classes at night and argued that her three children were being neglected. Maria, leaving the argument unresolved, had come to resume her studies. Her teacher, instead of giving advice or encouragement, asked the group to discuss **(dialogical method)** and help resolve Maria's dilemma.

The members discussed and reflected on the Maria's experience and, in the process, identified several issues **(problematization)**: A husband's putative "rights" over his wife, acceptance of domestic violence against women as "normal", a presumption that women are "asking for trouble" if they go outside at night, and that Maria had the major responsibility for her children **(codification and decodification)**.

The discussion was energetic, with strong sentiments expressed by some who appealed frequently to "the way things are," and a growing solidarity among the women **(dialectical tension)**. While the group continued discussing these issues, the teacher recorded words **(generating themes)** on an improvised blackboard: "woman," "violence," "mother," and "wife" -- words to which the class would return, once their meaning had been expanded and enriched through the groups' discussion



**(demystification in a cultural circle).** Finally, it was Maria who interrupted and said, "You've told me the way things are; I'll tell you how they should be, and together let's talk about how to make them so." She effectively shifted the focus of the group from the patronizing solicitude of some who accepted the present reality to a strategy for social transformation (**conscientization**).

Source: Heaney (1999).

### **Participatory Tools**

Facilitators of community participation have effectively operationalized the conceptual approaches discussed above (for instance, the ideas of codification, generating themes, dialogical method, and others) into practical tools for participatory learning and action (PLA). Here we examine ten highly influential and innovative participatory tools that may be employed in any PLA community-based intervention: (1) mapping, (2) transect walks and observation, (3) time lines, (4) seasonal calendars, (5) daily schedules, (6) body mapping, (7) pie charts, (8) card sorting, (9) story with a gap, and (10) appreciative inquiry<sup>11</sup>. While these tools were developed in varied participatory contexts by different individuals and organizations, they are relevant, useful, and practical in almost all participative contexts (Cornwall 1992; de Negri et al., 1998; Narayan & Srinivasan, 1994; Narayan, 1996; Pretty et al., 1993; and Srinivasan, 1993).

There is not set recipe for when to use these tools, although some tools are more effective as introductory tools at the beginning of the PLA process, while others should be used later to explore specific topics, problems, and solutions (de Negri et. al., 1998).

#### **Tool #1: Mapping**

Mapping is a spatial data gathering tool which provides a visual representation of the community (either the whole community or part of it), including its (Narayan & Srinivasan, 1994; de Negri et al., 1998):

- Geographical features
- Utility infrastructure (roads, telephones, power supply, etc.)
- Service infrastructure (schools, clinics, stores, shops, etc.)
- Land use patterns
- Number and types of houses

- Livestock distribution

As mapping can encourage many community members to participate, and also build their interest in the PLA process, it might well be one of the first facilitation activities. Mapping also generates a lot of information that can be used to plan the rest of the PLA process. For instance, mapping can be used to identify households and topics for subsequent in-depth interviews.

Maps can easily be drawn on the ground using sticks, stones, leaves, and seeds as markers to represent various physical entities, and later be transferred to paper. Maps typically generate a high level discussion among community members, as they afford an opportunity for everyone to participate. Seeing one's community being represented in visual form is often highly exciting for community members. Mapping, however, does have some constraints. Some community members, who may want the boundaries of their property to be known, may resist mapping. Also, mapping can be difficult to implement with large groups, and maps are of little use if everything is not clearly labeled on the paper copy.

Maps can also be used to explore spatial data on specific topics, for example:

- Location of opinion leaders, teachers, mid-wives
- Households suffering from different diseases
- Caste, tribe, or ethnicity of households
- Users of family planning
- Location of violence against women

Maps can also be used to show changes over time, that is how things have changed from the past to the present, or how the community members would like things to look in the future.

## **Tool #2: Transect Walks**

Transect walks are walks which PLA team members take around the community in order to meet people, observe surroundings, and identify problems, opportunities, and resources (de Negri et al., 1998). Like mapping, transect walks are spatial data-gathering tools. Ideally, transect walks should be conducted early in the PLA process, after the

mapping exercise. Transect walks are planned by drawing a “transect line” through a map of the community. The line goes through or “transects” all zones of the community in order to provide a representative view. Transect walks can be used to observe:

- Housing conditions
- Sanitary conditions
- Presence and condition of health facilities
- Informal street commerce and prostitution
- Nature of interactions between men and women
- Forms of children’s labor
- Religious organizations in the community

Before conducting a transect walk, PLA facilitators should develop a flexible **observation guide** to structure the issues of visual salience. Observation guides can really sharpen people’s observation skills. In a multi-disciplinary PLA team, each member should develop his or her own observation guide, according to their interests and expertise.

### **Tool #3: Time Lines**

Time lines are time-related data-gathering tools that link dates with historical events (Narayan & Srinivasan, 1994; de Negri et al., 1998). A time line is usually divided into many sections, with the date (or any other culturally appropriate measure of time) written on one-side of the line, and the event written on the other side. While time lines can cover any time period, they are mostly used to examine a sequence of events over many years. In addition to representing significant events, time lines also can identify changes over time.

Time lines represent good icebreakers in the PLA process, because people love to talk about salient events in their community. PLA facilitators should conduct time line exercises along with mapping and transect walks. Time lines are also a good way to involve elders, as they often know the most about the community’s history.

Time lines can easily be drawn on the ground with sticks and other objects. Another variation, especially in communities with high literacy rates, is to have each person involved to write different events on paper, and then to have the group arrange the

papers in chronological order. As noted previously, absolute dates are not necessary. Time lines can be used to put events in chronological order, and the distance between events can illustrate time.

Time lines can be used to describe (1) personal histories, (2) community histories, or (3) project histories. Some examples of the use of time lines for community's history may include:

- Major disease outbreaks
- Periods of community crises
- Introduction of new agriculture, health, and educational practices
- Cultural and social changes

#### **Tool #4: Seasonal Calendars**

A seasonal calendar is a time-related data-gathering tool that can diagram key activities, problems, and opportunities during the course of a recurring time cycle (de Negri et al., 1998). A seasonal calendar helps identify periods of greatest difficulty and vulnerability, or other recurring phenomenon that have an impact on people's lives.

Seasonal calendars can be conducted early in the PLA process in order to obtain general information about a community (e.g. harvest patterns, income flows, etc.). or later in the PLA process to explore relationships between two or more events (e.g. the relationship between rainy season and disease outbreaks).

Seasonal calendars are often drawn with the months of one year (or another time period chosen by the community) laid out in a horizontal row. A seasonal calendar should reflect the indigenous concept of time, and does not have to be in monthly intervals, starting with the month of January. For instance, communities may decide to use rainy, dry, and winter seasons instead of months. After the time intervals are laid out horizontally, vertically stacked rows are then created in each time interval, with each row representing a different seasonal factor (e.g. income, disease, workload, etc.).

Like maps, seasonal calendars can be drawn on the ground, and objects such as seed, rocks, or leaves can be used to indicate the intensity of different factors for each time period. Sticks can be broken into different lengths and used to indicate relative magnitudes. When seeking quantitative information during the construction of seasonal

calendars, PLA facilitators should also probe for qualitative information. For example, when asking community members to name the busiest months of the year, one may also ask what activities are conducted during those months, by whom, and why?

Following are some examples of different types of events that can be plotted on seasonal calendars:

- Patterns of prevalence of diarrhea, malaria, and other diseases
- Price variations for food and other items
- Income and expenditure patterns
- Social and cultural events
- Crop sequences, pests and disease
- Migration patterns
- Climate (rainfall, temperatures, etc.)
- Workload of men, women, and children

Examples of relationships which can be explored with seasonal calendars include:

- Weather and disease outbreaks.
- Home workload and school drop outs
- Income and health center utilization

### **Tool #5: Daily Schedules**

Daily schedules, like time lines and seasonal calendars, are also time-related data-gathering tools that examine daily work patterns and other activities (de Negri et al., 1998). Researchers can analyze the daily activities of a person, or a group, and compare with those of others. Daily schedules are used for:

- Documenting daily activities
- Examining the timing of daily activities
- Noting periods when two or more daily activities are being carried out concurrently.
- Discussing the introduction of new activities and their time implications
- Comparing differences between schedules

- Exploring a convenient time for scheduling meetings, training sessions, field visits, and other activities
- Generating discussion about gender issues (e.g. comparing the schedules of women with men, of girls with boys, and how these differences impact their health and education status).

Facilitators may conduct daily schedules early in the PLA process to get useful community information (such as women's versus men's workloads), or at a later time to determine most convenient times for scheduling project activities.

While there are many ways to construct daily schedules, a simple way of doing it is to use a daily time-line, divided by 24 hours or an appropriate time period (e.g. morning, afternoon, evening, night). Community members may select appropriate symbols (e.g. utensils to denote cooking time) to mark activities along the time line. Smaller objects such as seeds or beans may be placed next to symbols to indicate the amount of effort expended for each activity.

Daily schedules are used for mapping all of the activities in the typical day of men, women, and children. They are also immensely revealing and useful when done with a focus on specific issues, such as:

- Determining gender contribution to domestic chores (role of women versus men, girl versus boy)
- A typical school day (from the student or teacher's point of view)
- A typical day in a health center (e.g. created by a health center staff).

### **Tool #6: Pie Charts or Chappati Diagrams**

**Pie charts** (also called chappati diagrams in places such as Kenya and India after the flat circular Indian bread) are a tool for gathering social and health data, especially those which illustrate proportions (de Negri et al., 1998). They consist of a circle that is divided into different sized "slices", depending on the relative importance of the elements being discussed.

Pie charts can be conducted early during the PLA process because they are a short exercise that is easy and fun to do. Such simple exercises boost the confidence of community members. The preliminary information gathered through pie charts can

further be used to generate more in-depth discussions. Pie charts can also be used later in the PLA process to examine specific topics, which may have been identified as being salient through other participatory methods.

The pie chart can be drawn on the ground, and sticks can be placed in a circle to represent the “slice” demarcation lines. The advantage of using sticks is that they can be moved around during the discussion. If it is not possible to use the ground, a large round bowl can be filled with grain, beans, or seed, and participants can use small sticks to divide the slices.

Pie charts can be used to examine a community’s demographics, explore people’s weighted perceptions of issues, and identify constraints or problems. Following are some examples of how pie charts have been used in PLA processes:

- Ethnic or religious composition of communities
- Major health problems in the community
- Sources of drinking water in the community
- Reasons for girls dropping out of school
- Types of family planning methods used in community
- Causes of maternal mortality in the community
- Distribution of household expenses

#### **Tool #7: Body Maps**

Another variation of community mapping, are body maps, which are a tool to gather health data (Cornwall, 1992; de Negri et al., 1998). They can be used to describe the location of body organs and to describe bodily functions. Body maps are especially useful in participatory research to gain an understanding of how the local culture perceives health issues. Often such issues are very difficult to explore verbally because community members may be unfamiliar with anatomical vocabulary, may be embarrassed to verbally describe certain body parts, and also because words may have different cultural meanings. Visual body mapping helps to overcome these barriers as it provides a shared point of reference for researchers and community members.

Body mapping can be used to explore such health issues as:

- The male and female reproductive system
- The importance of nutrition for infants, children, pregnant women, and the sick.

- The impact of alcohol, malaria, worms, or AIDS affect the body
- The impact of positive or negative health behaviors on the body

### **Tool #8: Sorting Health Behavior Cards**

People's perceptions of health and disease can be examined through sorting health behavior cards (Narayan, 1996; de Negri et al., 1998)). This exercise can be done early in the PLA process to help identify health problems, or later after specific problems have been identified, in order to generate discussion about the causes.

The first step is to create twenty-four (or some such number) of illustrated cards – half of them with desirable health behaviors (washing hands, breast feeding) and the other half with undesirable health behaviors (garbage in the yard, flies on food, etc.). Community members are given the mixed set of cards and asked to sort them into two piles of desirable and undesirable health behaviors. When they are finished, the PLA facilitators ask the community members their reason behind the placement of each card. They can also use the cards to facilitate a discussion of which health practices (both desirable and undesirable) are prevalent in the community.

Card sorting can also be used in PLA process for a variety of non-health issues. For example:

- To examine desirable and undesirable human behaviors in the field of agriculture, sanitation, environment, education, etc.
- To sort problems according to which community groups are most affected
- To sort possible solutions according to their feasibility and cultural appropriateness
- To determine who will be responsible for different activities in the formulated community action plan (e.g. the community, the government, the sponsoring agency, etc.).

### **Tool #9: Story with a Gap**

Once the data is gathered, and problems identified, the facilitators work with community members to develop a community action plan (CAP). The story with a gap exercise is designed to make participants think through the different steps involved in



implementing a CAP (Srinivasan, 1993; de Negri et al., 1998). The trainers can either draw “before” or “after” pictures on a flip chart, hire a local artist to draw them, or make photocopies of photographs and distribute them to participating community members. Some examples of before and after scenes include:

BEFORE scene	AFTER scene
Long line of women waiting at a well	One woman getting water from a pump
A girl working in the fields	A girl at school
A malnourished pregnant woman	A healthy pregnant woman
A child defecating in the bush	A child using a latrine

This story with a gap exercise helps community members to generate culturally appropriate solutions to problems, and to move forward in developing a community action plan.

#### **Tool #10: Appreciative Inquiry<sup>12</sup>**

Most of the previously discussed tools, such as mapping, time lines, seasonal calendars, and others, while immensely useful, focus mostly on uncovering local problems, resource constraints, deficiencies and unmet basic needs in order to generate community-based solutions. Appreciative inquiry is a participatory technique that turns the problem-solving approach on its head. It focuses on a community's achievements, existing strengths, and local skills rather than its problems, and seeks to go beyond participation to foster inspiration at the community level.

Developed by Professor David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University (see Cooperrider, Sorensen, Whitney, & Yaeger, 1999; and Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000), the appreciative approach is now being applied on an experimental basis to community development projects in India and Canada (see [www.iisd.ca/ai](http://www.iisd.ca/ai)) by the Institute for Sustainable Development in Canada, and by UNICEF (electronic communication, Neil Ford, February 27, 2001).

*The appreciated world came into being with the development of man's capability for self-reflection, a faculty encompassing much more than just thinking. It holds the world—the physical, social, and spiritual aspects of man's world—as we view it not just through the understanding that our mind composes of it but through all forms of experience. It embraces our appreciation of what this world can do to and for*

*us, and what we can do to and for it... Thus, the appreciated world becomes the motor for change induced by human action.*

*Erich Jantsch (cited in [www.iisd.ca/ai](http://www.iisd.ca/ai)).*

Appreciative inquiry is a strategy for purposeful change that identifies the best of "what is" to pursue dreams and possibilities of "what could be." The appreciative approach involves collaborative inquiry, based on interviews and affirmative questioning, to collect and celebrate the good news stories of a community—those stories that enhance cultural identity, spirit and vision.

The appreciative approach involves four steps (see [www.iisd.ca/ai](http://www.iisd.ca/ai)).

1. Discovery Phase: The core task in the discovery phase is to appreciate the best of "what is" by focusing on peak moments of community excellence, that is, when people experienced the community in its most alive and effective state. Participants then seek to understand the unique conditions that made the high points possible, such as leadership, relationships, technologies, values, capacity building or external relationships.

2. Dream Phase: In the dream phase, people challenge the status quo by envisioning more valued and vital futures. The images of the future emerge from grounded examples of the positive past. The community members think great thoughts and create great possibilities for their community, then turn those thoughts into provocative propositions for themselves.

3. Design Phase: In the design phase community members create a strategy to carry out their provocative propositions. They do so by building a social architecture for their community that might, for example, re-define approaches to leadership, governance, participation or capacity building. This design incorporates the qualities of community life that they want to protect, and the relationships that they want to achieve.

4. Destiny Phase: In the final destiny phase involves the delivery and implementation of new images of the future, a process sustained by nurturing a collective sense of destiny. It is a time of continuous learning, adjustment and improvisation in the service of shared community ideals.

Appreciative inquiry is a continual cycle, and requires skilled facilitation. The destiny phase leads naturally to new discoveries of community strengths, beginning the process anew.

A video on appreciative inquiry is available from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)  
Title: *Conversations In Social Construction: Appreciative Inquiry-An Interview with David Cooperrider.*

### **Putting Participatory Tools in Practice in Uganda<sup>13</sup>**

The experience of Rakai AIDS Information Network (RAIN), a Ugandan NGO, exemplifies how several of the participatory tools (discussed above) can be put into practice to gather information about the community, to prioritize community problems and solutions, and to generate and implement a community action plan.

RAIN's goal is to reduce the spread of HIV infection in the Rakai District. Managed by health care providers, health educators, counselors and trainers from Uganda's Rakai district, RAIN's strategy is to provide integrated AIDS prevention interventions within a community-based health care framework.

Due to the high emphasis that it places on community participation, RAIN facilitated participatory learning and action (PLA) workshops in two rural areas with high HIV prevalence. The goal of the workshops was to help community members assess factors that put them at risk of HIV infection. A large group of community members representing several different villages participated.

The first PLA activity that was conducted was mapping. The participants divided themselves by village, and each group drew a map of its village using locally available materials (e.g. ash, beans, maize, and stones). The participants first drew physical landmarks, such as hills, swamps, roads, and then added social markers such as homes, church, schools, and farms. For each house, participants identified the number, age, and sex of inhabitants, and the number of deaths that had occurred during the previous year. The PLA facilitators asked the community members how many of the deaths were due to AIDS, but the villagers did not want to reveal this information due to the stigma associated with the disease.

The village maps were transferred to paper, and then presented to the group at large. By identifying the number of deaths in the past twelve months, participants realized that there had been at least one death in each home. Although the causes of death were not identified, participants knew that AIDS caused many. By seeing the number of

deaths, participants realized how widespread AIDS was in their community, and could better realize its implications for the community's survival.

Next participants identified specific locations where they might be at risk of HIV infection. For example, they identified bars where men took casual sex partners. They also identified isolated areas, such as wells and wooded lots, where women were at risk of being raped.

After mapping, a group of community members created a seasonal calendar on the ground in order to examine the patterns of various diseases. For each of the 12 months of the year, participants identified the prevalence of malaria and diarrhea. After they had finished and transferred the seasonal calendar to paper, some of the more educated participants related the occurrence of the two diseases to the presence of rain or sunshine.

Many of the participants were surprised by this relationship, because they had previously associated malaria and diarrhea with eating certain foods (e.g. maize and mangoes) that were present at specific times of the year. The PLA facilitator then asked the participants whether HIV had a transmission season. Surprisingly, the villagers said that yes, HIV transmission was highest during the harvest season (June, July, and August), when men had more money. Because the men had more money, they could drink more alcohol and pay for casual sex. In addition to the harvest season, the villagers pointed out that HIV transmission was higher in March and December, when men sold their stored crops to prepare for the Christmas and Easter holidays.

The final exercise involved the creation of twenty-four hour daily schedules to allow the villagers to identify the differences in the amount of work performed by men and women and to identify leisure time that might lead to risky behaviors. The men and women conducted the exercise separately, and members of each group discussed what they did for each hour of the day. The exercise revealed that women engaged in many more activities than men during the day, and men had more leisure time than women. The exercise also revealed that women were frequently asked by their husbands to have sex (sometimes as many as three times a day), and that women were often too tired to comply. Because of their extra leisure time and their tired wives, many men took on

additional sex partners. Both sexes realized that this behavior was putting men and their wives at risk for contracting HIV.

After each of the above activities – mapping, seasonal calendars, and daily schedules, participants were asked to think of solutions to the problems that were identified.

After the mapping activity, participants realized that men were at risk of contracting HIV at bars (where they would pick up casual sex partners) and women were at risk of being raped in certain isolated places. As solutions, the men proposed that all drinking be done before sunset, and that they come home early in the evening. To protect them from attack, women decided to go in groups to collect firewood and water, and some of the men even insisted that they will accompany their wives.

After the seasonal calendar activity, it became evident that HIV transmission was highest at the times of year when men had the most disposable income. The RAIN staff then decided to increase its condom distribution efforts and health education activities during those months. The women also realized that they needed to protect themselves more during the harvest season, and that they needed to encourage their husbands to take extra precautions during this time.

As a result of the creation of the twenty-four hour daily schedules, the villagers proposed that husbands and wives should together decide about how to better share the workload. They realized that this would make the women less tired and keep the men more occupied.

*Any situation in which some men prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. To alienate men from their own decision-making is to change them into objects.*

*Paulo Freire (1970, p. 73).*

## Chapter 5

### Training Resources for Participatory Facilitation

While many talk about the importance of community participation, few can effectively facilitate. In fact, the art of participatory facilitation is perhaps the single most important human resource skill that needs to be cultivated in development contexts. Needed are “catalyst communicators”, who can facilitate without fear, who can embody a set of people-centered attitudes and beliefs, who is well-versed in participatory theories, methods, and tools, and who has the requisite skills in language, listening, negotiation, mediation (Nair & White, 1999).

As opposed to reinventing the wheel, one must draw upon the various participatory facilitation videos, training materials, manuals, tool kits, and videos that have become available in the past decade. Some of these key participatory materials are identified below with contact and/or ordering information. Some key Web-based resources are also identified.

#### **Training Videos**

1. *Questions of difference: PRA, gender and environment*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

For more information, visit Web-site at <http://www.ied.org/resource/>

2. *Putting the last first*. Sussex, U.K.: Institute for Development Studies.
3. *Who holds the stick?* Sussex, U.K.: Institute for Development Studies.

For more information, visit the Web-page of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/>, or the home page of IDS’ Participation Program at <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/home/index.html>

4. *Groundwork: Participatory research in girl’s education*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank, Economic Development Institute.

For more information, visit: <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/resource.html>

5. *SAGA: Participation in practice*. Nairobi, Kenya: Kenya Rural Domestic Water Supply and Sanitation Programme.

### **Training Manuals**

1. Archer, D., & Cottingham, S. (1996). *Reflect mother manual. Regenerated Freirean literacy through empowering community techniques*. London: ACTIONAID.
2. de Negri, B., Thomas, E., Illinikumugabo, A., Muvandi, I., & Lewis, G. (1998). *Empowering communities: Participatory techniques for community-based programme development*. Volume 1(2): Trainer's Manual (Participant's Handbook). Nairobi, Kenya: The Centre for African Family Studies in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs and the Academy for Educational Development.
3. Hope, A., Timmel, S. (1984). *Training for transformation: A handbook for community workers*. Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press (also distributed by IT Publications, London; and David Philip Publishers, Claremont, S.Africa).
4. Pretty, J. et al. (1993). *Participatory learning & action: A trainer's guide*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.
5. Srinivisan, L. (1993). *Tools for community participation: A manual for training trainers in participatory techniques*. Washington D.C.: PROWESS/UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Program.

### **Tool Kits**

1. Institute for Development Studies (1997). *PRA Behavior & Attitudes Topic Pack*. Brighton, England: University of Sussex.
2. Institute for Development Studies (1996). *PRA Tools and Techniques*. Brighton, England: University of Sussex.
3. Narayan, D., & Srinivasan, L. (1994). *Participatory Development Toolkit: Training Materials for Agencies and Communities*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank. See more information below.

## **Participatory Development Toolkit: Training Materials for Agencies and Communities**

by

Deepa Narayan and Lyr Srinivasan

Price: \$ 40.00

English. Published September 1994 by World Bank ISBN: 0-8213-2687-2 SKU: 12687

Can be ordered online through:

[https://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item\\_id=195862](https://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item_id=195862)

Provides visual materials and guidebook for trainers, practitioners, and others in the field of development as an aid for incorporating participatory processes and methods into their programs.

Helping the helpers: This product will help project managers, trainers, social scientists, and other practitioners incorporate participatory processes and methods into their programs. The activities and materials in this tool kit are applicable to many fields, although they were developed for the water and sanitation sector. The kit, which is based on training experience in 20 countries assists development practitioners to adopt participatory approaches by providing field-tested materials, provides examples of materials that can be adapted to local conditions, offers new concepts to local artists and fieldworkers so they can create participatory materials that respond to local needs and culture.

Contents: The kit, a handsome fold-out satchel, contains 25 activity envelopes and an instruction booklet. A list of trainers experienced in participatory development techniques is included in the booklet. The materials included, however, are prototypes and not are meant for direct use in real-life situations--local adaptation is required. The description for each prototype covers the purpose of the activity, audience, duration, materials needed, materials contained, and usage instructions. For example, Activity 9, a map-making exercise, is intended to gather information about a community and its problems by having participants create their own map. Lasting 30 minutes to 2 hours, the exercise asks participants to map their community on various levels, including topography and demographics. A discussion of community-related issues is then initiated on the basis of the map.



## Web-Based Resources

While there exist several hundred Web-sites that deal with participatory issues, here are some which may be useful to tap as a resource for starters:

1. The London-based International Institute for Environment and Development has an excellent collection called the Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) Collection, which includes over 2500 documents on Participatory Approaches (such as: Participatory Rural Appraisal, Rapid Rural Appraisal, Participatory Learning and Action, etc.) from around the world with an emphasis on Africa, Asia and South America. The documentation consists mainly of unpublished literature, case studies and reports, and features material in more than ten languages. New items are added to the collection every month. Bibliographies, case studies, workshop reports and training aids on all the major aspects of PLA are also available. For more information, visit Web-site at <http://www.iied.org/resource/>
2. Visit Web-site of the Centers for Participatory Learning and Action Network at <http://www.rcpla.org/>
3. Visit the Web-site of the Sussex-based Institute of Development Studies' Participation Program at <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/home/index.html>
4. Visit World Bank's Participation Web-site at <http://www.worldbank.org/participation/>
5. Visit the Communication Initiative Web-site at [www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com)

## Chapter 6

### Commandments for Participatory Research

Participatory research is primarily community-based and is devoted to engaging local people in planning their own development processes (Jacobson, 1993; 215). This process of local self-reflection and education facilitates an action-orientation toward social change. The main goal of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is to build the community's capacity to track the progress of its own development. Many of the tools described in the previous chapter, such as mapping, seasonal calendar, daily schedules, sorting of cards, body maps, etc. can be used as tools of participatory diagnostics, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as to gauge community development and changes over time.

***Participatory research is “partisan research; it is the research of involvement. It is the research for liberation. It is not only research with the people; it is people’s research.***

***Simbulan (1983, p. 10).***

Participatory research places tradition, indigenous and local knowledge in position of primary importance. It is of different types and comes with different labels: Participatory rural appraisal (PRA), rapid rural appraisal (RRA), participatory action research (PAR), action research, and so on. The general notion is that participatory research involves interactive social learning instead of expert-dominated positivist social research (Jacobson, 1993).

#### **Ten Commandments of Community-Based Research**

1. Thou shalt not define, design, or commit community research without consulting the community!
2. As ye value outcomes, so shall ye value processes!
3. When faced with a choice between community objectives and the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity, thou shalt hold community objectives to be the higher good!
4. Thou shalt not covet the community’s data!
5. Thou shalt not commit analysis of community data without community input!
6. Thou shalt not bear false witness to, or concerning members of the community!

7. Thou shalt not release community research findings before the community research functions!

8. Thou shalt train and hire community people to perform community research functions.

9. Thou shalt not violate confidentiality!

10. Thou shalt freely confess thyself to be biased and thine hypotheses and methodologies to be likewise!

Source: Brown (1997).

### **Donor-Driven Versus People-Driven**

Unfortunately, evaluation of programs, whether participatory in nature or not, are still a donor driven exercise, in which participants are mainly seen as “objects” of study, and not subjects that can contribute to the evaluation process (Gumucio Dagron, 2001; Jacobsen, 1993; Servaes, 1999). The objectives of the evaluations, almost always, serve institutional agendas, not the people’s agenda.

Honest and useful evaluations will only be possible when donors and implementers surrender their institutional agendas (Gumucio Dagron, 2001). Will they?

### **Community Participation in Evaluation<sup>14</sup>**

de Ortecho (1991) narrates an example of community participation in evaluation from Cordoba, Argentina.

Having worked in housing for the Argentine poor in the last 20 years, we'd done many evaluations in the conventional (agency-driven) way and decided to undertake a participatory approach. A poor group that had set up a housing cooperative in Argentina wanted to evaluate their project’s progress over time and asked us for technical advice. Since they couldn't work easily with a written history of their long community experience, we thought of providing them with a visual synthesis of their process, which would mean they could look at their history, think about it, and draw lessons from it. The work involved several steps.

First, cooperative members, with our help, represented the remarkable moments and scenes from their community history by drawings, phrases, and pictures. We arranged these on a wall. We worked with simple, child-like images that were easy to draw, so anybody could incorporate ideas or situations and participate in building the panel. Pictures and phrases were also included. Next, we expected participants to identify the turning points of their history and reflect on them. Looking over their history, they gradually reached consensus on eight critical events. They called these "rudder strokes" and signaled them with colored circles.

This first participatory evaluation with community groups showed us, among other things, that images and manual work enrich dialogues and lead to holistic thinking. For this reason, we went on experimenting with images applied to rather abstract topics, like the relationship among different actors involved in a social and housing development process. Several groups were pleased to participate in this kind of analysis.

Years before we'd approached this topic with conventional procedures. We took from those experiences a traditional way of representing the group structure (that is, small circles linked by lines). With that idea in mind, we gave each group a blank sheet of paper and small colored circles representing various stakeholders: Cooperative associates, community representatives, volunteers, etc. The task was to play with circles on the sheet of paper until they represented the relationships among participants, and closeness or distance of stakeholders. Members of the groups said: "It was fascinating to see and realize how we've changed, altogether, over the years."

Our next challenge was how we could train these community groups in different types of conventional research procedures so they could work not only with opinions, perceptions, and ideas, but also verify and measure items of importance. We tried this with a group that had asked us for technical help in planning their housing process collectively. Once again we worked it out, little by little.

As a first step, we helped the group identify possible resources for a community housing process. They talked about it, wrote a list, and drew cards representing the many diverse possibilities. As a second step, we had them classify identified resources in a matrix by putting each card in a proper shelf. Shelves had been drawn on a paper panel glued to the wall. The idea of using one shelf for each type of resource worked so well in

showing the abstract conception of a matrix that they had no problem later handling different types of matrixes. As a third step, they verified and quantified community resources by designing, with our help, a close-ended quantitative interview. Community representatives filled out the forms with the families they visited at their homes. Later, we prepared a huge table where they tabulated the data obtained in the interviews. It was an enjoyable task, and an enabling one as well. Using the collected data, they identified the need for, and carried out several other surveys, which backed up a housing proposal used to obtain funding soon afterwards.

The results of participatory community development and evaluation effort not only appeared at the end of a working process when a final report was elaborated; on the contrary, we often found useful outcomes during the processes: For instance, participants shared feelings, expectations, and ideas not typically exchanged day after day; participants collectively acquiring knowledge; participants became aware of the relationship between particular issues (for example, large family size) and long-range social problems (for example, poor maternal health, shortage of educational facilities, etc.).

In the past several decades, Latin American people have seen that as one economic crisis is followed by another, and massive social groups are increasingly being impoverished. Traditional means of dealing with those problems have become useless. At the same time, social projects turned into collective learning processes are little by little being recognized as a way to mobilize human resources. We're facing methodological questions we didn't think of a couple of years ago. The frontier to be pushed is enabling community groups to handle useful evaluation processes. The time has come to face a challenge of a different nature-to turn these group learning processes into larger community learning processes to match the magnitude of the changes needed and expected with the ability to produce them.

### **Guides for Participatory Research**

- Participatory monitoring and evaluation should be conducted before, during, and after the launch of programs.

- Skills in conducting various types of participatory evaluation – both quantitative and qualitative -- need to be strengthened so that the evaluation processes are useful, timely, relevant, practical, and cost-effective.
- Change indicators must assess changes in individual, community, and the social environment.

### **Measures of Community Participation**

Scholars have proposed and honed various concepts to measure aspects of community participation and development, for instance: (1) community capacity (see Labonte, 1989; Parker, Eng, Schulz, & Israel, 1999), ((2) sense of community (Eng, Briscoe, & Cunningham, 1990; Eng & Parker, 1994 ), (3) social cohesion (Lochner, Kawachi, & Kennedy, 1999, Kawachi & Berkman, 2000), and (4) social capital (Kawachi & Berkman, 2000). While it is beyond the scope of this volume to go into an in-depth analysis of these sampled concepts and their measurement, some of their definitional attributes are discussed, which may be useful for some practitioners, in case they wished to whet their appetite<sup>15</sup>.

Community capacity is defined as one in which the various parts of the community are able to collaborate effectively in identifying the problems and needs of the community, can achieve a working consensus on goals and priorities, can agree on ways and means to implement agreed-on goals, and can collaborate effectively in the required actions (Parker et al., 1999). Sense of community is defined as opportunities in a community for membership, influence, mutual needs to be met, and shared emotional ties and support (Parker et. al., 1999). Social cohesion refers to the extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in a community. A cohesive society is one that is richly endowed with stocks of social capital, defined as those features of social structures – such as levels of interpersonal trust and norms of reciprocity and mutual aid – which act as resources for individuals and facilitate collective action (Kawachi & Berkman, 2000). Social capital thus forms a subset of the notion of social cohesion, which refers to two broad intertwined features of a society: (1) the absence of latent social conflict – whether in the form of income/wealth inequality, racial/ethnic tensions; disparities in political participation; and (2) the presence of strong social bonds – measured by levels of trust

and norms of reciprocity (i.e. social capital); the abundance of associations that bridge social divisions (“civil society”); the presence of institutions of conflict management (a responsive democracy, an independent judiciary, and so on).

As is clear from the above discussion, community participation is not merely concerned with numerical outputs and quantitative results; but also with long-term change in such measures as organizational capabilities, institutional growth, and people's relationships with their peers and those in power (qualitative results).

A general set of quantitative indicators<sup>16</sup> for community participation may include:

- Numbers of project level meetings and attendance levels
- Percentages of different groups attending meetings (e.g. women, landless)
- Numbers of direct project beneficiaries
- Project input take-up rates
- Numbers of local leaders assuming positions of responsibility
- Numbers of local people who acquire positions in formal organizations
- Numbers of local people who are involved in different stages of project
- Improved and higher levels of service delivery

A general set of qualitative indicators for community participation may include:

- Organizational growth at the community level
- Growing solidarity and mutual support
- Concern to be involved in decision-making at different stages
- Increasing ability of project group to propose and undertake actions
- Representation in government or political bodies related to the project
- Emergence of people willing to take on leadership
- Interaction and the building of contacts with other groups and institutions.

### **Community and Social Indicators**

To illustrate the notion of quantitative and qualitative indicators, a preliminary list of community and social change indicators for HIV prevention, care, and support programs are provided below. Notice that these are very different from the typical KAP

(knowledge, attitude, and practice) measures that are typically used to assess individual-level changes of behavior change communications.

The purpose is to assess changes in the degree (in terms of frequency, reach, intensity, and quality) to which

1. The workplaces in the community have implemented HIV/AIDS programs.
2. The community has initiated home-based care programs.
3. The local health services offer HIV/AIDS testing and counseling.
4. The local health services ensure and provide access to safe blood supply.
5. The local brothels and commercial sex houses have adopted a condom adoption and HIV testing policy.
6. The local prisons and military establishments have instituted HIV/AIDS programs.
7. The local schools have adopted an HIV/AIDS education curriculum.
8. The dropout rate for AIDS orphans at local schools has decreased.
9. Those who are living with HIV/AIDS are part of the “mainstream” in society (employed in regular jobs, working as counselors, etc.).
10. Those who are living with HIV/AIDS are protected by laws (that are designed to uphold their rights).
11. The quality of life of those living with AIDS, and those taking care of them, has been enhanced.
12. The community members openly discuss and debate HIV/AIDS issues in public meetings.
13. New community-based programs and initiatives have been launched to address HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support.
14. New coalitions and alliances have emerged among community organizations to address HIV/AIDS issues.
15. The community members have collectively taken decisions or passed resolutions about combating HIV/AIDS.
16. Grassroots leadership has emerged from within the community to tackle HIV/AIDS issues.
17. Religious organizations and spiritual leaders are involved in HIV prevention, care, and support programs.
18. The community has engaged in acts of mobilization and activism for HIV/AIDS related issues.
19. The community has engaged with the local administration, service delivery organizations, non-governmental organizations, and others on HIV/AIDS issues.
20. The community’s cultural activities (sports, folk media, festivals, celebrations, songs, etc.) engage with HIV/AIDS issues.
21. The most vulnerable groups for HIV/AIDS in a community have been empowered to take more control of their external environment.
22. The media coverage and media advocacy for HIV/AIDS has increased.
23. The overall rate of STDs, HIV infections have decreased.
24. The community has become AIDS-competent in terms of prevention, care, and support.



25. There exists multi-sectoral involvement at the national level for HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support.

Source: Singhal (2000).

## Chapter 7

### Bumps on the Participation Path

*Much is done in the name of participation that is participation only in name.  
Thomas Jacobson (1993, p. 225).*

#### Rhetoric Versus Reality

The reality of participation differs from the rhetoric. Participation has been promoted by donors, NGOs, and governments without changes in bureaucratic imperatives, or personal orientations (Chambers, 1999). For some reason, participation is seen as something that “others” do. In other words, participation has been commanded. Targets have been set, methods routinized, and then appearances of achievement contrived.

*There has been a growing trend to accept participation as a fashionable concept, but without much conviction on the part of the international and non-governmental organizations.  
Orlando Fals Borda (cited in Gomez, 1999, p. 152).*

Participation is far from being a smooth, unhindered, and clear-cut process of social change. Facilitators and their implementing agencies must be mindful of the caveats, barriers, and ethical dilemmas of participation.

#### Caveats

Many caveats underlie participatory communication activities (White:1994; Yoon, 1995).

**1. Not a panacea:** Participatory processes are not suitable for solving all problems in all contexts or time frames. The mother whose child is dying of diarrhea does not want to “participate”. Immediate, technically-appropriate, interventions must necessarily complement participatory processes.

**2. Price for participation:** People pay a price for taking part in participatory processes. An opportunity cost exists for every hour spent “participating”. The villager may be foregoing more productive activity if the participatory processes do not lead to long or short term benefits.

## Barriers

The key barriers to participation include:

**1. Reluctance to create conflict :** Participatory processes of empowerment often squarely upset prevailing power relationships, creating conflict between those lacking power and those holding power. Unless the oppressed have the agency to wage and bear the consequences of conflict, participation may do more harm than good. The inherency of conflict, and the propensity to avoid it, is often an important barrier to participation (Servaes, 1999, p. 196).

**2. Inconsistent organizational structures:** Participation is inconsistent with the organizational realities of development as NGOs and implementing agencies usually have narrow time frames to get projects off the ground (McKee, 1994). Funding agencies are concerned with budgets and progress reports. They are rewarded “according to the size of their portfolios and often look for a blueprint to follow, not a complicated community process that may take years to be realized” (McKee, 1994, p. 40).

### Can they Walk the Talk?

Can NGOs and their funding agencies adopt flexible management approaches in the implementation of participatory programs? Can they structure their work plans and budgets in a way that changes which evolve out of participatory processes can be addressed in a timely and efficacious manner?

**3. Slow decision-making:** Participation can both facilitate and impair decision-making processes. Participation means that facilitators consciously sacrifice their ability to make fast and stable decisions (Servaes, 1999, p. 198). Practitioners reluctance to relinquish swift decision-making powers represents a barrier to participation.

## Ethical Dilemmas

Participatory processes, given their social change orientation, necessarily face certain ethical dilemmas. The overarching dilemma centers on the ethical question: **Who** is to determine **what** is **right** for **whom**? In addition, at least two other dilemmas accompany participatory processes (Yoon, 1995).

**1. Ethical dilemma of “letting go”:** Participatory practitioners must be especially mindful of their ethical responsibility to let go, abandon, or relinquish cherished, pre-

conceived notions. For instance, even a well-meaning participatory facilitator can enter a community with a set of values and program agenda, hoping the community members will perceive their problems and solutions the way he or she sees it. In such cases, “manipulation” of the participatory processes is bound to happen.

**2. Ethical dilemma of completion:** Participatory programs can profoundly alter relationships and existing social structures in a community. Facilitators and their organizations must ethically commit themselves to working with the community members to “complete” the participatory processes, in order that the activities are routinized and sustainable. Facilitators must not abandon the communities in the mid-course of change when the challenges are especially severe. Communities should not be left fractured.

**3. Ethical dilemma of whom do I work for?** Facilitators of community participation often wrestle with the dilemma: Whom do I really work for? For my agency? Or for and with the people?

<p><i>Challenging the given methods of a sponsoring agency can have its perils.</i></p>
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### **Bridging the Distance: Wandering of the Beaten Path**

Compounding the above ethical dilemmas are the day-to-day job-related realities of development officials. For instance, even well meaning NGO and international aid agency officials are often urban-based and urban-biased (Chambers, 1983). Once established in their urban offices, they are tied down by committees, sub-committees, memoranda, reports, urgent papers, personnel problems, financial management, justifications, evaluations, visits by missions, meeting with ministers and government officials. All this means less time in the field.

Field experience of most agency officials is, at best, as a “rural development tourist” (Chambers, 1983). Lack of contact with community members permits them to form views without any real exposure to people’s problems. Poor people are rarely met; when they are met, they often do not speak; when they do speak, they are often too cautious and deferential; and what they say is often either not listened to, or brushed aside, or interpreted condescendingly (Chambers, 1983).

***What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve.***

Urban-based and urban-biased officials of NGOs and international development agencies, who often facilitate, support, monitor, and evaluate the ground-based facilitators of community development, may benefit greatly by regularly, as Robert Chambers (1983) says: “wandering off the beaten path”. Instead of hurriedly rocketing around in a Land Rover, they should allow plenty of time in one place, perhaps spend the night in a community, sitting and listening in the dark (as opposed to standing and talking). They need to “be” (not “act”) unimportant, perhaps coming by bicycle or foot, and coming unscheduled. Better still, they should try to experience the world as a poor and weak person, even if it be for a day.

My friend, Dr. Satsangi, a male veterinary doctor turned cooperative facilitator, who works with women dairy farmers in the Jaipur District of Rajasthan State, India, recounts the transformative experience of leading the life of a woman for one day, as part of a gender sensitization lived-experience. His day included waking up before sun rise, preparing fodder for the animals, milking the cows, walking to the forest to pick up firewood, walking to the village pond to wash clothes, cooking three meals, cleaning utensils, working on the farm, picking animal droppings for fuel, sweeping the yard and animal shed, and being the last person to go to bed (he noted that he was “spared” the task of attending to the four children and from obeying the wishes of the husband, in-laws, and elders). At the end of the day, he recounts his intense desire to get into his jeep and drive away to the city, only to be informed by the trainer: “Oh no, you can only leave the village about once a year; that too on a bullock cart, and with your four children”.

***“Talking” is the first step of walking the walk. It is probably easier for individuals to narrow the talking and walking gap than it is for institutions.***  
***White (1999).***

### **Author's Concluding Note**

Facilitating people's participation is no cake walk. It requires time. It requires resources – human and material. It requires abandoning oneself to the strength of others. It requires cultural sensitivity. It requires a respect for others. It requires surrendering certainty. It requires selflessness. It requires tools, skills, and training. It requires creativity. It requires collaboration. It requires having a bird's eye view. It requires having a worm's eye view. It requires passion. It requires emotion. It requires personal commitment. It requires persistence. It requires a willingness to take risks.

Participative facilitation is an art, science, and belief, whose visible signs, as White (1999) said, are expressed, ultimately, in its practice.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> This section on Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed draws upon the following web-sites: <http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archive/boalintro.html>  
<http://www.gn.apc.org/resurgence/issues/unwin204.htm>  
<http://www.unomaha.edu/~pto/augusto.htm>

<sup>2</sup> This draws upon Gumucio Dagron (2001).

<sup>3</sup> This draws upon Singhal and Rogers (2001).

<sup>4</sup> This draws upon Rose (1992).

<sup>5</sup> This draws upon Singhal and Rogers (2001).

<sup>6</sup> This section draws upon Chambers (1999).

<sup>7</sup> Mainly drawing upon Kiiti and Nielsen (1999).

<sup>8</sup> In some cases, these "nuggets" have been paraphrased for brevity and relevance. For instance, most of DePree's (1989) comments were made in the context of facilitative "leaders", which the present author feels holds direct relevance for "facilitators".

<sup>9</sup> This chapter draws heavily upon Cornwall (1992); de Negri et al. (1998); Narayan (1996); Pretty (1993); and Srinivasan (1993).

<sup>10</sup> This section draws heavily upon Heaney (1986, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> These represent a sample of the most commonly used participatory tools and methods but are not exhaustive.

<sup>12</sup> This section on appreciative inquiry draws upon [www.iisd.ca/ai](http://www.iisd.ca/ai). I thank Neil Ford for pointing this approach to me.

<sup>13</sup> This draws upon Ssembatya et al. (1995; cited in de Negri et al. 1998).

<sup>14</sup> This example draws upon <http://www.joe.org/joe/1991summer/a7.html>

<sup>15</sup> Interested readers should read the listed articles as they provide both a conceptual understanding of the given "community effectiveness" variable, including its measurement, and limitations.

<sup>16</sup> This discussion of quantitative and qualitative indicators draws upon:  
[http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5307e/x5307e05.htm#chapter five: participatory evaluation](http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5307e/x5307e05.htm#chapter%20five%20participatory%20evaluation)