UNIT 3   PARTICIPATORY TOOLS AND METHODS

Structure

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Participatory tools and methods are the means by which the principles of participation are translated into the actual practice of development. Participatory methods ensure that all stakeholders become involved in a number of different activities which are integral to the development process. They provide a structured approach to participation with clear guidelines of who should be involved, when and to what extent. They are very important to programme and project planning when clear procedures need to be identified and approved, rather than relying on an ad hoc approach. Participatory tools are specific activities designed to encourage joint analysis, learning and action. Special 'packaged' techniques can be very powerful ways of getting people involved. However, no one tool or technique is applicable to all situations.

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

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain why participatory tools and methods are important in participatory process management;

- describe participatory tools and methods;

- appreciate the principles and techniques of participatory methods; and

- describe the attitudes and actions that are critical to applying participatory methodologies.

3.2 WHAT ARE PARTICIPATORY METHODS?

Participatory methodologies aim to actively involve people and communities in identifying problems, formulating plans and implementing decisions.

They are often seen as a set of principles for generating insights about people and the communities in which they live. However, for those involved in using them, they are not only often flexible and informal, they are also continually evolving. In addition, there is no one standard methodology or set of methods to employ in any given situation: different techniques therefore need to be developed for particular situations.

Participatory methodologies enable people to do their own investigations, analyses, presentations, planning and action, and to own the outcome. The principles behind participatory methodologies are:

- That it is possible, and desirable, to increase participation in development by involving those immediately affected by a particular need;

- Involving people so affected enables activity designers and managers to explore a range of real circumstances and systems rather than concentrating on statistical samples;

- Issues can be investigated from different perspectives and using a range of approaches, such as involving multidisciplinary teams;

- Informal approaches are often more appropriate and can be changed as the work progresses.

Participatory methods are most commonly associated with the spread of diagramming and visual techniques which began to be developed in the 1970s. These originated in a number of scientific disciplines interested in analysis of complex systems: biological science, ecology, agricultural economics and geography. It became increasingly important to work with farmers to develop more sophisticated models to explain their responses to development programmes. The increasing influence of applied anthropology in development agencies from the 1980s also led to greater awareness of the need for a more sophisticated understanding of poverty, social processes and grassroots perspectives on development. The end of the 1980s diagramming techniques had combined bringing together the insights from these different disciplines into a flexible methodology commonly referred to as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). By the mid 1990s it was becoming increasingly evident that the mechanical application of these techniques was often failing to really reach and capture the views of poor people, particularly women, children and socially excluded. There was renewed interest in methodologies for participation, drawing on earlier traditions of participatory action research which had been long established as an integral part of many grassroots organizations.

Participatory methods are therefore a diverse and flexible set of techniques for visual representation and stakeholder involvement characterized by a set of underlying ethical principles. There is no one set of techniques to be mechanically

applied in all contexts for all participants. There is on the one hand a set of visual tools to be flexibly applied to assist the synthesis and analysis of information which can be used in group settings and also as part of individual interviews. On the other hand are a set of guidelines for facilitating participation and negotiation in focus group discussions and workshops bringing together different stakeholders. These may or may not make substantial use of visual techniques. Generally both visual techniques and participatory facilitation are combined in different ways. The emphasis is on innovation and creativity in adapting previous practice to new contexts and needs.

Participatory methods have a useful contribution to make in analysis of the findings of impact assessment. They provide a useful means of investigating and crosschecking information gained by quantitative and qualitative methods at appropriate stages during the assessment. At the same time information obtained through participatory methods should also be cross-checked through triangulation with other methods to test their validity and increase their credibility.

Participatory methods have an important contribution in the systematic identification of realistic ways forward based on the information obtained from the impact assessment. As noted above, diagramming techniques are frequently used in management consultancy for this purpose. In addition the participatory process facilitates communication between donors, policymakers, development practitioners and those affected by interventions. The different stakeholders therefore both have their own opportunity to present their views and recommendations, and also to comment on those presented by other stakeholders.

This participatory process needs to be carefully facilitated in order not to raise unrealistic expectations or create tensions which cannot be resolved. It is crucial that the potential limitations on change are clear to all those concerned, particularly in relation to resources available and the skills of development agencies. It is also important again to ensure fair representation of different stakeholders through the detail of focus group and workshop design.

A particularly important contribution of participatory methods is their role in capacity building of the different stakeholders. Where sufficient attention is paid to these participatory methods have the potential to build up the necessary information resources and networks for a learning process which will be sustainable beyond the term of the one particular impact assessment. This can include:

- Group-level learning

- Ongoing participatory monitoring and evaluation

- Multi-stakeholder networks for policy assessment

Thus the costs of integrating participatory methods can be seen as a contribution to development in themselves, leading to much longer term benefits. These benefits have included reducing the costs of project administration, reducing default in micro-finance programmes, making training programmes more attractive to clients prepared to pay for services. This is therefore also a contribution to longer term financial sustainability of interventions.

Participatory methods have an important contribution to make at all stages of an impact assessment:

- Initial identification of impact goals, indicators, categories for sampling and analysis and initial exploration of hypotheses

- During the impact assessment process for crosschecking and further exploration of issues raised by other methods

- Towards the end of the assessment to systematically identify and test the possible implications of any recommendations for improvement in projects or policy with different stakeholders

3.3 WHY IS PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Participatory management will not arise spontaneously: it is a conscious and informed activity to be advocated and implemented at every stage of the activity cycle. And it s important that senior staff recognize participatory management as necessary to the success of any development activity or intervention: senior staff are key because they act as powerful role models for other staff; and the practices they espouse should filter through to influence the way whole teams of staff interact with their partners.

The process of continued, active stakeholder involvement in an activity results in various improvements.

- **Sustainability and sustainable impact**

  More people are committed to carrying on the activity after outside support has stopped;

  Active participation helps develop skills and confidence.

- **Effectiveness**

  There is a greater sense of ownership and agreement of the processes to achieve an objective.

- **Responsiveness**

  Effort and inputs are more likely to be targeted at perceived needs so that outputs are used appropriately.

- **Efficiency**

  Inputs and activities are more likely to result in outputs on time, of good quality and within budget if local knowledge and skills are tapped into and mistakes are avoided.

- **Transparency and accountability**

  This accrues as more and more stakeholders are given information and decision making power.

- **Equity**

  This is likely to result if all the stakeholders' needs, interests and abilities are taken into account.

3.4 APPLICATION OF PARTICIPATORY METHODS

Participatory methodologies can be used at any stage of the Activity Cycle:

- At the Design stage, by involving people in identifying problems during the planning and designing stage, e.g. needs assessments, feasibility studies;

- At the Implementation stage, through examination of a particular problem or topic e.g. identifying priorities, or implementing new activities where information

- needs to be collected;

- At the Monitoring and Evaluation stage, by enabling participants to implement procedures to examine their own activities.

The precise information requirements of the different stages are diverse. However they all depend on the systematic collection of data about the households and communities served by the activity and the environments in which they live and work.

Three of the more common methodologies are:

1) Participatory Learning and Action;

2) Participatory Rapid Appraisal;

3) Participatory Action Research.

See Box 1 (overleaf) for more information on these.

Box 3.1: Common Participatory Methodologies

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)

An approach, which seeks to enable those with smaller, less dominant voices, to be heard and to take control over decisions, which affect their lives. PLA is a process of **LEARNING from**, **with and by the community**; of using a **set of tools, methods, techniques and exercises to UNDERSTAND** the needs, problems, and concerns of people. Participatory Learning and Action combines:

- a set of diagramming and visual techniques originally developed for livelihoods analysis;

- underlying grassroots participation principles of human rights activism which involve rethinking power relations and partnerships between development agencies, experts and poor people. These are now being developed further to facilitate negotiations between different stakeholders in projects and policy dialogue.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral approach to engaging communities in development through interactive and participatory processes. PRA builds upon the techniques of **Rapid Rural Appraisal** (RRA) pioneered to involve communities in their own needs assessment, problem identification and ranking, strategy for implementation, and community action plan. It uses a wide range of tool, often within a focus group discussion format, to elicit spatial, time related and social or institutional data.

> **Participatory Action Research** (PAR) involves three key elements: research,
> education and socio-political action. It is an experiential methodology for the
>
> acquisition of serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power,
> or countervailing power for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups and
> social
>
> classes — the grassroots — and for their authentic organizations and
> movements. Its purpose is to enable oppressed groups and classes to acquire
> sufficient creative and transforming leverage as expressed in specific projects,
> acts struggles to achieve the goals of social transformation.

After reading this section, you would have gained some idea about participatory
tools. Now you should be able to answer the questions given in *Check Your
Progress 1*.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a)   Write your answer in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

1)   What are the principles behind participatory methodologies?

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2)   Why are the different stages where participatory methodologies can be used?

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3.5   PLA: UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES

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

The participatory methods discussed here are now generically referred to as **Participatory Learning and Action (PLA).** Participatory Learning and Action combines:

- **a set of diagramming and visual techniques** originally developed for livelihoods analysis and now widely used in Natural Resources departments in development agencies. They have since been adapted for use in other sectors including enterprise development.

- **underlying principles of grassroots participation** from human rights activism which involve rethinking power relations and partnerships between development agencies, experts and poor people. These are now being developed further to facilitate negotiations between different stakeholders in projects and policy dialogue.

The underlying principles and most common techniques are summarized in Box 3.2.

Participatory methods for impact assessment are most commonly associated with the spread of **diagramming and visual techniques** which began to be developed in the 1970s. These originated in a number of scientific disciplines interested in analysis of complex systems: biological science, ecology, agricultural economics and geography. It became increasingly important to work with farmers to develop more sophisticated models to explain their responses to development programmes. The increasing influence of applied anthropology in development agencies from the 1980s also led to greater awareness of the need for a more sophisticated understanding of poverty, social processes and grassroots perspectives on development. By the end of the 1980s diagramming techniques bringing together the insights from these different disciplines had been combined into a flexible methodology commonly referred to as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). Parallel to these developments in the South, methodologies like Soft Systems Analysis and Cognitive Mapping also became increasingly common in areas like management consultancy, organizational research and planning. Here diagrams were used for institutional analysis, highlighting problem areas and brainstorming possible solutions. Workshops for organizations and enterprises included senior executives and managers.

By the mid 1990s it was becoming increasingly evident that the mechanical application of these techniques was often failing to really reach and capture the views of poor people, particularly women, children and socially excluded. There was renewed interest in **methodologies for participation** drawing on earlier traditions of participatory action research which had been long established as an integral part of many grassroots organizations in the South. In India for example SEWA and other women's organizations based their programmes on the findings of focus group discussions in the 1970s and 1980s. MYRADA and AKRSP developed participatory methodologies for grassroots mobilization. In Latin America Paolo Freire developed methodologies for action research which were later adopted in other countries. These methodologies were based on underlying principles of human rights and aimed to use the research process itself as a means of empowerment through use of diagrams as a focus for discussion and other methodologies like drawing and role-play. More recently these methodologies have been extended to include photography and video by grassroots groups and looking at ways in which grassroots groups can record their own information in diaries.

Box 3.2: PLA: Underlying Principles and Techniques

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- embracing complexity

- recognition of multiple realities

- prioritizing the realities of the poor and disadvantaged

- grassroots empowerment

- from assessment to sustainable learning

- relating learning to action

TECHNIQUES

Visual Techniques

- Diagrams: Flow/causal diagram; Venn/Institutional diagram; Systems diagrams; Pie charts; Histograms

- Ranking Techniques: Preference ranking and scoring; Pair wise ranking; Direct matrix ranking; Ranking by voting; Wealth ranking

- Time Trends Analysis: Historical and future (visioning) mapping; Time trends charts; Oral Histories

- Mapping Techniques: Mobility mapping; Social mapping; Transect (walks)

- Calendars: Seasonal calendar; Historical seasonal calendar

- Ethno-Classifications: Proverbs, Stories, Indigenous Categories and Terms, Taxonomies

Group and team dynamics methods

- Focus Group discussions

- Role-play

- Participatory workshops

Recent Innovations

- Photo and Video production with grassroots groups

- Grassroots diaries using diagrams and simple numerical and written information

OTHER COMPLEMENTARY QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

- Secondary Data Review

- Structured questionnaires

- Semi-structured interviewing

- Case studies

- Participant observation

- Direct observation,

- Qualitative anthropological fieldwork

Initially the term PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) was used to describe the bringing together of RRA and activist research. It was emphasized that the most

important aspect was not the diagramming tools but their flexible application based on a number of underlying principles:

- **Embracing complexity** and seeking to understand it rather than oversimplifying reality in accordance with predetermined categories and theories

- **Recognition of multiple realities** to be taken into account in analysis or action.

- **Prioritizing the realities of the poor and most disadvantaged** as equal partners in knowledge creation and problem analysis.

- **Grassroots empowerment**: aiming not only to gather information about impact, but to make the assessment process itself a contribution to empowerment through linking grassroots learning and networking into policy-making.

More recently the term Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) has become preferred because it more effectively incorporates the underlying human rights tradition through emphasizing the importance of:

- changing from **appraisal to learning** and hence moving away from the use of participatory methods as an extractive process by outsiders to a sustainable learning process involving different stakeholders as equal partners.

- the importance of **relating learning to action** incorporating programme and policy improvement as an integral part of the learning process.

Participatory methods are therefore a diverse and flexible set of techniques for visual representation and stakeholder involvement characterized by a set of underlying ethical principles. There is no one set of techniques to be mechanically applied in all contexts for all participants. There is on the one hand a set of visual tools to be flexibly applied to assist the synthesis and analysis of information which can be used in group settings and also as part of individual interviews. On the other hand are a set of guidelines for facilitating participation and negotiation in focus group discussions and workshops bringing together different stakeholders. These may or may not make substantial use of visual techniques. Generally both visual techniques and participatory facilitation are combined in different ways. The emphasis is on innovation and creativity in adapting previous practice to new contexts and needs.

3.6 WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Understanding the stakeholders, including their literacy levels, local languages, gender roles, indigenous management practices and work ethics is one important step. This information can be used to design log frame planning activities that are more appropriate to the local context and more conducive to local participation. A second, related step is to learn roughly equivalent terms in local languages for key log frame concepts (such as Goal, Purpose, Outputs, Assumptions). This often has to be done through discussions with local people. Sometimes the terms need to be renegotiated in log frame workshops when there is more of a context for the discussion and a better understanding of key concepts. Each of the above require that the preparation for log frame planning workshops be thoughtful and

rigorous, including ample time for stakeholder interviews in advance of the session and adequate time for designing and preparing specialized planning sessions that are responsive to local requirements.

For planning work with illiterate or semi-literate participants, the traditional (literacy-based) version of the log frame is inappropriate. In these groups, more literate and more articulate elites may dominate discussions, even with the assistance of an outside facilitator. In these situations local ownership of activity designs will not result and the disbenefits of using the log frame approach far outweigh its benefits.

Through adequate planning and preliminary stakeholder interviews, this kind of situation should be recognized well in advance of the arrival of a planning team. Where use of the log frame approach is not appropriate, Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) or Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) planning methodologies will be more appropriate (Refs), because they rely more on images rather than words. If need be, the results of these planning methods may be eventually be married with the log frame, preferably through a planning process involving more articulate local representatives. If necessary, though this is less desirable, planning experts can synthesis PRA planning decisions into a log frame format. In these kinds of planning settings, using the formal, literacy-based version of the log frame will created a bias against local participation. Again, more literate and articulate elites will tend to dominate the planning process. In these situations, the log frame approach can be used subtly with little explicit mention of its technical terms.

One planning process used in this situation combines consensus-based approaches for determining objectives that have more of a visual focus or an intuitive appeal. In using and blending these planning methods the visual focus and visioning provides a common basis for communication and building consensus and ownership amongst local groups.

3.7 USING PARTICIPATORY METHODS: ADVANTAGES, CHALLENGES AND WAYS FORWARD

Participatory methods have the potential to bring together information from a diversity of sources more rapidly and cost effectively than quantitative or qualitative methods alone.

- Relevance of impact goals and indicators
- Stakeholder representation
- Reliability of understanding of development processes
- Credibility of practical inference

However participatory methods also face a number of inherent challenges which need to be taken into account. Some of these are common to all impact assessment methodologies; some are due to the visual tools and some to the participatory process. The degree to which participatory methods realise their potential contribution depends critically on how carefully they are used and in what context. Participatory methods are not a fixed set of mechanistic tools but a diverse range

of possible techniques which need to be flexibly adapted to particular situations and needs. In some cases problems can be resolved through innovation in the methods themselves. Sometimes limitations can only be, others can only be addressed through triangulation with other quantitative and qualitative methods.

Using participatory methods provides a useful way of:

- Rapidly identifying the range of potential impacts through exploring the inter linkages between different dimensions of livelihoods and poverty

- Prioritizing the different possible impact goals for assessment by identifying which of the range of possible impacts are most important for the primary stakeholders e.g. increased income versus decreased leisure, levels of income and/or working conditions expected

- Identifying reliable measurable or qualitative indicators which can be used in different contexts or for different target groups.

These potential contributions of participatory methods also have their own challenges:

- Challenge of standardization for comparison because of the emphasis on locally identified impact goals and indicators there are added challenges for comparative assessment. It is however possible to agree on common impact goals to be applied across contexts and then weight locally specific indicators by which they are to be measured. This is merely an extension of the weighting procedure itself, which inevitably involves a certain amount of rather imprecise measurement and assumptions. The participatory process enables the rather arbitrary nature of *a priori* weighting to be based on local rather than external priorities.

- Challenge of sensitive information: it cannot be assumed that the participatory process will necessarily yield in-depth information on sensitive issues. In some cases the inevitably unpredictable nature of participation has enabled generally private issues like domestic violence or controversial issues like caste discrimination to be raised. Including techniques like role-play has been found useful in highlighting dimensions of power relations. In other contexts this sort of sensitive information may require in-depth investigation by qualitative methods.

The participatory process also has a number of inherent challenges which include:

- Emphasis on consensus may serve to privilege dominant views and further marginalize the most disadvantaged through giving the appearance of participation. Explicit attempts are likely to be needed to include the very poor, women and socially excluded and also to ensure that they are not only present, but their voices are heard. This requires careful attention to the participatory process: who participates which may require particular attention to location and timing, how they participate which may require separate meetings or special allocation of time to particular participants.

- The differences and also potential conflicts of interest may be difficult to resolve and may require careful skills of negotiation. Recognizing and addressing these differences and potential conflicts is nevertheless still essential to ensuring that the impact assessment is a reliable representation of contribution to poverty reduction.

Participatory methods have the potential to bring together information from a diversity of sources more rapidly and cost effectively than quantitative or qualitative methods alone. As indicated in Box 2 they have a number of potential key contributions in increasing:

- Relevance of impact goals and indicators

- Stakeholder representation

- Reliability of understanding of development processes

- Credibility of practical inference

Although there are inherent challenges faced by the use of participatory methods, these are no greater than for quantitative or qualitative methods. Much of the problem with participatory research in the past has been because of under resourcing, leading to mechanical use of tools by people with insufficient experience or understanding of context. Participatory methods cannot be seen as a cheap option. People with the skill and experience to flexibly adapt the different techniques to the particular issues, contexts and institutions being assessed, must treat them as a serious and integral part of impact assessment requiring management. In many contexts a skilled facilitator would be able to train programme staff, local investigators and/or grassroots leaders to replicate selected simple exercises to extend the scope and coverage of the participatory investigation. This is particularly the case for longer-term impact assessments and/or where at least some local people already have experience of participatory methods as co-facilitators or participants. Skilled participatory facilitators would also be able to identify any limitations in the information obtained and indicate ways in which the information obtained through participatory methods can best be triangulated with other quantitative and qualitative methods.

Box 3.3: Participatory Methods: Advantages, Challenges and Ways Forward

	Advantages	Challenges	Ways for
Relevance of impact goals and indicators	• rapidly identifying the range of potential impacts • participatory prioritisation of different impact goals • identification of locally relevant indicators	• standardization of impact goals and indicators to allow comparative assessment • ensuring that sensitive issues are aired	• using the same impact goals, weighting locally-specific indicators • role play and/or triangulation with qualitative methods
Representation of different stakeholders	• identifying relevant stakeholder categories for assessment, control groups and analysis • involving different stakeholders in a participatory process, including the most vulnerable	• the focus on consensus may mask differences • ensuring that the most vulnerable are present and their voices are heard • resolving differences between stakeholders	• paying attention to participatory process: location, timing, composition of discussion groups and discussion agenda • triangulation with quantitative survey or informal qualitative targeted interviews

Reliability of findings	• rapidly obtaining impact and other information for whole communities or groups • exploring processes and hypotheses • rapidly investigating underlying or side issues	• scale and representation beyond physically identifiable communities • focus on diagram outputs may detract from analysis of processes	• using quantitative PLA methods eg mapping and voting • careful documentation of context and the assessment process • triangulation with other methods
Credibility of practical inference	• increases communication between donors, policymakers, development practitioners and those affected by interventions • makes information immediately accessible to different stakeholders	• may raise unrealistic expectations • may create tensions which cannot be resolved	• attention to identifying and clarifying the limitations of the programmes and policies • careful attention to the participatory process

3.7.1 The Role of a Facilitator

• Help the participants to organise more quickly and effectively.

• To create a conducive environment where participants can be comfortable with one another.

• Guide the participants through a process of learning.

• Encourage the participants to become involved in the training program.

• Help the sub groups to establish proper roles and responsibility.

• Help the participants in setting up agenda and develop an attitude among them that it is in their best interests.

• Ensure that both the participants and the facilitator(s) are honest, open in their behaviour and actions.

• To provide a process, which will help the participants to discuss their own content in the most satisfactory and productive way possible.

• Facilitator is positive about the content of the training and has equal stake in the decisions that are taken by them.

• Facilitator may face many challenges with the participants but ultimately the participants must solve it on their own.

3.7.2 Facilitation Skills

Adapting: to the changing conditions, allowing freedom to change the mind and adjust to suit the particular needs of the moment.

Communicating: thoughts, feelings and ideas about the happenings. Enables to contribute and share; also helps to develop a sense of freedom to act in appropriate way.

Listening: in an open and quiet way. Helps to understand what and how it is happening. and gives basis for the choices to act.

Questioning: in an enquiring and learning way. Gain knowledge to make choices.

Reviewing: what is happening here and how. Helps to assess what changes your action has had on what is happening.

After reading this section, you would have gained some idea about participatory methods and tools. Now you should be able to answer the questions given in *Check Your Progress 2.*

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a)   Write your answer in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

1)   What do you understand by participatory learning action?

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2)   What are the advantages of participatory methods?

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3.8   RELEVANT TERMS EXPLAINED

- *Access to resources.*

    A series of participatory exercises that allows development practitioners to collect information and raises awareness among beneficiaries about the ways in which access to resources varies according to gender and other important social variables. This userfriendly tool draws on the everyday experience of participants and is useful to men, women, trainers, project staff, and field-workers.

- *Analysis of tasks.*

    A gender analysis tool that raises community awareness about the distribution of domestic, market, and community activities according to gender and familiarizes planners with the degree of role flexibility that is associated with different tasks. Such information and awareness is necessary to prepare and execute development interventions that will benefit both men and women.

- *Focus group meetings.*

    Relatively low cost, semi-structured, small group (four to twelve participants plus a facilitator) consultations used to explore peoples' attitudes, feelings, or preferences, and to build consensus. Focus group work is a compromise between participant observation, which is less controlled, lengthier, and more in depth, and preset interviews, which are not likely to attend to participants' own concerns.

- *Force field analysis.*

    A tool similar to one called "Story With a Gap," which engages people to define and classify goals and to make sustainable plans by working on thorough "before and after" scenarios. Participants review the causes of problematic situations, consider the factors that influence the situation, think about solutions, and create alternative plans to achieve solutions. The tools are based on diagrams or pictures, which minimize language and literacy differences and encourage creative thinking.

- *Logical Framework* **or** *LogFRAME*.

    A matrix that illustrates a summary of project design, emphasizing the results that are expected when a project is successfully completed. These results or outputs are presented in terms of objectively verifiable indicators. The Logical Framework approach to project planning, developed under that name by the U.S. Agency for International Development, has been adapted for use in participatory methods such as ZOPP (in which the tool is called a *project planning matrix*) and Team UP.

- *Mapping.*

    A generic term for gathering in pictorial form baseline data on a variety of indicators. This is an excellent starting point for participatory work because it gets people involved in creating a visual output that can be used immediately to bridge verbal communication gaps and to generate lively discussion. Maps are useful as verification of secondary source information, as training and awareness raising tools, for comparison, and for monitoring of change. Common types of maps include *health maps, institutional maps (Venn diagrams),* and *resource maps*.

- *Needs assessment.*

    A tool that draws out information about people's varied needs, raises participants' awareness of related issues, and provides a framework for prioritizing needs. This sort of tool is an integral part of gender analysis to develop an understanding of the particular needs of both men and women and to do comparative analysis.

- *Participation*

    Participation refers to involvement whereby local populations in the creation, content and conduct of a program or policy designed to change their lives. Participation requires recognition and use of local capacities and avoids the imposition of priorities from the outside

- **Participatory development.**

  An approach to "development" that empowers individuals and communities
  to define and analyze their own problems, make their own decisions about
  directions and strategies for action, and lead in those actions. The approach
  is contrasted with "top-down" development processes, in which outsiders,
  with greater socioeconomic and political power, make the key decisions
  about local resource use and management.

- *Participant observation*

  A fieldwork technique used by anthropologists and sociologists to collect
  qualitative and quantitative data that leads to an in depth understanding of
  peoples' practices, motivations, and attitudes. Participant observation entails
  investigating the project background, studying the general characteristics
  of a beneficiary population, and living for an extended period among
  beneficiaries, during which interviews, observations, and analyses are
  recorded and discussed.

- *Preference ranking*.

  Also called direct matrix ranking, an exercise in which people identify what
  they do and do not value about a class of objects (for example, tree species
  or cooking fuel types). Ranking allows participants to understand the reasons
  for local preferences and to see how values differ among local groups.
  Understanding preferences is critical for choosing appropriate and effective
  interventions.

- **Public participation.**

  A process that consists of a series of activities and actions conducted by a
  sponsoring agency or other entity to both inform the public and obtain input
  from them. Public participation affords stakeholders the opportunity to
  influence decisions that affect their lives. Other terms for public participation
  include public involvement and public engagement.

- *Role playing.*

  Enables people to creatively remove themselves from their usual roles and
  perspectives to allow them to understand choices and decisions made by
  other people with other responsibilities. Ranging from a simple story with
  only a few characters to an elaborate street theater production, this tool can
  be used to acclimate a research team to a project setting, train trainers, and
  encourage community discussions about a particular development
  intervention.

- *Seasonal diagrams* or *seasonal calendars*.

  Show the major changes that affect a household, community, or region within
  a year, such as those associated with climate, crops, labor availability and
  demand, livestock, prices, and so on. Such diagrams highlight the times of
  constraints and opportunity, which can be critical information for planning
  and implementation.

- *Secondary data review.*

  Also called desk review, an inexpensive, initial inquiry that provides necessary contextual background. Sources include academic theses and dissertations, annual reports, archival materials, census data, life histories, maps, project documents, and so on.

- *Semi-structured interviews.*

  Also called *conversational interviews,* interviews that are partially structured by a flexible interview guide with a limited number of preset questions. This kind of guide ensures that the interview remains focused on the development issue at hand while allowing enough conversation so that participants can introduce and discuss topics that are relevant to them. These tools are a deliberate departure from survey-type interviews with lengthy, predetermined questionnaires.

- *Socio-cultural profiles.*

  Detailed descriptions of the social and cultural dimensions that in combination with technical, economic, and environmental dimensions serve as a basis for design and preparation of policy and project work. Profiles include data about the type of communities, demographic characteristics, economy and livelihood, land tenure and natural resource control, social organization, factors affecting access to power and resources, conflict resolution mechanisms, and values and perceptions. Together with a participation plan, the socio-cultural profile helps ensure that proposed projects and policies are culturally and socially appropriate and potentially sustainable.

- *Surveys.*

  A sequence of focused, predetermined questions in a fixed order, often with predetermined, limited options for responses. Surveys can add value when they are used to identify development problems or objectives, narrow the focus or clarify the objectives of a project or policy, plan strategies for implementation, and monitor or evaluate participation. Among the survey instruments used in Bank work are *firm surveys, sentinel community surveillance, contingent valuation,* and *priority surveys.*

- *Tree diagrams.*

  Multipurpose, visual tools for narrowing and prioritizing problems, objectives, or decisions. Information is organized into a treelike diagram that includes information on the main issue, relevant factors, and influences and outcomes of these factors. Tree diagrams are used to guide design and evaluation systems, to uncover and analyze the underlying causes of a particular problem, or to rank and measure objectives in relation to one another.

- *Village meetings.*

  Meetings with many uses in participatory development, including information sharing and group consultation, consensus building, prioritization and sequencing of interventions, and collaborative monitoring and evaluation. When multiple tools such as resource mapping, ranking, and focus groups

have been used, village meetings are important venues for launching activities, evaluating progress, and gaining feedback on analysis.

- *Wealth ranking.*

  Also known as wellbeing ranking or vulnerability analysis, a technique for the rapid collection and analysis of specific data on social stratification at the community level. This visual tool minimizes literacy and language differences of participants as they consider factors such as ownership of or use rights to productive assets, lifecycle stage of members of the productive unit, relationship of the productive unit to locally powerful people, availability of labor, and indebtedness.

- *Workshops.*

  Structured group meetings at which a variety of key stakeholder groups, whose activities or influence affect a development issue or project, share knowledge and work toward a common vision. With the help of a workshop facilitator, participants undertake a series of activities designed to help them progress toward the development objective (consensus building, information sharing, prioritization of objectives, team building, and so on). In project as well as policy work, from preplanning to evaluation stages, stakeholder workshops are used to initiate, establish, and sustain collaboration.

- **Stakeholders**

  Stakeholders are any individual, group or institution, which could be involved in the transfer of knowledge and best practice to improve the urban development process, can be considered a stakeholder.

3.9   LET US SUM UP

Development practitioners use a wide variety of different methods, tailored to different tasks and situations, to support participatory development. Each of the methods described above is a combination of tools, held together by a guiding principle. Dozens of exercises exist to cultivate collaborative development planning and action. These are the tools with which social scientists and other development practitioners encourage and enable stakeholder participation. Some tools are designed to inspire creative solutions; others are used for investigative or analytic purposes. One tool might be useful for sharing or collecting information, whereas another is an activity for transferring that information into plans or actions

It would be misleading to claim that any tools or methods are inherently participatory or that they spontaneously encourage ownership and innovation among stakeholders. The participants in development planning and action—the users of these methods and tools—must be the ones who encourage and enable participation. The tools themselves facilitate learning, preparation, and creative application of knowledge. They make it easier for Task Managers and borrowers who are committed to participation to collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders in the selection, design, and implementation of development projects. These same methods, however, can also be implemented in a "top-down" manner, which merely pays lip service to participation. The ultimate responsibility for using these methods well, therefore, rests with the users and facilitators.

3.10   REFERENCES AND SELECTED READINGS

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3.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The principles behind participatory methodologies are:

   • That it is possible, and desirable, to increase participation in development by involving those immediately affected by a particular need;

   • Involving people so affected enables activity designers and managers to explore a range of real circumstances and systems rather than concentrating on statistical samples;

   • Issues can be investigated from different perspectives and using a range of approaches, such as involving multidisciplinary teams;

   • Informal approaches are often more appropriate and can be changed as the work progresses.

2) Participatory methodologies can be used at any stage of the Activity Cycle:

   • At the Design stage, by involving people in identifying problems during the planning and designing stage, e.g. needs assessments, feasibility studies;

   • At the Implementation stage, through examination of a particular problem or topic e.g. identifying priorities, or implementing new activities where information

   • needs to be collected;

   • At the Monitoring and Evaluation stage, by enabling participants to implement procedures to examine their own activities.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The participatory methods are now generically referred to as **Participatory Learning and Action (PLA).** Participatory Learning and Action combines:

   • **a set of diagramming and visual techniques** originally developed for livelihoods analysis and now widely used in Natural Resources departments in development agencies. They have since been adapted for use in other sectors including enterprise development.

   • **underlying principles of grassroots participation** from human rights activism which involve rethinking power relations and partnerships between development agencies, experts and poor people. These are now being developed further to facilitate negotiations between different stakeholders in projects and policy dialogue.

2) Using participatory methods provides a useful way of:

   • Rapidly identifying the range of potential impacts through exploring the interlinkages between different dimensions of livelihoods and poverty

   • Prioritizing the different possible impact goals for assessment by identifying which of the range of possible impacts are most important for the primary stakeholders e.g. increased income versus decreased leisure, levels of income and/or working conditions expected

   • Identifying reliable measurable or qualitative indicators which can be used in different contexts or for different target groups.