COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PARTICIPATION

In Humanitarian Relief Programming

A Practical Manual of Suggested Approaches and Tools for Field Practitioners
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Joseph Nyemah Nyemah
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SOME DEFINITIONS

Several terminologies have been used in this manual. Their connotations are, in some cases, very specific and influenced by the purpose of this manual.

_Aid worker:_ it is used interchangeably with development practitioner and relief worker in this manual to mean the staff or extension agent of a relief organization.

_Community:_ it is used to refer to a group of people, interchangeably used with beneficiaries, local people and the poor. It does not necessarily reflect the classic sense of a traditionally organized group.

_Community assets:_ refer to natural and man made resources, networks, knowledge and wisdom.

_Poverty reduction:_ this is referring to the process of analyzing, designing and implementing relief programs.

ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACF</td>
<td>Action Contre La Faim</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVA</td>
<td>Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis</td>
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<td>LFA</td>
<td>Logical Framework of Activities</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory Action Research</td>
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<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Sustainable Livelihood Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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BACKGROUND

Reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of the poor can have long-lasting results if it is done through locally driven participatory processes. Effective participatory poverty reduction should be built on a process in which power, influence, and decision making reflect a greater local involvement. Unfortunately, this is not working well as decisions and assistance are often pre-defined in offices of relief agencies and taken on the field for implementation. One single obstacle that seems to have no easy solution is the rapid increase of emergencies, which demands quick assistance before beneficiary consultation. This factor is a challenge to emergency agencies such as Action Contre La Faim in their efforts to consult beneficiaries at the onset of interventions. It is also unfortunate that many developing countries are unable to champion and support development initiatives. Their active involvement would mean a catalyst role in promoting the participation of local communities and sustaining livelihood improvement.

Evidently, more learning is still required on the concepts and practice of involving communities in humanitarian relief program design and implementation. Community participation and communal targeting are two development approaches that are being interpreted and practiced in varying ways by different agencies. In some cases, the two approaches are tied together and made to mean the same thing. This manual agrees with their strong interconnections but also thinks that they can be equally independent. The belief that they cannot be divorced has the tendency of leading to conceptual and practical complications. This manual is only a contribution to ACF’s existing literature on the concepts of community-driven participation. The contents do not proclaim perfection but rather suggestions.

**Action Contre La Faim**

Since its creation in 1979, Action Contre La Faim has been working in many countries around the World, implementing programs of Nutrition, Food Security, Health, Water/Sanitation and more recently Child Care Practices. Most of the interventions are initially, a response to emergency crises that can later evolve either into post emergency or
continuous emergency activities in a context of recurrent disaster. By using *community participation and communal targeting*, lots of successful interventions have been achieved over the years. However, most of these practices are not formalized and standardized. As part of the efforts aimed at addressing this weakness, most of the discussions and examples in this manual have been drawn from Action Contre La Faim’s field experience.

**SCOPE OF THE MANUAL**

This manual contains a range of suggested approaches and tools aimed at guiding and supporting expatriates and national staff who are managing Action Contre La Faim’s programs on the field. For those working many years with the organization, this manual will be seen as:

- A standardization of the organization’s field practices in participatory approaches and community-based targeting
- An introduction and adaptation of new tools

For those that are newly recruited, they will find it as an effective guide for learning to use participatory approaches and tools aimed at involving communities in all of the stages of a relief project cycle.

This manual is essentially in two parts focused on different aspects of *community participation*. The first part is contained in chapters one through to four, and is composed of the basic concepts of participation or including and working with communities in relief programs. As a way of presenting practical examples on how some of the critical concepts have been addressed, several case studies are presented in this first part.

The second part is contained in chapter four, which is an introduction and standardization of various participatory tools. The manual concludes with annexes containing references including documents and websites that are recommended for further readings.
CHAPTER ONE : AN INTRODUCTION TO WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

UNDERSTANDING WHAT A COMMUNITY IS

Like most jargons in the development world today, the term “community” can be given several definitions depending on who you are and the objective on your mind. Michael Lewis provides two practical approaches to the question. One sees community as a *locality*, while the other as a *category of people*... These definitions are inline with the field approach of Action Contre La Faim, as they see community as a matter of interaction around shared interests and values that are represented in a particular setting or institution in which members often try to achieve a common goal. *(Adapted from G. Cunningham 2005).*

Community as a locality

When a community is defined as a *locality*, it underlines the structure, dynamics, and utilization of resources that influence the livelihood mechanisms of the inhabited population. Some of the elements in this spectrum are the availability of natural resources such as water, land, forest and so forth that have natural implications in the lives of the people of that locality. This is why, very often, Action Contre La Faim’s:

- Water engineers try to understand the topography of a village in order to setup water points
- Agronomists try to understand climatic and soil characteristics in order to design agricultural programs

Community as a group of people

When it is defined as a target group, it is accounting for the social, psychological, cultural and economic ties and interconnections that influence the survival mechanisms of that group of people or institution. Some of the important elements here concern the local market, common crops, and common diseases, shared beliefs, shared traditional practices and so forth. In this direction, Action Contre La Faim’s
• Water Engineers try to understand who are the people connected by a common water point
• Agronomists/ socio-economists try to understand who are the people connected by a common farming system
• Nutritionists and nurses try to understand who are the people connected by common trends of malnutrition and diseases
• Psychologists try to understand who are the people connected by common trends of stress and or depression

All of the varying characteristics are strategically important in designing and implementing community participatory programs, as described in the following sessions.

**Why understand community as a locality and as a target group?**
The characteristics of the geographical and social setting of a community are important considerations in participatory poverty reduction.

• The physical resources of a community (in terms of how many, seasonality, etc…) have implications in designing participatory programs.
• The cultural beliefs of a community (in terms of ownership of resources, practices, etc…) have implications in designing participatory programs
• The way local people perceive their own vulnerability and how to address it have implications in designing participatory programs
• The psychosocial situation of a community as a target group (in terms of stress, trauma, etc…) have implications in designing participatory programs
• The coping strategies of a community as a target group have implications in designing participatory programs

These can be analyzed through the use of PRA tools such as focus group discussion, household interviews, and so forth. A detailed presentation of these tools is contained in chapters five of this manual.
Linking your understanding of a community and facilitating local participation

Whether as organized groups or as individuals, involving communities in the definition of local needs, and the design and implementation of projects is very essential. Successful ways of facilitating this local participation must be built on a strong understanding of the structure, fabrics and dynamics of the survival mechanisms of the individuals and their interconnectedness. Sustainable ways of running community participatory projects begin with establishing intimacy, trust and developing a deep understanding of the way of life of the group and geographical setting. In this relationship building period, or needs definition and project design stages, recognizing that vulnerable people, though poor, have a strong sense of their own needs and how they should be addressed, is crucial. It is helpful for aid workers to recognize and appreciate this capacity, remain consistent and honest in relating to local communities the whole length of the project period, and whatever the context (emergency or not). This is essential because the manner in which relationships are initially built with communities can have future implications on project local ownership and sustainability.

As Action Contre La Faim is initially responding to emergencies in most cases, the process of relationship building and facilitating local participation would go through a complex transition from a one sided sourcing of assistance to a gradual process of working through social links and encouraging more local participation. The objective of the increased participation is to address power, influence, and decision making and project control in favor of local communities. This transitional process is not always easy both for the field workers and the beneficiaries.
CHAPTER TWO: SOME BASIC CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This chapter is devoted to discussing some of the basic concepts of community participation. Participation in humanitarian relief is a key issue that is of crucial concern to all the stakeholders including governments, multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and even members of community-based groups at the village level. This is essentially because poverty reduction cannot succeed in a sustainable way without the inclusive and active participation of the poor.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION?

Community participation in community-based development is the process of actively involving local people in assessing their own needs, designing and implementing relief projects, and making decisions that affect them.

Pretty et al. (1995) noted that there have been an increasing number of analyses of development projects showing that participation is one of the critical components of success in irrigation, livestock, health, water, sanitation and agriculture. They state that success comes about when people’s ideas and knowledge are valued, and power is given to them to make decisions independently of external agencies.

To allow for qualification of the term participation, a Typology of Participation (Pretty et al., 1995) is referred to in this paper (Figure 2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Characteristics of Each Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Passive Participation</td>
<td>People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without listening to people’s responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participation in Information Giving</td>
<td>People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participation by Consultation</td>
<td>People participate by being consulted, and external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people’s responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people’s views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Participation for Material Incentives</td>
<td>People participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Much on-farm research falls into this category, as farmers provide the fields but are not involved in the experimentation of the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Functional Participation</td>
<td>People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Interactive Participation</td>
<td>People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.</td>
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<td>7. Self-Mobilisation</td>
<td>People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power.</td>
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THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN POVERTY REDUCTION

The analysis of local people about their own vulnerability and how to approach it are often more relevant than those of outsiders. Recognizing and practicing this principle of participation is not always easy to do as outsiders are the providers and controllers of project resources in many cases. However, because the resources are intended to affect the lives of communities, they have to fit into locally defined priorities. Additionally, outsiders will leave at a certain time of a project, hence if the priorities are not locally adapted, projects will definitely fail.

Participation leads to sustainability in poverty reduction: when local communities are consulted and their views considered in needs assessment and project design, we give them control and ownership, which are important for sustainability. The withdrawal of outsiders or aid agencies will cause no harm as the communities will already be in control to a larger extent.

Case study 1: CARE USA in Zimbabwe

CARE USA ran a community-based microfinance project in Zimbabwe in the late nineties by providing loans to poor and low income families. The communities were not involved as to how the project should be designed because they were replicating a successful model from other countries in which they worked. Later, repeated evaluations showed that default rates were high and that the project was making no sustainable impacts. It was decided to go back to the communities to analyze their needs and devise an appropriate approach to the problems by using the appreciative inquiry tool (see chapter five).

After a series of consultations in which the communities were encouraged to design the project, a new model was planned by the communities. The communities proposed to start the project with local savings and later provide loans to community members through a rotating process. The model also introduced an attractive feature of liquidity – cashing out anytime. In the subsequent 3 years, all loans were reimbursed because the money was sourced by the communities. For about 8 years now, the project continues to grow and CARE has pulled out of the process. More community members are loaned and the scheme is being copied by several communities in other parts of the country.

Adapted from Hamadziripi, A. (2005). Microfinance course case study, SFX University
Participation leads to a deeper understanding of local vulnerability: when local communities are consulted and their views are considered, we create an open space for free and confident information sharing about the problem. This will allow outsiders to easily gather more information about the vulnerability context.

Case study 2: Rwandan Red Cross

In 1999, about 5 years after the genocide in Rwanda, the Rwandan Red Cross needed to respond to an acute food crisis in 62 of Rwanda’s 92 districts. The Red Cross hypothesis in the office was to quickly provide food aid, though it did not know precisely what the underlying causes were and who were the most vulnerable. It was suggested that it would be better to ask the local communities to play a lead role in analyzing the needs. The Red Cross first sent a team on the field to all of the districts to do a sensitization campaign focused on its activities. The communities elected representatives from all of the districts representing 13 different sectors to work with the Red Cross in carefully analyzing the problems during a 2 week period. The communities were guided to do mapping, pair wise ranking and VCA exercises. Finally, a number of different local priorities and emphases were deduced, which gave a picture of not only the contemporary situation in the area but also its history, customs and future prospects. Completely different from the Red Cross initial perspectives it was established that the crisis required intervention in the areas of:
- Rotating credit scheme for livestock
- Livestock and animal medicines and pesticides distribution
- Construction of agricultural terraces
- Distribution of diversified seedlings

Adapted from ICRC. Community based food security work in Rwanda, A Rwandan Red Cross experience

Participation leads to appropriate vulnerability targeting and reduction: poor communities in most cases, have an accurate understanding of their own individual and communal needs than outsiders. Working with them through partnership and consultation often leads to appropriate targeting and effective reduction of vulnerability. We only need to develop an atmosphere of trust and sincerity.

Case study 3: the Albanian government

In Albania, when faced with massive unemployment and poverty in a transition period in the early nineties, the Ndihmes Ekonomika (economic support) safety net was implemented to provide assistance to poor rural households that lost jobs. Without involving the communities, the central government administered the assistance bureaucratically through local government ministries but later realized that the assistance
was going to the wrong people in terms of vulnerability. The program was then devolved by asking the local governments and the communities to do the targeting by using a system of block grants. A subsequent evaluation showed that the targeting was accurate and effective, as a consequence of the change in the approach.

*Adapted from Conning, J. & Kevane, M. (2000, p 8). Community based targeting mechanisms for social safety net*

**Participation empowers communities:** when local communities are consulted and involved in all of the stages of a project, we are creating a balance of power and making them to feel important. Poor families and women, who are usually not listened to, will begin to feel a sense of dignity and confidence to act in a positive and proactive way in improving their own lives. In addition to empowerment, consulting local community will instill a sense of responsibility and sincerity in the use of resources.

**Case study 4: CAFOD and local NGOs in Uganda**

In many countries around the World, the use of the “Stepping stones”, (a PRA tool developed in Uganda) is widely in practice. It is a tool used to encourage vulnerable people to analyze their own needs and act proactively in improving their lives. As a consequence of the widespread of the AIDS virus in Uganda, stigma and daily deaths make affected families to lose hope in life and the future. Affected people often discouraged themselves or are prevented by others from playing influential roles in their communities. The stepping stones tool was used in several communities to encourage affected families to regain their sense of self-worth and self-efficacy through various exercises. The exercises involved ways of relating to others assertively without being aggressive in the process of analyzing and deciding how their needs are addressed.

In projects supported by CAFOD and some local NGOs, many local communities have become empowered. Poverty and HIV hit families, particularly women; have become very active in speaking out about their problems, and proposing ways of addressing them. By doing so, they are also regaining influence and self-esteem in the communities. They are more and more able to raise their voices and make contributions to several community efforts, as well as controlling the approach the approach to the problem instead of outsiders.

*Adapted from [http://www.steppingstonesfeedback.org/issues.htm](http://www.steppingstonesfeedback.org/issues.htm)*

For a better community participation to work, outsiders or aid agencies will need to recognize that:
• The way vulnerability is seen from the outside is different from within – we might think that clean water for human consumption is the priority, whereas, local people are equally prioritizing water access for human and animal consumption.

• Policies predefined in offices must be adapted – we might want to target the most vulnerable families for food distribution, but communities might think the better off families should also be targeted. This may be due to the culture of sharing – before we arrived, the better off families were sharing with the poor. If we give the food only to the poor, they will still redistribute the food as required by the cultural setting. Instead of imposing the policy and damaging trust, we should consult and find a better way.

• Local communities are collaborative – if they are not actively collaborating, it could be the way other partners worked with them before our arrival. We should analyze, consult and communicate clearly.
CHAPTER THREE : DECIDING TO USE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This chapter is devoted to discussing when and how to develop a participatory intervention in relief aid.

WHEN TO START COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION?

Usually, a project goes through a 6 stage transition as demonstrated in figure 2:

The Project Cycle

*Figure 3: project cycle*
**Programming stage:** Possible entry point for the project. The overall context is assessed, to identify overall problems, constraints and opportunities. General discussions held (field, head office, donors) taking into account previous experience and Action Contre La Faim strategy at a national and regional levels.

**Identification stage:** Consultation with intended beneficiaries, analysis of the problems they face, and identification of options to address these problems. Ideas for projects are identified and screened for further study.

**Formulation stage:** Relevant project ideas are developed into operational project plans. Beneficiaries and other stakeholders participate in the detailed specification of the project idea. Project assessed for feasibility (whether it is likely to succeed) and sustainability (whether it can generate lasting benefits). On the basis of these assessments a participatory decision is made on whether to draw up a formal project proposal and seek funding for the project.

**Financing stage:** Project proposal submitted to the donor, and a decision is taken whether to fund the project. The donor and ACF formally agree on the modalities of implementation.

**Implementation stage:** Project is mobilized and executed. This may require the tendering and award of contracts for works and supplies.

During implementation, and in consultation with beneficiaries and stakeholders, the project is **monitored** to assess actual progress against planned progress to determine whether the project is on track towards achieving its objectives. If necessary, the project is re-oriented to bring it back on track, or to modify some of its objectives in the light of any significant changes in the context since formulation.

**Evaluation stage:** Assessment of the project to identify what has been achieved and to identify lessons that have been learned. Evaluation findings are used to improve the design of future projects or program. Evaluations may also take place mid-term.

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*Adapted from ACF introduction to working in food security, p. 25-26*

Starting community participation might never be too early but could be late. Poor people are wise, autonomous and know very well what they want in their own capacities. Approaching them with consistency is just as important as approaching a community of business leaders in New York or Paris. Begin to consult and involve communities as soon as you start a project. It will create positive intimacy between you and the communities.
and require from them a strong sense of commitment. If you start later, projects might not be well received and the impacts will not be sustainable.

DEVELOPING PARTICIPATION STAGE BY STAGE

The process of actively involving communities has to unfold gradually, as demonstrated below:

1. **Brainstorming and preparing for needs and context analysis**

   When thinking about a project, it is very important to draw some hypothesis in the office about the nature of the problem. Are the populations traumatized from the shock of a disaster? Is the context a conflict sensitive area? Are there political tensions? Is it a problem of food, water, health or nutrition? Is there gender oppression? And many more…. These will help to define some participatory analysis tools. See chapter five for a detailed presentation of these tools.

**Case study 5: ACF in South Sudan**

In 2004, information from the World Food Program and local communities revealed that there was a chronic humanitarian problem in the Lafon area of South Sudan. Being a principal actor in the area, ACF decided to react, by first inviting the traditional leaders of Lafon and partner agencies, including the government and relief organizations to a brainstorming meeting in the provincial town of Juba. The meeting was about information sharing between the traditional leaders and potential actors on the reported crisis. The meeting tentatively suggested that:

- There were problems of malnutrition
- There was a lack of food and safe drinking water
- There was serious insecurity in the area
- There was a lack of medical facilities and good accessible roads

An assessment team was setup and sent to Lafon to verify the situation and suggest as to how to address the situation.

**Comments:** from a participatory perspective, this process was well done, as local leaders were consulted during the initial brainstorming and planning.

2. **Problem analysis**

   It is important to ascertain the views of local people and understand how they analyze their own vulnerability and use their resources. Stages one and two are activities under programming and identification in the project cycle management.
Case study 5 continues

An inter-agency and multi sector team was set up and did a two week assessment. The assessment involved nutrition screening and the use of focus group discussions, household interviews and observation. It concluded that:
- There was a problem of malnutrition due to poor harvest and social conditions
- People were hungry during most of the year and they were drinking stagnant water
- Sporadic military fighting and communal violence were common
- There were no medical facilities and the roads were extremely inaccessible

The assessment recommended that it would be good to setup a nutrition feeding center, drill bole holes, run a mobile clinic, and implement seeds and tools distribution. How to do it was not discussed in details at this stage.

Comments: The analyses were participatory and accurate. The views of local people were well incorporated.

3. Consultation for program design

After information sharing and initial analysis with communities, we should bring back the final analysis and propositions. At this stage, communities are consulted about how the problem should be addressed. Communities might disagree with our propositions on solving the problem, we must be willing to adapt to their priorities to make project acceptable and sustainable. This stage is under formulation in the project cycle management.

Case study 5 continues

In the office in Juba, ACF convened a second meeting with all the relief and government agencies to present the findings. At the meeting, it was decided that it would be good to design a project that is participatory and uses community based targeting. The participation required local people to freely contribute labor during the construction of nutrition feeding centers and bole holes, as well as the transportation of food items. The team returned to Lafon and proposed this design and was accepted.

Comments: It seemed that at this point, the communities were not well consulted but requested to contribute. Probably, the same process done with the relief and government agencies should have been done with the communities. Their acceptance seemed not to have been genuine. They tried to please ACF, knowing that the arrangement would bring food. There were 2 constraints here (limited time and urgency to act, and extreme inaccessibility between Lafon and the provincial town of Juba).
4. Decision making and implementation

Even though local communities do not have the money and resources, their decisions and influence must be outstanding in the implementation of projects that are aimed at addressing their poverty. This implementation stage is practically looking at the reality of decisions made during consultation and program design.

Case study 5 continues

An implementation team was setup in Juba and dispatched to Lafon to plan the project details with the communities. Consultative meetings were held from community to community. The communities agreed that:
- They will contribute labor for all the construction activities
- They will transport the food periodically to all the feeding centers
- They will not allow the facilities to be affected by any violence

Comments: the commitments of the communities were not genuine. It seemed that ACF did not understand the cultural setting. People do not want to work together, as well as to provide free labor. It seemed that detailed consultation was missed at the design stage. Again, this was influenced by the urgency to act and the coming of the rainy season that would make the region inaccessible.

5. Evaluation of participation

The fifth stage of participation contains two important learning points: the first is a demonstration of the design of a logical framework of activities (LFA), whereas the second is a sample of indicators for evaluating local participation.

Case study 5 continues

A former evaluation exercise was not done with the project. But from all indications, it was crystal clear that time and resources were lost and the project was failure:
- The communities were not willing to provide free labor for anything
- Communal targeting for whatsoever did not fit into that violent cultural setting
- Of course, the rains came and roads became inaccessible

Comments: There were several problems with the project. Arguably, from the outsider perspective, it is assumed that:
- The consultation processes were not detailed, as time was pushing
- The Lafon people do not see the risk of the crisis as it is seen by ACF
- The people of Lafon have a complex culture that was not understood
- They people were not prepared or willing to contribute the requested labor
- The conditions, particularly inaccessibility did not provide working flexibility
**Figure 4: Log frame for participation**

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Intervention Logic</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs)</th>
<th>Sources of Verification (SOVs)</th>
<th>Pre-conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERALL OBJECTIVE</strong></td>
<td>Communities are actively involved in the process of addressing their poverty</td>
<td>• Beneficiaries’ role, power, influence and knowledge in a project</td>
<td>Project evaluation report</td>
<td>Donor provides funding Barriers to local participation are overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT PURPOSE</strong></td>
<td>Communities take full control of local projects and the impacts are sustainable</td>
<td>• Degree of beneficiaries’ decision</td>
<td>Project evaluation report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Degree of beneficiaries’ ownership</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Degree of beneficiaries’ commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESULTS</strong></td>
<td>• Vulnerability targeting is accurate</td>
<td>• Project impacts and relevance</td>
<td>Project activity report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communities are empowered</td>
<td>• Degree of beneficiaries’ assertiveness</td>
<td>Needs analysis reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Projects are sustainable</td>
<td>• Degree of beneficiaries’ control</td>
<td>Interview guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Degree of beneficiaries’ input in analysis</td>
<td>Training book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Degree of local knowledge in project design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Degree of collaboration between beneficiaries and aid agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Beneficiaries’ satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td>• Working with communities to analyze their own vulnerabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using local views to design projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Giving communities greater roles in project implementation</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A more detailed description of some indicators for evaluating beneficiaries’ participation is presented below:

**A. Beneficiaries’ role in the planning phase**
- degree of participation in original idea
- degree of participation in project planning
- beneficiary commitment to the project

**B. Beneficiaries’ role in implementation phase**
- degree of participation in implementation
- degree of indigenous knowledge used vs. dependency on outside experts
- degree of organization of beneficiaries

**C. Beneficiaries’ role in evaluation itself**
- degree of participation in evaluation
- reflection of local views in evaluation report

Examples of ACF participatory project activities in Sri Lanka are presented in case studies one and two.
Example 1: demonstrates the framework of an initial meeting with a community

Objective: to see the real motivation of the people and to determine if it is possible to work together.

**Case study 6: ACF Sri Lanka**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Messages</th>
<th>Methodology &amp; tools</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Presentation of ACF and objective of this meeting | - who is ACF,  
- what ACF is doing,  
- how and with whom ACF is working,  
- objective = to know and discuss their water situation. | Talk by ACF team. | 10 min. |
| 2. Identification of water problems faced by the community | - do they face problems with water?  
- which problems? | Participatory discussion. | 10 min. |
| 3. Identification of possible solutions and constraints | - what is already done by them, others  
- what are the diverse possible solutions,  
- which solutions are realistic (sustainable) and which ones are not. | Participatory discussion animated by ACF team. | 10 min. |
| 4. Explanation of ACF type of support | - what ACF could do to help them (example: to provide skilled labor, expensive materials, technical supervision, etc),  
- ACF staff should not promise anything to the audience!!! | Participatory discussion animated by ACF team. | 10 min. |
| 5. Villagers' participation | - what the villagers could do (example: to provide non skilled labors, to check the work progress, etc). | Participatory discussion animated by ACF team. | 10 min. |
| 6. Closure / Conclusion | - to review the main points discussed. | Participatory discussion. | 10 min. |
Example 2: demonstrates the framework of a second meeting

Objective: awareness on maintenance problems and formation of a well committee.

Case study 7: ACF Sri Lanka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Messages</th>
<th>Methodology &amp; Tools</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reminder of the main messages and conclusions from the first meeting.</td>
<td>- reminder of the problems they face with water and the possible solutions, - reminder of how ACF can help them and what they can do.</td>
<td>Participatory discussion.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Importance of maintenance</td>
<td>- why maintenance is important, - why they need to work as a group rather than working alone, - why the maintenance of the well has to be done by themselves and not by NGOs.</td>
<td>Participatory discussion: ACF use short stories (big stone, dress gift, etc) as illustration and starting point for a discussion between the beneficiaries.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Well committee</td>
<td>- why do we think it is important to have a well committee, - which general qualities must have the well committee members, - what is the structure of the well committee and what are the functions of each member.</td>
<td>Participatory discussion. Use &quot;key words&quot; such as leadership, involvement, sense of ownership…</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Formation of the well committee</td>
<td>- well committee election, - signature of the Well Committee Statutes.</td>
<td>Discussion between the beneficiaries.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Community agreement</td>
<td>- review how ACF and the villagers (through the well committee) will work together, - signature of the Community Agreement.</td>
<td>Participatory discussion.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments of the Program Coordinator “one strength of the approach is that there is local involvement at all levels, however there were still some difficulties and weaknesses. Some communities ceased to exist at the completion of the well construction.

In the two examples above, the process of participation reflects a sequence of consistency and emphasis on issues such as needs (what is the benefit of the project?), capacity (what each party can contribute) and leadership (who does what as an individual).
CHAPTER FOUR : FACILITATING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This chapter discusses some of the key issues that an aid worker needs to consider when planning and designing a participatory project.

SOME FACTORS AND BARRIERS
When facilitating community participation it is important to be aware of the following characteristics:

- The capacity of communities to participate
- Psychosocial impacts induced by shock from a disaster, war and displacement
- The awareness of communities about the benefits of participation
- Cultural barriers to inclusive participation
- Environmental barriers to participation
- Wrong priorities and interests as barriers to participation
- Communal groupings and networks

The capacity of a community to participate
Whether communities are participating by contributing knowledge in analysis and decision making, labor or influence in exercising control, material or cash, it is very important to investigate their capacity (technical and organizational) in those regards. A quick assessment activity would be necessary as a starting point. A suggested framework of such assessment is presented below:

Objective - To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the community
Methodology – direct group discussion with different segments of the group by using the capacity and vulnerability analysis tool. An example of the CVA tools used by a food security program in South Sudan is presented in case study 8:
Case study 8: ACF South Sudan, Kampala Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Vulnerability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material resources</td>
<td>Enough farmland</td>
<td>Lack of tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>Adult men and women</td>
<td>Forced military duties reduce time for farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local management</td>
<td>Good leadership characteristics</td>
<td>Forced military rotations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very low incomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming skills</td>
<td>Mono cropping (sorghum)</td>
<td>Lack of mixed cropping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial situation</td>
<td>Open to discuss</td>
<td>Depression from military presence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively, the SWOT tool (see chapter five) can also be used. These tools can be used for assessing different problems when adapted.

**Psychosocial impacts induced by shock from a disaster, or war**

In the aftermath of a disaster or in a violent conflict setting, it is common that people are depressed and traumatized. Unfortunately, in most cases, only the physical needs can be obvious, and as such, they are prioritized by aid workers. Aid workers also, have a tendency of ignoring psychosocial needs on the grounds that they fall outside of organizational mandate. Though the psychosocial needs are often hidden, they can affect working relationship with communities as well as their capacity to support recovery activities. Case studies nine and ten reflect the bearings that repeated forced displacement and abrupt natural disaster can have on affected populations.

Case study 9: ACF Liberia

In 2003, rural communities in Liberia began to show a new reaction toward certain relief projects that would last more than six months before yielding an impact. For example, they would not cultivate a crop that is harvested after six months. Despite rains and children being cold, they would not want to invest in building shelters. Instead of going to gather firewood, they would congregate in small groups speculating about fleeing the following day or reflecting on how they escaped and lost all of their assets a few weeks ago. They also felt offended by repeated assessments done by the numerous agencies, which probably had bearings on the gathered information and analysis.

This was happening because they were being forcefully displaced repeatedly, missing family members and abandoning farm products, livestock and household assets. Raping cases were also reported. These people were psychologically affected and some were depressed and traumatized, leading to social deconstruction.
Case study 10: ACF Sri Lanka

In the immediate aftermath of the December 2004 tsunami crisis in Sri Lanka, some families did not want to talk about certain things that reminded them about the tsunami disaster. Some did not want to return to their original villages fearing a recurrence of the disaster. The fashion in which politicians handled the situation also had some negative bearings on the affected population.

The people were depressed and traumatized from the shock, which killed half families and destroyed houses instantly. People were coping with quick weddings and unplanned pregnancies.

All aid workers are not psychologist and will not be. However, it is important to consider this component. To deal with this situation aid workers have to be very much observant focusing on the following points:

- Openness in communication and social interaction
- Body language when talking with a group of people
- Signs of fatigue and a lack of motivation or interest
- Positioning (packed and ready to be moved) of household assets
- Trust and solidarity
- Having network for referrals
- Female headed household, or other family and social changes due to the difficulties
- “Addictions”

The issue of recurrent assessment can be a crucial problem that can irritate depressed people. It is not noticed because it viewed as a part of the helping tools. To address the problem, the first option is to have more information sharing between partners, by looking at existing reports, followed by observation and casual discussions. In programming, quick impact projects should be upfront.

The awareness of communities about the benefit of their participation

Awareness in this regard is more than just local people being aware of what they think they can do. In a greater way, it has to do with motivation and the willingness to associate
with a project. For local people to be motivated and willing, efforts should be made to clarify the ownership and benefits that link them to the project. Although these issues are simple and well known, they are often forgotten.

- Clarity about ownership

*Is the project owned by the community or the relief agency?* The lack of clarity on project ownership can deceive aid workers about the commitment and sustainability of local people’s participation. Very often, local people try to impress practitioners from outside by doing what they are asked to do even if they disagree. Sometimes they show a *fluid motivation* if they see an immediate benefit, particularly knowing that aid agencies can provide assistance. For example, if they think that they are working for the aid agency by participating, they are likely to only act in that capacity in the presence of extension agents. In some cases, the projects can even be unacceptable but they will try to cooperate in the presence of extension agents, particularly expatriate staff that are seen to have authority over assistance. A case study of wrong identification and a lack of clarity over ownership is presented in case study eleven:

*Case study 11: ACF South Sudan*

In 2002, ACF ran a food security project in the village of Walan-Walang, South Sudan. The project identified the construction of a communal granary through a less participatory process that led to a wrong analysis and additionally failed to clarify ownership of the granary. In a community meeting, it was agreed that the community provides part of the materials available in the village. ACF would buy the rest of the materials that were not locally available. Some community members decided to provide the materials not locally available, as they would be bought. The locally available materials that were supposed to be provided by the community without pay could not be provided as was agreed. The community members were only willing to work when the expatriate made a visit. The project dragged on for about two years and became a failure.

In this example, people were not actively involved in the analysis, hence the identification was wrong and the community did not think the granary belonged to them. To avoid this kind of problem, it is important to clearly identify local priorities. The pairwise tool, presented in the last chapter of this manual is strongly suggested. It is also advised to avoid pre-deciding that activity replication between villages is relevant and
will be effective. Needs might be different from village to village, despite being in the same geographical area.

- Clarity about benefit
Local people will not participate with motivation, sincerity and commitment when they are not given enough influence and clarity about the benefit of a project. The provision of knowledge, time and other resources by local people must be guaranteed by a benefit during and at the end of a project. In some cases, while a project is ongoing, there must be some form of incentive to compensate local participation that is having immediate bearings on the labor and time resources of communities. However, the incentive has to be defined such that it is not harmful to the sustainability of the project that is being implemented and development in general.

The *do no harm incentive* has to consider the cost of participation and what the project will offer in bringing about a change. When a household decides to contribute labor to the establishment of a new income generating activity, the new activity will have bearing on family labor allocations. It might be that they will now drop the collection of firewood for sale so as to fully participate. When this decision is taken, the cost of participation becomes a gap (though it might be short lived) reflecting the contribution that firewood-income was making to the family budget, or a reorganization of the family in terms of labor, child care and so forth. This aspect is very delicate.

Incentive that refers to what the project has to offer has to do with the tangible output of the project on livelihood. Will the project improve household income or access to food? Will the project reduce water born diseases? Will the project reduce malnutrition? The tangible output has to affect livelihood in a positive way. Examples of the two types of incentives are presented in case study twelve and thirteen:
Case study 12: ACF Afghanistan “Taking care of the cost of participation”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of participation</th>
<th>Incentive for participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACF started a well construction program in a mountainous area in the centre of Afghanistan. The project required the community to participate in digging the wells. In the previous three years, ACF ran a water/sanitation project in the community by using cash for work. An assessment, which served as the entry point for this shift in the project approach showed that it would be very difficult for the communities to work without paying them money.</td>
<td>After long and sometimes difficult meetings, most communities finally accepted to dig the wells for free. We finally provided WFP food ration for the wives of the workers attending hygiene training (but we were not sure to have the food when we started the project, so we never mentioned it before they dug the wells). By avoiding paying them for this work, ACF expected communities to replicate the project (meaning to dig more wells) without the help of ACF. It also turned out that those who refused did not really need a new water supply infrastructure, and were just attracted by the salaries that ACF would have provided for the well digging.</td>
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</table>

Comment from the field team:
“This method should be applied carefully, only when we are sure that communities have enough resources (financial and physical) to carry out the requested work”.

Comment from the FS Department:
“Food and/or cash for training should not be encouraged except in very specific situations”
Adapted from ACF Afghanistan (2005)

Case study 13: ACF Liberia, “Taking care of incentive (future benefit)”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of participation</th>
<th>Benefits for participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| In 2001, ACF ran a fisheries project in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh, Liberia. Because the town is a non coastal town and has no rivers, fish is scarce and can be costly. The project setup inland fishponds that required communities to dig the pits, while ACF provided fingerlings, feeds and technical support. Fish from the ponds were sold to the community members. Part of the income from the sale was used to restock the ponds and to provide feeds. | • Fish was no more scarce  
• Women did not have to travel to buy fish and the time (3hrs) saved could be used to work on other household activities  
• Community could balance protein diet  
• Price could be controlled (reduced by 20%) by the community and the saved money could be used to increase household access to other items. |

Observation: pit digging was tedious but communities were motivated and determined to carry out the task and setup their fishponds.
Adapted from ACF Liberia (2001)

The factors of benefit and ownership were well addressed in these two case studies.
Cultural barriers to inclusive participation

The process of participation has to be sensitive to the local cultural setting of projects. In some settings, it might be unacceptable to combine women with men in a particular project activity. When this kind of cultural norm is not regarded, the likelihood is that either the men or the women will not fully participate as may be required in a particular development activity. For example, during analysis and consultation, women might not contribute their valuable knowledge if they are mixed with men in some cases. It will be the same for the lowest and upper castes.

Another important cultural element is the inability of people to work together. This can be a barrier, particularly when projects are tied with communal targeting in design. If beneficiaries do not relate to each other, any participatory project that is tied with communal targeting will never work successfully. Any results obtained will not be sustainable. The chapatti chat/diagram (figure 12) is suggested as a good PRA tool for evaluating this aspect.

Environmental barriers to participation

Projects have to fit into the environmental context of the community. This can work if a participatory analysis and consultation of local communities have been done and indigenous knowledge has been well incorporated within a project design. Local people will not fully participate if a project will affect an important social or economic feature of their local environment. For example, it could be a project that could affect fishing or livestock rearing. A simple example is presented in case study 14:

Case study 14: ACF South Sudan

In 2003, ACF ran a water/sanitation project in the village of Magorkele, South Sudan. The community members are agro-pastoralists who migrate seasonally in search for water due to a lack of permanent water source in the village. Guinea worm infections were common as they drank from stagnant water. Obviously, the physical needs that appeared to the water/sanitation team were about clean water for human consumption.

Analysis and local consultations were not detailed due to time constraints and the urgency to respond. A few months after setting up the water point, a pond of stagnant water gradually developed in front of the pump. The stagnant water was breeding
mosquitoes that threatened the community with malaria. On the other hand, it provided a huge relief to the community, as their livestock could drink from it.

As part of the project design, it is the responsibility of the community to fence the water points so as to prevent it from being damaged by children and animals. In addition to this arrangement, without detailed analysis and local consultation, the team solution was to get rid of the stagnant water by setting up a vegetable garden.

Though the community initially agreed to construct the fence, they showed no motivation. The expatriate thought to motivate them by providing the fencing materials and vegetable seeds and tools. When he arrived, they quickly joined him to construct the fence, but as soon as he left they abandoned the work. Later, it was realized that they would not build the fence because it would prevent their livestock from drinking.

In this case, the team discussed with the community but the analysis and consultation were not participatory, consultative and detailed to realize that the project would produce several impacts and not just clean water for human consumption. They were deceived by the sharpness of obvious needs. Additionally, the stagnant water might have been a consequence of poor technical design. What is important to note is that the community failed to voice out their disagreement.

Wrong priorities and interests as barriers to participation

As have already been mentioned, in many poor communities, poverty, hunger, diseases, and so forth are obvious. Upon arrival in a poor community, you are likely to see a polluted well, a malnourished child or a failed crop field. The fact that these are easily noticed can also deceive practitioners about the true picture of the situation from the perspective of the affected people. It is common that other needs are not noticeable though they are as crucial as those that can be seen. It is also common that though the needs are present, the priorities and interests of the affected people are different from the perspective of practitioners.

When the priorities and interests of poor people are missed, local participation will not work and projects will risk being unsustainable. Though there is time constraint, it is useful to look at vulnerability and addressing vulnerability from the perspective of the affected people by consulting and adapting headquarters’ prepared projects to local
influence and needs. This is where using the sustainable integrated livelihood approach can also be useful.

**Communal groupings and networks**
Channeling relief assistance through communal groups can be one effective way of enhancing local participation. It can lead to sustainability as local people can be in control of projects. It can also be an effective way of organizing assistance delivery, as local people can take on leadership roles. However, these can only work if communities are consulted and the process is well analyzed and considers the following factors:

- Existing social ties
- Existing economic ties
- Common culture
- Shared livelihood objectives
- Existing local organizations

All of the characteristics above provide a web of interconnectedness that stimulates a sense and practice of *we-ness* (appropriation) in a community. The *we-ness* is a strong nursery bed for landing and nurturing a communal targeting in delivering relief assistance. In poor communities – whether in slums, shantytowns or villages, there may be several organizations. In most cases, such associations or groups are informal and can even be unknown to field workers, as they do not have written records and standard planning for meetings, etc… Despite this unique characteristic, these associations and groups provide the forum in which the poor can find the opportunity of expressing their views and wishes with ease – because members feel a strong sense of common social class. Conversely, these groupings are a good forum for local consultation in needs analysis and intervention planning. Understanding these interconnections requires a closer look at the patterns and processes of decision-making in livelihood support activities. Figure five contains demonstrations of the fashions in which ACF has used community approach.
Figure 5: demonstrated ACF examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/ sector</th>
<th>How <em>community approach</em> has been used?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Nutrition & care practices | • Training groups of mothers or care-takers of malnourished children in food preparation  
                             • Home treatment                                                                 |
| Food security            | • Working with groups of farmers on improved agricultural practices  
                             • Working with groups of women for communal vegetable gardening  
                             • Working with group of farmers for running communal seed banks |
| Water/ sanitation        | • Training community groups in communal water point management  
                             • Training community groups in maintenance and repair of equipment  
                             • Training groups in waste management |
| Hygiene promotion        | • Training community groups in disease prevention  
                             • Working with community groups in managing community health post |

*Note: these examples are not exhaustive.*

The success of any of these approaches is largely influenced by the ties that exist and knit the individuals into groups. Communal targeting can contribute to the path of sustainability for development infrastructure when external agencies are gone.

When opting for communal targeting, it is important to prioritize working with existing groups. Group creation should be avoided or should be the last resort, as it is time and resource consuming. Also, the chances are that created groups will cease to exist when aid workers are gone. If creating groups comes as the last resort for a project, sometime because of risk management, ensure that they are linked to existing local structures such as local NGOs or relevant government agencies. These organizations can in a good scenario, continue to strengthen the groups. A case study of ACF group creation is presented in case study 15:
Case study 15: ACF Tajikistan

In Tajikistan, ACF ran a livestock and poultry project on a credit or revolving scheme. The arrangement was that after one year, the farmers should return the animals. Unfortunately, at the end of the first cycle, the farmers failed to return the animals. It was noticed that a true sense of ownership to the animals did not really occur to the farmers. Consequently, the team reviewed the approach and made the following changes:

- To get the farmers involved, it was decided to guide them choose the type of livestock.
- As a measure of risk management, local groups were formed
- A local NGO was identified and given part of the implementation of the project

As a result of these steps, at the end of the following cycle, all of the farmers returned their credits in cash rather than animals. The project continues to be run successfully by the local NGO through a cash credit for livestock scheme.

This particular case study links communal targeting, risk management and local participation. The assistance began to be channeled through the created group structures, which actually created a new dimension of order in terms of local management. Additionally, and maybe more importantly, the groups were given more power by taking on the responsibility of risk management that is very important for the sustainability of micro-credit related programs. You will find some tools in chapter five for group identification.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COMMUNITY BASED GROUPS

The process of capacity building can be both in the form of material, finance, training, etc. The definition of material and financial assistance in capacity building is largely dependent on the nature of the program and needs. Consequently, this section will focus more on the training aspect. Training should also suit the identified needs and should be adapted to the capacity of the beneficiaries.

When organizing training the following aspects should be well considered in consultation with trainees/ beneficiaries:

- Timing of the training
- Location of the training
- Selection of the beneficiaries
- Methodology of the training
**Timing** - training should not coincide with the busy schedule of the beneficiaries. For example, attendance will be poor, particularly for women if a training event is organized during the harvest season. The duration of a training session should also not be more than three hours as participants are likely to get bored.

**Location** – it should be reachable and negotiated with the participants to consider time, social aspects for women as well as for security.

**Beneficiary selection** – the right people should be selected so that the desired impact is obtained.

**Methodology** – trainers should be people culturally acceptable to the beneficiaries; for example, it might be women for women. Methods should be simple, adapted and interactive. Beneficiaries should be involved in more discussions than just listening. At the beginning of training, it is important to ask trainees/beneficiaries to voice out their expectations followed by clarifications by the facilitators.

**Group size** – it is effective and inclusive to train a fairly small group of people. The group of people in a training session should not be more than 20. Gendered issues should also be considered. In some cultures women will not be comfortable to do a particular training with men.

Working with groups is a delicate task that requires a process of continuous learning. It is always important to keep a close eye on the evolutions of the group.

**The process of withdrawal – total handover**

Exiting from working with communal groups is always marked by delicacy. In some cases, as development agencies pull way, created groups also cease to exist. In the scenario of existing groups, they have the tendency of returning to where they were when the development agency arrived. When these negative scenarios are unfolding, a few
influential persons that have been in the groups can quickly begin to personalize the assets and resources of the groups.

There is no perfect way of preventing this cease to exist and return to where we were as it is largely influenced by behavior of the individuals. However, there are some basic measures that can be taken to address such failure in advance. In addition to the characteristics of effective community groups presented earlier, before totally exiting, development practitioners should ensure that the group:

- Has got the necessary training in leadership and asset management
- Has got clear objectives how to continue with the future
- Has got some legal or civil status

Good training in leadership and asset management can allow a group to keep its members together through equal and fair distribution of benefits. The ability to develop clear objectives can avoid uncertainties among group members. The acquisition of a legal status can often prevent manipulation by powerful institutions and individuals. Importantly, it allows them the civil rights to do what is inherent in their status.

Some characteristics of effective community groups include:

- Are inclusive (members feel wanted and valuable)
- Are realistic (incorporate different points of view from members)
- Are reflective and contemplative (what they are doing, why and how)
- Are a safe place to be (freedom and confidence to express individual ideas)
- Share leadership

_S. Peck, The different Drum (1987)._}

These are important to consider when supporting communal groups.
CHAPTER FIVE : COMMUNITY PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

Chapter five introduces several community-based participatory tools that can be used to analyze, design and implement community-driven interventions. These tools are in two categories – the first is for analysis whereas the second category is a set of tools tailored for analysis and problem solving. These are action oriented tools.

PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS TOOLS

These set of tools can be used for participatory analysis and program design through a process of consultation and collaboration between aid workers and local people. Though they are simple and very popular, it is often helpful to repeatedly speak about them as they can be used in several ways when adapted to the context.
Focus group discussion

**Duration:** 1 to 2 hours

**Materials:** prepare in advance the questions you want to ask, make discussion open. Papers, note pads, markers and pens, or consider sticks and stones when pens and papers are not suitable.

**Purpose:** a fairly small discussion group (6 to 10 people) led by an aid worker or facilitator to provide a better understanding and description of several local perspectives in a community or local organization. It can be single or mixed gender but single is recommended if you want women to speak deeply. The same is true for different social classes such as age, caste, religious and ethnic groups. Do not raise hopes of receiving assistance as a consequence of interview. It can be useful to ascertain:
- Locally defined priorities
- Resource awareness and environmental interests
- Gender perspectives

**Objectives:** Cover maximum range of relevant topics of the context, or less topics but in details
- Gather concrete and detailed accounts of participants’ experiences
- Explore participants’ feelings and opinions in depth

**Process:**
- Step 1: define key issues you want to discuss and develop open-ended questions for an unstructured discussion around those issues.
- Step 2: often, it is good that each participant makes an individual, uninterrupted statement of introduction in the beginning

**Some tips for the facilitator:** introduce initial topic followed by unstructured discussion. Introduce second topic based mainly on points that have already been raised. Allow discussion to come to an end on its own with a subtle intervention to direct it to the point if necessary. Ensure that everyone is participating and avoid close questions. You can hold off comments that do not quite fit but reintroduce them at a logical point, i.e. “I recall that some of you mentioned something a little different earlier and I wonder how that fits into what we are discussion now”. End interview with final summary.

A sample of organizational questions for a vegetable association. These can be adapted.
- What is the purpose of the vegetable association?
- What resources does it have? Who supports?
- How does the association make decisions?
- How do responsibilities for men and women in the association vary?
Household interview

*Duration:* 1 hour for each interview  
*Materials:* note taking pads and pens

*Purpose:* involving one or more members of the household, it is a way of understanding the functioning of the household. It gives physical insights of surroundings linked to answers of questions asked.

*Process:*  
step 1: introduce yourself clearly and present objectives of the interview, without raising hopes of something coming as a consequence of the interview. Answer questions that household might ask. Ask to ensure that time and local are suitable.

Step 2: if the man is with the woman and he is dominating, clarify in a subtle tone that the perspectives of the woman on certain issues are crucial. Alternatively, choose to address certain issues individually at the end of the interview. Always ensure equal participation between the man and woman and different classes within the household. Remember that intra-household participation can also be challenging.

*Tips for the interviewer:* when entering the home, be happy to meet the people, but do not appear inquisitive, else you will be viewed suspicious. Always allow a prelude of ordinary discussions (greetings, news, and so forth) before going into the interview. Depending on the objective of the interview, it is important to focus observation on powerless family members (the physical appearance of children and women), environment (food storage, house condition, and so forth).
Semi-directive Interviews Techniques

The technique of semi-directive interviews consists of permitting the people to express their point of view while guiding the logic and the subject of discussion all the while without imposing a response (as opposed to ‘quantitative’ questionnaires where the questions are closed).

The semi-directive interview is a method of acquiring knowledge of the context and of specifying the hypotheses concerning the vulnerability of the populations. It involves organized discussions with a group of people and/or individuals. The subjects of discussion are predetermined: and the groups are organized according to the subject to be addressed. For example, themes of food habits, the cover of food needs are preferentially addressed to a group of women. The group of women is composed of 5 to 7 people including elderly women, women having small children.

The questions are asked during the interview which appears informal and non-conventional but which should be structured and guided. Using a list or a guide, the team asks open ended questions on the subjects to be addressed. The guide is established according to the objectives of the interview and the context of intervention; for example, the guide mentioned below has been prepared for a follow-up interview of food distribution with Liberian refugees residing in the Ivory Coast.

Otherwise, new subjects are addressed little by little during the development of the analysis (the guides are not strict). The information collected can be either quantitative or qualitative in form (hypothesis, proposals).

A few key points for using semi-directive interviews

* Use the 6 reference points

* Estimate the response: will it be...
  - A fact?
  - An opinion?
  - A rumor?

* Estimate the responses:
  - Suppose that...
  - But why?...
  - Please develop your idea...
  - Is there anything you want to add? ...

The size of the group of people should not exceed 10 to 15 individuals; often, it is preferable to organize discussions with several groups during a short period (1 to 2 hours) rather than one group composed of numerous individuals in which the conversations could become long and difficult to maintain on the intended subjects.

The discussions allow the rapid identification of the people having an ‘objective’ knowledge of one of the addressed subjects or those who are dynamic and involved in the community. These people are qualified as ‘resource people.’ The pursuit of interviews or the deepening of the subject can be realized through these people. Even so, in certain contexts, cultural habits or even the political situation are such that only a few people will speak during the interviews. In this case, it is important, when possible, to develop semi-directive interviews with people individually.
The information obtained from group interviews is interesting to compare with that obtained from the heads of families during the family visits. It is especially important at this level to plan discussions whenever possible with the husband as well as the wife.

In certain cases, it can quickly and clearly seem that the discussion drifts off course, and that the interview will produce nothing in relation to the starting objectives. In this case it is preferable to bring it to a rapid close so as to not lose time. This should nevertheless be done in a ‘diplomatic’ fashion, without leaving the group feeling as though the discussion had been useless…

- **The art of asking questions:** to prevent the introduction of a bias, it is necessary to avoid:
  - Closed or directed questions: instead of ‘Do you do your market in Madrid?’ ask ‘Where do you do your market?’ In this way the response is not limited to yes or no, and a more complete explanation is solicited.
  - Implicit presumptions: ‘What is your basic food, rice or millet?’ If it is neither rice nor millet, the person will probably correct the interviewer in the majority of cases. But out of courtesy some people will respond with one or the two possibilities in error.
  - Vague questions: ‘Is it difficult to draw water?’ If you are referring to the physical difficulty of this activity, your interlocutors will perhaps refer to the time used for this chore.
  - Unknown units of measure: ‘How many liters of water do you use per day?’ The liter is not a systematically known unit. It is preferential to identify the units of measures known and if necessary to later translate them into liters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WHAT YOU SHOULD DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Prepare a list of subjects to address. Write them up as a guide for use during the interview</td>
<td>* Accept the first response as evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Remember that the interview is structured by the team</td>
<td>* Ask closed questions (yes/no responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Relaxed conversation – be concise in the questions (one idea per question)</td>
<td>* Interrupt the ‘resource’ people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Present the team members and clearly explain the objectives</td>
<td>* Question a ‘resource person’ showing hesitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Allow all the team members to ask questions</td>
<td>* Question a busy person too long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Develop the subjects using keys of semi-directive interviews</td>
<td>* Show agreement or disagreement with the responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Take on a neutral attitude, listen attentively and note what is ‘not said’</td>
<td>* Ask questions composed of more than one idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Take notes during and after</td>
<td>* Let it be known to a person that a verification is necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Choose the people in such a way as to obtain diverse points of view (cf map of ‘resource people’)</td>
<td>* Ask delicate questions in front of several people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Take the names of the 'resource people'</td>
<td>* Make value judgments on the conditions of life or the food proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Have an open mind and be polite</td>
<td>* Act in a manner inappropriate to the situation (attitude)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Recognize the dynamic groups and organize ‘brainstorming’ sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Pair-wise ranking

*Duration:* about 1 hour

*Materials:* note pads and pens

*Purpose:* in a community group of about 6 to 10 people, community priorities are locally defined through a process of consultation and participation.

*Objective:* to understand locally defined vulnerability and the way to address them in the order of community priorities

*Process:*

1. setup a matrix listing the most important five to ten issues of concern along the horizontal and vertical axes. Give each topic a letter or symbol chosen by the participants.
2. ask each small group to compare the urgency of issue 1 on the horizontal axis with issues 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 on the vertical. Write a letter or symbol in each box that corresponds to the most important issue of the two which are being compared.
3. add the number of times each letter or symbol appears in the matrix. The more times it appears, the higher its rank.

### Figure 6: pair wise ranking exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of water</th>
<th>Hunger</th>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Lack of school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of water</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of school</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Hunger</td>
<td>Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores:* Hunger 6, Water 4, Lack of water 1, Disease 1, Lack of school 1

The exercise shows that hunger is the main priority followed by water.

*Step 4:* ask the group to choose someone to present the list of ranked priorities to the larger group. Discuss similarities and differences in the problems and priorities of each group. This tool is very consultative in nature.
Wealth ranking

**Duration:** about 2 hours  
**Materials:** not pads, pens, markers, flip charts, materials for drawing on the ground

**Purpose:** local people usually have a strong understanding of their social and economic class differences. You use this knowledge through consultation to obtain their perspectives about population classification according to wealth status or holdings. This information can be helpful in many ways. For example, better off families can be a strong asset for community capacity building and facilitating sustainable participation.

**Objective:**  
to identify criteria that distinguish the poor from the rich  
to understand the social and economic characteristics of the various groupings  
to identify proportions of the population in each category

**Process:**  
begin by asking the criteria or factors that make some people to be in different economic classes.  
to introduce the classes, talk about the rich and ask if there are other classes?  
identify all of the social and economic characteristics (try to quantify, eg. 10 cows, 2 wives, 9 children, etc...)  
try to establish a proportion of the population size in each group (see proportional piling in the following section)

**Note:** never allow the process to be too personal – talking special few persons in the community. Talking about wealth is a sensitive issue. Try to visit some homes representing the various categories.

**Figure 7: example of a wealth ranking data analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Farm size</th>
<th>Animal holdings</th>
<th>Monthly income</th>
<th>Social standing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>40 – 50%</td>
<td>0.5 – 1.5 acres</td>
<td>Caretakers of cattle</td>
<td>&lt; $20 or 10 - $19</td>
<td>Monogamists 5 – 20 dpd.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: dpd. – refers to dependents.

Brief analytic comments: you will realize that the poor do not have animals but working for the middle and rich class – this is very common and represent and element of connectedness. Some social characteristics of the poor can be mixed. For example, their family size can be the smallest or the largest. The key problem can often be a lack of productive social capital, influence, etc… In participatory program analysis and planning, you can consult representatives of these different social classes to develop interventions that are pertinent to their vulnerability.
**Triangulation**

*Duration:* depends on planning and location of sources  

*Materials:* note pads and pens

*Purpose:* guarantee the reliability and validity of data by cross checking with three sources. It helps to ensure participatory analysis and project design, that are accurate and adapted to local setting. This tool can be used at several levels including triangulation with analysts, with interviewees and with tools.

*Objective:* to ensure that information and analysis are reliable and valid

*Process:* simply, the questions that you have asked to poor people separately, should also be asked to the medium and rich classes separately in the same community. This can validate your data. Also, for reliability, you can ask to poor people the same question three times but in different fashions using different wordings. Interestingly, also, you can choose to address outsider bias by doing intra-team triangulation (ensuring that an assessment team is at least composed of a sociologist, a water engineer and a medical practitioner).

*Figure 8: Example of interviewee triangulation*

For example, if you are trying to ascertain specific aspects of vulnerability in a community, it might be helpful to cross check your information with these sources separately. Try to come back to the larger group to discuss. You might also realize that the various sources complement each other and that vital gaps have been filled.
**Proportional piling**

*Duration:* 30 minutes  
*Materials:* stones, not pads, pens and a spot to demonstrate on the ground.

*Purpose:* This is actually a participatory technique used in acquiring estimates and proportions, where numbers are needed to quantify trends in analysis. It can be used as a sub technique in most of the tools indicated in this manual. Local people who do not have skills of formal *numeracy* are made to develop quantitative data in the form of proportions that reflect local settings.

*Objective:* to acquire quantitative data in the form of proportions from communities that cannot read and write.

*Process:* the basis of your calculation is 100%. Provide as many stones as possible so as to give interviewees the flexibility of trying to establish the most accurate estimates of proportions. If you choose to provide 20 stones, each has a 5% value, for 10, each as a 10% value. Avoid interviewees from taking up stones one by one and representing individuals – you want them to do proportions. For example, in wealth ranking, put 20 stones on the ground and say “these stones represent all of the people in the community. Can you please try to show whether the rich are more than the poor or the poor are more than the middle class?” Try to triangulate the question by a cyclic comparison.

*Figure 9: Example of a proportional piling*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor class</th>
<th>Medium class</th>
<th>Rich class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Poor class stones" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Medium class stones" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Rich class stones" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the interviewer, you have to facilitate this process by making all the participants to actively participate, particularly by commenting on the variations. Allow time for them to consult and change if they find it necessary.
Observation

Observation is actually not a participatory tool as it is done discretely and only by the extension agent. It is only mentioned in this manual to highlight its importance, particularly in contexts where psychosocial situations ranging from stress, depression and so forth are eminent. It is also a reminder to raise the fact that observation is often helpful if it is planned.

**Purpose:** as an additional tool to the direct approach to data collection, it captures sensitive aspects of subjects discussed and provides physical accounts to analysis.

**Objective:** to gather additional and sensitive information without necessarily talking to the affected people.

**Materials:** it is suggested in some cases, to draft a list containing a couple of issues that the team wants to particularly follow.

**Process:** try to take a walk and have a look at the surroundings, sometimes discussing sporadically but not taking notes and not making people to think that you have a particular purpose on mind. Hold casual discussions. Following is a demonstrated example:

Personal observation of the physical condition of the local surroundings, condition of crops, livestock, the physical appearance of people and their living conditions, the interactions between people, etc.
Transect Walk

A walk through the area, specifically seeking out areas of interest; agricultural areas, water points, schools, markets, health centers or hospitals, areas that have been abandoned, pagodas, mosques, etc.

Ensures that the team explores the whole village and looks at the differences in the areas of the village.

Do:

- Walk the periphery.
- Walk in a zigzag, circle, or curve
- Talk to people you meet while walking.
- Encourage willing farmers and villagers to accompany you and ask them to describe the conditions.
- Look carefully and listen.
- Observe and record.
- Question everything you see: who, what, where, when, why, how.
- Cross-check and triangulate ask location A about location B, ask location B about location A; ask how they are different, similar, etc.

Don’t:

- Walk only in a straight line.
- Walk quickly.
- Lecture.
- Rush.

Adapted from: Htwe, E. E. & Sandilands, D. ACF Burma, Wa assessment tool kit
Seasonal calendar preparation

*Duration:* about 1 hour  
*Materials:* note taking pads and pens that can allow you to draw a table

*Purpose:* interviewees can be the same number as for a focus group or household interview. It helps to ascertain information on traditional planning of activities within a community, which is crucial in designing intervention.

*Objective:* to know at what time of the year, agricultural, economic, social activities and so forth are done.

*Process:* ask community to list all the activities and then ask as to when during the year the various tasks are achieved.

*Figure 10: seasonal calendar*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice farming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House repairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weddings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual cultural festivals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


If you want to plan a particular project, this calendar might help you in terms of time relevance. For example, maybe July and August might not be ideal for doing long assessments, as communities will be busy gathering harvest. It is important to indicate when people are busy, and not busy. This is a very good consultative tool for planning and designing projects in terms of accurate timing. It can also be adapted for determining seasonal vulnerability.

Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis (CVA)

*Duration:* about 1 hour  
*Materials:* note pads and pens for drawing tables. Local materials for drawing on the ground.

*Purpose:* can be a sub tool in a focus group discussion held with community representatives to ascertain local perspectives of community vulnerability. It can be very effective at the end of a focus group discussion as a way of making summaries.

*Objective:* to identify specific strengths and weaknesses of a community and to outline local priorities in addressing vulnerability.

*Process:* whether you are using it as a single tool or at the end of a focus group discussion, list in a table the various aspects of livelihood. Then ask community to speak first about their capacities in terms of what they have.

*Figure 11: example of CVA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Vulnerability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material resources</td>
<td>Enough farmland</td>
<td>Lack of tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>Adult men and women</td>
<td>Forced military duties reduce time for farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local management</td>
<td>Good leadership characters</td>
<td>Forced military rotations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very low incomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming skills</td>
<td>Mono cropping (sorghum)</td>
<td>Lack of mixed cropping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial situation</td>
<td>Open to discuss</td>
<td>Depression from military presence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The chapatti diagram or institutional diagramming

**Duration:** 1 hour  
**Materials:** note pads, flip chats, markers and local drawing materials

**Purpose:** in a group discussion of about 6 to 10 people of different social groups, community members define existing groups and their interconnections.

**Process:**
- A spot on the ground will be selected to represent the locality
- Circles representing communal groups and associations will be drawn and placed on the designated spot
- The circles will vary in size reflecting differences in the sizes of the various groups or associations
- In placing the circles on the ground, they should intercept each other to reflect interconnections between communal groups

A simple example is demonstrated below:

*Figure 12: the chapatti diagram*

![Diagram](image)

**Analysis**
- There are five communal groups in the village
- The charcoal club is the largest community group in the village
- The charcoal club has members from the rest of the four communal groups
- The fisherman community is only linked to the charcoal association
- The charcoal, diary, cattle and vegetable groups have members across the three groups

*Adapted from world bank participation source book (1996)*

Following this stage, each group can now be approached to look at their objectives, activities, assets, achievements, failures, strengths and weaknesses. The results from this stage will define the process of group assistance delivery and capacity building.
**Decision making analysis (who decides?)**

*Duration:* one hour  
*Materi als:* note pads, flip chats, markers and pens

*Purpose:* Decision making processes at the household, organizational or community level largely depend on gender, status, age or other markers of identity. This tool helps in providing an understanding of the dynamics of decision making processes through a participatory discussion with about 20 people of different gender and social classes.

*Objective:* to obtain an idea of the way community members interprets power and influence in decision making processes

*Process:* Step 1: the group can choose two common but realistic problems. One should be mainly concerned with household and another with community. Then ask that the group is split into gender or social groups.

- Step 2: for each of the problems draft some questions that the groups should answer:
  
  **Household decision making process**
  - What decisions are taking to responsibilities, gender, cultural norm, etc…?
  - How are decisions made by different people within a family similar?

  **Community or organizational decision making process**
  - How is information shared?
  - Is decision making body representative of one, a few, or many interests of the community?
  - How do you choose decision makers?

- Step 3: bring the groups together in a larger groups to discuss the findings and allow a participatory sharing of information on the various aspects both at the household and community levels.

*Note:* it is important both at the beginning and the end to summarize the purpose of the interview.
Mapping analysis

A grouping map is a plan, which is drawn by the villagers where they plot out the various wealth groups of their village / hamlet. It is a tool in which the villagers plot out by themselves the various houses are located.

Figure 13: mapping exercise

For the purpose of this assessment it provides quantitative information, where various groups are in the village. Mapping out the location / positions of different wealth categories of the population:

- The very poor
- The poor
- The middle (the better off)
- The rich.

Example adapted from:
Htwe, E. E. & Sandilands, D. ACF Burma, Wa assessment tool kit
These tools are related to what social theorists refer to as the participatory action research (PAR) tools in the field of Adult Education. They are a process that combines analysis and problem solving. In most cases they are attractive to rural communities due to the high level of local participation and being action focused.

### Strengthens, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

*Duration:* about 1 hour  
*Materials:* note pads and pens for drawing table. Also local materials for drawing on the ground.

*Purpose:* by using the same organization of a focus group discussion it encourages and empowers communities to develop action plans by building on strengths and opportunities.

*Process:* like with the capacity and vulnerability tool, do a bit of preparation in advance. List the relevant characteristics of livelihood in your table. In a consultative tone with the community, do the same on the ground or a large board. Ask interviewees to identify the various elements in horizontal order.

*Objective:* to consult and collaborate with communities in developing action or intervention plans by using existing opportunities.

**Figure 14: example of a SWOT analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local material</td>
<td>Forests</td>
<td>2 hours away</td>
<td>Motor transport</td>
<td>Logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>young men</td>
<td>Not organized</td>
<td>Approachable</td>
<td>Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local management</td>
<td>Influential chief</td>
<td>Poor communication</td>
<td>Local structures</td>
<td>Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming skills</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Not updated</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Environmental changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial situation</td>
<td>Information sharing</td>
<td>Lack of recreation</td>
<td>Psychologist present</td>
<td>Constant insecurity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Leaky bucket

*Duration:* 1 to 2 hours  
*Materials:* note pads, pens and materials for local drawing

*Purpose:* initially designed as a tool for community economic analysis, it can be done with about 6 to 10 community members to encourage local action plan development by analyzing local economies and identifying opportunities not explored.

*Process:* help community members to draw a bucket representing their community. Inside the bucket, separate government, households and institutions. Outside of the bucket, above and below the bucket, indicate sources of external inflows and outflows respectively. By using arrows, ask communities to show the economic flows of the community internally and externally.
**Objective:** in a participatory manner, to analyze workings of a local economy and identify potential opportunities that can be developed into action plans by communities.

**Figure 15: example of a Leaky bucket**

Size of arrows reflects variation in quantity.
**Economic inflows**
USA – those who moved and settled in the USA are sending money back home to their relatives on a regular basis. This remittance is important for paying children’s school fees and preparing for Christmas festival. **This is the largest inflow in the community.**

Ivory Coast – the Ivory Coast is home to an important market for the sale of rubber, palm oil, cocoa, sugar cane and gold from Behwan. After transaction, part of the money is converted into dry goods. The purchased dry goods such as cosmetics and clothes, and the balance cash are returned to Behwan directly to households and the small company operators.

Monrovia – due to the civil war, political and economic links between Monrovia and the rural areas are drastically reduced. The rural population uses the money earned from the Ivory Coast to purchase from Monrovia specific items, particularly rice and Maggie cubes that are cultural foods.

Pleebo – this City serves as a middleman market between Behwan and the Ivory Coast. Some of the agricultural produce are sold in Pleebo and the money is directly converted into dry goods for households and the plantation owners.

**Note:** as a consequence of the civil war, the local government has no economic links with the national government in Monrovia.

**Economic outflows**
Behwan is sourcing several agricultural produce including palm oil, rubber, sugar cane and cocoa for the population of Pleebo and the neighboring Ivory Coast. There is also an outflow of cash to finance education and purchase dry goods and household energy items like paraffin and candles. The gold is also taken to the markets of Pleebo and Ivory Coast. The small investors, who are not citizens of Behwan, are transferring their profits to Pleebo and probably Ivory Coast for savings, **which are the largest outflows.**

**Inner economic flows**

- **Households** → **Local government**: as the national government is not functional, all of the local government facilities and services are supported by the local population exclusively. They provide wages for the staff at the clinic, school and others. Those that work there offer services to the local population in return. In another way, the wages come back into the community as the staff are all members of the community.

- **Households** → **small enterprises**: households provide services while the companies in return provide wages and food items. Wages and food items from the companies are the largest inner flows within the community.

- **Households** → **gold mines**: households provide labor and food items for sale to the gold mines; while in return, the gold mines provide cash payment for the labor and food items. Money from the gold mines is the largest inner flows in the community.

- **Gold mines** → **small companies**: the small companies supply the gold mines with food items, while the gold mines provide cash in return.

**Opportunities – to be discussed and formulated into action plan by community**

Actually, there are lots of economic activities in Behwan with good trade links that bring in cash for the local population. Unfortunately, there is no bank or any saving facilities/services in the community. Setting up a community-based microfinance is a possible opportunity that could be explored and useful for the population.
The second point concerns the processing of some agricultural produce that are taken from the community in their raw state. It will be beneficial, particularly in terms of employment if the palm oil, rubber, cassava, etc… are processed. This will require the installation of processing plants. This opportunity will not only provide employment opportunity but will also give an added value to the produce that will increase income for the farmers.

*Adapted from Nyemah, J. (2005). Economic analysis training, ST. FX. University*

### The Sustainable Integrated Livelihood Approach (SLA)

The sustainable livelihood approach is an action research or problem solving tool that was developed from the work of Robert Chambers and others in the 1980s. It evolved from the concern that poverty alleviation was being too much confined to the promotion of income generating activities. Proponents of this approach realized the needs to take into account other factors such as:

- The physical and psychosocial vulnerability context in which the poor are located
- The coping strategies of the poor
- The human, financial, natural, social and physical assets of the poor

Being action oriented the sustainable livelihood approach addresses community needs holistically and has the tendency of promoting local participation. Once the main needs of a community are addressed according to local priorities and interests, the likelihood of active and sustainable participation is high. If a project only addresses the lack of water in a community in the face of a lack of farming tools, local people will appreciate but will not be motivated to participate in a sustainable way. In the case of ACF field activities, this can be easily achieved by consulting with local people in designing a project that will integrate food security, nutrition, water/sanitation, health and psychosocial.

### Using the Appreciative Inquiry tool

Though fairly new in the developing countries, the Appreciative Inquiry tool is more and more being practiced by Oxfam, the Coady International Institute, Care and several microfinance institutions in Asia. It proves to be effective in promoting attitudes of sustainable local participation. Appreciative Inquiry is the study and exploration of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best. This approach to personal change and organizational change is based on the assumption that questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes, and dreams are themselves transformational. It is said that through human communication, (inquiry and dialogue) people can shift their attention and action away from problem analysis to lift up worthy ideas and productive possibilities for the future.

*Duration:* about 2 hours a day for four days (this can be adapted to minimize time).

*Purpose:* you use group interaction and reflection to inspire people to develop collective actions for development based on previous experiences.

*Objective:* to identify a locally defined project through a participatory process.

*Materials:* note pads, markers, pens, flip charts and local materials for drawing on the ground.

*Process:* Built on a 4 – D stage approach, Appreciative Inquiry is a powerful tool that can gives confidence to communities to prepare participatory actions for local development. The 4 – D stages are presented below:
**Discover** – by working with community groups, this step is a discovery of the best of what is and what has been. The results are stories and maps of successes of the community.

**Dream** – at this stage, community members collectively try to see what some possible activities related to the success of the past that could be undertaken.

**Design** – In large groups or within small groups, community members draw on discoveries and dreams to select high and quick impact development activities.

**Destiny** – community members at this point, work out actions that support their innovations and aspirations for a development change.

*Adapted from Whitney, D. & Trosten-Bloom, A. 2002*

The driving point of this exercise is that it stimulates communities to act positively by building on past successes. However, there is no doubt that there are several constraints. One of them is the fact that it consumes a lot of time. Adapting it to the working orientation of ACF, it would work more if the focus is placed on the aspects of inquiring and appreciating the strengthens, and successes of a community. It might not be automatic (circumstance might change), but by recognizing that a community was able to independently manage the construction of a shallow well or communal granary, some degree of motivation and confidence could be created in that community that it can also do a similar project.

The important point about this tool is the strength of inquiry and appreciation. There is a lot to mention about this tool. Detailed information can be accessed in http://www.iisd.org/ai. There are several videos and detailed information from field practice on this tool that can easily be located in North American universities (www.brandeis.edu, www.sit.edu, www.stfx.ca, etc…). Success from the field use of this tool has spurred further research leading to related participatory tools such as Creative Inquiry and Collaborative Inquiry that are being used in Adult Education and Community development.

**Exchange field visit between communities**

This is a tool used to facilitate experience sharing, group learning and motivation.

*Purpose:* to make communities identify the productive activities of other communities through exchange visits.

*Objective:* to motivate communities and encourage participation and local initiatives.

*Process:* find communities that are performing very well in terms of managing local initiatives and participation. Find other communities with a contrary or poor performance record. Try to organize exchange visits. Sometimes, you will need to provide transportation if necessary. Let the weaker communities visit the stronger ones. The visits have to be planned time in advance. Make the host community to prepare a presentation of their overall history including how they got started, leadership structure, objectives, activities, information and benefit sharing, how they deal with critical incidents and so forth. During this presentation, allow questions and answers among the participants. Conclude the visit with a sight seeing of field project activities (water points, health centers, crop fields, etc…) if possible.
ANNEXES

Reference
There are several documents and websites that provide a wide range of information on community participation. Some are academic, whereas others have a professional focus. Below are a combination of materials reviewed to develop this manual and suggested further reading materials:

Documents
ACF. (2004). *Food Security pre-departure training materials*

Caffarella, R.S. (2002). *Planning programs for adult learners* (2nd ed.).
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass


Coirolo, L. et al. (2001). *Community based rural development, reducing rural poverty from the ground up*


Cunningham, G. (2005). *Community economic analysis, participant manual*
IFAP. (1992). *Towards self-supporting farmers’ organizations*

Htwe, E. E. & Sandilands, D. *ACF Burma, Wa assessment tool kit*


Mayfield, J. B. (1986). *Go to the people, releasing the rural poor through the people school.*


Nyemah, J. (2005). *St. Francis Xavier University, Community economic analysis paper*


Slocum, R. et al. (1995). *Power and participation – tools for change*

Us EPA office of sustainable ecosystems and communities. (1998). *Sustainable community indicators trainers’ workshop*


**Internet**

http://www.iisd.org/ai/

http://www.infed.org/community/b-compar.htm

http://www.rcpla.org

http://www.iapad.org/links_participation.htm

http://www.lastfirst.net

www.iied.org/NR/agbioliv/pla_note/index.html

http://www.hc-scgc.ca/hppb/wired/community.html

http://www.scn.org/cmp

http://www.steppingstonesfeedback.org/issues.htm