# Participatory Methodology Facilitation Guide


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*"Guide for Participatory Appraisal, Monitoring and Evaluation (PAME)"*

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***Please refer to Appendix B for the list of references and resources used in producing this guide.***

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# Chapter 1: Purpose and Overview of this Guide

## 1.1. *Purpose of this guide*

The intention of this guide is to familiarise community development workers with the knowledge and skills required for using participatory development methodologies. This guide should be seen as a reference and resource manual that will help guide development workers new to this field. This manual should preferably be introduced to development workers with a significant experiential training programme facilitated by skilled development workers / trainers.

This guide provides the basis for understanding participatory methodologies and we encourage the reader to explore other texts listed in the reference section at the end of this document. However, nothing can teach these approaches better than a mentored process during actual implementation and subsequent experience and self-evaluation.

## 1.2. *Who is this guide for?*

This guide is intended as a manual for the following people:

- ☑ Government and non-government community development workers.
- ☑ Government and non-government development planners.
- ☑ Community based development field workers.

## 1.3. *How this guide is structured*

This guide is structured as follows:

- ☑ **Chapter 1:** A description of the purpose of this document and its intended target users.
- ☑ **Chapter 2:** A background and introduction to participatory methodologies allowing the user to understand the basic principles and the reasons why these methodologies are used.
- ☑ **Chapter 3:** An introduction to the basic principles and methods for participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- ☑ **Chapter 4:** This section helps the reader understand the skills, core methods, planning methods and reporting requirements required by a good facilitator. This includes a description of the basic facilitators toolkit.
- ☑ **Chapter 5:** This section describes the processes necessary to plan your work well and to be able to produce meaningful reports of your findings.
- ☑ **Chapter 6:** A step-by-step guide through the process including a description of which tools to use at each stage.
- ☑ **Appendices:** Provides a reference guide of the seven-step process and a detailed list of further references.

# Chapter 2: Introducing Participatory Methodologies

## 2.1. *What are participatory methods?*

You could just as well ask, “What is a developmental process?” Is it something a government or development organisation does *for* a community, or is it something a government or development organisation does to *assist* a community to make *informed* choices and *actions* in order to improve the livelihoods of the community members? Too often governments have made the error of imposing development solutions on communities. Regardless of their good intentions, external agents cannot possibly understand all local community issues, cultural considerations and conditions, resulting in the implementation of ‘solutions’ that are all too often inappropriate and unacceptable to the community. As a result, these *top-down* solutions are not sustainable.

Participatory methodologies have been developed in response to these sustainability problems and involve the use of processes and tools that allow external agents such as governments and development organisations to work *with* communities to arrive at sustainable and acceptable solutions to development problems.

Participatory methodologies recognise that people within communities are *best placed* to make decisions that affect their lives. Participatory approaches inherently believe in and build on the skills, knowledge, experience and culture of community groupings, in order to engage them in designing and implementing their own development goals.

This said, it must be noted that participatory methods are only part of a broader development process. A participatory development process must include a full commitment to:

- ☑ Processes in which people with a legitimate interest (stakeholders) influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them. In other words:
    - ✓ Involvement of stakeholders in all phases of a development project cycle.
    - ✓ Promotion of the role of civil society in the development process.
    - ✓ Use of participatory methodologies to help ensure *real* and *meaningful* participation by all, especially including those who may be illiterate.
    - ✓ A full commitment by all to allow real stakeholder participation to become a part of any normal development process.

### 2.2. *Why use participatory methodologies?*

Participatory methodologies have gained considerable support from donors, governments and practitioners around the world since the 1980s. These approaches emerged and gained popularity as alternatives to the ‘blueprint’ approach to top-down development employed by many extension agents, international agencies and research institutions. Participatory methodologies have subsequently been developed and refined for different purposes. Some are focused broadly, like PRA (**P**articipatory **R**ural **A**ppraisal) while others have been designed for a specific sector, like PHAST (**P**articipatory **H**ygiene **a**nd **S**anitation **T**ransformation) in the water supply and environmental sanitation sector.

The reason for the increasing popularity of participatory methodologies is the recognition that development projects utilising participatory methodologies are more *sustainable* over the long term. Community ‘ownership’ of projects is greatly enhanced when people at local level meaningfully assess their problems, design interventions to address these problems, implement their strategies and manage their interventions over time.

Real participation *empowers* and *mobilises* people as actors and overseers of their own development. The benefits extend well beyond the single development initiative. People participating in such processes develop critical skills and experience. The spin-offs of this are improved self-development processes, improved local economic development and therefore more sustainable communities and societies.

Participatory approaches help to encourage the participation of individuals in group-processes, no matter their age, sex, social class or educational background. The methodologies are particularly useful for encouraging the participation of women in male dominated societies.

Participation can:

- ☑ Improve project design by:
    - ✓ Giving more accurate data on environmental, social and cultural issues.
    - ✓ Giving better understanding of stakeholders' felt needs and priorities.
- ☑ Help resolve / manage conflict by:
    - ✓ Identifying common ground.
    - ✓ Finding solutions that serve the needs of all.
- ☑ Strengthen local institutional capacities such as:
    - ✓ Management skills.
    - ✓ Self-reliance.
    - ✓ Self-esteem and confidence.
    - ✓ Transparency and accountability.
    - ✓ Access to greater resources.
- ☑ Provide better monitoring of the equitable distribution of the benefits, so that:
    - ✓ Remedial action can be taken quickly and easily.
    - ✓ Fairness and commitment are ensured.
    - ✓ Improved credibility of the processes is ensured.

*People look after things better when they have been part of decision making and implementation, than when others have planned and implemented for them. The solution may not be the best, but it is their solution and they are therefore more likely to maintain and support it.*

## 2.3. Core principles of participatory methodologies

The majority of participatory methodologies used today are based on a set of principles called SARAR:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **S***elf-esteem* | - | is built through active participation, through being at the centre of your own development. |
| **A***ssociative strengths* | - | having and taking strength from a mix of people and their skills resulting in better decisions and more support in implementing them. |
| **R***esourcefulness* | - | local people are resourceful in taking initiative and finding solutions to problems that affect them. |
| **A***ction-planning* | - | local people can plan and take action - they are not passive recipients. |
| **R***esponsibility* | - | taking responsibility for the outcomes local people identify and commit to (local people only have as much power to take action as their self responsibility is inspired and supported through participatory planning and decision-making processes). |

By, interpreting or ‘unpacking’ these principles in the context of sustainable development, we understand that:

- ☑ Development is people-centred.
- ☑ Development is not a process in a single direction, but a process of continuous adaptation, problem solving and exploitation of opportunities. The reasons why problems occur are always complex and often circular in nature, never simple or linear.
- ☑ Local conditions are diverse and complex and change rapidly.
- ☑ Even though people may be poor, they are knowledgeable and capable of self-reliant organisation. All individuals in a community have the ability to understand their own development opportunities and constraints.
- ☑ There must be community participation in and ownership of all processes.
- ☑ Communities must take responsibility for decision making and action planning.
- ☑ Communities must be able to make informed, appropriate local choices.
- ☑ Communities must take responsibility for implementation.
- ☑ Communities must take responsibility for sustaining their actions.
- ☑ Local capacity development must be built into the process.
- ☑ Governments, development organisations and development professionals must transform to put poor people, their ideas and insights, first.

### 2.4. *Strengths and weaknesses of participatory methodologies*

No one methodology is foolproof. It is therefore important to highlight some of the strengths and weaknesses of participatory approaches.

As noted above, the underlying premise of participatory methodologies is that people (regardless of age, gender, educational background, economic situation or social status) have the skills and insights to analyse, plan, implement, assess and monitor or modify development projects that affect their lives. More importantly, proponents of participatory approaches contend that local people are best suited to such planning and programming, given their intimate understanding of their world, and of what is and is not possible within that world. This means development agents become facilitators rather than key role players or designers in a development project.

Participatory approaches, therefore, are designed “to enable rural people to do their own investigations, to share their knowledge and teach us, to do the analysis and presentations, to plan and to own outcomes” *(Chambers 1983)*

Evaluations of participatory methodologies have demonstrated the following strengths:

- ☑ Community management of projects is achievable.
- ☑ Commitment is considerable as these projects are owned and managed by local communities.
- ☑ Local people, regardless of economic means, are willing and able to contribute both financial and human resources to their development if they feel they have played the central role in the planning, design and implementation of the project.
- ☑ The chances of interventions being sustainable are greatly improved.
- ☑ ‘Spin-off’ internal development initiatives are frequent.

- ☑ The need for government subsidies for services is reduced or eliminated in projects with a participatory focus.

Many people have viewed participatory methodologies as 'soft', 'unscientific' and time consuming[1]. And, despite the growing popularity of participatory approaches to development, the reality is that qualitative programming does not command the same respect or have the same influence in the policy making process as quantitative inquiries. These concerns have been challenged by many that utilise participatory approaches in the field, but this debate is beyond the scope of this guide.

Common weaknesses of participatory programming that should be borne in mind include:

- ☑ The lack of clarity about the nature and dynamics of 'participation', including how power relations at local level can often shape participatory programmes.
- ☑ The assumption that facilitators are neutral observers in the process is misguided.
- ☑ The reality that much of what is labelled participatory is in fact extractive.
- ☑ The wrong assumption that participatory methodologies are, by themselves, empowering.
- ☑ The reality that tools can be manipulated to ensure an outcome that fits with what the facilitator wants.
- ☑ The tendency of the analysis to be anecdotal or to give great significance to the insights generated by a relatively small number of unspecified participants.
- ☑ The reality, that many participatory approaches are now being applied like a blueprint. Reasons are complex, but are mainly because facilitators and planners do not have a clear understanding of the participatory methodologies and their principles.

### *2.5. Participatory framework*

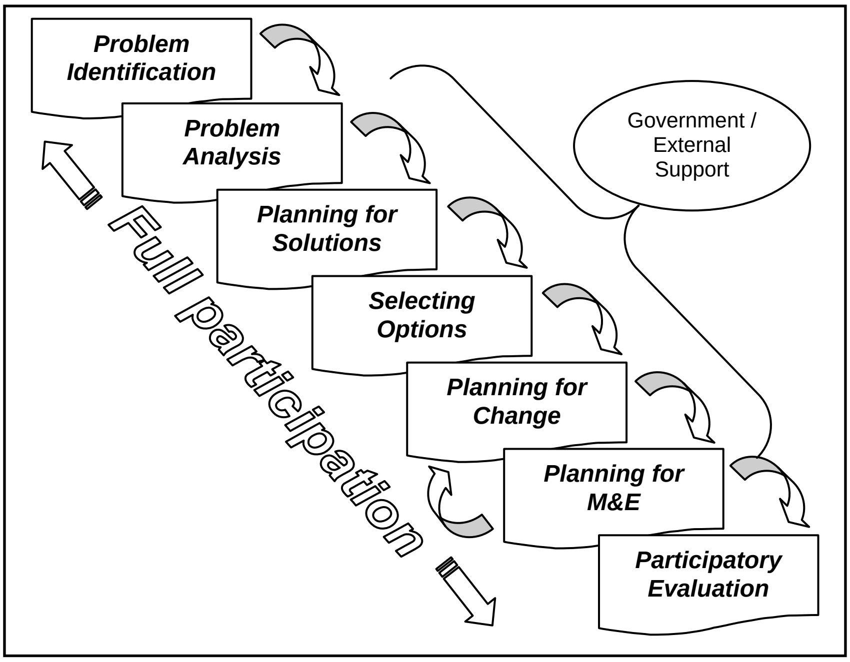


**Figure 1:** Participatory process framework.

[1] This is not true if well facilitated. Moreover, participatory practitioners constantly point out that top-down failed projects (of which there are many here and abroad) require additional time and resources to fix, and that this should be included in the calculations of time and costs in the longer term.

The participatory process framework shown in Figure 1 defines seven steps that are followed in any participatory development process. In fact, these steps are no different from those a good municipal engineer would follow for rectifying problems on a water system in an urban area. The key difference in the participatory process is that these steps involve full and real participation by community members, hopefully with the full support of their government authorities. Each step is briefly described below:

**STEP 1: Problem Identification:** This step uses extremely open-ended tools and activities to explore and discover the real problems in the community. If too many problems are identified, it may be necessary to ask the group to prioritise them.

**STEP 2: Problem Analysis:** The identified problems are analysed by using tools that assist the group to identify:

- ☑ The extent of the problem.
- ☑ The real impacts of the problem.
- ☑ Any related problems or factors.

**STEP 3: Planning for Solutions:** Here the group goes through a process of identifying:

- ☑ Possible solutions to the problem.
- ☑ The relative impacts of each of the solutions on the problem.
- ☑ Possible resources (people, materials, funding, etc) that would be needed for each solution.

**STEP 4: Selecting Options:** All the solutions are then prioritised into groupings that allow the community group to select those that will have the biggest impact in solving the problem and will also be the most feasible to implement with the available resources.

**STEP 5: Planning for Change:** The selected solutions are then scrutinised and detailed implementation plans are made.

**STEP 6: Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation:** Before or during the early stages of implementation, a plan is put in place to assist the community to monitor and evaluate the progress, impact, success and failure of the implementation process. The plans that are included should make provision for taking corrective action if required.

**STEP 7: Participatory Evaluation:** After implementation, whether successful or not, the community should go through a frank and participatory evaluation of the process. This will help them identify whether or not any further actions are required. It will also assist them to learn from the process to improve future development processes.

The methods and tools for implementing these seven steps as a facilitator are discussed in further detail in Chapter 6 below.

# Chapter 3: Participatory methods for monitoring and evaluation

Steps six and seven within the participatory framework presented above, require some further definition due to their critical role within a sustainable development process. This section serves to provide an introduction to participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E). Sections 3.3 and 3.4 provide more in-depth discussions on these two areas of participatory methodologies. Sections 6.7 and 6.8 provide further details on the steps required and the tools used for PM&E.

## *3.1. What is participatory monitoring and evaluation?*

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is a process of learning from experience. It helps us to learn, and it ensures that we plan better next time, or improve upon existing ways of doing things. It is above all, a system developed primarily for use by those who are beneficiaries of a project or program. As part of a *self-management* system, it enables the various partners in development to learn from experience, from successes and from failures, and to do better in future. Most importantly, if monitoring also happens at local level, rather than only at development or government agencies, it enables corrective action to be taken at the lowest and most immediate level. As a result, the need for costly external interventions to address problems emerging from monitoring, is minimised.

The methodologies employed for participatory monitoring and evaluation are essentially the same. The monitoring process looks at providing a system of basic information on an ongoing basis and allows a fluid adaptation of implementation processes. The evaluation process, on the other hand, allows for more periodic in-depth assessments and introspection of performance and usually plays a larger role in informing methodology and policy changes.

### 3.1.1. Principles of participatory monitoring and evaluation

At the heart of PM&E, are four principles (directly linked to the general principles of participatory methodologies):

- ☑ **Participation**, which means opening up the design of the process to include those most directly affected, and agreeing to analyse data together.
- ☑ The inclusiveness of PM&E requires **negotiation** to reach agreement about what will be monitored or evaluated, how and when data will be collected and analysed, what the data actually means, and how findings will be shared, and who will take corrective action on which issues.
- ☑ This leads to **learning** that becomes the basis for subsequent improvement and corrective action.
- ☑ Since the number, role and skills of stakeholders, the external environment, and other factors change over time, **flexibility** is essential.

### 3.1.2. Practical applications of participatory monitoring and evaluation

PM&E can be used for many purposes, for example:

- ☑ Governments and aid organisations can use it as a way of becoming more accountable, by giving communities the opportunity to speak out about local impacts.
- ☑ At a community level, PM&E can be used to help people to sustain local initiatives and manage conflicts.

### 3.2. Participatory baselines

A participatory baseline provides a description and information, mainly from the internal stakeholder's perspective, of a specific situation at a specific time. It is done so that activities can be focused, and change can be measured by comparison with similar situations at some future time. Information is identified and collected to describe the present situation as it specifically relates to the objectives. For example, if one of the objectives is to increase the local food production in a community, the baseline information required might include:

- ☑ What is the present food production?
- ☑ What are the current foods grown, by whom and how?
- ☑ What are the current farming practices?
- ☑ What is household food consumption?

A participatory baseline enables insiders and outsiders to measure and evaluate change in specific conditions providing a common understanding, from the beginning, of how change will be measured. The baseline is the base to which any future monitoring and evaluation process will be compared.

The process of defining a baseline follows a similar procedure to that of participatory monitoring and evaluation as described in sections 6.7 and 6.8. Many of the tools, as described in , can be used for this process.

### 3.3. Participatory monitoring

Participatory monitoring of a project is the planned collection, analysis and dissemination of information by local stakeholders for the purposes of informing them on the progress of the project. To be truly participatory, the decisions on the type of information to collect, how to collect it, how to analyse it and the means of dissemination, lies with the local stakeholders.

The main purpose of participatory monitoring is to provide information during the life of the project, so that adjustments and modifications can be made if necessary.

Participatory monitoring ensures that all role players agree on the objectives of the project and agree on how progress will be monitored. Keeping track of activities by recording information on an ongoing basis, and taking the time to stop and analyse the information monitored, can provide important and immediate feedback. This information can also be used in the future for participatory evaluations.

The main principles of participatory monitoring processes can be summarised as follows:

- ☑ Monitoring system designed by local stakeholders.
- ☑ External monitoring needs defined from local monitoring needs, not the other way round
- ☑ Provides ongoing information on project progress.
- ☑ Ensures information transparency.
- ☑ Information is analysed locally.
- ☑ Follow-up actions defined and implemented locally.

The following is a list of some of the advantages of participatory monitoring systems:

- ☑ Provides an ongoing picture:
    - ✓ Participatory monitoring provides an ongoing picture that allows the community to determine whether activities are progressing as

planned. It may also show when activities are not leading to objectives, so that early adjustments can be made.

- ☑ Problems are identified and solutions sought early:
  - ✓ Participatory monitoring provides an 'early warning' that identifies problems at an early stage. Solutions can then be sought before the problems get out of hand.
  - ✓ Because local stakeholders own the development process and the monitoring system, the incentive to take action is high. As a result action is usually taken quickly without the intervention of outsiders.
- ☑ Good standards are maintained:
  - ✓ Continuous feedback from local stakeholders throughout the life of the activities ensures that the quality of the activities is sufficient to provide good results.
- ☑ Resources are used effectively:
  - ✓ Participatory monitoring can effectively control the resources that are required to produce a certain effect, or help to distribute resources differently to get a better effect.
  - ✓ Because this is done locally in communities that are accustomed to resource scarcities, the efficiency of use of available resources naturally improves.
- ☑ Complete picture of project is produced:
  - ✓ When local stakeholders are in control of monitoring, the results are examined relative to past local experience. This broader picture enhances all other benefits of monitoring.
- ☑ Information base for future evaluations:
  - ✓ Both insiders and outsiders can benefit from the information base provided by participatory monitoring, which can provide realistic information while also showing trends.

While participatory monitoring can be introduced at any stage, it is best introduced at the beginning of a project process, before activities are implemented. The entire monitoring system can be designed as part of the overall participatory project design. If the activities are already ongoing, there are still many benefits to be had from introducing participatory monitoring. If the current monitoring is not working well, if the information that is generated is not useful to local stakeholders, or if other participatory approaches are being tried, introducing participatory monitoring will be appropriate. It is useful to compare the kind and value of information from before and after the introduction of participatory monitoring, to clearly be able to see its benefits and to learn from the process.

### *3.4. Participatory evaluation*

Participatory evaluation involves the collective examination and assessment of a program or project by stakeholders and role-players. It is people-centred whereby project stakeholders and role-players are key actors within the evaluation process and not the mere objects of the evaluation. It is a process that leads to corrective action by involving all levels of role-players in shared decision-making. Participatory evaluation is an opportunity for both outsiders and insiders to stop and reflect on the past in order to make decisions about the future.

Participatory evaluations are reflective, action-oriented and seek to build capacity by:

- ☑ Providing stakeholders and beneficiaries with the opportunity to reflect on project progress and obstacles.

- ☑ Generating knowledge that informs good practice and leads to corrective action.
- ☑ Providing beneficiaries and stakeholders with the tools to transform their own environment.

Participatory evaluation should not be thought of as the final judgement on whether activities are successful or unsuccessful. They should rather be seen to encourage changes and adjustments either during the life span of the activities, or for future phases of the activities, or for future new activities.

### 3.4.1. Why use participatory methodologies for evaluations

All too often, conventional evaluation reports sit on shelves or desks with little or no impact on the real project stakeholders, the community. While 'conventional' evaluations may fulfil a bureaucratic requirement, their impact on local project stakeholders or on informing development practices (either at community or institutional level) has been disappointing. Participatory evaluations 'breathe life' into more conventional approaches by involving project stakeholders in all aspects of the evaluation through active participation in:

- ☑ Designing the terms of reference for the evaluation (i.e. what, how, when and where).
- ☑ Collecting and analysing data.
- ☑ Formulating recommendations and making changes in the implementation of project activities.

The use of non-formal techniques can yield richer data and information than more formal methods of inquiry such as standard questionnaires or one-on-one highly structured interviews.

During participatory evaluation, people learn more about the things that have worked well, and why they worked. They also learn more about the things that haven't worked well, and why they didn't. When the people involved go through the process of examining, it is more likely that corrective measures will be implemented in the future because they are discovered and understood by the community.

### 3.4.2. Characteristics and advantages of participatory evaluation

Among the distinguishing characteristics and advantages of participatory evaluation are:

- ☑ Collaborative:
  - ✓ The process of collaboration to define and achieve evaluation objectives and process, is often more important than the methods used or the outputs achieved.
  - ✓ Usually collaboration improves the quality of the output, the relevance and interpretation of the findings.
  - ✓ Collaborative decision-making among all those affected by a project includes all local stakeholders as well as program and project staff.
- ☑ Builds local capacity:
  - ✓ Participatory evaluations should help build the capacity of stakeholders to reflect, analyse and take action.
  - ✓ Regardless of external organisation needs, project recipients should be involved in understanding the internal dynamics of their

project, its successes, its failures and solutions for overcoming obstacles.
    - ✓ Participatory evaluations provide stakeholders and beneficiaries with basic tools to make decisions and to introduce corrective actions.
- ☑ Problem-solving orientation:
    - ✓ Participatory evaluation should help develop lessons learned that can lead to corrective action by communities. When project stakeholders are involved in analysing problems, constraints or obstacles, they are able to offer more appropriate solutions.
- ☑ Generates knowledge:
    - ✓ Participatory evaluation aims to generate knowledge among local stakeholders. When communities are actively involved in data collection processes, information is transformed into knowledge and usually leads to self-sustaining actions.
- ☑ Releases creativity:
    - ✓ Participatory evaluation methods are creative and fun. Learning in this environment builds self-esteem and confidence essential for initiating action. People become involved in defining and carrying out the work.
    - ✓ Through the participatory process, tasks like mapping, drawing and sorting pictures release such energy and enthusiasm that the challenge often becomes bringing the process to a close, rather than struggling to keep it going.
    - ✓ This enthusiasm can often provide ‘spin-offs’ in the form of locally initiated development processes.
- ☑ Promotes effectiveness:
    - ✓ The results of participatory evaluation should provide stakeholders and program managers with information on the degree to which project objectives have been met and how resources have been used. Answers to these questions help program managers and local stakeholders make critical decisions about implementation processes, usually without any need of ‘expert’ opinions.
    - ✓ Participatory evaluation generates useful lessons and can provide participants with tangible and realistic tools for better managing their project or program with or without donor support.
- ☑ Creates ownership:
    - ✓ If the ownership of the development process from inception through to final evaluation lies with the local stakeholders, the sustainability of projects through the introduction of locally developed sustaining actions, becomes much more likely.
- ☑ Empowers:
    - ✓ Participatory evaluations should help stakeholders value their own experience and knowledge and, in the process, empower them to transform their environment.
- ☑ Uses multiple methods:
    - ✓ Participatory evaluation methods are eclectic (i.e. they borrow from many disciplines) and can be adapted to meet the specific job at hand.
    - ✓ If available tools are considered inappropriate, new tools are created.

- ✓ Validity and reliability are achieved through the use of multiple methods and by including different users and stakeholders in arriving at consensus views.

☑ Forward looking:

- ✓ Because all the stakeholders share in decision-making, the process of participatory evaluation can lead to corrective action by project recipients in ways that make sense to them. Participatory evaluations not only look into the past, but also guide stakeholder developed projects into the future.

☑ Involving 'experts' as facilitators:

- ✓ The role of the external 'expert' is to facilitate shared decision-making throughout the entire process of participatory evaluation, including identifying the purpose of the evaluation and selecting methods of data collection and analysis, field implementation, and disseminating and acting upon findings.
- ✓ If 'experts' are involved, their role is to merge specialised expertise with local experience, indigenous knowledge and learning systems.

### 3.4.3. The advantages and disadvantages of internal and external evaluations

One advantage of a community or organisation carrying out its own evaluation is that it can more easily accept and put recommendations into practice. Internal evaluations usually are carried out by the stakeholders involved in the project or process being evaluated. Internal evaluators, however, may lack objectivity and therefore hesitate to be critical of their own work. Evaluators from outside the programme may provide additional insight, greater technical expertise, and be more objective in formulating recommendations. On the other hand, they are not as familiar with the project or process, its history, constraints, local cultures and conditions or even the personalities involved. The advantages and limitations of both types of evaluators are summarised below:

| **Internal Evaluator** | |
|---|---|
| *Advantages* | *Disadvantages* |
| ☑ Knows the situation, its history, problems, processes, etc<br>☑ Understands and can interpret personal behaviour and attitudes.<br>☑ Is known to stakeholders, so may pose no threat of anxiety or disruption.<br>☑ Has greater chance of adopting and following up on recommendations.<br>☑ Is often less expensive.<br>☑ Does not require time consuming procurement negotiations.<br>☑ May provide more opportunity to build local evaluation capacity.<br>☑ Contributes to strengthening local capacity. | ☑ Finds it hard to be objective.<br>☑ May avoid looking for facts or forming conclusions that are negative or reflect badly on the community or individuals.<br>☑ Tends to accept the assumption of the stakeholders and community.<br>☑ May be too busy to participate fully.<br>☑ May be part of the local community and may be constrained by conflicts of interest.<br>☑ May not be trained in evaluation methods.<br>☑ May not have special technical expertise. |

| External Evaluator | |
|---|---|
| *Advantages* | *Disadvantages* |
| ☑ Not personally involved, so finds it easier to be objective.<br>☑ May be free from local bias.<br>☑ Can bring fresh perspective and insight.<br>☑ May have broader experience and more experience in evaluation and wider current programme knowledge.<br>☑ May be more readily available for intensive work.<br>☑ Can serve as an arbitrator or facilitator between parties.<br>☑ Can bring local stakeholders into contact with additional resources. | ☑ May not know the local situation, its history, problems, personalities, etc.<br>☑ May be ignorant of constraints affecting feasibility of recommendations.<br>☑ May be perceived as an adversary arousing unnecessary anxiety.<br>☑ May be expensive.<br>☑ Requires more time for contract negotiations, orientation and monitoring.<br>☑ May not be able follow up on recommendations and therefore may not have control or knowledge of appropriateness or success of the solutions.<br>☑ May be unfamiliar with local political, cultural and economic environment. |

A well-balanced combination of internal and external evaluators may be preferable for many purposes. Increasingly, evaluations have both kinds of participants, to take advantage of the strengths and counter the limitations of each. Careful consideration of the purposes of the evaluation helps determine whether such a balance is best in a given case.

### 3.4.4. When to do an evaluation?

Deciding on when an evaluation is to take place is informed by:

- ☑ If it is a part of a government, development, or funding agency planned process.
- ☑ If a crisis is identified in the course of monitoring.
- ☑ If there appears to be a looming problem.
- ☑ If prior programmes have not included participatory approaches (then a participatory evaluation of the programmes to date is a good place to start).

Formal evaluations are usually scheduled on completion of critical phases or at the end of the project or programme period. Ongoing evaluation, especially self-evaluation by the programme and project staff, occurs during implementation. Mid-term and annual reviews also assess programme progress during implementation.

The timing of evaluations, therefore, depends mainly on the decision-making needs and the purpose of the evaluation.

The steps for implementing an evaluation are discussed in sections 6.7 and 6.8.

## Chapter 4: Core facilitation skills & Methods

The single most critical factor for successful facilitation of participatory methodologies is *you*. Being a participatory facilitator is completely different from being a conventional field worker or trainer. This may mean that you will have to unlearn a whole range of habits and methods that you have become accustomed to. By doing so, you will not only begin to play a big role in achieving the benefits of participatory development, but you will be doing yourself a great favour. Participatory development work is extremely rewarding and is considered by many to be a lot less demanding than top-down development approaches, where you, as an external agent, do all the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Let's look at an example:

- ☑ A government environmental officer may be accustomed to:
  - ✓ Performing health inspections within businesses, schools and households.
  - ✓ In response to his/her findings, running formal group training sessions in a didactic manner (i.e. by lecturing to the group).
  - ✓ Defining his or her solutions to the problems.

  Experience shows us that this methodology is ineffective. Ask yourself this question, "If someone tells me that one of the reasons I may be getting diarrhoea is because I do not wash my hands after using the toilet, am I not going to feel patronised? Am I not going to say, but there is no clean water near my toilet?" The problem centres on the fact that this health worker has:
  - ✓ Possibly undervalued my level of understanding of the issues.
  - ✓ Possibly provided me with inappropriate solutions that I will be reluctant to implement because they were not my own ideas.
  - ✓ Not gone the extra mile by assisting me to analyse the root cause of the diarrhoea problems and assisting me to plan the solutions.

  It's that simple! As a facilitator, you must put yourself in the shoes of the individuals in the community in which you are working.

Facilitation is not the same as training. Training is the formal process of imparting skills. Your role as a facilitator is to use participatory methods to enable participants to:

- ☑ Identify issues that are important to them.
- ☑ Express their problems.
- ☑ Analyse their problems.
- ☑ Identify their own possible solutions.
- ☑ Select their own appropriate actions.
- ☑ Develop a plan to implement the solutions they identify and agree on.
- ☑ Monitor the indicators and evaluate the outcomes of the plan.

A good facilitator should *NOT*:

- ☑ Direct the group.
- ☑ Give information without first letting the group explore the issues for itself and then being invited to provide information.
- ☑ Advise or tell the group what it should do.
- ☑ Make assumptions about what is the right response to a problem.
- ☑ Make assumptions about the level of understanding and knowledge of the group.
- ☑ Correct the group.

This does not mean that as a facilitator you are redundant. It simply means that your role has been re-defined. The facilitator's role is to:

- ☑ Encourage participation.
- ☑ Create an enabling environment in which everyone feels comfortable to contribute.
- ☑ Provide guidance for the process of participation and not guidance towards particular solutions.
- ☑ Provide information only when requested to do so.

Remember that the only appropriate solution to a problem is one that the community defines with the use of supportive information provided by you if requested.  As an outsider, you cannot understand their situation in the way that they do, no matter how concerned and dedicated you are.

The key principle here is communication.  The core methods described below are essentially communication skills and tools.  These are used as an integral part of everything that you do, whether you are facilitating a meeting, conducting an interview with a key informant or facilitating a tool with a focus group.

### *4.1. Listening versus talking*

A good facilitator is therefore first and foremost someone who has learned the skill of listening.  In order to achieve this you must develop a respect for the level of knowledge in the communities you are working with.  Look at the group you are working with.  They are people like yourself, and many of them may be older and wiser than you are.  Those younger than you are probably vibrant and full of youth and enthusiasm.  Respect this and begin to *listen* and *learn* from the group.  This is their development process.  Let them do the thinking and talking.

### *4.2. Guiding versus directing*

The next skill you should have as a facilitator is the skill of guiding.  With experience you will learn to guide a group through a participatory process and *not* direct them towards a particular solution that you may feel is in their interest.  You need to be able to guide them through a process of discovery, of debate, of analytical thinking until they reach a solution that is totally their own.  This guiding process is done with the use of participatory tools that are open-ended.  In other words, they allow the group to define their own outcomes within the participatory framework (Figure 1).

### *4.3. Creating an enabling participatory environment*

To make participation happen when working with a group, you have the vital job of creating an environment in which the participants feel able to contribute freely without fear of:

- ☑ Embarrassment.
- ☑ Ridicule.
- ☑ Reprisal.
- ☑ Causing conflict.
- ☑ Revealing personal information.

As facilitators, we create this enabling environment by:

- ☑ Starting with a fun exercise that ‘breaks the ice’ and allows everyone a chance to relax and feel at ease.
- ☑ Keeping your group to no more than 15.  Even this size can be difficult to manage.  If your group is larger or if you feel smaller groups will work better, then split the group up into smaller groups for each activity.  The smaller groups can then report to each other later.

- ☑ Moving everyone into a comfortable seating arrangement. Try to get everyone into a circle. Also, try not to have tables in front of the participants. This is too formal and creates a barrier between people.
- ☑ Allowing the group to take control throughout the process. You must let them know you are there to assist them and that this is their process.
- ☑ Asking questions. Right from the beginning, when you are asked a question, always throw the question back at the group. The group will soon surprise themselves and realise that they already knew the answer. They will realise that in fact they do not need you and will gain self-confidence and respect for each other.
- ☑ Making sure they understand the need to allow everyone's views to be heard. You can introduce this concept in the beginning, but if you see this is not happening, assist the group to get this right (see section 4.7 below).
- ☑ Making the process easy and logical. We do this by using a set of tools and exercises that make the process easy, interesting and provides logical steps. The tools and exercises use lots of pictures, drawing and role-playing to help everyone to participate, young, old, illiterate and literate.
- ☑ Some activities may require the participants to draw pictures. If the participants indicate that they do not want to, since they cannot draw, show them that you cannot either and that the idea is not to create works of art, but to communicate ideas.
- ☑ Keeping the amount of writing to a minimum. The moment we use writing as a medium of recording things during the exercises, we begin to exclude anyone who may be illiterate. This is one of the reasons why the tools and exercises used are full of pictures. If the group feels they need to keep a record in writing, then designate someone to take notes. You may find some literate people resistant to 'playing' with pictures. This will generally not be a problem if you continue with the others. The individual will soon join in. If not, then give this person a specific responsible task (e.g. taking notes of the proceedings). They will soon join in when they see the process leading towards important decisions.
- ☑ Not taking written notes during the activities. Doing this may intimidate people if they feel that you are extracting information from them. Explore ways in which the group keeps track of the proceedings and then ask later if you can copy this down (see section 5.2 below).

## *4.4. Giving instructions*

The only time you will be required to give direct instructions to a group is when you are introducing a tool or activity. Your instructions, however, must remain focused only on how the tool or activity should be used or performed. The following should be kept in mind:

- ☑ Have all the necessary materials ready for each activity.
- ☑ Make all the materials clearly visible to all the participants. Spread them out on the ground or table for all to see. Do not hold them against your chest when explaining the tool. Share the tool as you talk.
- ☑ If the activity is the first in a session, then first do an 'ice-breaker' activity first.
- ☑ While spreading out the materials for the activity, clearly explain in a step-by-step fashion what needs to be done. You can explain the purpose of the activity, the estimated amount of time and the process they need to follow. Keep your instructions short and to the point.
- ☑ Never imply what you think will be a logical outcome to the tool.

- ☑ Never cut an activity short if it is generating a lot of discussion or if it is leaving unresolved issues.
- ☑ Explain the materials available and let them know where they can find more if they need them. Keep your explanation as brief as possible and let them know that if they do not understand, they can ask for clarification.

### *4.5. Relinquishing control and stepping back*

Remember that the process you are facilitating is the community's process. Once you have introduced a tool or process you must step back and allow the group the freedom to take control. Your job now is to listen. If the group asks you a question, consider the following:

- ☑ If they ask anything about the activity process:
  - ✓ Answer them only in terms of the procedure for the activity.
  - ✓ Do not limit their creativity. If they feel they need more materials, or more pictures, then let them use or create them.
- ☑ If they ask for extra information that they need in order to make informed decisions (e.g. technical expertise):
  - ✓ First, ask the group as a whole if anyone knows anything about the subject in question.
  - ✓ Only then should you add to or provide this information, but you must do so with full objectivity (i.e. do not express your preference for one option or the other but provide full information on any option). If you do not know the answers than say so and discuss where such information can be found.

Watch the group dynamics. Only intervene if:

- ☑ You see particular individuals dominating (see section 4.7 below).
- ☑ Serious conflict ensues. In this case, you will have to use your conflict-resolution skills. It is a good idea to do this by asking the group to identify areas of common ground and then using any activities necessary to work through the issues in contention.
- ☑ The group has become stuck and appears to be unable to proceed. In this case:
  - ✓ Ask what the problem is.
  - ✓ Ask probing questions (see section 4.6 below).

### *4.6. Probing and stimulating*

At times, it may be necessary to intervene in a way that helps the group to progress forward but that still does not provide any inferred direction from you.

In cases where you see the enthusiasm for an activity has been lost or where the group has reached a temporary dead-end, then you can:

- ☑ Call a break, have tea or do a short, fun 'energising' exercise.
- ☑ Throw in an open-ended question to stimulate discussion or to steer the group away from their sticking point. This should be done without suggesting any particular solutions.

Another use of probing is to help the group explore the issues being discussed in more detail. For example, the activity may have resulted in the group to identifying key problems, but has not resulted in the group thinking about the causes or implications of the problem. By asking a probing open-ended question you can steer the discussions to explore these issues further. An alternative is to use a different tool to do this. The choice is yours and it is dependent upon what you think will work best at that moment.

### 4.7. Dealing with difficult participants

One of the most common causes for a breakdown in the full participation of all individuals in a group is when one or more individuals create barriers for others to participate. In most cases, these individuals are unaware that they are doing this. Examples of this type of individual are:

- ☑ People who are very confident and outspoken (this intimidates others who are less confident):
  - ✓ If you see the strong individuals not giving the more timid ones a chance to participate, then have a quiet chat with the individual in question asking *them* to encourage the more timid people to participate. In other words, make them part of the solution.
- ☑ People with negative attitudes towards others or the process:
  - ✓ You can call the individual aside and chat to them quietly.
  - ✓ You can give the individual a special task.
  - ✓ You can move the individual to a group of confident people who may be able to deal with him/her.
- ☑ People who carry particular authority:
  - ✓ If you judge that this person's presence is limiting participation, then the solution is to make this person with authority part of your process. Make them your co-facilitator if you must and rapidly train them in the need for ensuring participation by all.
- ☑ People who are very timid and afraid to participate:
  - ✓ If you see some people unable to participate in a large group, then split the group up into smaller ones, possible putting all the confident people together in one group, thereby giving the more timid ones more of a chance to participate in their own group.
- ☑ Men who do not allow women to participate:
  - ✓ One solution is to separate the men and women into different groups. However, this does not achieve a building of respect for the women's views by the men.
  - ✓ You can use a tool called *gender analysis* that helps the group analyse what activities men and women undertake in daily household life. The men will soon begin to realise how many responsibilities women carry and will hopefully respect the need for women to participate in planning the community's development.

You can also raise the group's awareness of the issue of different types of people and how they react to working in a group. Ask each person to think of an animal and to then describe the character traits of that animal and how that animal would function in group discussion. For any animals that create problems in a group, ask the participants to discuss how they would deal with them. We ask people to think of animals instead of people because it makes the process less embarrassing and less personal. They are talking about animals on not themselves. This makes it easier to discuss.

### 4.8. Group meetings

The majority of work that you will be facilitating will be done in groups and you will need to use all of the above skills and methods. Working in groups through a well facilitated process provides a better understanding of the community issues and dynamics. For the community it also provides a more inclusive and legitimate process.  There is a greater chance of community ownership of the issues discussed and the solutions and actions that will result.  There are three types of group meetings that you may encounter:

- ☑ Focus groups meetings.
- ☑ Community group meetings.
- ☑ Spontaneous meetings.

The sections below describe each of these cases.

### 4.8.1. Focus group meetings

This is the most common type of situation that you will find yourself in.  Focus group meetings are meetings that can achieve one or both of two things:

- ☑ To *focus* on a particular issue in detail.  A project or a problem that has been identified by the community must be analysed and solutions and action plans developed.  The best way to do this is to work in groups of no more than 15 to focus on the issue at hand.  It is usually necessary to work with more than one group, each containing a wide range of people. This will give a broad picture of the community's perception of their problems, their understanding of these problems and their ideas for the solutions and the actions required to solve these problems.  At this stage it will not always be possible to achieve consensus around these issues. This may be only possible in community meetings (see section 4.8.2 below) or when working with a legitimately elected group or committee who have been given the mandate to make decisions on behalf of the community.
- ☑ To discuss general issues or a particular issue with a *special interest group*.  In some cases, the problem or potential solutions will only affect a particular interest group (e.g. women, farmers, the mandated committee as mentioned above).  In this case it is possible to work through and entire development process with the particular group.  If working with a mandated committee, it is recommended that you assist them to facilitate the process mentioned above (i.e. using various focus groups) in order to improve *their* understanding of the issues before proceeding with the detailed analysis and planning.  It will also then be their responsibility to gain consensus for their decisions as is described in the section 4.8.2 below.

In both of the above cases, the tools and methods discussed elsewhere in this guide are applicable.  All of these tools and methods are designed to assist you to stimulate discussion and, within the development framework, identify problems, analyse them, help find solutions and to therefore develop action plans.  Never forget that the information being discussed is *owned* by the community and that you need to ask *permission* to use this information for other purposes, for example, informing government departments, foreign donors or other interest groups.

### 4.8.2. Community meetings

Community meetings are meetings in which the whole or a majority portion of the community comes together.  The purposes of these meetings are mainly to:

- ☑ Feedback information.
- ☑ Obtain consensus on issues that affect the whole community.
- ☑ Confirm findings made during the other activities, e.g. you can review ranking of problems and problem analysis during focus group meetings.

When communicating in a community meeting, it is important to realise that the communication methods we use are different from those we use with focus groups or individuals. The process needs to be more formal and controlled or else things may become chaotic. However, it is important to convey the idea that everyone may participate and be heard. Community meetings require that preparations are made well in advance. People need sufficient notice in order to be able to arrange their lives to make time to attend.

Community meetings are difficult to facilitate and require that you remain confident and keep the process moving. It is often better that someone else, who is respected and holds a position of authority in the community, controls the meeting process. You will need strategies to deal with common problems, such as:

- ☑ Some people talking too much.
- ☑ Some people not participating.
- ☑ Some people trying to disrupt the meeting for their own purposes.
- ☑ The discussion not focussing on the planned topics.

Be sure to bring a lot of large sheets of paper (the type used for flipcharts). It is good to work in a team, so one person can write up key points or make diagrams as necessary. Making large diagrams, to present information and to capture outputs, is a good tool for group meetings. This assists everyone to see the information and to participate. Be sure, though, to use as many pictorial methods as possible so as not to exclude illiterate people. If you do not have access to paper, do not panic. Draw the diagrams on the ground and arrange the meeting in a large circle. Use any materials close at hand such as stones, grass, leaves, old cans or bottles.

Community meetings that are well run and not too long are good for enhancing the community spirit and energising the community through ensuring that everyone remains well informed and involved in the process. However, it should be pointed out that in a large community it may be necessary to hold a series of large meetings in different sub-areas.

### 4.8.3. Spontaneous group meetings

Whereas focus group meetings and community meetings are planned, spontaneous meetings take place when you happen to come across some kind of group. For example, a group of playing children, labourers taking a rest from their chores, old men socialising, women washing clothes, people at a weekly village market, etc.

Spontaneous meetings are useful as they provide an opportunity to gain information about people's daily lives. These meeting should be less formal and should in fact almost be seen as a social chat. Keep them short so as not to disturb the groups' activities too much. However, if the chat leads to issues and problems that interest the group, you can offer to help them take issues further and use some of the tools and methods that you will *always* have with you. Or you could arrange another time to take the issues forward and transform the spontaneous group into a focus group (see section 4.8.1 above)

When chatting with the group, try to focus on topics that are related to them, for example education and schooling with children after school, water issues and the effort required to obtain water with women washing clothes, historical issues and knowledge with old men, etc. These meetings are also useful as a way to confirm sensitive information gained through other activities. Examples are:

- ☑ In some communities men dominate decision making structures. Talking with women in spontaneous groups can help deal with this, but take some of the men with you as a learning process for them.
- ☑ In some communities it is culturally difficult to talk about some issues, such as where people go to the toilet, or who is allowed to use the toilet (e.g. in some communities children and menstruating women are not allowed to use the toilet because they make it 'unclean'). In these cases it is often a good idea to talk to groups of young children informally as they have less inhibition and will talk freely. This will happen naturally if you make it fun by using the picture tools in you toolkit.

### *4.9. Semi-structured interviews*

Semi-structured interviews are interviews where you use a guideline, structure or checklist, but you do not fix specific questions beforehand. The interviews can be conducted with small focus groups, households or individuals. The interview is guided by particular topics such as 'Water Supply'. You use open-ended questions such as: "Can you tell me about the ways your family use water?". To make it more structured you can use sub-topics such as:

- ☑ Traditional water sources: "Where did you get water previously?"
- ☑ Water uses: "Can you tell me what you use water from the different sources for?"
- ☑ Levels of water service delivery: "What do you think the good and bad points are of the current water system and what improvements would you like to see in the future?"
- ☑ Willingness to pay: "What services in the village do you think it is necessary to pay for and why?"

Going through the list of topics and sub-topics as the opportunity arises during the conversation enables the interviewer to get a lot of information, while giving the person being interviewed a chance to talk about things they think are important. Only introduce a question if it logically fits into the interviewee's current train of thought. Only introduce a new topic if it looks like the interviewee has finished discussing the current topic.

Semi-structured interviews require that you *listen* as discussed earlier in section 4.1 above. Very often, you stop listening either because your mind is racing to the next sub-topic or because the person you are interviewing is not saying what you want too hear. However, participatory methods are all about listening to people and learning what they are thinking. They are not used just to confirm the ideas that the interviewer might have beforehand. As long as what the person being interviewed is saying is about one of the topics or sub-topics in your interview outline, it is relevant and should *not* be interrupted.

During the interview, other relevant tools should be used when appropriate. Whenever it makes sense, the interviewee should be encouraged to write or draw on paper or on the ground or to make listings or rankings. You could even introduce some of the picture tools in your toolkit to help facilitate the discussion. If talking about something related to the interviewee's household, such as the latrine, ask to see it for yourself as this will help you understand the issues better and provide an opportunity to use your observation skills (see section 4.10 below).

Here are some more detailed guidelines:

- ☑ Before the interview:
  - ✓ Prepare yourself for the interview. You should be well informed about the topics to be able to ask relevant questions and show an interest in the interviewee's responses.
  - ✓ In selecting an appropriate team of interviewers, be aware of the impact that age, gender, class, ethnicity, etc., of the team members may have on the quality of the collected information (e.g. sometimes female interviewers are better suited to interview women than males).
  - ✓ Design a rough outline for the semi-structured interview and prepare a checklist system that will help collect the information without writing large amounts of information. The outline can be refined during fieldwork. Start with general inquires on a certain topic and add more detail and depth as you gain knowledge about the community (i.e. review your results everyday and decide what more detailed topics can be added that are relevant).
  - ✓ Keep as low a profile as possible (i.e. a small team, small notebooks and walk as much as possible).
  - ✓ Be aware of the daily schedule of the community members. Time interviews so they do not interfere with respondents important daily activities.
- ☑ During the interview:
  - ✓ It is a huge advantage to you as the interviewer if you adopt an attitude of friendliness and genuine interest. The interviewee should not feel like they are being interviewed, but rather feel like they are having an interesting and valuable discussion with you. Sit at the same level as the interviewee. Always begin the process with pleasantries, talking about the day, the weather, the crops, asking about his family and telling them about yours, etc. This helps 'break the ice' and set the scene for a good and honest discussion process.
  - ✓ Use the same language as the interviewee (colloquial language) to reduce barriers.
  - ✓ Observe: keep your eyes open for patterns, behaviours, differences, and unusual things. Observe non-verbal indicators such as facial expressions, use of space, body language, tone of voice, touch and eye contact, as they may reveal a great deal about the respondents' concerns or reservations and provide valuable clues for interpreting the answers.
  - ✓ It is important that you are not seen as writing everything down. Use a checklist as described above and only make small reminder notes. Immediately after the interview spend some time writing down everything relevant that you remember.
  - ✓ Preferably work alone or in pairs or else the interviewees may feel crowded and not talk comfortably.
  - ✓ Questions that start with "who" "what" "when" "where" "how" and "why" always help to establish further detail. Not all these six need be asked on any given point, but you should frequently run these over in the back of your mind to make sure nothing important is left out.
  - ✓ Use "why" questions sparingly as they may put the interviewee on the defensive and stop the flow of information.
  - ✓ Questions should always be phrased in such a way that they require explanation (open-ended questions) rather than allowing the interviewee to answer with "yes" or "no".

- ✓ Formulate questions clearly and don’t ask more than one question at a time.
- ✓ Most interviews should be opened with a broad question to allow respondents to discuss the topic in their own terms. Narrow questions predetermine the frame in which the topic is discussed and may restrict possible answers. Follow this with a series of specific questions to get more detail.
- ✓ Do not ask leading questions, be objective, and avoid value judgements. Leading questions make further probing for details much more difficult and subsequent answers less reliable. For example, instead of “Why is it important to have a latrine?” ask “What do you think about latrines?” Instead of “Do you use water from different sources during the dry season?” ask “When do you use water from different sources?”
- ✓ Never finish interviewees’ sentences even when they appear to have difficulty expressing themselves. Keep your own comments, knowledge and conclusions separate from information obtained from the interviews. The natural tendency to rephrase the response in your own words is usually very strong and therefore the interviewer must consciously guard against this.
- ✓ Avoid lecturing and advising. The interviewer is there to learn, not to teach.
- ✓ Carefully lead up to an important or sensitive question. If necessary, visit an informant several times to build up trust and familiarity before discussing more sensitive issues.
- ✓ Choose proxy indicators for sensitive questions. For example, household expenses and sources of income are proxy indicators for amount of household income.
- ✓ Probe and cross check each sub-topic to obtain increasing detail and depth on a subject of study during the interview. In order to probe, listen closely to what is being said. Challenge answers (where appropriate) and ask for backup information and more details. If you realise that you failed to probe on certain important issues, go back to those questions until you understand the issues clearly. Probing should be subtle cross-checking, not cross-examination. Experiment with different probing strategies, such as:
    - ~ Show interest and encouragement by nodding, or saying “yes”.
    - ~ Pause to let the interviewee add more information, but don’t make the pauses too long as this may cause embarrassment.
    - ~ Repeat the questions in slightly different ways. For example “What are the main health dangers facing your children?”, “What problems do you face in bringing up your children?”, “What do you worry about most when it comes to your children?”
    - ~ Use natural questions, such as “Could you tell me more about that?”, “Could you give me an example?” or “Could you explain that to me?”
- ✓ Do not rely on too few informants to form your conclusions. Test your understanding of an issue by using or describing it in subsequent discussions and interviews. If you have misunderstood the issue the interviewees will probably correct you.
- ✓ For each interview add interviewees’ age, gender, number of children, material status, religion and socio-economic status. This information may be useful later for understanding the outcomes better. Also add the name of interviewee, if possible.

- ✓ Always complete an interview politely and at a logical point. Thank the interviewee and discuss pleasantries and everyday things again. It is often impolite to just rush off once you have completed your task.

### *4.10. Direct observation*

A lot of information that you as a development worker can use in developing an understanding of the community can be gained through simply observing the surroundings carefully. As you gain experience, you will develop ‘an eye’ for the things to look for. Direct observation adds value to the information collected using other methods. It helps to confirm some information and to understand the context of issues. Direct observation can assist you greatly during:

- ☑ Household visits or semi-structured interviews.
- ☑ Monitoring and evaluation exercises. Often the best indicators for an M&E system are those that are easily visible through direct observation. For example, if monitoring whether or not a hygiene promotion campaign is successful or not, a good indicator, to check if hand washing practices have improved or not, could be asking to see household toilets and observing if there is *evidence* of the *use* of the hand washing facilities and if soap is available. This is more reliable than asking people if they wash their hands, as most people will say “yes” even if this is not the case.
- ☑ Mapping exercises. Performing a transect walk and using observation after a mapping exercise helps you to confirm things in the map and to gain a fuller understanding of issues and problems raised through the mapping exercise.

Here are some examples of the type of information that can be obtained through observation for assessing a household’s level of livelihood (poverty and vulnerability):

- ☑ Is there a water connection into the house?
- ☑ Is there electricity in the house?
- ☑ What is the house made of?
- ☑ How many rooms are there in the house?
- ☑ What animals and vegetables or fruit trees are there around the house?
- ☑ What type of kitchen do they have?
- ☑ What toilet facilities are there?
- ☑ What is the floor made of?
- ☑ How is the hygienic situation around the house?
- ☑ What is the condition of the roof?
- ☑ What furniture and equipment do they have?
- ☑ What electrical appliances are there?
- ☑ Are there any of the members of the household that have visible handicaps or diseases?
- ☑ What style of clothing and adornments do the women wear?
- ☑ Are the children clean?
- ☑ What is the condition of the clothing worn?

This type information should be noted down as soon as possible. It helps to have a prepared check sheet, but try not to fill this in whilst inside the household as this can be seen as you ‘checking-up’ on them.

Photographs are a useful way to conduct direct observation. A simple and cheap automatic camera is all that is required. Photographs can help you to quickly record what you see and they allow you to analyse things in more detail later. People also usually do not mind you taking photographs, but often you may wish to take photographs of things that they are ashamed of (for example a badly maintained toilet). Always ask for permission and, remember, the information belongs to them, so use the photographs as part of a process in which they are involved.

Photographs can also be effectively used for monitoring and evaluation exercises to show the before and after situations.

### *4.11. Triangulation*

Triangulation is a fancy word for a simple but *very* important concept. One of the main criticisms aimed at participatory methods is that often those who use it draw conclusions too quickly about issues from a small sample of people. This you should avoid at all costs. Participatory methods allow a lot more in depth data to be collected from fewer people, but individual people or groups have their own ideas and needs and you cannot rely on the view of a few to make generalisations about an entire community.

Triangulation is simply the process of cross-checking vital information and decisions with more than three groups of people, preferably groups who have different interests or groups that have a good spread of representation from the entire community. This is not as hard as it sounds, as you will always work with more than one group in the village. It just means that you have to carefully select your groups and understand who everyone is and what their standing is in the community. It also means that you have to keep a record of the vital information and decisions in order to keep track of issues and check that you are triangulating the information as you proceed

Finally, it is a good idea to cross-check the final outcomes through presenting the final information and decisions to a community meeting (see section 4.8.2 above).

### *4.12. A word about 'community'*

The word 'community' is used commonly in development circles when referring to groups of people living in a single area that we may define as a village, settlement or a town. However, using the word 'community' implies a sense of commonality of purpose within the group of people. It is sometimes a romantic view of external development workers that a community has common beliefs and common sets of values, needs, desires and also a common will to develop the entire community. While some communities do in fact have some of these traits, it is a mistake to see communities in this light. It is general human nature to first look after one's own (yourself and your family) and then to worry about community issues that affect you directly. How this manifests itself in each community will depend largely on local circumstances, including cultural issues and socio-economic issues, amongst others.

This must be kept clearly in mind while doing development work, especially when dealing with decision making processes, resolving conflict and understanding the contexts of community problems.

## Chapter 5: Planning and reporting

This section describes how to plan a participatory process and how to present the results in simple reports.

It is important to recognise that you cannot simply rush into a community and start working without following the local protocols for introducing yourself and getting permission to work. Not only is this rude, it is also totally against the principals of participatory methodologies.

As with everything else in development, the community that we wish to assist must want that assistance and they must be given a chance to define how that assistance will be provided.

## 5.1. Planning and preparation

### 5.1.1. Defining your purpose or objectives

Before entering a community, you need to define for *yourself* the purpose of your work and the methods you intend to employ. This should be your basic outline plan that defines the process you intend following in introducing yourself to the community and its leaders as well as how you will be describing your purpose to them.

Good preparation includes:

- ☑ Defining for yourself the objectives of approaching the particular community or simply the purpose of your next session. You will need to think about the scenarios (which groups, what activities and tools and in what context) that will influence the strategies you will use to assist the community.
- ☑ Reminding yourself of the purpose, application and methods of use of all your available tools and activities. This is especially necessary if you do not do this work on a day-to-day basis. In this case, it may be a good idea to practice the tools and activities with friends or colleagues first.
- ☑ Make sure that your toolkit is complete and that the tools and pictures it contains are appropriate for your target community (see section 5.1.2 below). For example, you do not want to use tools in an ethnic minority area that contains pictures that either create offence or are not relevant to the local circumstances.
- ☑ Developing a simple checklist of your objectives and the information and issues that you think should be covered. This will help you keep your thinking ordered and ensure that you do not miss anything. It will also provide a simple structure for easily recording the outputs and will therefore facilitate easier report writing later. Any daily findings should be carefully analysed and summarised in a notebook at the end of everyday.

When entering the community for the first time, you need to define with what mandate you are entering the community and whether or not you are arriving with an agenda. It is an unfortunate reality that development workers will almost always arrive in a community with an external agenda. We are usually attached to some organisation or government department that has special interests. For example, if you work for the department dealing with health issues, then your development agenda will be health related. You would not be able to entertain any demands for development processes for any other sectors (e.g. transport). It will be important for you to make your external agenda known from the start.

The process of defining for yourself the purpose and objectives is important, as it will:

- ☑ Force you to think carefully about how you will be applying the participatory methodologies in each situation.
- ☑ Provide you with a basis to evaluate your methods. If you see things going wrong, you can refer back to your plan and try to identify if there is something in it that you could improve to avoid the same problem again in the future.

- ☑ Give you the confidence to introduce yourself by being able to clearly define your purpose and external agenda within the participatory framework.

The organisation that you work for or the project on which you are working will already have set objectives. You will need to base your broad participatory process objectives on these and develop further more detailed objectives as you proceed. It is important to recognise that if you enter a community with all your objectives already defined and blindly move towards fulfilling these objectives that you will *not* be adhering to the principles of participatory development no matter how many participatory tools you may facilitate. You have not listened.

Therefore, it is important to set your detailed objectives only after you have contacted the community leadership and decided with them, in a participatory way, the more detailed objectives of your work. It is also always a good idea to select one or two people from the village to help you and in so doing transfer your participatory skills to them. These people may become invaluable to the project later as they can be used to promote, monitor and evaluate issues within the community.

Below is an example of broad objectives for a water supply project:

- ☑ Main goal: Assist the community to improve its existing water supply:
  - ✓ Contact leadership and set-up representative body with which you can work (if project demands this) or get permission to work in the community.
  - ✓ Agree on more detailed objectives with community and who your co-facilitators will be.
  - ✓ Conduct a baseline information gathering exercise. This could also be called ‘problem analysis’ or ‘understanding the problem’. This may include:
    - ~ Prioritisation of community problems and needs.
    - ~ Identification of the available water sources and their seasonal use.
    - ~ Assessment of income and expenditure and ability / willingness to pay for services.
    - ~ Identification of the internal capacity to contribute to the development of the new water supply in terms of human and other resources in the community.
    - ~ Identification of the poor and vulnerable groups in the village.
  - ✓ Problem ranking and selection of priorities.
  - ✓ Identification of possible solutions.
  - ✓ Solution analysis and selection, which will include technical and management option choices.
  - ✓ Produce project proposal or detailed planning report by a certain date. Participatory development processes can sometimes be too open ended, so it is important to work towards deadlines that, of course, must be realistic enough to allow good participation to happen.
  - ✓ Develop a basic monitoring and evaluation system based on the baseline data for use during implementation.
  - ✓ Conduct community promotion campaigns aimed at solving other problems identified in order to improve peoples live prior to the project start.

It is often not possible to prepare objectives beyond this point until actual implementation begins. If the project is a large one that involves money and resources from an external agency (e.g. from government or NGO), then there will often be a delay between this planning stage and the implementation stage. It is a good idea, though, to identify what things the community can do in the meantime to develop their village. This is important so as not to lose momentum and enthusiasm. These can be small things with big impacts such as promoting better hygiene behaviours, or larger things like improving or protecting an existing water source. These types of activities not only improve conditions in the village, but they also build the community's self-esteem to do things for themselves. At this stage none of these activities should be linked to the future project as this may result in raising expectations unrealistically and set the community up for future disappointment.

You must also learn to be flexible and open to change and suggestions from others. No matter how well you plan, you must be ready for anything. Groups you are working with may raise issues that you were not expecting and that require the use of different tools and methods to those that you had planned to use. You must be able to switch your plan quickly and easily to keep the participation going.

Sometimes valuable opportunities arise without time for pre-planning and preparation. For example, you may be on your way to a community meeting and come across a group of people queuing at the clinic. This is a perfect impromptu group with which to do some participatory activities. Not only will you find out more about why they are there and why they are queuing, but you may also be able to assist the group to analyse their problem and help them find a solution for which they are willing to take responsibility. You must develop the ability to facilitate these types of spontaneous sessions (see the sub-section on spontaneous group meeting in section 4.8 above).

### 5.1.2. Your toolkit

A good participatory facilitator will *always* have his or her own participatory toolkit close at hand. A large bag with numerous pockets works well. It *must* be well organised or you will feel embarrassed while you are rummage around in your bag looking for your next set of materials. A good toolkit should include at least:

- ☑ A full set of tools. If you do have these, remember that every tool is just a method and the pictures can easily be replaced by asking the participants to draw them for you.
- ☑ A guideline manual to help you remember how to facilitate tools in case you forget.
- ☑ Sticky tape or cello tape (preferably the light brown paper type, sometimes called masking tape.
- ☑ Bluetack (sometimes called Prestik), if available. Alternatively, use sticky tape.
- ☑ Large marking pens.
- ☑ Scissors.
- ☑ Large sheets of paper or newsprint. Big pieces of paper can be torn or cut into smaller one if needed.
- ☑ Beans of different sorts (or you can use stones or anything else available).
- ☑ Ready-made *pocket chart.*
- ☑ A bag to keep your toolkit safe.

☑ Anything else that you learn through experience is useful.

### 5.1.3. Getting permission

It would obviously be disrespectful for you, as an outsider, to walk into a community and begin working without seeking permission to do so. The protocol for doing this will vary from country to country and from community to community. Your first step, then, is to find out through polite enquiries what the correct protocol is.

If you work for a government agency, then you should already have permission and a mandate from the local government, but you will still need to gain permission from the local leadership. If you work for a non-governmental organisation, then it is important to seek permission from the relevant government structures first.

Having permission granted by the local leadership will allow you a higher level of support for your work that will help ensure your acceptance by the community. In fact, in terms of the fundamentals of participatory methodologies, the leadership or its representatives should essentially become part of your team that will assist the community through the participatory development process. This, therefore, means that you will need full and real support from the leadership, which must include support for the participatory methodologies that you intend to use. Section 5.1.4 below, contains some guidance on how to achieve this.

### 5.1.4. Marketing your presence and the methodology

One of the most effective ways to market your presence and the participatory development process is to ensure that, from the beginning, the legitimate leadership of the community owns the process. You must allow the leadership to take control of the process and to define, to an extent, the manner in which you will work. You must always appear to take the back seat while remaining supportive when required. The community and its leadership must come to see you as a useful resource as opposed to an expert sent to tell them what to do or as a government or donor informer.

Once you have gained this respect then you will be able to 'market' the work that you intend to do. You will need to make it perfectly clear what resources are backing you up, but you must never make promises that you have no control over. Make it clear that you are there to assist them to sort out their problems with the resources available to them and the few that you may have some control over.

You may have some problems marketing an approach that uses many picture-based activities. Some people in positions of power may see this as you coming to 'play' with the community and not to do serious work. You must explain the methods clearly and even demonstrate their use with the leadership. Make the leadership part of finding a method of ensuring full participation. By working with them through this problem, they will soon see the merits of the participatory methodologies being employed.

Another very good marketing tool is to take community leaders and other important stakeholders to visit other successful development programmes that have been run using participatory methodologies. Often the best way to unlock what may have otherwise been stubborn, untrusting or unconfident sets of minds, is to allow people to see and experience successful similar situations.

#### 5.1.5. Identifying relevant stakeholders

The leadership in the village and the relevant government departments are not the only important group with which you need to be working.  Every community has groups of people that have certain vested interests in development processes.  Likewise, every individual will have his or her own issues.  However, particular individuals may have larger vested interests by virtue of their role in the community.  These groups or individuals we call stakeholders.

As a facilitator of a participatory process it is vital that you attempt to ensure that your processes include as many of these stakeholders as possible.  This will not only help to ensure that the outcomes of the process are as representative as possible, but it will also ensure that all groups and individual buy into the process and are supportive of it throughout.  If you do not get this representation right, then conflict will most probably arise later.

But how do you successfully identify all the relevant stakeholders?  As a first step the local leadership will be able to identify most of the stakeholders, but you should not leave it there.  You should ensure that you consult as wide a range of people as possible to get the general view.  If you end up with too many people, then you will have to ask the community to decide which group can represent which set interests, thereby ensuring that they agree on a smaller number.

You may now have ended up with a list of stakeholders that looks something like this:

- ☑ Village leaders.
- ☑ Local government.
- ☑ Local development committees.
- ☑ Women’s groups.
- ☑ Local farmers.
- ☑ Business people.
- ☑ Youth groups.
- ☑ Pensioners.
- ☑ Religious groups.

Out of these stakeholders, it would be advantageous for the community to use one of these groups or to form another representative group as the main participant group in the participatory development process.  Each of the stakeholder groups should be represented.  This group would be tasked with managing the process and making the decisions, but not without the participation of the other groups, prior to final decisions being made.  In other words, you would work with this group to consult with all the other stakeholders in a participatory way, before working through the detailed issues within the leading group.

In small villages the above decentralised participation process may not be required due to all the main stakeholders being adequately represented in the lead group.  But, in large diverse communities it is a vital process to ensure consensus and full participation.

### *5.2. Information analysis and reporting*

It is important that a record is kept of the process as it proceeds through the participatory framework.  Do not keep all the records in the form of written notes as this will exclude illiterate people from accessing the materials later on.  As the activities are mostly picture-based, it should be possible to save the results of each activity and display them until the entire process has been completed. All pictures and other pieces of paper with drawings and notes should be clearly labelled and numbered for easy future reference.

At the end of each session or day, it is a good idea for one or more volunteers to sit down with all the materials and summarise the process and the decisions reached. These same volunteers would be expected to be able to transfer this information to anyone not present in the sessions. Information from previous sessions should be brought to each meeting to allow easy review of the results.

As a facilitator you should make your own notes at the end of each session. It is also important for you to write down as much as you can remember of the discussions that transpired during the day. Take special care to note any information that you think will require:

- ☑ In future sessions.
- ☑ For interpreting the information during the evaluation of your work.
- ☑ For presenting to others.

If you have access to a camera, it is also a good idea to take pictures of the results and, of course, the participants hard at work.

### 5.2.1. Analysing the outcomes

As a facilitator, your observations during each day's work are extremely valuable in order to understand and interpret the outputs. The information that you capture during the day and at the end of the day may include:

- ☑ The process followed on the day and the tools used.
- ☑ Clear decisions and outputs from each session. This may include lists of priorities, decision matrices or diagrams made.
- ☑ Observations about other significant issues raised by the group.
- ☑ Relevant observations about the attitudes or the organisation of the groups that may help you to interpret the outputs (e.g. women seemed reluctant to participate in the discussions about water system management).
- ☑ Any direct observations from the day (e.g. focus groups stated that there are no good toilets in the village, but whilst walking around you have noticed some good examples). This will help you in your follow-up activities.

Part of the analysis process is for you to carefully consider all the information, check to see if you are able to cross check this information with previous sources, and if not make a note to do so (see section 4.11 above).

### 5.2.2. Reporting

As a facilitator you are one of the most vital links within the participatory project framework. If you do not do your job well and if you do not produce your reports well, the project process will stop. Reporting information regarding the process being undertaken, the decisions made, the project progress and the lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation, is vital for all stakeholders and it will help to ensure a smooth and beneficial development process and improve the project's chances at becoming sustainable.

You and the village groups you are working with should take the initiative to provide regular reports to:

- ☑ Village leaders.
- ☑ Community meetings.
- ☑ Government structures.
- ☑ NGO's.
- ☑ Donors.

The first most important thing about writing a successful report is not to think that it is a lot of hard work. If you design a simple reporting structure that helps you structure your thinking when doing the writing, it becomes an easy task. If you follow the daily process described in section 5.2.1 above, most of the work is already done and all you have to do is format it within the report structure and make final conclusions.

The structure of your reports will vary depending on the report purpose and also on what point in the project cycle you are reporting. For example, the following reporting structure may be used to report for the needs assessment of a village, the problems and selected options for solutions:

- ☑ Introduction.
- ☑ Needs assessment objectives.
- ☑ Organisation of field work.
- ☑ Participatory methods and tools used.
- ☑ Community profile (population, location, etc).
- ☑ Overview of the community in relation to:
    - ✓ Economics (including a poverty profile).
    - ✓ Social indicators.
    - ✓ Water sources and use.
    - ✓ Health and hygiene issues.
    - ✓ Environmental sanitation.
- ☑ Community problems and opportunities identified.
- ☑ Ranking of problems.
- ☑ Community ideas for solutions and realising the opportunities.
- ☑ Experience and capacity of village for implementing the solutions.
- ☑ Draft action plan.

The above is just an example. If you are working within a project, the project should develop these reporting structures as it is important that the report format provides the information that the project will require. As noted before, it helps to have a simple checklist with you at all times that will remind you about what outputs you are required to provide and also to help you make brief reminder notes during the day.

# Chapter 6: Steps to Take and Tools to Use

This chapter takes you, the facilitator, through the step-by-step process of assisting a community group to identify its problems, find and implement appropriate solutions and to monitor their own performance. At each step through the seven-step process, you will be introduced to the purpose of the step, the tools and materials that you can use as well as the estimated time required. Detailed facilitation tips are given for each tool and activity.

If you have received this manual as part of a training course, be aware that some of the tools presented here may differ slightly from those that were presented to you in the course. In addition some of the tools in this guide may not have been presented to you at all. As you become more experienced as a facilitator, you will begin to realise that it is impossible to stick to one formula for using these tools or methods. Each group that you work with will be different and the flexible way in which you are able to use each tool will determine how successful it is. Therefore, use the methods presented in this chapter as a guide only. You will soon develop your own style and methods that work best for you and the communities you work with.

The seven-step participatory methodology framework can be used as a reference while reading this chapter (Appendix A: 'The Seven Steps' Chart).

## *6.1. First things first*

Before you rush a group into identifying its problems it is a good idea to let everyone get to know each other and to express their hopes and fears about the process to come. In addition, you can give the group a chance to define their own set of ground rules. The introductory or 'setting the scene' process is important because it sets the tone for the work to follow and it 'breaks the ice', freeing the participants to participate actively. It's therefore important that everyone feels that their contribution is supported and encouraged and that the introductory exercises are fun to do.

### 6.1.1. Introductory tools and activities

Some examples of introductory activities are as follows:

- ☑ Participants introduce themselves one after the other by selecting an adjective that starts with the first letter of their name and that they feel describes something about them.
- ☑ Participants walk around to find an object from the environment that represents what they are bringing to the workshop. They are then asked to present the item while introducing themselves and to tell the group:
  - ✓ What they are bringing to the workshop.
  - ✓ What they want out of the workshop.
  - ✓ What they are missing by being at the workshop.
- ☑ Participants are asked to stand up and to move into groups according to the following example instructions. After each grouping, ask the participants to introduce themselves to the person on their right and the person on their left:
  - ✓ Move all the men on the left and the women on the right.
  - ✓ Ask the participants to group themselves according to the areas they come from.
  - ✓ Ask the participants to group themselves according to the colour of their shirts or shoes.

Finally, ask the group to define their own ‘ground rules’. ‘Ground rules’ are a set of operating principles that the group decides will enable their active participation. For example:

- ☑ Respect the views of others.
- ☑ No ridiculing or interrupting.
- ☑ Talk one at a time.
- ☑ Everyone gets a chance to participate.
- ☑ No mobile phones.
- ☑ No smoking in the room.

The following will need to be documented during the exercise:

- ☑ What the group will be bringing to the workshop .
- ☑ What the group would want out of the workshop.
- ☑ The ground rules that the group identifies for the workshop.

#### 6.1.2. Hopes and fears tools and activities

| | |
|---|---|
| *PURPOSE:* | The purpose of the exercise is to share participants ‘hopes and fears’ about the workshop in a creative way. It will help to clarify what participants hope to learn and achieve at the workshop. It will also help participants to leave behind family and outside pressures to be in the workshop. |
| *TIME REQUIRED:* | 45 minutes. |
| *GROUP SIZE:* | Individually. |
| *MATERIALS NEEDED:* | ☑ Modelling clay, OR<br>☑ Paper<br>☑ Marker pens. |
| *HOW TO FACILITATE:* | Participants are asked to use modelling clay to fashion objects or symbols that represents or depict their hopes and fears. Alternatively they can us marker pens and paper to draw pictures. Once completed, ask the participants to share their hopes and fears in a plenary. |

The exercise helps participants to unload their emotional baggage and to realise that other people share their hopes and fears. It creates common ground that sets the mood for the entire workshop process. The use of creative methods sets the scene and gets the participants ready for using creative methods throughout the participatory process. This is an important part of creating an enabling environment for active participation for all. The use of creative methods must not be seen as ‘playing’ but rather as a means to breaking down barriers for participation.

### *6.2. Problem identification (STEP 1)*

During the problem identification step, we use a set of open-ended tools to allow the group to identify their problems in a way that allows open discussion without feeling guilt or inhibition.

#### 6.2.1. Unserialised posters

| | |
|---|---|
| *PURPOSE:* | The purpose of the exercise is to enable group members to identify important issues and problems facing their community and to help build a feeling of team spirit and mutual understanding which helps the |

| | |
|---|---|
| | group to generate self-esteem and creativity. |
| *TIME REQUIRED:* | 45 minutes |
| *GROUP SIZE:* | Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten. |
| *MATERIALS NEEDED:* | ☑ A set of at least eight pictures showing various human situations and interactions. The pictures should be open to varying interpretations. The pictures should focus on human interactions as opposed to human activities.<br>☑ Sticky tape. |
| *HOW TO FACILITATE:* | Working in smaller groups; participants are given a set of pictures depicting various ambiguous village situations. Ask them to review the pictures, come to a common understanding of what is depicted and relate them to a typical community situation. Following this they are then asked to select four posters and to create a story with a beginning, middle and an end about the community situation. The groups will then share their stories in the plenary session. They should be encouraged to discuss various issues that emerge from their stories.<br><br>This tool can be facilitated with higher or lower degrees of focus, depending upon the situation. For example (most open-ended to most focused):<br>☑ Tell a story about your community.<br>☑ Tell a story about the problems in your community.<br>☑ Tell a story about the water problems in your community.<br>☑ Tell a story about the recently constructed water system in your community (used as an evaluation exercise). |

This activity will enable the group to identify their most ‘burning’ problems as well as allow you as the facilitator to begin to understand the issues important to the community as well as to how the community members go about reaching consensus on these issues. It also gives the facilitator insights regarding the group’s approach to, and resourcefulness in, addressing problems.

If the pictures described above are not available, use the community mapping exercise with significant amounts of informal discussions around all the issues being ‘mapped’.

### *6.2.2.* Community mapping

| | |
|---|---|
| *PURPOSE:* | The purpose of this tool is to map the community and to develop a common vision and understanding of the community. It is useful for developing a quick visual map of the community’s physical environment and how it relates to everyday life. |
| *TIME REQUIRED:* | 30 to 120 minutes. |
| *GROUP SIZE:* | Any group up to 25. |
| *MATERIALS NEEDED:* | ☑ Newsprint. If paper is not available, the map can be drawn on the ground and various items such as |

stones, sticks and leaves can be used to help illustrate various items in the map.

- ☑ Marker pens.
- ☑ Stickers.
- ☑ Stones, sticks, etc.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Ask the group to make a map of their community including important physical features and boundaries, roads, houses, water sources, sanitation facilities, waste disposal sites, schools, churches and businesses. Do not interfere with the process once it has started and listen very carefully to everything being discussed. If you have used more than one group, ask the groups to take each other on a tour of their maps. Based on the map/s, stimulate a discussion about particular issues, such as water sources, sanitation, the concerns of women, farming, health issues, etc. During the discussion, it may appear if particular issues are of great concern. These can be explored further by stimulating informal discussions, perhaps asking older group members for historical perspectives or asking women how the issue affects their lives.

It will be very important to record the map for future use. If it has been drawn on newsprint paper then this is easier. If it has been drawn on the ground, ensure that someone faithfully copies it onto newsprint paper.

In later steps, the group may need to refer back to their map to emphasise a point or show you something. In addition, the map can be used to add further value to existing information or to analyse certain issues in further detail. For example, the map can be used later to map the social and economic status of households in order to analyse the poverty levels in the community. This will be described later in this chapter.

### 6.2.3. Participatory surveys

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of this exercise is to investigate any other aspects of a community. This could include, amongst other things, age, gender, members of households, access to water and sanitation services, education, health or employment. This tool introduces participants to a more quantitative means of analysing their circumstances.

*TIME REQUIRED:* Anything up to 60 minutes

*GROUP SIZE:* Any group up to 25.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ Different coloured beans, stones or other small objects.
- ☑ Bowls, cups, tin cans or other containers to collect the beans.
- ☑ Pictures representing the categories of information to be investigated.
- ☑ A pocket-chart if a secret ballot is preferred (see section 6.3.2 below).

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* The need for this exercise should arise out of another activity and can be used to analyse a problem, or it can be used to define a simple baseline of information. Place the pictures of the information categories to be investigated in a visible place. Show participants the different coloured beans or other objects that are to be used as markers and indicate what each bean represents, for example:

- ☑ White = women
- ☑ Black = men
- ☑ Brown = children

The markers can also represent more than one of an item (e.g. each bean can represent 100 people or items). Ask each participant pick the number of beans that represent her/his household situation (e.g. number of men, women and children). Ask one or two of the participants to collect and consolidate the different markers from each of the participants and count the beans. Basic statistics can then be worked out together with the group.

As you will have noticed, this tool is already allowing some level of problem or issue analysis to occur. However, it is used more frequently to obtain baseline information that can then be used to facilitate more detailed problem analysis as well as to design simple monitoring and evaluation systems.

Examples of use may be:

- ☑ What water sources people use for what purposes.
- ☑ Household sizes (men, women, children, etc)
- ☑ Crops grown in each season and in what quantities.

#### 6.2.4. Conventional tools

There are a number of the more ‘conventional’ participatory methods that you can use for problem identification. These were discussed in Chapter 4 above. Semi-structured interviews and direct observation are commonly used to identify problems. However, these methods have historically been used by outside facilitators as a means to extract this information from communities. Be totally sure when using these methods that you let the community group or the community leadership with whom you are working lead the process and own the outcomes.

### *6.3. Problem analysis (STEP 2)*

During this step, the groups are afforded the opportunity to begin analysing the reasons why their problems have occurred in order to be better able to find solutions.

#### 6.3.1. Community mapping

This tool is essentially a ‘problem identification’ tool, but if facilitated with a lot of probing and discussions, they can lead to a preliminary process of problem analysis.

In addition, as discussed earlier, certain issues can be taken forward directly in the mapping process, such as understanding the poverty profile of the community or its access to local resources. For example, the group can be asked to indicate on its map the position of the poor households and the wealthy households. They should be encouraged to name these households. Further analysis can occur by using a method similar to the 'What is poverty / who is poor' tool, described in section 6.3.5 below, to create a community understanding of what criteria they would use to classify a household as poverty stricken. This is important in order to later assist the community to develop internal poverty alleviation strategies in whatever development work they undertake.

### 6.3.2. Pocket chart

*PURPOSE:* This tool allows participants to assess, analyse and evaluate a given situation. This is a very similar tool to *It* will be very important to record the map for future use. If it has been drawn on newsprint paper then this is easier. If it has been drawn on the ground, ensure that someone faithfully copies it onto newsprint paper.

In later steps, the group may need to refer back to their map to emphasise a point or show you something. In addition, the map can be used to add further value to existing information or to analyse certain issues in further detail. For example, the map can be used later to map the social and economic status of households in order to analyse the poverty levels in the community. This will be described later in this chapter.

Participatory surveys discussed under 'Step 1', and will also give quantitative data. The two tools can be used interchangeably, but the pocket-charts added advantage is that it can easily be used for secret voting, if required.

*TIME REQUIRED:* Up to 60 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Any group up to 25.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

☑ *Pocket chart* consisting of rows and columns that can number up to 7 horizontally and 10 vertically. If a chart is not available, containers or bags can also be used.

☑ Markers (beans or stones) for voting should also be available

☑ Pictures labels depicting the issues being analysed.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Place the picture labels along the top and left-hand side of the *pocket chart*. Clarify the meaning of each picture along both horizontal and vertical axis. Ask each person to vote using the markers provided. If the issue being addressed tends to become sensitive or personal, the *pocket chart* can be placed in such a way as to provide relative privacy and participants can vote one by one. After voting is complete, invite volunteers from among the participants to count and tabulate the results. Participants should consider and discuss the meaning of the results of the voting. An example of the use of a *pocket chart* is shown in Figure 2 (except you would use pictures in place of the words). In this example, a group would be asked to vote about what water sources are used for the identified purposes.

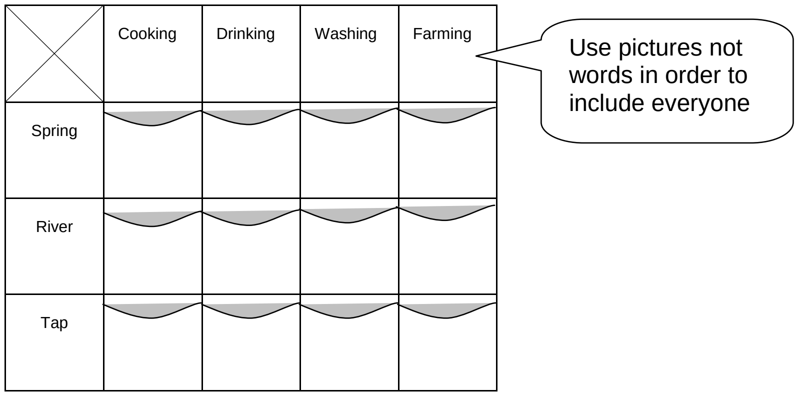


**Figure 2: Pocket chart**

### 6.3.3. Gender analysis

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to collect information, raise awareness, and understand how access to and control of household and community resources and household tasks vary according to gender.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 60 minutes per use.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ Three large pictures, one of a man, one of a woman and one of a couple.
- ☑ For analysing *access to resources*: at least 15 cards depicting different resources and possessions.
- ☑ For analysing *tasks*: at least 15 cards depicting common daily activities, all of them being performed by women.
- ☑ Different coloured bean markers.
- ☑ Blank cards
- ☑ Marker pens.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Place the three large pictures on the ground, in a row. Underneath these pictures, scatter the smaller cards at random. Include some blank cards. Ask the participants to sort the cards by categorising them under three large pictures in columns, depending on who owns or controls the resource or who performs the task. Facilitate discussions amongst the participants about why they made the choices they did. Be particularly sensitive to include women in the discussion or organise the exercise into two separate activities, one for men and one for women, and then let them share the results of the activities. This activity can be taken further to analyse the value of the resources or the amount of time spent undertaking the daily activities. Assigning values to the bean markers, ask the participants to place the relevant number of markers on each card.

Facilitate discussions amongst the participants about why they made the choices they did. Probe the issues further by attempting to get the discussions to deal with the issues such as the appropriateness of men making decisions around daily activities that women actually perform, or around the fairness of the access to resources.

It may be easier to facilitate this as two separate exercises, first dealing with tasks and then with resources.

### 6.3.4. Three-pile sorting

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of this tool is to develop problem-solving and analytical skills and the ability to reflect on causes and effects. It also helps to assess the extent to which communities are aware of the positive and negative implications of a variety of situations. It is also used as an awareness raising exercise.

*TIME REQUIRED:* Up to 45 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ 20-30 pictures depicting common activities or situations that can be interpreted as 'good, 'bad' or 'in-between'.
- ☑ Labels showing pictures that indicate 'good', 'bad' or 'in-between'. This tool is usually only introduced once a particular problem area is identified. For example, if health problems related to sanitation have been identified, then the pictures used would relate to 'good', 'bad' or 'in-between' health practices.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Divide the participants into smaller groups. Ask the groups to look at the pictures and agree on what they see. Ask them to sort the pictures into three piles, namely 'good', 'bad' and 'in-between' practices. The participants should then discuss their findings. The process could be taken further by asking people which practices are common in the village, how the "good" practices could be strengthened and how the "bad" practices could be overcome or changed.

If no pictures are available this exercise can, of course, still be used by asking the groups to identify good, in-between and bad activities or situations in their community.

### 6.3.5. What is poverty / who is poor?

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to determine what poverty means in a particular community, and to enable the community to decide which of its members should be targeted to receive the most assistance.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 60 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:* Similar materials as required for the *gender analysis* tool (access to resources).

- ☑ At least fifteen cards depicting various possessions.
- ☑ At least fifteen more cards depicting different situations and house types.

- ☑ Three drawings, one man, one woman and one couple.
- ☑ Three picture labels depicting rich, poor and average.
- ☑ Blank cards.
- ☑ Marker pens.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Begin by placing the three labels 'rich', 'average' and 'poor' on the ground side by side. Then, place and spread out the fifteen possession cards randomly below the labels so that all participants can see them. Ask the participants to discuss and categorise the cards by placing them in vertical columns, depending on whether the possessions are likely to be owned by rich, average or poor people in the community. Ask them to draw or write on a blank of paper any possessions not depicted on the cards. This process can then be repeated for the situational cards. After consensus has been reached, ask them to identify three or four cards that most characterise each group. Remove the labels shuffle the cards. Now use the drawings of a man and a woman. Ask them to categorise the cards again on the basis of whether there are differences in wealth and well being between males and females headed households. Finally ask the participants to categorise the actual families in the community in terms of whether they are rich, average or poor. Names of families can be written on slips of paper. Allow for ample discussion until consensus is reached.

An alternative way of facilitating this process is described in section 6.3.1 above using a community map to first identify the rich and poor households and then to ask the group to discuss what possessions, conditions or other factors they would use to indicate whether a household was rich or poor.

### 6.3.6. Critical incident analysis

*PURPOSE:* The purpose is to help community members further develop their analytical abilities in order to address local problems.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 30 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Any group up to 25.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ A sets of four to eight drawings of people in problem situations or simply problematic situations.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Pass the drawings around the group. Ask the group to analyse the pictures in terms of problems they may depict. Have the group discuss the factors that may have contributed to the problems and how they could be resolved and then how the problem can be avoided in the future. Discuss the pros and cons of different proposed solutions.

Alternatively, an existing or potential problem, identified earlier, can be analysed in this way. Also, reversing the order of Story with a Gap as discussed in section 6.4.1 below, can be used as a critical incident analysis.

### 6.3.7. Family dynamics

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to assess typical family dynamics and to analyse and investigate the impact of different livelihood threats on the family dynamics and relationships.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 45 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ Numerous silhouetted figures depicting different family members from very young to very old.
- ☑ Small coloured stickers.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Follow this step-by-step guide:

**Step 1:** *Prepare Materials.* Cut out all the silhouettes and stick or draw a dot on the back of about a third of the individual silhouettes.

**Step 2:** *Divide the group.* Break your group into small working groups of no more than 5 to 10 people per group. Try, as much as possible, to ensure a gender spread in the groups. You can repeat the exercise using single gender groups to demonstrate particular problem areas.

**Step 3:** *Starting the Exercise.* Introduce the purpose of the exercise. Place the cut out silhouette figures on the floor so that everyone can see them.

**Step 4:** *Creating Families.* Ask each group to select silhouettes that represent a family that is common to the area where they live.

**Step 5:** *Giving Life to the Family.* Working in their small groups, participants are first asked to give life to their 'family'. What would the people in the household be doing? What are the relations between family members? How does the family survive? What are the goals and dreams of the family as a whole, as well as the individuals in the household? They should be encouraged to personalise their families by giving them names. Give the groups about 10 minutes to complete this exercise.

**Step 6:** *Report Back (1).*

Ask each group to stand up and report back on what they discussed. Have them tell the plenary how their family gets along, what they do to survive, and what their dreams and problems are. Each group should take no longer than 3 minutes to tell the plenary about their family.

**Step 7:** *Introducing a problem factor.*

Ask the groups to turn over the silhouettes and find out if any have a dot on their back. Tell them that the person with a dot is experiencing a particular problem (e.g. HIV/AIDS). Ask them to discuss what the implications for the family are of this person having the particular problem. What has changed within the family? How will the family manage their situation? What will happen if the problem gets worse? How does this problem impact upon the others? What are the implications of this? How is the person being treated by other family members, or the community at large? Finally, how have family members' dreams and ambitions changed as a result of their family problem? Give the groups 15 minutes to discuss this issue.

**Step 8:** *Report Back (2).*

Ask each group to stand up and report back on what they discussed. Have them tell the plenary how their family reacted to the person having the problem, what they will do now to survive, and how their dreams and problems have changed as a result of the problem. Each group should take no longer than 3 minutes to tell the plenary about their family.

**Step 9:** *Household Coping Strategies.*

Ask each group to return to their families once more. Ask them to discuss ways in which the family can help the member of the family with experiencing the problem. Give each group 10 minutes to complete this exercise.

**Step 10:** *Report Back (3).*

Have each group present its findings in plenary. Give each group 3 minutes to report back to the plenary.

**Step 11:** *How do you feel?*

Ask participants, as individuals, to tell the plenary how they feel. Give people time to express their emotions in the open. Do not interfere during this session. Be willing to allow silence as people gather their thoughts. Allow 20 minutes for this session.

**Step 12:** *Developing Community Responses to the problems.*

Ask groups to return to the plenary group and to place their silhouette families in the centre of the room. Tell them that this 'community' has to solve the problems together. The only condition is that someone from a family would first have to ask either another family or the broader community for help. The programme will only start once someone says, "I need help…"

Give the group 20-30 minutes for this session, and be sure to document the suggestions for help that are discussed

This tool has followed a process of analysing the effects of specific problem towards a process of defining the solutions.

### 6.3.8. Disease transmission routes (and barriers)

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to explore participants understanding and perception on how diseases are transmitted from one host to another. This can be done for the oral-faecal contamination route, malaria, bilharzias, scabies, worms or any other communicable diseases. This tool is used if health specific related problems have been identified.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 60 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ A set of pre-prepared cards showing parts of the routes and other depicting the barriers for the identified transmission route to be explored.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Ask the groups to identify the ways in which the disease is transmitted from one host to another by placing the cards in a sequence that they think is correct for the various transmission paths. For instance, one could ask people to use the cards to depict the routes that allow fresh faeces to eventually enter the mouth and cause diarrhoea. Then ask the groups to identify the barriers would prevent the disease from reaching the new host. This last task is part of identifying solutions (see section 0).

The tool is useful to investigate and analyse local people's understanding of how diseases are transmitted and what can be done to block transmission routes. As an alternative to the use of pre-prepared cards, participants can be encouraged to draw their own routes and barriers.

### 6.3.9. Water quality testing

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to raise the community's awareness of the quality of their drinking water, and to create the conditions for further participatory exercises, which can help communities decide on steps needed to improve their drinking water quality. This exercise is only undertaken if water quality has been identified as a problem or as a cause of health problems.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 30 minutes (up to 4 days for test results).

*GROUP SIZE:* Any group up to 25.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ Small plastic beakers or test tubes containing active agents that test for e. coli.
- ☑ Correctly collected water samples.

The best testing system does not require incubation. However, if only the incubation tests are available, you can ask the participants to place the beakers under their clothes against their skin for the required length of time (usually 24 hours). *PLEASE NOTE: These testing systems are 'indicator tests' which only indicate a water quality problem. These simple tests are only available in some countries. Another system to use is the more sophisticated DelAgua kits, but these are expensive and require trained staff.*

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Collect water samples from a small number of points in the community. These points should include water from:

- ☑ The water source.
- ☑ The water storage system.
- ☑ A communal collection point.
- ☑ A private collection point.
- ☑ A private storage point.

Ensure that water from these points is collected in the same way that it is normally collected. For instance, collect water directly from the tap (into a beaker) rather than first transferring the water into another "foreign" vessel and then into a beaker. Similarly, collect water from domestic water sources using the same utensil (cup or ladle) that the household uses to transfer water from the storage container for domestic use.

Proceed as per the instructions of your particular test kit until the test indicates the result. It is advisable to collect two samples from each point. Leave one with the community and take the other away as a control. Compare the results when you return to the field.

If various samples indicate contamination, proceed with a detailed discussion about the possible causes. Your discussion should them lead on to identifying solutions. It may also then be wise to send further samples away for detailed analysis.

### 6.3.10. Problem tree (roots)

This tool has historically been facilitated by using writing and not pictures and was therefore not suitable for use with groups containing illiterate people. However, it is very easy to adapt and to use pictures with it.

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to raise the community's awareness about the root causes of their problems which then allows the development of more complete solutions.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 45 minutes per problem.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ Newsprint paper
- ☑ Marking pens
- ☑ Blank paper or cards
- ☑ Sticky tape or Bluetack (Prestik)

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* For each of the most important problems identified, ask the group to draw and/or write this problem down at the top of their Newsprint paper. Then ask each person to rapidly draw and/or write down on the blank pieces of paper what they think the causes of the problem are and to throw these into a pile in the centre of the group. The ask one person to read out each cause, and allow the group time to discuss this and agree or disagree before sticking this cause up under the problem on the flip chart. Do this for each cause, obviously grouping the common ones. Then allow further group discussion allowing time for proper understanding of all the causes and the identification of new ones.

Finally, ask the group to mark those causes that, if rectified, would have the largest effect on solving the problem. If you prefer you can use the *three-pile sorting* method as described in section 6.3.4 above to get the group to rank the causes. The problem tree can then be take forward into the solution tree as discussed in section 6.4.4 below.

Remember, however, that some of the root causes of the problem being analysed may in themselves be problems that are not easily solved and that it is important to then analyse that problem further looking at its root causes.

An additional exercise can also be added that is useful with communities who appear to be less interested in solving their problems. For each problem and its root causes, ask the group to identify the effects or impacts of the problem and its causes on their own daily lives. This would be done by allowing them to develop another level of issues below the causes already identified.

### 6.3.11. Conventional tools

As with problem identification tools, there are a number of the more 'conventional' participatory methods that you can use for problem analysis. These were discussed in Chapter 4 above. *Semi-structured interviews* and *direct observation* are also used to help gain further information and data to analyse problems. However, these methods have historically been used by outside facilitators as a means to extract this information from communities and then to analyse the problems without the communities full participation. Be totally sure when using these methods that you let the community group or the community leadership with whom you are working lead the process and own the outcomes.

## *6.4. Planning for solutions (STEP 3)*

During this stage, the groups go through a process of identifying possible solutions to the problems identified and analysed, as well as the possible resources that would be needed for each solution.

### 6.4.1. Story with a gap

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of this tool is to assist communities to plan by involving individuals in a critical analysis of their own situation. It encourages goal setting and ultimately behaviour change.

*TIME REQUIRED:* Up to 60 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ A range of pictures in pairs that show 'before' and 'after' scenarios in communities. For example:
  - ✓ Bad sanitation situation versus good sanitation situation.
  - ✓ Basic water supply versus improved water supply
  - ✓ A queue of women at a broken pump versus no queue at a repaired pump
  - ✓ A school in great disrepair versus a well kept school with flowers and good facilities

The 'before' and 'after' situation that you use will be dependent upon the problems that the group has identified and analysed. This may mean that you will have to prepare new pictures for this exercise. This can be done quickly without the need for a skilled artist. It is the concept of 'before' and 'after' that is important and the group can define their own 'after' situation based upon their needs and goals.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Introduce the exercise to the participants. Show them the picture of the 'before' scene and ask them to describe what they see and state why they think that situation exists. Then show them the 'after' scene and ask them again to describe what they see (or ask them to create their own after picture). In the small groups, ask them to create a story from their own experience to describe what steps the community in the pictures followed to move from one situation to the next. The small groups must then report their stories back to the plenary and discuss the issues by focusing on:

- ☑ What caused the problems?
- ☑ What do the groups think the community did to solve the problems?
- ☑ What obstacles faced the community along the

way?

- ☑ What resources the community needed to achieve this?

Each of these steps and the issues raised can be drawn on pieces of paper and placed between the two pictures in order to keep a record of the discussions.

Remember that this exercise could be a follow-up from an earlier problem identification exercise. The group will already know the problems or the 'before' situation. This exercise can be repeated for every problem raised. Remember to ensure that the group keeps a good record of all the solutions and issues raised as this exercise can then be taken forward by using the *planning posters* tool described in section 6.6.2 below.

### 6.4.2. Open-ended social drama

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of this exercise is to introduce participants to evocative, open-ended stories that can stimulate discussion among the group about particular issues. It is useful to help identify solutions to problems or, to stimulate debate about an issue and achieve consensus.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 45 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Any group up to 25.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:* No materials required.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* If you have a large group, divide it up into smaller groups of 5 to 10 people. Present a short drama to the participants that demonstrates a situation of conflict, or a difficult problem that must be resolved (your choice should be dependant on the problems identified in earlier exercises). Examples of short dramas/plays could be:

- ☑ Gender conflict
- ☑ A water system breaks down.
- ☑ An illness spreads in a family.
- ☑ A teenage pregnancy.

The drama presented should not have a conclusion. Following the short drama, ask the groups to discuss how the drama would be concluded. After they have discussed the conclusion, ask them to either share the conclusion with the larger group or, if they prefer, they can act out the conclusion.

This exercise can be used to analyse problems and to identify local solutions. In addition, the mandated community group tasked with a development process can use this drama method to stimulate discussion in community meetings to help them achieve consensus on issues and to raise awareness.

### 6.4.3. Disease barriers

As noted in section 6.3.8, this exercise is a continuation of the *disease transmission route* tool. This is usually facilitated immediately after the disease transmission routes have been completed.

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to identify actions that can be taken to block the disease transmission routes. The exercise allows people to decide which behaviours they wish to target for change, and can be used to clarify what they will do to support the changes in the identified behaviour.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 30 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ A previously completed disease transmission route exercise
- ☑ A set of pictures of potential barriers.
- ☑ Blank paper
- ☑ Marker pens.

If pre-prepared pictures are not available, the groups can identify and draw their own.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Tell the group that because they now know the disease transmission routes, they can now think about what can be done to stop or block these routes. Each group should take a set of drawings and agree as a group where to put it on their transmission routes diagram, in order to stop or block the different each route. Facilitate a discussion with the groups centred around what the group feels would be the best ways to implement the identified 'barriers' or solutions.

### 6.4.4. Solution tree (branches)

As noted in section 6.3.10 above, the *problem tree* approach can taken forward using a *solution tree.* This is usually done as part of the same exercise.

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to identify solutions to problems that clearly link the root causes of the identified problems.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 45 minutes per previously develop *problem tree*.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ Newsprint paper
- ☑ Marking pens
- ☑ Blank paper or cards
- ☑ Sticky tape or Bluetack (Prestik)

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Place a blank piece of Newsprint paper above the previously developed *problem tree* and ask the group to now draw the branches of their tree, the solutions, in the same way that they did the roots (*problem tree*). Tell them that they need to aim their solutions directly at addressing the highest ranked root causes of the problem. Allow sufficient time for the group to fully discuss and decide on all the solutions.

## *6.5. Selecting options (STEP 4)*

All the solutions identified in step 3 are then prioritised into groupings that allow the community group to select those that will have the biggest impact in solving the problems and will also be the most feasible to implement with the available resources.

### 6.5.1. Decision matrix

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of this tool is to assist groups to discuss and decide which of their identified solutions are most viable to implement at local level. This is a very powerful decision making tool and can be adapted by a facilitator to assist groups to analyse and make decisions about a whole range of issues. Only one method is presented here.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 45 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ Pictures of the range of solutions identified in previous sessions.
- ☑ A matrix, drawn on the ground or on large sheets of Newsprint paper.
- ☑ Labels with pictures and/or writing representing:
    - ✓ East to implement.
    - ✓ In-between to implement.
    - ✓ Hard to implement.
    - ✓ High impact.
    - ✓ Medium impact.
    - ✓ Low impact.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Draw a matrix as shown in Figure 3:

| | Easy to Imple-ment | In-between to Im-plement | Hard to Imple-ment |
|---|---|---|---|
| High Impact | | | |
| Medium Impact | | | |
| Low Impact | | | |

Use pictures not words in order to include everyone

**Figure 3:** Decision matrix

Ask the participants to place the solutions in the block where they think they fit best. For example, if a community has identified that keeping the area around their hand-pump clean and free from stagnant water is one of the solutions to their health problems then they would place this solution in the relevant block of the matrix. They may decide that it is easy to do and will have a high impact. Once this has been completed with all the solutions, discuss with the group which solutions they now feel they should target as a first step in their development process. Any solutions in the ‘high impact’ and ‘easy to implement’ block will be a natural choice. This set of solutions (if there are many) can be taken through a new decision matrix, to further analyse them (e.g. cost versus locally available skills)

In some cases, you may find the group you are working with are confused by the matrix. If this happens, you can easily revert to the using the *three-pile sorting* method discussed in section 6.3.4 above. You would simple ask the group to do this twice, once for the ease of implementation issues and a second time (using the easy to implement pile) for the level of impact.

### 6.5.2. Option ladders

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to explore different options within a solution. For example, it can be used to help a community to decide what levels or types of water or sanitation options are the most appropriate for them. It can also be used to help assess which of the options are prevalent in a community and to highlight what options people wish to explore further.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 60 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ A pre-prepared set of pictures that depict the various options. In the sanitation options example, the pictures would depict the whole sanitation ladder of options, from open field defecation, through unimproved pit toilets all the way through ventilated pit latrines and finally flushing toilets.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Lay the pictures of the options out on the floor for the group to see. Ask the group to first agree on what each picture represents in relation to their community. Next, ask them to arrange the pictures in a row, ranging from what they believe is the worst situation to the best. Once complete, provide the group with a number of coloured markers (beans, stones, tiny pieces of coloured paper) and tell them to use them to indicate those situations that exist in their community. Up to this stage, this tool is an assessment tool.

Next, ask the participants to use a different set of markers to indicate those options that they would like to implement in their community in the future. Now give the group third set of markers and ask them to use them to indicate the time-scale for the implementation of the selected future options.

However, be aware, that at this stage the group may not fully understand the option being looked at, especially if you are dealing with technical water, sanitation or other systems. At this point it would be a good idea to take the group into a *demystifying the solution* (in this case the options) exercise as described in section 6.6.2 below.

The picture that depicts the current situation and the selected final future option/s, can now also be taken forward into a *planning poster* (section 0 below) for further analysing what the constraints and resources are that will hinder or assist the development process.

From this point, the selected future options can be taken into a decision matrix as described in section 6.5.1 above, which will help the participants to realistically decide on which options are feasible and appropriate to their circumstances. However, as the

This is one of the tools that may require you as a facilitator to provide external input if asked to do so. This will usually arise if the options being discussed include technical options that the group feels they do not know enough about.

### 6.5.3. Pocket chart

This tool has already been discussed in section 6.3.2. At this stage in the process, it can be used in much the same way as the decision matrix is used, or it can be used as a voting tool to achieve consensus on the chosen solutions, particularly if they are slightly complex and contain a range of options..

### 6.5.4. Question box

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to provide participants with an opportunity to ask questions in a way that does not force them to express their concerns publicly. This activity can be used throughout the entire process as a way of allowing people to raise concerns at any time. It is presented at this stage as a specific activity as it allows people to raise concerns and issues at the vital stage of prioritising solutions, which may be a cause for contention and conflict.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 45 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Any group up to 25.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ A closed box or other container with a slot cut into it like a ballot box.
- ☑ Slips of paper.
- ☑ Marker pens.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Show the group the *question box* and invite them to place any question they have in the box on the slip of paper. Inform them that they may place a question in the box at any time. When answering the questions, open the box in front of everyone and ask each of the participants in the group to pick one of the pieces of paper that are in the box. Ask each person who has a slip of paper with a question on it to first read the question and then try to answer. After this, the floor can be opened for other people to suggest answers to the posed question. Make sure that everyone understands that no question or concern should be laughed at or dismissed.

### 6.6. *Planning for change (STEP 5)*

The selected solutions are then scrutinised and detailed implementation plans are developed. If other external role players become involved at this stage, you will need to ensure that they understand the process followed up to this point and to show the necessary respect for it. Examples of external role players may be other sector government departments, NGO's, funders or technical consultants. They need to understand that they are there to assist and add value to the process and they must follow the same methodology that you have done so far.

#### 6.6.1. Roles and responsibilities

*PURPOSE:* The aim of the exercise is to explore the roles and responsibilities involved in a project and for long-term sustainability in relation to:

- ☑ Project management.
- ☑ Financial management.
- ☑ Tariff collection.
- ☑ Community relations and communication
- ☑ Operation and Maintenance (if required)
- ☑ Implementation and/or Construction

This tool can be used for the following:

- ☑ During the planning phase:
  - ✓ To explore the various roles and responsibilities involved in implementing a project.
  - ✓ To facilitate decision making around which roles and responsibilities various stakeholders or role-players will assume.
  - ✓ To explore the implications of assuming particular roles and responsibilities.
  - ✓ To develop action and monitoring plans for these roles and responsibilities.
  - ✓ To identify training needs:
  - ✓ To identify the skills and capacity needed to fulfil the roles and responsibilities identified.
  - ✓ To identify existing skills and capacity in relation to a particular group or function.
  - ✓ To identify gaps.
  - ✓ To identify training and capacity building needed for different groups or role-players.
- ☑ For monitoring and evaluation:
  - ✓ To assess which responsibilities are assumed by different role-players
  - ✓ To assess which responsibilities are problematic for a particular group and the implications of this.

This tool can be facilitated in two ways:

- ☑ In themes:
  - ✓ Financial management.
  - ✓ Tariff collection.

- ✓ Community relations and communication.
- ✓ Operation and Maintenance.
- ✓ Construction.

☑ All of the above themes collectively.

The target participants for this activity are:

☑ Community members spread throughout the project area.

☑ Project management structures such as Village Water Committees, Water Services Providers and Water Services Authorities.

☑ Trainees, e.g. O&M operators, structures responsible for financial management.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 120 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Any group up to 25. Can be split into smaller group to make it easier.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

☑ Pictures depicting roles and responsibilities through a project cycle.

☑ Blank paper.

☑ Marker pens.

☑ Some means of recording the decisions taken.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* For planning:

☑ Step 1: Place all the pictures on the floor / table in front of the group and fan them out so everybody can see them.

☑ Step 2: Introduce the tool: Each of the pictures shows different things that have to be performed on a project.

☑ Step 3: Ask the participants to discuss and agree on what is depicted in each of the pictures. If they feel that there are some roles or responsibilities not depicted, they can draw these and add them in.

☑ Step 4: Ask the participants to choose the roles and responsibilities they feel they as a group / committee would like to take on and put them to one side. You can explore why they feel it is important that they take them on.

☑ Step 5: Explore with participants who they think should take on the roles and responsibilities they have not chosen.

☑ Step 6: Explore with participants all the implications of where they have located the roles and responsibilities discussed.

☑ Step 7: Based on these discussions, facilitate the participants' development of an action plan around these options. The action plan should address who will do what, when, where and how.

☑ Step 8: From here, you could also facilitate a discussion around how this group will know that their action plan is being implemented effectively to enable them to monitor the process.

For a Training Needs Analysis:

- ☑ Steps 1-3: As above.
- ☑ Step 4: Ask the participants to discuss what skills are needed in order to fulfil these responsibilities effectively?
- ☑ Step 5: Ask participants to identify what skills and capacity they feel they have and what skills, capacity or support they feel they need in order to fulfil these effectively.

The outcomes of these discussions should then feed into the training and capacity building plan for the project.

For monitoring / evaluating:

- ☑ Steps 1-2: As above.
- ☑ Step 3: Ask the participants which of these responsibilities are happening now? This step will help to identify current gaps.
- ☑ Step 4: Explore causes and implications of problems.
- ☑ What does the problem mean and what / who does it effect?
- ☑ Step 5: Use the *story with a gap* to identify the desired stage of where the participants want to be.
- ☑ Step 6: Ask the participants to discuss the constraints and challenges of getting to the desired stage. Brainstorm the options. Which one's are easy or difficult?
- ☑ Step 7: Based on these discussions, facilitate the participants' development of an action plan. The action plan should address who will do what, when, where and how.
- ☑ Step 8: From here, you could also facilitate a discussion around how this group will know that their action plan is being implemented effectively to enable them to monitor the process.

### 6.6.2. Demystifying the solution

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of this tool is in some ways similar to *Roles and Responsibilities* as discussed in section 6.6.1 above, but deals with the much more practical issues related to implementing a particular solution. Its purpose is to breakdown the solution into its key components in order to develop a better understanding of the requirements and to check what, if any, issues and resources will, in the view of the group, require external assistance.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 45 90 minutes depending on complexity of solution.

*GROUP SIZE:* Any group up to 25.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ Depending on the solution being looked at, a series of pictures that break down the solution into the following categories:
    - ✓ Materials or components
    - ✓ Equipment
    - ✓ Tasks & activities (roles & responsibilities)
- ☑ It is often a good idea to develop these pictures within these categories with the group which can create a better understanding of the solution. In this case blank paper or cards with pens are required.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* If creating the pictures from scratch with the group, ask them to brainstorm the list of requirements within the categories. While they are doing this have someone record these on cards by sketching a basic picture for each one. Next collect the cards together and ensure that they are sorted into their categories. Now follow these basic steps:

- ☑ Ask the group to sort the *materials or components* cards between those that they think they will be able to provide themselves and those that they think they are unable to provide. Of those they are unable to provide ask them to sort these into those that they could afford but do not know how to access and those that they cannot afford.
- ☑ Repeat this exercise with the *equipment* cards.
- ☑ Finally, do the same with the *tasks & activities* cards, but of course, change the instruction to get them to sort the cards between those that they can do themselves and those they cannot do. Then they must take those they cannot do and sort them into those they feel they could and would like to learn to do and those that they feel require external expertise.

### 6.6.3. Planning posters

*PURPOSE:* The purpose of the exercise is to enable participants to develop a plan to implement the selected solution.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 120 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Best facilitated in small groups of between five and ten.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ The ‘now’ and ‘future’ options from the options ladders
- ☑ Sticky tape.
- ☑ Marker pens
- ☑ Blank paper.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Give each group an identical set of ‘now’ and ‘future’ drawings and a *planning poster*. Give the group about 30 to 40 minutes to work out its arrangements of steps, and then ask each group to explain its plan to the other participants. Each group should be prepared to answer any specific questions that might arise, although a more general discussion or debate should be limited until each group has had a chance to present its work.

After the presentations, encourage a group discussion aimed at reaching an agreement on a common plan. The discussion should cover:

- ☑ The similarities among and differences between steps chosen by each group.
- ☑ What difficulties they might come across in trying to carry out these steps.
- ☑ What resources they might need to carry out these steps.
- ☑ The time necessary to carry out the plan.

Facilitate a discussion with the group on what it has learned during this activity, what it liked and what it did not like about the activity.

### 6.6.4. Problem box

*PURPOSE:* The purpose is to get the group to think about possible problems in implementing the plan and devise ways of overcoming them.

*TIME REQUIRED:* 60 minutes.

*GROUP SIZE:* Any group up to 25.

*MATERIALS NEEDED:*

- ☑ A closed box or other container with a slot cut into it like a ballot box.
- ☑ Slips of paper.
- ☑ Marker pens.

*HOW TO FACILITATE:* Ask everyone to write on a slip of paper a problem that they think may arise in taking the plan forward. Write this problem in a form of a question e.g. “What would we do if the person trained to do maintenance leaves the community?” Ask the participants to place all their problems in the container. This container becomes the *problem box*.

When all the problems have been collected, pass the *problem box* to one participant at a time and ask each participant to pick out a slip of paper and to answer the question. Give the group plenty of time to discuss the answers. If the participant can’t answer the question, the question passed to the next person.

If there is time, it may be helpful to have the group sort the problems into different categories. The suggestions for two-pile sorting of problems are:

| **Pile 1:** | | **Pile 2:** |
|---|---|---|
| Start-up problems | & | On-going problems |
| Technical problems | & | Social problems |
| Difficult problems | & | Outside help needed |

## *6.7. Planning for monitoring and evaluation (STEP 6)*

Take the time to prepare and plan monitoring and evaluation (periodic evaluation during implementation or post-implementation). It helps if everyone knows why he or she is monitoring, and how it will be done. The first meeting to plan for monitoring can include all those directly involved in the activities as well as other interested groups, but the following meetings will be concentrated on those directly involved or those selected by the groups who will be responsible for monitoring.

Planning for monitoring can use a process as explained in the following steps:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 1:** *Discuss reasons for monitoring.* | Review the benefits and purpose of monitoring so that stakeholders can decide whether monitoring will help them. |
| **Step 2:** *Review objectives and activities.* | If PAME has been continually used, the insider objectives and activities will have been established during the participatory development planning process.<br><br>If insiders have not previously been involved, the objectives and activities as established by outsiders can be reviewed and discussed by insiders. A Participatory Assessment may be necessary if insiders and outsider objectives are very different. |
| **Step3:** *Develop monitoring questions.* | Discuss the information needed to help you know if activities are going well. Focus on the questions:<br>☑ What do we want to know?<br>☑ What do we monitor that will tell us this?<br><br>Do not try to monitor too much, keep it simple. The facilitator can write (or draw), on large sheets of paper or a blackboard, monitoring questions generated around each objective and activity. There should be agreement by the group on each monitoring question. If many questions are generated they can be ranked in order of importance. |
| **Step 4:** *Establish direct and indirect indicators.* | For each monitoring question, determine direct and/or indirect indicators that will answer the monitoring questions (see section 3.4 above for a more in-depth discussion regarding indicators). Try to make these indicators easy to assess and see. |
| **Step 5:** *Decide which information gathering tools are needed.* | For each indicator or monitoring question, the most appropriate information-gathering tool must be chosen. Remember one tool can gather information that answers many monitoring questions. Many of the tools discussed in this document can be used. |
| **Step 6:** *Decide who will do the monitoring.* | Decide who will do the monitoring. Monitoring is not a specialist's job, but may require input from people with specific skills such as bookkeeping or engineering. It will also require a certain amount of time commitment from people. |
| **Step 7:** *Analyse and present results.* | It is important that information monitored be analysed at specific times throughout the activities. The analysis can be discussed at community meetings, posted or put in community newsletters. The community will then know whether or not activities are progressing as planned or if changes or modifications are required. |

## 6.8. Participatory evaluation (STEP 7)

The time that is taken to carefully prepare and plan a participatory evaluation is time well spent. It helps if everyone knows why we are evaluating and how we are going to do it.

The first meeting to prepare and plan the evaluation should be open to all stakeholders. This meeting could include all project stakeholders, both internal and external.

If a great number of people are interested in the evaluation, some of the responsibilities of the evaluation can be delegated to a smaller group, a community evaluation team. This team need not be the same people as those directly involved with the project implementation, but should rather be a mix that includes other stakeholders. The larger stakeholder group must first discuss why they are doing an evaluation and what they wish to know, in order to provide guidance to the community evaluation team.

The following is a step-by-step guide for designing and implementing a participatory evaluation process. Refer to Appendix A: 'The Seven Steps' Chart to see which of the tools presented in this document can be used to assist you through the participatory evaluation steps. Many of the steps and the principles set out here are very similar to the participatory monitoring steps as described in section 6.7 above.

**Step 1:** *Review objectives and activities*

The community's long-term and immediate objectives and the activities should be reviewed at this meeting.

- ☑ If PAME has been used, the objectives and activities established during the participatory project development process can be reviewed.
- ☑ If the activities have not been participatory, the objectives, as established by outsiders, can be reviewed.

**Step 2:** *Review of purpose of evaluation.*

Why are we doing an evaluation?

- ☑ The participants will need to define the exact reasons for the evaluation.

What do we want to know?

- ☑ This is the process of defining the broad categories of issues that you want the evaluation to give you answers on.

**Step 3:** *Develop evaluation questions.*

The detailed questions must be designed in a way that will provide you with an indication of how well the project has faired on each broad category as defined in step 2.

**Step 4:** *Decide who will do the evaluation.*

In the larger group meeting, decide who will do the evaluation and who will want to know the results. It may be decided to include the whole community (especially if it is small), or only the beneficiaries, or delegate the responsibility for the evaluation to a smaller evaluation team.

- ☑ The composition of the evaluation team should be decided by the larger group at this first meeting.
- ☑ If it is known that some minority groups will

not be represented, the facilitator may encourage the participation of spokespersons from these groups on the evaluation team.
- ☑ The evaluation team may include beneficiaries, those who may be disadvantaged by an activity, community members and other affected groups.

The larger group also decides who needs the results of the evaluation and when the results should be ready. This will depend on who needs the information to make decisions, and when decisions are to be made

**Step 5:**
*Identify direct and indirect indicators.*

For each evaluation question, direct and indirect indicators are chosen.

- ☑ Direct indicators are pieces of information that expressly relate to what is being measured. For example, if information on crop yields is required, this is exactly what we will measure.
- ☑ Indirect indicators are essential pieces of information, chosen from amongst many possible pieces of information, to serve as substitutes or proxy's to answer questions and/or respond to statements that are difficult to measure. For example, instead of the direct indicator of income, indirect indicators of poverty chosen by stakeholders might be:
  - ☑ Persons are poor if they have to hire themselves out as labour.
  - ☑ Persons are rich if they can hire labour.

This type of indicator is obviously only locally specific and cannot be generalised.

Three important questions to be answered when defining the key indicators are:

- ☑ What do we want to know?
- ☑ What are the many pieces of information that could tell us this?
- ☑ What are the few pieces of information (key indicators) that will tell us this?

Establishing good indicators will reduce the amount of information that has to be collected.

**Step 6:** *Identify the information sources for evaluation questions.*

For each key indicator you now need to define a mix of information resources that you can use or ask.

If an existing participatory process is in place, especially a participatory monitoring system, much of your information may be obtained here. If information is not easily available, then an appropriate mix of participatory tools can be used or developed.

**Step 7:** *Determine the skills and labour that are required to obtain information.*

The evaluation team must decide which skills and resources are available to them:

- ☑ What resources do we need?
- ☑ What resources do we have, or can we develop?
- ☑ What other resources do we need to get?

**Step 8:** *Determine when information gathering and analysis can be done.*

Specific dates and deadlines need to be agreed upon for each phase of the evaluation.

**Step 9:** *Determine who will gather information.*

Each member of the evaluation must be allocated specific tasks.

**Step 10:** *Analyse and present results*

When all the tasks have been completed, it will be necessary to analyse and synthesise information for presentation. The participatory analysis tools described in section 6.3 above can be used to facilitate the analysis process.

The evaluation team can decide what will be the best way to present results, given the audience for whom the results are intended, the resources and time available.

# Appendices

### *Appendix A: 'The Seven Steps' Chart*

### *Appendix B: References and Resources*

## Appendix A: ‘The Seven Steps’ Chart

**1 Problem Identification** =

- ☑ Unserialised posters
- ☑ Community mapping
- ☑ Participatory surveys
- ☑ Conventional tools

**2 Problem Analysis** =

- ☑ Community mapping
- ☑ Pocket chart
- ☑ Gender analysis
- ☑ Three-pile sorting
- ☑ What is poverty / who is poor?
- ☑ Critical incident analysis
- ☑ Family dynamics
- ☑ Disease transmission routes (and barriers)
- ☑ Water quality testing
- ☑ Problem tree (roots)
- ☑ Conventional tools

**3 Planning for Solutions** =

- ☑ Story with a gap
- ☑ Open-ended social drama
- ☑ Disease barriers
- ☑ Solution tree (branches)

**4 Selecting Options** =

- ☑ Decision matrix
- ☑ Option ladders
- ☑ Pocket chart
- ☑ Question box

**5 Planning for Change** =

- ☑ Roles and responsibilities
- ☑ Demystifying the solution
- ☑ Planning posters
- ☑ Problem box

**6 Planning for Monitoring and Evaluation** =

- ☑ Roles and responsibilities
- ☑ Planning posters
- ☑ Decision matrix
- ☑ Problem box
- ☑ Question box
- ☑ Story with a gap
- ☑ Family dynamics
- ☑ Participatory surveys
- ☑ Semi-structured interviews

**7 Participatory evaluation** =

- ☑ Roles and responsibilities
- ☑ Planning posters
- ☑ Decision matrix
- ☑ Problem box
- ☑ Question box
- ☑ Story with a gap
- ☑ Family dynamics
- ☑ Participatory surveys
- ☑ Semi-structured interviews

## *Appendix B: References and Resources*

The following references and resources have been used and adapted in the production of this guideline:

### *These texts were used extensively:*


Narayan D, Srinivasan L. *Participatory Development Toolkit: Training Materials for Agencies and Communities.* The World Bank: Washington DC 1994

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