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# REPORT

## BASICS

**PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT  
WORKSHOP  
INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

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## ACRONYMS

BASICS	Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal

## **PURPOSE OF VISIT**

The purpose of the author's visit was to participate in a workshop on participation in development. The author also shared some of the work that BASICS is doing in this area and got feedback from the other participants.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP**

The workshop started with a "seed mixer." Everyone took two types of seeds, one for each participant. Participants were then asked to talk to each other and exchange a seed. This was followed by introductions using flipchart paper where each person wrote his name, anything about himself, anything special to contribute, what he hoped for, and special interests with the option of a self-portrait. Using these introductions, participants wrote cards for special interests, what they would contribute and their hopes. This was used to plan the agenda.

### **What is Participation?**

In groups, everyone wrote on cards the answer to "I know participation is happening when..." Some of the things that came out of the group included:

- 1) Concrete action is taken, people work together;
- 2) Consensus is reached;
- 3) Initiate action themselves;
- 4) People rally around an issue;
- 5) Conflict;
- 6) People feel changes in themselves;
- 7) Each person feels comfortable expressing an opinion;
- 8) The action/project does not die when you leave;
- 9) People decide to monitor their own progress;
- 10) Non-hierarchical;
- 11) People guarantee each other, e.g. credit;
- 12) Ownership;
- 13) Information and ideas shared;
- 14) People not forced to be there;
- 15) People summarizing an argument to which they are opposed;
- 16) Letting go;
- 17) Empowerment;
- 18) When people share power over resources; and,
- 19) Sustainability of collective action, of the process.



Participants then discussed the types of participation:

Cooption	
Compliance	ON them
Consultation	FOR them
Collaboration	
Co-learning	WITH them
Collective action	BY them

In groups, each person then drew his own history of participation and discussed some of the positive and negative forces that have shaped participation.

### **PRA Overview and Familiarization**

Participatory rural appraisal developed in part to combat the biases of “rural development tourism” (spacial, controlled, rushing, project, official biases, translators, seasonal, people met [ones who are there], service, time of day). Increasingly, PRA practitioners recognize the central importance of how outsiders behave and the need to promote self-critical awareness, equity and diversity. The specific PRA methods simply give people a way and an opportunity to express the complexity of their lives. As outsiders, we need to “unlearn,” to sit down and listen, relax, embrace error, hand over the stick, and suffer the silence.

We do not have the answers. Chambers gave the example of the psychoanalysis theory that sexual abuse victims were in love with their abusers. The psychoanalysts were so sure they were right and now no one believes this theory any longer.

Does all power deceive? Does it lead to misinformation? Does a hierarchical educational system orient one to a hierarchical bureaucracy? Chains of hierarchy can be mutually reinforcing.

Participants then reviewed and practiced some of the PRA methods. There was an example where livestock were rated by staff and the villagers. The criterion of “causes trouble with neighbors” was important to villagers but not to staff. Another example was a treatment matrix;” the numbers in the matrix refer to the first, second, third and fourth source of care.

	government	drug seller	PVO	traditional healer	How common is illness?
cough					
snake bite	3	4	2	1	
measles					
diarrhea					

Another example was a time allocation matrix, comparing how time was spent on different activities at different time periods:

Activities	15 years ago	Now	5 years later
	amount of time spent on each activity. 20 beans per column		

### Scaling Up Participation

There are four types of scaling up participation:

- 1) Quantitative (doing it in more places);
- 2) Functional (moving from one activity to more activities);
- 3) Political (from service to political causes); and,
- 4) Organizational (increasing organizational capacity).

There are many questions about scaling up: What is the impact? Does it make a difference? What are the pre-conditions? What capacity needs to be built? What attitudes and behavior need to change? (In Indonesia, the army trained people.)

Edwin Shanks presented a case study on scaling up from Vietnam. The pre-conditions for scaling up were human resources, flexibility, time, government support, grassroots demand, benefits of the pilot, decentralization, core of trainers, and a stable external environment.

### Institutionalization of Participation

Simon Maxwell led the group through an exercise in institutionalization. The typical progress in group dynamics is forming, storming, norming (setting new rules), and performing. There are four organizational cultures:

- 1) Power culture (single dominant personality, e.g. NGO);
- 2) Role culture (predictable, organized, e.g. civil service, bureaucracy);
- 3) Person culture (organization exists to satisfy the needs of one person, anarchic; e.g., university); and,
- 4) Task culture (people come together to get a job done in work groups, e.g. advertising, Toyota).

Most people are stuck in a role culture but really need to be in a task culture. Integrated rural development of the 1950s set up different organizations dependent on donor funding where there was too much planning using a blueprint approach with very little action. The focus should be

on integrated planning by independent implementation. Do not think of oneself as a unit to direct others, but as a unit to empower others.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Who measures? Who defines success? Given the diversity of community goals, how can one develop standard indicators? How are pride and dignity measured? Logframes can be seen as disempowering by shifting the goals to things that can be measured.

It is difficult to measure participation because it is non-quantifiable and contextual; it is a continuum, a process which depends on local capacity and involves differing expectations. Is it a means or an end? What is the unit of analysis (individual, organization, community)?

Robert Putnam has analyzed "social capital" which is a pre-condition for effective participation.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Overall the workshop was extremely interesting and challenged everyone to think in different ways. There are many unanswered questions about how to make participation work in the context of large bureaucracies. The author brought back many materials and made a number of important contacts which she hopes to pursue further.

**APPENDIX**

**Appendix**  
**List of Contacts**

Heidi Attwood	Institute for Development Studies
Robert Chambers	Fellow, Institute for Development Studies
Andrea Cornwall	Consultant
John Gaventa	Fellow, Institute for Development Studies
Simon Maxwell	Institute for Development Studies
Ian Scoones	Institute for Development Studies
Mira Shah	Institute for Development Studies
Kamal Singh	Institute for Development Studies



# BASICS

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