Module 1.2: Effective Participation in Institutions and Planning Processes

Topic 1. Participatory Planning

Participation is a fundamental value as well as an essential process of the CDD-based approach, where all members of the community have ownership of every step of the project’s procedures (e.g., development planning, selection and prioritization of sub-projects, approvals, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and building institutions). Achieving effective, committed, and informed participation is perhaps also the biggest insurance against governance risks in a CDD-based project.

In the core steps of the project involving policy change and decision-making, everyone in the community should participate through such means as developing non-negotiable rules, deciding on development priorities, and approving beneficiaries through targeting exercises and sub-projects. However, day-to-day assignments could be carried out by leaders or representatives who usually form elected (or otherwise community-legitimized) sub-committees.1

Even for the steps where everyone is supposed to participate, in the real world, constraints exist, and 100% participation in all meetings is usually impossible. Therefore, having an agreed definition of “effective participation” upfront is critical.2 In addition to the core conditions, it is important to also set additional conditions to ensure that the definition of “effective participation” meets the project’s objectives (e.g., percentage of women in attendance, percentage of vulnerable groups participating in discussion, etc.). When these rules around participation are well established and followed, this can help to ensure that voices from traditionally disadvantaged groups are heard.

1 For example, for a village with 200 people, everyone participates in selecting priorities. If the decision is related to a water project, the village would collectively select 8-10 people as members of the water management association. The association would gather and develop a proposal, deciding on where tanks are to be located, calculating the cost, analyzing types of tanks, etc. Once the proposal is prepared, then everyone in the community will again participate in the approval of the plan to move forward.

2 An example of this may be that at least 70 or 80% of the members need to be present for the meeting to be considered effective. If this is not the case, participants could still have discussions, but no formal agreement on next steps can be made.
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**FIGURE 1**
Core Phases of Effective Community-Level Participation

- **Non-negotiable rules**
- **Selecting priorities**
- **Participatory planning**

**Representatives**

- **Sub-committees**
  - Gather and assess proposals
  - Calculate costs
  - Decide on initial plans

**All community members**

- **Approval of the plan developed by the sub-committee**

**Agreed definition of “effective participation”**
For example:
- At least 70-80% members are present
- Of which 50% are women

**BOX 1**
Key Characteristics of Participatory Planning

- **Tapping into local knowledge:** Participatory planning does not rely solely on the knowledge available from experts and extensive survey reports (such as the census, district gazettes, national sample survey, economic surveys, etc.). Rather, it draws upon the knowledge available within the community.

- **Direct involvement at various stages:** The involvement of communities is not restricted to the early stages of data collection and decision-making. Communities are also actively involved in implementation, monitoring, and the maintenance of services and installations.

- **Individuals develop their views through social interaction:** Conventional planning approaches tend to attach singular static interests and opinions to individuals and groups. In contrast, participatory planning is an exercise in mutual learning through the exchange of ideas, experiences, expertise, and interests. It recognizes that views and interests can change.

- **Multiplicity of interests:** It is important to remember that people have diverse interests and expectations, which are rooted in social constructs (such as family structures, gender roles, and status) and that these can be symbolic as well as material.

*Source: Towards Mainstreaming Social Accountability: Mapping of Participatory Planning in East Asia, 2010. PRIA Global Partnership and ANSA-SEA.*
For sub-projects, participatory planning is a process that convenes a broad base of key stakeholders, on an interactive basis, in order to generate a diagnosis of the existing situation and develop appropriate strategies to solve jointly identified problems. Project components, objectives and strategies are all designed in collaboration with stakeholders.

This process allows project stakeholders (including direct beneficiaries at the community-level) to analyze and discuss their local situation in a systematic manner, identifying critical problems and priorities, and leading to the development of a proposal or strategy based on consensus and participation. It also empowers communities by promoting greater participation and ownership by the local people. Participatory planning is known to be effective in identifying genuine development priorities for target groups. It also allows for local data collection and analysis by community members aided by experienced facilitators.

Participatory planning encourages the participation of different social and ethnic groups within a given community, including women and the most vulnerable groups. When successful, it facilitates social accountability through the enhanced flow of information. The involvement of key stakeholders in identifying problems and prioritizing development needs can also lead to more sustainable development activities.

**BOX 2**

**Challenges in Participatory Planning**

- May require a significant investment in community capacity building and a significant time commitment from participants.
- If not carefully managed, the participatory process can be dominated or captured by influential groups.
- Therefore, it requires facilitation by external agents who draw from Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) techniques and other participatory tools to assist project stakeholders in the planning and decision-making process.
- Positive energy generated among stakeholders will also quickly subside if the process is not translated into actual projects or activities. To avoid, detailed procedures on sub-project proposal preparation, submission, and approval need to be prepared by the project with World Bank advice and input, and elaborated fully in the project’s operational manual.
BOX 3
Philippines KALAHI-CIDSS Project: Participatory Situation Analysis (PSA)

Participatory Situation Analysis (PSA) is a process in the Philippines KALAHI-CIDSS Project where community volunteers undertake community-level research, identify the key factors in the community that cause poverty, and identify a range of possible solutions to address these problems.

Generally, the PSA involves three steps:

- Planning and preparations to undertake the PSA, including attention paid to facilitation support and community mobilization to participate
- Research and Analysis
- Community Consultation (on the results of the Research and Analysis)

EXAMPLE: Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC)

The KALAHI-CIDSS Project follows a CDD model implemented through a five-stage, multi-activity process referred to as the “KALAHI-CIDSS Community Empowerment Activity Cycle” or the CEAC (see figure below). The CEAC is the primary community development process and intervention of the KALAHI-CIDSS project.
The first stage is called the **Social Preparation** stage. The most critical feature of the social preparation stage is the conduct of the Participatory Situation Analysis wherein the community volunteers collectively gather data on conditions existing in the community, analyze these conditions, and define appropriate development interventions to address identified needs. These are then validated through a designated assembly.

The Social Preparation stage is followed by the **Project Identification stage** where the communities begin to develop identified interventions. The most critical feature of this stage is the criteria setting workshop which is essentially a collective exercise of identifying the parameters by which development projects will be prioritized.

The next stage is the **Project Preparation, Selection, and Approval** stage, where the people begin the arduous but rewarding task of preparing project proposals, and finalizing plans for development projects identified during social preparation.

Once the projects are selected, the cycle moves into the **implementation** of sub-projects.

Before beginning the second cycle, a **period of “transition”** is undertaken. Part of this transition involves a community-based evaluation process where community residents assess their participation in the project and the changes that have been brought about because of this participation.

**Sources:** For more information, please see the following resources:
- About the Philippines KALAHI-CIDSS Project

**FIGURE 2**
**Steps to Successful Project Facilitation**

1. **Diagnosis and identification of local or community-level needs and priorities:** Using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools such as village mapping, Venn diagramming, focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

2. **Assessment of local resources and problems:** Based on the needs emanating from the local-level stakeholders, along with the local resources available, the problems are analyzed with reference to available data, and priorities are selected by the project stakeholders for further development.

3. **Elaboration of action plans and preparation of project proposals:** Using procedures outlined in the project’s operational manual, local-level stakeholders and/or communities elect representative members (including women) who participate in working groups which usually include technical experts (e.g. engineers, small-scale infrastructure specialists, etc.) and local government and project implementation staff, to prepare and submit project proposals based on the priorities that were decided upon.

4. **Review and approval of the projects:** the process of reviewing and approving proposals is usually carried out by the Approving Authority or Group established in accordance with the project’s operational procedures.

**Additional Resources:** Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): A Manual for CRS Field Workers and Partners, by Karen Schoonmaker Freudenberger.
### TOOL 1
**Participatory Vulnerability Analysis**

| **What** | The Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) is a tool for the community to identify obvious vulnerabilities in order to make decisions on the allocation of funds based on established priorities. It works as an entry point activity for mobilizing vulnerable and poor communities and can be particularly useful in communities that are exposed to natural disasters.

The PVA can serve as the standardized methodology to prepare and prioritize community level activities that are included in village development plans. All investments under the village development plans are centered on removing the identified and prioritized vulnerabilities. |
| --- | --- |
| **Why** | In many projects, natural disasters are a common phenomenon and the poorest and most vulnerable are often the worst affected. Accordingly, projects aimed at empowerment, institution building, livelihood development or infrastructure support to poor communities that are vulnerable to natural disasters must: (i) mitigate vulnerabilities and (ii) work to build resiliency to withstand internal and external shocks.

The PVA approach helps these efforts by building:

- The accountability of each community member to provide equitable benefits to the most vulnerable
- The broad participation of everyone in the village for making critical resource allocation decisions
- An overall increased resilience capacity within the communities |
| **How** | The PVA follows a 5 step process:

1. **Conducting a vulnerability analysis** at the individual, family, community, and environmental level.
2. **Prioritizing the vulnerabilities**, as identified in Step 1, based on the extent of damage and number of people affected.
3. **Conducting a participatory social mapping exercise** including damage from natural disaster(s) and future vulnerabilities (e.g. physical, agricultural, water shortages etc.).

   *For an example, please see the map from the Bangladesh Empowerment and Livelihood “Nuton Jibon” Project below.*

4. **Identifying and planning mitigation measures** to reduce the vulnerabilities identified. The end product is an overall mitigation plan including prioritized vulnerabilities, mitigation options, fund requirements and other sources of funding in times of need (beyond the project itself).
5. **Preparing an overall village development plan.** This complements the disaster map, showing prioritized vulnerabilities and the mitigation plan. |

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Tool 1 (continued)

| **Who** | All 5 steps are undertaken with the full involvement of the communities and project staff. Well-facilitated focus group discussions are held for analyzing vulnerabilities at different level and also for prioritizing them. |
| **When** | The first exercise is undertaken at the planning stage of the village development cycle, immediately after selection and capacity building of the community institution. The vulnerability maps are updated every year and refined to reflect the emerging changes. |
| **Challenges/Lessons** | Maintaining the quality of the exercise when scaling up to other villages is the biggest challenge. The success of the exercise depends upon a high quality facilitation process. Understanding the source(s) of funding as a part of this preparation process is important. As a part of the facilitated process, villagers should understand the link between funds available and vulnerabilities identified. Often time, resources will not meet all concerns and vulnerabilities may need to be prioritized. When practiced well, many community-level professionals become experienced in the PVA process, training the next generation to carry forward the activities beyond the project period. |
| **Case Example** | In the Bangladesh Empowerment and Livelihood “Nuton Jibon” Project, the project team worked with the community to mainstream participatory vulnerability analysis as the entry point activity for mobilizing the extreme poor and poor. As a result, all investments under the village development plans were centered on removing the identified and prioritized vulnerabilities. The village development cycle was renamed as the “resilience cycle,” and its stages and activities are shown below. The map opposite is the result of a community mapping process where the village identified areas as a part of a vulnerability analysis. |

“Participatory Damage and Risk Assessment Map” from the Bangladesh Empowerment and Livelihood “Nuton Jibon” Project
The following is an example of the Village Development and Disaster Management Resilience Cycle from the Bangladesh Empowerment and Livelihood “Nuton Jibon” Project.

*VDRRF stands for “Village Development and Risk-Reduction Framework”

Source: Bangladesh Empowerment and Livelihood “Nuton Jibon” Project.
**TOOL 2**

**Participatory Village Development Planning (VDP)**

| What | Village development plans reflect the collective decisions of the whole community. As these plans serve as a compass for the village’s development moving forward, they should be developed through a participatory process to ensure greater buy-in and ownership from community members. Beyond the plan itself, the participatory process is critical for ensuring accountability. |
| Why | Without using this approach, there are significant community level risks for elite capture, inefficient use of funds and the exclusion of vulnerable and/or disadvantaged members. |
| How | **Step 1: Create a Problem Tree**

A problem tree is used to identify main problems, underlying factors, and solutions. The aim of the exercise is to facilitate deeper reflection and analysis on the root causes of community issues, and in doing so, move the community toward greater consensus on the issues and potential actions to address them.

**Step 2: Discuss the Root Causes of Poverty**

Following the decision tree exercise, the community should discuss the findings of the analysis. This is done in an effort to build and reinforce a collective sense of underlying factors.

**Step 3: Create a Collective Vision for the Village**

Through guided facilitation and building on the common understanding established in Step 2, work with the community to create a longer-term (3-5 year) vision for the village. What will be the same? Different? How will the community members get there together?

**Step 4: Develop an Action Plan for Village Development**

The community should be organized into representative and manageable committees. Ask them to plan in a participatory manner how they will achieve their goals and list out activities under each vision articulated.

**Step 5: Define the Project Activities**

This exercise may result in a large number of plans. The facilitator should guide the group to go through each plan and state whether it can be undertaken with the project funds available. Projects should be prioritized.

**Step 6: Create a Timeline of Activities**

The facilitator works with the community to develop an acceptable timeline for delivering the project activities.

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### Tool 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How</th>
<th>Step 7: Continuous Information Gathering and Communication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At each stage in the process, as implementation begins and continues, transparency on financial data, decisions, and steps in the process should be disclosed for community awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Step 8: Ongoing Compliance Checks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These are conducted to ensure work is being carried out to the standards and protocols required by the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Who | A skilled facilitator should work with the community as a neutral and trusted party to lead the creation of the problem tree, discussion of core poverty areas, development of a collective vision and prioritization of activities (action plan and timeline included). |
|     | While the process should be participatory, depending upon the community structure, a set of committees and sub-committees can be established to deliver on discrete tasks and also work on continuous information flow and public awareness on the process. |

| When | It is recommended that the village development plans are created early in the project cycle so as to inform project design and the sequencing of community-level activities in implementation. |

| Challenges/Lessons | **Timing:** If conducted too late in the process, the village may feel as though the exercise is “for show only” and does not influence project design and implementation. |
|                   | **Inclusion:** It is important to know the context of the community well in order to work towards broad representation (including from marginalized or disadvantaged groups) in each step so that all opinions and realities are taken into account in the planning process. |
|                   | **Clear process rules:** Good facilitation in part signifies that the process for identifying and prioritizing problems is clear to the whole group. |
|                   | **Clear compliance rules:** The community should have a strong understanding of fiduciary and other responsibilities related to project implementation and monitoring so as to avoid surprises during compliance checks. |
|                   | **Multi-step:** For various reasons, the planning process might not be completed within one meeting. In this case, it should be made clear that the planning process will span a few sessions and that all participants are to be present to complete the full process. |
Annex 1: More on Participatory Vulnerability Analysis—Sample Formats Used in Bangladesh

Format 1: Participatory Vulnerability Mapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of Risk</th>
<th>Vulnerability at Different levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Format 2: Vulnerability Mapping for Different Community Segments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extreme Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Pregnant and lactating mothers</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Elderly</th>
<th>Disabled</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Format 3: Participatory Livelihood Risks and Vulnerability Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Major Livelihoods</th>
<th>Common Risks</th>
<th>Main Vulnerabilities</th>
<th>Possible Measures for Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Format 4: Participatory Vulnerability Analysis for Physical Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Main Infrastructure</th>
<th>Reason for Vulnerability</th>
<th>Main Damage</th>
<th>Level of Vulnerability</th>
<th>Possible Measures for Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Format 5: Participatory Risk Reduction Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Level Mitigation Measure</th>
<th>No. of Families Benefited</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Investment Amount</th>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
<th>Implementation Schedule</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Source: Bangladesh Empowerment and Livelihood “Nuton Jibon” Project