Outline of presentation

• Why a concern with community participation and empowerment?
• Planned community participation in CCTs
• Research methods in Mexico and Nicaragua studies
• Research findings
  – Targeting
  – The promotora
  – Community organization
  – Knowledge about the program
  – Empowerment, Ownership and agency
• Recommendations
Why community participation?

• Important streams in development theory & practice: Participation, Community-Driven Development & Social Capital:
  – Promote the poor as informed participants in development assistance
  – Top-down approaches as disempowering and ineffective
  – Collective agency plays important role in improving well-being
  – Reduce information problems in determining priorities & targeting
  – Build institutions that organize the poor & build their capabilities to act collectively in own interest
  – Increase sustainability of intervention through fostering ownership of program objectives and processes
  – Cornerstone of World Bank’s Comprehensive Development Framework

• What relationship to CCTs?
Previous workshop recommendations on participation

- Obtain highest amount of participation from local and institutional actors
- Transparency, participatory processes, and political will should be created to achieve the participation of local actors early in program design phase
- Advance the decentralization process: It offers more advantages than disadvantages

(Ayala Consulting 2003)
Some areas for community participation

- Targeting: use of local knowledge to identify needy households and/or review selection
- Program-Beneficiary Liaison: Usually an elected beneficiary representative (the *promotora*)
- Community communication forums
- Monitoring of program implementation, transparency, and compliance
- Management and/or monitoring of supply and quality of education and health services
Planned community participation: Brazil

- **In Bolsa Escola**
  - Municipal government task force implements enrollment questionnaire and submits to federal government to provide income data.
  - List returned to municipal level to select beneficiaries, based on selection criteria and budget.
  - Municipality-appointed local advisory committee, comprised of at least 50% civil society, to:
    - Give final approval to beneficiary list
    - Assess municipal program execution
    - Approve school attendance records
    - Evaluate socio-educational activities at municipality level and provide forum for community feedback
    - Stimulate community participation

- **In Cartão Alimentação**, *comitês gestores* are a forum for local participation.

- Forums combined in *Bolsa Família*
Planned community participation: Honduras

- Geographical targeting, centrally administered, then local participants identify and enroll new beneficiaries, usually health center & school staff
- Local government tasked with providing logistical support, information & ideas
- Local women trained to provide health and nutrition information
- Funds provided for parent organizations for improvement of educational services
- PRAF coordinates with Quality Improvement Teams
  - Nurse, local leaders & community volunteers
  - Communicate concerns about quality of health services
  - Receive training on maternal & child health, quality control, teamwork, priority setting, planning and budgeting
  - Receives budget & assistance obtaining equipment
Planned community participation: Colombia

- Local authority provides list of beneficiaries
- “Assembly of participating mothers” where community members can express opinions
- Local level assistance in registering families
- Contracts with municipalities to maintain beneficiary data, provide logistical and human resource support
- Beneficiary chosen by others to receive training and tasked with training others
- Municipal government responsible for ensuring coordination with schools & health centers
- Community monitoring system
Planned community participation: Bangladesh

- Local committees choose beneficiaries according to criteria set by central government (limited to 40% of students)
  - Local committees include teachers, local representatives, parents, education specialists, school donors
Planned community participation: Mexico

- Central government conducts geographic and household targeting
- In local assembly, communities review list and register claims about errors of exclusion and inclusion.
- Non-beneficiaries may petition for inclusion
- Social comptrollership to be promoted
  - Main task to verify accuracy and quality of targeting process
  - Ensure compliance with requirements and proper use of $
- Election of beneficiary as *promotora* to provide information, channel questions and complaints
- General information meetings and system for community to express doubts & complaints
Planned community participation: Nicaragua

- Central government conducts geographic & household targeting
- In local assembly, communities review list and register claims about errors of exclusion and inclusion.
- Non-beneficiaries may petition for inclusion
- Election of beneficiary as *promotora* as program-community liaison
- Participation encouraged in parents-teachers association
- Parents give *bono de oferta* to the teacher
Research methods: Mexico

• 23 focus groups with beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, and *promotoras*, involving 230 participants, from 70 communities across seven states

• Key informant interviews with doctors, nurses and school directors in 16 communities across four states
Research Methods: Nicaragua

- 6 Communities: 2 household and 4 geographically targeted
- Ethnographic approach: 3 researchers lived for 4 months in intervention communities; 7-8 weeks in each of 2 communities
- 59 household case studies, observing and interviewing *titulares*, their spouses, children and other household members (some case studies on non-beneficiary households)
- 66 semi-structured interviews done with additional program *titulares*
- HHs stratified to represent cross-section of communities
- Key informant interviews with promotoras, teachers, healthcare providers, religious leaders, the UEL
- Observation done in home, market, program activities
- Short comparison study carried out in 2 non-RPS communities
Research Findings from Mexico (PROGRESA) and Nicaragua (RPS)
Participation in Targeting: Mexico

• No cases found of *asambleas* used for reviewing beneficiary list
  – Lack of awareness that this is an *asamblea* function
  – Non-beneficiaries do not attend

• Petitions for inclusion submitted in some cases
  – Many unaware of right to petition
  – No cases of new admissions in our study, though we know they exist elsewhere
  – Promotoras said it was not possible to be admitted once list was closed
Participation in Targeting: Nicaragua

• No cases found of *asamblea* where beneficiary lists was reviewed

• Targeting process regarded as entirely exogenous
  – Belief that they can do nothing to affect selection or correct errors

• Across 125 HHs in our study, 4 accounts of appeals, none admitted
Local understandings and perceptions of targeting: Mexico

- Little understanding of reasons for inclusion/exclusion: bad luck; a lottery
- Promotoras can not explain
- Some understand that poverty is the criteria, but they do not agree ‘Here we are all poor. We all have nothing.’
- Pervasive perceptions of errors of exclusion
- Some perceptions of errors of inclusion, but far less
Local understandings & perceptions of targeting: Nicaragua

- Little understanding of poverty as the criteria
- View that though some have a little more or a little less, ‘we are all poor…’
- Explanations include: luck, lottery, blessings from God, ‘a map’ drawn
- In 85 out of 125 households, informants cited errors of exclusion in their communities
  - 34 found in the 2 household targeted communities, 50 in the 4 geographically targeted communities
- Problems of inclusion seen as both less prevalent and less important
Implications for empowerment

• People want to understand the process, but do not
• Where people do not understand reasons for inclusion/exclusion, they live in fear of losing benefits
• Self-perceived poor left out of program experience frustration, lack of control
• Community participation in targeting would increase sense of ownership of program and agency
Targeting and community dynamics: Mexico

• Greater value placed on ‘equality’ than ‘equity’
• Sympathy and solidarity: “It hurts us that others don't have it because we feel we are one family.” (B)
• Creates social tensions: resentment, envy, gossip, feelings of rejection
• Embarrassment among children in school
• Non-beneficiaries stopped participating in community cleaning activities: "why should I work, they say, if the government is not supporting me?” (P)
• Parents complained about paying fees to community association to school: “beneficiaries should pay because they are receiving and we are not.” (P)
• Non-beneficiaries feel ‘not welcome’ in health platicas
• Impacts on social capital?
Targeting & community dynamics: Nicaragua

- Contrary to common concern that participation in a safety net program confers a ‘stigma,’ being a beneficiary confers a status
- Differentiation into new categories “beneficiary” and “non-beneficiary”
  - One group travels together to obtain payments, to shop, to attend meetings, health lectures and community activities
  - Other group is excluded
- Mostly solidarity, but also ‘envy,’ ‘annoyance,’ ‘gossip’
- Main problem expressed with regard to non-beneficiary children
  - In some communities, beneficiaries take up a collection to purchase school supplies for non-beneficiary children
• **Doctor, Mexico**: “The problem is envy, the problem is rage because no one is supporting them…. I have to take other measures to assure their presence, telling them that the health pláticas are for everybody, that the community is of everybody, so it has to be clean…but they say while I don’t get the support, I don’t participate… There is a division between PROGRESA and non-PROGRESA.”

• **Promotora, Nicaragua**: “hay una diferencia bien bastante, o sea como una envidia por que hay hogares que hay bastantes niños y no fueron beneficiados, hay unos que necesitan de esa por que aquí no hay fuentes de trabajo.”
The *promotora*: Mexico & Nicaragua

- Elected
- Holds meetings to provide information to beneficiaries on program requirements; dates
- Does not regularly communicate problems, grievances, ideas to program officials
- Facilitates beneficiary compliance with conditions and participation in health services
- Organizes beneficiaries to participate in communal activities
- Needs better training
Community Organization

- Unlike programs where people form groups to obtain funds, CCTs are assigned individually and thus do not formally facilitate community organization.
- But CCTs can and do promote informal organization.
- In Mexico & Nicaragua:
  - Women go collectively to pick up benefits, sometimes pooling resources for transportation.
  - Beneficiaries form groups to clean up communal areas.
  - Program meetings provide space for women to share experiences, problems & solutions; learn to speak in groups.
  - Program emphasis on women is empowering.
- In Nicaragua:
  - Beneficiaries say it is easier to organize women than before the program.
  - Promotora organizes buying groups to obtain lower prices or to regulate spending organized cooking and hygiene demonstrations.
Community organization, cont.

- Depends on initiative of the promotora or doctors
- May depend somewhat on pre-existing level of community organization
- Most meetings do not facilitate much discussion: could encourage more
- A paradox: Inverse relationship between the strength of these community activities among beneficiaries and strength of exclusion of non-beneficiaries
  - Can only be solved with solution to targeting problem
  - More effort could be made to include non-beneficiaries in activities such as health lectures or buying groups, so that they can take advantage of educational opportunities
Knowledge about the program

• In both countries, beneficiaries understand
  – Basic program requirements
  – Basic human capital objectives
  – Composition of benefit package

• They do not understand
  – Overall logic of investing in human capital to reduce poverty
  – Targeting system
  – Rights and procedures for appeals
  – In Mexico: program incentive structure, e.g. why education benefit is higher for girls
  – In Nicaragua: aspects of conditionalities
    • Belief that weight gain requirement is still in effect
    • Promotoras create rules about purchasing requirements

• Health lectures are often performed and attended to fulfill requirement; insufficient attention to learning
Information, ownership, agency & sustainability

• From development perspective that promotes agency and empowerment, misunderstanding of program requirements is problematic
• Stress of fear of losing benefits
• But paradoxically, these incorrect ‘conditions’ encourage better nutritional practices
• Tension between maximizing nutritional objectives in the short run, and empowering beneficiaries to make their own decisions, more sustainable in the long run?
• *Learning* is important, not just meeting conditionalities
  – Key to sustainability
  – Key to empowerment
Recommendations

- Consider & debate trade-offs and complementarities between participation & human capital objectives
- Difficult to weigh costs against benefits of household targeting, but must be done
- Implement provisions for participation in targeting
- Implement appeals process transparently & systematically (rolling appeals?)
- Research needed on alternative targeting mechanisms to compare results and outcomes
  - Survey; key informants; participatory methods; combinations
- Consider providing school supplies transfer to all children in area
Recommendations, continued

- Improve local understanding of CCT programs to increase ownership & agency
- Improve quality of health training and other beneficiary forums to promote learning
- Better trained promotoras
- Encourage promotora and others to organize economic, educational and social activities for beneficiaries
  - Keeping in mind women’s time/work burdens
  - Consider including non-beneficiaries where possible