Participation Source Pack #2

An Introduction to Participatory Poverty Assessments

Bad living is a child who does not eat or drink tea when he or she is going to school.

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July 2000

Participation Group at IDS

An introduction to Participatory Poverty Assessments
Information Pack

Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) were developed during the early 1990s with the aim of increasing the participation of poor people in the processes of formulating and implementing policy for poverty alleviation.

This information pack aims to provide the user with a background to PPAs – what they are and how they are carried out, an understanding of how they have developed over time, and an overview of the impact they have had.

Part I provides an overview of PPAs, based on a review of published and unpublished information resources.

Part II presents summaries of the information resources on which the overview is based, together with details of the availability of the resource.

Part III reproduces three key information resources.

Part I
An overview of Participatory Poverty Assessments

Definitions

PPAs have been carried out in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America during the 1990s. The term PPA has been used to describe a wide range of processes, and is defined in various ways by different commentators. Two recent definitions are shown below, one from the World Bank, and one from the Department for International Development, UK.

Two definitions of PPA

"A PPA is an iterative, participatory research process that seeks to understand poverty from the perspective of a range of stakeholders, and to involve them directly in planning follow-up action. The most important stakeholders involved in the research process are poor men and poor women. PPAs also include decisionmakers from all levels of government, civil society and the local elite, thereby uncovering different interests and perspectives and increasing local capacity and commitment to follow-up action. PPAs seek to understand poverty in its local social, institutional and political context. Since PPAs address national policy, microlevel data are collected from a large number of communities in order to discern patterns across social groups and geographic areas, and across location and social group specificities." (Narayan 2000:15)

"A participatory poverty assessment (PPA) is an instrument for including the perspectives of poor people in the analysis of poverty and the formulation of strategies to reduce it. Its purpose is to improve the effectiveness of actions aimed at poverty reduction. PPAs are generally carried out as policy research exercises, aimed at understanding poverty from the perspective of poor people, and what their priorities are in terms of actions to improve their lives. PPAs can strengthen poverty assessment processes through: broadening stakeholder involvement and thereby increasing general support and legitimacy for anti-poverty strategies; enriching the analysis and understanding of poverty by including the perspectives of the poor; providing a diverse range of valuable information on a cost-effective, rapid and timely basis, and creating new relationships between policy-makers, service providers and people in poor communities." (Department for International Development, website 2000)

Others have written about the objectives of PPAs without offering full definitions, but pointing to the range of functions that a PPA might fulfil. These include:

- Improving the base of knowledge that supports policymaking
- Understanding poverty as experienced by the poor, and therefore bringing about policy changes to reach the poor
- Carrying out qualitative research to discern the perceptions and attitudes of the poor
- Engaging a range of stakeholders in the process of the PPA to maximise local ownership and build commitment to change

- Raising people's awareness and capacity by equipping them with new skills to analyse and solve problems
- Building on local people's analysis, which is legitimate and sophisticated
- Changing the attitudes of policymakers by involving them in the research process
- To add accuracy to poverty assessments using conventional methods, and thereby improve the quality of policies for poverty reduction
- To empower participants and lead to follow-up action

Not all PPAs aim to fulfil all these functions, and not all PPAs fulfil their objectives. In contrast to other kinds of participatory research, "PPAs…are essentially extractive and product-driven, although good practice can ensure local ownership and create the conditions for local follow-up" (Holland & Munro, 1997:1) Some practitioners justify the inherently extractive nature of PPAs by citing the impact they have on informing local action and on informing broader policy.

Origins and developments

PPAs originated in the World Bank in the 1990s, and represent the convergence of two streams of change in development practice:
- **World Bank Poverty Assessments** (PAs) were developed as a policy instrument in the late 1980s, and were accelerated when the 1990 World Development Report re-focused the activities of the Bank on poverty reduction. The 1992 Poverty Reduction Handbook defines the Poverty Assessment as analysing "the relation between the poverty profile and public policies, expenditures and institutions. It also evaluates the effects of economic and social policies on the poor and makes recommendations for the consideration of country policymakers." (cited in Whitehead & Lockwood)
- **Participatory Research methodologies** became increasingly common in development during the late 1980's, and were widely perceived to produce qualitative research findings from the perspectives of the poor and less powerful. Within the Bank, Salmen's work using the Beneficiary Assessment methodology developed into the formulation of PPAs.

PAs relied on the collection of national household survey data on income and consumption. Participatory poverty assessments were developed from the notion that conventional poverty assessment does not capture certain aspects of poverty and well-being that are important to poor people themselves. For example, poverty assessments relying on household survey data rely on certain assumptions about the nature of the household as a unit, which fail to focus on the idea that power and access to economic and non-economic resources are all distributed differently within the household.

The first PPAs were carried out in Africa in the early 1990s, used a variety of methods, and had a wide range of impacts. In common, however, they produced qualitative research findings for dissemination to policymakers which represented views of poverty from the perspectives of poor people.

PPAs quickly spread beyond the Bank to other agencies, where they evolved and developed both in terms of methodology and objectives. The UNDP 1996 Human Development Report on Bangladesh, for example, contains a large section which reports a PPA process. The methodology used is defined as Participatory Rapid Rural Appraisal,

and the authors of the study note that this was "a variation of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) which is widely used where information is required by external agents but must be expressed by the communities themselves in their way and with their emphases… Like Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), it is a one-off, extractive exercise, but differs in its emphasis on the process of participation and ensures that people themselves define their priorities. PRRA is sometimes used to provide illustrative "underviews" (views from the bottom) which can then be extrapolated for large scale development planning. It also provides an entry point for more intensive participation of communities in the long run. …PRA, on the other hand, is empowerment of communities so that they gain confidence in being able to define and take control of their own development." (UNDP, 1996:3) This development highlights the importance of the context in which PPAs were carried out. In South Asia, PRA has often been best understood as part of a process of community level empowerment, and thus the authors of this report feel the need to state very clearly what the PPA can and cannot provide with reference to the common understanding of PRA.

One important lesson from the early Bank PPAs influenced the design of future interventions. Norton and Stephens (1995) suggest that increasing the participation of a range of stakeholders in poverty assessments can

- Improve understanding of poverty
- Ensure that poverty reduction strategies reflect the priorities expressed by the poor
- Promote a wide ownership of proposed solutions
- Build capacity for poverty analysis and policy design

Although many PPAs continued to be designed and carried out with the principal objective of supplying more accurate information to policy makers, others placed equal emphasis on strategies for increasing the participation of multiple stakeholders, encouraging national ownership of the process, and supporting policy influence beyond the Bank. There are several examples of these latter processes, each of which used a different model to generate information and to influence policy.

The 1997 UNDP Shinyanga PPA, for example, tried to respond to earlier criticisms that PPAs, because of their essentially extractive nature, take knowledge from the poor without contributing to long term participation or solutions. The Shinyanga PPA worked at the level of a single region in Tanzania in order not only to gain knowledge and insights into human development issues, but to contribute to an ongoing regional and local action planning process, and to strengthen the capacity of local level government workers to use participatory methods. Cornwall suggests that "Bringing together diverse teams of facilitators and researchers in innovative and longer-term processes, these 'new generation' PPAs open up spaces for engagement by local government officials and NGOs: the 'street-level bureaucrats' who play vital, often unacknowledged, roles in the shaping of policy on the ground […]" (Cornwall, forthcoming, cited in McGee with Norton, 2000).

The Uganda PPA Project (UPPAP), for example, was designed as a three-phase process running over three years, beginning in 1998. Its objectives, outlined in a document of the Uganda Ministry of Finance, are: to enhance knowledge about the nature and causes of poverty and strategies for action; to build district capacity to plan for poverty reduction; to develop a national system for qualitative poverty monitoring; to establish capacity for participatory policy research in Uganda. Notably, this process is situated

within the national government, and three of its four aims are focused on policy and capacity rather than straightforward information provision.

By 1998, with the experience of many African PPAs to learn from, a report prepared for DfID evaluated the added value of participation in poverty assessments, and developed the argument concerning policy influence. The authors define "the most basic, and in many ways the most important, argument for participation in poverty assessments is that these should be participatory in the sense of involving both primary and secondary stakeholders in a *process* that is capable of influencing policy and practice" and conclude that "a good PPA alters the terms on which policy is decided." This shift in emphasis concerning the central element of PPAs is a precursor to the design of later processes.

Issues of process and methodology

Process

The box below illustrates an example of an early PPA process, undertaken to complement a Bank PA.

Kenya PPA (1994): an early example of a PPA process
Sources: HRSSD, Ministry of Planning, and the World Bank, Kenya
1994
Narayan & Nayamwaya, 1996

During the planning stage of the PPA, the following issues of process were noted as important:

- **Involvement of key stakeholders**, identified as National Government, District authorities, the poor and the World Bank, was planned through individual and group meetings both before and after data collection. One day workshops were planned at the District level, to find out District government views on poverty, and to better understand decisionmaking processes. Fieldwork results were to be fed back to District level by community members and researchers, and a national level workshop was planned
- **Identification of key issues** was carried out to complement the findings of a recent national household survey. Six main themes were identified: the characteristics of poverty, access to basic social services, coping strategies, perceptions of service providers about the poor, decisionmaking processes at the District level, and policy implications.
- **Sampling** was carried out using the sampling frame from the household survey which the PPA aimed to compliment, and selected the poorest districts in each of the provinces where the PPA took place.
- **Methods** included a combination of mapping and wealth ranking, problem identification, visual tools developed to examine gender and health seeking behaviour, focus group discussions, household and key informant interviews, and a sentence completion exercise for schoolchildren.

The report of the PPA says that "to maximise local ownership and to initiate change, participatory research techniques were used in defining the research agenda (including the sampling framework)…   The research agenda was defined in consultation with senior decision-makers and staff in the Ministry of Planning and relevant sectoral ministries."

For the PPA, a field research team of 35, primarily sociologists and anthropologists, was trained for two weeks in instrument development and field testing. For the fieldwork, they divided into teams of seven. Each team consisted of a senior anthropologist or social scientist with four university graduates as research assistants. Each team spent two to three days in one of seven communities, selected from the poorest Districts in Kenya.

The data collected was analysed through *content analysis* and some of the information was converted to frequencies and percentages. Quantitative data from a pre-coded household questionnaire was also used.

A very different process, described by Attwood (1995) and Attwood and May (1998), was followed by the 1995 South African PPA, to inform a Bank Poverty Assessment Report. The SA PPA was "primarily a research project directed at improving policy analysis." (1998:121) It sought to strike a balance between the requirements of policy research and a PRA-based process, through ensuring transparency and accountability, and ensuring that all research partners were engaged in work with local communities which could be informed by the PPA research. Following a national stakeholder workshop and an extensive period of consultation between stakeholders, a design workshop, and several stages of the submission and review of proposals, the research was carried out by 14 separate teams, using a range of methods. Two group workshops provided input on synthesis of results, with the explicit objective of limiting the influence of the personal views of the individuals writing the final report, and allowing poor people's voices to be reflected in as much of the final document as possible. Drafts were fed back to researchers, who were also obliged to feed back the results of the research to the communities where they had worked. Final drafts were submitted simultaneously to Government and donors.

The direct policy influence of the South Africa PPA was inhibited by the closure of the Reconstruction and Development Programme office. The PPA was commissioned by the Bank on behalf of this office, and when a change in government policy closed the office, "the crucial link to policymakers was undermined". This event led Attwood and May to reflect on "the weakness of concentrating policy advocacy on one policymaker or department" (1998:129).

The process of the Vietnam PPA is outlined in the box below, and built on experience from earlier designs.

The Vietnam PPA (1999): an example of a later PPA process
From C.Turk, Consultations with the Poor, Vietnam Country Report, cited in McGee with Norton, 2000

The outputs and benefits of the Vietnam PPAs go beyond the research documentation – four PPA site reports and a national Synthesis report … The PPAs were commissioned to inform the poverty debate within Vietnam and to complement statistical data in a new, national analysis of poverty.

The PPA research work was carried out by organizations working in partnership with Government in poverty alleviation at the grassroots level and, as such, the research was embedded in ongoing relationships and dialogue with local Government. Linking this work to the national level through the Poverty Working Group (PWG) has provided an important opportunity to involve central Government agencies in the analysis of poverty at a local level. The process has been powerful in demonstrating the value of opening up direct lines of communication with poor households in planning for poverty alleviation. Importantly, the process followed also means that research findings have an in-built link into Government programming for poverty reduction and into policy making.

At a national level, the task of coordinating the PPAs fell to the World Bank on behalf of the PWG - the coalition of seven government ministries and eight donor and non-governmental organizations which was established to guide the drafting of the Vietnam Development Report ("Attacking Poverty") for the Consultative Group meeting. There were many advantages of this arrangement. First, the PWG was actively involved and interested in the PPAs – the study agencies were members of the PWG and kept the PWG fully informed of progress. Government members of the PWG attended local-level PPA feedback sessions where findings were discussed and debated. At these workshops, it was clear to national Government officials that local leaders who had lived in these areas their whole lives were endorsing the PPAs as fully reflecting the lives of the poor. Secondly, because the PWG was responsible for producing Attacking Poverty for the Consultative Group meeting, the PPA findings were fully incorporated into the discussions tabled at the CG. This attracted attention from policymakers at the very highest level and Government requested donors at the CG to assist them in mainstreaming such techniques.

At a local level, each of the PPAs was carried out in partnership with local authorities. In some cases, this meant that local officials were trained in participatory techniques and took part in the training. In other areas, it meant that commune, district and provincial officials were closely involved in the planning and analysis stages, but not actually in conducting the field work. In all areas, however, it has meant that local authorities have been keenly interested in the PPA findings and have requested support in exploring ways of dealing with problems raised. At a local level, Government buy-in to the PPA findings meant that these studies have a real chance of influencing decisions relevant to poor households. As an example, local officials in one of the Provinces are now lobbying for improved and more sustainable financial sector interventions that could provide services adapted to the needs of the poor on a sustainable basis.

Reflection after the first stage of the Uganda PPA resonates with some of the experiences and lessons from South Africa and Vietnam. Fieldwork had been carried out in 36 communities in nine Districts, and the details of this process are contained in the UPPAP report (2000). Several key lessons for the process in the context of the potential to influence policy were recorded by McLean(1999):

- Careful consultation and design, to not only include questions which increase broad understandings of poverty, but which also maximise the ongoing efforts of the Government to reduce poverty
- The importance of having a single project to run the PPA, which continues to operate after the duration of the data collection phase

- The development and maintenance of partnerships and linkages between the PPA process, civil society and Government to facilitate consultations in the field, and feedback of information
- Intensive training and backup for researchers
- Local level feedback, enabling the process and its findings to be acceptable and focused on local priorities and planning processes
- Participatory synthesis of information.

These examples illustrate some of the range of processes through which PPAs have been carried out. The next section discusses some of the wide range of research and analysis methods used in the course of these processes.

Methods: adaptations and innovations

Many PPAs have relied on a range of research toolkits, including those based on Beneficiary Assessment, Rapid and Participatory Rural Appraisal, and Participatory Learning and Action. Norton and Stephens (1995) point out that participatory research methods can illuminate aspects of the social, environmental and economic processes by which poverty is produced and reproduced. They observe that terms describing different methodologies – BA, systematic client consultation, PPA, PRA – have been used interchangeably to describe several approaches to datagathering and decision-making, and that these methods and combinations of them fall at different places on a wide continuum of potential participation by different stakeholders. They list what they describe as "core techniques" for PPAs, which include conversational and semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and participant observation, and suggest that in the case of the Bank, PPA methodologies have depended on capacity, the disciplinary background of the Task Manager, and the expected relationship between the PPA and the PA.

Such very broad understandings of PPAs – emphasising the methods used, rather than the levels or kind of participation which the process gives rise to – appear to be a characteristic of the World Bank. Robb (1998) and Narayan(2000) have both presented analyses of the Bank's experience with PPAs, and both include in their sources a range of qualitative studies which used some of the range of tools described above, but which other practitioners would not consider to be PPAs, due to their high level of extractiveness, and lack of attention to the ethics and actions of participatory research.

Methodological developments have arisen both from the evolution of participatory tools, and the need to combine the results of PPAs with other research. One example was the UNDP's 1996 Human Development Report for Bangladesh, one of the most varied and innovative PPAs in terms both of process and of the presentation of findings. The PA researchers developed a Prioritised Problem Index of Poor People, using indexing as a statistical tool to analyse the results of field exercises where local people discussed and prioritised their problems. This allowed direct comparison between communities, whilst retaining detail and diversity. In the Report, discussion of these problems is presented through a gender disaggregated bar chart for each site, a narrative of the problem content, direct quotations from poor people and excerpts from field diaries of researchers.

This method allowed gender disaggregated data to be presented to policy-makers, as well as highlighting important, and perhaps unexpected problems, to outsiders. For example, for both men and women, the issue of the rising demands for dowry was problem which

ranked as the third priority. This largely unexpected finding led to strong recommendations to the Government to uphold existing dowry laws as part of their strategy for poverty reduction.

Gaventa (1997) reports on an inductive method for analysis of PPA findings through card sorting and group work, used in the Shinyanga PPA and building on experience described by Attwood and May for the South Africa PPA. The process took place after village level fieldwork reports had been written, and aimed to synthesise results and develop a reporting framework. The workshop group included field researchers and local level government officials. The process was a week long and was carried out in the following way:

- **Case study presentation and active listening** Presentations on context, findings and action plans were made for each of the sites. Other participants engaged in an "active listening process", in which they noted on cards key themes as the presentations were being made. Cards were coded by community and questions about key issues were included
- **Card sorting** Participants divided into groups to sort the resulting 800 cards, and categories were developed, shared, discussed and refined.
- **Presenting and refining the framework** Participants presented case study findings to a parallel workshop of government staff from the region, and presented the overall structure that had been developed. Input was requested on how best to present findings to ensure follow-up and other ways that follow-up should be pursued. Refinement of the framework followed.
- **Coding the data** Following a third refinement of the data, site reports were coded by small groups and indexes developed for each report.
- **Report writing** by a sub-group of researchers.

The facilitators commented that "this process was far more than developing a structure. It was also one of confidence building, conceptual and analytical development, application of concepts, building ownership of the results, development of writing and presentation skills and building of social capital and research skills for application in future development projects." (1997:3)

Gaventa's account represents an innovative approach to the synthesis and analysis of PPA findings. There are challenges inherent in such processes, concerned with researcher bias, the difficulties of synthesising complex findings in a way that maintains diversity but is also acceptable to policy-makers, and the difficulties of including the opinions of a range of stakeholders.

Sampling and validity
Salmen, during early work with Beneficiary Assessment at the Bank, comments that "The qualitative approach does not aim at statistical accuracy, but rather aims at portraying the perspectives of crucial concentrations of people." (1995:3) Brocklesby & Booth (1998) echo this when they point out some of the limitations of PPA research methodology: PPAs rely on perceptions and opinionated data, rather than observable or measurable phenomenon, and usually emphasise explanatory, in-depth analysis in a small number of sites, rather than breadth of coverage or standardisation. This limits external validity, and has implications for both the selection of communities, and the identification of the poor within selected communities.

A range of experience in selecting sites for PPA research is shown in the box below.

Selection of sites in three PPAs
Adapted from Norton & Stephens, 1995:8

Both the Ghana and Zambia PPAs used methods predominantly derived from PRA, with a strong focus on community level dimensions of the experience of poverty. Field sites were selected by experienced local researchers to represent a variety of communities differentiated by rural/urban characteristics, mode of livelihood, cultural/ethnic group, agroecological zone, access to infrastructure and services and integration with markets.

A further factor that influenced site selection in the Ghana case was the existence of appropriate 'entry points' for dialogue with the communities. Where a member of one of the research teams was part of a development programme which was operational in the community this greatly assisted the quality of interaction and participation in the research.

In the case of the Kenya PPA, the starting point for the selection of sampling procedures for the rural areas was to focus on methods and criteria which would enhance the credibility of the PPA findings in the eyes of central planners and the statisticians from the Central Bureau of Statistics. To achieve this end, the cluster sampling framework of the national Welfare Monitoring Survey was used and the statisticians were involved in the process of village selection. Since the priority was understanding the perspectives of the poor, based on the WMS data five of the poorest districts were chosen … District cluster maps were used to randomly select five villages from each cluster.

Various methods of identifying the poor within selected communities have also been used in PPAs. These include wealth ranking and social mapping, development of rapid appraisal indicators, integration with household survey results to find households defined as poor according to national level consumption data, and selecting individuals by occupations perceived as "low income." These methods fall into two broad categories – those which depend on local perceptions of wealth and poverty, and those which depend on outsiders. Although both may be justifiable, they may give different results of different perceived validity, and result in different degrees of participation; it is important that PPA processes should be explicit about the methods they have chosen, and about the trade-offs involved in those choices.

Holland and Munro (1997:1) elaborate on the question of sampling, and suggest that sampling for PPAs "can still be purposive and driven by particular *a priori* concerns, and yet, given a slightly more systematic contextualisation of each research site, the relevance of the findings can be more readily understood in terms of their applicability to similar contexts elsewhere." They identify the key dynamic of sampling for PPAs as the need to reconcile diversity with representativeness, and suggest that this can be achieved with a sampling process that draws on careful preliminary research, and the construction of regional and site profiles which are representative according to a range of indicators.

The question of representativeness is addressed by Booth et al "Certain information necessary to understanding poverty manifestations and poverty dynamics can be obtained through contextual methods of data collection only. In these instances, strict statistical representativeness has to give way to inductive conclusion, internal validation

and replicability of results … If ten separate and independent case studies in a country show that corruption in rural health and education services leads to an exclusion of the poor, policymakers might be well advised to react to these findings via "inductive conclusion" rather than to wait for another 90 case studies to meet a statistical representativity criterion." (1998:54)

Triangulating with other research: issues of qualitative and quantitative data
Several authors argue that the potential for triangulation with other kinds of research and data is one of the greatest strengths of PPAs, and that the combination of different methodological styles can offer benefits for effective policymaking. The challenge of achieving a balance between different kinds of research is shown by those who have reflected on the difficulties experienced in making the results of PPAs heard, and there are several accounts of PPA authors having to defend their results as real, credible findings (see for example Narayan and Nyamwaya.)

The table below outlines the main difference between what Carvalho and White describe as the qualitative and quantitative approaches to poverty assessment.

Some characteristics of the quantitative and qualitative approaches
Adapted from Carvalho and White, 1997:2-3

Characteristics	Quantitative approach	Qualitative approach
Definition of poverty	People considered poor if their standard of living falls below poverty line, measured by income/consumption.	Poor people define what poverty means; broader definition of deprivation from a range of factors.
Philosophical underpinning	Positivist paradigm: existence of one reality	Rejects positivism: there are multiple forms of reality
Determination of poverty	External surveyors	An interactive internal-external process involving facilitator and participants
Nature of variables	Quantifiable	Perception variables reflecting attitudes and priorities
Interview format	Structured, formal, predesigned questionnaire	Open-ended, semi-structured, interactive
Sampling	Probability sampling	Purposive sampling
Sampling error	Less sampling error but prone to more non-sampling error	More sampling error but tends to reduce non-sampling error
Geographic coverage	Wide: typically national	Small: typically a few regions or selected communities
Statistical analysis	An important part of approach	Makes little or no use of it. Systematic content analysis and gradual aggregation of data from different levels can be used. Relies on triangulation.

Booth et al, in their analysis of the added value of participatory approaches to poverty assessment, identify four key areas in which PPAs have been particularly useful in relation to conventional methods of poverty assessment:

- "bringing to life" poverty profiles – communicating more effectively what it means to be poor
- suggesting the importance of indicators of deprivation that move beyond income and consumption measures
- indicating the importance of locally-specific dimensions of well-being and deprivation
- promoting a more dynamic and explanation-oriented approach to poverty assessment, by focusing on what the poor perceive to be the main constraints under which they live

They point out that first three of these relate to enriching poverty profiles developed using conventional, quantitative methods, while the last is more directly linked to improving policy instruments, rather the policy priorities. They suggest that both these elements are central to PPAs, and therefore that "by giving expression to the many different dimensions of deprivation and to what poor people themselves say about what causes them to remain poor, PPAs have the potential both to give us a fuller understanding of poverty, and to make it more difficult for poverty to be ignored or side-lined by politicians and other decision-makers" (1998:5)

Whitehead & Lockwood (1998) on the other hand, analysing the gender content of PAs, agree that the potential for triangulation is a major benefit of PPAs – but argue that PPA data has not been used in this way in the poverty assessments they review, which "have a limited understanding of non-quantitative non-survey based methodologies, poor conceptualisations of what PPAs can do, and very little idea about triangulation and how multi-stranded methods can be successfully combined" (1998:542)

McGee (2000) writes about the differences between PPA and national household survey findings on the subject of poverty trends in Uganda, which appeared to show contradictions, with the household survey results suggesting poverty has decreased over time, and PPA findings suggesting that it has increased. McGee argues that the two sets of findings are not directly comparable because of differences in the methodologies they employed, but that the findings are potentially complimentary. She suggests that the complimentarity of the two processes might in the future be pursued in the following areas of ongoing and future work:

- Using existing PPA findings or future PPA research to explain the apparent slight downturn observed in core welfare indicators for both poor and non-poor in the household survey data
- Using the methodological and behavioural insights generated by the PPA to refine the implementation of the survey, including the way questions are phrased and who they are applied to, and attitudes and behaviour of enumerators towards respondents
- Incorporating in future household surveys questions on insecurity and food security which emerged as key poverty-related themes in the PPA
- Dovetailing the sampling for future PPA research with that of the survey: ensuring that the selection of PPA sites includes at least some of the communities designated as enumeration areas for the next household survey, and that some of the same households are covered by both pieces of research;
- Increasing the standardisation of investigation of poverty trends in future PPA research. This might involve the presence of more consistent and more interventionist technical assistance than was the case in UPPAP Phase 1 and a much

tighter control over the trend analysis process by researchers, for example the stipulation of total reference periods and time intervals and the specification of which trends to analyse, given the range of dimensions of poverty. Such standardisation could generate data more equivalent to the UNHS poverty trends information, but implies a trade-off in that it stifles diversity and limits the scope of the exercise for encountering unexpected findings;

- Careful analysis of how best to repeat in the second-round PPA some first-round PPA exercises which, if done in series, can systematically enrich existing information on trends: for example, wellbeing ranking exercises. Communities where these were conducted in the first round can be reminded which criteria they listed as describing the poorest group, and asked to indicate which households present those characteristics now. Comparison of the actual households, and of the proportion of total households, assigned to this poorest group in first and second rounds will provide a basis for understanding how household poverty levels have changed and why.

Gender

Many PPAs have, to a greater or lesser extent, attempted to take a gendered approach to their work. The 1996 UNDP Bangladesh PPA , for example, outline an approach where "the timing and nature of the PRRA approach taken enabled many women to be actively involved. In most locations, more than two-thirds of the participants were women. In some rural locations, women preferred to have separate sessions away from the men, whereas in other areas, mixed groups worked together." (1996:3)

Gender sensitivity, however, is not built in to participatory methods, and a great deal relies on individual practitioners. There is little in most PPA reports to confirm or deny the gender sensitivity of a process, because many fail to report on process, concentrating instead on findings.

Whitehead & Lockwood analysed six African Poverty Assessments for their representations of women and gender. Three of these six PAs had a PPA component. They observe that "the six Poverty Assessments we reviewed display a good deal of variation in the way that gender is treated, but that in none of them is there an adequate, let alone strong, analysis of gender that could form a basis for policies to assist poor women in Africa." (1998:550).

They also raise the issue of standardisation, and how PPA results are interpreted in PAs, with what influence on policy. They cite a 1992 World Bank Handbook which outlines how to carry out a Poverty Assessment, which had the aim of standardisation across countries. It names several thematic areas in which gender is held to be important – female education, women's land rights, and the targeting of agricultural extension services to women. Whitehead & Lockwood conclude that these thematic areas – and only these – are the only ones in which women and gender are represented in the final policy recommendations. This suggests an agenda for "women's issues" which remains unaltered throughout the PA process, regardless of any input a PPA component might make towards widening the areas in which gender is important. Whitehead and Lockwood conclude that "by the time the policy chapter in many of our PAs is reached, poor women and their specific characteristics have often almost disappeared." (1998:2)

Similarly, Booth & Brocklesby, reviewing the results of the Ghana PPA, comment on the gender specificity of local analysis. They note that men compared themselves with other men and women with other women – leading to very different priorities for what constitutes poverty – but that these differentiations do not filter upwards through the reporting or in the policy recommendations made by the PPA, despite their fundamental importance.

Some PPA findings have however been analysed in conjunction with survey results to arrive at policy recommendations. A UNDESA research project in Myanmar (1999) combined a PPA component with a household survey to refine indicators of poverty used by planners. The research report combines the findings from the two studies, and highlights the differences between the two sets of findings. Household survey results on health, education and nutrition are analysed by gender, and presented alongside a gender wellbeing ranking exercise, which sought to assess the comparative position of men and women based on local people's criteria of wellbeing and social deprivation. The analysis of survey results concludes that males as a group are better off than females in terms of health, education and nutrition, while the analysis of the PPA findings suggest that a sizeable minority of women are amongst the very poorest social groups. The policy implication the authors draw is that gender alone is not a good proxy for social deprivation, but that the characteristics of groups of poor women could form the basis for targeted interventions.

They draw methodological as well as policy lessons from this discrepancy: "there are systematic differences between better-off and worse-off households in their perception of most pressing problems and needs. The ranking of needs, in particular, differed systematically between the two groups. There were only two villages where the rankings were identical. In all other villages the top two or three needs were either completely different or ranked in a different order. In the case of gender, the needs of better-off and worse-off women differed (either completely or in order of priority) in *all* villages ... This finding strongly suggests that the results of 'participatory' meetings or assemblies with better-off village representatives should be treated with caution if the objective is to get the views of the worse-off villagers." (1999:71)

Ownership
Ownership had emerged as an important issue of process by the mid-1990s, and is central to the question of policy influence. In the case of the Bank PPAs, despite early recognition that national ownership was important to start a process of dialogue at the country level and within the Bank to bring about the needed change in policy or program interventions, there was mixed success at creating national ownership. Owen (1998), reflecting on the process of the Mozambique PPAs, identified national ownership of the process as essential to the acceptability of the PPA, but points out that attempting to achieve this had important trade-offs in the areas of recruiting and preparing the field team, carrying out fieldwork, writing up results and in conflicts around the role of "outsiders" in the process.

Agyarko raises questions of ownership concerning the Ghana PPA, the results of which were not included in a major policy document formulated by the Government shortly after the PPA was published. The following questions are raised:
- The PPA was managed by an NGO and the report initially owned by the international sponsors of the process. To what extent does this affect the Government of Ghana seeing the PPA as a valid piece of work?

- Where is the increased demand for participatory research and development work coming from? Is it only from foreign development agencies?
- Are the results of participatory work shared with those in government, or do they remain in donor and NGO circles?

Booth et al present several different scenarios for promoting stakeholder ownership from the experience of reviewing the first round of African PPAs, within the context of understanding that "the Bank is not expected to continue undertaking country PAs systematically and under its own auspices, but only selectively and mainly by lending support to in-country initiatives." (9). They cite examples from:

♦ **South Africa**, where the PPA was instigated by the Bank but passed almost exclusively into national hands
♦ **Zambia,** where regular poverty monitoring, relying on both participatory research and household survey components, was institutionalised after the PA. Participatory monitoring exercises have been undertaken on a regular basis since then.
♦ **The Gambia,** where a National Poverty Monitoring System which integrates participatory and rapid-survey elements, has been funded by UNDP in the framework of a national Strategy for Poverty Alleviation

They conclude that these and other experiences constitute a shift towards the increased involvement of government and other stakeholders in design and management of PPAs.

Norton & Stephens, after reviewing 22 PPAs[1], present the following case for the strengthening of local ownership: "By any measure, a national strategy for poverty reduction must reflect as far as possible a consensus based on extensive dialogue between a wide range of primary and institutional stakeholders within the country itself concerning the nature of poverty and the type of actions which will most effectively improve the situation. This recognises that the concept of poverty embodies general cultural values about entitlement and need which are a significant element of a country's national culture. Outsiders can engage in this process, but ultimately the momentum must reside within the society itself" (1995:26)

Later PPAs, while still often relying on technical support from donors or other outsiders, have been designed with the intention of local ownership. In the cases for example of Vietnam and Uganda, this has involved a configuration of stakeholders, including NGOs, academics, civil society organisations and government, who are partners in the PPA process.

Impact
Most PPAs aim to have an impact on policy. Norton (1998) points out the importance of recognising that policy has many meanings, ranging from resource allocation through efficiency and relevance in the delivery of public services. He describes policy as being negotiated between various stakeholders who have different levels of influence, power and access to information. In the context of PPAs, then, having an impact on policy is likely to be a question of elaborating key policy messages for different stakeholders, and facilitating the communication of those messages.

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[1] Using the very broad definition favoured by the World Bank

It is in this discussion of effective communication of information to key stakeholders that we see the seeds of the design of the later PPAs, which are structured not only to feed information into the poverty strategy of the government, but to disseminate results widely in civil society for potential use in advocacy work and to fuel demand for public action to reduce poverty, as well as to widen impact through capacity building.

Impact of PPAs has been experienced in a range of forms, some of which are shown below:

- Lessons from the Zambia PPA highlight the importance of pursuing information and capacity building strategies simultaneously to maximise impact. Although the PPA findings resulted in heightened awareness of poverty reduction issues amongst policy makers, which led to initial action, this was not followed through. The Government requested World Bank funding for four provincial workshops in 1995, to develop provincial action programmes. There was not adequate funding to carry this out in all provinces, and the first participatory poverty monitoring exercise found that many government officials thought that the provincial action programmes lack seriousness because there had been no additional capacity created to implement them, there were no responsibilities assigned for implementation, there was no congruence with national sectoral plans, and there had been a lack of poor people's participation in drawing them up. (Milimo, pers. comm.)

- An evaluation of the Ghana PPA looks at the impact of the exercise at several levels. In terms of impact on individuals, the PPA was found both to have raised the profile of individuals involved in the national policy arena. Another route for impact at this level was achieved through individuals using the methods and retaining the attitudes of PRA in their own work. The evaluation emphasises the difficulties encountered by those who wished to move towards using PRA for analysis, action and organisational management. These included attitudinal obstacles, often within their own institutions. Impact at the community level was found to be limited. In only one of the three communities revisited for the evaluation were there on-going activities related to the process of the PPA. In the community where an impact had been felt, there had been follow-up visits by members of the PPA team, and members of the community were already working together on a particular issue for which they were able to request specific support. All communities reported dissatisfaction that they had not received copies of research findings. Impact at the national policy level had been felt most strongly in the areas of rural infrastructure and education. The PPA findings emphasised a strong priority for water and other rural infrastructure, and the evaluation suggests that these findings were instrumental in the World Bank's decision to fund a Village Infrastructure Programme. Issues around education which were raised by the PPA were investigated further and a World Bank funded project of school improvement which worked using a participatory approach were started. The limits to impact at the national level are shown through the formation of a Technical Committee on Poverty in the National Development Planning Commission which produced a document on poverty reduction which was to form a basis for all government poverty reduction activities. This document did not reflect any of the findings of the PPA, and relied heavily on quantitative poverty reduction data collected for the PA of which the PPA was part.
- Whitehead & Lockwood (1998) review four PPAs in terms of their impact on the outcomes of the Poverty Assessments. The range of impacts is wide. In the 1993 Uganda PPA, there was little evidence to suggest that the results of the PPA
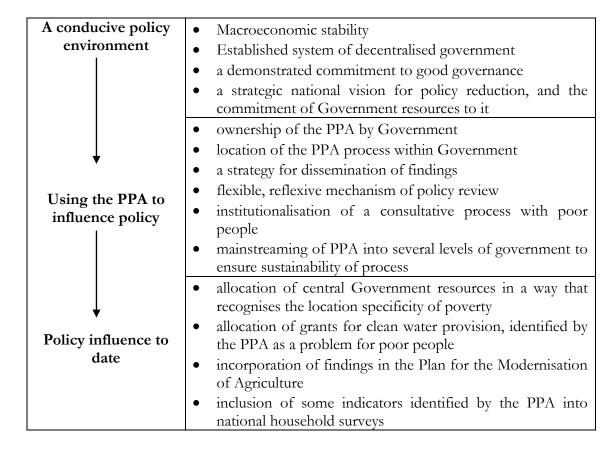
influenced the analysis in the PA. In Zambia, on the other hand, the findings of the PPA were well integrated, for example, into the poverty profile, but many other themes uncovered by the PPA are lost in the process of summarising the PA. Generally, they conclude that policy recommendations are a result of selective readings of the PPA findings, and that findings on gender in particular are subject to this selective reading. They note a paradox in the Assessments: on one hand, a wide variation in approaches to the measurement of poverty and analysis of its causes; on the other, a remarkable consistency concerning policy recommendations.

- Brocklesby and Holland, summarising PPA findings about public services, highlight one way that PPA processes can influence policy: "PPAs provide a forum for the poor to voice their own demands for change in public service provision by reflecting on their own experiences in dealing with government services." They suggest that the strategic value of PPAs is in allowing governments and other stakeholders to reflect on the way resources are currently allocated between sectors.

McLean summarises the influence of the Uganda PPA six months after the completion of fieldwork. She outlines the range of ways which the PPA had influenced national policy, as well as describing the key factors which contributed to a conducive policy environment, and the strategies which were undertaken to use the PPA to influence policy. These are summarised below.

Using the Uganda PPA to influence policy
Adapted from McLean 1999

A conducive policy environment	• Macroeconomic stability • Established system of decentralised government • a demonstrated commitment to good governance • a strategic national vision for policy reduction, and the commitment of Government resources to it
Using the PPA to influence policy	• ownership of the PPA by Government • location of the PPA process within Government • a strategy for dissemination of findings • flexible, reflexive mechanism of policy review • institutionalisation of a consultative process with poor people • mainstreaming of PPA into several levels of government to ensure sustainability of process
Policy influence to date	• allocation of central Government resources in a way that recognises the location specificity of poverty • allocation of grants for clean water provision, identified by the PPA as a problem for poor people • incorporation of findings in the Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture • inclusion of some indicators identified by the PPA into national household surveys

Spread: from national to regional and international

Downwards spread
Although national PPAs remain the norm, use of PPA methods has spread both upwards, to studies which analyse more than one country, and down, to regional and district levels.

The Shinyanga PPA is a good example of downwards spread. This PPA was carried out in one region, and was supported by 8 regional Sector studies, which were carried out by local specialists and designed to complement the participatory work. The aim of the project was to build local capacity in participatory action research, to plan for the formulation and implementation of a poverty eradication programme for the Shinyanga region, and to facilitate local action at the village level. It was carried out in the context both of recent changes in government poverty reduction planning, and during a process of governmental decentralisation. While earlier PPAs had aimed to enrich poverty profiles, the Shinyanga PPA tried to go further by building action-oriented research and planning into the process as a central element. Capacity building was perceived to be central to the project, and was defined by process participants as "enhancing the ability to manage their lives and environment through skills and knowledge, awareness, organisation and management, collaboration, participation and resources."

As part of the PPA process, each village developed action plans. An evaluation in four of the PPA sites one year later found that in all four villages, some of the planned activities had been carried out, with varying levels of success. Most activities were carried out by small groups, and ranged from digging and rehabilitating wells, to alteration of farming practices, to the formation of women's groups. Although there were different levels of success in each village, there were factors common to all villages which had contributed to what had been achieved. These were the PPA sessions themselves, good leadership, support from outside authorities (sometimes NGOs), favourable weather, commitment by communities, support within the family and changes in awareness, attitudes and behaviour. On the other hand, in the many cases of less successful implementation, negative factors identified were adverse weather, famine, poor leadership and lack of follow-up. Those plans which had been implemented included, in two of the villages, initiatives which had been ongoing at the time of the PPA. Although positive impacts are documented, it is important to keep these in context. A member of a women's group formed after the PPA observed that the processes in her village involved very few people, as most of the villagers did not attend the PPA session.

A regional approach has also contributed to the horizontal spread of capacity building. Some of those trained during the PPA have become involved in other programmes of development work, from the NGO sector to the local government reform programme, and have become advocates of participatory research and planning in those arenas. Partners in the PPA process, including local people, were able to influence World Food Programme strategies for supporting people to increase agricultural production. At least one village has had its action plan incorporated into the activities of an NGO. Lessons and personnel from the Shinyanga process have been incorporated into another PPA process in Kiteto and Singida Districts, supported by Sida, which aims to initiate poverty reduction work through participatory processes and planning, and to build the capacity of District level officials in participatory research and planning. (Masaigana, pers. comm.)

A similar process is reported in Ghana (Dogbe, pers. comm.). The NGO which carried out the national PPA to inform a Bank PA have continued to work in participatory research. Their current work is at the Regional level, and they have developed a program built on PPA experiences which aims to train community leaders in strategic planning and action around existing action plans, in conjunction with government staff. The issues identified and addressed will serve as a basis for advocating changes in policies or practices which affect poverty, from the community to the regional level.

The path from the national PPA to a programme based on advocacy, capacity building and action at the regional level, was directed by two intervening experiences. The first was facilitating an analysis of the state of education in 60 communities, which resulted in the lesson that many of the problems identified were attitudinal and did not necessarily require money to address, but different kinds of resources. The second was a District level PPA carried out in close conjunction with government staff, which also concluded that poverty is not only an issue of lack of money or resources, and resulted in local people identifying areas for action and projects, and demanding technical assistance for them. The current programme of capacity building and advocacy is a direct result of this intervention.

Upwards spread
Some studies, strongly influenced by PPA methodologies, have sought to compare poor people's perceptions of poverty in several countries, in order to influence international policy actors. The Consultations with the Poor/Voices of the Poor process aimed to carry out a participatory study of poverty in 23 countries to inform the team writing the World Development Report 2000/1 of poor people's perspectives on poverty. This process built on the experience of PPAs in order to influence a very particular group of policy makers. There were trade-offs involved with a process at this scale, which included the key question of ensuring comparability between countries while retaining the flexibility and open-endedness of the methodology. As one of the methodology pilot studies points out, "The study gave a fixed format for both the research agenda and the data presentation. Not only was it sometimes restricting, but the Terms of Reference were at times not necessarily suited to the field context. As a result of the predetermined format and limited amount of time, the team felt that the research was less process orientated and required more facilitation than usual … This runs counter to the ideal of PRA, wherein process takes precedence over output … The study therefore lacks much of the empowerment element assumed to be implicit in the application of PRA tools." (IPID, 1998:35)

Time constraints, which were related to the timetabling of the World Development Report which the study aimed to influence, were restrictive throughout the process. In addition, the scale of data produced and several different layers of synthesis – local, national and global – meant that the emerging analysis had passed through multiple filters and biases before outputs were finalised. This is perhaps at odds with the authority with which the project claims to represent the voices of the poor.

At the time of writing – before the publication of the WDR 2000 - it is difficult to say what impact such an exercise has had, or in which arenas. There has certainly been an impact on the language and ideas employed by some key figures in the Bank, and there is little doubt that the process formed a major plank of the strategy employed by the WDR writing team to consult a wide constituency of stakeholders in the process of elaborating their report. There is however little evidence to suggest impact at the national or the

local level, except in the minority of cases where a study team had existing relationships in the community.

Critical Reflections

Attwood and May, writing about the South Africa PPA from their perspective as experienced PRA practitioners, reflect the concerns of many about the questionably "participatory" nature of many PPAs. "Our understanding of PRA is that it is an approach that, if used as part of a development process, can lead to control over that process by the people for whom development and local delivery/action is supposed to be happening. Research, using only PRA methods, is not PRA. Hence, when considering the relationship between PRA and policy, the concern is not how we can use PRA to influence policy but rather how, through the use of PRA (participatory techniques and process) the poor can influence the policy that affects their lives while at the same time furthering their own development." (1998: 119)

A 1997 evaluation of the Zambia PPA provides an example of exactly the kind of dilemma outlined by Attwood and May. It suggests that some people involved considered that the inception of the PPA was not participatory, because the process was designed and conceived in Washington. When discussing impact, the evaluation highlights the contradictions between the final recommendations made by the Zambia Poverty Assessment (of which the PPA formed a part) and the recommendations of community members in the PPA: the poverty assessment makes the recommendation to "sustain trade liberalisation and privatisation programmes", while respondents in rural sites were reporting the difficulties they were enduring due to precisely these policies.

Zambia is one of the PPAs reviewed by Whitehead & Lockwood, giving rise to the observation that "Beyond the issue of how participatory data are actually collected, there is the question of how they are then selected, analysed and presented. Here we would simply observe that the strong moral emphasis on accessing the voices of the poor, and the subsequent focus of methods and tools in participatory approaches, side-steps questions about validity and reliability (familiar from debates within qualitative methods) about the role of data collectors themselves. The field worker is a crucial figure in selecting and transmitting the voice of the poor, but it is largely invisible in the PPAs." (1998:540)

Yaschine-Arroyo examines the role of the field worker in generating a particular type of information when she analyses how the environmental assessment contained in one of the Shinyanga PPA site reports was constructed, emphasising how researchers' reluctance to challenge those preconceptions which they perceive as based on scientific and expert knowledge continue to pose a limitation to participatory policy-making. While emphasising that the paper is not a criticism of the "valuable work" done by the Shinyanga PPA, the author places the experience in the context of how different actors shape policy processes. The paper presents evidence that the environmental assessment in the site, Businda, expressed the views of the research team far more than those of local people. The assessment emphasised the threat of deforestation at the hands of local people, rather than attempting to engage local people in order to understand their perceptions of the issue. Yaschine argues that even within a participatory approach, power differentials between the actors – in this case, the researchers and the people of

Businda – persist, and that it was the more powerful position held by the researchers which enabled them to impose their own environmental perceptions.

Shaffer (1998) identifies difficulties with a PPA methodological approach when he documents his experience with what he describes as "micro-level PPA" for research, in order to compare results with conventional poverty measurement. He argues that there are two major areas of difficulty which arise from conducting research which aims to base the determination and assessment of wellbeing and deprivation on local conceptions of the terms. These are

- Difficulties with understanding and interpreting local meanings, which may call into question the validity of the interpretation. Shaffer suggests that there is no way to break out of this, but that facilitators of this kind of exercise need to be explicit about the categories they use for interpretation.
- Difficulties around the fact that the determination of assessment of wellbeing and illbeing are social processes, meaning that "one might assume that 'worse off' groups will have 'less ambitious' …expectations, and will base assessments of wellbeing/deprivation referents."

Future

PPAs continue to evolve and adapt. Several of the later PPAs, designed to be part of sustained processes located in national policy contexts, are still ongoing. Some new national PPAs are planned, whilst PPA-based work continues in various countries at the sub-national level. Some PPAs have formed the basis for national level poverty monitoring, and yet others have the potential to do so.

One key area which looks likely to build on the experience and lessons of the PPAs is the formulation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, a policy instrument devised by the World Bank and IMF to ensure that debt relief is tied to effective poverty reduction. PRSPs demand a national strategy for poverty reduction based on a consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.. McGee with Norton, in a synthesis of experience with participatory approaches to policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and design, outlines the key lessons which the experience of PPAs has to offer the PRSP process. "The early PPAs were remarkable for the new substantive insights they offered on the nature of poverty, whereas the 'second generation' PPAs (South Africa, Uganda, and others forthcoming) are less noteworthy for new findings than for fostering and enabling new institutional characteristics, protagonists, owners and processes. The lesson for PRSPs is that, while poverty information generated by participatory methods offers essential insights for forming a robust understanding of the nature, processes and variations of poverty, fresh participatory research might unearth less new information than new and more effective ways of applying the lessons of participatory assessment to policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, especially through the exploitation of the new spaces and relationships offered by the participatory research process." (2000:35)

The World Bank PRSP Sourcebook describes participation in the following way: "Participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them. It is likely to involve a cycle of participatory dialogue, analysis, actions and feedback within existing

political and governance structures that is designed to bring the views of all levels of civil society, from communities to the private and public sectors, into government policymaking and programme implementation, at both national and local levels" This definition builds on the earlier experience of PPAs, although the scope is wider. Such a definition, combined with a strong emphasis on national ownership of PRSPs, gives rise to the kind of paradoxes already discussed concerning contradictions in power relationships and questions of who participates, and with what outcome.

Part II
Abstracts of information resources on PPAs
In chronological order

HRSSD, Ministry of Planning, Kenya and the World Bank, Kenya
Participatory Poverty Assessment: issues and methods
Unpublished note
1994, 4pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Or mail: Participation Resource Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE.UK.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax:+44(0) 1273 621202

A short note made during the planning of the Kenya PPA in 1994 points out the importance of "generating commitment and ownership" of the PPA among four key stakeholder groups – central Government, District government authorities, the poor, and the World Bank – and discusses how the PPA process planned to do this. It identifies six key sets of issues to be addressed by the PPA, with the aim of complementing or verifying the findings from a Welfare Monitoring Survey. It discusses sampling and field research methods, and outlines plans for data feedback.

H. Attwood
PRA training report, Hlabisa
Data Research Africa, South Africa, unpublished training resource
1995, 69pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Or mail: Participation Resource Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE, UK.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax:+44(0) 1273 621202

Report of a PRA training undertaken in response to request from the organisations involved in the South Africa PPA. The report was written to provide participants with an output on the process and content of the training, to open the process of training to critique from other trainers, and to share ideas on training. The report offers a day-by-day account of the training, which while it introduces the basic elements and methods of PRA, also has a strong emphasis on attitudes, behaviour, biases, gender and team roles. Three days field exercises are also documented.

A.Norton, T.Stephens
Participation in Poverty Assessments
World Bank Environment Department Dissemination Notes, 20
June 1995, 4pp
Available from: http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sba202.htm

A short summary of "early lessons for task managers" about participation in the World Bank's PAs. The distinction is drawn between PPAs (which has come to refer to the use of specific qualitative research methods) and increasing the participation of a range of

stakeholders in Poverty Assessments. The summary covers the rationale for broadening participation in Poverty Assessments, issues in making Poverty Assessments more participatory and how to incorporate a PPA into overall Poverty Assessments. Text boxes illustrate examples from Cameroon, Peru, Kenya and Zambia.

A.Norton, T.Stephens
Participation in Poverty Assessments
Social Policy and Resettlement Division Discussion Paper
June 1995, 27pp
Available from: http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sba202.htm

Paper examining the role of participation in World Bank Poverty Assessments. The authors emphasise the importance of participation both in understanding the dynamics of poverty from the perspectives of poor people, and in gaining the allegiance of those consulted for the proposed solutions which result. They discuss participation in the context of two major stakeholders, defined as *primary* (the poor) and *institutional* (key stakeholders in government and civil society).

The section on *primary* stakeholders discusses the relationship between different kinds of methodological combinations and the level of participation, as well as addressing several issues of research design, and examining the uses and applications of PPA methodologies and some of their limitations. The section on *institutional* stakeholders discusses the definition of the research agenda, undertaking of analytic work, formulation of policy and dissemination of results.

L.Glassco,Y. Ishihara
What does PRA tell us about poverty that conventional methods do not? The case of Zambia
Unpublished MPhil term paper, University of Sussex, UK
April 1995 42pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Or mail: Participation Resource Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE, UK.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax: +44(0) 1273 621 202

This paper uses the Zambia PA (1994) to examine what findings from PRA tell us about poverty that conventional methods do not, by examining four areas of the PA: results on characteristics of the poor, the process of data collection and analysis, administrative feasibility, and the usefulness of the findings.

The authors discuss basic issues of poverty assessment – poverty profiles, definitions of poverty and conventional methods of measurement. They go on to outline the process of the Participatory Poverty Assessment in Zambia, concluding that the biggest strength of the PPA is the ability to capture depth, complexity and multi-dimensionality of rural poverty as well as its causative chains, but that it fails address the issues of political and economic stratification, as well as being unable to compare poverty beyond the boundaries of a single community. The conclusion offered is that "although PRA has much to offer a poverty profile, it is a methodology that is best used as a complementary tool to other poverty measurement methodologies.

D.Narayan, D. Nyamwaya
Learning from the poor: a participatory poverty assessment in Kenya
Social Policy and Resettlement Division Paper 34
May 1996, 65pp
Available from: http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sbxp0703.htm

This report of the 1994 Kenya PPA introduces the methods and process used for the study, and presents key findings. These are organised into sections on the characteristics of poverty, coping strategies and self-help networks; case studies are presented of urban Nairobi, and Mandera District, which is isolated and semi-arid. The section on coping strategies contains the information on how poor people interact with social services which was one of the main objectives of the study. The text contains boxed examples showing excerpts of field results from different communities, as well as discussing the difference between poverty trend information collected by the PPA and from analysis of quantitative poverty lines.

A final section outlines the lessons learned from the PPA process: the importance of establishing the credibility of the methods and the generalisability of the results; deadlines causing shortcuts are detrimental to process; tensions between team members of different disciplines; the need for follow-up to internalise the results; and the importance of involving a wide range of stakeholders.

UNDP
A pro-poor agenda: Report on Human Development in Bangladesh 1996
Part 3: Poor people's perspectives
1996, 106pp
Available from: Mr. Shams Mustafa at Email address: shams.mustafa@undp.org
Fax: 880 2 8113196

Report of research findings from UNDP funded PPA in Bangladesh, which aims to present the perspectives of the poor on the analysis and prioritisation of their own problems, and the identification of their future expectations from Government, non-Government and private sector agencies.

The report is structured firstly around poor people's analysis and ranking of their problems, which have been aggregated using statistical indexing. Findings are clearly disaggregated by gender and frequently discussed from a gendered perspective. Secondly, poor people's analyses of institutions are presented: these include the finding that 20% of the villages and slums visited were totally unaware of any Government services. Participants identify and discuss a wide range of areas in which they think Government should take responsibility: provision of health, education and credit, enforcement of dowry and land tenure law, and employment creation.

S.Carvalho, H. White
Combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches to poverty measurement and analysis: the practice and the potential
World Bank Technical Paper 366, 26pp
May 1997
Order publication from the World Bank: ISBN 0-8213-3955-9
http://www.worldbank.org/html/extpb/ordform/onlineorderform.htm
Or mail: The World Bank, P.O. Box 960, Herndon, VA 20172-0960, U.S.A.

Phone: 1-703-661-1580
Fax: 1-703-661-1501

This paper highlights the key characteristics of the quantitative and qualitative approaches to poverty measurement and analysis, examines the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, and analyses the potential for combining the two approaches in analytical work on poverty. The main conclusion of this paper is that sole reliance on either only the quantitative approach or only the qualitative approach is often likely to be less desirable than combining the two approaches.

The paper looks at the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches in several key areas: defining poverty, sampling, data collection methods and instruments. It goes on to examine the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, before looking at how qualitative and quantitative methods might be combined.

J.Gaventa
Synthesising PRA and case study materials: a participatory process for developing outlines, concepts and overview reports.
Draft unpublished documentation from Report Writing Workshop, Shinyanga Region, Tanzania
September 1997, 11pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Or mail: Participation Resource Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE.UK.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax:+44(0) 1273 621202

This short piece describes an inductive method, based on card sorting, used for synthesising information from 8 village level participatory poverty assessments conducted in Shinyanga Region, Tanzania, 1997. The method was adapted by facilitators from those used in the SAPPA and during the process of an Empowerment Program in the USA.

A process is outlined whereby a team of 18 people, nearly all of whom were involved in fieldwork and who included local government officials, developed a detailed outline for a synthesis report, and coded and indexed 8 village fieldwork reports to allow a team of writers to continue the work. The account is laid out to present in parallel the Workshop Process and the Facilitators' Comments on the process.

R. deGraft Agyarko
"In spite of the rains the ground is still dry": Ghana Participatory Poverty Assessment Studies – impact, implications and lessons for the future.
Unpublished paper
October 1997, 19pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Or mail: Participation Resource Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE.UK.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax:+44(0) 1273 621202

Based on interviews and a desk review, this paper looks at the impact of the PPA in Ghana, 1993-4. It asks whether the PPA led to better understanding of poverty from poor people's perspectives, and examines whether local capacity was strengthened, whether local action or policy change resulted from the PPA, and the nature of the demand created for PRA by the PPA process.

The paper summarises the key findings of the PPAs, and goes on to discuss the impact at several levels: individual, community, organisational and national. A major difficulty at the community level was the lack of follow-up, and a major strength at the individual level was the development of local capacity to undertake research and training. At the national level, the author identifies an underlying assumption that participatory data is not substantial enough as a basis for policy.

J. Holland, M. Munro
Profiling the purposive: some thoughts on the site selection process in PPAs
Unpublished note arising from the design of the Egypt PPA
December 1997
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Or mail: Participation Resource Room, IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax:+44(0) 1273 621202

This short note locates sampling techniques that have been used in PPA between the purposive sampling techniques of PRA, and the statistically representative sampling techniques of questionnaire surveys. The authors suggest that, compared to PRA, "PPAs tend to seek to draw broader conclusions, lessons that extend beyond the community involved in the participatory analysis. With this agenda, there is a renewed emphasis on commensurability of information and a concentration on the external validity of findings."

The authors discuss the possibility of developing a systematic approach to site selection which reconciles diversity with representativeness through the identification of regional and community "profiles."

D. Booth, J. Holland, J. Hentschel, P. Lanjouw, A. Herbert
Participation and Combined Methods in African Poverty Assessment: renewing the agenda
Department for International Development Issues Paper, Social Development Division and Africa Division
February 1998, 127pp
Available from:
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/public/what/advisory/group7/pdf/sddafpov.pdf

This report has to objective to "contribute to the wider adoption of participatory principles and combined methods in poverty assessment work, by illustrating more fully the added value to be derived from these approaches."

The first section outlines three distinct elements in making the case for participation and combined methods in poverty assessment: stakeholder involvement, the meaning of poverty and the views of the poor, and triangulation and the limits of single-stranded approaches. It outlines an evolving agenda for poverty assessment work in Africa:

promoting stakeholder ownership, strengthening the rang of contextual and non-contextual methods and how best to move from improvement of the poverty profile to the advancements of explanations.

The body of the report is supported by five substantial annexes which look at different elements of the agenda outlined: contextual and non-contextual methods in the construction of poverty profiles, integrating contextual and non-contextual methods, themes from the PPAs, understanding the dimensions of poverty in Zambia, and understanding the dimensions of poverty in rural Tanzania. The latter annexes re-analyse the data from the two PPAs within an assets framework, and are strongly gendered.

C. Bailhache, U. Grant, M. Greeley, A. Kirundi, N. Lebrun, G. Pratt, I. Yaschine-Arroyo
Human Development Report, Shinyanga Region, Tanzania: a synopsis
Unpublished synopsis of PPA research
March 1998, 23pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Or mail: Participation Resource Room, IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax:+44(0) 1273 621202

This short report, prepared for the UNDP report on Poverty in Africa from the results of the Shinyanga PPA, outlines lessons from that process in the areas of methodology and findings of processes of poverty and processes of change. The Shinyanga PPA, funded by UNDP, was part of a project on decentralised poverty eradication initiatives, and aimed to build local capacity in participatory action research, and to plan for the formulation of a regional poverty eradication action plan.

The methodology of the process is described and a short presentation made of key findings about processes of poverty. The section on Processes of Change describes the impact of the PPA in terms of action at the village level, capacity building at the village level and government capacity building. The results are mixed. After six months, several activities outlined during action planning had taken place, but participants in villages reported obstacles to action: lack of close follow-up from outsiders, poor leadership, heavy rains and famine. Some village level changes were reported in terms of attitude and behaviour, participation, creativity, improved gender relations, and problem solving. At the institutional level, impact was noted in terms of the increased capacity of individuals, as well as better collaboration and co-ordination between institutional levels.

I. Yaschine-Arroyo
Analysing the deforestation narrative in the Businda Participatory Poverty Assessment report: how was it constructed
Unpublished MPhil term paper, Institute of Development Studies
April 1998, 24pp
Available by email from: iliana@laneta.apc.org
Or by mail from: Quetzal 31, Col. Rosedal, 04330, Mexico D.F., Mexico

This paper is based on a self-evaluation by the author of work done for the Shinyanga PPA in Tanzania. It analyses how the environmental assessment contained the fieldwork report from one site, Businda. It emphasises the role of researchers in this process and seeks to explain how their perceptions of deforestation came to being, and why their view of environmental change in Businda prevailed despite the fact that the community

did not seem to endorse it. The analysis highlights how researchers' reluctance to challenge those preconceptions which they conceive as based on 'scientific' and 'expert' knowledge still poses a limitation to participatory policy making. It also provides an example of how existing power relations continued to exert a strong influence within the framework of a positive participatory exercise.

M. Masaiganah/UNDP Human Development Report Project
Village and capacity building: evaluation synthesis report
Unpublished project report
May 1998, 94pp
Available from: masaigana@africaonline.co.tz
By mail from: M. Masaiganah, Mwasama Primary School, Box No 240, Bagamoyo, Tanzania
Tel: +255 52 44062

This report describes the evaluation of four of the eight villages which made action plans during the first round of activities of the Shinyanga PPA. These villages were visited six months after they made action plans, and the evaluation team included government staff who had been trained in participatory methods for the PPA. In each of the four villages, the research team documented the status of implementing plans (which ranged from adopting different farming techniques, to rehabilitating water supply, to formation of women's groups), and the factors hindering implementation. These included "poor leadership", which in one village had led to conflict, famine, adverse weather conditions and lack of follow-up from the PPA team. The report also documents a process of "replanning", facilitated as part of the update of evaluation.

The second part of the report documents an evaluation of the capacity-building component of the PPA. Amongst the changes in capacity noted at the village level were changes in awareness of potential solutions to problems, participation of villagers in action plans, changes in attitude at the household level, increased creativity and problem solving, resource mobilisation and improved gender relations. Conflicts, unsolved problems and lack of follow-up are also reported.

T. Fujikura, M. Bhattarai, A. Bhattarai
Review of Participatory Poverty Analysis Report
Unpublished, submitted to ActionAid Nepal
May 1998, 23pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Participation Resource Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE.UK.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax:+44(0) 1273 621202

This report describes participatory poverty assessment activities carried out by three NGOs in eleven districts of Nepal in 1998, with the stated objective of finding out poor people's perspectives on poverty and the impacts of policies on their lives. The purpose of the study was explained to one group of poor people "not to write a report in the sense that they knew, but to press the authorities to work with and for the poor to reduce poverty."

The authors go into some detail about how they approached the question of finding poor people, and some of the contradictions inherent in trying to contact, for example, street children. They outline their findings on the diversity of perceptions of poverty amongst the different groups of poor and non-poor that they identify. Other findings are outlined, concerning landlessness, inflation, 'natural' disasters, education, cultural practices, seasonality and downward mobility.

P.Shaffer
Who's 'poor?' Comparing household survey and participatory poverty assessment results from the Republic of Guinea
Unpublished paper for IDS Poverty Research Programme international conference
"What can be done about poverty?"
July 1998, 24pp
Available from: Paul Shaffer, 4 Normanna Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6C 1H2
Paul Shaffer@utoronto.ca
Sections also appear as: World Development Vol.26, No.12, 1998 pp2119-2135

This article presents findings on gender and consumption poverty taken from household surveys and Participatory Poverty Assessments in the Republic of Guinea. National household survey data reveal that women are not more likely than men to be consumption poor or to suffer greater consumption poverty. PPA data from the village of Kamatiguia reveal that women are "worse off" than men when deprivations includes excessive workload and reduced decision-making authority.

Through looking at findings on the poverty status of women headed households, female representation in poor households and the intrahousehold distribution of food and health care, the paper seeks to analyse the relation ship between gender and consumption poverty. As well as presenting the findings from household survey data, the author presents an account of how focus group discussions and wellbeing ranking were used to address these questions. Category and selectivity bias are discussed with reference to the PPA findings. The conclusion of the paper is that according to quantitative household survey data on consumption poverty, women are better off than men, but that according to PPA data, the whole concept of consumption poverty misses critical elements of women's deprivation. This in itself supports the conclusion that "the equity import of policy interventions based *exclusively* on consumption poverty is limited indeed."

M.Brocklesby, J. Holland
Participatory Poverty Assessments and Public Services: Key messages from the poor
DFID Social Development Division report
September 1998, 31pp
ISBN 1-86192-087-3
Order publication by email from: enquiry@dfid.gtnet.gov.uk
By mail: Public Enquiry Point, Department for International Development, Abercrombie House, Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8EA
Tel: 44(0) 1355 84 3132
Fax: 44(0) 1355 84 3632

This report focuses specifically on the "range of opinions, concerns and demands of the poor regarding public services provision" reported in PPAs conducted by the World Bank and others since 1990. The authors briefly introduce the rationale of PPAs,

emphasising that in their understanding, a PPA is both a process and a product. They review PPA findings on local conceptualisations of poverty, before focusing on public service provision.

The authors argue that PPA findings have provided a number of critical issues for further public service analysis, and that many of these are linked to "securing equity of access to improved quality and contextually relevant services, and to ensuring poverty reduction and livelihood security." The key issues they discuss, with examples from a range of PPAs, are financial barriers to access, ensuring physical access, social, cultural and political constraints, quality of service, and improving participation in public policy making. In conclusion, they suggest that "the most powerful message to emerge is their [*the poor*} desire to be self-reliant. Public sector assistance is views as important but not a substitute for their own efforts and initiatives in breaking the cycle of poverty.

A.Whitehead, M. Lockwood
Gender in the World Bank's Poverty Assessments: six cases from sub-Saharan Africa
Draft of paper, published in Development and Change, 30(3), July 1999 pp525-555
November 1998, 54pp
Available on-line at:
http://www.blackwellpublishers.co.uk/asp/journal.asp?ref=0012-155X&src=ard&aid=128&iid=3&vid=30

This paper examines the role of gender in six World Bank Poverty Assessments in Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania and Uganda (three of these PAs had a PPA component). The authors look at how and why gender appears in these poverty assessments, and links emerging points about gender within the World Bank to broader questions of approaches to poverty, methodology and policy. The most common way women appear in the Assessments under review is in the guise of female headed households. Aside from this, the authors find that gender sensitivity in the PAs under review varies widely.

Section Five looks at gender in the PPA components of the PAs under review. It examines the methods used in the PPAs, their influence on the outcomes of the Poverty Assessments, and the question of whether or not PPAs improve gender analysis. It concludes, that for the PPAs under review, this is not the case. This is partly due to the marginalisation of PPA findings within PAs but is also due to "serious shortcomings in the theory and practice of participatory methodologies."

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
Uganda PPA: Background to the December 1998 Consultative Group meeting
Unpublished project document
December 1998, 13pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Participation Resource Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE.UK.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax:+44(0) 1273 621202
Or Internet for general information from UPPAP: http://www.uppap.or.ug

This short document outlines the background, objectives and planned activities and outputs of the UPPAP. The rationale for the project is placed within the Poverty

Eradication Action Plan, which was formulated through a consultative process with did not involve the "real poor". At the same time, consultations with poor people at District level which happened in the course of formulating the WB's Country Assistance Strategy showed that there were differences between the felt needs of the poor and the priorities outlined by policy. These factors together led to launching the UPPAP.

The stated objectives of the UPPAP in this document are: to enhance knowledge about the nature and causes of poverty and strategies for action; to build district capacity to plan for poverty reduction; to develop a national system for qualitative poverty monitoring; and to establish capacity for participatory policy research in Uganda. The core stated activity is that of informing planners and development actors about the nature and causes of poverty. The envisaged outputs of the project are to generate policy-relevant messages, but have a strong focus on integrating the information produced by the participatory research with other sources of information about poverty.

The document summarises key findings from the three districts where work had already taken place. A discussion of poverty trends notes that reported changes in different aspects of the level of poverty are not consistent within or between communities.

T.Dogbe
'The one who rides the donkey does not know the ground is hot': CEDEP's involvement in the Ghana PPA
(ed) J. Holland, J. Blackburn, <u>Whose voice? Participatory research and policy change</u>
IT Publications
1998, 6pp
Available from: Information Technology Publications Ltd, 103-105 Southampton Rd London WC1B 4HH
Email: orders@itpubs.org.uk

This short piece discusses a series of participatory poverty assessments conducted in Ghana in 1993 and 1994. One of the researchers involved in the PPAs outlines some of the key areas of learning, highlighting issues of process, such as the importance of "handing over the stick" and interacting face-to-face with poor people. He discusses some of the strengths and weaknesses of the Ghana PPA, and the early indications of influence on policy.

D.Owen
Whose PPA is this? Lessons learned from the Mozambique PPA
(ed) J. Holland, J. Blackburn, <u>Whose voice? Participatory research and policy change</u>, IT Publications
1998, 7pp
Available from: Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd, 103-105 Southampton Rd London WC1B 4HH
Tel: +44 (0) 436 9761
Fax: +44 (0) 436 2013
Email: orders@itpubs.org.uk

This critical reflection of lessons learned from the 1995 Mozambique PPA suggests that the process of carrying out a PPA is as significant as the product, in terms of quality and effectiveness. It outlines the objectives and planning of the PPA, before suggesting that national ownership of a PPA process is an important part of effective policy influence,

and concludes that "different stakeholders expect different kinds of information from the PPA, with implications for the ownership of the process…Multiple stakeholders create multiple policy demands."

H. Attwood, J. May
Kicking down doors and lighting fires: the South African PPA
(ed) J. Holland, J. Blackburn, <u>Whose voice? Participatory research and policy change</u>
IT Publications
1998, 12pp
Available from: Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd, 103-105 Southampton Rd
London WC1B 4HH
Tel: +44 (0) 436 9761
Fax: +44 (0) 436 2013
Email: orders@itpubs.org.uk

This account documents the process of the 1995/6 South Africa PPA, focusing first on the design of the research – how it was undertaken, who controlled the process and which issues were chosen for focus. It continues to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the PPA process, and examines some of the issues which proved important for moving from empowerment at the community level to meeting policy objectives.

A.Norton
Analysing participatory research for policy change
(ed) J. Holland, J. Blackburn, <u>Whose voice? Participatory research and policy change</u>
IT Publications
1998, 11pp
Available from: Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd, 103-105 Southampton Rd
London WC1B 4HH
Tel: +44 (0) 436 9761
Fax: +44 (0) 436 2013
Email: orders@itpubs.org.uk

This paper aims to share some of the experiences gained during work on the PPAs in Zambia, South Africa and Ghana. The introduction deals with conceptual and ethical issues, particularly questions of power, authority and control in the relationships between researchers and participants. The process of analysing research generated through participatory methods is discussed with reference to several stages of the research process: preparation, analysis and reporting in the field, policy analysis of findings, social analysis, and the dangers of making assumptions. The author concludes by emphasising the importance of keeping the language and methods of analysis accessible to the widest possible range of participants.

J.Gaventa, M. Robinson, L.Humphrey
Influence from below and space from above: non-elite action and pro-poor policies
Draft IDS working paper
May 1999, 39pp
Available to order from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Mail: Participation Reading Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877284

Fax: +44(0) 1273 877335

This paper concerns itself with how non-elites – especially the poor or those working closely with the poor – can shape and influence policies on poverty and social exclusion. Through a review of existing secondary literature and case study materials, it seeks to establish the extent to which action 'from below' has successfully influenced anti-poverty programmes, by mobilising non-elites through action groups and social movements, by advocacy strategies led by NGOs, and through institutional openings created 'from above'. Three sets of openings are examined in the paper: participatory poverty assessments, the institutionalisation of participation through national ministries or bureaucracies, and the use of decentralisation as a means of strengthening community participation.

The first half of the paper looks at the strengths and weaknesses of two modes of "action from below", before examining the "spaces from above", of which PPAs are one example. The other examples discussed are institutionalising participation, and democratic decentralisation. The authors conclude that "the relationship of 'action from below' and 'policy from above' is symbiotic: social action from below can influence the perceptions and actions of elite policy-makers; in turn, policies, especially those which call for participation of the poor, create space and opportunity for action from below."

World Bank Resident Mission, Hanoi
A Synthesis of Participatory Poverty Assessments from four sites
Compilation reports of the Vietnam PPAs as a submission to the Consultations with the Poor process
September 1999, 85pp
Available from: http://www.worldbank.org.vn/rep5/voc001.htm

This report presents a synthesis of findings from the Vietnam PPA, co-funded by the World Bank but organised and conducted by four NGOs. The PPA was designed to complement the statistical data generated by a national household survey, by providing helping to explain trends emerging from the statistical analysis and providing information on issues to do with poverty not covered by the survey, with the aim of a deeper and more representative analysis of poverty. The NGO partners, all of whom have ongoing poverty alleviation programmes, worked closely with local government officials, and there was a strong capacity building component to the work.

The report presents a range of findings on understanding wellbeing and illbeing, vulnerability and coping, institutional analysis, gender relations and problems and priorities of poor households

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K. McLean and K. Muhakanizi
Utilisation of PPA results to influence policy: experience in Uganda
September 1999, 14pp
Available to order from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Participation Reading Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex
Brighton BN1 9RE
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877284
Fax: +44(0) 1273 877335
Also look at: http://www.uppap.or.ug

This report discusses how the results of the 1998 Uganda PPA were being used to influence policy six months after the field research phase ended. It outlines the key areas where the PPA had influence, including recognition by Government of the need for local government planners to have greater flexibility in resource allocation for locally identified needs, the allocation of conditional grants for water provision in accordance with the identified priorities of poor people, incorporation of findings into the Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture, and inclusion of indicators identified by the PPA into national household surveys.

The author discusses the nature of the conducive policy environment which led to PPA results being incorporated, which include decentralised government and an existing commitment to and vision for poverty reduction. Critcal factors in the success of the PPA process are outlined. The author concludes by discussing factors which were essential to the ability of the PPA to influence policy, which include ownership of the PPA by the Government, the development of a dissemination strategy, and the existence of flexible, reflective mechanisms for policy review within Government.

Asia Branch CIDA, South Asia Partnership Canada, Shastri Indo Canadian Institute
Consultations with the Poor
Executive Summary of the Consultations with the Poor in Asia, April – August 1999
September 1999 40pp
Final Report Available from: http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/resultspagee?openform&consultations+with+the+poor&0&8&1&0&0&0

This report summarises key findings from a series of local consultations in six countries in Asia to hear "the 'voices' of the men and women who actually live, work and endure poverty on a daily basis." Five of the country studies used some PRA methods (sometimes in conjunction with questionnaire surveys), and the objective was to take into account recent developments and changes in Asia and deepen CIDA's understanding "of the nature and the effects of poverty and what can be done to help people move out of poverty."

Findings from India, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam, Cambodia and Philippines are summarised, principally concerning perceptions of poverty and of change in poverty over time, and policy implications are drawn.

Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development
Report on the application of participatory methodologies for poverty assessment, Mulipothana
Report commissioned for the Consultations with the Poor process
1999, 35pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Mail: Participation Resource Room, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE.UK.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax: +44(0) 1273 877335

This report documents a pilot fieldwork exercise, the lessons from which were used to develop the methodology for the Consultations with the Poor process. The exercise was undertaken in a village in eastern Sri Lanka, and tackles three main thematic areas: trends

and changes over time in wellbeing, poverty, livelihood security and the labour market, institutional and power relationships, and problems and concerns. The research team used a range of tools to address these themes, and each is critically discussed in terms of process, findings and analysis.

V. Kozel
New approaches, new methods: the need for cross-disciplinary research on poverty
Unpublished transcript of World Bank seminar (?)
1999, 3pp
Available from: participation@ids.ac.uk
Mail: Participation Resource Room, IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton. BN1 9RE.UK.
Tel: +44(0) 1273 877263
Fax: +44(0) 1273 877335

This short note makes a case for the use of combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods for poverty analysis : "Some researchers … have recognised that the most complex questions under the poverty rubric can be answered with greater depth and accuracy if both approaches are used." The author illustrates her argument with examples from a 1997 study in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, India which combined a Living Standards Measurement Survey with PRA exercises.

Although the note does not directly address PPAs, it provides a useful argument and examples in support of combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

UNDESA
Studies in social deprivation in Myanmar
Unpublished findings of UNDP study
1999, 119pp
NOT AVAILABLE YET: contact Yoshinobu Yonekawa, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN on Email yonekawa@un.org, for details of publishing dates.

This report represents the findings of a study undertaken "using PPA methods", to respond to questions which arose from a large scale fixed response household survey questionnaire. PPA methods were chosen for the study because the household survey was not felt to capture the necessary information, but anthropological field studies were too costly. The overall objective of the study is to develop indicators to facilitate poverty targeting and monitoring.

The study addressed two major themes: who are the poor/socially deprived, and how do people become better and worse off. The report combines the findings from the two studies: for example, household survey results on health, education and nutrition are analysed by gender, and presented alongside a gender wellbeing ranking exercise, which sought to assess the comparative position of men and women based on local people's criteria of wellbeing and social deprivation. The analysis of survey results concludes that females as a group are not better off than males in terms of health, education and nutrition, while the analysis of the PPA findings suggest that a sizeable minority of women are amongst the very poorest social groups. The policy implication the authors draw is that gender alone is not a good proxy for social deprivation, but that the characteristics of groups of poor women could form the basis for targeted interventions.

C. Robb

Can the poor influence policy? Participatory Poverty Assessments in the Developing World
World Bank 'Directions in Development'
1999, 128pp
Available from: http://www.worldbank.org/html/extpb/canpoor.htm

This book summarises the World Bank's experience with PPAs up until 1998. It defines PPAs and examines their impact on deepening understanding of poverty, influencing policy and strengthening policy implementation. The author looks at emerging good practice and possible future directions. She concludes that "PPAs are highlighting the potentially powerful role the poor can play in analysing poverty, developing interventions for its reduction, and assessing the impact of projects and policies. The challenge for the Bank and the rest of the development community is to effectively integrate the perspectives and values of the poor into the process of policy and project formulation and implementation."

R. McGee
Analysis of Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) and household survey findings on poverty trends in Uganda
Unpublished report of a mission to Uganda
February 2000, 33pp
Available from: Mr Leonard Okello at UPPAP on okello@uppap.or.ug
Also see Internet site: http://www.uppap.or.ug/

This report discusses the findings of analytical work on poverty in Uganda, undertaken using both quantitative measures and participatory approaches to data-gathering and analysis, and giving apparently different results. While quantitative measures seemed to indicate that poverty is declining, participatory approaches revealed that many local people perceived it to be increasing.

The author argues that the two sets of findings do not contradict one another, because they are not comparable, being based on different dimensions of poverty, different assumptions on the relationship between household consumption and poverty, different samples, and different time reference periods. She asserts however that some of the results are compatible, particularly in the areas of purchasing power, certain types of increased expenditure and food security. In conclusion, she writes "this analysis has highlighted a need for greater precision in the use of poverty-related terminology in Uganda in future. Since poverty is now understood to be a wide gamut of deprivations ranging from voicelessness and exposure to violence, right through to consumption shortfall, confusion could be avoided if consumption data were henceforth referred to as consumption data rather than 'poverty data', and the term 'poverty data' reserved for the whole broad range of information – qualitative and quantitative – which it is now known to encompass."

J. Milimo, T.Shillito, K.Brock
"Who would ever listen to the poor": findings from participatory research on poverty in Zambia, 1991 – 99
Unpublished draft book manuscript
February 2000,118pp
Available from: Participatory Assessment Group, 234/6 UN Avenue, PO Box 51080, Lusaka, Zambia

John Milimo by email at: pagzam@zamnet.zm

This book summarises findings from a decade of participatory research on poverty in Zambia, including the 1993 PPA and a series of poverty monitoring exercises which were undertaken to update the PPA for policy and planning purposes.

The book briefly discusses the evolution of participatory research in Zambia and outlines the tools and methods used to carry out the study. It summarises findings about livelihoods, health, education and institutions and organisations. A concluding chapter highlights lessons for policy formulation, the decentralisation of service provision, contributions to the National Poverty Reduction strategy and the participatory approach.

M.Masaiganah, J. William, H. Malyunga, K.Mwamwaja
Participatory Poverty Assessment: Report for Kiteto and Singida districts
Unpublished report prepared for Kiteto and Singida District Councils
February 2000
Available from: masaigana@africaonline.co.tz
Mail: M. Masaiganah, Mwasama Primary School, Box No 240, Bagamoyo, Tanzania
Tel: +255 52 44062

The report traces the process and findings of a District level PPA, supported by SIDA, and involving an NGO with an ongoing land management project in the area. The author describes the process as building on the lessons of the Shinyanga PPA, and outlines the objectives as providing background experience on developing poverty reduction processes through participatory approaches leading to participatory planning, and to train District staff to carry out a PPA process.

The report outlines the findings of the study on local perceptions of poverty and livelihoods, and describes the process and outcomes of the first stage in the planning process, including examples of problem analysis diagrams.

R. McGee with A.Norton
Participation in poverty reduction strategies: a synthesis of experience with participatory approaches to policy design, implementation and monitoring
IDS Working Paper 109
May 2000, 80pp
Available from: IDS Publications Office, IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE
Tel: 44 (0) 1273 678269
Fax: 44(0) 12713 691 647 or 621202
Email: ids.books@sussex.ac.uk
Website: http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/publicat

The purpose of this synthesis is to review experience in applying participatory approaches to processes of policy formulation at the macro level, with a view to informing the formulation of Participatory Reduction Strategy Papers, a policy instrument recently introduced by the World Bank and IMF to ensure the link between debt relief and poverty reduction. The paper maps out the PRSP process and discusses the paradox of country ownership of such processes, before reviewing experience to date in terms of information-sharing through participatory generation of knowledge, influencing policy through participatory processes, and increasing the accountability of governments.

PPAs are discussed both as part of the process of information generation, and in terms of their role influencing policy. Text boxes provide information on the Uganda and Vietnam processes. The author argues that these "second generation" PPAs are distinguished by having policy influence as an inherent part of their design.

D. Narayan, R. Patel, K. Schafft, A. Rademacher, S. Koch-Shulte,
Voices of the poor: Can anyone hear us?
A co-publication from World Bank and Oxford University Press
2000, 343pp
ISBN 0-19-521601-6
Available from: http://www.worldbank.org/html/extpb/ordform/onlineorderform.htm
Mail: The World Bank, PO Box 960, Herndon, VA 20172-0960, USA
Phone: 1703 661 1580
Fax: 1703 661 1501

This book reviews the findings of 81 World Bank PPAs, offering "a view of the world from the perspective of the poor." It focuses on the common patterns of poor people's experiences in terms of defining poverty, state and civil society institutions, changing gender relations, and social fragmentation.

The analysis presented in the book results in five main conclusions: poverty is multidimensional; the State has been largely ineffective in reaching the poor; the role of NGOs in the lives of the poor is limited, and the poor depend primarily on their own networks; households are crumbling under the stresses of poverty, and that the social fabric is unravelling. The recommendations for strategic change that arise from these conclusions are: to start with poor people's realities, to invest in the organisational capacity of the poor, to change social norms and to support development entrepreneurs.