This document is the product of the collaboration of the following persons and organizations:

Benin:

Désiré Agoundoté, (DIFOV)
Valérien Agossou, National Institute for Agricultural Research in Benin (INRAB)
Pascal Djohossou, Program for the Management of Natural Resources (Mali, Benin) (PGRN)
Faoussatou Tadjou, Development Association of the Netherlands (SNV)
C. Rigobert Tossou, International Forum for Exchange of Know-how on Rural Development (FIDESPRA)

Burkina Faso:

Lobassa Somda, DNVA/Ministry of Agriculture
Sibiri Jean Zoundi, National Institute for the Environment and Agricultural Research
Félix de Valois Compaoré, National Program for Land Management/Ministry of the Environment
Haoua Gnoumou, DVTT/Ministry of Animal Resources

Ivory Coast:

Daniel Glounaho, National Agency for Support and Rural Development (ANADER)
Nicole Aphing-Kouassi, Research-Development
Konan Ahoutou, National Center for Agronomy Research (CNRA)
Amari Agneroh, PNGTER

Guinea:

Alpha Bacar Barry, National Service for Rural Promotion and Extension (SNPRV)
Louis Beavogui, Institute for Agronomy Research Foulaya
Mamadouba Camara, PA/PDR Middle Guinea
Mohamed II Camara, SNPRV

Madagascar:

Yolande Rafaranivomihamina, Directorate of Agricultural Extension
Clarisse R. Maharavo, Ministry of Livestock
Voahangy Arijaona, Inter-Regional Directorate of Agriculture
Edmond Rakotonaivo, Programme de Perimetres Irrigues
Gaston Jaonera, Coordination Regionale du Programme de Perimetres Irrigues.

Mali:

Demba Kébé, Economie des Filieres (ECOFIL), Institute of Rural Economy
Adama Sidibé, National Project, Program for Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Rural Development
Boubacar Macalou, Program for the Management of Natural Resources, Ministry of the Environment
Mahamadou Larya Cissé, Malian Company for Textile Development (CMDT)

The Netherlands:

Aad Blokland, Royal Tropical Institute
Gerard Baltissen, Royal Tropical Institute

World Bank:

Michel Aklamavo	Sam Eremie	Ibrahim Nebie	Joseph Toledano
Daniel Benor	Esther Gadzama	Leopold Sarr	Jan Weetjens
Hans Binswanger	Zelig Matmor	Mohamed Ould Tolba	
Mary Bitekerezo	Amos Ben Mayor	Abdoulaye Toure	

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Village participation in Rural development

Manual

Publication Information:

Editorial Board:
Valérien Agossou, Benin
Gerard Baltissen, The Netherlands
Louis Beavogui, Guinea
Aad Blokland, The Netherlands
Daniel Glounaho, Ivory Coast
Demba Kébé, Mali
Lobassa Somda, Burkina Faso
Yolande Rafaranivomihamina, Madagascar
Jan Weetjens, World Bank

French editor:
Paulette Géraud, Paris, France

English translation:
Holly Jones-Rougier, Elisa Pepe

English editor:
Wendy S. Ayres

Cover and design:
Hennie van der Zande, Basislijn, Amsterdam

Printing:
Giethoorn Ten Brink, Meppel

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ANADER	Agence Nationale d'Appui Développement Rural (National Agency for Support to Rural Development) (Ivory Coast)
CMDT	Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Textiles (Malian Company for Textile Development) (Mali)
CNRA	Centre Nationale de Recherche Agronomique (National Center for Agronomy Research) (Ivory Coast)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DIFOV	Direction de la Formation Opérationnelle et de Vulgarisation Directorate of Operational Training and Agricultural Extension (Benin)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIDESPRA	Forum International pour le Développement et l'Echange de Savoir et de Savoir Faire au Service d'une Promotion Rurale Auto-Entretenue (International Forum for Exchange of Know-how on Rural Development)
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
IER	Institut Rurale Économie (Institute for the Rural Economy) (Mali)
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
INERA	Institut National de l'Environnement et Recherche Agricole (National Institute for the Environment and Agricultural Research) (Burkina Faso)
INRAB	Institut National des Recherches Agricoles du Bénin (National Institute for Agricultural Research of Benin)
IRAG	Institut de Recherche Agronomique de Guinée (Institute for Agronomy Research of Guinea)
KIT	Royal Tropical Institute (the Netherlands)
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PGRN	Programme de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles (Program for the Management of Natural Resources) (Mali, Benin)
PNGT	Programme National de Gestion des Terroirs (National Program for Land Management) (Burkina Faso)
PNVA	Projet / Programme National de Vugarisation Agricole (National Project / Program for Agricultural Extension)
SARS	Site d'Adaptation de la Recherche Système (Site for the Adaptation of Systems Research (Ivory Coast)
SNPRV	Service National de la Promotion Rurale et la Vulgarisation (National Service for Rural Promotion and Extension) (Guinea)
SNV	Development Association of the Netherlands
VLPA	Village Level Participatory Approach

Dedication

This work could never have come to fruition without the inspiration and encouragement of our sage, Amos Ben Mayor.

Amos accompanied us and helped us discover the importance of villagers' participation. With him we crossed a threshold, and came to understand that rural people are the true promoters of and actors in development.

Thank you Amos!

The Editorial Board

Preface

This manual has many parents. The commitment, creativity, and innovative work of many people working for nearly thirty years to develop participatory methods has made it possible.

The approach described here was originally developed to help agriculture extension and other rural development service agencies better respond to the needs and demands of local people. Over the past fifteen years, African countries have significantly improved management and organization of agricultural extension services. Extension staff at all levels now better understand their roles and responsibilities, benefit from extensive training, and, most importantly, have more systematic and thorough contact with farmers. Work organization has also improved. Nonetheless challenges remain. Local farmers must be given greater control over the types of services and technical information they receive from extension agents, and be given greater voice in the management of agricultural extension services. These are best achieved by using participatory approaches. Further, due to the democratization and decentralization that is underway in many African countries, gradual privatization of rural services,[1] empowerment of rural people and changing attitudes of staff, it is now possible to use participatory approaches on a large scale (including on a national scale).

To tackle the challenges, in 1996 the Benin Directorate of Operational Training and Agricultural Extension (DIFOV) in collaboration with the Benin National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRAB) and the Netherlands Royal Tropical Institute began research in Borgou. The researchers

1 Rural services are all technical and administrative services

started by applying well-known participatory tools and methods, such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA) used in natural resource management programs, participatory training in soil fertility management, tools related to project planning by objectives, and the like. In 1997, extension services from Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Madagascar began using similar techniques.

Village participation is not new. But the question being explored by the researchers is: how can participatory management be expanded to a national scale in a relatively short period of time?

In May and June 1998 country teams in collaboration with the World Bank and the Royal Tropical Institute evaluated pilot experiences with participatory management in five West African countries (Mali, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Benin, and Burkina Faso). National teams comprising representatives from national extension services, research consultants, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and project staff produced case studies for each country.

The evaluation led to a preliminary finding: to foster development it is not enough to focus on agriculture extension services, rather communities must be involved in decisions affecting all aspects of development. Indeed, it makes little sense to encourage rural people to express their views on agriculture extension while not listening their concerns in other areas. The evaluation also showed how important it is for service agents to have the right tools - a manual on village participation in rural development and a training guide.

In June 1998 a steering committee comprising representatives from countries, the World Bank and the Royal Tropical Institute was formed to produce these documents. This manual is based on training modules developed by the countries' training services, and includes inputs from other organizations and from project staff.

During preparation of the manual, several regional meetings were held to discuss and improve the text and tools. A workshop in Parakou in October 1998 was especially fruitful. This workshop brought together participants from eight African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Uganda) that are using participatory approaches. Representatives from national and international development organizations and donor agencies also participated in the workshop. This manual on village participation in rural development is the result of the active participation of all these practitioners.

Introduction

This manual is intended to help practitioners at all levels to work efficiently and professionally with villagers as they assess their needs and undertake their development activities.[2]

The manual has four specific objectives:

1. Help practitioners conduct their field work more effectively
2. Encourage practitioners to share information and experiences, leading to improvements in participatory tools and methods
3. Offer technical support and guidance on methodologies to trainers
4. Contribute to discussions on new developments and implementation of village participation on a large scale.

2 Practitioners are people who, regardless of their institution or responsibilties, contribute to the implementation of participatory approaches.

The manual comprises three parts. Part one (chapters 1-6) presents the objectives and general principles of the participatory approach. It also discusses participatory methods and provides details on the steps and tools appropriate to each stage of the process. To facilitate their use, the tools are also presented in individual worksheets, which form part of this manual. Part two (chapters 7-9) describes the underlying conditions necessary for successful implementation of the participatory approach. It also discusses the roles of the various actors involved. Part three (chapters 10-15) describes the conditions necessary for successful implementation of the participatory approach. It also describes what adoption of the approach means for organization of service delivery at the local, regional and national levels.

This manual will be of interest to development practitioners and policymakers at the national, regional and local levels. The manual is organized to be useful for people with varied interests. Field staff may find the first part describing the tools particularly helpful. Policymakers may wish to focus on the third part, which describes the conditions necessary for successful implementation of the participatory approach and what the approach means for organizing service delivery at the local, regional and national levels.

Given its purpose and the topics it covers, this manual cannot be considered a finished work. Rather, it provides current information on a rapidly evolving process. Teams in the respective countries are developing and testing new participatory methods. With regard to organizational and institutional frameworks many questions remain. Three important areas to explore further are rural services programming and planning, links with the decentralization process, and mobilization of human and financial resources.

This document is a first edition. Its authors hope a new and more detailed version will appear within the next few years containing lessons of the latest experiences and research. The editorial board invites readers to share their critiques, views and suggestions based on their own experiences in the field. These inputs will enrich future editions.

Part one:
Methods and tools

Over the years, a wide range of actors have developed and implemented community participation methods and tools. Many organizations including service agencies, NGOs and rural development organizations are using the participatory methods and helping communities develop capacity to undertake development activities. Experience of these groups shows that effective participatory processes have much in common.

In part one, we present the principles that underlie truly participatory approaches. We discuss the role of the principal actors in the process, outline the various steps of participatory methods, and describe the tools which can be used to better understand the village context, including the constraints it faces and its resources. As we shall see, using participatory methods helps villagers and practitioners develop and implement programs that best match local needs and demands.

Chapter 1:

Participation: by whom and for what purpose?

1.1 Objectives of participation

Village communities, regional and local government, and service delivery and rural development agencies, each have different objectives with regard to community participation.

• For rural communities, participation is a way to identify and implement priority rural development activities through better use of existing resources. To do this, communities analyze the existing situation (constraints as well as resources available), identify and agree upon priority problems, develop action plans to address the priority problems, take charge of implementing the action plans, and pressure the service providers and development organizations to provide the necessary assistance. Communities also identify what incremental resources are needed and organize themselves to try to mobilize these resources.

• For regional and local government, the use of participatory methods in a large number of villages provides information to establish development programs (including the use of regional and local development funds) that respond to local demands and needs.

• For rural development organizations and service providers, participation means becoming more accountable to communities. The village action plans provide the terms of reference that guide future assistance to the community. Moreover, villagers influence how the development organizations and service providers organize their work with the village. Through their strengthened organizations, villages can more strongly voice their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services received, and indicate how service delivery can be improved.

1.2 Methods and tools

The methods and tools described in this manual are not new. They are a synthesis of a large number of experiences with community participation. The process consists of the following steps:

• *Diagnosis.*
Through village mapping exercises, semi-structured interviews, transects, daily and seasonal schedules, and social structure diagrams, villagers analyze their situation and become aware of problems, challenges and their potential for dealing with them. To ensure the active participation of all members, the villagers are asked to divide themselves into self-defined groups based on age, gender, ethnic group or other affiliation. It is up to the villagers themselves to decide which groups to establish. The use of different tools for the diagnostic exercises makes it possible for the villagers to complement and cross-check the information obtained through one tool with information from another.

• *Identifying priority problems.*
The diagnostic exercises can result in a long list of village problems. Each group is asked to select four to five problems that they consider to be the most pressing and that should be addressed immediately. The compilation of the list of group priorities becomes the list of village priority problems.

• *Problem and solution analysis.*
The priority problems are analyzed in mixed groups, using a method of problem and cause analysis called the problem tree. For each problem, the group analyzes the underlying causes, and goes as far as possible in this analysis. They also identify the effects of the problems. The elaboration of the problem tree raises awareness among villagers that they can actually influence many of the causes of the big problems, and that many causes are due to their own actions (for example, cutting of trees leading to erosion and soil degradation). Finally, villagers name possible solutions. Here again, villagers become aware of their capacity to influence and deal with the priority problems using their existing resources.

• *Action plans.*
Village groups together with the team of facilitators identify the actions most likely to produce the desired results. The villagers with the assistance of the team then develop detailed action plans specifying responsibilities, labor and resource needs, implementation timetable, and monitoring indicators

• *Village organizations.*
Once the villagers adopt their action plans, they decide whether their existing organizations are adequate to oversee their implementation or whether they need to create a new organization to handle this responsibility. In addition, villagers also identify committees that will be in charge of implementing specific activities.

1.3 General principles for the participatory approach

Although there is no singular and uniform participatory approach, all conform to general principles. Participatory approaches:

• *Encourage participants to take responsibility*
Participatory approaches encourage the community to take responsibility for its own development agenda. Rather than wait for outside assistance, the community can undertake activities that they themselves regard as the highest priorities.

• *Respect village diversity*
Although the village is a discrete geographic and administrative unit, it is not necessarily homogenous. People or groups sometimes have conflicting interests or perceptions. Development practitioners should be careful to give all socioeconomic groups equal weight in decision-making.

• *Promote participation for all*
For socio-cultural reasons, it may be a challenge for women, youth, the poor and others to speak out in village meetings. Facilitators should make sure that people from disadvantaged groups (for example, women and female headed households, minority ethnic groups, people living with HIV/AIDS or families affected by the AIDS epidemic, landless people, the handicapped, youth and others) are able to express their opinions and participate actively in decision-making.

• *Reconcile different interests*
Many problems require group decisions. Actions which solve the problems of some groups can harm other groups. Different groups should be encouraged to find solutions which are acceptable to all. The participatory approach recognizes that different groups within villages have different interests, and that the decision-making process must take all into account.

• *Listen to the community*
Service agency staff arrive in villages with expertise but not with ready-made solutions. Rather they

listen to the villagers. They also encourage villagers to think through their own problems. Each person has knowledge and ideas which can contribute to finding solutions to village problems. There is a proverb from Benin, "knowledge, like fire, can be found at the home of one's neighbor."

• *Involve multidisciplinary teams*
There is another proverb, "two know better than one." Involving people from different service agencies, with different training and backgrounds allows the group to benefit from different knowledge and perspectives. Collaboration among service agencies is essential to integrate the activities of all those working in the village.

• *Examine the situation from different points of view*
Approaching a problem with only one point of view, based on one tool or technique can lead to wrong solutions. It is better to use a triangular approach, looking at a problem from at least three different perspectives. When many perspectives are taken into account, information collected will be more thorough and reliable. For this reason a variety of tools and methods are presented in this manual.

• *Adapt to local situations*
Although the participatory methods and tools are described in detail, it is up to the team of facilitators to decide which tools to use and then adapt them to local conditions. The team should also experiment with new tools. The choice of tools depends on the local situation, and time available to the villagers to experiment with them. The choice of tools of course influences the final results of the exercises.

1.4 The actors and their roles

Each actor involved in village participation – community members, service and development agency staff, political and administrative authorities – has a unique role to play and task to perform. Villagers must actively participate in both the analysis of their problems and the search for solutions. They must identify their priorities and name the development actions that can address them.

As facilitators, service and development agency staff must encourage villagers to collectively reflect on their situation, analyze their problems and identify possible solutions. As specialists with expertise, they are responsible for informing the villagers of technical solutions to the problems. They can also facilitate contact between the village and service and development agencies.

The challenge for administrative authorities at regional and national levels is to take the concerns of local people into consideration when allocating resources for development activities. Good quality village-level planning can serve as the basis for regional development planning and programming of service agencies' activities.

The participatory approach thus implies that the attitudes and behavior of each actor in local development must change. Participation leads away from a relationship based on dependence and hierarchical position to one based on partnership and collaboration.

Box 1 Results of the participatory method in Benin

Use of participatory methods in Benin has intensified contact between technical services staff and villagers (especially literate youths who want to master the tools). In certain cases, disadvantaged groups feel more involved in the development process. Contact with technical services staff is not limited to key contact persons in village groups. Everyone can freely talk with staff and solicit their help and advice.

Service agency staff have also benefited from use of the participatory approach. Staff feel far more effective in villages. They also believe their relationships with villagers has improved. They report that farmers now ask them many more questions and are very interested in the training and demonstration sessions. Planning actions with the villagers helps the service agency staff to better address the topics of greatest interest to the villagers. And communication between service agents and villagers has become more egalitarian.

Source: Valérien Agossou, Désiré Agoundoté, Pascal Djohossou, Faoussatou Tadjou, C. Rigobert

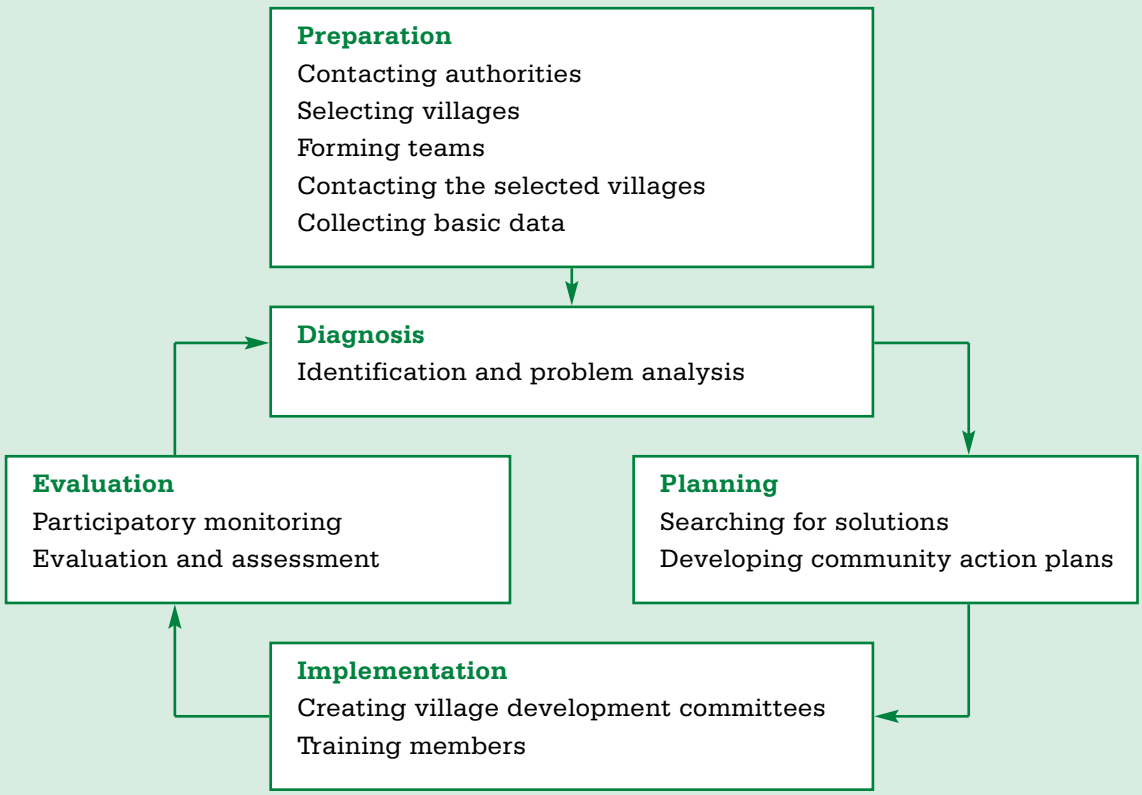
Chapter 2:

Preparation

"To act, one must first understand." When a doctor wants to cure a patient, he first needs to understand that person's condition and understand why he is ill before prescribing medication. The diagnosis must precede the search for remedies and administration of medication. Similarly, villagers must analyze the economic, social and environmental conditions of their village as the first step to identifying problems and suggesting solutions to them. It is also essential for development practitioners working in rural areas to understand the environment they are working in and the villagers' concerns. A full understanding of the limitations and potential of an area, and of the physical and socioeconomic landscape makes it easier to find appropriate solutions.

The participatory process involves a logical sequence of steps: preparation, diagnosis, planning, creation of a village development organization, execution of the work program, and monitoring and evaluation. The steps and their sequence are expressed graphically in figure 1. The approach is iterative; each year the program must be evaluated and the diagnosis updated to reflect what has been learned during the previous year.

Figure 1 The different stages involved in participatory planning



2.1 Contact with partners and agreements with administrative authorities

Before starting the participatory process in a village, the people responsible for the exercise must contact the relevant authorities and partners, identify the villages, provide training for the team of outside organizers and discuss the plans with the villagers. They should also collect as much background information on the villages as possible. These are activities of the preparation phase.

The partners most likely to be involved in the process include service agency staff, people in charge of development services (public or private), NGOs, local business people working in rural areas, religious groups, political and administrative authorities and donor agencies. It is important to involve these partners as much as possible throughout all the stages of the participatory process so that they fully understand the villagers' situation and concerns. This will facilitate subsequent coordination of activities. Intermediate and local administrative authorities are best placed to mobilize these partners.[3]

Reaching agreement with political, administrative and traditional authorities and engaging them in the participatory process are critical to success. This helps build ownership of local leaders.

2.2 Forming teams

Teams should comprise people from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds who can then contribute different perspectives and expertise. The more diverse the team membership the better equipped the team will be to help the village address its problems and concerns.

The team should have enough members to work with all socioeconomic groups in a village. Experience suggests that teams should comprise at least 4-5 people. Larger teams can cover more villages in a given period of time. Generally, team size is limited by available transportation and logistics.

The internal organization of the team, particularly the distribution of tasks, is also important. While several forms of organization are possible, each with advantages and disadvantages, there must always be a principal facilitator. One person may remain in this role throughout the exercise, or different people may be put in charge each day. What is important is that the principle facilitator is clearly identified.

The new attitudes of collegiality, openness, and teamwork do not reduce rigor and thoroughness in the work. In fact, using a participatory approach requires great discipline: teamwork requires a degree of sensitivity on the part of members, and putting villagers in charge of developing action plans imposes more constraints on the service agencies.

2.3 Implementation strategy

The village

The village is generally the unit of participatory planning. In most cases, the village corresponds to the lowest level administrative unit and has a legal and political identity. However, in some countries, the basic unit may comprise a collection of hamlets or settlements, as for example in pastoralist areas. For these cases local authorities or village leaders can identify the hamlets or settlements that best constitute a planning unit. In this document, "village" means participatory planning unit.

3 See section 10.4 on service agencies working at the local level.

Table 1 Participatory methods being used in various countries

Country	Method/Step	Total duration
Benin	Initial phase	5 days
	Adaptation phase	3 days
	Verification phase	1 day
Guinea	Participatory diagnostic	3 days
	Eco-development approach	More than 1 month
Ivory Coast	Diagnostic tools used in the Sites for the Adaptation of the System Research*	3 days
	Village diagnostic	3 days
Mali	Global participatory diagnostic	7 days
Madagascar	Complete process	5-6 days
	Diagnosis	3 days
	Planning	2 days
	Establishing village committees	1/2 day

**This is a participatory research approach.*

Choosing villages

When the participatory process is still new in a region, the team is responsible for identifying potential villages that may be interested in taking part. They choose villages using criteria such as the degree to which the village is typical of others in the region, the availability of service agency staff to work in the village, and the existence of village management capacity. The final decision often depends on practical considerations, such as accessibility, the strength of village organizations, and the villagers' desire and capacity for taking part in the process.

Experience shows that as awareness of the process spreads, villagers often approach local officials asking to be involved. Decision-makers should take care to avoid always choosing the most advanced villages of the region because they are easier to work with.

Duration of the participatory process

The participatory process takes time. While the time required varies from place to place, experience suggests that the process requires about four full workdays over a period of 4-15 days. A reasonable average would be one week, including four days in the village.

The timing of the participatory process must be appropriate for the villagers and the service agencies concerned. Generally, the planning phase is carried out before or after the agricultural season. In West African countries, the nonagricultural season lasts 2-3 months a year.

2.4 First interactions with the village

Before starting the participatory process, team members and villagers should reach a common understanding of the objectives of the exercise, the process that will be followed, and the expected outcomes. The team should first discuss these issues during a preliminary meeting with village authorities. The team can then introduce the ideas to an open village gathering, chaired by local or village leaders. During the meeting, the team should:

- Explain the objectives of the participatory process, taking care to avoid creating unrealistic

expectations. The idea is not to draw up a wish list but to develop a collaborative action plan that will be both realistic and feasible for the villagers to implement.[4] It is also important to stress that the village is responsible for formulating and implementing the program.

• Ask all villagers to individually participate in community decisions and to assist with implementing agreed activities. Special attention should be paid to involving minorities and other groups that are typically excluded from decision-making. Explain that the process will take time, and that activities should be scheduled during periods of the year when people have more time.

• Encourage villagers to invite representatives from neighboring villages to observe and participate in the process. This way of working generates considerable interest in neighboring villages and allows them to benefit from the participatory exercises and the resulting program.

• Reach agreement on specifics of the participatory process, including when the exercises will take place, type of work, number of days and the like. This will assure that the process meets the needs and accommodates the schedules of the participants.

• Provide information on logistics. This should include information on work hours, locations of plenary and work group meetings, materials available (chairs, benches, mats, pencils, chalk, markers, blackboards), what is being done to mobilize local people (public announcements, posters, radio announcements), how meetings are being organized, and the like. Specify team and village responsibilities, such as who will provide food and drinks and who will pay for what.

At some point before starting the diagnosis, the team should visit the traditional authorities (village chief and leaders) to pay respects and introduce the members of the team. This is also the occasion to answer questions about the participatory process and to report that the villagers have agreed to move ahead.

The day before starting the diagnosis, one of the team members (and if necessary higher level authorities) should go to the village to confirm the team's arrival. During this visit, the team member should once again review the practical and logistical aspects of the process.

Upon arriving in the village to start work the team should again visit village authorities to pay respects and confirm the work plan. If possible, the team should remain in the village for the duration of the exercise. Spending the night in the village helps establish trust between the team and villagers. It also encourages informal contact after the work day ends. Staying in the village also allows more efficient use of time as team members lose no time traveling to and from the village.

2.5 Collecting basic data

Rural service agencies, local administrative bodies and NGOs often have information on villages where they are working. Before beginning the diagnosis, the multidisciplinary team should learn as much as it can about the village, such as population, area, natural resources, main crops, existing socioeconomic infrastructure, village organizations and key historical events. Having a basic understanding of the village will make the diagnosis more robust. The worksheet of tool 1 specifies the data to be collected and where the information can be found. Of course the data are not always reliable or accurate and users should always be cautious about how they interpret and use the information.

4 See section 13.1 on avoiding unrealistic expectations.

Chapter 3:

The diagnosis

3.1 Objectives

The diagnosis is the first step in the participatory process.[5] It is an examination and analysis of the current situation. With the help of the multidisciplinary team acting as facilitators, the villagers learn how to analyze their current situation. The goal of the diagnosis is to understand the dominant traits and tendencies of the village, not to undertake an in-depth study of all the characteristics and problems of the village or the geographic region. This provides the basis for later in-depth analysis of specific problems by the villagers and the technical specialists.

For the villagers, the objectives of the diagnosis are to:

- Better understand their environment, problems, challenges and potential
- Identify the main problems for each village group
- Prioritize the problems of the village as a whole
- Analyze the problems to better understand their causes and effects
- Select the problems that the villagers can most effectively tackle
- Identify the skills and resources of the village that can be mobilized to address them.

By the time the villagers complete the diagnosis, they will have depicted in detail their geographical area, identified priority problems, analyzed their causes and named resources to address them. This information forms the basis of the planning phase that follows.

Generally, only communities can define their priorities. However, there is one major exception-HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS is devastating communities throughout Africa, as the following figures demonstrate:

- Over the last 15 years, 37 million Africans have been infected by HIV, and nearly 14 million have already died.
- In over a dozen African countries more than 10 percent of adults are HIV positive; in some countries, one person out of four is HIV positive.
- In some African countries, the probability of a youth of 15 dying from AIDS is 60 percent; in many other countries the risk is over 33 percent.
- The 21 countries in the world with the highest rates of HIV infection are in Africa.

Yet, even in villages with extremely high AIDS mortality rates, fear, shame, and denial often stop villagers from realizing and identifying problems related to AIDS. The teams of facilitators must encourage villagers to discuss the disease and identify ways to reduce its spread and impact. This manual suggests ways and means for facilitators to use participatory methods to discuss this subject.

5 In West African countries, the diagnosis may be called participatory community diagnosis, global participatory diagnosis, global diagnosis or village diagnosis.

3.2 Methods and tools

The methods and tools presented in this manual have been selected from the techniques of rapid rural appraisal, participatory rural appraisal, and program planning by objectives. These methods and tools have proved effective in action-research in rural communities throughout Africa.

The tools most often used during the diagnostic stage are:
- Village mapping
- Semi-structured interviews
- Transects
- Historical background
- Seasonal calendars
- Story boards
- Daily schedules
- Venn diagrams
- How to deal with HIV/AIDS and its implications
- Prioritizing and ranking problems
- Problem trees.

The techniques presented here can be considered elements of a toolbox: the team selects the tools from the toolbox that are most likely to achieve the desired objectives within the time available. Field experience shows that the tools most often used are village mapping, semi-structured interviews, transects, Venn diagrams and the tools dealing with HIV/AIDS.

Use of the various tools requires different skills. The team should decide who should use which tools, based on each member's skills and interests. For example, the person most knowledgeable about soils and agriculture may be responsible for the transect, while someone with strong listening skills may undertake the semi-structured interviews.

Village mapping (tool 2)
Drawing village maps helps villagers structure their knowledge of their surroundings. Generally, different village social groups (women, man, young, old, and others) draw their own maps, deciding for themselves what features of the physical and social environment to represent and how to do so. This exercise strengthens the voice of each of these groups and fosters dialogue among them. The village maps are used as visual aids to help in choosing the transect and in organizing the discussion and reflection sessions that take place during the next stage when villagers identify their problems. Later, the map can be used to show where village actions will be undertaken. The map drawing exercise is among the most enjoyable for villagers.

Semi-structured interviews and question guidelines (tool 3)
Semi-structured interviews are informal discussions based on interview guidelines that contain the essential themes or topics to be discussed. They help the team better understand village organizations, village use of resources, and activities of different village groups and various government administrative bodies in the village. Interviewers work with distinct village groups to ensure that disadvantaged groups can express their opinions. They formulate specific questions during the interview and explore issues of particular interest more deeply. Conducting semi-structured interviews requires skill, but the skills can be learned with experience. Tool 3 of the toolkit provides further guidance on conducting semi-structured interviews using interview guidelines.

Transects (tool 4)
Transects are walks through the village and the surrounding land. During this walk, the villagers

discuss in some detail the various aspects of the physical reality they encounter. The findings and major conclusions of the walk are presented in a diagram showing the route traveled and key observations made, such as physical characteristics of the territory, vegetation, soil types, crops, agricultural and forest resources, stock breeding sites, infrastructure, potable water sources, road conditions and the like. This walk enriches residents' knowledge of their village and provides information missed during the mapping exercise. Transects often take place in mixed groups (men and women, young and old together) to stimulate discussion from various points of view.

Historical background (tool 5)
This tool provides the means for establishing or retracing the history of a community or region. A village history can be created through drawings, written summaries (if villagers are literate) or symbols. The villagers are asked to think back as far as they can and describe what happened over time. This information is used to establish a chronology. Often a specific topic or theme is chosen to help organize the information. Discussion may focus on topics like changes in occupation of land, growth of population, physical expansion of the village, the appearance of HIV/AIDS in the area, or periods of drought or famine.

Seasonal calendars (tool 6)
Any change that occurs on a yearly basis can be shown on a seasonal calendar. Many subjects can be discussed, including:
- Changes in temperature, rainfall, wind and the like
- Agricultural patterns, including crop choice, timing of inputs, harvesting and marketing
- Fuel use and supply
- Changes in income and expenditures
- Access to health, education, water supply and other services.

If the calendar is filled out by different village groups, it also supplies important information on the distribution of work between the groups including men and women.

Story board (tool 7)
The story board depicts simple drawings of people, animals, plants, dwellings and others that represent village scenes. The figures can be attached to or removed from a board covered in felt. Team members can use the figures to discuss village situations (real or imaginary). The use of this tool is especially recommended in situations where few people are literate. Its use can greatly facilitate communication in situations where writing is simply not possible.

Daily schedule (tool 8)
The daily schedule is used to present the daily tasks of village groups. It allows comparison of the daily workloads of various individuals and groups throughout the day. This tool is often used to analyze activities of men and women and to understand the work responsibilities of different groups. Knowing local time schedules can help when arranging meetings, to ensure the meetings are convenient for different groups. They are useful if new activities are proposed to help identify who has time to carry out planned activities. The schedule can be presented in the form of a table or a graph.

Venn diagram (tool 9)
The Venn diagram is a method for visualizing and analyzing the relationships between various actors in the village. Through the drawing of the diagram, the villagers illustrate how they perceive relations between groups within the village and relations with external organizations and institutions such as local authorities, political representatives, and private and public service providers. Each of the groups in the village draws a Venn diagram. This enables disadvantaged groups to express their concerns (for example, female-headed households who may have less access

to extension services than male farmers). The Venn diagram also helps in creating a village development organization to oversee implementation of the village action plans (chapters 5 and 10.1).

How to deal with HIV/AIDS and its implications (tool 10)
Involving the villagers in a discussion on the subject of AIDS requires a great deal of sensitivity and tact. People often do not like to discuss this subject, which touches on the sensitive areas of sexuality and death. Fear, shame, and denial that the problem even exists make it difficult to discuss this subject. However, it is only through an open discussion with all villagers about the realities of the epidemic in all its aspects (reduced production, care-taking needs and medical costs, care for orphans, the use of contraception, and others) that villagers can create an action plan to deal with the crisis. Specific tools exist to discuss AIDS, like the mapping of areas where various groups are more likely to contract AIDS. Team members should use whatever tools they feel are most useful to stimulate discussion of this critical issue.

Identifying priority problems (tool 11)
Through the diagnostic exercises villages often develop lists of over one hundred problems. To move from diagnosis to action, they need to narrow their lists to contain a small number of priorities. However, simply asking villagers collectively to identify priorities carries the risk that traditionally dominant groups make the decisions at the expense of disadvantaged groups. To reduce this risk, each group is assigned an equal number of slots on the final list, which then contains all groups' two or three top priorities. Decisions on how many priorities each group can submit can be agreed during a plenary session held at the beginning of the priority setting exercise.

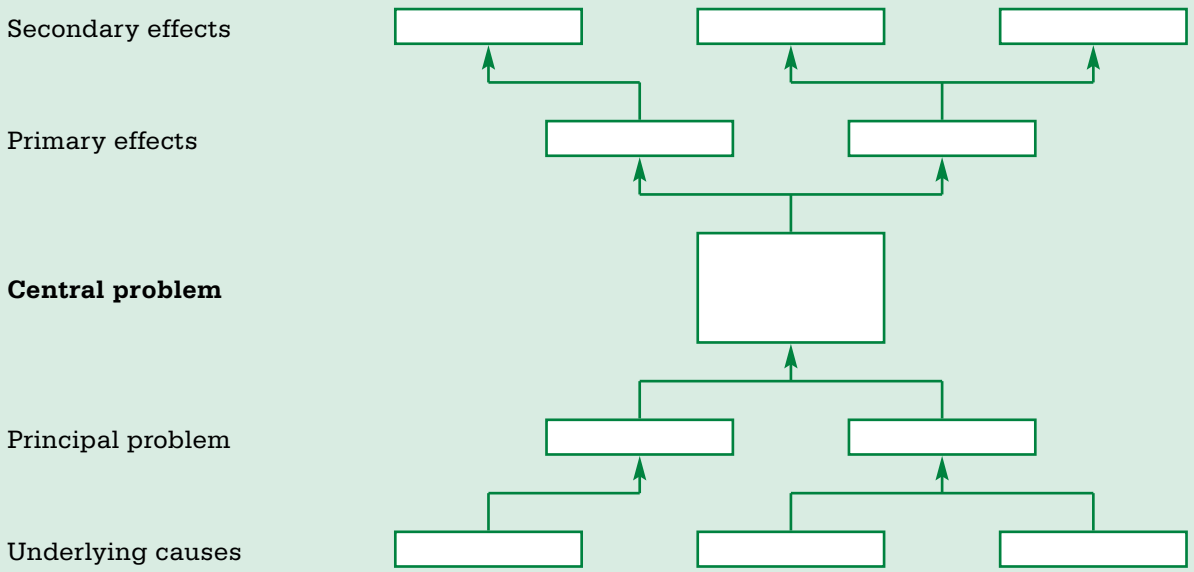
Problem tree (tool 12)
The priority problems identified by the villagers are often large, complex and very difficult to handle. The perceived magnitude of the problems is often the reason why villagers have not already tackled them.

The problem tree represents the causes of problems ("roots") and their consequences ("branches"). As villagers construct the problem tree, they see that large and difficult problems have many causes, some of which they themselves can change. The problem tree is thus a powerful tool to raise villagers' awareness of the power they have to influence their environment.

To create a problem tree, the team must ask the following questions:
1. There is a problem because.... (causes)
2. This problem brings about.....(effects).

As with the transect, mixed groups generally draw the problem tree. This way, participants can hear different points of view and all people interested in solving the problem can contribute to the discussion (tool 12). The elaboration of the tree is the result of the opinions and consensus of the villagers. The final product depends on the participants' abilities to analyze their situation, and on the expertise of the team in using the tool. A diagram of a simple tree is presented in figure 2.

Figure 2 Problem tree diagram



3.3 Sequence of steps

General meeting
In the village, the diagnosis begins with a general village meeting during which the team introduces the exercise and explains its steps, timetable and expected results. The village members introduce themselves and designate a leader for the session.

Forming groups
It is up to the members of the community to decide how they wish to group themselves. As soon as a number of people identify themselves as members of a distinct group in the community, the team of facilitators should recognize it as such. Being in a group with others who share common interests encourages individuals to speak out when they might otherwise hesitate. For example, women who may be uncomfortable speaking at a village meeting may have no difficulties offering their opinions to a group of women.

Depending on the tool that is used, villagers work in self-defined groups or in mixed groups. In the mixed groups, members from various village groups work together. For example, mixed groups often carry out the transect, which promotes discussion on common problems from different points of view. However, homogeneous groups carry out other exercises, such as village mapping, so that villagers can see that different groups have different perspectives on the village. Work in mixed groups requires added effort on the part of the facilitators, who must make certain that no particular subgroup dominates the debate and that everyone is able to express his or her opinion.

Using the tools
In general, villages start the diagnostic exercise with the mapping tool. This sets the stage and allows the community to have a first broad understanding of the issues that will be discussed over the coming days. In many cases, the mapping exercise is followed by the transect and the semi-structured interviews. Because not all villagers take part in the transect walk, those who stay behind sometimes draw the Venn diagrams.

Depending on the local situation and personal preferences, the facilitators will decide on the tools to be used. There is however one exception: given the overwhelming urgency of the HIV/AIDS crisis, facilitators must prompt a discussion on this topic (tool 10).

After the use of the various diagnostic tools (which takes about 11/2 days in total), the villagers meet to discuss the outcome of the exercise and to review the list of all the problems that have been identified. At the end of this session, it is agreed how many priority problems each group may select. This plenary meeting takes about 11/2 hours.

Compiling and reviewing the results
Next, the groups narrow their lists of problems to include only a few priorities. Then the various groups come together in a plenary session. The compilation of the respective priority lists constitutes the village priority list. This final session usually does not take much time; 30 minutes is often enough.

Problem analysis
Using the problem tree villagers can analyze a few of the priority problems in one morning.

Presentation and feedback
During the village meeting, each village group presents its problem tree with problems and causes that group members feel they can and want to address.

Table 2 presents the steps of the diagnosis, tools and methods for each step, expected results, necessary materials, and typical time required. The entire diagnosis can be completed in three days (not including time needed for collecting data). If time permits, and depending on the specific program needs, facilitators can use additional tools.

Table 2 Diagnosis: Methods and tools, expected results, materials needed and duration

Methods and tools	Expected results	Materials	Duration
Day 1			
General village meeting	Common understanding reached of sequence of activities, tools that will be used and expected results Self-defined groups formed		1 hour
Village mapping	Maps drawn depicting village groups' views of their surroundings	Poster paper and markers	1/2 day
Semi-structured interviews	Deeper understanding reached by team of how villagers see their problems and resources	Interview guidelines, maps made by the different groups.	1/2 day

Day 2			
Transect	Villagers' knowledge of their surroundings, its diversity, and village problems and resources enriched	Village map, poster paper, markers	1/2 day
Feedback meeting	Deeper understanding reached of the results of the exercises Inventory created of the problems and resources of the village	Village map, transect diagram, list of problems and resources	1 1/2 hours
Priority setting by village groups	Lists created of priority problems of village groups	Problem lists, paper, markers	1 hour
Creation of list of village priorities	List created of village priorities, containing priorities of all village groups	Lists of priority problems of village groups	1/2 hour

Day 3	Problem analysis and search for solutions		
Village meeting	List of priority problems reviewed and understanding of next steps reached	List of priority problems	1/2 hour
Problem tree (group work)	Central problems, and causes and effects visualized Causes to address selected	Small index cards, markers, poster paper, thumb-tacks or tape	1 1/2 hours
Analysis of problems not included on the problem tree	Additional problems, and causes and effects analyzed Causes to address selected Village resources for addressing the problems identified	Markers	1 hour
Presentation and feedback meeting	Common understanding reached of the causes and effects of the identified problems	Markers, paper	1 hour

Chapter 4:

Planning

4.1 Objectives

During the planning stage, villagers elaborate action plans with the assistance of the team of facilitators. Based on the priority problems, they identify their objectives. The villagers have the primary responsibility to propose and discuss actions that can be taken to reach the objectives. However, since they are not always aware of all possible technical solutions, the facilitators can help by proposing solutions that they know have worked in other communities.

The planning stage involves three sessions. During the first session, villagers propose actions that can help reach their objectives. During the second session, the facilitators with a small group of village representatives examine the list, and eliminate actions that are not feasible, propose alternatives, and add technical solutions the villagers were not aware of. The revised list is then discussed with the villagers. During the third session, villagers name the practical steps needed to implement the actions and clarify the tasks and roles of all the partners involved in the process.

4.2 Methods and tools

Objectives tree (tool 13)
The objectives tree can be used to translate the problems identified during the diagnosis into objectives. First villagers ask themselves what objectives they wish to set, given the problems they have identified. They then create an objectives tree, which contains actions that will enable the villagers to meet their objectives. The team of facilitators and village representatives then work together to answer the following questions:

- Will the proposed actions help the villagers meet their objectives? If not, can the team members suggest actions that will help them do so?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each proposed action, and what are the conditions needed to implement each?

Following this analysis, the villagers finalize the list of actions they will pursue to meet their objectives. This list forms the basis for planning.

Planning table (tool 14)
The planning table is used to program actions and evaluate their feasibility. The table displays objectives, actions, responsible group, timeframe, resources needed to carry them out (materials, financial and human resources), and the underlying conditions that will affect implementation. It also contains monitoring indicators that the villagers will use to track implementation progress, from the first step through completion. Table 3 presents an example of a planning table.

Table 3 Planning table example

Objective	Action	Responsible group	Time-frame	Resources	Underlying conditions	Indicators
Improve drinking water supply	Clean up wells	Water committee	April 5-May 5	Village labor required	None	All wells clean before the end of the month
	Install new shallow well	Water committee	April 5-June 5	Village will raise 20,000 shillings to hire skilled labor	Discuss where to situate shallow well Ask district engineer to check quality of water from well	Shallow well ready
	Install new borehole	Water committee	Before June 30	Represent-atives will contact local project office and NGO to request financing	Water committee prepares documents to send to project office	Financing confirmed before June 30 Works started before Sept. 30 Borehole ready before Oct. 31

4.3 Sequence of steps

The planning phase requires a minimum of one and a half days in the village. One half day is needed to prepare the objectives tree and collect villagers' proposals for action. Another half day is needed for the facilitators and the village representatives to critically analyze the proposed actions and finalize the list of actions to be pursued. Finally, a half day is needed to create and adopt the planning tables. The exercise begins with a village meeting during which the facilitators explain its purpose and describe the process to be followed. The facilitators then divide up the list of priority problems and distribute different problems to the mixed groups.

The groups develop the objective trees based on the problem trees and discuss actions that can be taken to address them. Members of the team of facilitators should participate in groups dealing with problems that are in their area of expertise. For example, a water specialist will participate in the group focusing on water problems. Facilitators, however, should take care not to lead the discussions.

Once the mixed groups complete the objective trees and list of actions, the facilitators contribute their know-how to strengthen the list of proposed actions. To do this, they meet among themselves to discuss the proposals made by the villagers. Although the participation of all villagers is not possible, the facilitators invite a small group of village representatives to take part. The main role of the village representatives is to ensure that the technical specialists do not propose actions that villagers will not accept or will find too difficult to implement.

Next, the village representatives present the results of their work with the facilitators to a general village meeting. Once again, the villagers divide themselves into mixed groups to finalize the action plans. The mixed groups judge the feasibility of the actions proposed. For the actions judged feasible, they prepare the planning tables. Finally, they present their planning tables in a general village meeting, during which villagers review the proposals, make final changes and adopt the planning tables. Table 4 summarizes the details of the planning stage.

Table 4 Planning: Methods and tools, expected results, materials needed, and duration

Methods and tools	Expected results	Materials	Duration
General village meeting	Objectives of the planning stage understood		30 minutes
Elaboration of the objectives tree (by mixed village groups)	Problems and causes translated into objectives and corresponding actions	Problem tree	1/2 day
Review by team and village representatives of proposed actions	List of actions proposed by the village completed (and modified if necessary)	Objective tree	2 hours in subgroups to analyze and amend the actions (distribution of objectives according to mandates and skills of services agency staff)
General village meeting	Proposals of the team and village representatives understood		2 hours
Elaboration in mixed groups of planning tables	Proposals made for the planning of actions	Objectives tree	2 hours
Feedback session	Program of actions between villagers and team agreed Meeting times to undertake the work agreed	Planning tables	1 1/2 hours

Chapter 5:

Identifying a village development organization

5.1 Objectives

Successful local development requires careful attention of villagers to communication and coordination – among themselves, and with neighboring villages, regional and local administrative authorities and various development partners. For this reason it is important to create or strengthen a village organization to lead development efforts, coordinate and evaluate planned activities and communicate with external partners. Thus, once they have completed the planning stage, villagers should start thinking about the kind of organization they need to coordinate and implement development activities.[6]

Village development organizations have similar tasks and objectives. They must:
- Organize the work program
- Mobilize resources to execute the planned activities
- Serve as the point of contact between the village and external partners and service providers
- Take charge of monitoring and evaluating the actions.

To be able to carry out these tasks and to ensure that vulnerable groups such as women, youth, HIV/AIDS victims and others can defend their interests, the village development organizations should include representatives from all groups in the village.

5.2 Methods and tools

The village development organization needs to be both representative and effective. Very often villages have organizations, both formal and informal, that can handle at least some of the development tasks. In deciding whether to strengthen an existing organization or create a new one, villagers evaluate existing organizations in terms of their composition, representativeness, effectiveness, resource management capacity and the like.

Often villagers have some reservations about existing organizations, which they view as inadequately representative or insufficiently active. It is the facilitators' job to stimulate discussion on whether to strengthen existing organizations or create a new one, and how to do so. For example, villagers may wish to improve existing organizations by changing the procedures by which members and the executive committees are selected. To allow each individual to speak freely, these discussions should be conducted in the self-defined groups.

The tools to be used for creating or reinforcing village development organizations are:
- Semi-structured interviews (tool 3)
- Venn diagrams (tool 9)
- Establishment of village development organizations (tool 15).

6 Village organizations have different names in different countries. They are called village associations in southern Mali, village development organizations in Burkina Faso and coordinating committees in Benin.

5.3 Sequence of steps

The process of identifying a village development organization starts with a village meeting. The team of facilitators explains the objectives of the exercise and asks the villagers to divide themselves into groups. The exercise takes about four hours to complete and ideally follows the planning stage. Often villagers have created Venn diagrams (tool 9) during the diagnosis, and do not need to do so again for this exercise. Table 5 presents the steps, tools and methods, expected results and the material needed to create a village development organization.

Table 5 Creation of a village development organization: methods and tools, expected results, materials and duration

Methods and tools	Expected results	Materials	Duration
Analysis of the planning stage	Workload estimated (number of , actions), people to be involved identified, and seasons when there are many activities (and therefore a need for coordination) specified	Planning table on poster paper	1 hour
Drawing of Venn diagrams	Inventory of existing organizations created Relationships between organizations understood Relationships between the village and external actors understood	Poster paper, markers, small colored index cards, wooden boards, thumbtacks	1 1/2 hours
Group discussions (semi-structured interviews) on existing organizations and the option of creating a new development organization or strengthening an existing one	Operation of the most important organizations for village development analyzed Groups present their proposals	Venn diagrams, poster paper, markers, thumbtacks	1 hour
Review and feedback in a general village assembly	Groups validate results Composition and role of the village development organization specified	Venn diagrams, poster paper, markers, thumbtacks	1/2 hour

Chapter 6:

Participatory monitoring and evaluation

6.1 Objectives

Participatory monitoring and evaluation enables villagers to observe and measure their progress, analyze problems and introduce changes to their action plans when necessary. In the past, monitoring and evaluation was the responsibility of the service agencies. Today however, as with other development activities, monitoring and evaluation is increasingly the responsibility of the villagers.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation allows the villagers to:
- Follow implementation progress of each action throughout the year
- Keep all interested parties updated on progress
- Evaluate results of the actions underway and modify them if necessary
- Evaluate the commitment of both village and agency staff in executing the ongoing activities.

Monitoring is a continuous process during implementation. By contrast, evaluation is carried out periodically, perhaps once per year or when activities are completed.

6.2 Methods and tools

Monitoring
Monitoring involves continuously and systematically collecting and analyzing information that can help with managing and improving implementation of the work program. A well-designed monitoring system provides the villagers with key information at the time they need it to make decisions. It also allows for correction, modification and confirmation of ongoing programs. The tools commonly used are the monitoring log (tool 16), site visits and periodic meetings. There is no one correct way of monitoring progress. Different village development organizations use different approaches depending on their capacity and preferences. For example in Benin some villages use the monitoring logs to systematically track progress of agreed actions. In Malawi, villagers present their progress visually by updating the village maps once a year. They also show the changes that have taken place in the organization of the village and in village relationships with service agencies by updating their Venn diagrams. Nevertheless, monitoring remains a difficult process and better knowledge of how to organize it is required.

Evaluation
Evaluation involves assessing completed activities or programs to discover what worked and what did not. A clear understanding of lessons learned helps in the development of future programs.

Participatory evaluations involve the villagers in defining the aims of the evaluation and assessment indicators and in analyzing the findings. They draw upon the wide range of knowledge, values and concerns of villagers in assessing implementation progress and effectiveness of individual actions.

The tools and methods of participatory evaluations include visits between villages, discussions in village groups, maps, Venn diagrams and annual village meetings to review what has happened during the year. Tools 15, 16 and 17 provide details of the use of these methods.

Preferably, the assessment is carried out during a general village meeting, as this allows all village members to evaluate performance of the village development organization. As with monitoring, we do not yet fully understand how to organize evaluations effectively. Various experiments and research in this area are ongoing, and their findings will have to be analyzed and compared for future use.

6.3 Sequence of steps

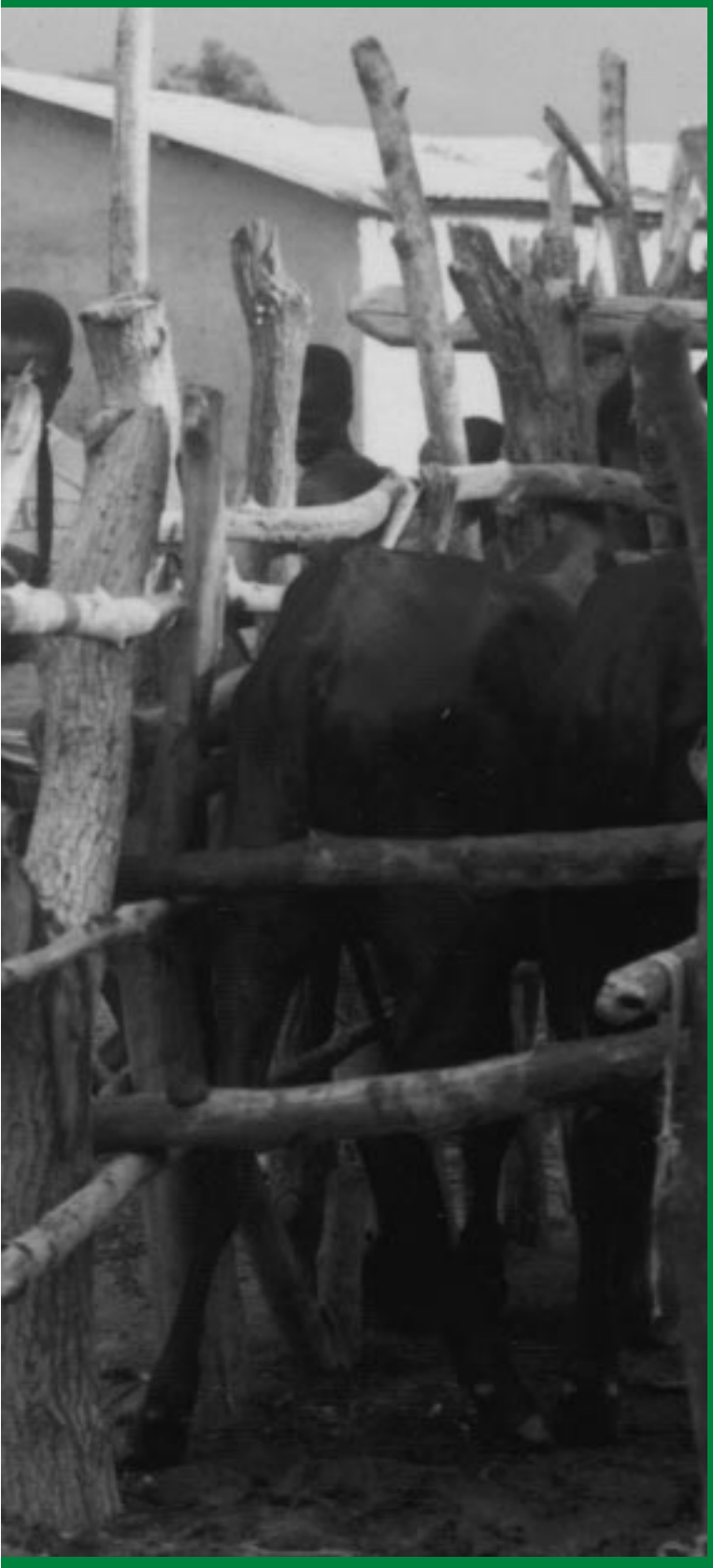
To assure that the action plans are carried out effectively, the village development organization keeps careful track of progress in implementing activities. This allows it to quickly learn about and address problems.

It is important for the village to regularly assess results, procedures, and problem areas. Typically, villagers conduct evaluations twice a year, once half way through the year, and once at the end of the year.

Table 6 Evaluation meeting: methods and tools, expected results, materials and duration

Methods and tools	Expected results	Materials	Duration
General village meeting	Exercise introduced and objectives of the meeting understood.		15 minutes
Presentation of the monitoring tools	Progress made over the past year understood, problems analyzed and solutions identified	Log books, maps, Venn diagrams	2-3 hours
Planning	New programming procedures prepared Village planning table updated	Planning tables	45 minutes

Part two:
Execution of village action plans



The success of the participatory approach does not depend solely on the villagers. It requires changes in attitudes and behavior on the part of all those involved, including the service agency field staff and their managers. This calls for a service-wide reorientation, thorough training for managers, changes in attitudes, and continual moral support and resources from the authorities.

In this part, we outline the support that is needed to implement the participatory approach,
the contribution of field agents, support from officials, management training, and coordination of activities of various participants.

Chapter 7:

Roles of the various participants

7.1 Collaboration is key

Each member of the multidisciplinary team working with villages (villagers, field agents, project staff, and NGO representatives, and political and administrative authorities) has a specific contribution to make, according to professional position, personal expertise, and level of involvement with the villagers.

As part of a team, each person's ability to understand and listen to others is key to success, not his or her hierarchical position. The challenge is finding ways to collaborate that enables all actors to contribute to the full extent of their abilities.

7.2 Field agents

Field agents, who represent the technical service agencies, have frequent contact with rural communities, and know the villagers, local elites and traditional and administrative leaders. Being in the position of "gate-keepers," they can arrange the first contacts and meetings between the village leaders and the team of outside facilitators.

Villages may wish to take action in a variety of sectors: agriculture, health, rural roads, water and sanitation, education and the like. Therefore field agents from a variety of service agencies should be included on the teams undertaking the participatory approach in villages. The involvement of field agents in the participatory process, starting with the initial training in the approach, greatly facilitates work in the field, both during the diagnostic exercises and during the execution of the village action plans. Being part of the participatory approach helps staff to be more careful and modest, to listen to the villagers and avoid dominating the debates. If field agents have the necessary skills, they can act as facilitators during the diagnosis and planning phases of the participatory process.

Because they represent outside agencies and have technical expertise, field agents sometimes act authoritarian when dealing with villagers. And during the problem analysis, villagers sometimes name field agents' behavior as an obstacle. If this happens, field agents should take care not to become defensive. Rather, they should listen to the villagers' perspectives and together with the villagers try to find solutions. Of course adopting a new attitude of listening and openness may not be easy for everyone and may take time. But, the more experience field agents gain with the participatory approach, the more confident they will feel and the more recognition they will receive from the villagers and their own superiors.[7]

7 Some services agencies and development organizations already have considerable experience with participatory diagnosis, analysis and planning. This is especially true of the health and environment sectors, which are the source of several diagnostic tools presented in this manual.

Box 2 Field agents in Mali change their attitudes

In southern Mali, the behavior and the attitudes of field agents who work according to the participatory approach have changed. Farmers and heads of development organizations believe that the participatory approach has:

- Strengthened contacts between technicians and farmers
- Led to more effective collaboration between field agents and rural people
- Helped the field agents improve their skills as facilitators, thus encouraging farmers to share their knowledge and skills.

Sources: Adama Sidibé, Boubacar Macalou, Demba Kébé, Mahamadou Larya Cissé (1998).

7.3 Supervisors and specialized technicians

The participatory approach can succeed only if field agents receive methodological and logistical support from supervisors, and technical expertise from specialists.

Methodological support

Methodological support enables field agents to tailor their interventions to the needs of individual villages. Each village is different, and methods that work in one place are not necessarily suitable for another. The team of facilitators sometimes has difficulties choosing the most appropriate tools to use in any particular situation and may have difficulties judging how best to apply them. Supervisors who are very experienced in using the methods and tools should regularly visit the teams in the field and provide their support and guidance. The supervisor's role is not to do the work of the team, but to help it carry out its tasks more effectively and efficiently.

During meetings with the team, held before and after meetings with villagers, supervisors provide feedback and advice of how best to facilitate participatory sessions. They should make certain that their comments are constructive in the spirit of the participatory approach, and respect the contributions of team members.

Supervisors should take care to foster an atmosphere of trust, and encourage team members to freely discuss their weaknesses in addition to their strengths. Without trust, field agents will be reluctant to admit their weaknesses and may feel attacked if others suggest they do their work differently. Supervisors who act like chiefs or inspectors will not be able to establish trust. Thus the new attitudes are important not only between field agents and villagers, but also between supervisors and field agents.

Logistical support

Logistical support is needed to enable the team to carry out its work effectively and efficiently. Teams, which often include 4-6 people, need transportation to the work sites. One or two vehicles must be made available, preferably for the full time the team spends in the villages. While teams should use equipment and supplies available in the village to the extent possible (such as blackboards from the school), they will still need to provide some equipment and supplies for the work sessions, such as chalk, felt, paper, boards, thumbtacks and the like. Arrangements for these should be made prior to the team's arrival in the field. An interpreter may also be needed. The teams must decide what works best in a given situation.

Technical expertise

Subject matter specialists have an important role to play in problem analysis and the search for solutions. In discussions of options, they can contribute a perspective based on their specialized professional knowledge, making it easier to make choices.

Chapter 8:

Training

A good training plan is key to successful scaling up of the participatory approach. The organization responsible for leading the work on participation develops and implements the training plan. Political leaders endorse the plan and provide funding for its implementation. Training plans should be simultaneously ambitious and realistic. The form and breadth of the plan depend to a large extent on the available human and financial resources.

8.1 Training of service agency staff

Participation is a profession like any other area of expertise. Developing the expertise to successfully use participatory methods and tools requires high-quality training and field experience. Training must aim to familiarize staff with participatory methods and tools and encourage practitioners to adopt the attitudes of openness and broadmindedness that will enable them to apply the tools and methods.

It is important to involve all rural service and development organizations in the training program, including service agencies, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral development agencies. Collaboration among various organizations facilitates implementation of participatory methods in a given region and, through economies of scale, greatly reduces the costs of training.

A common critique is that ordinary staff members do not have the knowledge or skills to undertake participatory approaches in their work. Experience from the field shows that with high quality training many of the front line staff become first class facilitators. To provide the training, an excellent team of trainers is needed, preferably comprised of technical experts from different sectors. Members of the training team must be chosen on the basis of their personal qualifications and not on their position in the hierarchy of their organization.

For the training of trainers, organizers can call upon qualified nationals and solicit assistance from experts of other countries in the region that have carried out similar exercises. Experts from elsewhere can offer new and different perspectives on the local situation and help the different agencies find common ground. In Uganda, Malawi, Madagascar, Cameroon and Togo training teams have successfully included foreign experts.[8]

The agents' training must be practical. The best way to learn how to use the tools in the participatory approach is hands on experience. The Trainer's Guide, part of this manual, offers suggestions for organizing training and using teaching aids.

Training is often divided into three parts. During the first part, which lasts approximately three days, trainers present the various steps and tools of the participatory approach. During the second part, which lasts approximately one week, participants visit villages (which are aware of the team's arrival) and carry out the entire participatory process with the local people. It is important to stress that this is not role playing for training purposes, but a genuine exercise of diagnosis and planning

8 In Uganda the training team included an expert from Benin. In Malawi the team comprised an expert from Benin and two experts from Uganda. In Cameroon, the team contained experts from Mali, Madagascar, and Benin.

Box 3 Training of trainers in Madagascar

The objectives of a workshop for the training of trainers, held in Antsirabe during February 5-8, 1998, were to:

- Reexamine the village participatory method and adapt it to the Malagasy situation
- Train a team of trainers in participatory methods
- Draw up concrete action plans for community development of the fokontany (community) in which the method was tested.

Following two days of workshops, one team went to the fokontany of Tsaramody, and one went to seven fokontany in the rural commune of Ambohidranandrina. Villagers went through the entire participatory process, diagnosing their situation, identifying priority problems, analyzing problems and naming possible solutions, developing an action plan, and selecting a steering committee to oversee implementation of planned actions.

Villagers were very enthusiastic about the exercise. Although at first the villagers had unrealistic expectations about the material and financial support the service and development agencies would provide, they quickly accepted their roles and responsibilities. The service and development agency staff then adopted new attitudes, instead of telling people what they should do, they listened to them.

At the end of each day of fieldwork, the team members met to synthesize and evaluate the day's work and prepare the program for the following day. This enabled them to modify and improve their approach for the next day.

in one or more villages. During the third part, trainees meet with trainers and with decision-makers from various organizations (line ministries, ministry of planning, NGOs, and others) who are invited to participate in this final part of the training program. This third part takes about two days and allows participants to share their experiences and brainstorm solutions to problems. Based on these deliberations, the decision-makers and trainees consolidate their findings and elaborate an action plan for the implementation of the participatory approach.

8.2 Raising awareness of political and administrative authorities

Political and administrative authorities on the local, regional and national levels should also undergo training in the participatory approach. These include local leaders, elected representatives, and political advisors from regional authorities in countries where decentralization is underway. This training is much more abbreviated than that for frontline staff, as it is intended primarily to raise awareness of the approach and its importance for community development, rather than help participants learn how to apply it in the field. During the sessions, trainers describe the methods and tools, outline the expected results, and explain the implications of the process for the work plans of service agencies.

This training is most effective when the administrative authorities themselves take the initiative to implement the participatory approach. In Guinea, for example, various rural service agencies adopted participatory methods after the heads of the regional offices received training and the national authorities made a commitment to implement the approach throughout the country.

Box 4 Staff training in Guinea

In Guinea training in the participatory approach in the southern region (maritime Guinea) in Fria prefecture drew the attention of local and national authorities.

At the request of the head of Fria, all service agency staff in the prefecture received training and participated in village diagnostic and planning exercises. As a result, all the service agencies are firmly committed to applying participatory methods and providing support for the village action plans.

Source: Alpha Bacar Barry, Mamadouba Camara, Louis Beavogui, and Mohamed II Camara (1998).

8.3 Training for village development organization members

Introducing the participatory method in a village entails the creation of a village development organization to oversee implementation of planned actions (chapter 5). However, the members of the village organizations do not always have the know-how and experience to effectively carry out their responsibilities. The team can assess training needs of village organization members and ask which groups active in the village can provide the necessary training. Such groups may include those providing adult literacy training or support for farmer associations. However, the villagers are responsible for contacting the authorities and service providers and requesting assistance.

Training of members of the village development organization often covers the following topics, among others:

- Functional literacy
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation
- Preparation of project proposals
- Management of financial resources and project accounting (if the organization has responsibility for finances).

The tasks and responsibilities of the village development organization are discussed in chapter 10.1.

Chapter 9:

Other support needed for successful implementation of the participatory approach

To ensure successful implementation of the participatory approach, support of different types is needed. Information on the impact the participatory approach is having on implementation of village action plans and on quality of service delivery can help improve the use of participatory methods. Publicity is needed to widely inform citizens of the new approach to development, and encourage those directly involved to continue. And political support is required to ensure that financial and logistical resources are available.

9.1 Monitoring

In addition to ensuring the continuous monitoring of development activities by village development organizations, the service agencies involved must regularly monitor the implementation of village action plans. They should monitor the training program, the execution of works and the process of participatory monitoring and evaluation in villages.

The service agencies should pay special attention to the quality of the work of the front line staff, including implementation of the participatory process and subsequent support to the village for implementation of the action plans. The aspects to be monitored include:

- Technical quality of the work
- Appropriateness of the organization of service delivery in the village
- Extent to which all village groups benefit from services
- Quality of the relationship between the front line staff and the villagers.

Service agencies can use the same monitoring tools and indicators that the villagers use to complement the information they have collected from other sources on the quality of service delivery. The Venn diagrams are especially useful to understand the villagers' perception of the effectiveness of various service delivery agencies.

9.2 Publicizing goals and achievements

Publicizing goals and achievements of the participatory approach among decision-makers, front line service and development agency staff and the general public generates commitment for the approach. Benefits of publicity for each of these groups is described below.

- *Authorities.*

Not all decision-makers can visit the field to observe for themselves the benefits of the participatory approach. Widely disseminating experiences through television, radio and newspapers informs authorities of activities in their jurisdictions. Political leaders who actively support the approach are generally very pleased to see the results of their efforts.

- *Field staff.*

The recognition and appreciation brought by publicity is a strong incentive for agency staff to continue using the participatory approach, even when they face obstacles.

- *Villagers.*

News of the participatory approach informs rural people of what others in similar situations are doing to improve their lives. This shows them that they too can influence their futures. Awareness of the approach also encourages people to pressure local authorities to introduce participatory processes in their villages.

9.3 Support from the authorities

Experiences in the countries involved in the production of this manual shows that the support of regional and local authorities is essential to implement the participatory approach effectively. The more they are involved with and feel responsible for the exercise, the better are the results.

Regional and local authorities can encourage adoption of participatory methods by:

- Mobilizing managerial staff
- Coordinate among various service providers (both public and private)
- Raising people's awareness, especially through television, radio, newspapers and other media
- Making transportation available
- Make funds available (if they have the power to make decisions on budget allocations).

Figure 3 Benin newspaper article on the village level participatory approach

PLOI

Thursday, 7th January 1999

Council of ministers

At the beginning of the Session, the Chief of Staff observed one minute of silence in the memory of the departed :
- Samuel DEGBEGNI, magistrate, former president of the court at Ouldah, former general deputy at the Court of Appeal at Cotonou, who died on 27th December 1998;
- Djemllou Adlssa ALLALADE, magistrate, magistrate, former president of the court at Ouldah, who died on the 4th of January 1999.
Delegations have been set up for offering the condolences of the Government to the bereaved families.
During the Session, the Council approved a project for the setting up, composition, organisation, and functioning of the National authority entrusted with the implementation of the convention for the prohibition of the development, the manufacture, the stockpiling, and the use of chemical weapons, as well as for the destruction of the same.
In the course of the same Session, the Council of Ministers approved several documents, in particular the following:
- A report of the Ministry of Public Health concerning the national policy and strategy for the development of the sub-structure for blood transmission for the period 1999-2001
- A report by the President of the Republic concerning the mission executed by a Benin delegation, at Hull, in Canada from the 7th to the 13th of November 1998, under the Canadian International Development Agency.
- A report by the Ministry of Culture and Communication concerning the conference of the International History Museum Association and the Scientific Committee entitled "Women Who Made Africa" held in Quebec from the 18th of October to the 19th of November 1998.
- A report by the Ministry of Mines, Power and Waterworks concerning the consultation meeting for commissioning the hydroelectric development project of Dyodyonga on the river Mekrou, held at Nlamey, in Nigeria from the 12th to the 16th of October 1998.
During the meeting, the Minister of Rural Development submitted to the Council a report of a workshop concerning the village participation in rural services in Africa and in Madagascar, which was held at Parakou, from the 7th to the 13th of November 1998.
In fact, over the last few years, the Ministry of Rural Development has been engaged in efforts to set up a new tool of intervention into the rural environment, entitled "A Participative Approach at the Village Level". The fundamental characteristics of this approach is to provide the village community with tools that allow them to prepare a plan for the management and development of the lands covered by it, on the basis of a multi-dimensional analysis of the constraints and the strengths, and putting in place a representative authority capable of directing the execution of the plan.
This approach, initially conceived as a tool for the research and popularisation of agriculture, has sparked off keen interest amongst the rural population and certain African countries, which have adopted the same at the workshop at Parakou, with the proposal to make it an instrument for national and multi-sectoral planning and in all the participating countries.
Within the framework of our policy of decentralisation and promotion of 'minimum social community', the participative approach at the village level shall be developed in all the villages in our country with a view to progressively making village planning a basis for programming actions at all levels. A 4-year plan of action has been prepared for this purpose.

Instructions have been given to the Planning Ministry, the Ministry for Economic Reconstruction and Employment Promotion and to the Ministry of Rural Development, with a view to updating and diligently implementing the plan of action prepared at the end of the said workshop, liaison with other relevant Ministerial departments and joining our country to the network that is being built up to promote this participative approach.

The Council of Ministers authorised the following during the meeting:
- Participation of a delegation from our country at the two international seminars for the improvement of the capacity reinforcement program at Tivon in Israel, from the 6th to the 25th of January 1999;
- The participation of a delegation from Benin for a mission relating to the 2nd annual religious and tourist pilgrimage of Ouldah, from the 30th of January to the 7th of February 1999, and the 24th Congress of the Africa Travel Association (ATA) in Ghana from the 2nd to the 7th of May 1999.
Finally, the following appointments and deputations were announced:

APPOINTMENTS

To the Ministry for Social Protection and the Condition of Women

On the proposal of the Minister:

- Joint Cabinet Director, Madam Abida ALIMI ICHOLA
- Director for Education and the Economic Promotion of women: Madam Antoinette BOSSOU-LAWIN-ORE
- Departmental Director for the Social Protection and the Condition of Women of the Ouémé: Madam Ashiata NASSIROU
- Departmental Director for the Social Protection and the Condition of Women of the Atlantic: Madam Paula ADJOVI-AYANOU
- Departmental Director for the Social Protection and the Condition of Women of the Zou: Madam Agnes SOZONLI-DAASSOUNON
- Departmental Director for the Social Protection and the Condition of Women of the Mono: Mr. Rigobert Kuassi HOUNNOUVI.

To the Ministry for National Defence

On the proposal of the Minister:

- Inspector General of Armies: Colonel Justice Adrien SOGLO

To the Ministry of the Interior for Security and Territorial Administration

On the proposal of the Minister:

Sub-prefect of Banikoara:
Mr. Blo Sorogou Orou Zimé

DEPUTATION
Madam ASSOGBA-GODONOU A., French, has been placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Finance.

Cotonou, the 6th of January 1999.
The 2nd Joint Secretary General of the Government Ambroise LALEYE

formation sanitaire

Part three:
Conditions for implementation and implications of the participatory approach

In this part, we discuss the organizational and institutional frameworks required for effective village participation. We examine what the participatory approach means for organization of government. Specifically, we address the following questions:

- Who are the actors, what are the sectors involved, and what are their respective roles?
- How do we ensure effective coordination among the different actors?
- How do we ensure cohesion between village planning, decentralized management of rural services, and national policy?
- What is the relationship between village participation and the decentralization process?
- What role should the agricultural extension services play? How should extension work be organized to be more participatory?
- Does this way of working sometimes create unrealistic expectations among the farmers?
- What can we do to help villages implement their action plans?
- How can the transition be made from a pilot exercise to a more extensive operation?

Experience and daily practice provide some guidance, which we present below. Many questions, however, remain less than fully answered.

Chapter 10:

Roles of the various stakeholders

10.1 Village communities

As previously mentioned, villagers play the major role in diagnosing their situation, planning development activities and implementing their action plans. They create new, or strengthen existing, village organizations to take charge of mobilizing the labor force and internal and external resources, ensuring transparency in the use of these resources, overseeing implementation of the action plan, monitoring progress, keeping records and evaluating outcomes.

• *Composition of the village development organization.*
The village organization has a major responsibility for mobilizing villagers, so its composition is critical. It must comprise all village groups to ensure that the interests of all villagers are taken into account and to benefit from synergies. For example, young people who are literate can help with keeping records while older people and village leaders can use their influence to mobilize the village labor force. Of course, it is important to respect existing organizations as much as possible, including village organizations set up as part of the process of decentralization. Before creating new organizations, it is wise to examine ways to reinforce existing ones.

• *Mobilizing the villagers to execute the work program.*
The village development organization is responsible for mobilizing villagers to carry out the work program.[9] It must identify informal leaders able to motivate others and willing to take the initiative to start the work. These informal leaders organize work groups to execute specific actions. In some cases, villagers with a common interest in a project come together to work on it. For example, parents may take charge of deciding how a school should be organized. In other cases, the tasks to be carried out require participation of most villagers. For example, the village development organization of Pebié in the Borgou in Benin decided that all adults in the village had to devote half a day per week to maintain the roads.

• *Mobilizing local resources.*
The village organization is responsible for mobilizing local resources. For example, in the village of Buwongo in the district of Jinja in Uganda, the village organization found resources to buy seeds by reallocating funds meant for a tarp to protect funeral goers against rain. The organization also plays a role influencing villagers to manage their natural resources more effectively. Thus, in many countries village organizations encourage villagers to use organic matter as fertilizer rather than as fuel, construct terraces to protect soils against erosion and use more efficient stoves to conserve trees.

• *Organizing support from public or private service agencies.*
Service agencies provide villages with know-how that they cannot develop on their own. To ensure that they receive the help they need in the most useful form, the village development organizations

9 In the past, service agency staff often took responsibility for organizing the villagers. For example, the field extension agents organized contact groups. However experience shows that contacts are much more useful when farmers organize them.

reach agreement with the service agencies on what support the agencies will provide and how they will provide it.

• *Mobilizing external financial support.*
Many development projects require greater resources than can be mobilized from within the community. The village organization is responsible for formulating requests and submitting proposals to funding agencies. The regional and local authorities, service agencies and donor agencies have important roles to play in mobilizing external resources, as we shall see later in this chapter.

• *Ensuring transparency.*
It is not enough to mobilize resources. Resources must also be managed with maximum transparency. If villagers suspect that organization members are diverting resources, no matter how small, the credibility of the organization can be destroyed. There are many ways villages can ensure transparency. They can require that people who will manage funds be elected and that members of disadvantaged groups be systematically represented on the committees. They can post the financial records (allocation and release of funds received) in public using the local language. The common requirement of donors to keep accounts and documentation in a language other than the local language impedes village accountability because typically only village elites can read and write the nonnative language. Posting accounts in the local language allows people with little formal education to exercise their right to inspect financial records. Finally, providing literacy training increases the capacity of community members to examine and control the use of financial resources.

• *Monitoring the implementation of the action plans.*
The village development organization is responsible for monitoring implementation of the agreed activities. Villagers select the monitoring indicators and define the aims of the evaluation (see chapter 6 and tools 15, 16 and 17). Case studies show that when villages monitor progress regularly they implement their action plans more effectively. Regular monitoring allows village organizations to quickly identify problems and take corrective measures. Regular monitoring also makes it easier to plan the activities for the following year. With good monitoring, village committees can provide precise information on what has been completed and what remains to be done.

• *Managing the village program file.*
The village program file contains records of the results of the diagnosis, the list of priority problems, the action plans, the service agencies and development organizations involved, and progress made during the implementation phase. The village development organization is responsible for keeping the program file up-to-date (including information on performance indicators) and ensuring that it contains the key information. In Benin copies of program files are kept in a central location (sub-prefecture, central development agency and the like). This reduces the likelihood that the records are lost. It also makes it convenient for people from the center to consult the files.

• *Communicating between villages.*
Contacts between villages are important for several reasons. First, many development actions involve more than one village, and require inter-village coordination for making decisions and implementing activities. These actions include construction of schools and dispensaries and irrigation systems serving more than one village, and road maintenance among others. Inter-village contact also encourages rural inhabitants to share experiences and draw upon the knowledge and lessons learned of others. It is often wise to invite delegations from neighboring villages to observe the diagnostic and planning exercises. As the experience of the Malian Company for Textile Development (CMDT) shows, service agencies can also promote inter-village exchanges by organizing competitions, fairs, exhibitions and the like. Visits from political authorities such as parliament members can also promote inter-village exchanges.

10.2 Political and technical leadership

There is a distinction between political leadership and leadership of the participatory process (hereafter called technical leadership). The people and institutions assuming political leadership are in most cases not qualified to provide technical leadership, and vice versa. For example, a district commissioner is often not equipped to ensure that the quality of the participatory approach is sound. At the same time, the people who are qualified to use the participatory tools and techniques are not in a position to assume the political leadership and to coordinate various sector agencies. For the implementation of the participatory approach to be successful, both types of leadership are required. Participation is an area requiring technical expertise like any other, and support from specialists who have the skills and experience with participatory methods is critical.

Staff from many agencies can come together and provide technical leadership. In each district or region, managers of the relevant agencies will have to determine who among the staff are most qualified to provide this technical leadership. Personal qualities are more important than institutional affiliation in ensuring the quality of the participation process.

Although any organization can take the lead in developing and implementing the participatory approach, agricultural extension services and community development organizations have assumed this role in several countries. Of course, taking a leadership role often requires additional financial resources, an issue that will be addressed later.

At the same time, participation has an important political dimension. It is the responsibility of the political authorities to ensure that the preferences of the villages are accurately taken into account during the planning and budgetary exercises. Political authorities at the local levels of government will also have to take the lead to ensure that the various service delivery agencies respond adequately to the villages' demands, and to coordinate the work of the agencies.

10.3 Local levels of government

Without full ownership of the participatory process by the local levels of government, it would be very difficult to implement the participatory approach on a large scale and in a sustainable way. Local authorities alone have the mandate to coordinate various agencies and can ensure that these agencies operate in a common framework. Although they do not necessarily have line authority over sector agencies, they can ensure that the sector agencies respond adequately to the needs from the

Box 5 Importance of involving local authorities in Madagascar

When the village level participatory approach was implemented in the village of Tanamay Talatan'Ampano in Madagascar, some 450 kilometers from the capital, the school enrollment rate was very low. Of 200 school-age children, only 55 were enrolled.

A participatory diagnosis brought this problem to light. The mayor of the village, who had participated in the diagnosis, decided to take action. With the support of the school director, he began an awareness-raising campaign for parents, encouraging them to send their children to school. Meetings involving the mayor, the school director, and the parents helped to identify ways to overcome obstacles preventing parents from enrolling their children in school, such as lack of birth certificates, high school fees, and others. The efforts paid off. Since then, 120 children have enrolled at school.

villagers. The extent to which local government is empowered through political, administrative and fiscal decentralization largely influences their capacity to assume these responsibilities.

10.4 Agencies working in villages

It is essential that as many as possible of the service and development agencies that work in the region are involved in the participatory process.[10] Otherwise, the various agencies active in a village may not be aware of others' activities and fail to coordinate their work. This has several consequences. Inhabitants of the same village may be asked several times to participate in the same types of diagnostic exercises. Agencies focusing only on activities in particular sectors can prevent villagers from seeing their problems comprehensively, and selecting priorities across sectors. Without minimizing the creativity and inventiveness of each, the various actors should work together, share experiences and coordinate activities. This allows the various agencies to provide mutual support and benefit from synergies without giving up their independence.

Although it is important to invite all agencies to take part in the participatory process right from the beginning, not all agencies may be ready to do so. Those that are ready can start the process, and others can join later.

Although development planning is multisectoral, each sectoral agency provides support for actions specific to its sector. Coordination among agencies does not mean that individual agencies stop focusing on and managing work in their areas of focus. While development planning must include activities of all agencies, implementation support must be organized according to the requirements specific to each sector.

Through the diagnosis the village determines the support it wants to receive. The diagnosis and planning help the various service agencies better understand the needs and requests of the rural people. One example comes from the Kouritenga province in Burkina Faso. Villages that received training from the National Program for Land Management identified the problem of deforestation in the area. After analyzing the problem they requested help to build improved stoves to reduce wood demand. The environment agency thus knew what information to provide as a priority.

Just as villagers determine the priority areas to address, they influence the way service agencies work in their village. The villagers discuss with the front line staff how best to organize their contact. For example, farmers may ask field staff to visit on specific days of the month and meet with particular groups of people. These discussions take place at the time when the detailed action plans are being discussed. Still, limited resources and technical imperatives also impose limits on what the agencies can do. Thus, both desires of communities and logistical or technical imperatives influence the way agencies carry out their work.

NGOs can provide valuable assistance. In many cases they provide public services that government is not fully providing. Even where government is delivering services effectively, NGOs can provide competition, raising the overall quality of services. Thus NGOs can act as countervailing forces to government, influencing how public services are managed and delivered. On the other hand, lack of coordination between local authorities and NGOs active in the region can harm development efforts. If NGO services do not conform to national policy, they cannot be reproduced on a larger scale. The risk is that some villages receive various forms of support such as subsidized goods or other forms of

10 These include all service and development agencies active in a village and that want to contribute to its development, regardless of nature, affiliation or size: agricultural extension, education, public health services, road maintenance services, NGOs, churches, volunteer associations and others.

assistance because NGOs happen to be active in the area, while neighboring villages do not. To prevent this from happening, local authorities must encourage NGOs to communicate with each other and with government agencies so that all can coordinate their efforts. It is only then that results are tangible, sustainable and benefit all the people. This underlines once again the importance of local governments for providing leadership.

10.5 National level service agencies

Rural development planning using participatory methodologies considerably changes the role of national level service agencies. No longer do these agencies have primary responsibility for the execution of works and the management of activities in the field. More and more they are focusing on defining national policy and making sure that planning conforms with national policy, giving technical support to local authorities, and providing training. It is becoming evident that the participatory approach has implications for the service agencies, and imposes new demands on managerial staff of national level agencies. The question countries are increasingly facing is what support (training, advice, and the like) should be provided to the staff of service agencies so that they can meet the new challenges and fulfill their new roles.

The tasks of national level staff are becoming more complex. Instead of being responsible for the implementation of programs, they have to support staff at the local levels, who in many cases will no longer be under their direct control. National level staff must:

- *Prepare national policies.*

Because they have a global vision and know the constraints and needs of different areas of the country, they help prepare national policies to foster the development of each region. To do so effectively, the national level staff must visit villages frequently to understand what people need.

- *Provide technical support to local authorities.*

Being from outside the area and having a global vision, national level staff can advise local staff and help them solve technical problems. They can also offer encouragement and moral support.

- *Help local level colleagues adapt the national policy to local conditions, and facilitate communication.*

During their visits to different regions of the country, national level staff can put various groups in contact with one another so that all mutually benefit. They can help organize training by identifying resource persons who can assist local staff to solve particular problems.

Many questions remain about the role of national level service agencies. For example, how can cohesion between national policy and local planning for all sectors be ensured? How can communication be organized so that national policies reflect as much as possible villagers' priorities, while taking account of the guidelines developed by national political leaders, and logistical and budgetary constraints? Of course, the same types of problems arises at the local level.

Another unresolved question concerns institutional matters. The more efforts are concentrated at the village level, the more resources (human, logistical and financial) must be allocated to this level. How can this be achieved? What are the implications for the management of human and financial resources of the national level agencies and service providers?

10.6 National political authorities

Who should provide political leadership of the participatory process? Political leadership should reside with ministries dealing with cross-cutting issues, such as the prime ministers office, ministry of planning, ministry of local government or ministry of community development. This is because the

participatory approach is a comprehensive approach to rural development. Sector organizations have precise mandates and none can assure coordination of others. The organization that takes political leadership should have the authority to coordinate the sector ministries and should preferably be represented at the local level. This allows continuity from the national to the local levels in terms of responsibilities.

For the participatory approach to work, it cannot be left to public service agencies alone. It is important to engage political representatives and civil society to promote the approach. These can be religious leaders, trade unions, members of parliament and the like. Institutions naturally resist change, including changes required by the participatory approach. If staff within institutions alone try to bring about changes, chances are slim that they will succeed. The pressure from civil society and political leaders can be instrumental in overcoming these obstacles.

10.7 Donor agencies

Donor agencies are also affected by the participatory approach. Hearing from villagers what they want allows donor agencies to better tailor their assistance to local and national priorities. It also allows them to support long-term national programs.

Several donor agencies have been instrumental in developing and promoting participatory methods over the past twenty years. German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) has introduced the techniques of planning by objectives. DANIDA has brought participatory planning at the decentralized level. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has introduced participatory methods through farmers' schools. The French Development Bank has promoted farmer organizations and natural resources management. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has contributed, so that the poorest could be the first to benefit from development programs. The Department for International Development (DFID, UK), especially through the International Institute for Economic Development, has develop and promoted participatory approaches. The Netherlands through the SNV (Netherlands Development Organization), the Royal Tropical Institute and the University of Wageningen, has contributed to the effort. Finally, the World Bank has contributed to the development of participatory approaches in many African countries through social funds and natural resources management projects.

It is important to involve all interested donor agencies in promoting the participatory approach. Each one, based on its experience, can make a valuable contribution. Working together they can improve its quality and effectiveness.

The national and sub-national authorities must coordinate donor activities. Only government can set development priorities and communicate them to donors. Donors can however contribute to strengthening the participatory methodologies to identify priorities and they can verify that the requests expressed by government actually reflect the priorities of beneficiaries. The clearer and the more transparent the procedures for defining priorities are, the easier it is for donors to follow and tailor their interventions in the country accordingly.

Long-term planning must follow the identification of priorities on the local, regional and national levels. There is a growing consensus that the project approach does not provide maximum long-term impact. With the project approach, donors finance specific activities (which often correspond to their own priorities), in a given area and for a relatively short period of time (5-10 years). Often the donor agency hopes to improve implementation of the project by establishing a project management unit that attracts the best national staff, bypassing weak governmental institutions. However, executing projects through project management units does little to strengthen government capacity to undertake future development activities. More and more, donor agencies agree that country

institutions should be strengthened and not bypassed. In the program approach, donors work to meet national objectives, and provide long-term support to strengthen national institutions. Donor support can help country institutions respond better to village demands, manage operations more transparently, and adopt new institutional structures. If villages state their priorities, then donors can support national and regional organizations to respond to village requests in a coordinated way and within the framework of a national policy.

Chapter 11:

The importance of decentralization for the participatory approach

The participatory approach is most effective in countries that have granted considerable authority to local governments to allocate resources. Local authorities are close to the people and are therefore able to get the information they need for planning and budgeting through the participatory approach. The more autonomy they have in decision-making, the better able they are to respond to village requests effectively and flexibly. Their effectiveness is to a large extent determined by how far administrative, budgetary and political decentralization has progressed.

11.1 Planning of rural development actions

For the participatory process to be fully effective, local and regional authorities should include village priorities in planning their annual work programs. Because the priorities cut across sectors (roads, health, education), authorities must plan intersectorally (integrated planning for rural development), and simultaneously, develop specific work programs for each sector.

This approach may appear to resemble the integrated development approach of the 1970s and 1980s, which largely failed. However, there are several ways the current approach differs from the previous one:

• *It works through local institutions, rather than independently of them.*
The managers of the integrated rural development projects worked under the supervision of the ministry of agriculture or the ministry of rural development and were independent of the local authorities (and often duplicated them). Once a project closed and financing ended, the local authorities and staff had neither the means nor the capacity to continue the programs. In the current approach, the local authorities are responsible for implementing development activities. Rather than duplicating local institutions through creation of temporary organizations, the capacity of local institutions to plan and carry out rural development programs is strengthened.

• *It does not depend on donors.*
Previously, almost all integrated development projects depended on donors for financial and technical assistance. Today, it is widely agreed that use of the participatory approach cannot depend on donors alone; a variety of partners must be involved with programming development activities. The presence of donors considerably increases the capacity of service agencies to respond to villagers' requests. But even in their absence, it is important that service agencies program their activities according to villagers' requests, and that the villagers coordinate their efforts to identify priority problems and actions.

• *It is nationwide and long term.*
Integrated development projects were limited in space and time. The approach recommended here is meant to be applied (if the national authorities agree) to the entire country and over the long term.

To maximize the impact of participation, a number of conditions must be met. The local authorities must support the approach and agree to coordinate different service agencies, and include village

priorities when planning their annual programs. Beyond this, they must have some latitude and autonomy to respond to village requests. The service agencies must also have the authority to act. Local and village organizations must be strengthened and financial and human resources mobilized. The participatory approach can then identify the best ways of using the resources.

Planning raises many questions. How can a multitude of priority problems and village action plans be translated into a coherent plan at the regional or local levels? What procedures should be put into place so that local action plans conform to standards and objectives specified in national policies? This is a concern not only for programming of activities, but also for allocation of resources (financial, human and material) needed for implementation of the programs. Answering these questions requires much thought and learning by doing.

Box 6 Areas of planned activities in Benin using village level participatory approach

Agricultural extension
Improving farming techniques, animal health, processing of agricultural output

Rural infrastructure
Improving access roads, providing water supply, constructing schools and health facilities

Natural resources management
Resolving conflicts between cultivators and herders, controlling erosion and conserving soil fertility, improving land management, controlling brush fires

Village organizations
Creating credit societies and women's groups, improving representation of youths in village associations.

11.2 Administrative decentralization

Administrative decentralization transfers decision-making power from the center to regional and local authorities. Administrative decentralization is essential for the participatory approach because it allows the local authorities to effectively respond to requests of the communities by entering the priorities and choices of villages into their work programs. Administrative decentralization also gives local authorities the power to coordinate the work of local organizations, including that of NGOs, project staff, private sector organizations and government agencies.

The decentralized management of services requires a strong national governmental structure. Decentralizing management and authority is not equivalent to asking local people to manage on their own. It is a way to allow them to fully assume their responsibilities within the framework of a clearly defined national policy. For example, local staff need to know what the national standards are for agricultural extension services to effectively manage locally-based services (number of farmers per field agent, budgetary standards, training of field agents and others).

11.3 Budgetary decentralization

Budgetary decentralization makes it possible for local authorities to meet local demands. With budgetary resources, decision-makers at the local level can determine to some extent the budgets to

allocate to each sector to respond to local requests. Without some authority over budgetary decisions, local leaders have no choice but to work with centrally-determined budgetary appropriations.

Even with budgetary decentralization, national authorities' are still responsible for identifying (and allocating resources for) national priorities, such as campaigns against AIDS, initiatives promoting gender equity, social security and the like. Activities targeting disadvantaged groups will always require financial support from the national authorities. Experience has shown that local authorities often neglect these types of programs.

Budgetary decentralization is not the only way of getting resources directly to villages. In many countries social funds and rural investment funds provide resources to communities to undertake priority projects. Still, while these funds are important, they are often centrally managed and bypass local governments. In many cases, this is only a second best solution to delivering funds to communities.

Decentralizing budgetary authority is not a simple task. Questions remain about the national allocation of funds for specific operations, budgetary parity between regions (independent of the capacities of regional governments to raise revenues), and the structure of taxation. These questions are not addressed here.

11.4 Political decentralization

Political decentralization is not a requirement for implementing the participatory approach, but it creates a favorable environment for doing so. With political decentralization, villagers are more likely to know (although indirectly) if development plans actually include their priorities. They also have greater opportunities to voice their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services provided. If political decentralization is combined with budgetary decentralization, elected officials can allocate funds to different sectors according to local priorities. Furthermore, with political decentralization, service agency staff are accountable not just to their managers, but also to the elected representatives of the beneficiaries. This encourages them to respond to community requests, behavior that is reinforced when elected representatives have the power to allocate funds.

Chapter 12:

Impact of the participatory approach on agricultural extension

There are four key issues regarding the impact of participatory approaches on agricultural extension. They are:

1. What impact does the participatory approach have on technical advice provided through agricultural extension services?
2. How does the participatory approach influence the relationship between extension agents and farmers?
3. To what extent does use of participatory approaches divert extension agents from their primary mission, helping farmers to solve production problems?
4. To what extent do participatory approaches enhance farmers' options to choose between service providers?

12.1 Technical advice

The participatory approach provides many benefits to farmers and agricultural extension services. It allows both farmers and extension staff to identify the priority messages. It provides information for the programming of technical review meetings between farmers, extension agents and researchers. It identifies the issues that require further in-depth analysis by agricultural specialists. And it generates information for the programming of agricultural research activities.

Through the participatory approach, farmers and the team of outside facilitators jointly specify the technical advice needed. Together they assess the importance of extension services compared to services of other sector agencies. And they identify the priority problems within the sector. Many villagers specify production as a top priority. Others name problems of transportation, marketing, processing of agricultural products, and supply of inputs as equally important as problems of production.

During the global diagnosis, villagers identify the priority problems, analyze their causes and suggest solutions for many of them. However, many problems cannot be solved during the one week the team of facilitators is in the village, but require in-depth analysis before appropriate solutions can be found. Villagers need the assistance of sector-specialists who return to the village to conduct in-depth, sector-specific analyses together with farmers. For example, agronomists carry out diagnoses on problems of production with farmers.

12.2 Relationship between farmers and extension agents

In addition to helping identify key topics of agricultural extension and research, the participatory approach improves the relationship between rural people and extension staff. Drawing Venn diagrams allows villagers to visualize the relationship between the village and the various organizations active there, and express their opinions about the quality of organizations providing extension services. This leads to a discussion on how to improve the quality of services. Key questions are:

- To what extent is the contact effective?
- Are all farmers benefiting from support or just a small number of elites?
- Are the contact groups functioning well?
- Are the farmers satisfied with the frequency and timing of the extension agents' visits?

The participatory approach thus provides the opportunity to critically evaluate the work of the extension agents and to improve the effectiveness of contacts between the extension agents and farmers.

Often improvements focus on the organization of contact groups, programming of visits, and work discipline. These are explored in greater detail below.

Organization of contact groups.
Farmers typically express a range of concerns regarding contact groups. They sometimes see them as too elitist, comprising people who are close to the extension agents. They may see them as representing only one small part of the village territory or the interests of men rather than of women. Discussing these issue with the entire village often leads to changes in the organization of the contact groups. Sometimes farmers want groups to be created around a specific topic or problems. In other cases they prefer the groups to be formed according to criteria of family membership, gender, geographical proximity and the like. Whatever the criteria used, it is important that the villagers choose them. This facilitates the diffusion of knowledge among farmers. The extension agents are responsible for ensuring that everyone has access to information. It is up to the villagers to decide how they want to be organized.

Organization of the work program.
The farmers must determine the frequency and timing of visits by extension agents. Of course the extension staff must also provide their inputs, since they must coordinate the requests of different villages. Often the agricultural extension service cannot comply with all the requests. The communities and extension agents must therefore negotiate the best way of organizing contacts. Still it is up to the extension agents to respond to the farmers' preferences and not the other way around.

Work discipline.
Villagers can play an important role in ensuring work discipline of extension agents. In general, farmers are good at perceiving the qualities and weaknesses of extension agents. The existence of a forum that allows farmers to voice what they would like to see improved is an extremely strong incentive for extension staff to perform well.

Box 7 Evaluation of the village level participatory approach in Benin

Introducing participatory methods into the national extension service has triggered several changes in the way the agency carries out its work. Monthly technical review meetings are now programmed on the basis of priority problems identified by the villagers, and staff are trained in ways that help them address villagers' priority problems. The relationship between staff and farmers is now stronger, and farmers' demand for extension services has increased. It is now easier to form contact groups, and contact groups now comprise people from a wider range of village factions, ensuring that all villagers have access to key information.

Source: DIFOV, INRAB and KIT (1997).

12.3 Choices of agricultural extension service provider

The participatory approach allows communities to take part in the decision of which organization provides them with extension services. In many regions a variety of organizations offer extension services, including government, NGOs and donor agencies. In other regions, extension is being subcontracted to one specific organization. For example, in Mali the CMDT is responsible for extension in its geographical area of operation. Even where there is more than one service provider, villagers rarely have had the opportunity to take part in the decision of with which organization they shall work. However, this is changing with the participatory approach. By using the tools described above, farmers can indicate which organization is their preferred source of extension advice.

However, having a strong national extension policy is critical to coordinate the work of multiple service providers. A strong and clear national policy makes it possible to assure quality control, clarify responsibilities and eliminate costly duplications.

12.4 Time allotted to the participation process

Many ask if the work on participation diverts extension staff from their main tasks, if they are spending too much time facilitating participatory exercises instead of using that time for agricultural extension. In reality, these exercises don't take more than 10-15 percent of extension staff time. The exercises are organized periodically (never more than once a year in a given village), preferably when work in the fields is at a minimum. In fact the time spent on participation improves the quality of extension work, and the benefits well exceed the costs.

Chapter 13:

Implementation of village action plans

13.1 Avoid creating unrealistic expectations

Villages are confronted with so many problems it is impossible for them to handle all with existing resources. How can the team of facilitators avoid creating unrealistic expectations when asking villages to identify their priority problems?

It is important to highlight the difference between consultation of villagers on the use of external resources on the one hand, and discussions on the better use of existing resources on the other. Experience has shown that it is best to first ask people to think through what they can do with their own resources. Bringing external resources to communities without first strengthening their capacity to manage resources effectively and efficiently is not advisable because (a) activities will be more sustainable if people learn first how to better manage the limited resources they have, (b) villagers have to learn to plan within hard budget constraints, and (c) mobilizing external resources is the responsibility of the villagers and should be in their action plans.

It is important for communities to learn how to plan realistically given resource constraints. The team of facilitators must clearly explain to villagers that the prime objective of planning is not to bring in new resources but to promote the efficient use of those that are already available. Communities understandably have a tendency to assign the team the role of donor agency. It is important that the team members resist the tendency to mobilize resources on behalf of communities, removing this responsibility from the villagers and their organizations. Indeed, one of the goals of the participatory method is to break the vicious cycle of dependence. Learning to change reality by using existing resources in a more efficient way can contribute to this objective. The facilitators must always give the responsibility for implementing action plans to the communities and village development organizations.

This is not to say that communities do not need additional resources or that the mobilization of these resources should not involve external agents. It is simply to note that additional resources can be used much more effectively if the process starts by identifying available resources and improving their use.

13.2 Choosing the initial activities

Villagers can begin implementing many of their priority actions almost immediately after completing the participatory exercises. Villagers possess the resources and have the necessary knowledge to attain many of their goals successfully, once they improve their village development organizations. The list of actions that can be completed with local resources is long, and includes improved stove burners, construction of latrines, road maintenance, construction of schools, terracing and other actions to reduce soil erosion, and adoption of new farming methods.

Other activities require purely technical support. The question is where can villagers obtain the knowledge they need to carry out the work? When technical specialists are not available, then the village development organization should request help from the authorities. In several countries in Africa civil engineers have come to villages to provide advice on how to build infrastructure

following requests of village development organizations. In fact these types of requests lead service agencies to provide higher quality services to villages.

Certain activities can only be implemented with resources brought from outside the community. This is the case for relatively substantial public works, technicians' wages, electrification and the like. It is essential that the team of facilitators informs the villagers of whether or not external resources for these purposes can be mobilized, and, if they can, how to do so. Being clear about this helps avoid creating unrealistic expectations.

Staff of donor and service agencies and NGOs can help villagers gain access to external resources by informing them of sources of funds, explaining eligibility criteria and showing them how to apply. For example, they can assist communities apply for social funds and rural development funds where these are available.

Chapter 14:

External evaluation

Decision-makers (country nationals and donor agencies) need to have reliable information on the benefits and impacts of the participatory approach to guide them in developing future programs. The evaluation, which focuses on impacts directly related to participation, covers not only the impact on village income but also the impact on intermediate indicators such as the strengthening of village organizations and degree to which village action plans are implemented.

This impact evaluation should be conducted by people who are independent of the organizations being evaluated to avoid conflicts of interest. Thus field agents who have been working with the villagers should not be involved with conducting this evaluation. Nevertheless the data collected through the internal evaluation system can be useful. Similarly the data collected by the villagers themselves during implementation of their action plans should be used for the external evaluation.

To assess the impact of the participatory approach it is valuable to compare the situation in villages that have been through the exercises with those that have not. This involves the collection of baseline data from villages that are planning to implement the participatory approach but have not yet done so, and from villages that are not planning to adopt the approach for the next few years. After a few years researchers can return to these same villages and learn how they have changed, and assess whether the changes can be attributed to participation.

The external impact evaluation should cover both intermediate results and final results. Assessment of intermediate results should include both qualitative indicators (strengthening of village organizations, improvement of service delivery in villages), and quantitative indicators (hectares planted, kilometers of roads maintained, number of people who contributed labor). The final results include indicators such as household income and well-being. Obviously, the impact can be measured only after several years of implementation.

Chapter 15:

Reaching national coverage

Every country has its own challenges to meet in expanding the participatory process to the national scale. The speed of expansion depends mainly on political commitment. When political decision-makers decide to go for national coverage, the organization taking the lead for the participatory approach will have to answer the following questions:

1. What did the pilot phase achieve?
2. Who are potential partners?
3. What is the best way to mobilize local authorities?
4. What training is needed and for whom?
5. How will the expansion be financed?
6. How will external resources be made available to villages?
7. How will national coverage be sequenced?
8. How will the program be monitored?

15.1 Evaluating the pilot phase

Before embarking on a program to expand the approach the pilot phase must be assessed. Evaluators will need information on the methods used and their effectiveness, training, institutional aspects, the financing of the participatory process, the financing of village activities, and the monitoring of the village program.

15.2 Identifying potential partners?

Often many organizations in a country have experience with participatory processes. These include not just public sector institutions, but also NGOs and private companies. Scaling up is more likely to succeed if all these organizations contribute to the effort. Equally important is to identify who will assume the political leadership at various levels of government and who will take the lead in developing and implementing the participatory approach. In some countries, the ministry of planning takes overall political leadership, while in others the ministry of local government or the ministry for decentralization assumes this role. In many countries a specialized line ministry, such as the ministry for community development, the ministry for rural development, or the ministry of agriculture has the technical leadership role.

15.3 Mobilizing the authorities

National coverage will only be possible if local authorities have ownership of the process. It is therefore important that they fully understand the process and know who is responsible for what in terms of political and technical leadership. The efforts to reach national coverage should be fully coordinated with the ongoing efforts on decentralization. Hence mobilizing the ministry of planning, ministry of interior, ministry of decentralization and the line ministries is vital. It is also important to make sure members of parliament and local representatives are involved with the efforts.

15.4 Providing training

It is important to have a strong national team of trainers, who are in charge of preparing training plans and the training of trainers at the local levels. This national team is also responsible for

Box 8 Working together, development organizations have greater impact: Example of Kouritenga, Burkina Faso

Over several decades Kouritenga Province, in the central eastern part of Burkina Faso, has benefited from a wide variety of programs and development projects. NGOs and public organizations support adult literacy programs, natural resources management, water supply projects, agricultural and livestock extension and health services, income generating activities for women and others. Each development organization active in the region has its own financial resources and staff and its own procedures. Still, the procedures of the various institutions have much in common.

The agencies recognized that working together would allow them to make their resources go further and cover the entire province.

During a workshop, the various stakeholders were able to:

- Specify a common method and tools for participatory diagnosis which all would use
- Clarify the villages of intervention of each agency
- Agree on activities to be implemented as part of a joint pilot operation
- Determine the logistical needs.

The first results of the coordinated work include:

- Strengthening of the partnerships between the various agencies active in the province (public services, NGOs, projects and others)
- Implementation of the participatory process in 50 villages with the involvement of the various agencies operating under joint terms of reference
- Planning of the respective agencies' activities to cover the entire province over a relatively short period.

Lessons learned include:

The pilot operation to coordinate various agencies under the leadership of the technical provincial coordination committee has demonstrated the feasibility of conducting participatory diagnostic exercises on a large scale by through cooperative effort of various organizations. In Kouritenga, 50 villages have participated over a period of less than two months.

The approach will be implemented in all the provinces where the natural resource management program is active. It has several advantages:

- Being involved from the beginning leads all agencies to feel ownership of the outcomes (diagnosis, action plans and the like)
- Pooling resources leads to economies of scale
- Coordination makes it possible to cover all villages in a given administrative area (department) in a shorter period of time
- Facilitators can help all villages located in a same area coordinate their activities to better manage common property resources such as watersheds, pastures used by migrant herders, forests and the like.

Source: Zoundi, Sibiri Jean, Felix de Valois Compaore, Lobassa Somda; and Haoua Gnoumou-Diabate (1998).

producing learning materials. The national team should include representatives of the various organizations participating in the effort.

15.5 Financing the expansion of participatory approaches

The largest expenses incurred in scaling up are for training of staff and provision of logistical support to carry out participation exercises in the villages. The people developing the national expansion plan should have a clear understanding of the costs, and identify budgets that will finance the exercises. The availability of funds largely determines the speed of scaling up.

15.6 Financing village activities

It is easier to expand to areas where there are mechanisms to transfer resources to communities. For example, in Malawi, it was decided to link introduction of village participation exercises with the implementation of the World Bank-financed Malawi Social Action Fund. By linking participation to the fund, communities can mobilize external resources to implement their action plans.

Table 7 Financing the participatory approach

Activities requiring financing	Potential sources of funds
Disseminating information, raising awareness	Initiators of the program with the assistance of other partners
Launching the program	
Training of trainers	Agency assuming technical leadership
Briefing the local authorities	National, regional and local authorities
Briefing the groups responsible for intersectoral planning and coordination	
Undertaking village participation	
Preparing the village diagnostic exercises	Initiators
Informing the villages	Villages
Performing the exercises in the villages	Local authorities Other involved sector agencies
Implementing the village action plans	
Executing works	Villages Local authorities (taxes) Sector agencies Specialized institutions (banks) Partners (NGOs, projects)
Monitoring and providing support during implementation of the action plans	
Training members of the village development organization	Villages
Supervising	Sector agencies
Support of technical specialists	Other partners
Participatory monitoring and evaluation	
	Villages Initiators Partners

15.7 Sequencing the national expansion plan

The sequencing of the national expansion largely depends on political decisions. These are often driven by regional considerations. Instead of covering an entire district, it is best to start in a few villages in each district, and expand from there. By doing so one is not obliged to wait to enter a new district until the previous one is fully covered.

15.8 Monitoring the program

Before starting, the people in charge of scaling up should specify the monitoring and evaluation arrangements. They should also make a baseline study to be used for a future impact evaluation. Finally, they should identify who will be responsible for measuring the program's impact, preferably an independent institution such as a university, think tank or consulting firm.

Box 9 National strategic plan

1 Rural services are all technical and administrative services.

2 Practitioners are people who, regardless of their institution or responsibilities, contribute to the implementation of participatory approaches.

3 See section 10.4 on service agencies working at the local level.

4 See section 13.1 on avoiding unrealistic expectations.

5 In West African countries, the diagnosis may be called participatory community diagnosis, global participatory diagnosis, global diagnosis or village diagnosis.

6 Village organizations have different names in different countries. They are called village associations in southern Mali, village development organizations in Burkina Faso and coordinating committees in Benin.

7 Some services agencies and development organizations already have considerable experience with participatory diagnosis, analysis and planning. This is especially true of the health and environment sectors, which are the source of several diagnostic tools presented in this manual.

8 In Uganda the training team included an expert from Benin. In Malawi the team comprised an expert from Benin and two experts from Uganda. In Cameroon, the team contained experts from Mali, Madagascar, and Benin.

9 In the past, service agency staff often took responsibility for organizing the villagers. For example, the field extension agents organized contact groups. However experience shows that contacts are much more useful when farmers organize them.

10 These include all service and development agencies active in a village and that want to contribute to its development, regardless of nature, affiliation or size: agricultural extension, education, public health services, road maintenance services, NGOs, churches, volunteer associations and others.

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