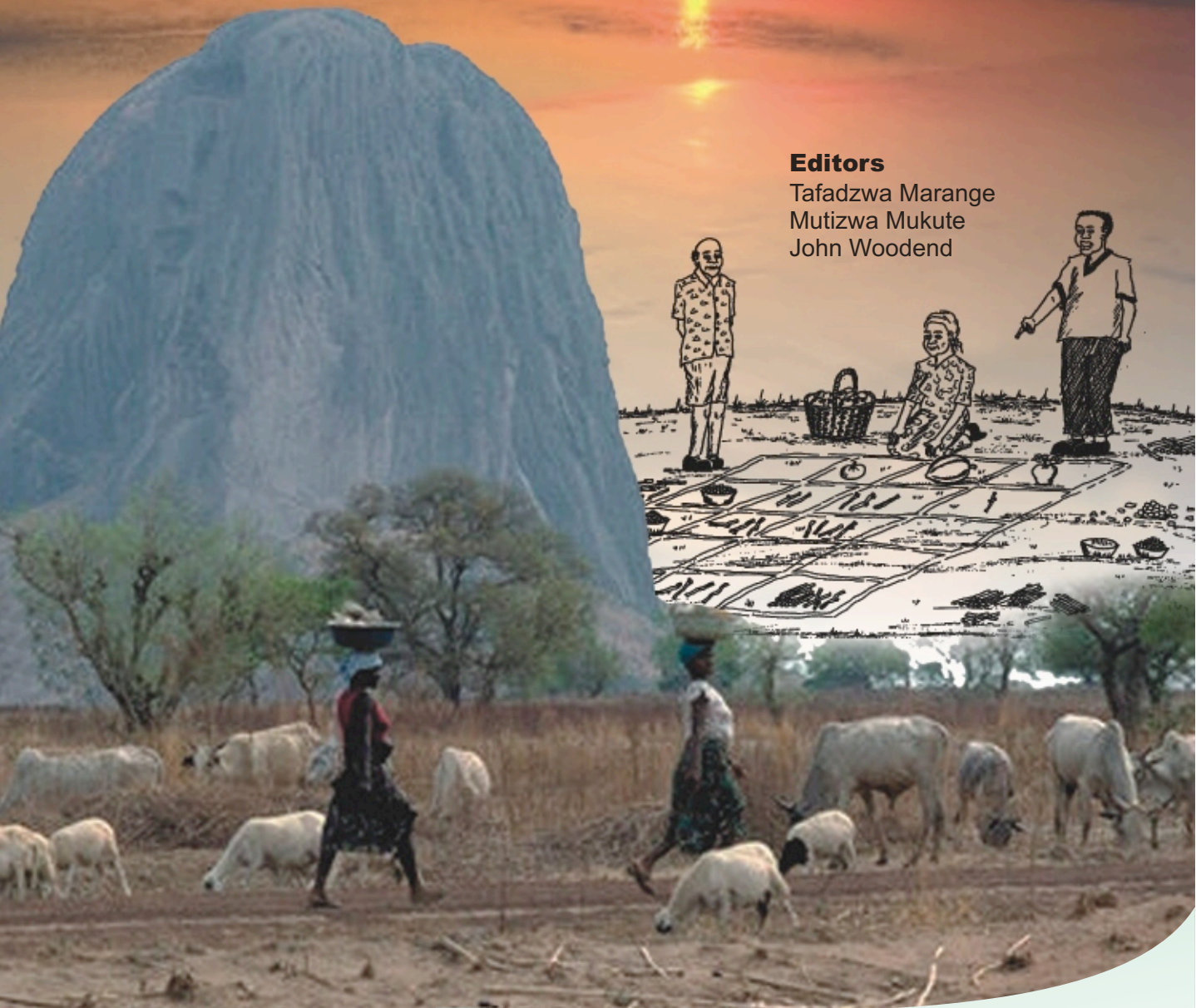


BEYOND PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

Field Guide

Editors

Tafadzwa Marange
Mutizwa Mukute
John Woodend



PELUM



VECO ZIMBABWE



CROP POST-HARVEST PROGRAMME

DFID Department for International Development

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FIELD GUIDE

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Sponsors: GTZ, VECO and DFID



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CPHIP
CROP POST-HARVEST
PROGRAMME



DFID
Department for
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGRITEX	Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services
CDTF	Community Development Trust Fund
CGIAR	Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research
CIAT	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
CPHP	Crop Post-Harvest Programme
Con Till Project	Conversation Tillage Project
DFID	Department for International Development
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IIED	International Institute of Environment and Development
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRI	Natural Resources Institute
PCP	Participatory Community Projects
PEA	Participatory Extension Approach
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PELUM	Participatory Ecological and Land Use Management
PIM	Participatory Impact Monitoring
PRE	Participatory Research and Extension
PRCA	Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal
PTD	Participatory Technology Development
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
VECO	Vredeseilanden Country Office

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Producing the guide has been made possible by the purposeful partnerships between the Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Programme, DFID Crop Post-Harvest Research Programme (CPHP), Southern Africa and Vredeseilanden, (VECO – Zimbabwe). Besides editing and compiling inputs, most case studies used in the guide have come from these organisations.

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- Bieke Machiels from VECO–Zimbabwe, Organisational Strengthening and Institutional Development Adviser;
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5. Illustrations

We are indebted to Enock Chihombori for developing the illustrations in this guide.

Tafadzwa Marange (Regional Coordinator, CPHP Southern Africa)

Mutizwa Mukute (then Secretary General, PELUM Association)

FOREWORD

This field guide has been produced from the collective strengths and experiences of many people. It has been made possible by the purposeful partnership between the Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Programme, the Crop Post-harvest Programme for Southern Africa (CPHP) and Vredeseilanden, (VECO-Zimbabwe). The process of compiling the guide took over a year during which consultations were held between the partners, authors and editors. As a result, we believe we have a worthwhile product that will add value to the literature on participatory development, especially in the rural areas of developing countries.

The guide draws from the experiences of development practitioners who have used participatory approaches for several years and under different circumstances. Therefore, I am confident that the insights generated from practice and constant reflection will add value to the knowledge and literature that is already available.

Perhaps the major strength of the guide is that it goes beyond the participatory tools themselves, and attempts to locate them within a particular framework. One of the main concerns of the guide is why we use the tools we use.

We, the partners, therefore hope that readers will use the guide creatively and developmentally, and that they will also understand the application of the tools in their proper context.

Mary Jo Kakinda

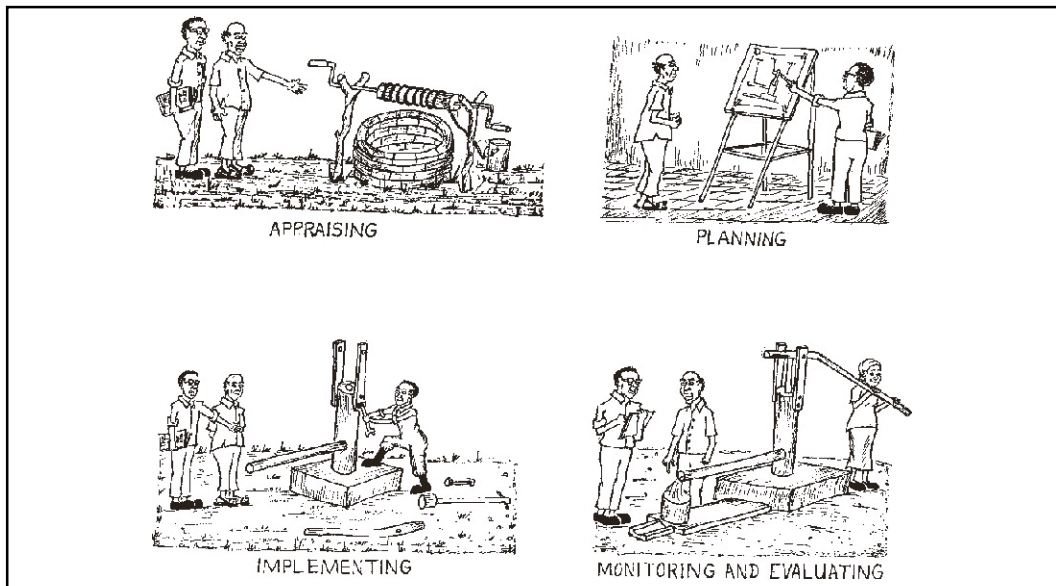
PELUM Association Chair

INTRODUCTION

Mutizwa Mukute

1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

This field guide is primarily intended for development facilitators who work directly with communities. It seeks to provide participatory development ideas and suggestions for a development worker to consider using when working with communities. Its primary focus is to explain why and how participatory concepts, tools and techniques can be used effectively in development work. More specifically, the guide seeks to synthesize and crystallise various participatory development approaches, principles, methodologies and tools; and expose and share relevant experiences from eastern and southern Africa. It further aims to stimulate creativity and adaptive use of approaches and tools; raise interest in a more holistic approach to participatory development and integrate gender into participatory processes.



In this guide, we try to explore the entire journey: appraising, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating.

The title of this guide suggests that there is a danger of viewing participation as a set of tools that have come about with the rise in participatory approaches. Yet, what matters more than the tools, are the principles behind them.

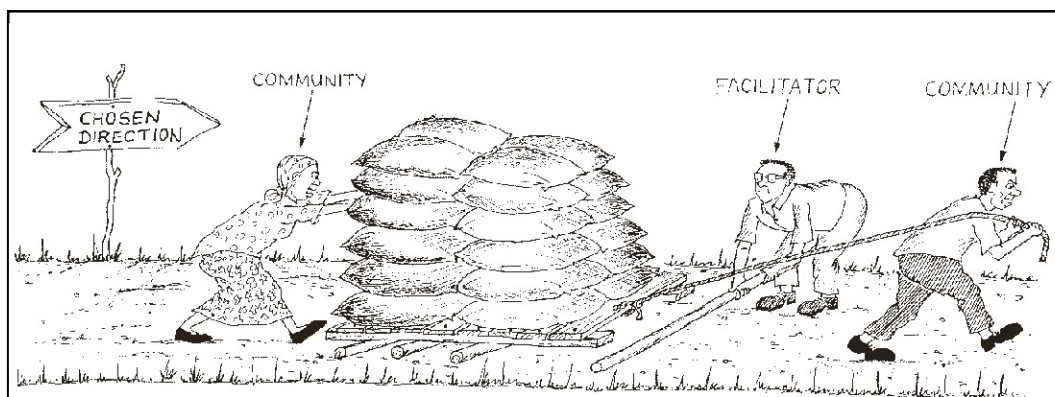
2. OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDE

This field guide was written against growing evidence that many of us who use participatory tools need more understanding of the why, in addition to the how. Unless we understand enough of the reasoning behind the use of a particular tool or set of tools, we are unlikely to generate accurate and useful information and the desired change.

The limitation mentioned above has resulted in the ineffective and rigid use of tools such as semi-structured interviews, transect walks and force field analysis. A good understanding of the techniques and approaches, and what lies behind the tools, should enable us to question them, to adapt them to different situations and to develop them further. Continuous reflection and action can bring about personal development that increases one's potential to make a difference in one's personal and professional life.

The other reason for producing the guide is that while there have been many experiences in participatory rural development in Africa, there has been limited gleaning, crystallisation and sharing of these experiences. The guide therefore makes a determined effort to pull together regional experiences where the social, ecological and political conditions are similar. This manual is experience-based and draws on the various experiences of the three organisations and the partners they have worked with. We acknowledge that we have benefited from the documented lessons and experiences from other continents. We also realise that we have a responsibility to share our experiences among ourselves and with others. Where necessary, we have drawn upon experiences outside southern and eastern Africa.

Another gap that was identified in the current participatory development literature was the tendency to concentrate on one aspect of the development process. For example, most

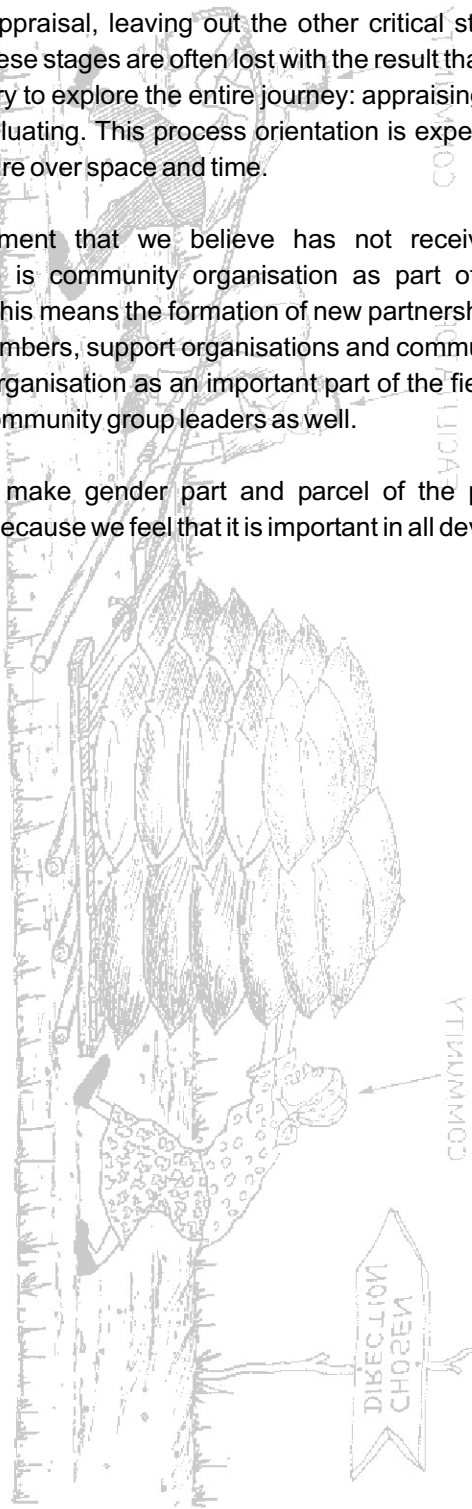


Helping the community to work together to realise its potential in the direction that it has chosen.

approaches focus on appraisal, leaving out the other critical stages of the process. The connections between these stages are often lost with the result that weak links exist between them. In this guide, we try to explore the entire journey: appraising, planning, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating. This process orientation is expected to assist users of the guide to see the big picture over space and time.

Another important element that we believe has not received enough attention in contemporary literature is community organisation as part of helping communities to empower themselves. This means the formation of new partnerships between development workers, community members, support organisations and community-based organisations. We therefore see self-organisation as an important part of the field guide. This also makes the guide important to community group leaders as well.

We have also tried to make gender part and parcel of the participatory development discussion in the guide because we feel that it is important in all development work.



3. INTENDED AUDIENCE OF THE GUIDE

*“If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then, let’s work together,”
(Lila Watson, an Australian Aboriginal educator and activist).*

Since this field guide is primarily meant for a development facilitator/worker, it is important to look at what they do in community development. These are the people whose responsibilities include to:

- Facilitate, animate and coordinate. This means helping the community to work together to realise its potential in the direction that it has chosen;
- Improve communication and interaction in the community by listening to the people and helping each participant to speak out;
- Build good working relationships with people by adapting and fitting in different circumstances, living simply, being patient with people, and working with them, not for them;
- Facilitate the enhancement of the strength and creativity of the people they work with by having confidence in them, trusting in their capacities, supporting their initiatives and bringing in added value to what they want and do;
- Join the people in search of knowledge by viewing learning as a life-long process, by learning from the people and helping them appreciate that each person knows something that they can contribute for the benefit of others;
- Provide information that people need but leave them to make their own informed choices; and
- Accept doubts, criticisms and conflict as they will inevitably arise in conditions of diversity, but manage these productively.

***These roles are well summarised in the following Chinese saying:**
“Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build on what they have,” Lao Tsu.*

4. PARTICIPATION AS A JOURNEY

Participation can be seen as a journey that people travel together, with an end in mind. It is a journey that takes the people to uncharted territory, the unfamiliar, to new challenges and opportunities, to new benefits and costs. The journey can be broken up into several parts:

- Get ready for the journey (*purpose and commitment to participation*)
- Where are you now? (*assessment, appraisal*)
- Where do you want to be? (*visioning*)
- What is the best way to get there? (*action planning, decision-making, options*)
- What barriers are you likely to face? (*implementation-barriers to participation, problems*)
- How will you know how far you have travelled? (*monitoring and evaluation, success*)
- Arrival and preparing for a new journey (*embedding participation*).

Box 1: Some important steps in the development journey

Given that most development processes fail to notice the link between one stage of the process and another, it is useful to look at the stages that one may go through in establishing participatory processes in community situations. These are as follows:

Formulate the desired situation:

This is a description of what the individual or the community would like to achieve in a given period. The desired situation often covers many aspects of life and denotes success. Communities cover their values, and the social, economic and ecological improvements in formulating the desired situation.

Identify the community and area strengths: These are the resources the community possesses in order to achieve the aspired kind of life.

Problem and opportunity identification: Participants identify the major obstacles and opportunities that may lie in their path to achieving the desired life.

Problem and opportunity clarification: The people go over the problems and opportunities so that they can appreciate their context, content and relevance. This facilitates engagement, negotiation and deepening of discussions.

Causes and effects identification: Participants draw up a problem tree and/or causal diagram to identify real causes and consequences. There are many unsuccessful attempts to do development work because the solutions addressed symptoms only.

Prioritise: Participants identify the problems to tackle according to their importance and significance. There are some problems that if solved, lead to solutions for others.

Participatory planning: Participants then define the objectives derived from the desired situation, the problems identified and agreed upon, followed by specific objectives and activities under each objective. They also decide on monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms.

Implementation and monitoring: Participants then implement the plan and constantly review it, learn from both the successes and failures, develop their own “theories” about the project and feed lessons into future planning.

Participatory evaluation and re-planning: After setting its own indicators and basis for the evaluation, the community takes an active part in the process. It may decide to have someone from outside (external evaluator) in which case it should lead the definition of the terms of reference. At the end of the evaluation, major re-planning is often necessary.

5. ORGANISATION OF THE GUIDE

The guide has been organised in a manner that should make it easy to follow and understand. It discusses the key ideas and principles that guide participation, identifies and discusses the knowledge and skills that are desirable in participatory development processes, and looks into the process of participation before proposing how the concepts, tools and techniques may be used and adapted.

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPATION

John Wilson

1.1 INTRODUCTION

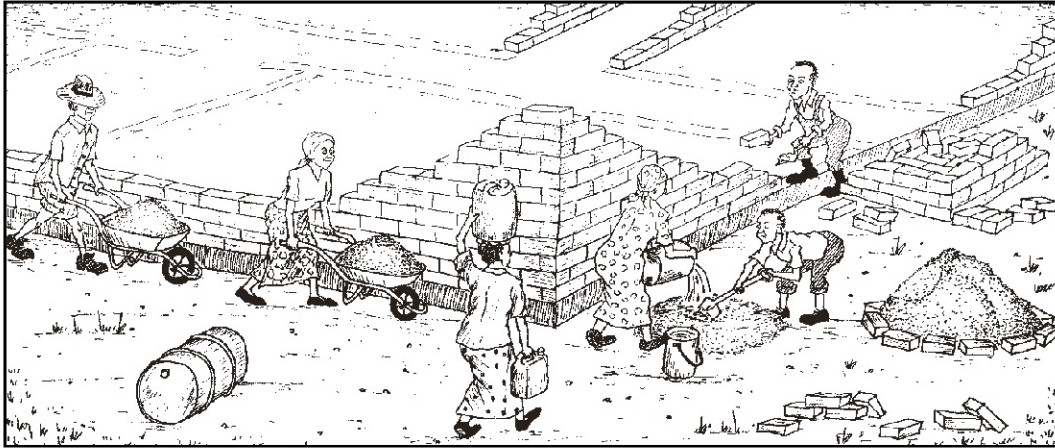
Participation is about people taking part in something. In development work, people use participation to denote involvement, ownership and power-sharing, creating synergies from working and living together, and thinking and working together for mutual benefit.

The principles of participation include involvement, building on what is there, uniqueness of each situation, attitude, using each opportunity to learn, observation, initiativeness, gender and diversity, communication and dialogue.

- a. **Involvement:** Participation is about people being involved. Who is involved in the current discussion? Who is not? Who is influencing a particular programme? Who is being left out? How can those that are left out become more involved? Facilitators of participation are always asking themselves how to increase, renew or maintain people's involvement.
- b. **Building on what is there:** It helps to start with what people have. This could be knowledge, physical assets, useful connections or reputation. Underlying this is the principle of respect; respect for the people and what they have, and how they look at things. Building on what is there also refers to the unfolding of a current situation, and recognising and celebrating the richness that already exists.
- c. **Each situation is unique:** The particular situation of one community is different from another though many similarities may exist. Realities differ in place and time. Tools and other standard ways of doing things provide useful frameworks. However, one needs to use them in a flexible way, avoiding the tendency to follow standard procedures and practices that disregard the uniqueness of each situation.
- d. **Attitude:** One's attitude towards the people and to the approach that is being used is important because it affects how one relates to people. Positive attitudes include having faith in the people's abilities to liberate themselves. There are no participation experts. Attitude determines how one designs a certain programme, how to respond in a particular situation, and how to participate.

- e. **Use every opportunity to learn:** This principle refers to bringing rigour into one's practice of participation. If you have been part of a meeting, then give a moment to reflect on the levels of participation at that meeting. If you are a facilitator, then every time you facilitate look closely at how effective the facilitation was. What enabled participation? What prevented it? What will you do differently next time? What new insight did you gain? The skill of action learning is of immense value to promoting continuous learning.
- f. **Observe, observe, and observe:** It is the principle of observation that respects the uniqueness of each situation. There are many things to observe about participation. Only by observing a particular situation can one respond appropriately. How well are people listening? What do their expressions tell you? What is the body language saying? Are there some people being left out? Land, animals, infrastructure also need to be observed.
- g. **Be bold, try out new ways of doing things:** While following the principle of on-going learning, one also needs to be prepared to try out new ways of doing things. In this way, one will achieve breakthroughs to greater participation, and increase one's own understanding of participation. It requires being prepared to fail and learn from mistakes.
- h. **People remember best what they hear, see, do and talk about:** Remembering and participation are closely linked. One is likely to remember something better if one has been involved. This involvement can take the form of hearing, seeing, doing or talking about something; or a combination of them. When you design an event, try to include activities that enable a variety of hearing, seeing, doing and talking about. This is likely to contribute significantly to promoting effective participation.
- i. **Keep energy levels up:** Energy promotes participation and participation promotes energy. They go hand in hand. Someone whose energy level is high is far more likely to participate actively than someone whose energy level is low. This is closely linked to the principle that people remember best what they hear, see, do and talk about.
- j. **Work towards improving everyone's understanding of participation:** Greater participation depends on all those involved understanding why participation matters and how to enhance it. If a member of a community has a tendency to dominate, only when that person has a greater understanding of participation will he/she be able to change his/her behaviour. It is not enough for just the facilitators of development processes to become more skilled in the field of participation. All those involved should have a good understanding in order for participation to be effective.

- k. **Gender/Diversity/Inclusion:** Participation is about enhancing equality and equity among men and women, boys and girls, the poor and the well-off. Therefore, all attempts at promoting participation are more useful when they include the gender and wealth dimension.
- l. **Communication/Dialogue:** Communication and dialogue form an essential part of participation. People have different perspectives, issues, needs and aspirations that need articulation, negotiation and dialogue, giving and taking, creating solutions and benefits that draw on the strength of each person.



In development work, people use participation to denote involvement, ownership and power-sharing, creating synergies from working, living together; thinking and working together for mutual benefit.

1.2 LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

Participation covers a range of levels. It can also mean different things to different people. In the book *Participatory Learning and Action*, the team at International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) proposed seven types of participation. This is just one way of looking at participation but does provide an illustration of the range of possible levels. IIED's types of participation are as follows:

- **Passive participation** – hearing something from someone else but having no part in it.
- **Participation in information-giving** – answering a researcher's questions, for example.
- **Participation by consultation** – sharing views but not participating in the decision-making.
- **Participation for material incentives** – this is when people participate for particular benefits, for example in a food-for-work scheme.