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International Perspectives on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

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International Perspectives on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

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1. History of Participatory Approaches

To understand Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) it will be useful to understand the historical roots of the concept, which lies in the history of the participatory approaches.

Emergence of Participatory Research : Participatory Research (PR) is emerged from critiques of traditional social science research methodologies, in which researchers adapted and applied pure scientific methods to the study of social systems. At the same time, people at the community level who had been oppressed and marginalised for generations–by unequal distribution of power, loss of livelihood sources, and control of information and knowledge by dominant elite groups were coming to the same conclusions, out of their own hard day-to-day experiences of life and survival. The emergence of participatory research was also greatly influenced by the practices of adult educators working in developing countries, who realised that the rise of professional specialisation was devaluing popular knowledge and its production.

The growth of participatory development:A further influence on the emergence of participatory approaches came from practitioners involved in development work from the 1970s onwards in both the North and South, but principally in the latter. Among them, debates grew about the fact that 'development elites' were controlling knowledge production systems, with the result that in social sciences, the status quo was preserved and dependency created among the poor on government and elite sections for the resources, services and knowledge that comprised 'development'. As a result, some development practitioners began to realise the importance of indigenous and popular knowledge in framing and delivering more effective development programmes.

Prominent among them was Robert Chambers, who proposed the involvement of poor people in gathering information for development project planning and design, initially through what he termed Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). He then took the developed practice further into what he termed Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

2.What is Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation?

2.1 Differences between participatory and conventional approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation

It will be important to note that there are two main forms of monitoring and evaluation, which include conventional forms and participatory forms.

Conventional forms of evaluation

- aim at 'objectivity';
- are undertaken by 'outside experts';
- are often initiated by funding agencies; and
- are mainly concerned with objectively establishing the financial and/or technical viability of a project or competence of those running it; recommending any needed changes to the project design or blueprint; ensuring that all aspects of the activity are carried out on time and to plan, and that the performance does not deviate from the blueprint or overrun cost or time limits. (UNDP, 1996)

Participatory forms of monitoring and evaluation

Participatory forms may well seek to do much the same things (in short, to improve the work), but additionally or alternatively they:

- more generally support and extend participatory models of development;
- empower the monitored and/or evaluated communities, organisations, and individuals to play their part in analysing and solving their own problems;
- value the pre-existing and indigenous knowledge and experience of local people in analysing their economic, political, social and cultural realities;
- use learning and education to promote reflection and critical analysis by both project participants and development workers;
- involve the active participation of beneficiaries, who play a central role in the entire process;
- promote the beneficiaries' ownership of the project or programme;
- use participatory approaches of obtaining data and generating knowledge(employing a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods); and
- create better, more in-depth, more widespread and more accurate knowledge of the performance and results of a development intervention (being participatory and collective in nature) (Jackson & Kassam, 1998).

Table 1 summarises the key differences between conventional and participatory approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation, adapted from Narayan-Parker (1993).

Table 1: Differences between conventional and participatory approaches to PME

	Conventional	**Participatory**
Who	External 'experts'	Community members, project/programme staff, expert as 'facilitator'
What	Pre-determined indicators of success; mainly about costs and tangible outputs etc	People identify their own indicators which may include, but not be restricted to, tangible outputs
How	Focus on 'scientific objectivity'; distancing of evaluators from other participants; uniform, often complex, procedures; delayed or limited access to results	Self-evaluation; simple methods adapted to local culture; open, immediate sharing of results and local involvement in the entire process
When	Usually on completion of the project/programme; sometimes mid-term	More likely to be frequent or continuous
Why	Accountability; usually summative; to determine if funding continues	Knowledge- and capacity-building; empowerment of local people to initiate, organise, control and take action

Source: Adapted from Narayan-Parker (1993).

Working definition of PM& E

It is a way of learning from and with community members and other stakeholders, to investigate, analyse and make informed and timely decision, learning to corrective action.

2.2 Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation in the development context

Participatory approaches are increasingly becoming the norm for the Evaluation of development projects in the Third World (UNDP, 1996). Rarely are the objectives and purposes of such projects simple or singular, especially at the programmatic or organisational levels. One review of social development programmes alone (Oakley, Pratt and Clayton, 1998, cited in Dwivedi, 2001) suggests that they may have any or all of these objectives:

- ***Poverty reduction***: in terms not only of income generation and increased production but also of helping poor people gain access to the resources necessary to sustain their livelihood.

- ***Human development***: meaning better education, health, family planning, literacy, skills, etc.

- ***Participation***: involving poor people directly in the development process.

- ***Empowerment***: beyond participation, helping people to gain the knowledge, skills and abilities that enable them to have more power to defend their interests, promote their livelihoods and to make choices and decisions.

- ***Women's social and economic development***: the promotion of gender equity to ensure equal access to resources and development benefits.

- ***Rights and social justice***: including those enshrined in constitutions and democratic processes, particularly the rights of the marginalised and the vulnerable.

It can readily be seen that unlike conventional approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation of these goals, the adoption of participatory approaches will in themselves actually contribute towards their achievement. Or to look at it from another angle, the use of conventional approaches may well actually reduce the chances of achieving them.

2.3 Principles of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Narayan-Parker (1993) identifies six underpinning principles of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E):

- collaboration;
- generating knowledge;
- problem-solving:
- releasing creativity;
- using multiple and innovative methods;
- involving experts as facilitators.

Gaventa and Estrella (1998) outline four more:

- learning;
- negotiation;
- flexibility;
- participation.

These ten underpinning principles are explained below:

Learning

Participatory monitoring and evaluation builds on what people already know and do, and both uses and develops their abilities and skills to monitor and evaluate their own progress (Feuerstein, 1986). As participants involved in PM&E gain skills, local the community's capacity for planning, problem-solving and decision-making is built. Both at the individual level and that of the community or organisation-level, people gain a greater understanding of the various factors (internal and external) that affect the conditions and dynamics of the project, organisation or community as a whole. New knowledge builds on their existing knowledge: what works and what does not; and what alternative actions might need consideration. PME is an experiential learning cycle: a process of continuous learning, reflection and action. Ward (1997) identifies four levels of such learning:

- Level 1: Learning facts, knowledge
- Level 2: Learning transferable job skills
- Level 3: Learning to adapt and to derive lessons from success and failure
- Level 4: Learning to be innovative and creative to design the future rather than merely adapt to it.

The OECD (Ball, 1989) sees Levels 3 and 4 as "enterprising" personal qualities referred to earlier. But, if they are to survive and prosper in a rapidly changing world, people need knowledge (Level 1) and skills (Level 2).

Negotiation

PM&E is increasingly seen as a social process for negotiating between people's different needs, expectations and world views. At its heart are discourse and interaction (Gaventa and Estrella, 1998). Working together on PME improves the understanding of all parties of their own needs and the interests, perceptions and roles of others, so that the outcome can be continuously improved for all (Gaventa and Estrella, 1998). When placed in the context of an entire society or nation, it can readily be see that PME contributes significantly to the achievement of democracy through being a forum for discourse and debate (Freedman, 1998).

The issues that arise here are those of power, equity and social transformation. The processes of negotiation can either empower or disempower the different stakeholders, depending on the extent to which they are involved in the design, implementation, reporting and use of results of the PME process. The greater the level of participation of the beneficiaries, the more empowered they will be. The question of who creates and who controls the production of knowledge and information collected and created by monitoring and evaluation is a central one. An important part of the PME process is the selection of indicators.

Flexibility

Unlike many forms of conventional evaluation, there is no 'standard model' or 'blueprint' for PM&E in any particular setting or for any specific purpose. Indeed, process should be contextual, taking into account the local socio-cultural, economic, political and institutional contexts in which may take place (Marsden and Oakley, 1990). It follows that every PME exercise will be different: flexibility is the key to its design.

Freedman (1998) takes the principle of flexibility to its (logical) conclusion by arguing that evaluating in a participatory manner is an 'art' in marked contrast to the emphasis on 'science' of earlier generations of evaluation. "Conventional evaluations," he argues, "can be needlessly elaborate because evaluators go to great lengths to surround their study with the appearance of rigour in order to withstand the challenges of managers and ministers' offices". And he goes on: "The art is finding research exercises that participants like to do and that will make them proud of their work...this means using numbers for effect but not for proof, using commonsense methods....and generally recognising that compassion works as well as distance in assuring accurate information". To go back to the choosing of indicators, he adds: "...it means avoiding indicators whose principal justification is that they are 'standard' indicators..."

Collaboration

PM&E is a collaborative endeavour all the way through the process, from planning to analysis and change. 'Collaboration' means not just doing things together but taking decisions collectively, and making special efforts to ensure the meaningful participation of traditionally excluded or overlooked groups, such as women, youth and the most poor and marginalised (Narayan-Parker, 1993).

Generating knowledge, problem-solving and releasing creativity

PM&E seeks not just to gather and analyse information in order to generate knowledge in the form of a better understanding of a problem or need, and of the effect of the action being taken to address it. It includes that and goes beyond it, to developing 'Level 4' attributes among people: innovation, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. The techniques used in PME are themselves designed to be creative and enjoyable, so that they do not only generate knowledge but also build self-esteem and confidence, and stimulate enthusiasm (Narayan-Parker, 1993).

Using multiple and innovative methods

The methods used in conventional approaches typically consist of an 'expert' evaluator gathering information through individual interviews, along with data collection from files and records. In PM&E the methods used to plan, to gather information, to analyse it and

to make decisions are much more numerous and imaginative, many of them borrowed and adapted from other disciplines, particularly the arts (Narayan-Parker, 1993).

Involving experts as facilitators

While still often called 'the evaluator', outside 'experts' play very different roles than in conventional forms of monitoring and evaluation. The key difference is that that they facilitate and enable rather than 'do'. While it is often thought that PME is synonymous with 'self-evaluation', this is not true at all. In fact, many PME exercises involve outsiders .

Participation

Gaventa and Estrella (1998) note that: "perhaps what most distinguishes PME from more conventional 'traditional' approaches to monitoring and evaluation is its emphasis on participation...PME acknowledges that there are multiple stakeholders who are, or should be, participants in monitoring and evaluation".

3.Steps in PM&E

3.1Enabling environment

Before community monitoring is initiated, it is important to create an environment where it is not seen as a threat. This requires:

- developing an understanding of the meaning of monitoring, its aims and objectives among all the stakeholders;
- helping people to understand how monitoring works and the responsibilities of the actors involved in it. What is the system? What data does it need to collect? How is the information aggregated, analysed and acted upon? What are the reporting mechanisms? What can be done to improve the system?
- identifying the people who are supporting the initiative among NGOs and the government;
- starting with monitoring activities that are simple, neutral and non-threatening and build capacity and confidence.

Project monitoring can be defined as the systematic and continuous assessment of the progress and changes caused by the implementation of a project over a certain period of time. Through monitoring what is happening in a project is closely followed so that any problem or shortfall in performance is discovered at an early stage so that corrective action can be taken immediately so that in turn the project more surely reaches its goals.

3.2 Defining the aim of the monitoring

In designing and putting in place a monitoring system the first step is to define its aims. A monitoring system should be designed to meet specific needs and these vary according to

the nature of activities at each level of the project. It is important to know who or what needs monitoring and why it is needed.

3.3 Finalising Indicators

The next step is to decide what information should come from where on the basis of interest of each partner or actor involved in the project, and how it should be collected. At the same time, indicators that depict progress or change should be determined.

3.4Collection of data

There are many different ways of collecting data. The most appropriate method should be selected according to the kind of information needed, who is collecting it and how it is used.

Some methods of collecting data include:

***Participatory learning methodologies*:** These methods are useful in engaging people in collection as well as analysis of the information gathered from monitoring. If the planning stage had used these methods , they can be very appropriate and effective in monitoring. For example if resource mapping was used in planning an afforestation project it will be appropriate to use it to monitor the growth of trees.

Surveys: The surveys can be conducted to determine how the population affected by the project. Collected data can be compared with the results of any baseline study carried out before the work began.

3.5Analysis of data

The analysis of data coming from monitoring should be carried out as it is collected. The analysis should not only seek to identify trends, but could be done to continue or to improve the situation. For example if the data from a women's education project indicates that some women are not coming to attend classes, a proper analysis would offer reasons for that. The women themselves should be encouraged to discuss those reasons and plan what should be done to counteract or respond to it. The analysis should also give rise to suggesting actions to be taken at the level implementing agency such as changing the time of classes, making sessions more interesting by using innovative methodologies etc. As well as reviewing progress and achievements against those set out in original project plans and taking appropriate actions, monitoring should also determine whether actions indicated by earlier monitoring has actually been taken, and if not, why not. It should also be stressed that such actions may be the responsibility of any or all of the programme/project teams; the communities; the donors; and any project partners.

3.6 Use of results

A good monitoring system should envisage a variety of uses of the data and analysis, which can include: use in planning future projects; contributing to formal project reviews and evaluations; and institutional learning.

Core steps in developing PM&E

1. Identify who should, and wants to, be involved.
2. Clarify participants' expectations of the process (what are their information needs), and in what way each person or group wants to contribute.
3. Define the priorities for monitoring and evaluating (on which goals/objectives/activities to focus)
4. Identify indicators that will provide the information needed.
5. Agree on the method, responsibilities and timing of information collection.
6. Collect the information.
7. Adapt the data collection, methodology, as needed.
8. Analyse the information.
9. Agree on how the findings are to be used and by whom.
10. Clarify if the PM&E process needs to be sustained, and if so, how. Adjust the methodology accordingly

(Source : Gujit, 2000, p202)

4. Innovative techniques used in participatory monitoring and evaluation

As experiences in participatory approaches developed over the past 30 years, particularly in projects involving poor and marginalised people, a wide variety of creative and innovative techniques have been developed. This has been in response to a central challenge that is faced by anyone promoting and seeking to enable participation in any form of participatory research or participatory development: how can people who feel that they lack the knowledge, skills and abilities required to participate, and/or feel they have nothing to contribute, and/or feel that it is none of their business; be enabled to become involved?

4.1The aims and objectives of innovative participatory methods include:

- ***Fostering grassroots participation and negotiation***: grassroots participation facilitates understanding of the complexities of development processes, power relations and grassroots aspirations. Participatory methods also facilitate negotiations between different stakeholders.

- ***Dealing with issues related to power***: enabling primacy to the perspectives of poor and disadvantaged people, or if not, these are at least recognised as important.

- ***Enabling information gathering, learning and analysis by local people.***

- ***Accommodating multiple values and perspectives***: the assumption is that there are multiple possible perceptions and understanding of any reality. The complexity and diversity of individual and group perceptions need to be recognised.

- ***Fostering collective and group inquiry and action process***: the underlying assumption is that full complexity of social reality will only emerge through group inquiry and that collective action, rather than mere understanding, will be an important result.

- ***Context specific***: there are no 'standard' or 'model' approaches, as every set of conditions and actors are different. Methods are, therefore, applied flexibly and innovatively.

- ***Experts act as facilitators***: the role of an expert is to help people in their situation to carry out their own studies, leading to desirable and sustainable changes. These facilitators may well come from the community itself, and thus be stakeholders.

- ***Using visual media***: visual techniques enable and encourage the participation of people, who are marginalised, lack literacy, or are not used to verbal communications.

- ***Leading to change***: the process is likely to have a strong capacity building element so that needed changes are not just identified, but necessary empowerment and individual and collective ability to achieve them are developed.

4.2 Innovative participatory methods combine:

Group methods: These are essentially popular education methods, drawing upon the knowledge and experiences of participants, and blending of different types of knowledge (traditional, local and practical as well as external, academic and theoretical). They promote critical analysis through group discussion and build capacity for collective action.

- Participatory workshops
- Community and public meetings
- Collective dialogues
- Group Discussions
- Semi-structured interviews
- Educational camps,

Arts/drama based techniques: These are extensively used in PRA to draw out and cross-check the experience of people and communities and cultures; to identify, assess and prioritise needs; and to evaluate and analyse.

- Drawing

- Public art production and display:
- The picture-novel or fotonovela
- Socio-drama
- Popular or street theatre
- Puppet theatre:
- Participatory video

Visual based Methods: Visual presentation both complements and supplements verbal discussion. It facilitates data generation during the production of baseline surveys at the planning stage for example, or when monitoring data is being collected. It helps to identify issues; build consensus and can form a basis for resolving conflicts and differences of opinion.

Visual presentations can be generated on the basis of space, time and relationships.

- *Space-related visuals*: These explore the spatial dimension of people's reality. These methods create social maps that show how people perceive and relate to each other, spatially.(social map, mobility maps, service and opportunity map,personal maps, transacts)

- *Time related methods*: These create visual representations of changes over time. They chronicle events; people's accounts of the past; and how customs, practices and other things close to them have changed; local histories of a crop, an animal, a tree, a pest, a weed, etc.; changes in land use and cropping patterns, population, migration, fuel use, education, health, and credit. (seasonal calendars, daily time-use analysis)

- *Relationship methods*: these show relationships between people, events or causes or effects, which are generated and presented, using such visual techniques as Venn diagrams and ranking methods.

5. Practice of PME

Case Study 1 :Citizen Monitoring in a village in India (adapted from PRIA, 2002)

In 2000-2001, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) with a local partner organisation, the Himalayan Action Research Centre (HARC) initiated a study of the effectiveness of village-level governance institutions in two districts in the state of Himachal Pradesh. These institutions aimed to enable people's ownership of the services provided, giving them control of them and autonomy to run them in their own way. Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) were among them, having local control over a World Bank-funded project that aimed:

- to promote and deliver sustainable health and hygiene benefits to people through improved water supply and sanitation services;
- to improve rural incomes;

- to test alternatives to existing supply side-driven service delivery mechanisms; and
- to promote sanitation and gender awareness.

Project implementation was through a Project Management Unit in each district (DPMU), under which the VWSCs operated The study revealed that the effectiveness of the village governance institutions (including the VWSCs) depended on a number of factors, including community leadership and trust, good communication between committee members and their communities, good accountability and transparency, and good relationships with other village institutions.

The study revealed that in one village, Dharali, conflicts between its VWSC and the community were so deep that the project was having little effectiveness. Among the problems that were identified were:

- pipes and stand-pipes were being stolen;
- some people objected to the project because community contributions in cash or kind were required;
- the election process of the VWSC was considered to be flawed;
- accusations of corruption;
- women were under-represented on the VWSC (the planning stage had totally excluded them and little effort had been made to build their capacity for participation).

With HARC, PRIA initiated a participatory monitoring process in Dharali as a response to the problem and throughout it, both facilitated and worked to build the capacities of the community to implement the process and the action that followed. The steps that the process followed were as follows.

Step 1: Identification of the problems: this was done through the original study, as above

Step 2: Engaging the key stakeholders such as the VWSC members, village head and other community members in identifying the problems and concerns through a series of consultations and discussions. Initially, the meetings resulted in pro- and anti- project factions making allegations against each other, but it was eventually agreed to mount a monitoring exercise on one identified problem: ineffective water supply (in terms of continuity and quality).

Step 3: Identifying a core monitoring group of four people to be responsible for the collection of monitoring information. Through a large meeting in the village, it was agreed that those undertaking this task should meet these criteria:

- representative of each ward in the village;
- people showing interest in development work;
- people who are not members of the VWSC; and
- be a resident of the village.

Step 4: Indicator identification: The two external organisations, with the community, identified indicators and the core group arranged them into five categories:

- regularity of water supply;
- functioning stand-pipes;
- quality of the water;
- condition of the pipes; and
- contributions by the community.

Step 5: Collection and analysis of information: Information on each of the five indicators was collected by the core group every day for a year, by visiting each stand-pipe, individual interviews and group discussion and observation. A monthly meeting–usually late in the evening in the agriculture season to enable maximum attendance by community members–was convened by the village headman at which the findings were presented and discussed and, most importantly, to identify and agree the action that needed to be taken. For example, it was agreed that the problem of poor quality water should be dealt with by:

- raising the height of the tank to stop silting;
- afforestation around the water source;
- covering of the tank; and
- regular use of bleaching powder in the tank.

The meetings also identified who would be responsible for each action– among the community, the VWSC, the DPMU, the village panchayat (local government institution)– and what would be required to take it forward (in terms of skills, knowledge, resources, etc.).

Step 6: Taking action: The action taken was also subject to monitoring in order to continue the process of building the capacities of the various involved parties, particularly members of the community. This was done through meetings, awareness–raising camps, exposure visits to other communities and the showing of a video, *Pani ki kahaani* (The story of the water).

Case Study 2: Use of a combination of monitoring tools and methods (adapted from Marsden, Oakley& Pratt, 1994)

Over the years, the International Centre for Education and Human Development, (CINDE), has been implementing community-based approaches to early childhood care and education in Colombia. The programme began by encouraging groups of mothers from the poorest sections of the communities to stimulate the development of their pre-school children by playing games with them at home. During the meetings, the mothers started to identify other problems related to health, nutrition and income generation. Over time, the project evolved into an integrated community development project addressing such issues. Despite the widespread poverty in the area in which the programme operates, the focus of the work was on educational and organisational processes. The work was led

in each community by a *promotoro*, or facilitator, many of whom were mothers from the poorest sections of the community. These *promotoros* were the main educational agents in the programme.

From the outset, parents were involved in the management of the programme. Monitoring and evaluation were an integral part of the programme, not only to improve and assess the work, but also as a fundamental strategy to build the capacity of the individual participants and the communities. The monitoring system used various approaches, including:

- *Reporting and recording meetings* - each group kept an individual record or log. For example, during meetings with pre-school mothers, a point was made of evaluating the work done by each mother since the last encounter and how it had affected the development of her children. In the nutrition programme, the children were weighed and measured each week, and a simple graph developed by the mothers so that they could see the progress made. The group discussed the records, reflecting on why there had been any improvement or decline. In addition, the *promotoros* and CINDE staff wrote reports on activities, in which they noted their observations with respect to the objectives, achievements and any difficulties faced.

- *Survey/diagnosis/questionnaire* – a baseline survey was undertaken by the community to evaluate the situation before the programmes. For example, at the start of a campaign for the installation of latrines, the community developed a map, locating houses with latrines and those without, and which showed the altitude of different sections of the community to indicate the possibility of underground septic tanks. This helped stimulate the community to visualise the problem, locating the areas where the problem was more severe and created a basis against which to monitor their progress.

- *Group discussions* - meetings and activities were evaluated through group discussions, which provided an opportunity to discuss collective views on activities and the changes taking place.

- *Key informants* - individual discussions with one or two *promotoros* or community leaders were used as a way of monitoring developments and checking the validity of previous findings.

- *Workshops* - at least once a year, workshops were organised with the *promotoros* and CINDE staff to analyse development, to check that the project was on course and to make necessary changes.

Case study 4: Evaluating a Women and Development project in the Caribbean (adapted from Ellis P, 1998)

A pilot project for the Integration of Women in Rural Development, commonly known as the 'Rose Hall Project' was established by the Women and Development Unit (WAND) of the University of the West Indies in the small village of Rose Hall (population 1,200) on the island of St. Vincent. The objectives were to establish a participatory 'bottom-up'

development process to assess, plan, instigate and evaluate community-based projects; and through engaging rural women in the development process, enable them to raise their understanding of the role they play in the development of the community, develop their desires and abilities to take on leadership and decision-making roles, and generally improve the quality of their own lives and that of the community. The project was managed by a community working group.

Ten years after its inception, the Working Group decided to have a participatory evaluation (facilitated by an external evaluator from WAND, who had been the project's original coordinator and was thus familiar with it) to examine the past as well as help plan for the future. The Group identified the purposes of the evaluation and the questions it would address. The purposes were:

- to review what had happened over the 10 years as a result of the project;
- to reflect on and analyse the project's processes, outcomes and impact on individuals and the whole community;
- to begin to develop a plan for the future development of the project.

The questions were:

- What had been the project's achievements?
- What conditions and factors have contributed to them?
- In what ways has the project affected people's lives and that of the community as a whole?
- What problems and setbacks have been faced?
- How has the Working Group developed and how can it become more self-sufficient?

The Group also decided that the methodology of the evaluation should include a series of consultations with various community groups, focusing on reflection/ evaluation/ analysis of the past and renewal, visioning and planning for the future. As well as small and large group discussions and workshops, role plays, skits, song and poetry were used. Apart from collecting information by these means, there was a constant process of feedback. There were eight workshops involving over 200 people. The workshops included three with the Working Group itself; two for young people aged 12-30; and others with members of the coordinating committees that had been established for four of the project's ventures: a pre-school group, a bakery, an adult education programme and a shop. There were also two community meetings during the evaluation, attended by over 100 men, women and children.

In addition, the evaluator carried out one-to-one interviews and informal discussion with individuals in the community. A photographic exhibition was used to stimulate people's memories of what had been done and who had been involved over the years.

The evaluation revealed the great changes that had been brought about by the project over its lifetime. These included:

Among individuals:

- Improved personal relations between people – more caring, respectful, and willing to cooperate;
- Broadened horizons and aspirations – for higher education for example.
- Improved male-female relations;
- Increased technical, interpersonal and analytical skills and improved senses of self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth;
- Improved quality of life; and
- Improved problem-solving abilities.

Across the community as a whole:

- Improved physical appearance of the community through new constructions and upgrading efforts by householders;
- New facilities – telephones, TVs, water supplies, pre-school, bakery, community centre;
- Various successful development projects accomplished;
- Greater community 'togetherness' – cooperation, cohesion, commitment to community development; and
- Emergence of commonly shared goals and value systems, based on caring and cooperation.

6.Critical questions

In conclusion, and by way of drawing further lessons from the studies we have presented, let us briefly examine the key questions that need to be addressed when a participatory monitoring process is established. Bakewell, Adams and Pratt (2003) summarise them as:

- *What information is needed?* This will, of course, also involve the critically important question of what indicators are to be used for each of the links in the Log Frame sequence. It is important to collect no more and no less information than is needed; and to have a flexible approach so that changes can be made to the system over time, as and when needed. It is important that the beneficiaries as well as other stakeholders are involved in asking and answering this question as well as those that follow.

- *Who will collect the information?* Again, this needs to be thought about carefully from the very outset: in particular, the question of whether those who generate information can or should also collect it must be addressed.

- *How will the information be collected?* Choice on the tools and techniques need to be made, bearing in mind that multiple techniques allow for 'triangulation') but involve more time and effort. The balance to be struck between quantitative and qualitative approaches also needs early consideration.

- *Who will organise and analyse the monitoring information?* This also needs careful thought. If only one stakeholder does the analysis (who has a particular values or interest base), then will it be credible to all stakeholders? Again, a participative approach involving multiple stakeholders will have value.

- *How will the findings be used?*There is no point in having a monitoring process if there is no willingness or ability or process for its results to be used.

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