



# Practitioner's Guide:

## Participatory Planning



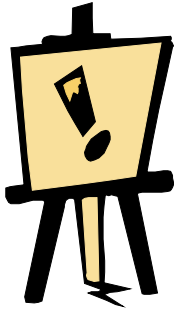
Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Technische Zusammenarbeit  
(GTZ) GmbH



Bundesministerium für  
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit  
und Entwicklung

### Participatory Planning

#### Brief Description



Participatory planning tools and techniques enable participants to influence and share control over development initiatives and decisions affecting them. In development planning, *participation* is a process of equitable and active involvement of all stakeholders in the formulation of development policies and strategies and in the analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development activities. Disadvantaged stakeholders need to be empowered to increase their level of knowledge, influence and control over their own livelihoods, including development initiatives affecting them in order to allow for a more equitable development process.

Participation is also an organized effort within institutions and organizations to increase stakeholder access and control over resources and related decision making that contributes to sustainable livelihoods. Participation is furthermore viewed as an iterative process involving the continuous re-adjustment of relationships between different stakeholders in a society in order to increase stakeholder control and influence over development initiatives that affect their lives.



*Photo 1:  
Organising a participatory  
planning exercise*



*Photo 2:  
Evaluating results of a  
participatory planning exercise*

### Participatory Planning

#### Proposed Main Users

Social and urban planner, private and public sector expert.



#### Purpose of the Process



There are various levels or degrees of participation ranging from simple consultation to joint decision making to self-management by stakeholders themselves. Participatory approaches, methods, tools, activities can all contribute towards a more equitable and demand-driven participatory development process. Participation is the key to sustainable development initiatives, since it will lead to:

- ▶ building on existing potentials and capacities, develops a greater sense of ownership on the part of the stakeholders
- ▶ increased commitment to the objectives and outcomes
- ▶ longer term social sustainability
- ▶ increased self-help capacities
- ▶ stronger and more democratic institutions and partnerships



*Photo 3:  
Women  
debating  
in organised  
groups*



*Photo 4:  
Villagers involved in a  
discussion over plan  
alternatives.*

### Participatory Planning

#### Advantages



- ▶ Involves all major stakeholders in the process of identifying their own potentials and constraints.
- ▶ Participation by all ensures a high degree of consensus.
- ▶ A host of different participatory methods and tools exist to address different target groups.
- ▶ Participatory methods enhance and support democratization efforts.
- ▶ Minority groups can be more effectively integrated into development processes.

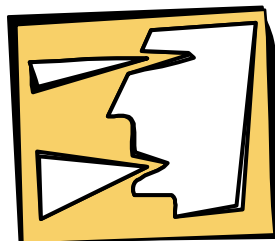
#### Limitations



- ▶ Organising participatory processes for a large group or for numerous settlements is costly and resource intensive activity. It is also not always “politically” desired.
- ▶ A consensus may be difficult or even impossible to reach.
- ▶ Latent tensions may emerge and could end in conflict as a result of the participatory process.
- ▶ A qualified process facilitator is often required to moderate the participatory action.
- ▶ Participatory processes question local traditional authorities. These need to be carefully integrated into the process if they are to participate effectively.

### Participatory Planning

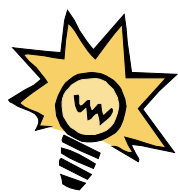
#### Principles and General Procedures



There are numerous different forms in which participation of the people can be undertaken, including:

- ▶ **Passive participation:** People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. These people are normally not involved in decision-making.
- ▶ **Participation in information giving:** People participate by answering questions posed by people who just want information. They normally use questionnaires or similar approaches.
- ▶ **Participation by consultation:** People participate by being consulted and external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions and may modify these in the light of people's responses.
- ▶ **Participation for material incentives:** People participate by providing resources. For example, labour in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Here, participation ends when the flow of incentives ceases.
- ▶ **Functional participation:** People participate by forming groups to help achieve the objectives related to the project. They are not part of the beginning of the project and only come in at the implementation stage.
- ▶ **Interactive participation:** People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action planning and therefore have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
- ▶ **Self-mobilisation:** People participate by taking their own initiative and not relying on any prompting from outside. They only rely on external sources for funding or technical advice but keep control over how resources are used. Such local initiatives sometimes change existing allocation of power, and sometimes do not.

There is no single universal approach for organizing participation. The manner in which the participation is to be organized depends upon so many variables all of which cannot be described here. However, there are a few general rules and procedures that should be observed when organizing any form of participation in planning.

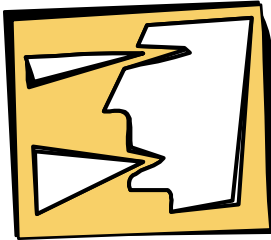


#### Participation must be based upon a set of values:

- ▶ Individuals are able to learn and are able to change.
- ▶ Individuals and communities can identify problems in their lives, find solutions and act to achieve them.
- ▶ People can work effectively together to change conditions that may be beyond their individual control.
- ▶ An individual by positively changing any part of his/her life may benefit from the change and thus improve his/her overall standard of living.
- ▶ Community participation and group processes in themselves enhance peoples well being.
- ▶ Individuals are genuinely interested in participating in developing themselves and their community.

### Participatory Planning

#### Principles and General Procedures



The following step-by-step approach defines some of the “do and don’t” that should be considered when organising any form of participatory planning exercise:

#### 1. Decide who should participate:

The group composition of a participatory process depends on the central issue and the goals of what has to be discussed or agreed upon. For some topics a homogenous group of participants is required, in others a more heterogeneous group of people should be chosen (different perspectives, different ages). When deciding on who should participate the motives of the people should also be considered. These can include: personal interest in the topic, opportunity for social contacts, opportunity for getting informed, curiosity, financial incentives, logistics, trust in the person organizing the participatory process. The composition of the group is a vital ingredient for successful participation.

#### 2. Describe the tasks and roles of the participants:

The tasks vary in accordance with the objective of the participatory session. The role can vary from a passive role to a very active role, depending upon the time, resources and logistics available. In a passive role the participants are invited to the process to discuss the central issue as a group. No presentation is needed. In the case of the active role, participants have next to a discussing role, tasks such as writing reports, preparing presentations, formulating questions, making collages and so on.

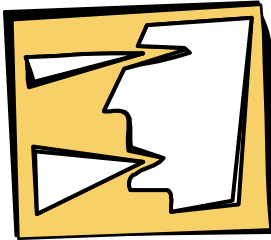
#### 3. Describe the tasks of the process facilitators:

Facilitators can include: experts, the convener, professionals, chairpersons, and leaders. The facilitator is the key to the success for creating a favourable environment for participation. He/she is responsible for the process and not for the content of the discussion. The facilitator has to be in tune with the purpose of the group and must have all the necessary skills to guide the process effectively. The facilitator is well trained in group dynamics, has excellent skills in interviewing, able to guide but not dominate a discussion. He/she does not make judgements or use body language that may communicate approval or disapproval. The facilitator must be able to:

- ▶ Be attentive to all comments, must stimulate all to participate.
- ▶ Must have a good overview of what is being discussed and is able to visualize this quickly and efficiently.
- ▶ Must have excellent conversation skills by asking the right questions, giving short summaries and appropriate comments so that all participants can fully understand what is going on.
- ▶ Must be unbiased so that he/she can represent all views in an unbiased manner.

### Participatory Planning

#### Principles and General Procedures



#### 4. Decide whether one or more meetings are required:

A series of meetings maybe necessary, these have to be carefully planned. A separation in the topics to be addressed and the timing has to be decided upon. It is also necessary to decide on the composition of each group for the various meetings.

#### 5. Decide upon timing and materials needed:

Duration of meetings can vary, time slots and overall timing has to be carefully planned. The location where the meeting takes place is also crucial. The location should reflect the type of atmosphere that is needed in view of the goal of the process, the type of participants and the participatory method being used. Supporting material that can be used includes: lectures, presentations, computer presentations, films, fact sheets, maps, charts, pictures, etc.

#### 6. Define the output:

The output of the participatory session also has to be defined. The output could be a simple set of charts, collages, a report, a series of questions to be further elaborated upon and so on. The goal and the type of participants define the end product of the process. Some participants are used to reports while others prefer collages.

#### 7. Decide upon the data collection needs:

During the participatory processes it may be necessary to gather data and information. This may be done by the facilitator, the group itself may visualize the results of their deliberations. Observers maybe used who note down the results of the process. Information should be gathered on the way people interact with each other (i.e. domination of individuals, group atmosphere, etc), structure of the arguments and opinions being raised, the facilitation process, the way the participants used the materials, the way in which the output or final result was achieved.



### Participatory Planning

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