2

Capacity Building
Toolkit

THE ROLES OF THE VOLUNTEER IN DEVELOPMENT

PEACE CORPS

Capacity Building Toolkit 2

VOLUNTEER AS CHANGE AGENT

IN THIS TOOLKIT

VOLUNTEER AS CHANGE AGENT

KSA MATRIX AND LEARNING PLAN

CHANGE AGENT ROLE	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
Knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) you need for this role	Community participation/ mobilization theories; change models including appreciative inquiry; diffusion of innovation; gender equity issues; youth development best practices; networking	Selecting and using participatory activities with community/groups; gender analysis; inquiry skills; strategic planning skills; promotion skills; relationship building for networking and linking people together for action	Flexibility, ability to deal with ambiguity; enthusiasm; confidence in change process; appreciative outlook; respect for local values, traditions, and ingenuity
Your initiatives to learn more	What knowledge you still need and where to find it: – – – – –	Skills you need to gain or improve and how you might work on further skill development: – – – – –	Things that will help you change any attitudes that will hinder your role: – – – – –

WHAT IS A CHANGE AGENT?

A change agent is someone who generates ideas, promotes new practices, models healthy behaviors, draws attention to opportunities, and encourages networks to help people move forward in reaching their goals. Change agents do not impose their ideas on others, but rather help people see possibilities they might otherwise miss. For Peace Corps Volunteers, the role of change agent is virtually inevitable. People in your community will observe you closely as you go about your work and play, and some of them will try things they see you doing just because they think you're "cool." You may be influencing people to think and act differently without realizing it! And that is perhaps the single most important reason to be conscious of your behavior not only when you are "on the job" but also when you are socializing and relaxing with others.

As community members get to know and respect you, they will expect you to help them. This may mean they want you to get them "stuff" (money or goods). The challenge is to help people understand their options and make informed decisions about their future without trying to force a particular change on them. It also means helping them learn how to make their own changes. In this sense, the roles of change agent, community facilitator, and project co-planner are intertwined and intermittent—you initiate the sparks of change and then step back and "guide by the side" as people plan and implement their desired activities.

An important aspect of serving in the role of change agent is to be aware of the implications of change. Sometimes small ideas grow into big activities that eventually result in enormous change in people's lives. While you cannot always predict the way things will turn out, you can try to analyze and understand the potential impact of your work in an effort to be less *ad hoc* and more intentional in serving your community.

EXAMPLES OF THE CHANGE AGENT ROLE

1

Alicia, an agricultural Volunteer, introduces a group of local farmers to two new varieties of maize. She takes the local farmers on a field trip to the agricultural extension station in a neighboring province, where they tour demonstration plots of the new maize varieties, and talk with the local extension agents who care for the plots. The farmers and agents talk at length about the pros and cons of the new plant varieties, and at the end of the tour, the farmers ask about getting some of the seed to plant along with their regular maize crop. Alicia suggests an approach in which the farmers conduct a pilot field test of the maize with support from the extension farm agents. Alicia and the extension agents also offer to take the farmers to visit a neighboring community where a small group of farmers have already harvested from the new seed varieties. The farmers say they will discuss this proposal back in the community and make a decision within a few days.

2

Paul, an NGO development Volunteer, notes that the organization where he is working has successfully planned and implemented a series of projects, but lacks a long-range vision and plan for the future. He meets with the NGO leaders and suggests that they hold a strategic planning session for assessing and building organizational capacity. He recommends an appreciative inquiry approach, explaining the process and the outcomes they can expect. The NGO leaders decide to go with Paul's recommendation and ask him to facilitate the planning sessions. He accepts with the condition that one of the NGO leaders co-facilitate some of the activities with him. The sessions go well and nearly everyone in the group feels energized from the process and resulting plans. Afterwards, Paul senses that the group may need help in monitoring and getting other systems in place that will support the long-range goals they have set. He offers himself as a resource for technical assistance.

3

Linda, an education Volunteer, uses community-based content instruction (CCBI) with her students. After several classes focused on HIV/AIDS prevention, the students have become very engaged and want to organize some after-school activities in coordination with the local health clinic and one of the social service providers in the neighborhood. Several colleagues at the school hear the students talking about how "different" the Volunteer's classes are and they ask Linda to show them what this methodology is all about. She gives them an orientation and also invites them to observe a class. Afterwards, a couple of the teachers seem to like the idea and want Linda's help in CCBI lesson planning. Other teachers are more skeptical, saying the new approach might distract the students from their preparation for the comprehensive tests at the end of the semester. They also express concern about the informality of Linda's teacher-student relationships. They say they want to wait and see what happens if other people try the new approach.

Capacity Building Toolkit 2

MODELS, CONCEPTS, AND CASES

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

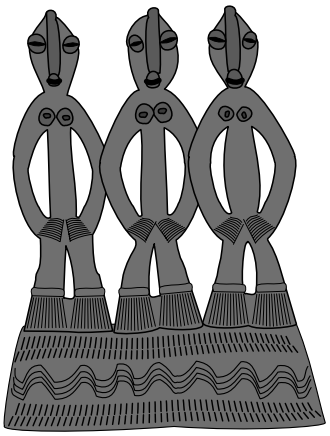
What do we mean by community participation? Initially, participation is people getting together and getting engaged. Ultimately, it is the power to make decisions. Participation means people taking responsibility for their own development as a better way to achieve improvements in economic and social conditions. Participation recognizes the potential of human talents and energy—the most basic of development objectives and a human right.

Promoting participation in a community mobilization process depends on your philosophical orientation as much as on program strategies, design, and procedures. Do you believe that the disadvantaged or uneducated can make an important contribution to their own development? Do you regard communities as sources of good ideas, organizational capacity, and rational thinkers, not just as sources of labor or as objects to be mobilized towards a programmatic outcome? Promoting effective and sustainable participation that empowers communities to make decisions affecting their lives requires investment in the process.

How do we know if we have achieved full participation in our community mobilization efforts? We need to know *who* is participating as well as *how much* participation is occurring. Which groups are less involved in implementation, decision making, or accessing benefits? Women? Youth? Ethnic minorities? Temporary landowners? Migrant workers? People living in the poorest, makeshift neighborhoods?

It is also important to know how participation is occurring.

- Are communities taking the initiative themselves or are external organizations taking the initiative?
- With a monetary incentive, voluntarily, or through coercion?
- On an individual basis or in an organized manner? Indirectly or directly?
- Is the process sporadic, intermittent, or continuous?
- Is the process empowering?



A WORD ABOUT "INCENTIVES" FOR PARTICIPATION

Rewarding participation with monetary or other "incentives" will often create demand for incentives in the future. When the incentives are finished, so is participation. In some settings, this attitude has become so pervasive that community members insist that they be compensated for their participation. Some organizations, fearful that the community will not participate in the mobilization effort, decide to give in to this practice, further increasing demand and dependency. Other organizations maintain that they will only work with those communities that are interested in helping themselves. When community members refuse to participate without incentives, the organization moves on to find a community that will participate without incentives or works with those individuals who forgo external material rewards.

Peace Corps Volunteers, who have few or no material incentives to offer, usually opt for the latter approach—they work with those individuals who are willing to forgo material rewards. But in communities where a strong precedent for incentives has been set by other organizations, this can be a challenging road to travel. The important thing is to remember to be consistent with the long-term aims of the project and the Peace Corps' core values and principles. If you can get two or three people involved, others may become more interested and join the dialogue and work.

BARRIERS AND RESISTANCE TO PARTICIPATION BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Undoubtedly, it would be easier for you and your Counterpart/team to work only with those people who show up in response to a general announcement, but this may not be the wisest or most effective strategy if you truly want to reach priority groups ("rounding up the usual suspects"). There are many reasons that people may not want to or be able to participate in a community mobilization process. People should be free to decide whether or not they want to participate. There are times, however, when people do want to participate but may have barriers to doing so such as:

- Limited physical access to meeting sites
- Cultural limits to mobility and participation (e.g., women in *purdah*, caste structures, age, etc.)
- Family members or others prohibiting an individual's participation (often husbands initially object to their wives participating in meetings because they may not see the benefit, particularly if no tangible incentives are provided)
- Opportunity costs of participation ("If I attend this meeting, I am forgoing something else that may be more beneficial to me or my family.")
- Low self-esteem ("I wouldn't have anything to contribute.")

You and your Counterpart need to listen to community members to be able to identify the barriers to participation and work with interested ones who would like to participate to develop strategies to overcome barriers. Often, those most affected by the issues you are working on are experiencing the greatest barriers to participation.

[Adapted by permission from ***How to Mobilize Communities for Health and Social Change*** (draft form). Lisa Howard-Grabman and Gail Snetro. Save the Children Federation, Westport, CT.]

WORKING WITH GROUPS TO MOBILIZE THE COMMUNITY

Why is group organizing so important to the community development process? Some of the reasons follow. You may be able to think of others, too.

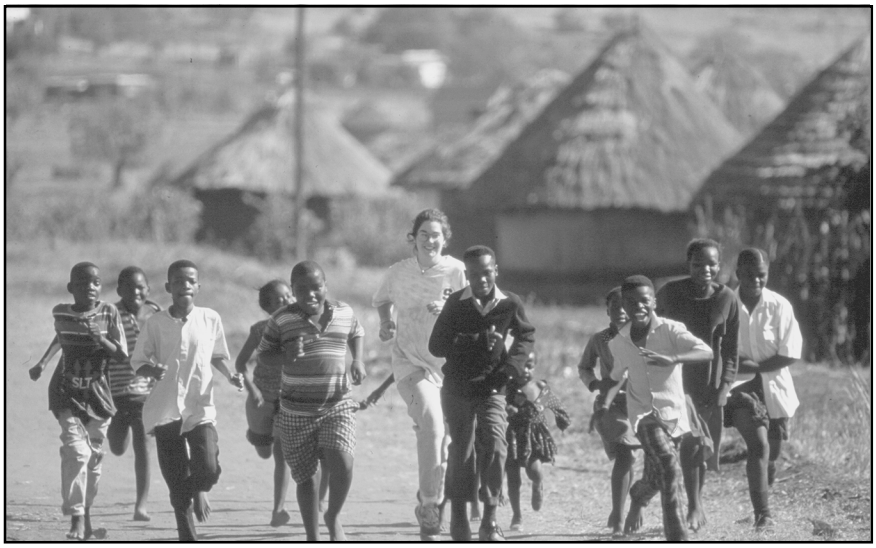
- Collective action often creates more power to advocate for changes in policies, relationships, resource allocation, access, etc., or brings life to inactive or ignored policies and systems that are supportive of healthy communities.
- Combined resources can be stronger and more effective than uncoordinated individual resources.
- Community members gain awareness that they are not alone in their concern about and experience with development issues (health, environment, income generation, education, agriculture, youth development, and so on.)
- Group experiences can create conditions for new leaders to emerge and for leaders and other group members to practice new skills.
- Working with existing groups may strengthen these groups' capacity to effectively address development issues.
- Newly established groups may evolve into local organizations or institutions that continue to work on the particular technical focus or similar issues.

WORKING WITH EXISTING GROUPS

As part of getting to know your community, you will likely find numerous groups that already exist for various purposes. These may include social clubs, sports teams, support groups, professional associations, church groups, and so forth. As you begin to explore the various interests and needs in the community, especially those related to your technical assignment area, you will have to make some decisions about whether to work with some of these existing groups or organize new ones.

The **advantages** of using existing groups include the following:

- ***Avoidance of delays in start-up***. Extra time is not needed to organize new groups and give members time to become acquainted.
- ***Group cohesion***. In existing groups the group dynamics have already been worked out. The group is usually stable and cohesive and can turn its attention to new topics.



- ***Trust***. Over the course of many discussions, group members develop a common bond and learn to trust each other. This trusting relationship enables them to have a more open discussion about the realities of their lives.

- ***Altruism***. Group members have demonstrated their interest in giving support to others.

On the other hand, trying to build on existing community groups is not always successful. **Disadvantages** may include some of the following:

- ***Inflexibility***. Groups may not be open to adding new topics or tasks, or to organizing in different ways than they are accustomed.

- ***Dependency on incentives***. Groups that were formed to receive to some tangible benefit, such as food or agricultural supplements, may not be motivated to attend group meetings when concrete incentives are not provided.

- ***Dysfunctional formats***. Some groups may be structured in ways that discourage the active participation of all group members. Also, existing groups may have fallen into patterns that discourage new ways of thinking and problem solving. Changing the dynamics of group composition may help the group get out of the rut.

- ***Existing structures may perpetuate inequities that may contribute to some of the development issues*** *(for example, poor health, inequitable education opportunities, restrictions on small business, and so on).* When minority subgroups are excluded from participation in existing groups, their issues are not included on the community agenda and their needs remain unarticulated and unmet.

[Adapted by permission from ***How to Mobilize Communities for Health and Social Change*** (draft form). Lisa Howard-Grabman and Gail Snetro. Save the Children Federation, Westport, CT. Original source for text on working with existing groups from ***Mother Support Groups: A Review of Experiences in Developing Countries.*** BASICS. 1998.]

COMMUNITY LEADERS

There are many types of informal leaders in your community, in addition to the formal leaders. Do you know who they are? Do you know how to work with them and get them to want to work with you?

Community leaders generally include:

- **Natural Leaders:** They attract the trust of the community members and usually have a lot of common sense, integrity, and concern for others. Natural leaders are not easily identified because they are not looking for power for themselves. They may not have much formal education or speak out much at public meetings, but they know the community very well and are familiar with its conditions and concerns. Examples of natural leaders might be a healer, owner of a grocery store, successful farmer, barber, soccer team captain, bartender, and so on.

- **Institutional Leaders:** They are connected with religious, educational, government, or non-government institutions. They have power within their respective institution and prestige and influence in the community. They may be appointed or elected to their position. If they don't approve of something (project, new idea, or process), the community is likely to reject it.

- **Prestige Leaders:** These people have wealth and social position in the community, are usually well educated, and may even have traveled extensively. Prestige leaders often belong to families that have had influence in the community for many years and they guide many of the social areas of the community. They are usually very concerned with "losing face."

- **Specialty Leaders:** They have a particular field of expertise and are sought out by community members for advice. They may have started out poor, but have now "made it." They may have taken a risk to start a business and have achieved much success at it. They are known for acting carefully and giving sound advice.

- **Voluntary Leaders:** These people offer their energy and time to community and public causes that they believe in. They usually have definite ideas about what should be done and how it should be done. They have energy and motivation, but probably not much time to research an issue. They are likely to be in the limelight because they are persuasive and may have garnered honors and awards. They are usually talented organizers and good spokespeople on behalf of a cause.

[Adapted from ***The New Role of the Volunteer in Development Manual***. Peace Corps. 1984. (ICE T0005)]

PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS TOOLS AND METHODOLOGY

Participatory analysis is a methodology to help community members assess where they are in their development and decide where they want to go in the future. ("Community" here refers to more than a geographic location — it may also mean neighborhood, institution, organization, professional group, or affinity group.) Using tools such as resource mapping, seasonal calendars, and institutional relationships diagrams, the community:

- Identifies and describes the resources, characteristics, and conditions of which it is composed.
- Organizes the information or data about the community in ways that make it easier to analyze (that is, puts the data in the form of a map, diagram, matrix, or other graphic).
- Identifies and prioritizes changes it wants to make or issues it wants to address
- Prepares to move forward into concrete planning of specific community actions.

Peace Corps Volunteers and other development workers have been using participatory analysis tools and methods with community groups for several years now. Generally, the Volunteer's role has been to (a) introduce the community to the tools, (b) suggest appropriate tools for the type of analysis the community wants, and (c) serve as a co-facilitator at least the first time the community conducts the assessment activities. Given the substantive discussion that goes on during the analysis, the facilitators need good communication skills. As such, this is an excellent opportunity to team with your Counterpart or someone else who has a good command of the local language.

ADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS TOOLS

Community Mobilization – The analysis is carried out in the community, under the responsibility of its members and with their active participation. Through participation, community members raise their consciousness about their reality and what can be done to transform it.

Use of Visual Techniques – Semiliterate people participate more effectively when they use visual techniques for gathering, analyzing, and presenting information. These tools make use of maps, diagrams, and other graphics, which people design, interpret, comment on, adapt, and make corrections to during the exercises.

Promotion of Grass-roots Development – The participatory methodology allows members to search for solutions in accordance with local criteria and priorities in areas such as technical and social feasibility, sustainability, cost, and the role of participants.

Partnership building and Collaboration with External Institutions – The participatory process provides a space in which community members and development workers can get to know each other better, clarify roles, and build trust over time. It also helps communities identify where they may need help from other groups to achieve a particular goal.

Giving Everyone a Voice – The methodology encourages and offers a means for participation by all people, including men, women, youth, children, the elderly, and other diverse sectors of the community.

Integration of Themes – History, geography, social aspects, economy, and production themes are analyzed in relation to one another.

Low Cost – The materials used in applying the tools are low cost and easy to obtain.

Convenience – The analysis is done in or near the community and the activities may be scheduled around daily work routines.

LIMITATIONS IN THE APPLICATION OF THE TOOLS

- False expectations can be raised in the community, especially regarding financial support. Sometimes community members will expect the development worker to bring funding in once they've all participated in and finished the assessment activities.
- Some of the information obtained through the activities can be superficial, false, or exaggerated.
- Every sector of the community is not always adequately represented (women, children, the elderly, the landless, ethnic and religious groups)
- Community members may have trouble reading and understanding some of the matrices and diagrams used in the tools.

GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS

Gender perspective means learning about and taking into consideration the characteristics that distinguish women's and men's roles in a given society. These include: work, family and/or social responsibilities, behaviors, values, preferences, fears, activities, and expectations that society assigns in differentiated ways to men and women.

It is helpful to understand the differences between "gender" and "sex" in the context of development work. Gender refers to the socially or culturally established roles of men and women. These roles will vary from one culture to another and will change over time. Sex refers exclusively to the biological differences between men and women.

By analyzing gender roles, you are exploring the different needs and roles of men and women and, in some cases, how these might be changed. Adopting a gender perspective does not mean working exclusively with women. Its true significance is its recognition of the need to integrate women as well as men, and girls as well as boys, into the processes of change.

In the context of these participatory tools and activities, gender analysis *identifies* men's and women's points of view, criteria, and desires for change *equally*, giving them the *same value* when decisions have to be taken, activities implemented, and benefits distributed.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR USING PARTICIPATORY TOOLS AND METHODS

1. Define your community including all representative segments (gender, ethnicity, age, economic, and educational groups)—for example, a school, a group of chicken farmers, a women's co-op, a village.

2. Involve all representative segments from the community in the entire assessment process.

3. View members of the community as partners, not objects to be studied.

4. Conduct the activities in the local language and at the site of the community.

5. Identify and respect local protocol.

6. Whenever possible, have a community member or agency partner work with you in carrying out the activities.

7. Prepare the community beforehand. [For details see ***PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action***. Peace Corps. 1996. (ICE M0053)]

8. Remember that the overall goal is to build the community's capacity to take action.

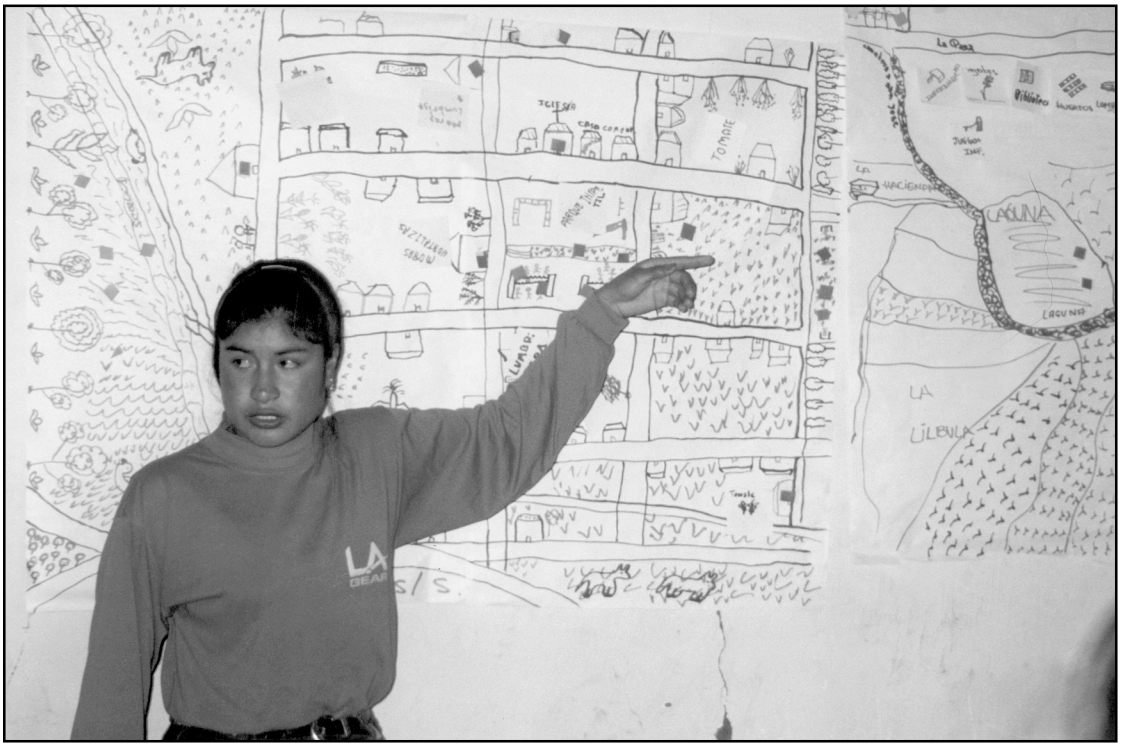
SELECTED PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS TOOLS

COMMUNITY MAPPING

In community resource mapping, community members make a graphical representation of the community. Drawn on paper or on the ground, the map shows spheres of activity spatially over the landscape. It can be used in various settings to locate current resources, activity centers, institutions, and other areas frequented by the groups developing the map. It can be used in small communities, neighborhoods of larger communities or cities, workplaces, training centers, classrooms, and organizations to identify differences in perceptions, assets, needs, access to power, and so on.

Once the maps are drawn, additional instructions can be given to enhance the information. For example, participants may be asked to indicate places they frequent daily, weekly, less often; places they like to be and others they dislike; what they would like to have that is not there (more land, school, clinic, store, transportation, repaired roads, and so on). After subgroups have completed their maps, they post and explain them to each other. This provides a more complete picture, as each perspective adds to the whole. The discussion of the maps can lead to identification of issues to be addressed and potential projects they wish to undertake, or simply supply a baseline for measuring future activities.

[For instructions and tips on using Community Mapping see ***PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action***. Peace Corps. 1996. (ICE M0053)]



Example of Community Mapping

DAILY ACTIVITY SCHEDULES

In this activity, participants (women, men, girls, and boys) re-create a timeline of their daily activities that describes their gender and age roles in terms of labor. Most households have weekly and seasonal variations in tasks, and several schedules may be needed to get the whole picture. Information from Daily Activity Schedules may be important when determining who will need to train for a particular project, when in the day (or season) meetings and training events can take place, what type of labor-saving interventions might be possible, and how changes might impact different families and family members.

[For instructions and tips on using Daily Activity Schedules see ***PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action***. Peace Corps. 1996. (ICE M0053)]

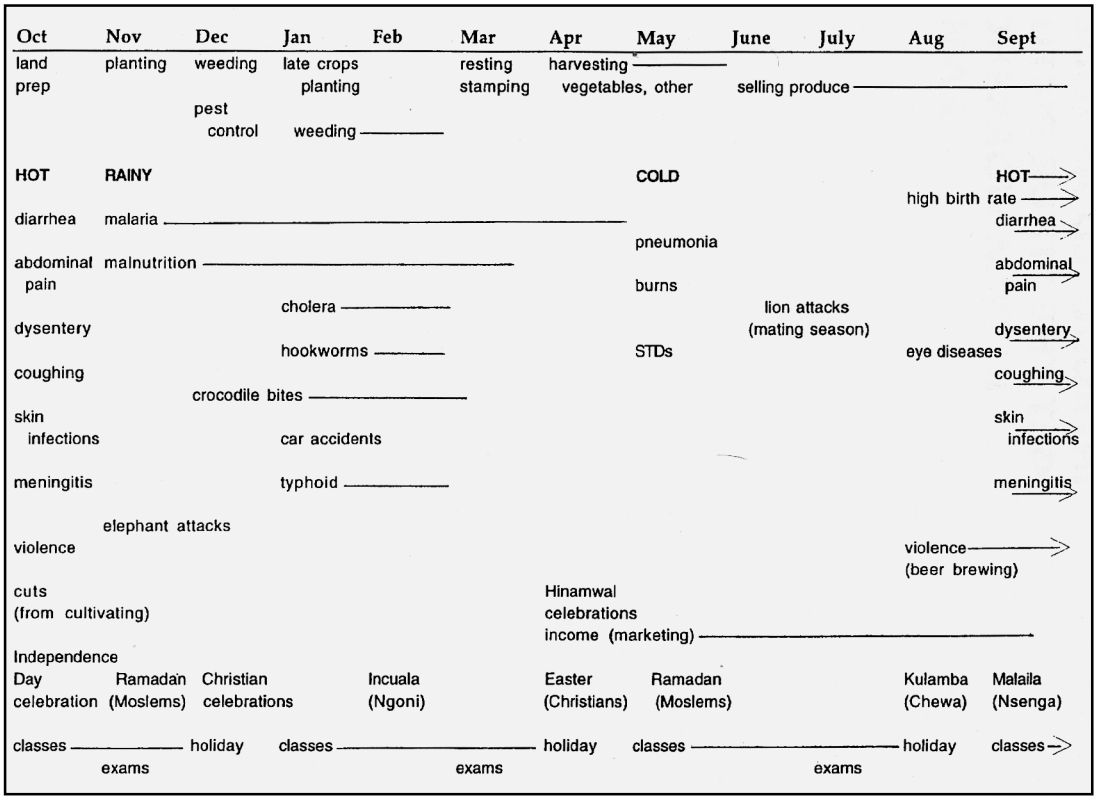
Time	Typical Day for Boys	Typical Day for Girls
	Jemal Kassem Esaw Tesfaalem	Fatma Salem Welesh Helen
6:00 am	Wake up, wash face, prepare for school	
6:30-7:00 am	Go to school	Wake up, wash, eat, put on uniform
8:00-10:00 am		Help parents with food, washing clothes, gardening, do homework
11:00 am		Eat
11:30 am		Go to school
12:30 pm	Go home, wash hands	
1:30 pm	Eat (cook if in boarding school), sleep, study, sports; get water from well, wash clothes and harvest (if in boarding school)	
6:00 pm		Go home
8:00 pm	Eat dinner, watch TV (in city), do homework	Eat, wash dishes, watch TV (in city)
9:00-10:00 pm		Go to sleep
10:00-11:00 pm	Go to sleep	

Example of Daily Activity Schedule

SEASONAL CALENDAR

Seasonal calendars trace seasonal variations in labor activities, income flow, and expenditure patterns. They can include various other factors: weather patterns, crops and animal production, plant and animal diseases, human health patterns, and social obligations and events. Many households experience periods of economic or other stresses, and these variations may have differential impacts on sex, age, and other subgroups. An understanding of these seasonal variations is important to the development of community activities. For example, the calendar can be used to determine opportunities for new productive activities, or conversely, the potential difficulties in adding activities to an already "full" calendar. Or in another example, the calendar might pinpoint when certain members of the household are overburdened with work and can open a discussion of whether these labor bottlenecks should be addressed in a project.

[For instructions and tips for using seasonal calendars see ***PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action***. Peace Corps. 1996. (ICE M0053)]



Example of Seasonal Calendar

INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS DIAGRAM (VENN DIAGRAM)

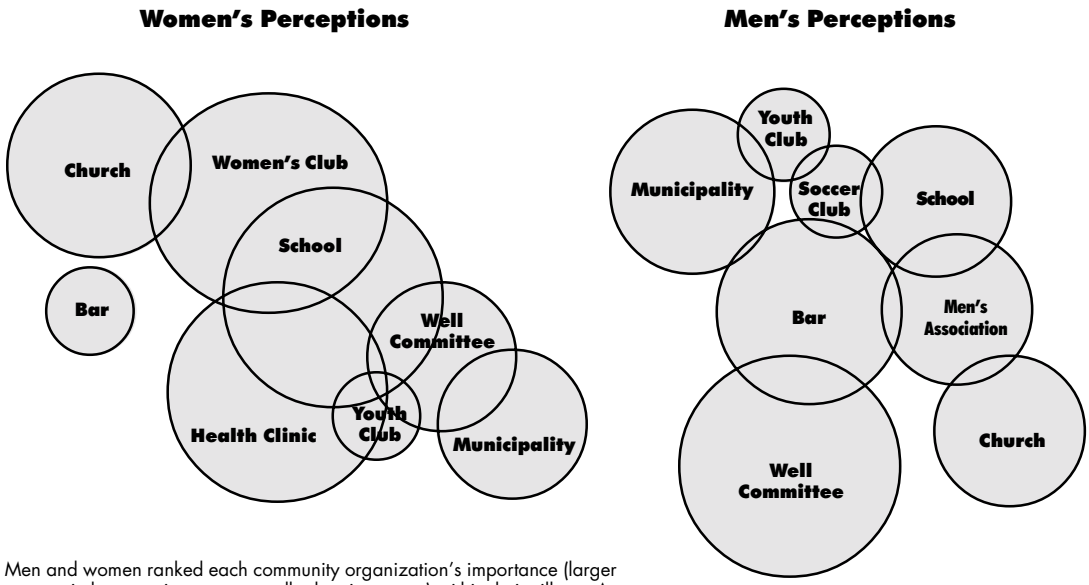
The Venn diagram shows existing community groups, institutions, and their social relations. The diagram is a type of social map of the community. It can provide insight into which individuals and groups have influence on decision making, as well as the relationships between the community and outside forces, such as development agencies or the government. The diagram is usually designed on the ground, a floor, or a table with the community. Paper can be cut to different sizes to represent different groups or institutions (women's groups, artisan cooperatives, health committees, NGOs, agricultural extension office, and others). The larger the piece the more influence that group has in the community. Designs placed inside a drawn circle represent individuals and groups in the community. If the cards touch or overlap it means there is some interaction or social network between the groups. The designs placed outside the circle represent organizations external to the community. Arrows are drawn to show how outside organizations interact with the community. Some questions you can ask while using a Venn diagram include:

- Which people or groups have power to make rules concerning _____ resources? (sector specific)
- How do they work together? What happens when there is a conflict?
- What are women's roles in decision making? In decisions on resource management? What are men's roles?
- What kinds of help or barriers come from outside the community concerning _____ ? (sector specific projects/activities)

[Venn diagram description is adapted by permission from ***How to Mobilize Communities for Health and Social Change*** (draft form). Lisa Howard-Grabman and Gail Snetro. Save the Children Federation, Westport, CT.]

[See the ***Participatory Rural Appraisal and Planning (PRAP) Workbook***. David Selener, Nelly Endara, and José Carajal. IIRR. 1999, for additional instructions and tips on using Venn diagrams.]

EXAMPLE OF INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP DIAGRAM (VENN DIAGRAM)



Men and women ranked each community organization's importance (larger cut-out circles more important; smaller less important) within their village. As noted, men and women ranked the organizations differently. This exercise done by Trainees provided an insight into organizations and about attitudes toward them by both men and women from differing gender viewpoints.

Example of a Venn Diagram

DECISION/FEASIBILITY MATRIX

The decision or feasibility matrix is a tool that may be used to help the community rank the relative importance or feasibility of proposed changes and solutions from several perspectives in an ordered and systematic way. In this technique, community members begin by discussing the proposed changes and solutions to ensure everyone understands the issues and options. After discussion, some of the changes or solutions may be combined or written as one clear item. Then, the group determines the criteria it will use to analyze and rank the options. Possible criteria include: productivity, sustainability, equity, time required to accomplish, costs, technical feasibility, social feasibility, and others. Once the criteria are established, group members discuss and agree on a ranking for each option under consideration.

[For instructions and tips on using a Decision/Feasibility Matrix see ***PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action***. Peace Corps. 1996. (ICE M0053)]

Solution/ Desired change	Acceptability to community	Sustainability	Cost	Benefits largest number of people
Item 1				
Item 2				
Item 3				
Item 4				

Example of a Decision/Feasibility Matrix

"The Chinese use two characters to write CRISIS.
One means opportunity,
the other means problem."

BUILDING INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS

When you begin your service in your community, you must meet your neighbors on both literal and figurative levels. Make a direct and focused effort to get acquainted with young and old neighbors, town officers, bus and boat drivers, post office personnel, teachers, principals, shop owners, youth workers, local NGO staff, governmental workers, members and leaders of local churches, business owners and managers, and anyone else who makes up part of the fabric of your community. The more you have sustained conversations with these folks, the more you become aware of their capacities, the personal assets they bring to community and organizational development. As you go about this style of networking, you will begin to notice potential linkages between individuals, groups, and institutions — linkages that lead to involvement and action.

Tips for successful contact with people in the community

- Fact-finding—learn about the people you're interested in contacting; find someone who knows them and ask a few questions.
- Walk by—get a feel for their workplace or house.
- Participate with them in activity settings—the market, sports field, informal meeting places, dance clubs, porches, etc.
- Make a courtesy call—a brief "drop-in" visit; a quick phone call; perhaps use a third person to schedule an appointment (if culturally appropriate).
- Explore areas of mutual interest—make a connection on a personal basis; look for shared ideas, beliefs, and/or values in conversation.
- Emphasize "process," not "product." Without hurrying the relationship, look for appropriate opportunities to introduce collaborative activity.
- Beware of people who seem to be overly eager to please you, such as the "hangers-on."
- Remember that every community has "quiet" leaders—you may be talking to one!

[Adapted from a workshop in assets-based approaches and project planning conducted in Peace Corps/Western Samoa, 1996.]

REFLECTION QUESTION

Consider the title of this piece — "building intentional relationships and networks." What does it mean to you? Have you ever done this? Think about the social and professional networks you had in the U.S. before coming overseas. Who were the people or groups in your networks? How did you "find" them and get to know them in such a way that you were willing to be supportive and collaborate with one another? How might you apply this experience to building intentional relationships in your new community here?

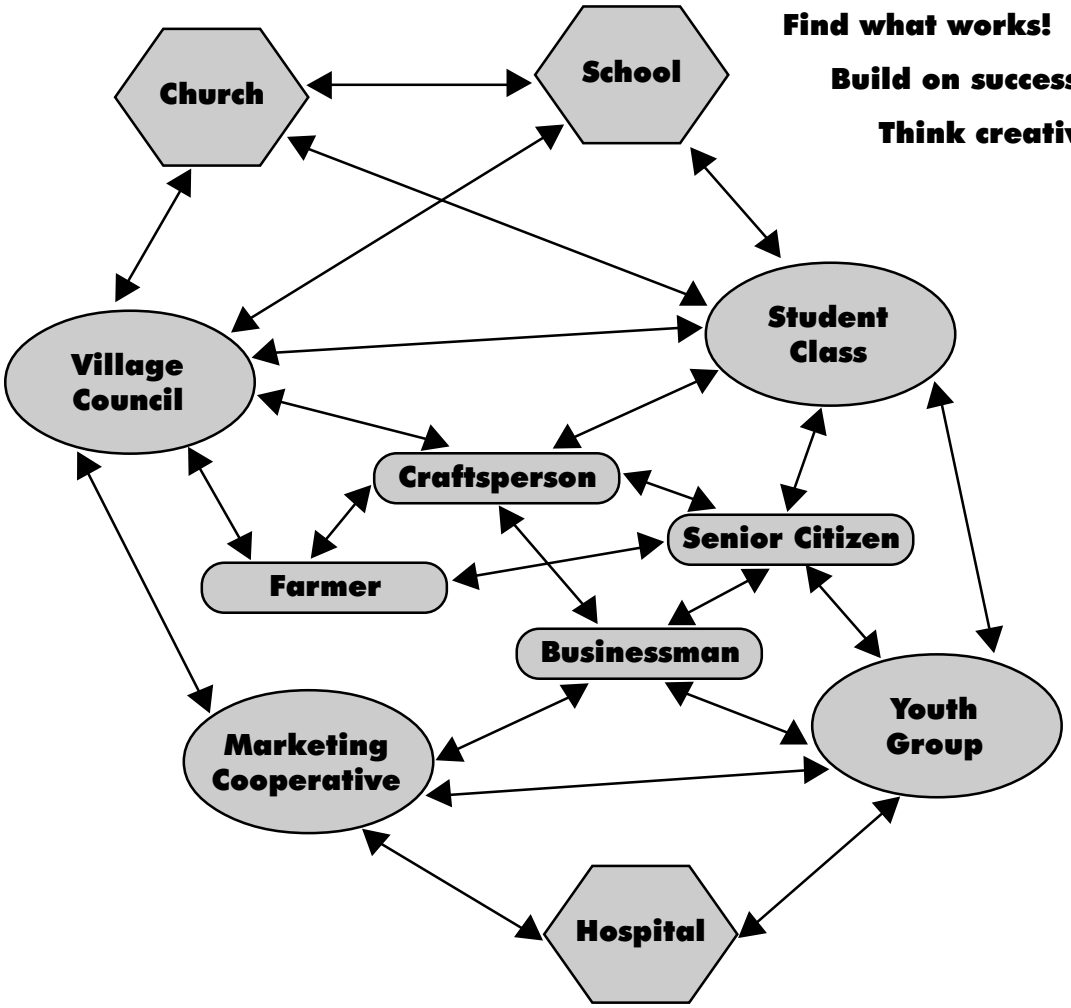
INDIVIDUAL/GROUP/ INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES: LINKING PEOPLE WHO KNOW WITH PEOPLE WHO WANT TO LEARN

As you begin to learn about your community's resources and capacities, remember that people have been living, learning, and achieving there for a long time. They have a multitude of skills and knowledge that may be tapped for community action toward desired goals. The key is not only to recognize *who* has *what* skills/expertise but also to *connect* "people who know" with "people who want to learn."

As a Volunteer, you can help your community identify the capacities of its individual members, associations, and organizations by using participatory analysis tools (mapping, Venn diagrams, and so forth) and through your own intentional efforts to build relationships and networks (see previous page). In the process of seeking out and valuing individuals' skills and knowledge, both you and the community members will begin to see potential linkages that can lead to "those who know" teaching or assisting "those who want to learn." Ideas for small doable projects or activities will often just suggest themselves. These can be ideas that may or may not surface in more traditional needs surveys or assessments. The diagram on the following page illustrates some of the linkages and partnerships that may be built from individual and group capacities.

[For more ideas on creative partnerships, see ***Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets.*** John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. ACTA Publications. 1993. (ICE CD051)]

Building Relationships among Individuals, Community Groups, and Local Institutions



- Schools and firefighters conducting public fire-safety campaign
- Artists and craftspeople teaching in hospitals, schools
- Businesspeople tutoring in schools
- Youth group observing government in operation
- Senior citizens tutoring students
- Youth group leading tutoring and recreation program for preteens
- Marketing cooperative selling youth, senior, and hospital crafts
- Community nurse working with families to promote hygiene
- Bank supporting local businesses
- Police conducting young-adult recreation leagues
- Students performing for elderly and sick

[Text and diagram adapted with permission from ***Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets.*** John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. ACTA Publications. 1993. (ICE CD051)]

YOUTH CAPACITY BUILDING BEST PRACTICES

In many developing countries, 75 percent or more of the population are youth under the age of 30. Although the concept of "youth as resources in development" is increasingly acknowledged, the practice of engaging youth in development activities as full partners is still not fully accepted. Meanwhile there is increasing concern about the status and employment of young people, particularly in countries transitioning from war with many demilitarized youth who have limited education and skills. The question becomes how to meet the needs of these youth to develop skills to earn a livelihood through engaging them in development.

> *"Development without including youth is not sustainable."*
>
> — Virginia Gobeli

The following list of best practices is offered for consideration in planning activities that focus on youth as resources in development activities. The intention is to help youth develop skills and competencies that they have an opportunity to practice while positively contributing to the development of their communities and nation. We hope this list will be tested further, evaluated, expanded, and refined as part of a growing trend toward identifying and relating to youth as full partners and resources in development.

- **Give youth a seat at the table.** Engage them as full contributing partners at all stages of program and activity planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- **Model and teach experiential learning.**
- **Advocate and provide internships, service learning, and mentoring** as effective "hands-on-learning" approaches. Advocate and encourage communities and the public and private sectors to learn how to help youth gain skills through paid and volunteer services.
- **Provide opportunities for youth to develop a set of core skills** that can be transferred to income-generating activities. Consider: project planning, budgeting, self-assessment and management, negotiation, teamwork, and conducting meetings.
- **Focus on building human capacity** rather than on quick and easy deliverables such as computers. For example, do not provide too many personal computers without building the human capacity to use and apply the tools to solve real life issues and problems.
- **Proactively select partners when engaging youth.** Use carefully constructed criteria linked to the objectives of the activity for selecting youth as partners. Be as open and transparent about the criteria and selection process as the situation permits. (Not every young person has the personality and people skills to become a trainer-of-trainers or a community development outreach coordinator.)

- **Build on strengths.** Don't reinvent the wheel. Use localized, tested training materials and resources. Help youth and members of the community appreciate what they do have as local resources (human, natural, social, and financial resources within the community).

[Adapted with permission from ***Report on USAID/USDA Youth Initiative Pilots in Uganda and Zambia***, March 2000.]

"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

— Margaret Mead

THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

Many development programs claim to involve children actively in the process. Roger Hart, a leading authority on environmental education, has studied hundreds of "children's programs" and found many of them lacking in the true involvement of children in shaping their own and their communities' futures. He adopted the metaphor of the "Ladder of Participation" to guide adults in critical thinking about how to support the involvement of children to the maximum of their desire and capacity.

Most important, the ladder is meant to show what is *not* participation—that is, the types of programs described on the bottom three rungs of the ladder. The other five rungs of the ladder describe programs of true participation. All children may operate on one of these levels depending on their ability and interest in the particular project. This conceptual view does not mean that projects at level 8 (totally child-initiated) are better than projects at level 4 (still adult-initiated). It means that adults should create the conditions and opportunities for children to work at whatever levels they choose.

1. **Manipulation.** If children have no understanding of the issues and hence do not understand their actions, then this is manipulation. One example is that of preschool children carrying political placards concerning the impact of social policies on children.

2. **Decoration.** This refers to those frequent occasions when children are given T-shirts related to some cause, and may sing or dance at an event in such dress, but have little idea of what it is all about and no say in the organizing of the occasion. This is described as one rung up from "manipulation" as the adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by children. They simply use children to bolster their cause in an indirect way.

3. **Tokenism.** Children are apparently given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about the subject or the style of communicating it, and little or no opportunity to formulate their own opinions. There are many more instances of tokenism than there are genuine forms of children's participation. A good example is the token use of children on conference panels.

4. **Assigned but informed.** This rung of the ladder marks the start of true participation. To be truly labeled as participatory it is important that:
   - The children understand the aims of the project.
   - They know who made the decisions concerning their involvement and why.
   - They have a meaningful (rather than "decorative") role.
   - They volunteer for the project after the project was made clear to them.

5. **Consulted and informed.** The project is designed and run by adults, but children understand the process and their opinions are treated seriously.

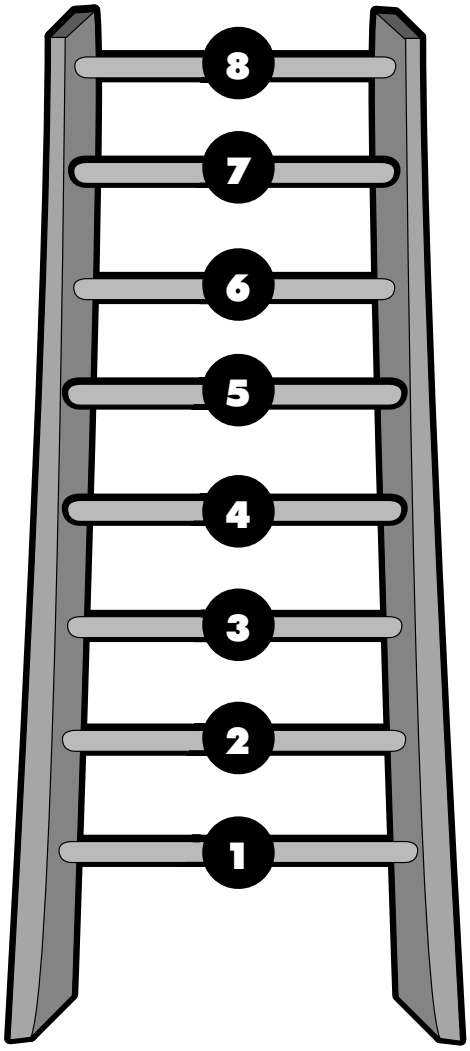
6. **Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children.** Though the projects at this level are initiated by adults, the decision making is shared with the young people.

7. **Child-initiated and -directed.** Children in their play conceive of and carry out complex projects. When the conditions are supportive, even very young children can work cooperatively in large groups.

8. **Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults.** Regrettably, projects like these, on the highest rung of the ladder of participation, are all too rare. This is not a result of the absence of a desire to be useful on the part of teenagers. Rather, it is the absence of caring adults attuned to the particular interests of young people.

LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

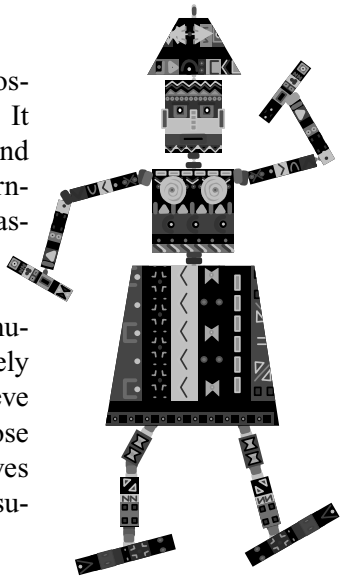
8. **Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults**
7. **Child-initiated and -directed**
6. **Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children**
5. **Consulted and informed**
4. **Assigned but informed**
3. **Tokenism**
2. **Decoration**
1. **Manipulation**



Note:
1-3 = Non-participation
4-8 = Degrees of participation

[Adapted by permission from ***Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship. Innocenti Essays. No. 4***. Roger A. Hart. UNICEF, New York, NY, 1992. Origin of the "Ladder of Participation" is an essay on adult participation by Sherry Arnstein, 1969.]

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL/COMMUNITY CHANGE PROCESS



Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an approach to building capacity and fostering innovation within organizations, groups, and communities. It has been used successfully with a wide variety of organizations and groups within the United States and internationally, including government and non-government organizations, coalitions, communities, associations, and corporations.

Through Appreciative Inquiry, members of an organization or community focus on their past successes and existing strengths to collectively develop a common vision for the future and initiate action to achieve it. The art of appreciation is the art of discovering and valuing those factors that give life to an organization or group. The process involves interviewing and storytelling that draws on the best of the past to visualize and develop possibilities.

As a method of organizational development, Appreciative Inquiry differs from conventional managerial problem solving. In this problem-solving approach, the basic assumption seems to be that we can repair a human system much as we might repair a car or computer. If we fix the problems, the organization will succeed. In contrast, the underlying assumption of Appreciative Inquiry is that organizations are *solutions to be embraced.* As human systems are designed to be creative and innovative, organizations are full of solutions.

To lead an organization toward healthy change, AI uses a process called the **4-D Model**. Within that model there are four phases:

DISCOVERY Determining what gives life to an organization; what is happening when the organization is at its best

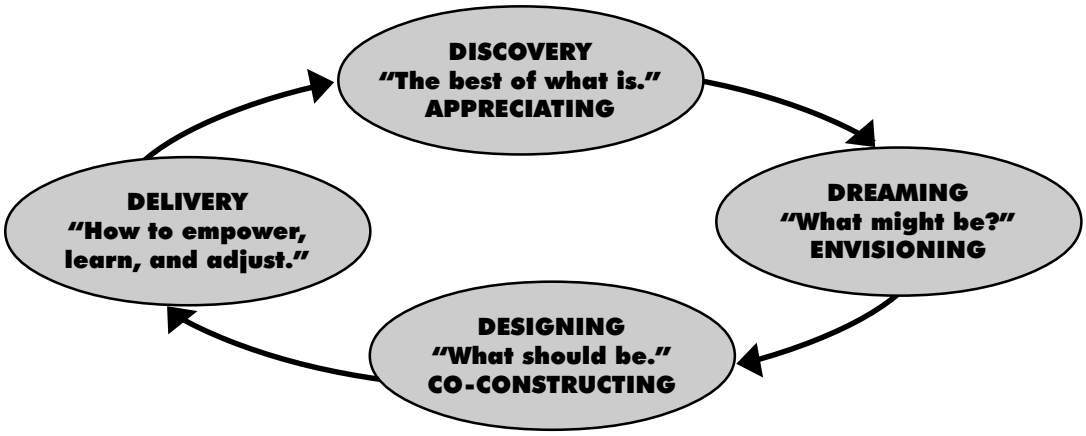
DREAM Imagining what might be; what the world is calling the organization to be

DESIGN Setting up ways to create the ideal as articulated by the whole organization

DELIVERY Establishing an ongoing and iterative process to carry out the design

The 4-D Model represents not some static solution, but rather a dynamic process of continuous change as illustrated in the following diagram.

THE 4-D PROCESS



As you read through the following description of the 4-D Process, think about how it may apply to your role as a change agent in your community. If you want to learn more about Appreciative Inquiry, see the Resource section at the end of this Toolkit for listings of several excellent references.

DISCOVERY — APPRECIATING

In the discovery phase, the important task is to appreciate the best of "what is" by focusing on times of excellence when people have experienced the organization as most alive and effective. People have to let go of analysis of deficits (such as needs assessment) and carefully inquire into and learn from even the smallest examples of high performance, success, and satisfaction. Using the interview guide (see box below), they tell stories about all the aspects of their organization: inspired leadership, helpful partnerships and networks, technologies that make work go more smoothly or facilitate better service, planning that encompasses new ideas and diverse people, opportunities to learn, and so on.

THE APPRECIATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. **Best experience.** Tell me about a time when you felt most alive, involved, fulfilled, and excited about your work.
   - What made it an exciting experience?
   - What was your role or contribution? Who else was involved and what were their roles?
   - What were the qualities that made it a positive experience?
2. **Values.**
   - What do you value about yourself? Your work?
   - What attracted you to this organization?
   - What are the energizing factors that you feel give life and meaning to your organization?
3. **Best practices and core values.**
   - What are your organization's best practices (the things it does well) and core values?
4. **Three wishes.**
   - If you had three wishes for your organization, what would they be?

[Interview questions excerpted with permission from ***Strategic Planning: An Inquiry Approach***, CEDPA Training Series, Volume X. The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), Washington, DC. 1999.]

World Vision — Community Capacity Building in West Tanzania

...We began with the Discovery step of the Appreciative Inquiry process by asking such questions as, "As a people of Kagera Region, what are you most proud of? Share some stories concerning your most valued traditions. What are your best practices in farming? Why have you been so successful in formal education and schooling? What core factors make life in Kagera possible?" At first the villagers stared at us wondering where our facilitation was leading. Then one teacher stood to say that the villagers have many problems. The children were dying of measles, the youth were dying of AIDS, the mothers did not have access to prenatal services, the fathers did not have enough money to pay school fees for their children, and the grandparents were left to care for the children whose parents had died of AIDS. Other villagers added more and more problems to the teacher's list. We listened to their stories attentively and sensitively. Then we asked them if anything was working in the community. We requested them to focus for a moment on what is present in the village, the assets, the capacities, the pride of its residents, the cooperative and institutional base of the community, not on what is absent, or on what is problematic, or on what the community needs. To our surprise, the mood changed to one of laughter and clapping once the villagers, one after another, started narrating the good news stories of the proud people of Kagera.

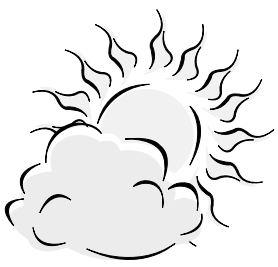
[Adapted by permission from the paper "Capacity-Building using the Appreciative Inquiry Approach: The experience of World Vision Tanzania." Dirk Bouy. 1998. Paper is included in *Appreciative Inquiry in Action: A Practitioner's Manual*. The Global Excellence in Management (GEM) Project, Washington, DC.]

Working through the discovery phase, people share stories of exceptional accomplishments and discuss best practices of the organization. The interview data will help the group locate, illuminate, and understand the distinctive strengths that give the organization life and vitality when it is functioning at its best.

DREAM — ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

In this phase, participants envision a preferred future for the group (an NGO, a cooperative, a school—whatever its composition). They engage in conversations about the group's potential, its mission, and the unique contribution it can make to people's well-being. For many, this will be the first time they have been invited to think great thoughts and create great possibilities. As the group imagines the future, they are grounded in the positive examples of the past. Like an artist's paintbrush, the stories of unique and joyful moments in the past create a vibrant image of the future.

Engaging in dreaming and visioning takes people beyond what they thought was possible. This is the time to wonder about the group's greatest potential. "Five years from now what are we doing that is exciting, and worthwhile?" Participants create statements in the present tense that describe the ideal future as if it were already happening. Sometimes it's helpful to prompt people with the phrase "what if" and then ask them to complete the sentence by stating a possibility. For example, "What if…we keep our clinic open during the hours most convenient to our clients?" One of the dreams might then be, "Our clinic services are accessible to our clients — we accommodate their work schedules and make it as easy as possible for them to use the clinic and its resources."



DESIGN — CO-CONSTRUCTING/ALIGNING WITH THE IDEAL

During the design phase, the group members move from the image they have created together of their desired future and begin to design a "social architecture" that will support their shared dreams. This step requires careful consideration and dialogue on the part of all the group members about what the structure and processes of the organization will be. Possibilities are raised by the kinds of questions asked: What kind of leadership structure do we need and how do we want our leaders to act? What is our strategy for moving toward our shared vision? How can we organize ourselves to work together to get there? Who should be our partners in development? Are these strategies and processes congruent with the values reflected in our possibility statements?

DELIVERY — SUSTAINING

In the last phase of the 4-D cycle, the delivery phase, group members work together on an implementation strategy or action plan for moving forward in the immediate future. They make commitments and begin to take action. The emphasis is on becoming a "learning organization" in which all members are committed to continuous learning, adjustment, and innovation in support of their shared vision. The key to sustaining momentum is to build an "appreciative eye" into all the systems, procedures, and ways of working together.

The appreciative inquiry process does not end with this final stage. It is a continuous process of discovery, learning, and innovation.

[Adapted by permission from ***Appreciative Inquiry in Action: A Practitioner's Manual***. The Global Excellence in Management (GEM) Project, Washington, DC.]

"If one is not in a hurry,
even an egg will start walking."

— Ethiopian Proverb

DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS

As a development worker, you will be actively involved in the "diffusion of innovations," such as communicating and promoting new practices and ideas. An understanding of the process of diffusion will give you insights into how to go about promoting new ideas and how to gauge the effectiveness of your activities over time. Here is a discussion of the basic theory.

Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system.

An **innovation** is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or group. It doesn't matter if the idea is really new—it could have already been around for years. If the idea *seems new* to the individual or group, it is an innovation. Once approximately 10-25% of the population has adopted an innovation, the adoption rate accelerates. In other words, the innovation "takes off." [The use of cell phones is one such example.]

People see innovations in a number of ways that influence how soon they adopt them.

1. **Relative advantage** is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea or practice it supersedes. Relative advantage may be measured in terms of economics, social prestige, convenience, and/or satisfaction.

2. **Compatibility** is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experience, and needs of the potential adopters. An idea that is not compatible with the prevalent values and norms of a social system will not be adopted as rapidly as an innovation that is compatible. An example of an incompatible innovation is the encouragement of condom use for HIV prevention in Roman Catholic nations.

3. **Complexity** is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use. For example, in some water and sanitation projects, health workers tried to explain germ theory to villagers as a reason they should boil their drinking water. The villagers did not understand the theory as presented and did not adopt the practice.

4. **Trialability** is the degree to which an innovation can be experimented with on a limited basis. New ideas that can be tried on the installment plan will generally be adopted more quickly than innovations that are "all or nothing." For example, farmers will often try out a new crop variety by planting a small plot to see if it will work in the local environment.

5. **Observability** is the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others. The easier it is for people to see the results of an innovation, the more likely they are to adopt it. Such visibility stimulates peer discussion of a new idea. For example, one or two local artisans might adopt the innovation of staying open later on certain evenings to attract tourist groups; other artisans notice the new business traffic and begin to experiment with extended hours and services, too.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Communication channels are the means by which messages get from one individual to another. Mass media channels are often the most efficient means to inform an audience about the existence of an innovation—that is, to create awareness. Mass media channels (radio, television, Internet, newspapers, and so on) enable a source of one or a few individuals to reach an audience of many. On the other hand, interpersonal channels are more effective in persuading an individual to adopt a new idea, especially if the interpersonal channels link two or more individuals who are near-peers. Interpersonal channels involve face-to-face exchange between two or more individuals.

Results from studies show that most individuals do not evaluate an innovation on the basis of scientific studies. Instead, most people depend mainly upon the opinions and experiences of *other individuals like themselves* who have previously adopted the innovation.

THE INNOVATION DECISION PROCESS

There are five main steps in the adoption of an innovation:

1. Knowledge (the innovation exists)
2. Persuasion (a favorable attitude)
3. Decision (to try it)
4. Implementation (trying it)
5. Confirmation (permanent or long-term adoption of the innovation)

A sixth step, *discontinuance*, may occur. This is a later decision to reject the innovation that had previously been adopted.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about a time when you were persuaded or influenced to consider and adopt a new idea or practice. The innovation might have been to stop doing something (such as stop smoking), to start doing/using something (such as buy and start using a cell phone), or to make a significant change in a process (such as change your major in college, change your job or career). Once you have centered on a particular example of "change" in your life, analyze it for a few minutes:

- Who was involved in promoting the innovation? Who persuaded or influenced you? What about this person/these people made you want to listen and take action?
- What aspects about the proposed innovation made it appealing? Was it easy or difficult to adopt this change? Why?

ROLE OF OPINION LEADERS IN DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION

Every society has certain people who are influential in forming opinions. This is a type of informal leadership rather than a function of the individual's position or status in the system. Opinion leadership is earned and maintained by the individual's technical competence, social accessibility, and conformity to the system's norms. They can be quite crucial to a community's adopting or rejecting an innovation.

One of the most striking characteristics of opinion leaders is their unique and influential position in their system's communication structure: *they are at the center of interpersonal communication networks*. The opinion leader's interpersonal networks allow him or her to serve as a social model whose innovative behavior is imitated by many other members of the system. The influence and respect the opinion leader holds can be lost, however, as happens when the leader deviates too far from the norms of his or her system. There is research evidence that opinion leaders can be "worn out" by change agents who overuse them. Opinion leaders may be perceived by their peers as being too much like the change agents, and may therefore lose their credibility with their followers.

> ***We must be the change we wish to see in the world.***
>
> **— Mohandas Ghandi**

STORIES FROM THE FIELD:

MADAGASCAR

When a Volunteer first wrote from her site she asked, "Who is my community?" She had been placed at a forest station that serves as a zoo and captive breeding center for endangered lemurs. While her job to assist with developing environmental education programs and materials was well defined, she wanted to do more with community development. The problem was that she was a long way from the closest village, with its market and community center. Her day-to-day contact was with the other people who worked and lived at the zoo. Well, she figured, I'll make them my community. The results turned into something much bigger than she ever imagined.

Located on a forestry station, Ivoloina Zoological Park is visited each year by thousands of Malagasy visitors. Zoo workers have the right to do a little farming there to produce some of their food needs. When she arrived, they mostly just grew rice. She asked around and found that there was a great interest from the park personnel in doing more with the small tracts of land they were given. The workers and their families worked with her to develop a project plan and proposal to train themselves in small animal production, beekeeping, agroforestry, and improved farming practices. In her last report she wrote "as of the end of September, all the houses have been built and populated with their respective chickens and ducks. Many of the local material hives already have bees in them.... There really is no other project like this going on in our area so I feel that the potential to pass this [information] on is high. I also feel like this is paving the way for Ivoloina to truly become a regional leader in conservation."

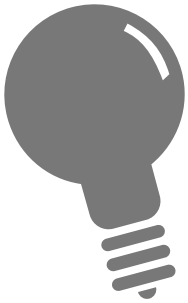
MALAWI

A knock at the door of my hut. I came to see who it was—a scout standing on my doorstep holding a homemade muzzle-loader gun. A water pipe as the barrel, a tree as the casing—the kind of weapon commonly used for poaching by local communities. Skipping the traditional greeting, I immediately asked, "Where did you get that?"

"A villager gave it to me, a member of the Natural Resource Committee we've been working with. They've been talking to the poachers, convincing them that the Wildlife Reserve is a good thing. One of the notorious poachers handed over his gun—he said he was finished poaching—and that this would prove it to the village and to the government."

Over the next eight months, 27 firearms were voluntarily handed over by local villagers to the Department of National Parks and Wildlife. An official "Handing Over Ceremony" was held on 5 August 1998, presided over by the Honorable Minister of Tourism, Parks, and Wildlife.

— A Parks and Wildlife Volunteer, Malawi



IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING YOUR ROLE AS A CHANGE AGENT

PRACTICING PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS TOOLS

PURPOSE

Because participatory analysis tools promote lively and oftentimes powerful conversations among participants, they require "facilitation finesse." Some Volunteers have tried to conduct participatory analysis in their communities without first adequately practicing the tools—the results have been dismal more often than not. You will do yourself and your community groups a big favor by practicing these techniques in "safe" situations until you feel comfortable with the process and smooth with the local language.

ACTIVITY

There are several ways to get practice time with these tools before you attempt them in your community. At the beginning of PST, you can practice the tools with other Trainees and trainers in English, in the host language, or using a "half-and-half approach." Later on, when your language skills are stronger, you can practice the activities with your host family and/or other "safe" groups in the training community.

Once at your site, you can invite someone who already has experience (another Volunteer, an NGO leader, your Program Manager, or others) to co-facilitate with you in your first real participatory analysis workshop with the community. Or conversely, you might ask if you can attend and assist at one of their workshops where they are using some of the tools.

Here are a few specific ideas to get you started:

COMMUNITY MAPPING TOOL

See the *Toolkit: Volunteer as Learner* for ideas on practicing this tool.

DAILY ACTIVITIES SCHEDULES

Practice this tool by shadowing members of your host family during training. Draft what you think their daily activities involve and ask them to check and correct your work. If your language skills are developed enough, ask them some questions about their roles and responsibilities, and what they wish they could change.

SEASONAL CALENDAR

There are several options for practicing this tool, depending on your language skill:

- Make a seasonal calendar with your language trainers, asking them to play themselves, or assume the roles of local community members.
- Make a calendar with a group of Volunteers who work in the same technical program or with your program manager.
- Team with other Trainees, Volunteers, or Counterparts who have strong language skills and practice the seasonal calendar with a local support group or club that has some familiarity with participatory activities.

INSTITUTIONAL (VENN) DIAGRAMS

In language class, make a Venn diagram of your own community, neighborhood, or school back in the U.S. Share your diagrams with one another and analyze them for common elements and interesting differences.

Ask your trainers to help you organize a small group of local community members to do a Venn diagram with you and your Trainee teammates. Ask your language instructor to help you formulate the instructions for creating the diagram and some "safe" questions for the analysis part of the activity. Use your language resources wisely—have the Trainees with the strongest language skills lead the discussion portion of the activity.

A final reminder: When you are ready to facilitate participatory analysis tools and activities in your community, remember that the *process is as important as the outcome* or the products. Let community members build the maps and diagrams themselves, give them opportunities to share their ideas and opinions with one another, pose questions that help them think critically about their roles and resources, listen for their desires and aspirations, and learn from them.

Having a Conversation about Leadership

Consider the set of questions listed below. First, think about your own individual views about "leadership," then sit around with a few of your American friends (fellow Trainees or Volunteers) and have a conversation about the theme. After that, pose some of these same questions to your host family or other friends in the local community and listen to what they say about "leadership."

- What are the *qualities* of a good leader—that is, what kind of a person is a good leader?
- What are the *functions* of a leader—that is, what does a leader *do*?
- What are the benefits of playing a leadership role in groups?
- What are the stresses connected to being a leader?
- What kind of support do people in a leadership capacity need from others?
- Who in history or in your life has been a good leader in your opinion? Why do you think so?

TALKING TO CHANGE AGENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

PURPOSE

To learn how change agents work in the local community

ACTIVITY

If you are in PST, solicit the help of your trainers to arrange a meeting with someone in the local community who is considered to be an agent of change. If you are a Volunteer living in your site, ask your supervisor, Counterpart, or friends to help you identify some of these people. Examples of change agents might include:

- A schoolteacher known to be dynamic and active in the community
- A school director who works with parents in formal and informal ways
- A local farmer who has been the "first" to try new agricultural/conservation practices and shares his/her experiences with other community members
- A mother who has organized the women in her neighborhood to form a support group
- An entrepreneur who models successful business practices

Paying attention to local protocol, have an interview with the change agent. Here are a few questions you might use to get the conversation started—adapt them and add your own:

- Are you familiar with the term "agent of change"? What does it mean to you?
- How do you engage people in new activities and promote new ideas to people in the community? (Can you please describe one or two specific experiences?)
- What are some of the cultural norms or rules that encourage or inhibit change?
- What are some factors (from inside or outside the community) that are currently influencing people to consider certain changes?

Once you have conducted your interview, share your perceptions and insights with fellow Trainees, trainers, Volunteers, or Counterparts. If possible and desirable, spend more time with the change agent to gain a better understanding of his or her activities and relationships in the community.

CONDUCTING A CAPACITY INVENTORY

PURPOSE

To get experience with inventorying individual capacity among members of the training group and/or local community; to use the inventory to imagine or suggest possible linkages between people and/or institutions

ACTIVITY

This practice activity can be done in PST in collaboration with members of your language or technical sector groups, or it can be adapted for an IST setting.

1. With your colleagues, make a list of all the potential skills and knowledge areas that you think may exist in the local community. Consider these four categories as you create your list:

   - **Survival** skills/knowledge (preparing food, repairing houses, gathering water and firewood, managing multiple tasks, budgeting and managing money, and so on)
   - **Social** skills/knowledge (about rituals/traditional ceremonies, storytelling, and other matters)
   - **Work** skills/knowledge (performing trades, teaching, planning, providing services to others)
   - **Leisure** skills/knowledge (playing soccer, dancing, and so on)

2. Once you have listed and organized as many of the different skills/knowledge as you can think of, use the list to conduct an informal survey with your host families. Ask different members in your family which skills/expertise they have. Ask them what other skills and knowledge they have that are not on your list, and add these items to your survey.

3. Back in your training class, share your information with your colleagues. In as orderly a fashion as possible, put all of the information on the wall so you can see and study it.

4. Do an inventory of your own capacities (yours and your colleagues') and add these skills to the list on the wall.

5. Study the "capacity bank" you have created from the inventory. Based on the resources you see, try to imagine some creative linkages between individuals, between individuals and institutions, and between institutions. Also consider the goals of your technical sector Project—are there linkages and activities that "suggest themselves"? Visualize your ideas through diagrams or drawings.

COMMUNICATING TO PERSUADE OR INFLUENCE

PURPOSE

To practice communicating about a new idea or behavior change in a way that respects and builds on local cultural beliefs, values, and norms

ACTIVITY

1. Select an issue area that is of interest to you and to at least some people in your community. The issue may or may not relate to your technical Project. Examples of issues might be:
   - more educational opportunities for girls
   - condom use for HIV/AIDS prevention
   - teen pregnancy prevention
   - alternative fuel sources (vs. depleting local forests or swamps)
   - alternative credit sources for residents in poor urban neighborhoods

2. Write down your own understanding and views of this issue: What do *you* think people should start or stop doing that would bring about a desired change? Why? What are some of the consequences of making or not making the change? How do your beliefs and values influence your position on this issue?

3. Conduct a cultural assessment of the issue or topic. Talk objectively to several different types of people in the community to learn about their perceptions of the issue. (The idea here is to learn what they think about the issue, *not* to convince them about your viewpoint.) If your issue or topic is a particularly sensitive one, talk to those people with whom you've already built some trust (host family members, language trainers, your Counterpart's family, and others). Try to listen for the cultural beliefs and values that may be at the core of people's opinions.

4. After your conversations with community members, compare your view of the issue with theirs. If you are doing this exercise with others in your training group, share what you have learned and ask your colleagues for additional insights that you may not easily see.

5. Using your analysis of the data, compose a message about the issue that promotes the new idea, practice, or desired change in a way that takes into account the cultural and community context.

6. Present your message to your colleagues, trainers, and/or friends and ask them for feedback. (Do as much of this whole exercise as possible in the local language.)

YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND YOUR PEACE CORPS PROJECT

PURPOSE

To explore the potential for participation by youth and children in your Peace Corps Project activities

ACTIVITY

There are several possible ways to assess the potential for youth participation in your Project. First, read *Youth Capacity Building Best Practices* and *Ladder of Participation* in this Toolkit. Then, review the Project Plan for your technical assignment area and identify what it specifically says or implies about youth participation in the Project activities:

- Does the Project design recognize young people as valuable community resources? How? (Give examples.)
- Based on your understanding, where would you place this Project on the Ladder of Participation?
- What are the strategies for meaningful involvement of young people or children? How will this Project build young people's capacity?
- What are some additional ideas you have about the roles that youth could play in this Project?

Discuss your findings and ideas with your colleagues, your APCD, other Volunteers, and Counterparts.

NOTE: You may apply these same assessment questions to focus on women's participation and capacity building.

As a complementary activity, invite several young people (girls and boys) in the local community to participate in a simple focus-group discussion. Ask them a series of questions that will help you find out what they know about the themes or issues addressed in the Project, what their interest in the Project might be, and how they would like to be involved. Allow everyone to express his or her own views, if necessary separating the young people into girls' and boys' groups. After the focus discussion, meet again with your colleagues and trainers to discuss what you learned. ***[NOTE: If you are doing this inquiry activity in your PST host community, you and your trainers should be prepared to follow up with the young people assuming they express a positive interest in your Project. Do small activities that will get them engaged and help them link with others in the local area who are also working in your sector. In short, don't raise their expectations about involvement in a project and then leave them hanging.]***

Still another activity is to invite several current Volunteers who have had successful experiences with youth involvement to come to PST and share best practices and lessons learned from their work.

Once you've assessed the Project design and heard from youth representatives and serving Volunteers, craft a set of recommendations for youth participation in your Project and technical sector activities. Show the recommendations to your APCD and get his or her feedback.

CASE STUDY OF ONE VOLUNTEER'S EXPERIENCE WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND CHANGE

PURPOSE

To identify key decisions and/or actions on the part of the Volunteer that contributed to the community's success in reaching its goals and building its capacity

ACTIVITY

Read the following case study. As you go, highlight the points in the story where the Volunteer and the women's group made decisions that were key to the success of the non-formal education program. Use the questions listed below to guide your analysis. Discuss your perceptions with your trainers and colleagues.

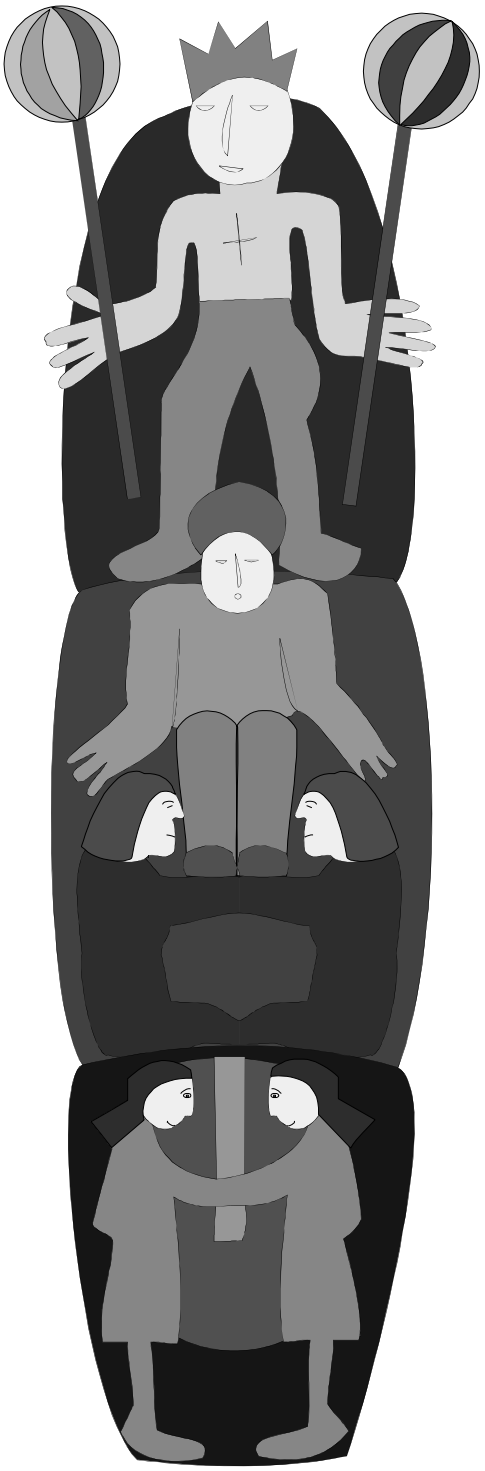
Questions for reflection and discussion

- What did Mark do to build a relationship with the women's group and the larger community?
- Was Mark using an asset-based or deficits-based approach in his work here? Please explain your answer.
- What were the elements of capacity building in this project?
- What did Mark NOT do that contributed to the project's success?
- Do you view this project as part of Mark's overall job of coordinating the non-formal education activities? Explain your answer.
- How would you characterize Mark in terms of risk taking?
- What would you have done differently along the way?
- If you were Mark, what would you do next with the women's group and/or with the assignment of "coordinating non-formal activities"?

MARK'S CASE

Mark was assigned to work at the *Los Encuentros* Education Center in a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of a town in Panama. The Center housed both a secondary school and non-formal education facilities for adults. The formal school and the non-formal program were supposed to share facilities such as sewing rooms, carpentry equipment, and gardens. Mark's job was to coordinate the non-formal education activities.

Upon his arrival, Mark found that the common space was not being shared as he had thought. The non-formal education program, made up predominantly of women, had been relegated to three small offices. The formal school had expanded to serve twice as many students as originally projected. Space was so scarce that many of the non-formal activities had been abandoned and the office Mark had been promised was in a closet. There was no hope of ever getting back the use of the common rooms because student enrollment in the formal school was increasing. The women said they understood and would rather their children have the space.



Mark surveyed the situation at hand. The women had organized themselves into a group to sew and sell school uniforms, and their greatest concern seemed to be making enough money to pay for their children's fees. As Mark discussed issues informally with the women and observed their work, he realized that they needed proper working space for the sewing project. He suggested they call a community meeting to discuss the need for more space.

At this meeting, someone proposed the idea of constructing a building for the women. Everyone—the mayor, community elders, and the women themselves—thought this was a great idea. At the end of the meeting, everyone was saying, "If Mark can get us a building, we will have something to remember him for."

Mark was distraught by the response. He knew that through Save the Children and other development organizations, he could only get funds to cover materials, not labor. He met with the women's group and explained the situation, but they told him that they did not know how to build and urged him to find money to pay a builder. Mark began looking for additional funding when an idea occurred to him: why not train the women to build by constructing their own building? Not only would they have room for the activities they considered important, they would have learned new skills as well.

Mark got the Director of Housing in the Ministry of Natural Resources to agree to back the project. The Director's only demand was that the group experiment with a new type of construction technology that used "soil-cement bricks." He told Mark that he would assign a construction supervisor to train the women while they built.

Mark called a meeting to discuss this idea with the women. They were very reluctant, for it was time to harvest their corn (maize), and besides, they did not think they could

construct the building themselves. They discussed the pros and cons of the idea for a long time. Mark tried to be encouraging, but resisted the women's attempts to give him the major responsibility for the project. Finally, the women made the decision to try, even though it was something that had never been done in their village before.

Mark's main worry was that as the work progressed, the women's other family activities might pull them away from the project. He was careful to get everyone to agree that enough of the group would actually show up each day during the five-week construction period. When everyone was sure they were ready to carry out their plan, Mark and the chairperson of the women's group went to the capital to sign an agreement with the Ministry of Natural Resources.

During the first month, Mark helped the women make plans and preparations for the construction. They found accommodations for the construction supervisor and an assistant. The women pressed the soil-cement bricks with a machine borrowed from the Ministry of Education. When construction finally began, the small community had become so excited about the project that over 30 people were involved.

Early each morning, Mark and the construction supervisor would mix the mortar so that construction could begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. The community members did all of the bricklaying. Even the weather seemed to cooperate—it rained only once during the five weeks. When the building was completed right on schedule five weeks later, the women were very pleased with their efforts. They called the new structure "our building" and had a party to celebrate.

KEY RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INSIGHT

Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets. John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. (ACTA Publications, Chicago, IL). 1993. [ICE CD051]

Children's Participation: Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care. Roger A. Hart. (UNICEF, New York, NY). 1997. [ICE YD029]

Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining and Enjoying the Journey. Michael Winer and Karen Ray. (Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, MN). 1996. [ICE CD053]

Community Building: What Makes It Work? A Review of Factors Influencing Successful Community Building. Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey. (Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, MN). 1992. [ICE CD052]

No Short Cuts: A Starter Resource Book for Women's Group Field Workers. Nicky May and Mia Hyun. (Change International, London, England). 1992. [ICE WD119]

Networking for Development. Paul Starkey. (International Forum for Rural Transport and Development, IRTD). 1997. [ICE CD055]

PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC). 1996. [ICE M0053]

Participatory Rural Appraisal Handbook: Conducting PRAs in Kenya. (World Resources Institute, Washington, DC). 1992. [ICE AG258]

Participatory Rural Appraisal and Planning Workbook. Daniel Selener, Nelly Endara, and Jose Carvajal. (International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, New York, NY). 1999.

Power, Process and Participation – Tools for Change. Edited by Rachael Slocum, Loir Wichart, Dianne Rocheleau, and Barbara Thomas-Slayter. (Intermediate Technology Publications, Ltd., London, UK). 1995. [ICE TR108]

Promoting Powerful People. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC). 2000. [ICE T0104]

RRA Notes Number 21: Special Issue on Participatory Tools and Methods in Urban Areas. Sustainable Agriculture Programme (International Institute for Environment and Development, IIED, London, UK). 1994. [ICE WS119]

The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry. Sue Hammond. (Kodiak Consulting, Plano, TX). 1998. [ICE TR110]