Mainstreaming Participation in Development

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Acknowledgments

Preface

Despite the potential benefits of globalization and technological change, world poverty has increased and growth prospects have dimmed for developing countries during the 1980s and 90s. The Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) was launched by the World Bank in January 1999 in response to these difficult circumstances. It has evoked considerable interest throughout the development community as an approach that can address the increasingly intertwined challenges faced by development practitioners. Its basic elements are not new. What is new is their joint articulation as a framework to guide development assistance. The first point is that development constraints are structural and social, and cannot be overcome through economic stabilization and policy adjustment alone—they require a long-term and holistic vision of needs and solutions. Second, policy reform and institutional development cannot be imported or imposed; without domestic ownership, reforms and investments are not sustainable. Third, successful development requires partnership among government, local communities, the private sector, civil society, and development agencies. And fourth, development activities must be guided and judged by results.

In this context, the *1999 Annual Review of Development Effectiveness* (ARDE), authored by Nagy Hanna under the guidance of Robert Picciotto, set out to examine development experience through the lens of CDF principles. A number of papers were commissioned to support the ARDE by providing in-depth review of evaluation and research findings that assess the relevance of the CDF principles and constraints as well as promising approaches to their implementation.

Introduction

Efforts in the past decade to bring participation to center stage in development have yielded a rich harvest of learning, much of it now echoed in the guiding principles of ownership and partnership in the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF). Participation is about building partnership and ownership from the bottom up.

We have known for some time that strong primary stakeholder participation on the ground boosts project performance. More recently we discovered that participation holds promise outside the project framework—for informing national policymakers (Norton and Stephens 1995; Robb 1999; Holland and Blackburn 1998), for planning and implementing large scale government programs (Thompson 1995), for designing and implementing donor projects (Forster 1998), and for encouraging good—and often local—governance (Gaventa and Valderrama 1999). We now see the need for better partnerships with secondary stakeholders—not just for more ownership by primary stakeholders—as participation goes to scale.

But what is participation, exactly? We define it as a process through which primary stakeholders influence and share control of their development initiatives, decisions, and resources (Tandon and Cordeiro 1998, building on World Bank 1994.) Mainstreaming participation means adopting the "institutional reforms and innovations necessary to enable full and systematic incorporation of participatory methodologies into the work of the institution so that meaningful primary stakeholder participation becomes a regular part of a project and policy development, implementation and evaluation" (Long 1999, 11). Scaling up participation means increasing the number of participants or places that participate or expanding people's participation in one activity (such as appraisal) to many. It means involving people throughout the development process in a way that empowers (Gaventa 1998). The challenge is to increase numbers without undermining quality.

Building Ownership and Partnership through Policy Consultations with the Poor

The use of participatory research, specifically participatory rural appraisal,[1] to make national policymakers more aware how the poor really live began on a large scale in the mid-1990s. One of the most interesting developments has been the gradual institution-alization of World Bank-promoted country-level participatory poverty assessments—a complement to the Bank's conventional poverty assessments. Several authors have argued that participatory poverty assessments reveal more about the dynamics of poverty and its multiple dimensions than conventional survey-based economistic studies (Booth et al 1998; Brocklesby and Holland 1998; Robb 1999). To date, more than 100 participatory poverty assessments have been carried out, the largest number in Africa.

But so far participation been limited in most participatory poverty assessments and participatory sectoral studies to consulting multiple stakeholders on effective policy de-sign—and this is not the same as ownership. Effective ownership means involving primary and secondary stakeholders in every stage of the policy cycle (NGO Working Group 1999). Recent participatory poverty assessment experience, especially in Uganda, shows how the influence of such assessments can be extended beyond consultation to build cross-partner in-country ownership into policy design. Networks of governmental, nongovernmental, and other organizations committed to bringing the voices of the poor to the ears of policymakers now exist in many countries and could provide informed advice on CDF implementation.

The Importance of Involving Government

Though it is difficult to trace policy effects back to causes, participatory poverty assess-ments seem to have a greater effect on policy when governments have a greater amount of ownership. In Zambia government officials were included from the early stages of the poverty assessment process, leading to changes in sectoral balances with higher priority given to rural road construction and maintenance. In Lesotho government ownership in-creased when participatory poverty assessment results were included in the government action plan. In Argentina, although the specific policy changes have not been documented, ownership has been important in modifying monitoring and evaluation indicators of social programs (Robb 1999). In a participatory sectoral study of education in The Gambia early involvement of government officials in research proved important in modifying education policy—increasing the number of female teachers and reducing tuition fees by 50 percent in secondary schools (Kane et al 1998).

The Importance of Involving a Wide Range of Civil Society Actors

Civil society actors have been involved at different stages of the participatory poverty assessment in different ways. In Zambia the inclusion of a cross-section of stakeholders created a shared feeling of ownership of the process and the action plan (Robb 1999). In Lesotho nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the World Bank worked on the action plan together, and the government received extensive support from both. South Africa made a concerted effort to build stakeholder ownership into every stage of the research process, from design and methodology to management, facilitation, and synthesis (Attwood and May 1998).

These kinds of effective partnerships require that more powerful partners cede control to weaker partners. Only then can the weaker partners be the main owners. This sort of involvement requires time and commitment. The idea is to view participatory poverty assessments as a learning process in which capacities—of government, NGOs, and World Bank staff—are built.

A Learning Curve of Innovations

Participatory poverty assessment methodology has evolved through cycles of innovation, learning, and change. Participatory rural appraisal methods were introduced in the Ghana participatory poverty assessment of 1993 (Dogbe 1998) and further developed in Zambia that same year (Milimo and others1998) and in Mozambique in 1994 (Owen 1998). While earlier participatory poverty assessments had been seeded and sustained principally by donors, the South African assessment (introduced in 1995) was owned and managed by South Africans. The process was managed by a South African consultancy firm—Data Research Africa—and overseen by a management committee of representatives from academia, NGOs, and the private sector. Organizations and individuals were selected for fieldwork after a transparent, competitive process. The outcome of their work was a report of groundbreaking insight and authority—which it included the voices of poor people (May 1998).

The Bangladesh participatory poverty assessment also engaged the poor—this time in focus groups. Participants voiced needs that workers had not anticipated. The second priority of "doables" for poor urban women, for example, was a place where they could wash in private. And male and female, rural and urban alike wanted to counter the damaging effects of dowry.

The participatory poverty assessment in Shinyanga in Tanzania also broke ground by being regional rather than national, by involving district government staff as facilitators, by engaging participants intensively—with three weeks of training and three weeks of residence in each community—and by working on participatory follow up (Shinyanga Human Development Report Project 1998).

The Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process: A Model for the Future?

Initially funded by donors, the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process is owned and managed—and championed—by the government. A committee of donor and NGO representatives, chaired by a government staffer, oversees and coordinates it. The initial timespan is three years, longer than any previous participatory poverty assessment. Before

beginning, field workers underwent thorough training in which they learned lessons from experience in other countries. Three people in each of nine districts—two from government and one from an NGO—make up the core teams. Feedback is given to the district level and to district planning, as well as to the center. Ongoing participatory monitoring and evaluation in communities has been built in.

The participatory poverty assessment unit has more policy influence than previous units because of its location within the Ministry of Finance. Sectoral ministries seek advice and feedback from the unit for their policies and proposals, in a process that has already influenced a policy change in line with poor people's priorities for water services. Policy in agriculture, taxation, and education is also being discussed, and there is potential for further policy influence on the budget process. While it is too early to draw firm conclusions, the participatory poverty assessment process in Uganda seems to be a useful case study for governments and donors committed to reducing poverty in ways sensitive to the realities and priorities of poor people.

Lessons and Implications for the Comprehensive Development Framework

Participatory poverty assessments have the potential to influence all sectors of the CDF by informing and influencing policies, providing feedback on implementation, enhancing awareness and commitment among donors and beneficiaries, and encouraging and strengthening champions of the poor. These influences will be stronger and more sustainable if the process includes ongoing participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Five lessons and conclusions stand out:

- Government should take ownership—early. Most of the first participatory poverty assessments were owned largely by donors. In South Africa, for example, the assessment was owned by South Africans, but the process took place almost entirely outside government and transfer of ownership and commitment to government was never complete.
- NGOs and government should forge partnerships. When a government is committed to participatory antipoverty policies, it should be in the driver's seat. Patterns and possibilities will vary, but one promising approach is to have an NGO staff member work in a government office (as in Uganda).
- Participatory poverty assessment should be a part of government. The South African participatory poverty assessment became an orphan when its government home, the Reconstruction and Development Program, was unexpectedly abolished in 1995. In contrast, in Uganda the unit responsible for participatory poverty assessments is strategically located in the Ministry of Finance—well placed for influencing sectoral ministries and sharing information from ongoing participatory poverty assessments in the districts.
- Awareness and commitment should be built at different levels in government. Both the Shinyanga and Uganda participatory poverty assessments have enhanced awareness and commitment at district level by involving government staff. There are indications that this is affecting district-level priorities and implementation generally.
- Participatory poverty assessments should be a way of life for government. The participatory poverty assessment process is long term and includes participatory monitoring and evaluation. The participatory poverty assessment process should become—progressively and at different levels—the way in which governments and donors do business.

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Building Ownership and Partnership by Scaling Up Participation in National Government Programs

Perhaps the best known success story in taking participation to scale in a government bureaucracy is the Philippines National Irrigation Administration's step-by-step approach to help build user associations' capacity to manage local irrigation systems. Of particular relevance to CDF implementation are a learning process approach (D. Korten 1980) and managerial innovations that allow local priorities and processes to guide bureaucracy work—not the other way around (D. Korten 1988).

Benjamin Bagadion and Frances Korten (1991) argue that the Irrigation Administration's institutional learning process began when a working group brought together frontline workers and high-level staff to define a common vision of change. The group then worked through a five-step learning cycle over a number of years: They identified the need for an innovation, conceptualized a new approach, tested it on a small scale, systematized the lessons, and developed institutional capacities to adopt the change on a wider scale.

Supporting ownership of local user associations in defining how and when to build, rebuild, and maintain their irrigation systems was not something that could be achieved by decree or by pumping huge resources into the system early. The key was to take the time to complete each stage of the learning cycle and to resist spending large sums at the start, as often happens in multilateral donor programs (Thompson 1995, 1998). Long-term success also required resisting an attempt by the World Bank to go to scale too fast with an expanded program that would have seriously undermined participation and sustainability.

How Procedural Inflexibility Can Quash Participation: The Case of the Doon Valley Project in the Indian Himalayas

Changing organizational systems and procedures to facilitate participatory development is complex and problematic. But the costs of not attempting to do so can be heavy, as the Doon Valley Project shows (Shepherd 1998).

The government of Uttar Pradesh's Doon Valley Project, funded by the European Union, seeks to promote sustainable management of Himalayan hillsides by farmers. Although a participatory method of village planning has been initiated, village facilitators have been unable to apply a participatory approach further into the program cycle. The constraints derive in part from government and donor unwillingness to challenge a requirement that predetermined quantifiable targets be achieved within set time frames, which clashes with the needs of a participatory approach to program implementation.

The lesson is clear: participation cannot be "bolted on". Sticking participatory rural appraisal onto existing programs as an appendage will not lead to participation. All too often the priorities revealed by participatory rural appraisals contradict those already fixed by the program, and development organizations—from field units to foreign funders—find themselves unable or unwilling to change. Resistance by those far up in the hierarchy leads to friction. And field staff, often the only people to receive relevant training, can easily become disillusioned. The quality of participatory rural appraisal drops and staff begin to apply the approach in a mechanical, routine way without the creative enthusiasm needed to make a real difference (Chambers 1997).

The Dangers of Rapid Scaling Up: The Case of Rushing to Scale in Indonesia

Participation cannot be rushed, as the Indonesian government's attempt to facilitate nationwide village development planning in less than a year illustrates. In June 1995 a central government directive informed all 27 provinces that starting with the 1995–96 cycle, bottom-up planning would begin in villages. Budgets were duly allocated to facilitate the prescribed four-day training for provincial trainers and three-day training for village council heads in some 60,000 villages. Cascade training on such a scale and at such speed seriously diminished the quality of the exercise. Field-based methods inevitably became classroom based, and the short timeframe hampered learning and consultations with NGOs experienced in participatory methods. Attitudes and behaviors, long recognized as more important in participatory rural appraisal than the methods themselves (Kumar 1996), received little attention (Mukherjee 1998). Quality suffered even more from Indonesia's hierarchical bureaucratic culture.

This case confirms what has been reported elsewhere (see, for example, Thompson 1995 and 1998 and Pratt, Pimbert, and Bainbridge 1998): using participatory approaches effectively on a wide scale requires a long, gradual approach to developing strategies, gaining experience, and building capacity. The Indonesian government's attempt to facilitate nationwide village development planning quickly shows what happens when participation is forced: little or no ownership by the village.

Another lesson: Trainers must model participation in their behavior and approach to training and they must have enough time to teach. Effective participatory rural appraisal training takes 10–20 days and requires field experience. In one country a World Bank staff member reportedly asked a local participatory rural appraisal trainer to conduct training in three days. When the trainer said that was impossible, that training required more time and field experience, the staff member simply found another trainer. The consequence of similar behavior by donor staff is low-quality participatory rural appraisal and much disillusionment with participation.

Hanging in There Pays: The Rural Integrated Project Support Program in the Lindi and Mtwara Regions of Tanzania

The Rural Integrated Project Support Program in Tanzania illustrates the importance of long-term commitment in a participation strategy (Freling 1998). The fruits of this program are not a result of quick mass action, but of experience and learning from mistakes for 25 years.

The Rural Integrated Project Support program is district-level and holistic, embracing water, healthcare, education, agriculture, local government, savings and credit, transport and marketing, and natural resource management. A 1993 evaluation of phase one (launched in 1988) revealed weaknesses in program delivery at the community level. The evaluation prompted adoption of a unique participatory planning process, implemented in phase two in October 1994.

This participatory approach has accelerated learning. Today's program framework supports and facilitates meaningful dialogue between local communities and government authorities to identify priorities, available resources, and opportunities for action. Remarkable results have been achieved in healthcare, agriculture, natural resource management, and education (with links made to the government's education reform). More remarkable is that this has been achieved with little outside money. External funds from donors and the government come to only $US 3 million a year.

Lessons for the Comprehensive Development Framework: Champions, Continuity, and Alliances

In cases where governments or NGOs have increased beneficiary participation, we often have key individuals, or alliances of individuals, to thank. They take the lead, often battling institutional inertia, individual hostility, and political pressures from the relatively wealthy. The Regional Commissioners of Mtwara and Lindi in Tanzania allied with the Rural Integrated Project Support Program to introduce participatory approaches in government (Freling 1998). Benjamin Bagadion of the National Irrigation Administration in the Philippines and Frances Korten of the Ford Foundation were key allies in developing and spreading participatory irrigation management in the Philippines. The critical pioneering development of joint forest management in India took place in West Bengal during five years when there was strong mutual support and commitment of both the minister responsible for forestry and the chief conservator of forests. A former chief executive transformed the irrigation bureaucracy of the Mahaweli Development Authority in Sri Lanka into a model of participation. Further crucial innovations in participatory forestry, irrigation management, watershed management, and training for attitude and behavior change owe much to the continuity and commitment of Anil K. Shah in Gujarat, first as a secretary in the government and then for over a decade in the NGO sector.

The challenge is to multiply the number and effectiveness of champions. This means we must find and support them and enable them to network, form alliances, learn from each other, and spread their participatory approaches. And we must foster conditions that encourage and enable champions.

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Lessons for the Comprehensive Development Framework: The Primacy of Personal Change

Participatory approaches must be reflected in the attitudes and behavior of all actors at all levels, for these are the means and assurance of sustainable change in organizational cultures (Blackburn with Holland 1998). Again and again a new authoritarian manager has set the clock back, ruining the participatory culture and practices patiently nurtured by a predecessor. Sustained leadership and support from a high level are critical—progress is often made by incentives and example. The bottom line in participatory change is individual and personal.

It is only recently that the implications of attitude and behavior have been recognized. Leadership generally has been celebrated, but participation goes beyond conventional leadership. To empower others demands special qualities and behaviors. In August 1998 the Indian Government held a workshop at the National Academy of Administration, at which it was resolved to introduce attitude and behavior change modules in training for probationers for the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Forest Service (Mathur 1998).

While a leader in policy formulation, the World Bank is often a laggard in behavior and attitude change. But since Bank staff are role models for many development professionals, especially in government, they must place attitude and behavior change at the center of their policies and practices or risk turning the CDF into another exercise in domination. Client government staff cannot be expected to be patient and participatory if Bank staff are not. Bank staff must facilitate, listen, and empower more—and teach, talk, and dominate less. And this may require radical personal change.

Field experiences will also help. Those who have facilitated participatory poverty assessments in the field often speak of how they have been changed by the experience. At a recent global synthesis workshop, leaders of national field teams in the Consultations with the Poor project undertaken for the World Development Report 2000 said they had been deeply moved and changed by the experience. But although senior World Bank staff have been immersed in villages and slums, other agencies have not followed suit.

Building Ownership and Partnership through Donor Policies and Programs to Mainstream Participation

In the 1990s a number of large and small donors began to emphasize the importance of mainstreaming participation in their activities.[2] Four donors—Germany's Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Bank—agree that they need a more flexible approach to project design. GTZ and DFID are working to make the logical framework more participatory using participatory rural appraisal. But participatory rural appraisal applications are still too mechanical (Forster 1998). The current USAID discourse has assimilated catch phrases such as "listening to the customer," but La Voy's 1998 study of USAID's organizational change experience says little about methodological innovations at the field level.

New participatory methodologies are needed to secure project ownership of primary stakeholders. The principle of ownership makes little sense unless it extends to beneficiaries. Formal and informal networks of practitioners in participatory rural appraisal and their related methodologies now exist in dozens of countries—an important social capital base on which to draw.

Making Management Frameworks More Flexible

A central challenge for DFID, GTZ, USAID, and the World Bank is to adapt their management frameworks to meet the challenge of mainstreaming participation. At DFID, staff see the existing project cycle management framework as time-consuming, rigid, and too consultant-dependent to let local priorities influence program design effectively (INTRAC 1998). GTZ has been testing a more flexible approach, but wants to see more projects with an "open orientation" phase of up to three years for complex projects (Forster 1998). USAID's response has been to pilot a "strategic objective" approach with partners (La Voy 1998). Recent studies of the World Bank's efforts to mainstream participation revealed similar concerns. The Bank's internal reviews and the NGO Working Group on Participation in the Bank (1999) identified the need to improve feedback systems and make consultations with partners more systematic when designing country assistance strategies.

The four organizations agree: donors need longer and more systematic consultations with primary and secondary stakeholders. The challenge will be to identify and contact civil society organizations in each country that represent the weakest in society. It is also vital for the Bank to share process documentation and encourage partners to make their own contributions. Improvements in communications technology should make this easier.

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Improving Collaboration and Coordination among Institutions

DFID, USAID, GTZ, and the World Bank agree that increasing primary stakeholder participation cannot be achieved without improved coordination and collaboration among the players in the development field. Competition or mistrust among NGOs, or between NGOs and government, continues to impede scaling-up strategies (Fowler 1997). Dangers include the "autistic trend of [each donor] building participatory islands" (Forster 1998) and "consultation fatigue" among partners expected to engage different donors on the same subject. DFID's response is to focus on long-term sectoral investment programs involving several partners. USAID's New Partnerships Initiative is similar. GTZ sees the global trend towards decentralization as an opportunity for strengthening partnerships with local government, NGOs, and other actors in civil society.

Donors who work on their own often urge secondary and primary stakeholders to collaborate. This contradiction has tarnished the move to mainstream participation. Today's shifts towards globalization on the one hand and decentralization on the other require organizations to collaborate more effectively than ever before. The CDF can help make this a reality.

Improving the Capacity of Different Stakeholders to Own and Share

More emphasis on human resource development, both within agencies and among partner organizations, can help staff work in more participatory ways. The current debate focuses on what training to use. GTZ and DFID point to staff dissatisfaction with formal courses, and call for alternative in-house training such as temporary duty assignments, job swaps, shadowing, and distance learning.

Participatory rural appraisal training in donor organizations is most effective when seen as part of a broader strategy of organizational learning (Thompson 1995). USAID has had more than 50 Participation Forums to raise awareness among staff, but difficulties remain in achieving the internal organizational changes—in systems, procedures, and structures—needed to make customer focus a reality (La Voy 1998). Ideas at the World Bank include immersion training (arranging for Bank staff to spend time face to face with the poor) and using communications technologies. All four donors have said that mainstreaming participation requires better staff screening, new incentive systems, and more emphasis on personnel continuity.

Making Donors More Participatory from the Inside

Participants at an Institute for Development Studies workshop on Institutionalizing Participation (proceedings are summarized in Blackburn 1998, 145–52) argued that innovative organizational changes can increase the flexibility of organizations supporting participatory projects on the ground. The notions of flexible accounting and downward accountability may be useful to the CDF.

The rationale for flexible accounting is to broaden the number of people entrusted to make budget decisions, making it easier to move money from one item to another, and roll unspent balances forward. This is considered necessary because participatory projects are

evolutionary by definition: their spending priorities will shift over time. Just as customers increasingly define what firms produce, clients or potential beneficiaries must do the same for development agencies. No literature documenting specific cases of flexible accounting can be traced, but empirical experience is growing as development organizations grapple with the challenges of taking participation to scale. More research in this area could be useful to the CDF.

Finally, there is much talk of the need to move toward models of downward accountability, though there is little knowledge of how to put this into practice. The ever-widening applications of participatory monitoring and evaluation offer some clues.

Building Ownership and Partnership through Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

In addition to its principles of long-term holistic development, partnership, and ownership, the CDF also hopes to develop approaches to strengthen results-based monitoring, transparency, and accountability. In this area, work related to monitoring and evaluating participation, and to participatory monitoring and evaluation, is also relevant.

Donor organizations are exploring new ways of measuring the impact of their work. How can results be tracked continuously over time? How can we know what works and what doesn't? How can a learning process be established to support strategic choices for improvement?

Conventionally, such questions have been answered through a monitoring and evaluation approach that involved outside experts measuring performance against preset indicators, often after a project or initiative was over. But recently large organizations have been searching for ways to monitor that are continuous and oriented towards organizational improvement. A number of developments contribute to this shift:

- The increased emphasis on performance measurement, or management by results, in the U.S. Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
- The shift within organizations, especially in the private sector, towards more flexible, learning-systems approaches
- The surge of interest in participatory approaches, which involve people in the assessment process
- The pressure for greater accountability by donor agencies, especially at a time of scarce resources.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation is attracting interest from many quarters—it offers ways of assessing results and learning from them that are more inclusive and more in tune with the aspirations of those directly affected, and that allow development organizations to better focus on their goal to improve poor people's lives. By broadening involvement in identifying and analyzing results, a clearer picture can be gained of what is happening on the ground.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation builds ownership. It puts local stakeholders in charge, helps them develop skills, and demonstrates that their views count for assessing results and needs. It enables and supports partnership by involving all stakeholders. The principles of participatory monitoring and evaluation are:

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- Participation. All stakeholders participate in all aspects of participatory monitoring and evaluation, including choosing indicators and analyzing data.
- Negotiation. Stakeholders negotiate what will be monitored and evaluated, how and when data will be collected and analyzed, what the data mean, and how findings will be shared and action taken.
- Learning. Participation and negotiation lead to collective learning, ownership, and investment in key findings by those most able to use the results for corrective action.
- Flexibility. Since the purpose of participatory monitoring and evaluation is improved learning for improved results, leading to ongoing change and adaptation, flexibility is essential. Blueprint approaches to evaluation, in which standard indicators are imposed and held constant to measure change over time, will do little to encourage a flexible, results-oriented learning approach. (Estrella and Gaventa 1998 and IDS Policy Briefing 12, 1998).
- Involvement of all stakeholders. When multiple stakeholders work together to develop indicators, they also clarify expectations and priorities, negotiate a more common framework, build ownership of outcomes, and ensure that the assessment reflects principles of partnership.

These byproducts resulted from the process used by the InterAmerican Foundation to develop its Grassroots Development Framework. The Foundation consulted with hundreds of stakeholders to create a common framework that reflected the importance of tracking tangible and intangible indicators at micro, meso, and macro levels. (Ritchey-Vance 1998; Abbot and Guijt 1998).

Indicators of success must track holistic goals, both tangible and intangible. Developing indicators for intangible concepts like ownership, partnership, inclusion, empowerment, and transparency is a new but not impossible task. When dealing with a holistic definition of development, it is important that we not reduce our goals only to those measurable by traditional quantifiable means. To capture quality we need to look for qualitative approaches. Many times these measures are based on observations and intuitive judgments based on field experience. At other times they are expressed in stories, anecdotes, or drawings by stakeholders. While these may not be highly rigorous or precise, they are critical to learning how to create a holistic assessment.

Developing a large-scale assessment involving multiple stakeholders can strengthen ownership, partnership, and a results-based orientation. But large scale participatory monitoring and evaluation requires skills and approaches to monitoring and evaluation that are not traditional:

- Capacity building in indicator development, monitoring, and negotiation for all stakeholders.
- Joint indicator development and designing processes for gathering and sharing data openly that are built in from the beginning, not tacked on at the end.
- Skills in group facilitation, negotiation, conflict resolution, and participatory methods. Traditional evaluation departments often lack these skills and an understanding of why they're important. Reorienting donor agencies, government staff and civil society organizations means changing attitudes and behaviors, and learning new skills and approaches.
- Support for high level champions. Because most evaluation professionals do not fully

understand participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation, and because involving stakeholders empowers them to demand transparency, insist on accountability, and raise critical questions, use of the approach may be opposed by people resistant to change. High-level champions may be needed who will support and defend the new process and justify the need to address critical questions or uncomfortable findings (Gaventa, Creed and Morrissey, 1999).

Participatory monitoring and evaluation can strengthen accountability and transparency. Partnership and ownership cannot be sustained without clear information accessible by all parties. Take consultations on country assistance strategies. Failing to make the results available to the consultants has limited new partnerships (Tandon and Cordeiro, 1998). In other cases lack of transparency has led to strong grassroots movements, such as the Right to Information campaign in Rajasthan, India, to demand accountability locally (Jenkins and Goetz, 1999). Outside citizen monitoring, like the Report Cards developed by the Public Affairs Center in Bangalore, or by the NGO Working Group on the World Bank Flagship Participation programs, is an important mechanism for insuring greater accountability and transparency.

Building Ownership and Partnership by Creating Enabling Environments

While partnership and ownership should be built from the bottom, they can be strengthened from the top—through interventions and policies that create enabling environments for participation. (Gaventa and Robinson 1998). A growing body of research indicates that primary and secondary stakeholder participation can be maximized with the right enabling framework.

Enabling frameworks may range from protecting the rights to free speech, assembly, and association to legislation that gives legitimacy and power to the voices of poor people. In recent years we have seen the birth of government policies that promote participation of poor people through legislation or administrative decree. The widespread move towards more democratic decentralization has opened new spaces for grassroots participation to merge with state policy. (Gaventa and Valderrama 1999).

The implications for the implementation of CDF are clear. Legislative frameworks can enable or disable partnership and ownership. Many rules and regulations weaken and discriminate against poor people. Others require or enable positive change.

The Andhra Pradesh Farmers' Management of Irrigation Systems Act

The 1970s and 1980s saw a series of initiatives to improve canal irrigation management (Chambers 1988, 90). As Secretary, Command Area Development for close to a decade Syed Hashim Ali supported such innovations as participatory committees of farmers at the lower levels of large irrigation systems (see, for example, Ali 1982). But because they lacked statutory power, these were never strong and gradually dissolved. Ali's allies in government, however, learned quite a bit. In the late 1990s populist Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu provided a new, participation-friendly environment.

This led to the supervised election of over 10,000 Water Users' Committees for over 4 million hectares of irrigated land. Thus, an enabling environment has been created with the potential to transform the equity and efficiency of canal irrigation. Early information shows that larger areas are already being irrigated, and more water is passing to the deprived tailends of the systems.

The Bolivian Law of Popular Participation

The Bolivian Law of Popular Participation passed in 1994 is another interesting example of how to combine decentralization and participation to promote local ownership of development. The law empowers registered community-based organizations in both rural and urban municipalities to participate in making five-year municipal development plans and implementing local development projects. Municipal participatory planning is now being applied across the country (Booth et al 1997).

Citizen participation in local governance has been enhanced by vigilance committees composed of five to eight elected community-based organization leaders who act as watchdogs to ensure that community-level project priorities are reflected in municipal investment decisions. The committees can also request independent audits of municipal governments.

Through these initiatives Bolivia has created legal and methodological frameworks that allow community-based organizations to directly influence the investment decisions of municipal councils. But this influence does not translate into ownership. Vigilance committee members are unpaid and easily co-opted—and silenced—by the mayor. Despite the participatory rhetoric, key decisions are still made behind closed doors. Creating the climate of trust needed for effective popular ownership will take time.

Both Bolivia and Andhara Pradesh show that interventions from the top must be combined with other elements:

- Vigorous community-based organizations that can take advantage of the space that is offered by institutional reform. If these do not exist, support must be provided for community organization and capacity building from below for change from above to be effective.
- Government officials, mayors, and local councillors who are open to new ideas. This kind of leadership encourages innovation. When leaders are not open to new ideas, training, capacity building, and leadership development programs are important for success.
- A local political culture built on trust and information-sharing. Training political and civil society leaders in participatory planning and budgeting methodologies will foster this.

Holism and Coordination

The CDF seeks to develop an enabling environment through a holistic approach, including greater coordination of actors and programs. But trying to take everything into account, especially in a top-down, center-outwards mode, might cause paralysis. Dangers with coordination became evident in approaches to integrated rural development in the 1970s: centralization, standardization, paralysis from more meetings and more communication, and turf wars over who coordinates at the country level (the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the government?). The result was more frustration and less effective development. Both holism and coordination need to be optimized, not maximized, and need to originate and operate at appropriate levels.

Holism is most natural at the very local level. The experiences of poor people are diverse, integrated, and not divided into programs and sectors. The "three Ds"—decen-

tralization, democracy and diversity—can create holism, reducing the need for coordination higher up. Holism grounded in local realities, with coordination low in the system, can combine to sharpen the relevance of national policy and reduce the needs for centralizing coordination at the national level.

Holistic partnership and coordination can thus be achieved in the district, where initiatives from the top and actions from the bottom intersect. The Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Program is feeding directly into the district level and informing national and sectoral policies, showing how the holism of open-ended participatory analysis can feed in higher up. In Tanzania, the government, Danida, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, the SNV–Netherlands Development Organization, Irish Aid, Finland, and the World Bank are supporting district programs. As illustrated by the Rural Integrated Project Support Program, there has been substantial learning and improvement. At the same time, the new donor focus on sectoral programs, and now the CDF, could endanger support for district-level partnerships in what are already substantially holistic programs, and where recent learning and improvements have been accelerating.

Conclusion

Strengthening Participation and Ownership in the Comprehensive Development Framework

The history of mainstreaming and scaling up participation in development offers many lessons and insights for strengthening partnership and ownership through the CDF.

Strengthening partnership and ownership requires institutional change at all levels, not only among primary stakeholders. NGOs, governments, donors, and the World Bank—as the champion of this approach—will need to change how they behave and operate. But this won't be easy for the Bank. It has to lend large sums quickly, and its incentive system remains linked to the scale and speed of disbursement rather than the quality of the recipient country's partnerships or ownership. Also, the Bank is more lender than grantor. Loans, including International Development Association credits, lead to debts that eventually have to be repaid. This limits the capacity and incentives to take the risks that lead to institutional learning and change. And as perhaps the most powerful partner in these projects, the Bank finds it difficult to learn from others. If the Bank demonstrates its willingness to change and share power and ownership, the rest will follow.

Large-scale consultations with the poor are feasible and helpful. The history of participatory poverty assessments show us the importance of:

- Taking time in the process, including a wide range of civil society actors, and feeding back the results of consultations to all parties
- Involving government, especially key ministries of finance and planning, to ensure follow-up and use of results
- Linking these consultations to policy formation and change, including the development of the country assistance strategies
- Linking these consultations to capacity building, trust building, and attitude and behavior change among stakeholders that may continue after the formal consultation.

Institutional change enables donor staff and secondary stakeholders to develop more participatory behaviors and approaches. While building partnership and ownership through consultation with primary and other stakeholders is necessary, it is not sufficient to ensure participation over time. This requires attitude and behavior change at all levels, especially for Bank staff. Instituting a learning process approach is also key, and takes flexibility and long-term commitment. Key champions for the process can form alliances with other champions to promote effective change.

Donors must change too. They should be more flexible in designing and managing projects. They should collaborate and coordinate better with other institutions. And they should be more innovative in their internal organization—using flexible accounting, moderating drives to disburse large sums fast, and strengthening mechanisms of downward accountability and consultation. Training, recruitment, and incentives can be changed to encourage attitudes and behaviors that foster ownership and partnership, provided there is enough time for truly participatory training at all levels, including donor staff.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation can build ownership and partnership—when all stakeholders help develop indicators of success, and when this cooperation in gathering and sharing information is built in from the beginning, not tacked on at the end. Capacity building for participatory monitoring and evaluation is needed for all stakeholders, as is strong support for critical champions who can help articulate the value of this new approach. Since the CDF is proposing a holistic framework, indicators also need to be able to track holistic goals, both tangible and intangible.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation may also strengthen accountability and transparency, especially as new methods of downward accountability are linked with traditional methods for upward accountability.

Interventions from above can help create an enabling environment for participation. These interventions work best when there are vigorous community-based organizations to take advantage of the space offered through institutional reform, when government officials, mayors, and local councilors are open to change and innovation, and where there is a local political culture built on trust and information-sharing.

Holism and coordination are the means—not the ends—of poverty reduction. If greater coordination creates more meetings, more power struggles, and more planning, countries will see less participation. The key is to recognize the diverse, yet holistic, realities and priorities of poor people, enable them to analyze and express them, and then reflect them in policy and practice, with local coordination.

None of these lessons offers an instant solution. All entail long-term commitment. And all can be achieved through champions and alliances sustained by continuous support. There is much experience and much to learn—a challenge for the CDF is to recognize this ignorance as an opportunity to learn, change, and improve.

Endnotes

1. Participatory rural appraisal has been described as a family of approaches, methods, and behaviors that enable poor people to express and analyze the realities of their lives, and to plan, monitor, and evaluate their actions (Chambers 1992). Participatory rural appraisal is based on the ideas that local people have the knowledge and ability to conduct their own development, and that those who facilitate participatory rural appraisals must pay attention to the way they behave when interacting with local people.

2. At a conference at the World Bank on Mainstreaming and Up-Scaling Primary Participation in November 1998, USAID, DfID, GTZ, and the World Bank presented papers reflecting on their institutional experiences in this regard. These unpublished papers form the basis of the findings and discussion in this section.

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