

Edward T. Jackson
Yusuf Kassam

Knowledge Shared

Participatory
Evaluation
in Development
Cooperation

Knowledge Shared

This page intentionally left blank

Knowledge Shared

**Participatory Evaluation in
Development Cooperation**

Edward T. Jackson and Yusuf Kassam
editors



Kumarian Press

This book is dedicated, with great hope, to the next generation of development workers and practitioners of participatory evaluation: may your senses be keen, your hearts joyful, and your solidarity with others permanent. We also dedicate this book to our children: Noah and Jacob, and Yassir and Omer.

Knowledge Shared: Participatory Evaluation in Development Cooperation.

Published 1998 in the United States of America by Kumarian Press, Inc.,
14 Oakwood Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut 06119-2127 USA.

Published 1998 in Canada by the International Development Research Centre,
PO Box 8500, Ottawa, Canada K1G 3H9.

Copyright © 1998 Kumarian Press, Inc. All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission of the publisher.

Production supervised by Jenna Dixon Copyedited and proofread by Linda Lotz

Typeset by First Folio Resource Group, Inc. Index by George Neumann

The text of this book is set in 10/13 Adobe Meridien.

The display type is Adobe Antique Olive.

Printed in Canada on acid-free paper by Transcontinental Printing and Graphics.

Text printed with vegetable oil-based ink.

⊗ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Knowledge shared : participatory evaluation in development
cooperation / Edward T. Jackson and Yusuf Kassam, editors.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-56549-085-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Evaluation research (Social action programs). 2. Rural development—

Evaluation. I. Jackson, Edward T., 1951– . II. Kassam, Yusuf, 1943– .

H62.K627 1998

300'.72—dc21

98-35799

Canadian Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title :

Knowledge shared : participatory evaluation in development cooperation

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-88936-868-6

1. Economic development projects — Developing countries — Evaluation.

2. Sustainable development — Developing countries — Evaluation.

3. Community development — Developing countries — Evaluation.

I. Jackson, Edward T.

II. Kassam, Yusuf.

III. International Development Research Centre (Canada)

HC79.E44K46 1998

338.91

C98-980291-4

07 06 05 04 03 02 01 00 99 98 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 1st Printing 1998

Contents

<i>Illustrations</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Foreword, Budd L. Hall</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xi</i>
Introduction	1
Edward T. Jackson and Yusuf Kassam	

I Issues, Strategies, and Methods

1. Simplicities and Complexities of Participatory Evaluation
Jim Freedman 23
2. Questions of Ethics in Participatory Evaluation:
A View from Anthropology
Scott Clark and John Cove 36
3. Indicators of Change: Results-Based Management
and Participatory Evaluation
Edward T. Jackson 50
4. Participatory Impact Assessment as a Tool for
Change: Lessons from Poverty Alleviation
Projects in Africa
Sulley Gariba 64

II Case Studies

5. Are We on the Right Track? Report of a Workshop
on Participatory Evaluation
Kamla Bhasin 85
6. Participatory Evaluation: Primary Health Care
in Patna, India
Marie-Thérèse Feuerstein 95
7. Combining Participatory and Survey Methodologies
in Evaluation: The Case of a Rural Development
Project in Bangladesh
Yusuf Kassam 108

8. Process Evaluation: The Nepal Health Development Project <i>Sheila A. Robinson and Philip Cox</i>	122
9. Participatory Evaluation in Human Resource Development: A Case Study from Southeast Asia <i>Gary Anderson and Deborah Gilsig</i>	150
10. Participatory Evaluation: Offering Kenyan Women Power and Voice <i>Bonnie B. Mullinix and Marren Akatsa-Bukachi</i>	167
11. Participatory Internal Monitoring and Evaluation in Water Projects: A Case Study from Ghana <i>Andrew J. Livingstone</i>	177
12. Rose Hall Ten Years Later: A Case Study of Participatory Evaluation in St. Vincent <i>Patricia Ellis</i>	199
13. "We Need to Rebuild This House": The Role of Empowerment in Evaluation of a Mexican Farmers' Cooperative <i>Elizabeth Whitmore</i>	217
<i>Further Reading</i>	231
<i>Organizational Resources</i>	234
<i>About the Contributors</i>	237
<i>Index</i>	241

Illustrations

Figures

Figure 3.1	Possible Methods of Participatory Research and Evaluation	54
Figure 4.1	Village Development Capacity Index	76
Figure 4.2	Village Development Capacity Index Worksheet	78
Figure 8.1	Composition of the HDP Process Evaluation Team	128
Figure 8.2	Spiral Model of Capacity Building	130
Figure 8.3	Spiral Model of Capacity-Building Zones	131
Figure 8.4	Capacity Building Observed in the Community Stream of Activities	142
Figure 8.5	Capacity Building Observed in the District Stream of Activities	142
Figure 11.1	Matrix for the Evaluation of the Appropriateness and Sustainability of the Project's Community Management	181
Figure 11.2	Matrix for the Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Project's Training Activities	186
Figure 11.3	Matrix for the Evaluation of the Sensitivity of the Project to Gender Equity Issues	191

Tables

Table 6.1	Some Surprises from the MCH Survey, Patna 1988	103
Table 8.1	Process Evaluation Schedule of Activities	133
Table 8.2	Abridged "Before HDP/After HDP" Chart Prepared by Villagers from Babiyachaur	138
Table 9.1	SEAMEO Regional Centers	152
Table 9.2	Summary of Major Stakeholders and Their Roles	154
Table 9.3	Summary of Data Collection	155
Table 10.1	Development Progress of Women's Groups	175
Table 11.1	Normative Criteria Scores	180
Table 12.1	Participation in Evaluation and Planning Workshops	204

Participatory Impact Assessment as a Tool for Change: Lessons from Poverty Alleviation Projects in Africa

Sulley Gariba

The 1990s have witnessed a deepening fatigue among the development assistance community toward sustained investments in poverty alleviation. This frustration stems from both a lack of concrete results in poverty alleviation projects and the inability of development practitioners to convey the real impacts of their work to the sponsors of such projects. The subject of this chapter, the evaluation of an integrated rural development program funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in northern Ghana, has already paid the ultimate price of the donor fatigue: termination of support.

This kind of “undifferentiated gloom and doom is not justified” (Cornia, van der Hoeven, and Mkanadwire 1992, 2), essentially because, in many countries of Africa, there is scattered but growing evidence of progress at the grassroots and sectoral levels in improving agricultural systems and water conservation, in raising efficiency in education, and in extending key health services, such as child immunization, even though recovery at the aggregate level is not yet apparent.

What remains to be determined is the most effective means of assessing and analyzing the growth and development of human capacity and the “intangible” interventions that coalesce to generate increased capacities for development at the grassroots. This chapter illustrates how partners in development are tackling issues of participatory impact assessment.

Scope of the Chapter

This chapter focuses on the attempt to use a participatory impact assessment process to foster village-level capacity building in poverty alleviation

Some parts of this chapter were first published in *Knowledge and Policy: The International Journal of Knowledge Transfer and Utilization*, Vol. 10, No. 1/2, under the title “Participatory Impact Assessment for Poverty Alleviation: Opportunities for Communities and Development Agencies.” Reprinted by permission of Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

programs. It concentrates on the process by which an evaluation exercise has been used as an integral part of the development intervention activity, while satisfying the primary objective of assessing impacts.

This chapter describes the background of the program that was being evaluated, describes divergent purposes of the evaluation, and examines the extent to which the participatory methods adopted influenced the program in question. Finally, this chapter analyzes the wider implications of this approach to evaluation, both for the specific project and for the broader network of promoters, implementers, and beneficiaries of a more transparent process of development interventions in general.

Project Background: Bedrock of Competing Interests

The Northern Region Rural Integrated Program (NORRIP) was initiated over a decade ago by the government of Ghana, with funding from CIDA, to promote regional and integrated rural development in Ghana's underdeveloped northern region. Phase I of the program, undertaken in the early to mid-1980s, involved the establishment of a regional development secretariat (known as the NORRIP office) to undertake a variety of regional-level sectoral studies and produce a comprehensive program implementation plan. After some delays, the implementation phase of the program (NORRIP phase II) began in 1988, with the NORRIP office, in conjunction with a Canadian executing agency, charged with the mandate of strengthening the planning and program delivery capacity of line agencies of the government of Ghana and testing innovative means of delivering social and economic services to villages in two project districts, namely, the Yendi and East Mamprusi districts in the northern region.

Between 1988 and 1990, the stakeholders in NORRIP II significantly redesigned and refocused the implementation phase of the program. In particular, it was decided that the lead sectors of the project would be rural water supplies (village-operated hand pumps) and related education and training, together with primary health care services. The approved inception report for this phase determined that the project would install 350 hand pumps in the newly reconstituted districts of East Mamprusi and Yendi, where it was estimated that there were some 250 villages eligible for this improved water supply.

This major redesign brought to the fore the conflicting expectations of development programs that seek to address the problems of poverty in rural areas. Growing frustrations with the pace of "tangible" outputs led the funding agency, CIDA, to emphasize the objectives relating to the installation of facilities—in this case, new water supply facilities. Yet the rationale for the program, and ultimately the long-term objective, related to sustainability and capacity building for the concerned villages and communities to manage their own development, including the newly installed water supply and sanitation facilities. Thus, water supply and related sanitation facilities were merely

means for enhancing the capacity of the communities to work toward alleviating their poverty rather than ends in themselves.

In 1989, CIDA engaged the services of an evaluation and monitoring consultant to provide ongoing professional advice on the effectiveness, efficiency, and impacts of NORRIP II, through twice-yearly monitoring missions and more detailed baseline and evaluation studies. The evaluation consultant, a Canadian firm, undertook these activities in partnership with a Ghanaian firm with extensive experience in the northern region of Ghana to actively promote capacity building among local consultants in evaluation and monitoring (the results of this collaboration have been presented; see Gariba and Jackson 1993).

What to Evaluate and How

Two specific problems confronted this evaluation mandate. The first was a question of what specifically to evaluate, arising from the divergent expectations of the different stakeholders; the second was that of which evaluation methodology would ensure satisfactory outcomes for the main stakeholders in the program.

The contending objectives of village-level capacity building for sustained development and the immediate delivery of improved water supply raised crucial questions of what to evaluate. The main promoter of the NORRIP program, CIDA, was interested primarily in the type of evaluation that would convey immediate impacts of the investment in water supply and sanitation, as emphasized in the program redesign. This was a logical defense against the growing pressures to reduce budgets for development projects commonly faced by the aid bureaucracy.

However, it is commonly recognized that the health impacts of water supply and sanitation projects are difficult and expensive to measure on a routine basis. Further, the investments in the project, while supporting water supply and sanitation improvements, also involved fundamental areas of capacity building, at both the village and the development agency levels. Therefore, it would have been extremely limiting for the evaluation exercise to have focused exclusively on the long-term health impacts of improved water supply.

The evaluation activities were therefore designed to foster a combination of the capacity-building objectives and those targeted at measuring the impact of delivery of new water supplies into one objective: assessing the impact of capacity building on access to improved water supply and sanitation services.

The Evaluation Methodology

As the implementation stage of the project started up in early 1989, it became clear that an early baseline study—prior to implementation—was not welcomed

by village leadership in the project area; nor would it have been ethical. Villagers and other institutional partners had waited ten years for the delivery of services promised by the project and were unlikely to cooperate with yet another study until some concrete evidence of implementation (boreholes, hand pumps, health services, and the planned village-level capacity building) was forthcoming.

The methodology and implementation of the evaluation study were therefore conditioned by the peculiar circumstances of the NORRIP II program in order that the results would be useful and reflect the needs and expectations of the project stakeholders.

The Evaluator's Dilemma in Selecting a Methodology

In developing countries, the word *evaluation* has often evoked mixed reactions from promoters and implementers of development projects. For the promoters, mainly Western donor agencies, evaluation has been used as the yardstick for “extending” or “terminating” project mandates and funding. For project implementers, evaluation has been, at best, a means for vindicating their approaches to project management and, at worst, the vilification of their chosen techniques. Caught in between these divergent purposes and perceptions of evaluation is the evaluator, who, for the most part, satisfies neither the promoters nor the implementers of development interventions. In this chapter, evaluation is viewed as a systematic way of learning from experience, whereby the partners in the development endeavor draw lessons from their interaction and take corrective actions to improve the effectiveness or efficiency of their ongoing future activities.

Thus, the participatory impact assessment method of evaluation was selected, to emphasize the process of collaborative problem solving through the generation of knowledge and its use. A number of critical elements of this method need to be mentioned before we describe how they were actually implemented.

Evaluation as a Learning Tool. This principle formed the main paradigm of choice. The purpose was not to investigate but to create an opportunity for all the stakeholders, the donors included, to learn from their particular roles in the development intervention exercise.

Evaluation as Part of the Development Process. The evaluation activity is not discrete and separable from the development process itself. The results and corresponding tools become, in effect, tools for change rather than historical reports.

Evaluation as a Partnership and Sharing of Responsibility. This is in sharp contrast to the tendency for evaluators to establish a syndrome of “we” the professionals and “they” the project actors and beneficiaries. In the participatory impact assessment methodology, all the actors have more or less equal weight.

In this context, the evaluator becomes readily transformed from an investigator to a promoter, and from persecutor to participant.

Assessing Capacity and Its Impact on Development

In the baseline study for NORRIP II, the entire data collection exercise was orchestrated around an attempt to study the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of rural residents of the survey area related to various socioeconomic phenomena, some of which the NORRIP program was attempting to change by its interventions. For this reason, the purpose, methods, and outcomes of the evaluation study were tailored to facilitate this complex interplay between what villagers already knew and current practice (or lack thereof). The underpinning assumption was that, physical access notwithstanding, the capacity to analyze their situation and understand their environment was a critical indicator of whether or not rural residents could benefit from any poverty alleviation measures made available to them, no matter how minuscule.

In more practical terms, the KAP approach was selected on the assumption that understanding the extent of current knowledge (or lack thereof) would facilitate the design and targeting of "appropriate" information and development interventions. As well, understanding the attitudes, sources of misconception, and myths prevalent in target communities would likely affect strategies for presenting new information and even credible personalities for such delivery. Finally, understanding the current practice would enable change agents to discourage inappropriate behavior (with new evidence of the reality) or reinforce appropriate practices.

Organizing for Change

A further aspect of the participatory impact assessment process is that of a conscious attempt to organize rural residents into groups for the purpose of analyzing their objective reality in the context of the development intervention. Experiences in Latin America, Asia, and elsewhere show that rural populations are seldom able to find solutions to their problems unless they can organize themselves to achieve objectives that they themselves understand and set, drawing on their own resources to do so (Isely and Martin 1977).

Montis (1985, 2–3), in her work on Nicaragua, proposed three interrelated stages of participatory investigation:

1. Inquiry about the socioeconomic characteristics of the study area.
2. Evaluation of the functioning of the project, from the point of view of acquiring the critical knowledge for developing new and superior forms of economic and social organization.
3. Evaluation of the way this critical knowledge is manifesting itself in the development and functioning of the water supply and sanitation system.

These three stages, according to Montis, are predicated on a conscious organi-

zation of the participants into consistent groups that have common reference points in relation to the exercise at hand.

In the NORRIP evaluation exercise, the entry point for the village data collection exercise was a series of village-based focus group workshops involving groups consciously organized for that purpose. The main criterion of group information was the preexisting organizational dynamic of decision making in the community. Thus, groups of female youth were set aside from female adults; these, in turn, were separated from male youth and male elders. The specific interests, expertise, and capacities of each group were explored separately, in order to arrive at a complete picture of the village dynamic.

Two other dimensions were used to supplement this village organizational basis of data collection. The first was the extensive use of village informants, one female and one male, to collect pertinent and commonly known factual information about the village, such as community infrastructure and location of facilities. The second was the use of a cross section of the disaggregated groups identified during the focus group workshops to verify information collected from the key informants and other sources. The rationale for this was to establish a quality control mechanism and thereby avoid unnecessary bias that could arise from particular individuals.

Findings: The Macro Environment of Poverty

Since the village is the main focus of analysis of macro-level manifestations of poverty, it is important to understand how these impinge on village-level capacity and what tools are needed to both understand the dynamic and influence change. Using the combination of processes identified above, the baseline study revealed that four main characteristics of poverty stand out distinctly in the study area:

Food insecurity was a critical indicator of worsening poverty in the northern region.

At the time of planning NORRIP, the overwhelming expectation was that the project would assist peasant farmers to reinforce their preexisting subsistence security and increase their productivity in a manner that would not altogether destroy their social and cultural specificity (see Gariba 1989, chap. 4). By anticipating interventions in agricultural production and value-added food processing, potable water supply, education, and the development of rural infrastructure, such as feeder roads, NORRIP proposed to enhance the productive capacity of rural producers, making their surpluses available to a wider domestic market, without altogether destroying them.

- The project did not embark on any of the production enhancement proposals originally contained in its plan of action. The consequence, as evi-

denced by the baseline study, was a high incidence of food insecurity, with more than 70 percent of the survey area running out of food before the end of the critical lean season.

- The bulk of this survey area received little or no agricultural extension services. In fact, the East Mamprusi district had been virtually ceded to two small nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) providing limited coverage in agricultural extension. Consequently, the chances that peasant producers would receive any sustained support to avoid starvation were increasingly diminishing. No forms of credit or farmer support services could be found in the area that might allow farmers access to needed resources for productivity enhancements.
- The seasonal stock of peasant surpluses then got sucked quickly into the cash economy and urban markets, leaving peasant producers with little or no food when they needed it most—in the lean season.

The level of coverage in basic social amenities was so low that the majority of the residents in the region were constantly at risk of water source contamination and disease exposure.

- The northern region of Ghana still ranked as the lowest in terms of access to potable water, education, and health amenities in the country. Although the NORRIP intervention introduced a marked improvement in water supply, this was limited in two out of thirteen districts, providing a mere 350 point sources of potable water in a region of over one million residents. By contrast, CIDA investments made earlier (in the 1970s and 1980s in the upper regions of Ghana) provided over 2,600 point sources of potable water, for a population less than 70 percent that of the northern region.*
- The little that was provided in terms of coverage and scope now stood the risk of not being sustained, due in part to a disastrous ethnic conflict that wiped out about 40 percent of the villages in which NORRIP had installed water and health facilities. The imminent termination of support to the NORRIP program by both partners at this critical moment did not augur well for sustainability of the remaining investments. The consequence could be a reversion to the “old ways and old sources” of water and attendant practices, thereby deepening the poverty situation.

High rates of illiteracy among women exacerbated the ignorance of residents of this region on the risks associated with inappropriate water utilization and sanitation practices.

- Notwithstanding the few potable water sources offered by NORRIP, the majority of the residents of the survey area still used water from unsafe

* The Upper Region Water Supply and Utilization Project, though limited to the water sector and sanitation education, had a sustained and significant coverage. To date, the project is in its third phase, having been initiated in 1974.

sources, largely due to their proximity and to ignorance about the disease implications of unsafe drinking water and sanitation practices.

- The higher incidence of illiteracy among women made the effects of this life-threatening poverty indicator more serious for the rest of the family, as the major decisions on water, sanitation, family care, and the management of health were made primarily by women.

Deepening poverty undermined social-economic harmony and the legitimacy of the formal state or government. This could exacerbate existing ethnic tensions and conflicts over land and production assets.

- The economic mode of production throughout northern Ghana was peasant based, with a predominance of a subsistence ethic. Production was organized mainly by family labor primarily for its own consumption. Under these circumstances, land and labor were the most important factors of production, and their abundance was held sacrosanct. Consequently, the issue of land and the size of families became virtually nonnegotiable, if subsistence security was to be maintained at current population growth rates. Any disequilibrium in the critical balance between the productivity of land and the size of families, clans, or tribes resulted in serious conflicts of untold proportions (see Schejtmann 1984).
- Under the peasant-based mode of production, political office was based primarily on the clan and tribe, with the chief retaining overwhelming authority, which was often shared by various clan leaders (elders) and a variety of traditional opinion leaders, including women. Here, the secular authority of the central state, regional, and district administrations had not yet gained wide acceptance or creditability (Ray 1984; see also Skalnack 1983).
- The only means by which this formal authority (the government) gained any measure of acceptance was through the investments it made in poverty alleviation, production, and development. Where this was lacking, as in northern Ghana, traditional societies held steadfastly to their traditional state, and when conflicts over resources emerged, these state forms held the authority.
- At the root of the recent northern region ethnic conflicts was the issue of land and production rights, as a result of rapidly diminishing arable land. The trigger for the conflict, the issue of autonomy of various chieftaincies, related essentially to which chief had authority over which land. The consequences were the disastrous "peasant wars" in the northern region, which claimed over 4,000 lives (Wolf 1969).

Tools for Change: The Village Development Capacity Index

If monitors and evaluators are to be seen as partners in the development effort (not mere critics of it), the question that comes to mind is what value does evaluation add to the development process?

At the start of the monitoring and evaluation process, two outputs were expected. The first was that a process of longitudinal evaluation, including a detailed baseline study, would allow the evaluation consultants to contribute consistently to the process of program formulation in response to emerging issues during periodic monitoring missions and diagnostic studies. The expectation was met largely by frequent missions, also involving intense dialogue and stakeholder consultations. The second expectation was that a new methodology would evolve that would permit the evaluation or assessment of impacts in a qualitative as well as quantitative manner.

As CIDA and the government of Ghana contemplate new forms of intervention to alleviate poverty and increase community governance capacity, it is timely to propose tools, coming out of the extensive experiences of the NOR-RIP monitoring and evaluation process. One of the objectives of the baseline study was to attempt to prepare a methodology by which village development could be monitored and evaluated. This section outlines a framework for the use of the Village Development Capacity Index (VDCI) as a means of both planning and assessing village development on a continuous basis.

The central idea of the VDCI is that each village, as a community, has a unique combination of social, political, economic, and cultural characteristics that determine its status and prospects for development. Understanding and documenting these characteristics at the start of a project (intervention) can allow development agents and agencies to

1. Recognize the strengths (capabilities) as well as the weaknesses (needs) at the start of the project;
2. Plan appropriate and desirable interventions in any particular community;
3. Monitor the effects that planned interventions are having on the weaknesses identified, while tracking the status of the existing strengths (capabilities) identified in the community;
4. Evaluate the extent to which planned interventions have had impacts on development, and how existing capabilities have changed over a specified period of time; and
5. Isolate which new factors or variables have emerged in the course of the planned intervention that were not considered at the start of the project.

Building Indicators

Ideally, the planning of a project should begin with a set of objective condi-

tions that require change. This can be the result of a study of the conditions of poverty, outlining salient characteristics of that phenomenon that can be changed through precise interventions. The developmental conditions in a given community can be recorded in two forms:

1. The status of community infrastructure and socioeconomic services; and
2. The status of community and village development capacity—including prevailing values, customs, traditions, and socioeconomic as well as political systems at the village level.

In the case of the NORRIP program, although the planning phase did a thorough assessment of the existing physical infrastructure and the associated development constraints, there was no coherent database of existing conditions as defined in (2) above. For this reason, the baseline study* designed a specific instrument to collect socioeconomic status data in a qualitative and quantitative manner. The first step in the process of collecting data was the village profile. This involved the determination of indicators that would depict the current status of village development and capacity.

These indicators were determined by the evaluation consultant, in consultation with NORRIP. The following indicators then served as discussion guides in male and female focus group workshops in all thirty villages surveyed.

1. **Status of village organizations:** includes the number and variety of village-initiated groups and women's groups and the decision-making ability of these groups.
2. **Previous development experience of the village** in planning and sustaining development projects, with particular emphasis on projects initiated by the villagers themselves, women's projects, and the ability of the village to raise funds in support of projects receiving external support.
3. **The status of agriculture and control of resources** in the village, focusing on range of crops produced, production techniques and technology, control of food within households, control of natural produce such as fruits, women's access to land, and opportunities for women to increase their role and benefits from agriculture.
4. **The level and range of village cooperation**, including different forms of organizing labor for production, communal work, and social obligations; the types of traditional savings and credit; and access to formal loans.
5. **The range of economic assets and income-generating activities** in the village, with emphasis on which of the gender groups engage in more income-generating activities in the wet and dry seasons. Also in this section, emphasis is put on the ability of the village to sustain its

* Ironically, the baseline study came at the end of the project, making it impossible for NORRIP to benefit from these results.

labor force throughout the dry season, without resorting to seasonal migration to augment family subsistence.

6. **Status of village leadership:** an analysis of the political dynamics in decision making, focusing on whether the village is fractured by conflict, ruled by strong leadership, or operating on a system of consensus and collective leadership.
7. **The leadership's perception of the major constraints to village development,** and the level of understanding of the causes of these constraints, as well as the solutions they would propose to overcome these.
8. **The village's knowledge of NORRIP,** its expectations from NORRIP, and whether or not it benefits from other donors, government agencies, NGOs, and extension services.

Supplementing these qualitative indicators were other forms of rudimentary data constituting poverty indicators extracted from the quantitative survey of over 400 rural households in the two target districts.

Poverty Indicators

Based on the analysis of the macro environment, certain indicators were extrapolated that impact heavily on the ability of rural residents to overcome their current situation of deprivation. In the specific context of the NORRIP project, these included:

1. **Risk of contamination:** the risk factor determined by the village water sources in wet and dry seasons, prevailing sanitation practices and availability of sanitation facilities such as latrines, and exposure to diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, and guinea worm. If the village has potable water, this risk will be low; if it obtains water from unsafe sources all year-round, it will record a high risk.
2. **Knowledge of diseases (diarrhea),** including knowledge on how the disease can be contracted and prevailing practices to treat and/or prevent it.
3. **Knowledge of guinea worm,** including knowledge on how the disease can be contracted and prevailing practices to treat and/or prevent the infection.
4. **Literacy (extent of ignorance)**
 - general rates of formal literacy
 - knowledge of causes of illness (mainly waterborne)
 - knowledge of disease prevention or avoidance practices
 - knowledge of treatment methods
 - knowledge of benefits of child immunization
5. **Risk of hunger/food security,** involving an examination of when stored grain is finished from the granaries, and the extent to which food produced is adequate to feed the population year-round.
6. **Level of expenditure,** a crude estimate of disposable income.

Constructing the VDCI

Upon completing both the quantitative and qualitative surveys, the VDCI can be constructed by using Figure 4.1.

Allocating Scores to the VDCI

The exercise of scoring needs to be participatory, involving the major stakeholders, including the village leadership. The following guidelines might be useful to incorporate in the planning process for scoring VDCI.

Beneficiary Workshop. The beneficiaries on whom the data were collected should be given an opportunity to review and discuss the data on their status, with respect to poverty and their village development capacity. This will assist the evaluators to correct any wrong information and to update any new information that may have been missed during the survey period. It will also serve as a forum for feedback to the beneficiaries of the survey.

Stakeholder Forum for Scoring. Once the feedback with beneficiaries has occurred, they are asked to select their representatives for an exercise in scoring. Village representatives, the implementing agencies, the donor, and other allied agencies with knowledge about development in the area are then invited to a workshop on scoring the indicators.

Prior to this workshop, all participants must be provided with adequate information on the data collected on each village, both the qualitative and the quantitative data.*

At the workshop, dialogue and consensus building should characterize the scoring process. Where participants have reason to score high or low on any indicator, adequate reasons must be presented. If these reasons constitute new information that was missed during the survey, that particular section of the village profile data needs to be reviewed and updated accordingly, to correspond with the agreed score.

Using the Score Range. The score range suggested is on the scale of 1 to 5: 1 signifies low, 2 fair, 3 average, 4 high, and 5 very high. This allows the flexibility of dialogue and consensus in the process of development and capacity building.

Uses of the VDCI

Monitoring and Evaluation of Indicators. After an index is established for each village, specific indicators can be tracked over time. Thus, for instance, if access to safe drinking water (physical presence and proximity) in Village 1 was high (i.e., 5) and the knowledge, attitudes, and practices on disease pre-

* In the case of the baseline study, a detailed report was produced on each village, covering the village profile and a set of quantitative data from the household survey.

Figure 4.1: Village Development Capacity Index

Elements/Indicators	Score/Index by Village				
Poverty Indicators (From Household Survey)	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
Safety of water sources year-round (if low score 1...if high score 5)					
Knowledge of diarrhea diseases (if low score 1...if high score 5)					
Knowledge of guinea worm (if low score 1...if high score 5)					
Literacy (extent of ignorance) (if low score 1...if high score 5)					
Food security (if low score 1...if high score 5)					
Level of expenditure (if low score 1...if high score 5)					
(You may add any number of poverty indicators for which you have collected data)					
Subtotal (Poverty Indicators)					
Village Development Capacity Indicators	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
Status of village organizations (if weak and few score 1...if strong and varied score 5)					
Previous development experience of the village (if poor score 1...if strong score 5)					
The status of agriculture and control of resources (if few score 1...if diverse with gender-balanced control score 5)					
The level and range of village cooperation (if weak and uncooperative score 1...if strong and cooperative score 5)					
The range of economics assets and income-gener- ating activities (if weak and few score 1...if high and varied score 5)					
Status of village leadership (if weak and conflict-prone score 1...if strong and consensual score 5)					
The leadership's perception of the major con- straints to village development (if uncertain score 1...if clear and perceptive score 5)					
Villager's knowledge of their development part- ners (if not known and not understood score 1...if known and compatible score 5)					
Total Score/Index (By Village)					

vention were very low (say 1) due to poor literacy (say 2) in a survey carried out in 1992, these particular indicators can be monitored periodically when the project (interventions) is being implemented.

Tools for Analysis and Planning of Interventions. A major application of the VDCI is as a tool for analysis and planning of development interventions. The experience of NORRIP and other integrated rural development programs shows that, while basic services, such as water, are paramount needs in rural northern Ghana, not all villages require the same types of intervention. Further, the specific permutation of development interventions can assure proper targeting needs:

- A detailed analysis of village vulnerabilities
- A correct appraisal of village capacity and development capabilities

By using the VDCI, such indicators can be clearly spelled out and researched, with the full involvement and cooperation of the beneficiaries.

The VDCI Worksheet

This study cannot usefully be concluded without providing a practical tool for development practitioners seeking to effect change in developing societies. The VDCI worksheet will assist development workers and villagers to analyze their situations objectively and to plan appropriate interventions.

The VDCI worksheets* are forms that can be used by partner agencies, extension workers, and monitoring and evaluation practitioners to

1. Outline poverty alleviation and village development goals;
2. Relate these goals to various development indicators;
3. Evaluate their present development strategies and intervention activities against these goals; and
4. Arrive at their own assessment of the level of development capacity attained and what is required to upgrade this performance to higher forms of village development and empowerment.

In this worksheet, each of the elements of poverty alleviation and village development capacity building identified during the baseline study is regarded as a strategic goal;** each goal then has a set of goal indicators. The development agents (donors, executing agencies, extension workers, and villagers themselves) and the partners are then required to complete the last two columns on the right-hand side of each worksheet by

* These worksheets were adapted from *Using Development Indicators for Aboriginal Development. A Guidebook*, by the Development Indicator Project Steering Committee, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), Canada, September 1991.

** Development agencies and village leaders are encouraged to select from this menu any set of strategic goals consistent with their chemistry, or add others that are not described here.

Figure 4.2:
Village Development Capacity Index Worksheet

Strategic Goals on Poverty Alleviation	Goal Indicators	Activities/ Interventions	Enhancement Strategies
Eliminate the risk of disease contamination	provide a variety of potable water points year-round		
	water sources are close enough to villagers, women		
	the technology of water delivery is simple and reliable		
Improve knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to diarrheal and other waterborne diseases	most villagers know that diarrhea, guinea worm, and malaria are caused by drinking infected water or unsafe sanitation		
	most villagers know how to prevent waterborne diseases		
	villagers' water utilization practices are safer		
Improve literacy for development	overall literacy rates are improved		
	women are specifically targeted in literacy activities		
	functional literacy is emphasized		
Eliminate the risk of hunger	productivity is improved through soil and water conservation		
	storage of food is improved through reduction of post-harvest losses		
	food processing is enhanced through use of appropriate and affordable technology		
Improve incomes	sources of rural incomes are diversified		
	women are specifically assisted to increase their income		
	opportunities to market goods and services are increased year-round		

Strategic Goals on Village Development Capacity	Goal Indicators	Activities/ Interventions	Enhancement Strategies
Strengthen village-based development organizations	level of functional village organizations		
Reinforce positive development experiences of the village	extent to which village self-learning is enhanced		
Improve agricultural productivity and foster equitable distribution of benefits	extent to which environmental factors inhibiting agriculture are addressed		
	level, type, and appropriateness of agriculture and agro-processing technology		
	extent to which the burden and benefits of agriculture are shared in a gender-balanced manner		
Reinforce village cooperation	extent to which cooperative labor systems are reinforced		
	extent to which exploitation of child and female labor is reduced		
Improve the range of productivity of value-added investments in village	range of value-added production enterprises		
	extent of gender balance in investments		
	extent of savings		
Work with village leadership and acceptable structures	extent to which existing structures are reinforced and improved		
Train leadership on development	extent to which analytical tools for development are shared		
Foster an understanding and negotiation with a variety of development partners	tendency toward mutual trust		
	extent of transparency and openness		
	sensitivity to partner's socioeconomic and cultural context		
	extent of endurance and long-term commitment		

1. Summarizing the activities currently in place to foster the attainment of that goal indicator; and
2. Suggesting strategies to improve the attainment of higher forms of that indicator.

Some Cautions and Further Work

Using the participatory impact assessment method for baseline study raises an important question that is often unanswered: in what ways can the parameters of data collection for the baseline be simplified to provide a consistent mechanism for tracking performance over time? Most KAP studies tend to be rather complex and diffuse, detailing current reality at the time of data collection to the point where use of the data over time as a baseline for assessing impacts in the future becomes problematic (see Isely and Martin 1977, 315).

Further, it is important to emphasize that poverty indicators cannot easily be aggregated, as the phenomenon tends to affect some households more than others (see Roe, Schneider, and Pyatt 1992, 103–15). A group organizational approach works better, hence the validity of the participatory impact assessment model. In village discussions on the willingness and ability to pay for improved water supply, a consensus by the village on what, collectively, it is able to pay for water is, in effect, the median of what the average household will be able to afford. This has further implications for the establishment of indicators to assess the extent to which communities have made good their commitment to pay for improved water supplies. Under conventional evaluation, the onus is on the evaluator to determine such an indicator, and the responsibility falls on project management to explain outcomes. Under participatory impact assessment, the community, in collaboration with the other stakeholders, determines indicators for assessing impact.

This chapter depicts the use of tools fabricated by local professionals and community members to assess impacts of development interventions on a continuous basis. By focusing on capacity-building indicators on the one hand, while tracking poverty indicators on the other, the model presents a hybrid between nebulous analysis and too discrete counting. It also offers opportunities for both donors and developing country partners to record, analyze, and document the real changes that are occurring as a result of investments in poverty alleviation.

Finally, there is an intrinsic strategic value in the alliances between evaluators and project stakeholders to devise methods that can contribute positively to change rather than render retribution for how badly projects are managed. The prevailing perception among donors and development workers that portrays evaluators as “policemen” needs to be discarded and replaced by a partnership for progress. Valuable information about the project gathered through

the participatory assessment of impacts needs to be fed into the development process in a dynamic and constructive manner. The collectors and analyzers of the information, being themselves stakeholders, build their capacity to internalize the implications of that information and hone in on the strategies to generate change. This is the essence of participatory impact assessment.

References

- Cornia, G., R. van der Hoeven, and T. Mkandawire, eds. 1992. *Africa's Recovery in the 1990s: From Stagnation and Adjustment to Human Development*. New York: St. Martin's Press, UNICEF.
- Gariba, S. 1989. "Peasantry and the State in Northern Ghana: The Political Economy of Agrarian Stagnation and Rural Development in the Northern Region of Ghana." Doctoral diss., Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.
- Gariba, S., and T. Jackson. 1993. "Enhancing North-South Partnerships in Evaluation." Paper presented at the conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development, Ottawa, June.
- Isely, B., and F. Martin. 1977. "The Village Health Committee: Starting Point for Rural Development." *WHO Chronicle* 31: 307-15.
- Montis, M. de. 1985. "Participatory Research in Nicaragua." Translated by M. A. Rahman. Rural Employment Policies Branch, International Labor Organization, Geneva.
- Ray, D. 1984. "The State Traditional Authority and Development in Ghana." Paper presented at the 14th annual conference of the Canadian Association of African Studies, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, May.
- Schejtman, A. 1984. "The Peasant Economy: Internal Logic, Articulation, and Persistence." Pp. 274-98 in *The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment*, 3d ed., edited by C. Wilbur. New York: Random House.
- Skalnick, P. 1983. "Questioning the Concept of the State in Indigenous Africa." *Social Dynamics* 9 (2): 11-28.
- Wolf, E. 1969 *Peasant Wars of the 20th Century*. New York: Harper and Row.

My gratitude goes to my Canadian partner, Dr. Ted Jackson, and all the staff and associates of E.T. Jackson and Associates for the high level of collaboration in producing this chapter. Special thanks go to Ms. Huguette Ruter, who worked with me in Ghana to collect and analyze the data and is now dedicating herself to similar work in Rwanda, against all odds. Thanks are also due to IDRC for sponsoring my participation in the conference and to my wife and business partner, Neo, for intensely scrutinizing the manuscript.