Tools for Assessment, Planning and Participatory Development

PART III provides information on tools and methods to support assessments and planning of DAR programmes, as well as on ways to promote participatory development processes. It should be used in conjunction with **PART II** of the Handbook. For detailed information on the tools, readers should refer to the references provided.

This part of the Handbook enables users to:

- Plan and conduct joint assessments with partners;

- Conduct sample surveys, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions; and

- Design and implement programmes in a participatory manner.

Appendix I	**Assessment and Planning Tools**
Appendix II	**Tools for Promoting Participatory Local Development**

Assessment and Planning Tools

1 INTER-AGENCY/JOINT ASSESSMENTS[61]

Adapted from UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Guidelines, June 2004

The purpose of inter-agency/joint assessments in the context of DAR programmes is to understand the situation, needs, risks, capacities and vulnerabilities of the refugees and host populations and thereby determine what actions need to be taken to:

- design and implement a DAR programme; and
- ensure planned activities fit within district plans and addresses poverty and development challenges in refugee hosting areas.

Specific objectives, terms of reference and a report format must be defined for each assessment in the context of what is known about the situation and any particular issues that need to be addressed.

For additional ideas on conducting assessments, please refer to *"Practical Guide to Multilateral Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations"* UNDP, World Bank and UNDG, 2004.

Methods

These notes provide brief guidance on the general process an inter-agency/joint assessment team should normally follow. It suggests the approaches and methods that may be appropriate in relation to the topics that the team is required to address.

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[61] Appendix I was prepared with the assistance of Claudia Flores-Somera, UNHCR intern.

Drawing up an Assessment Plan

An assessment plan incorporating the elements below should be rapidly compiled and agreed:

TABLE 1. KEY ELEMENTS OF AN ASSESSMENT PLAN	
Elements	**What needs to be done**
Agree on Assessment Methods	Agree in advance on: • The assessment techniques to be used and ensure that all team members have a common understanding of how to use the chosen techniques and cross-check information • The types of key informants to be sought and the specific types of information to be sought from them • The approach to be used in selecting interlocutors and focus groups among the host community and refugees, and the specific types of information to be sought from them
Prepare Data Collection and Reporting Formats	• Prepare agreed formats for data collection and reporting
Itinerary, Schedule and Logistics	• Plan the itinerary taking account of logistic realities • Arrange transport and accommodation in all locations. If the refugees are in an isolated area where there are few services, be as self-contained as possible
Security	• Ensure that any required security clearances are obtained from relevant national authorities • Arrange for the mission to be accompanied by a field security officer, if necessary
Coordination	• Inform all interested government entities, UN agencies, NGOs and donors of schedule of the assessment team

Before Going to the Field Site(s):

- examine available secondary data and summarize those data under the headings of the overall checklist/report format;

- when visiting locations, ensure that:

  - each team/sub-team is balanced in terms of skills and experience, and gender;

  - specific team/sub-team members are briefed to gather information on particular aspects; and

  - one member of each team/sub-team is designated to compile a note on the sub-teams findings.

- within the team agree on a sensible division of labour, so that it is known who will collect information on what;

- ensure that all assessment teams understand local cultural norms and those of refugees (so as to be able to adopt appropriate, respectful approaches); and

- thoroughly brief any interpreters who will accompany the team. Ensure that they understand the purpose of the assessment exercise, the topics to be addressed, the techniques you will be using, and their own role, in order to faithfully convey your questions and what the informants say (not to give their own interpretation of what is being asked or said).

How to Ensure a High Quality Inter-Agency/Joint Assessment

For a joint/inter-agency assessment to produce quality outputs and enable appropriate programme interventions to be planned and implemented in a timely manner:

- the objectives and terms of reference must be appropriate, realistic and agreed;

- the assessment process must be carefully planned and managed, including preparatory work as well as field work;

- assessment team members must have relevant skills and experience, and work together as a team;

- optimal use must be made of information that is already available; and

- the preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations must be thoroughly discussed with all the main stakeholders, and the final versions be widely disseminated.

While every effort must be made to mobilise the resources for a thorough assessment, the scope and depth of an assessment sometimes has to be tailored to the resources and time available. Success depends largely on:

- the commitment of the country offices of the agencies involves, when present;

- good joint planning and management; and

- good monitoring, the effective use of monitoring data.

TABLE 2. CHECKLIST FOR VERIFYING THE CONTENT AND QUALITY OF AN ASSESSMENT REPORT

Does the report provide/include:

- A statement of the objectives of the assessment (and the TOR in an annex)
- A concise description of the methodology used, the sites visited, how interviews were selected
- Statements concerning the reliability of the data, the extent to which data are representative, possible margins of error, any gaps in information or differences of opinion
- Information on all the topics covered in the guidelines and/or the TOR (eg. context, numbers, population characteristics, food security including coping strategies, self-reliance, community services, gender, logistics, coordination, contingency planning)
- Analysis of opportunities for increasing *self-reliance* and prospects for DAR programmes
- Analysis of the political, social and security *context*, including the situation and attitudes of the host population, and the implications for food security, self-reliance, and gender and protection concerns
- Analysis of the *capacities* available to implement DAR programmes and related activities, including appropriate targeting
- The *options* for interventions with the pros, cons and implications of each
- Recommended *strategies* for DAR programmes, and specific recommendations for interventions for the next period, including inputs, implementation (including targeting) mechanisms, logistics arrangements
- *Risks* (including possible negative side effects of assistance) and the contingencies for which contingency plans should be maintained
- The specific aspect that *monitoring* should focus on and any additional studies required
- Particular information is lacking, is this acknowledged and something stated about when and how it should be obtained?

Defining Objectives and Terms of Reference (TOR)

The objectives of the assessment must be clearly defined and understood by all concerned. The typical objectives presented in Table 3 below must be adapted to (i) what is known about the general situation, and (ii) any particular issues that need to be addressed.

Based on the defined objectives, clear and precise TOR must be drawn up specifying the methods to be used, the output required (the topics to be covered in the report) and the time frame.

Take care to ensure that the objectives and TOR are focused and realistic.

TABLE 3: TYPICAL OBJECTIVES FOR AN ASSESSMENT

- To compile data that will be required for operational planning, and enable preliminary information to be provided to donors
- To identify the localities and priority topics on which a follow-up (if necessary) more detailed assessment should focus
- To identify factors that could positively or negatively influence possibilities for DAR programmes
- To determine what measures are necessary and what assistance is required to ensure that the refugees progressively achieve sustainable self-reliance preparing for solutions, as well as support to host communities
- To identify and assess the resources of potential implementing partners to undertake DAR programmes and monitoring activities
- To assemble the data required for operational planning and budgeting, and initiate implementation: this includes data on key indicators necessary to establish a baseline against which programme performance can be measures, to the extent possible
- To enable specific, credible project proposals to be elaborated and submitted to donors for funding

Constituting the Assessment Team

The assessment team should include:

- the government: at least one representative of the national entity responsible for refugees and of the relevant local authority (regional/provincial/district, as appropriate);

- UN organizations: eg. FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WB, WFP, WHO as appropriate): each will nominate its own representative/participants;

- donors: one or two representative(s) of the donor community should be invited; and

- NGOs: representatives of the major NGOs should be invited. NGO staff will be key interlocutors at field sites but senior NGO staff with relevant experience should also be encouraged to participate as members of the overall assessment team.

The team should possess skills and experience in:

- rural development (for rural settings);

- sectors - gender, child protection, public health, nutrition, education, infrastructure, etc.; and

- self-reliance/livelihoods, employment and income-generating activities.

The team should include:

- individuals with extensive knowledge of the area;

- individuals with multi-disciplinary skills (social, economic and institutional); and

- women to ensure gender balance.

When relevant, experience in protection issues may also be included.

The size of the team should be decided in relation to the number of sites to be visited, if applicable. If there are several widely separated sites, sub-teams should be formed to visit different sites simultaneously.

One individual, or one from each organization, should be assigned responsibility at the outset to compile and edit the assessment report. Other individual team members may be assigned responsibility for compiling preliminary drafts on specific themes.

At the District Level:

- divide the team into sub-teams to meet simultaneously with the heads of the local administration and department staff; and

- reassemble the team to exchange and consolidate information; plan (or confirm) the itinerary and schedule for follow-up visits to other potentially important logistic centre, together with local officials.

At each refugee site/settlement or host village:

- meet with the local leaders and refugee representatives, local officials or NGOs involved;

- for refugees, determine whether the refugees at the site are from similar or different localities, backgrounds and ethnic origins:

  - if the population is more-or-less homogenous, identify the leaders and meet with them to introduce the team and start gathering information; and,

  - if the population includes distinct population groups, identify the different groups and their leaders, and immediately divide the team to meet with those leaders simultaneously to introduce the team and start gathering information.

- walk through the site/village to observe conditions and discuss informally with hosts/refugees;

- visit health facilities, water supply and storage points, and sanitation facilities;

- visit markets within and nearby;

- organize focus groups; and

- meet with leaders and representative groups from the local (host) populations.

Note: Meetings with refugees should not be limited to the leaders. Consultations should be broadened to various groups such as women, children and youth to ensure that views of the community are heard and addressed. It is also recommended to meet various groups in their own environment, eg. home, market, school, etc. The same applies to meetings with the host community.

Re-Assemble the Assessment Team Each Evening:

- *before leaving the site/locality,* discuss the team's findings/observations and tentative conclusions with refugee leaders (when feasible), host community representatives, local authorities and organizations present; and

- *at the end of each day,* the team should meet to discuss findings and all team members prepare notes on their findings and submit them to the team rapporteur.

The success of the assessment will depend on the leadership and the commitment of all team members to (i) work together in the pursuit of the common objective in the framework of the agreed terms of reference, and (ii) find practical, pragmatic solutions to the problems that will inevitably arise.

Preparing and Disseminating the Report

- Prepare and present a draft summary report; and

- As soon as the report is finalized and all appropriate Country Directors and Representatives of participating institutions have signed, send it to:

  - The Government;

  - All government entities, other organizations and donors that contributed to the preparations for and/or participated in the assessment, including at field sites;

  - The UN Resident Coordinator and other members of the UN country team.

  - The regional bureaux and relevant headquarter units of UNHCR and other organizations involved; and

2 SAMPLE SURVEYS

Adapted from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets[62]

Objectives

Sample surveys are complementary to, and often informed by, participatory, qualitative methods such as structured-interviews and focus group discussions. To be effective, sample surveys should be preceded by an initial qualitative overview of the community or context in which they have to be carried out. This enables survey work to be more precise and effective. The initial enquiry, for example, should help help identify some questions for the sample survey questionnaire.

Sample surveys are particularly useful for generating quantitative data on specific livelihood attributes such as the distribution of assets in a population.

TABLE 1: EXAMPLES OF INFORMATION MOST COMMONLY AND USEFULLY GATHERED FROM A SURVEY			
Economic Information	**Assets**	**Livelihood strategies**	**Access to services**
• Income-generating activities • Income (cash, in-kind) • Consumption • Seasonal prices • Seasonal wages • Cash costs of production • Non-cash costs	• Productive assets • Quality of shelter • Access to infrastructure • Access to training or education • Household labour availability • Nutrition • Financial services and conditions	• Remittances received • Income by source for various household members • Access to natural resources for urban dwellers • Seasonal variation in strategies	• Service providers • Standards of delivery • Fees and charges • Levels of participation

Note: Non-exhaustive list and overlap in categories; for illustrative purposes only.

[62] *Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets, Department for International Development* - See www.livelihoods.org

Information that can also be collected through sample surveys include: Questions on family details: gender, age, country or region of origin, length of stay in country of asylum, previous occupation, current skills, opportunities for return to country of origin to assess present situation and choice for future, i.e. local integration, repatriation, resettlement?

Data from surveys allows those involved to:

- gain better understanding of structures and issues;

- figure out household/group sources of income;

- compare different wealth groups for patterns of income sources, if relevant;

- compare levels of critical assets between different groups; and

- identify major constraints in accessing services.

Surveys are also useful because:

- they generate detailed information about a population from a small sample, so minimizing costs and resource requirements;

- standardization of questions and answers allows for comparisons to be made; and

- they help reveal whether sample populations (and, by extrapolation, wider populations) are relatively uniform or highly heterogeneous, thereby improving the design of projects and/or programmes.

It is important not be too ambitious when employing sample surveys. Some things to be aware of include:

- overestimating the data required to find out about different aspects of the population. Likewise, do not underestimate the time needed to process and derive the results from the data;

- skipping simple data analysis for sophisticated statistical routines as important things may be overlooked; and

- asking for information about incomes; some assets and intra-household issues can be very sensitive or impossible to get. Progress can be made by building trust or by approaching difficult questions in roundabout ways (for example, asking about consumption rather than income).

Methods

Guidelines for conducting sample surveys:

- identify data, devise survey forms and set-up with local researchers;

- pre-test survey forms in the field and train enumerators;

- the sample survey should:

    - take under an hour to administer;

    - avoid ambiguous questions and focus on quantitative data;

    - have a sample size of at least 30 from any single group. A possible option is to select three groups for comparison giving a combined minimum sample size of 90;

    - disaggregate populations and ensure that all relevant social dimensions are covered (eg. women, men, age groups, etc.).

- enter and check data; and

- analyze data (statistical analyses often employed) and prepare report.

3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Objectives

Semi-structured interviews are valuable rapid/participatory, qualitative/appraisal (RA) methods[63]. RA methods, in general, can provide important information on attitudes and perceptions, permit enquiries to be adapted on-site in response to findings, and can provide information for decision making more rapidly and cheaply than structured surveys

A careful, systematic approach is essential in order to ensure that as accurate a picture is developed when using semi-structured interviews and RA methods in general:

- **Preparedness:** before starting enquiries on the spot, study the available information on the population and locality and prepare a preliminary checklist of topics on which you want to gather information;

- **Sampling:** although formal sampling techniques may not always be used, sites and informants should be selected carefully and consciously in order to ensure that all the main subgroups are covered;

- **Interpretation:** if you do not speak the local language fluently, find a knowledgeable interpreter so that informants will not be restricted to those that speak your language;

- **Gender and Age Considerations:** talk separately with men, women, girls, and boys and in mixed groups and children,

- **Real-Time Analysis and Checking:** reflect on the significance of information and analyse it for coherence and internal consistency during the interviews and discussions. Ask follow-up questions to explore new aspects, clarify any apparent inconsistencies or fill gaps in understanding;

- **Focus:** concentrate on aspects that may influence the livelihoods and issues of interest of different groups and the ways in which each group might best be helped. Do not waste your own or your informants' time on data that may be interesting but irrelevant to your purpose;

- **Progressive, Participatory Learning:** recognise that you are engaged in a learning exercise; learning from and with your informants. Your understanding will increase as more issues are raised and explored with members of the affected population. Be flexible and opportunistic. While keeping a clear focus on livelihoods, needs and variables of interest, be alert to and follow up on aspects that you may not have thought of previously.

[63] UNHCR/WFP Joint Assessment Guidelines.

Methods

Below are some useful guidelines on conducting semi-structured interviews (with application to group discussions):

- **Selecting the sample for qualitative interviews:**

  - decide who will be in the sample: draw up lists of who you will like to know about; decide on the number of people in the sample at least 10 for drawing general conclusions; and select people at random; and

  - keep records to show that data is reliable: keep record of all steps in process so that someone else can "audit" if necessary. Records should include: how sample was selected, who responded, who did not and why, how you replaced people if necessary, and how you conducted interviews.

- **Designing a semi-structured interview schedule:**

  - think about the structure of the interview: select key themes, questions, and the order and way to ask them. For example, start with simple relatively uncontroversial topics first and to build rapport with the respondents;

  - ask generative questions first: for each new theme, ask initial open, generative questions (see Table 2 on page 14);

  - ask supplementary questions to probe for more detail;

  - ask closed questions last: to avoid a pattern of short responses to prompts; and

  - think about the time period the questions will refer to: it is useful to use shorter time-periods or periods marked by an event that respondents can remember.

- **Preparing for interviews:** always pilot your interview with staff but also with at least two real respondents who are similar but not part of actual sample. Keep in mind:

  - how many interviews you can realistically conduct within the limits of your budget and available time, focus on quality not quantity; and

  - who will be present during the interview because this will affect what people are willing to tell you.

- **How to start:** always begin with a traditional greeting and explain:
  - who you are, who you work for, why you are there, what your roles is;
  - explain that by collecting good, accurate information from the community you will be able to inform decision-makers more accurately about the community's situation; and
  - identify and record the characteristics of the individual or group, i.e. gender, age and socio-economic status.

- **How to conduct yourself and the discussion:**
  - refer to someone or something visible;
  - use checklist to ensure all topics are covered but be flexible. Allow relevant, new and unexpected issued to be brought up and pursued;
  - maintain an informal approach, do not interrogate. Mix questions with discussion;
  - be aware of non-verbal communication from your informants;
  - respect people's sensitivities and their right not to answer certain questions if they choose not to;
  - in a group discussion, ensure that all participants contribute; do not allow more powerful individuals or groups in the community to dominate. (If an individual persists in dominating, politely bring the discussion to an end and form a new group);
  - let informants and groups explain points fully; allow them to 'wander' if it helps them to make their point. Understand their logic and concerns and, when appropriate, gently bring the discussion back to the topic about which you seek information; and
  - do not take more than 45 minutes for an individual interview, or 90 minutes for a group discussion.

TABLE 1: HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS DURING SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- Ask direct, clear questions, eg. How? Where? When? Who? Why? What? How much?
- Ask questions about groups of people, not about the individual informants themselves, eg. "How many goats do most poor families (not you) have?"
- Listen carefully to every answer and ask follow-up questions if needed for more detail
- Ensure that each question is clearly understood, especially when working with an interpreter
- Ask one question at a time; do not ask more than one question in the same sentence
- Only ask questions that you think the informant(s) can answer
- Keep sensitive questions until later in the interview or discussion
- Do not phrase questions in a way that assumes or implies that the informant(s) should follow (or have followed) a specific course of action
- Do not induce particular answers by helping an interviewee to respond

- **Whenever possible and appropriate and particularly in group discussion, use two interviewers** (preferably a man and a woman):

  - one interviewer leads the discussion while the other takes notes; exchange roles regularly. Type up notes as soon as possible after interviews, while memory is still fresh. Consider tape-recorded interviews if conducive and non-intrusive; and

  - do not interrupt each other.

TABLE 2: EXAMPLES OF GENERATIVE AND SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Theme	Generative Question	Supplementary Questions
1	Please tell me how the overall situation has changed for you and your household since the refugee settlements were set up. Please also explain the reasons for these changes?	How has your health and the health of other household/community members changed? Have you acquired any important assets or skills?
2	Please tell me what other members of your household feel about the prospects of local integration of refugees. Please explain why you feel that way?	How will this affect relationships with nationals/refugees? How will this affect the nationals/refugees access to services?
3	NOTE: Questions being revised to fit purposes better	

- **Analysing and interpreting narrative data:**

  - prepare typed summaries of each interview;

  - organise information into a report identifying key issues under each theme; and

  - good practice to note in brackets or footnotes the code numbers of interviews to which a particular point refers should you need to trace back.

- **Analysing and converting qualitative data into numbers:**

  - constructing an overall impact score or other measure - when the sample size is more than 20 and there is scope for combining qualitative with quantitative data.

- **Using the data to improve services, for programme planning, etc.**

4 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS
Objectives and Why do Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion methods are important tools for conducting analysis and gathering specific information related to different groups. The main objective is to determine how issues differ among groups such as women, men, vulnerable populations, farmers, youth or other categories.

Qualitative data can provide very useful information about particular groups or individuals that quantitative data may not provide. Quantitative data gives a good picture and overview of the things available and the things lacking. Qualitative interviews and surveys on the other hand offer a more nuanced picture and get at data that often cannot be quantified such as perceptions and feelings as well as allow the group or individual the opportunity to tell their own story and speak openly and in detail about how services or circumstances affect them.

Focus group discussions specifically:

- allow for dissent and consensus building, for example, about levels of self-reliance from various perspectives/interest groups;

- can provide contextual and retrospective insights for interpreting current and future situations and sub-groups of interest that can be missed by other methods;

- can be relatively cost-effective due to small sample size(time, financial human resources); and

- allow for gender perspectives to emerge on key issues, especially control of resources that might be generated as a result of a particular intervention.

Methods

These notes provide a guide to developing and conducting focus groups discussions:

- **Sampling approach:** purposive sampling (women, youth) or/and random (quota, etc.);

- **Sampling size and selection:** groups of six or eight in a facilitated discussion. Groups usually represent subgroups of interest. Groups may intentionally be a mixture of sub-groups;

- **Generalising from sample to population/subpopulation of interest:** Discussion is focused on generalised experience of population/subpopulation and not on the experience of the individual participants in the discussion;

- **Tools:** Semi-structured discussion guide (see 3 above for some guidance on developing these);

- **Common techniques (in addition to interviewing):** Proportional piling, ranking, mapping, time trends, seasonal calendars, transect walks, direct observation and other tools;

- **Skills and training required:**

    - Facilitator: skilled and experienced facilitator able to balance the need to maintain focus while allowing the group to raise issues important to them.

    - Reporter: Basic literacy and numeracy skills, training in topic and verbatim recording of discussion.

    - Design/Supervisory Team: experience in tool development if tools not provided.

    - In-depth interviews, analysing the information and making conclusions based on what you have learned.

With regard to interviewing techniques, it is recommended engaging gender and child participatory experts.

Tools for Promoting Participatory Local Development

INTRODUCTION[64]

Participatory methods are essential for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating DAR programmes. This section presents the various tools available for promoting participatory local development.

Participatory Development

A participatory approach is now recognized as a normal way of conducting development business, replacing earlier concepts and approaches, which were used from the 1950s to the 1970s, such as community development.

Key principles for participatory development include the following[65]:

- recognize the **primacy of people,** their interests and needs to underpin key decisions and actions relating to development interventions;

- base project interventions on **people's knowledge and skills**;

- **empower** women and other marginalized groups;

- enhance **autonomy** as opposed to control;

- facilitate **local action** instead of local responses; and

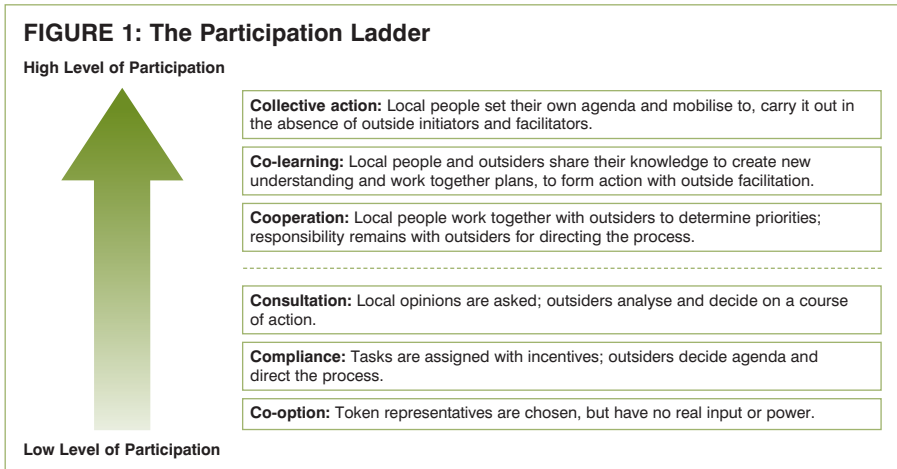- allow for **spontaneity** as opposed to rigidity in design, implementation and review.

Participatory Programme Development (PPD) is the process of working in partnership with communities to develop feasible, desirable and sustainable programmes.

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[64] Appendix II prepared with the assistance of Kathleen Dick, UNHCR Intern.
[65] UNDP Empowering People: A Guidebook to Participation.

Participation can take many forms, ranging from full empowerment to mere token forms as shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: The Participation Ladder

High Level of Participation

Collective action: Local people set their own agenda and mobilise to, carry it out in the absence of outside initiators and facilitators.

Co-learning: Local people and outsiders share their knowledge to create new understanding and work together plans, to form action with outside facilitation.

Cooperation: Local people work together with outsiders to determine priorities; responsibility remains with outsiders for directing the process.

Consultation: Local opinions are asked; outsiders analyse and decide on a course of action.

Compliance: Tasks are assigned with incentives; outsiders decide agenda and direct the process.

Co-option: Token representatives are chosen, but have no real input or power.

Low Level of Participation

Participation in UNHCR Work

In contrast to development agencies, the routine and systematic use of participatory approaches is not common among humanitarian organizations. Factors that tend to limit their use of participatory methodology include:

- the need to move quickly in emergencies to save lives. It is often claimed that since participation takes time, it is a luxury that is ill afforded in the face of emergencies;

- the skills and profiles of humanitarian relief workers;

- vertical command structures found in many humanitarian and relief organizations;

- internal procedures, eg. planning and budgeting cycles often limited to one year;

- donor humanitarian/relief assistance policies which often have short time horizons;

- the fact that local institutions are often destroyed or weakened by the emergency itself, and are often sidelined by the process of providing emergency assistance; and

- the practice of viewing emergencies as sudden and dramatic events rather than as events with a long gestation periods, of which the emergency is just a symptom.

Community-based participatory approaches when applied to emergencies can make relief interventions more effective, less wasteful and supportive of local institutions than externally designed and managed programmes[66].

BOX 1: EXAMPLE OF A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN AN EMERGENCY

"In Liberia, at the height of the fighting, citizens of Monrovia organized themselves into community welfare teams and organized food and water distribution for each neighbourhood. They also organized neighbourhood security watches and conflict resolution… The systems that were set up in Monrovia by the Community Welfare Teams are still in place today and they have influenced the democratic process in Liberia in a beneficial way. Since that time Save the Children Fund has been using PRA to generate community plans."

Source: Workshop on Participatory Approaches in Emergencies, March 2000.

- Over the years, UNHCR has developed tools to enhance participation in its work. Examples include the following:

- developing a Practical Handbook for Participatory Planning, essentially aimed at encouraging greater stakeholder participation in UNHCR programmes, and in particular, the elaboration of the Country Operations Plan (COP).

- emphasising mainstreaming concerns relating to gender, children and groups with specific interests in UNHCR operations;

- adopting a community-development approach to camp management; and

- supporting refugee communities to set up decision-making bodies to manage aspects of their affairs and as mechanisms for consultation.

A participatory approach is a *sine qua none* for a sound DAR programme. The sections below provide an overview of the various tools that are used for participatory planning. Two of the tools (workshop-based and community-based) are treated in greater depth, and the implications in applying participatory approaches in DAR programmes are highlighted.

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[66] Alastair Scott-Villiers. "Workshop on Participatory Approaches in Emergencies," March 2000.

Overview of Participatory Tools and Methods

The range of tools and methods for promoting participation fall into four categories:

1. Workshop-based methods include:

- *Objectives-Oriented Project Planning (ZOPP):* a project planning technique for stakeholders to come together in workshops and set priorities and plan for implementation and monitoring;

- *Appreciation-Influence-Control (AIC):* a workshop-based technique, which promotes consideration for social, political and cultural factors by all stakeholders; and

- *TeamUp:* emphasizes team building within the ZOPP method using a computer software package (PC/TeamUp) that focuses on team-oriented research, project design, planning, implementation and evaluation for stakeholders.

2. Community-based methods include:

- *Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA):* a participatory approach/method, which focuses on local knowledge and promotes communities doing their own appraisal, analysis and planning; and

- *Self-Esteem, Associative Strengths, Resourcefulness, Action Planning and Responsibility (SARAR):* a participatory approach geared at the instructing of local trainers and facilitators and draws on local knowledge to strengthen local capacities.

3. Stakeholder Consultation methods include:

- *Beneficiary Assessment (BA):* uses systematic study of beneficiaries' and stakeholders' perception, ensuring all concerns are heard and incorporated within policy and project structure; and

- *Systematic Client Consultation (SCC):* a group of methods for improving communication among staff, direct and indirect beneficiaries and stakeholders of projects, government agencies and service providers, so that projects and policies are demand driven.

4. Social Analysis methods include:

- *Social Assessment (SA):* a systematic study of social processes and development factors that influence project impacts and results; and

- *Gender Analysis (GA):* focus on understanding and documenting of the differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities within each unique context.

For a summary, please see Matrix on pages 6-7.

OUTLINE OF COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING TOOLS AND METHODS[67]

	TOOL/METHOD	WHAT IT IS USED FOR	COMMENTS
WORKSHOP-BASED	**Objective-Oriented Planning Project (ZOPP)**	• Stakeholders set priorities, plan for implementation and monitoring • Output is project planning matrix, undertaking participatory, objectives-oriented planning • Length spans the life of the project or policy • Focus on team commitment and capacity	**Pros** • Encourages "social learning" • Promotes ownership • Produces visual matrix of project plan • Stakeholders establish rules of the game and working relationships **Cons** • Matrices should be considered changeable • Stakeholders must be involved in all planning • Not all stakeholders comfortable in workshop setting • All stakeholders must have accessibility and voice
	Appreciation-Influence-Control (AIC)	• Stakeholders consider social, political and cultural factors under influence of technical and economic aspects • Focus on building appreciation through listening, influence through dialogue and control through action	
	TeamUp	• Based on ZOPP with emphasis on team-building • Uses PC/TeamUp software package to guide stakeholders through team-oriented research, project design, planning, implementing and evaluation, fostering 'learning by doing' environment	
COMMUNITY-BASED	**Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**	• Focused on local knowledge; enables local people to do own appraisal, analysis, planning • Development practitioners, government officials and local people work together on context-appropriate programmes	**Pros** • Can be used in a variety of settings • Interactive/visual tools not dependent on literacy levels • Rely on everyday experience • Participation = empowerment **Cons** • Training alone does not provide locals with decision-making authority • Energy must be targeted to actual tasks and programmes • Trained facilitators needed
	Self-Esteem, Associative Strengths, Resourcefulness, Action-Planning, Responsibility (SARAR)	• Geared towards instructing local trainers/facilitators • Focus on local knowledge, strengthens local capacity to assess, prioritize, plan, create, organize and evaluate • Builds multi-sectoral/level training approach to team building; encourages participants to learn from local experience not from external 'experts;' empower communities and agencies to initiate action	
STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION	**Beneficiary Assessment (BA)**	• Systematic analysis of stakeholders' perceptions so concerns are voiced and incorporated in programme formulation • Seeks out otherwise silent stakeholders; highlighting constraints of beneficiary participation • Relies on feedback on development interventions	**Pros** • Systematic analysis improves interaction with stakeholders • BA and SCC are field-based requiring travel to representative communities **Cons** • Listening/consultation alone to not lead to increased capacity/participation • Effectiveness of programme depends on managers/representatives to be able to realize communities' needs and demands within programme operation
	Systematic Client Consultation (SCC)	• Focus on improving communications among stakeholders so projects are more demand driven • Systematic listening to stakeholders' attitudes, preferences • Engineer process for continuous communication • Act on findings by incorporating stakeholder feedback within project design and procedure	

OUTLINE OF COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING TOOLS AND METHODS[67]

	TOOL/METHOD	WHAT IT IS USED FOR	COMMENTS
SOCIAL ANALYSIS	Social Assessment (SA)	• Focus on social processes/factors of development impact/results • Identify key stakeholders; establish participation framework • Project objectives/incentives must be appropriate and acceptable to beneficiaries • Assess social impacts/risks • Minimize adverse impacts	**Pros** • Provide process for information building into plans for action • Communication between communities and agencies • Flexible framework for design able to conform to existing programme and policy goals • Involving local experienced consultants increases capacity for actionable social analysis **Cons** • Data collection/analysis must isolate relevant issues and prioritize them
	Gender Analysis (GA)	• Understanding/documenting differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities within context • Disaggregates quantitative data by gender • Based on socially and culturally variable gender attributes • Does not treat women as homogenous group or with immutable characteristics	

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Objectives-Oriented Project Planning (ZOPP) are relevant tools in developing DAR programmes, and are not mutually exclusive.

Participatory Development Tools[68]

Participatory development is concerned with stakeholders' involvement in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and the sharing of responsibilities and benefits. It increases control over resources and institutions by groups who would hitherto have been excluded. It enhances their well-being in terms of self-reliance and any other values they cherish. It recognizes an existence in differences of political and economic power between different classes and social groups so that development will be based on democratic, independent and self-reliant ideals. It is based on dialogue between various stakeholders, whereby the agenda is jointly set, and local views and knowledge are deliberately sought for and respected.

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[67] The World Bank Participation Sourcebook, Appendix 1: Methods and Tools, www.worldbank.org
[68] Adapted from Civil Society Organizations, Empowering People: A Guidebook to Participation, UNDP
http://www.undp.org/cso/resource/documents/empowering/ch1.html

Evolution of Participatory Programme Development (PPD)

The evolution can be summarized in the following sequence: Rapid Rural Assessment (RRA) » Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) » Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)

RRA was largely knowledge "extractive" process[69], where the information was analyzed off-site by outside experts. PRA focused on community capabilities and promoted local ownership of the programme. PLA emphasizes the action phase of the programme and has broadened the scope of development from rural to multi-sectoral. Outside experts observe and facilitate, while community members are planners, implementers, monitors and evaluators.

Description of PLA and Steps Involved

The goal of PLA is community collective action. PLA is a process for community members to:

- analyse their needs;
- identify possible solutions; and
- develop, implement and evaluate a plan of action.

The scope of PLA can be:

- focused on a specific sector; or
- open to community choice of issues to be addressed.

The PLA Team is multi-disciplinary with representative genders, disciplines and career background. Participants may include[70]:

- sponsoring agency;
- other NGOs or development agencies;
- local government representatives; and
- community members.

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[69] Empowering Communities: Participatory Techniques for Community-based Programme Development, Volume 2: Participant's Handbook, Centre for African Family Studies (CAFS), Session 2, pp. 8.
[70] Empowering Communities: Participatory Techniques for Community-based Programme Development, Volume 2: Participant's Handbook, Centre for African Family Studies (CAFS), Session 2, pp. 6.

The Team Structure:

- Leader: makes initial contact with community, is a primary link with community leaders, coordinates logistics of field work, introduces team to community, supervises work of team members;

- Trainers: supplement leader's tasks;

- Note-Takers/Recorders: observe and record PLA activities in a variety of mediums;

- Facilitators: conduct PLA activities with community members, ensuring all members are given chance to participate; and

- Community Link Persons: liaise between team and community.

Foundations of PLA:

Behaviour and Attitudes

Methods

Sharing
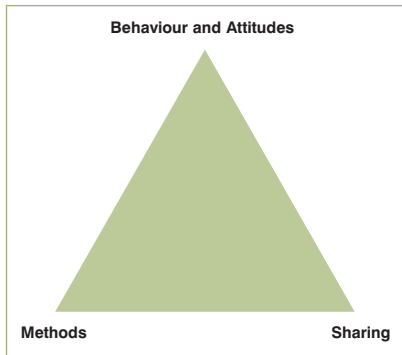
Behaviour and Attitudes:

- respect for local knowledge and capabilities;

- rapid and progressive learning;

- "handing over the stick" [to community members];

- flexibility and informality;

- offsetting biases;

- seeking diversity; and

- self-critical awareness.

Methods:

- mapping and diagramming;
- semi-structured interviews;
- sorting and ranking;
- transect walks and observations;
- time lines, schedules and seasonal calendars; and
- matrices.

Sharing[71]:

- local people sharing information amongst themselves;
- local people and outsiders sharing information with each other;
- PLA facilitators sharing information amongst themselves; and
- organisations conducting PLA-sharing experiences with each other.

Outline of the Participatory Programme Development (PPD) Process:

- selection of the community and formation of the PLA team;
- training of the PLA team and logistical preparations;
- preliminary site visit;
- the PLA workshop: data collection;
- the PLA workshop: data synthesis and analysis;
- the PLA Workshop: ranking of problems and solutions;
- the PLA Workshop: presentation of results;
- the PLA Workshop: creation of an action plan committee and development of a community action plan;
- workshop follow-up and implementation of the action plan; and
- participatory monitoring and evaluation.

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[71] Empowering Communities: Participatory Techniques for Community-based Programme Development, Volume 2: Participant's Handbook, Centre for African Family Studies (CAFS), Session 2, pp. 10-11.

Applying Participatory Tools And Methods to DAR

Even under "normal" circumstances, using participatory approaches can be challenging. When applied in the context of refugees and DAR programmes, it would be important to take into account a number of factors, such as the following:

- divergent stakeholder motivation and interests: What is in it for me?

- imbalances in power relationships;

- gender roles and support to groups with special needs;

- time and costs associated with participatory approaches; and

- skills of staff.

The Table on page 12 spells out the main challenges/issues and responses when applying participatory methodologies in the context of DAR programmes.

CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES IN APPLYING PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO DAR PROGRAMMES

Challenge	Issues	Responses
Stakeholder motivations and interests	• Differences in stakeholder interests are normal in any community but these are magnified in the case of refugee-host community - local - central government context • Differences could be wide in the initial stages, narrow overtime (as inter-community ties are solidified) but will not disappear completely • The alignment between the different stakeholders may also vary with the issue in question - there may be issues where refugee and host communities have a common view point; and in others, hosts and local authorities share more common interests	• Understand the different stakeholder interests and motivations • Focus the early phases of DAR programmes on shared interests of all the stakeholders, and expand the programme as the common area of interest grows • Identify other instruments by which to address the concerns of stakeholders not covered by the DAR programme - the programme cannot solve all local problems although there could be a tendency for local governments to view it as a panacea for local problems
Imbalances in power relationships	• Refugees are at the "bottom" of the power hierarchy • UNHCR because of the resources at its disposal wields a lot of influence and local authorities may have certain reservations to voice their critiques in the open	• Hold separate consultations with refugees and host communities, as well as combined ones in order to identify unique needs of each sub-group and common issues • UNHCR staff to exercise caution and prudence in dealing with local authorities and be open to criticism
Gender roles and support to groups with special needs	• Refugee women may have greater degree of empowerment than women in host communities • There may be more consistent support to groups with special needs (the elderly, etc.) in refugees than in host communities • Support to refugees may be greater in times of crises - eg. food shortages in event of droughts • Local government programmes may not prioritize women's empowerment issues	• Ensure that gender gains of refugee women are not "lost" and are further developed in DAR programmes - provide opportunity to women to fully express needs and priorities during consultation processes • Proactively reach out to groups with specific needs among local communities as they are often by-passed by development activities
Time and Costs	• Time and costs of participation could be high • There may be no budget allocations for designing programmes in a participatory manner • Not all needs identified would eventually be funded	• Allocate budget resources for participation • Address urgent needs while identifying more detailed programme elements through participatory approach
Skills of staff	• Skills to do participatory planning could be limited among UNHCR and partner staff	• Undertake training activities prior to launching participatory approaches • Tap external expertise to help in process

MATRIX OF PLA TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES[72]:

	TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES	REMARKS
INFORMATION/DATA GATHERING	**Spatial Data** • Mapping • Transect walks and observation	• **Maps:** encourage discussion among community members, everyone can contribute, many different features of the village are represented • **Transect Walks:** accompanied by several community members, the walk covers much of the village area
	Time-Related Data • Time Lines • Seasonal Calendars • Daily Schedules	• **Time-Lines:** link dates with historical events like politics, disease outbreaks, periods of crisis, changes in natural resources, etc. • **Seasonal Calendars:** reflects indigenous concepts of time • **Daily Schedules:** outlines individual habits (differences in gender and class roles, etc.)
	Social/Health Data • Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs) • Well-Being Sorting • Body mapping • Pie charts • Venn diagrams • Flow diagrams	• **SSIs** are informal conversations to gather information, based on predetermined topics, which can be modified as needed. They involve active listening with sensitive questioning and require recording for critical self-reviews. **Individual Interviews:** useful for one-on-one communication with community member about sensitive/private topics; **Group Interviews:** informal directed conversations with large heterogeneous group, therefore it is important for everyone member to have participation; **Focus Group Discussions:** less rigid, more spontaneity than group interviews; **Probing:** begin with 'what,' 'why,' etc. includes leading questions to encourage greater participation • **Well-Being Sorting:** a.k.a. wealth-ranking, classifies households according to locally developed criteria • **Body Maps:** illustrate human body and outline local health perceptions. • **Pie Charts:** distinguish different characteristics of village (i.e. ethnic composition, education levels and literacy, etc.) • **Venn Diagrams:** use circles to represent relationship/interaction between different village institutions/organizations • **Flow Diagrams:** identifies problems and explores feasibility of proposed solutions, highlights gaps in communication and used as evaluation tool
RANKING, SCORING AND MATRICES	**Ranking of Problems and Solutions** • Preference-Ranking and Scoring • Pairwise Ranking • Matrix Scoring	• **Preference-Ranking and Scoring:** useful for less than or equal to 5 issues/problems to be ranked or prioritized and tally results (but results aren't weighted) • **Pairwise Ranking:** when there are many community members; each issue is compared to one other, and prioritized against it • Matrix Scoring: presented in matrix form with solutions listed in the left column and criteria listed across the top row; criteria for evaluation include cost, technical feasibility, sustainability, equitability, time to completion and social/cultural acceptability
COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN (CAP)	**Creation of Community Action Plan** • Forming a n Action Plan Committee • Developing an Action Plan	• **Forming an Action Plan Committee:** at the end of the workshop, community members need to elect an Action Plan Committee, which will be in charge of developing and monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan. The APC should be represented by men and women, youth and elderly and special community groups (i.e. the disabled) • **Developing an Action Plan:** there must be a well-defined strategy and concrete implementation plan, headed by the community. The Action Plan contains the following elements: name of the project, person/group in charge of project, project objectives and outputs, activities needed for output, resources needed, a time-line and a monitoring and evaluation plan
	Workshop Follow-Up • PLA workshop report • Community Sponsoring Agency (SA) Liaison	• **PLA Workshop Report:** summarizes the PLA activities, results and identified problems/solutions. This report is distributed to the SA and the community • **Community Sponsoring Agency (SA) Liaison:** keeps momentum of the project; SA tries to ensure increased/adequate funds available to the community in order for successful Action Plans

[72] Empowering Communities: Participatory Techniques for Community-based Programme Development, Volume 2: Participant's Handbook, Centre for African Family Studies (CAFS), Sessions 8-15, pp. 30-74.