



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

Certificate Programme

International Perspectives in Participatory Research

Unit 6

Participatory Research Tools in Development Practice

Units of Certificate in International Perspectives in Participatory Research

Unit 1: Understanding Social Research

- Meaning of Research
- Dominant Social Research Paradigms
- Issues in Knowledge Production and Knowledge Utilization Underlying Social Research Paradigms
- Critique of the Dominant Social Research Paradigms

Unit 2: Development of Participatory Research

- Adult Education Movements
- Action Research
- Development Programmes
- Feminist Movements
- Anti-Racist Movements

Unit 3: Participatory Research: An Alternative System of Knowledge Production

- Characteristics of Social Science Research
- Difference between Social Science Research and Participatory Research
- The Research Process
- Outcomes of Participatory Research
- Case Study Analysis: Occupational Health & Participatory Research

Unit 4: Participatory Research Methods of Generating Knowledge

- Purposes of Participatory Methods
- Streams of Participatory Methods: An Overview
- Diverse Methods of Generating Knowledge

Unit 5: Participatory Methods of Analyzing, Disseminating and Utilizing Knowledge

- Participatory analysis: group feedback analysis, neighborhood meetings, Community consultation
- Audiences, media and choosing dissemination vehicles
- Utilizing research to affect change

Unit 6: Participatory Research Tools in Development Practice

- Participatory Enumeration
- Focus Groups: Gender Division of Labour

Table of Contents

S. No.	Contents	Page No.
	Introduction	5
	Learning Objectives	6
6.1	Participatory Enumeration	7
6.1.1	Context	7
6.1.2	Participatory Enumeration	8
6.1.3	Methodology	9
6.1.4	Process	14
6.1.5	Implementing Organisations	18
6.1.6	Case Study: Participatory Enumerations for Tenure Security	20
6.2	Participatory Town Planning	24
6.2.1	Decentralised and Participatory Town Planning	25
6.2.2	Participatory Tools	28
6.2.3	Process	29
6.2.4	Outcomes	31

6.2.5	Case Study: Participatory Town Planning in Rajnandangaon and Janjgir, Chhattisgarh	32
6.3	Popular Theatre	37
6.3.1	History	38
6.3.2	The Process	39
6.3.3	Case Study: Participatory Theatre : Acting against Violence in Northern Nigeria	43
6.4	Participatory Video	49
6.4.1	History	50
6.4.2	The Process	51
6.4.3	Case Study: Participatory Video in Researching Violence	53
	Summary	58
	Recommended Readings	59
	References	60

Introduction

Participatory research (PR) in development practice is primarily focused on the marginalised and poor who are excluded from development interventions. The methodology emphasises a problem identification and priority-setting process with a participatory and manageable codification process (i.e., representation of local situations and problems) engaging people to actively respond to the code.

In this Unit we shall learn some of the popular participatory tools used in development practice. We have selected four different examples, viz., *Participatory Enumeration*, *Participatory Town Planning*, *Popular Theatre* and *Participatory Video*, to illustrate the range of contexts, subject matter, techniques, research and organising methods in PR. As these tools offer novel ways of generating data and constructing and contrasting alternative perspectives on reality, both actual and possible, they are also well suited to the promotion of action through self-aware reflection.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this Unit, you will be able to:

- *Understand* various PR tools used in development practice

6.1 Participatory Enumeration

6.1.1 Context

Development challenges in informal settlements have social, economic, environmental and physical dimensions. The challenges are strongly related to the limited access that the poor have to serviced land, adequate housing and above all tenure insecurity.

Note Bank

Tenure takes a variety of forms, viz., rental (public and private) accommodation, cooperative housing, lease, owner-occupation, emergency housing and informal settlements, including occupation of land or property. Notwithstanding the type of tenure, all persons should possess a degree of security of tenure, which guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats.

Tenure security can be defined in various ways:

- A degree of confidence that land users will not be arbitrarily deprived of the rights they enjoy over land and the economic benefits that flow from it.
- The certainty that an individual's rights to land will be recognised by others and protected in cases of specific challenges; or, more specifically;
- The right of all individuals and groups to effective government protection against forced evictions.

(Mundy, 2010)

People living in conditions of insecure tenure experience poverty, social exclusion and inadequate housing, water and sanitation on a daily basis. Unless urgent action is taken, this number is likely to increase drastically. Many people and civil society organisations therefore emphasise the need for improving the living conditions of the inhabitants of informal settlements by providing them security of tenure. They have been developing new tools, methods and strategies. *Participatory enumeration* is one such method.

6.1.2 Participatory Enumeration

To enumerate is “to count”, “to list down”, or “to ascertain the number”. It is the process of gathering statistical information about a community. One type of enumeration is a national census, in which a government body gathers a variety of data, including demographic characteristics (sex, age, marital status, etc), health, access to services, employment, income, access to housing, etc, in geographic units called “enumeration areas”.

Participatory enumeration directly, and to a significant extent, involves the people who are being enumerated. In some cases the entire process is participatory, from inception, through design, management and implementation, to analysis and use of the data. In others, participation occurs at specific points in the process, such as an initial consultation or information sharing event, a point of boundary identification, or a process of public data verification. The level of participation by local residents varies from case to case. Some are internally driven, with little or no outside assistance. In some cases the initial impetus for the enumeration comes from the community itself. In other instances, support organisations may give an initial impetus for enumeration and provide training or help residents organise the enumeration or advocacy work using the data. The federations and support NGOs help low-income communities undertake surveys at various levels, including citywide or area-wide “slum” surveys that provide documentation of all “slums”, informal settlements or pavement dwellings. They also undertake very detailed household enumerations and intra-household surveys. These surveys have enabled community organisations to manage a large resettlement programme for those living in informal settlements.

6.1.3 Methodology

- Types of Data

Population / sample

In some instances it is necessary to gather information about everyone in the settlement, for example, if the purpose is to reallocate land to residents. In such a situation, omitting someone from the enumeration would mean they would not receive a parcel of land. In practice, it may be difficult, time-consuming and expensive to gather information about everyone, for e.g. people are out when the enumerators call, or they may refuse to answer questions. In other situations, it is enough to take a representative sample of residents, then to extrapolate from that to the whole population. An example of this is if approximate numbers are needed when trying to resist a threatened eviction, for example, or to profile a settlement. It is cheaper and easier to survey a sample than the whole population, but it is important to choose the sample carefully to ensure it is representative (Mundy, 2010).

Units of analysis

Should the enumeration gather information on individuals, households, land plots, or areas? This is in part a question of scale. Most enumerations gather information about **households**: number of members, income sources, tenure status, and so on. Such information can be aggregated to give a picture of the settlement as a whole.

Sometimes it is necessary to gather information about **individuals** within households. This is particularly important to ensure that the interests of women are represented (they tend to be invisible if the male head of the household answers all the questions).

Some enumerations focus on **land plots** as the unit of analysis. They attempt to delineate each plot of land in the area, and then determine who has ownership and other

rights over it. Finally, the ***settlement as a whole*** may be treated as a unit. Features such as the location of water points or the number of schools and clinics are characteristics of the settlement.

Listed below are variables useful for strengthening a community's negotiating position to improve their land tenure. Enumerations intended for other purposes will gather some of the same information, but will also select variables appropriate for their own needs.

(Mundy, 2010)

Note Bank**Category Variables*****Basic household profile***

- Number of family members, age of household members
- Gender of household members
- Educational levels of school age children
- Educational attainments of adult household members
- Civil status of household heads, length of residency in the community
- Tenure status (house owners, renters, sharers, etc.)
- Type of structure (concrete, semi-concrete, wood, other light material)

Physical profile

- Size of plot
- Location of plot
- Size of housing
- Number of rooms
- Quality and building material of housing
- Number of persons in the house
- Connection to services and infrastructure (water and sanitation, electricity)

Social profile

- Province where household comes from
- Ethnicity
- Religious affiliation
- Relatives in the community
- Access to or sources of basic services

Economic profile

- Occupation, employment
- Type of work (regular, contractual, seasonal, etc)
- Primary income source
- Other income sources
- Amount of monthly income
- Major household expenses (as percentage of monthly income)

- Access to sources of credit/lending facility or institutions (government and private)

Perceptions or positions on community issues

- Knowledge and understanding of issues affecting the community
- Opinions on issues affecting the community
- Position on the issues affecting the community
- Recommendations to address community issues

Organisational membership in community organisation

- Affiliation
- Position in the organisation
- Duration of membership in the organisation

Huairou Commission, 2007.

Spatial referencing

GPS equipment and GIS software have made spatial referencing cheaper and easier. Some types of data, such as land ownership claims, have to be matched against accurate maps of the area, and surveyed carefully on the ground. For a land administration system, for example, it may be necessary to mark the boundaries of each plot of land on a map, along with information such as ownership claims. This can be done by “vectorising” (tracing the outline of) property from aerial photos, or by using GPS equipment to mark the boundaries on the ground. For other purposes, less detailed spatial information is required. It is enough to identify a particular property by an address or as a point on a map, but not necessary to mark its boundaries. For various other purposes, no spatial referencing is necessary, for example, in a campaign for adequate resettlement of people displaced by a new road, it is not necessary to mark the existing houses on a map; it is more important to gather information on the number and ages of residents, their workplaces, etc, in order to plan the new settlement appropriately. (Mundy, 2010)

- **Participatory Tools**

Participatory enumeration is built on the assumption that the experience and knowledge of people is extremely valuable and should inform and guide development. Its outcome is relevant to the local context and provides insights on how to use that information for development. As participatory enumeration places strong emphasis on the involvement and control by participating residents themselves, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)/Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tools can be very useful in exploring the complexities of land tenure security.

Note Bank

Some of the activities included in *participatory enumeration* are:

- **Discussions, interviews, investigations and research:** As with all participatory rural appraisal methods, local people conduct these themselves, with assistance from experienced facilitators.
- **Timelines and trend and change analysis:** Historical timelines are constructed using local knowledge to identify key events, changes and trends (both positive and negative) in the history of the settlement or area.
- **Local analysis of secondary sources:** The analysis draws on and compares official maps, diagrams, statistics and tenure records through people's experiences and local knowledge.
- **Institutional diagramming:** Individual, group and institutional relationships are discussed, analysed and represented in diagrams. These can be very useful for representing tenure relationships.
- **Listing, matrix scoring and ranking:** These develop a shared understanding of the settlement, its residents and its priority tasks and challenges.
- **Development of locally relevant indicators:** These are used to track progress over time.
- **Shared presentations, analysis, discussions:** Teams of participants may work on individual aspects of a participatory rural appraisal, then present their results and discuss them with the members of other teams and the community as a whole.

(Mundy, 2010)

- **Community Mapping**

Community mapping is often used as part of participatory enumeration. Community mapping is an exercise undertaken by and for residents themselves. It includes a range of activities such as sketch-map projects (hand drawn maps showing community information on specific issues or themes) to cartographic projects (accurate to-scale area, township or village maps). The objective of community mapping is not simply to produce useful maps, the mapping process is itself transformative, knowledge is shared, viewpoints are debated, ideas and strategies for action often emerge, and people shape the mapping process itself.

Community mapping techniques include:

- **Community survey:** This is the most common method of community mapping. It can help reveal the conditions of the community at large.
- **Map drawing:** This shows where people in the community are affected by certain issues and can help draw conclusions about why these areas are affected.
- **Focus group discussions:** These show how a particular group understands a situation and the role that they see themselves and others playing in relation to the issue.
- **Interviews:** These reveal more details about how and why problems exist in the community based on the experiences of different residents. (Huirou Commission, 2007)

6.1.4 The Process

Various organisations that conduct participatory enumerations have their own general set of procedures. Nevertheless, common patterns and standard approaches have emerged for enumerations initiated by organisations such as Shack/Slum Dwellers International.

- The decision to undertake the enumeration may be in response to a crisis (such as an impending eviction), or part of a longer term activity (such as planning for slum upgrading). It is important to understand clearly why the enumeration is undertaken. If outside organisations are involved (NGOs, a development project or the government), they will need to build trust among the local residents, as well as among one another. If no outsiders are involved, the local initiators may still need to gain the confidence of other residents in order to include a spectrum of interest groups and constituencies.
- A community planning meeting is arranged to share the purpose and objectives of the enumeration with the whole community and initiate dialogue and participation between all stakeholders. This should be a public meeting and should be well advertised in advance. Enumerations have to be systematic in order to gather credible data. It is necessary to decide on tasks and allocate responsibility to organisations and individuals. It is also important to undertake a rough community mapping process, which records a community's geographic, social and economic features. Involving all the stakeholders in the community rough mapping process helps in identifying specific issues that affect a community.
- Even the simplest enumeration costs money, for stationery, training, refreshments, analysis, compensation, reporting, and so on. Resources (including time and effort as well as money, material resources and skills) may come from individuals or organisations within the community itself, donor organisations, NGOs or the government.
- The next step is to allocate enumeration teams for each area; take decisions about the size of the area to be covered and the size of the team that will realistically be needed to cover it; and select the enumeration team. The team should be representative of the community or area that is to be enumerated. Ideally people from each area should be selected.

- The next stage is to plan and train for the enumeration. The selected team needs to come together to think and discuss what is to be enumerated and the challenges that data collection would raise. For example, for a socioeconomic survey one would need to plan to carry out the survey at a time when the main earner of the household is present. Typically, the process is steered by a small core group, which trains and manages a larger number of enumerators who go from door to door to gather information. These enumerators need training on the purpose of the enumeration, as well as techniques such as measurement, interviewing and recording responses.
- Residents are often suspicious of people coming round and asking questions especially about sensitive issues such as income, family arrangements and tenure. It is necessary to ensure that they are aware that the enumeration is to take place, its purpose, how the information will be used, as well as issues such as privacy.
- Gathering secondary information. The background material, other data sources, maps, aerial photos, etc., are useful for guiding data gathering or as a basis for comparison (for example, to contrast official figures with those gathered through the enumeration).
- Designing enumeration instruments and procedures involves designing and pre-testing the questionnaire, developing interviewing procedures and designing mapping exercises, while using the overall objective of the enumeration as a reference. It also means dividing the area to be surveyed into manageable areas that one person or a small team of enumerators can cover within the time allocated.
- Once everything is ready, the enumeration can be launched at a public meeting where the results of the rough mapping can be shared and a detailed plan and a schedule for the enumeration can be arranged. If it helps, and the community thinks it necessary, local community leaders (if not involved), ministers, politicians, and the police could also be invited.

- The cadastral survey then begins. The enumeration team(s) goes house to house with the questionnaires and measure plots and house sizes.
- Once collected, data should be checked for standardisation and any errors or omissions. It is necessary to check the data for validity, triangulating responses where possible to other data sources (such as other questions in the questionnaire), and where possible go back to collect missing items. Public displays, presentations and discussions about the preliminary findings are often useful steps for verification. Incomplete or disputed information may need to be recollected.
- Once the dataset is reasonably free of errors, the data is analysed. Analysis takes many forms. It may consist of calculating simple totals (e.g., number of residents) or averages (e.g., mean number of people per household). It may also include tabulating data to reveal relationships of interest (tenure status of female-headed households, for example), or more sophisticated statistical analysis. It may also consist of public discussions about the implications of the findings.
- Ideally the information gathered needs to be shared back with the areas and the whole community at public meetings and through smaller group discussions, which should be inclusive of all people, for example, women, children and the elderly. The meetings form a platform for learning and teaching the process of enumeration. They also allow people to discuss the issues they face, considering root causes and proposing possible solutions. In order to create public awareness and public opinion, enumeration findings are shared with the wider public, NGOs, media and policy makers in order to focus attention on the issues the area is facing.
- Reporting means converting the analysis into a form that can be used, reports, maps, posters, graphics, and so on. Participatory enumerations typically have at least two intended audiences – the residents themselves and the local government – so it may be necessary to prepare the information in different formats to suit each audience. Information from participatory enumerations may be used in many different ways. These may be used by the community organisations to

press for rights or to advocate a change in policy, or by the government to plan resettlements or upgrade infrastructure.

- Some participatory enumerations are one-off activities, aiming to gather data for an immediate need. Others aim to gather information that will be needed for an extended period, for example, for land administration records. That means it is important to store this information over time and access it as and when required. Issues such as ownership (who owns and controls the data?), security (is the data safe?) and access (who is allowed to see it?) are important at this stage.
- Once the enumeration process is complete it will be helpful for the team involved, and the wider community, to consider what has been learned from the process. This evaluation can be recorded and used if the process is repeated or shared with other communities. The implementation of the action plan should also be monitored and evaluated.
- Information has only a limited shelf-life before it is outdated. This is especially true in informal settlements, where people move frequently and tenure situations may change rapidly. The data may be updated either through periodic follow-up enumerations (similar to the official census approach), or through a system where records are updated as they change (e.g., when someone buys or sells a property, similar to the official land records system). Updating of data can also allow comparison over time, and trends analysis.

6.1.5 Implementing Organisations

Data on informal settlements and their residents are needed for a wide range of purposes – to enable residents to demand their rights, to improve land tenure, to plan the provision of infrastructure and services, to redevelop slums or plan the resettlement of people in new areas, to guide land allocation and adjudication, to use in land administration systems, and so on. These data are needed by an equally wide range of organisations at the local, city and national government levels, as well as by community organisations, NGOs, researchers, development agencies and the private sector.

(Mundy, 2010)

Most participatory enumerations are initiated by NGOs and community groups that operate in informal settlements (such as Shack/Slum Dwellers International). These organisations have gained a good deal of experience in managing and running enumerations, and in using the results to press for policy changes. Where they do not play a leading role, such organisations often facilitate or support enumerations carried out by others. Many of these enumerations are conducted in response to some impending problem, such as a threatened eviction. (Mundy, 2010)

A number of enumerations are initiated by development projects or international agencies (such as UN-HABITAT). These enumerations are often done in response to a disaster (such as to allocate land after a conflict or natural disaster), or have a specific aim in mind, such as improving tax collection or redesigning the land records system. They may or may not be designed and implemented with complete cooperation of the government. Other enumerations are initiated by national or local governments. These may be driven by other government-led initiatives such as redevelopment projects or attempts to resettle residents in safer or more salubrious surroundings. An increasing number of participatory enumerations are implemented by partnerships of two or more of these groups. A development project, for example, may partner with an NGO or community organisation to implement an enumeration; or an NGO may persuade a government agency to work with it. (Mundy, 2010)

Community organisations and governments have very different goals and needs, and different requirements for the data gathered. The types of data and the accuracy required vary widely depending on their use. An enumeration that aims to find out how many people live in a particular slum needs different types of information and a very different level of accuracy from one that aims to formalise landholdings and resolve disputes between conflicting claimants. Often, community organisations feel that

governments try to appropriate “their” tools and take control over “their” processes. Governments often feel the same about community groups. The result is often mutual suspicion and conflict.

Together, authorities and local communities can ensure that participatory enumeration data are sufficiently accurate for a wider set of uses. Such collaboration needs to benefit local communities by becoming visible officially and statistically, and urban slum dwellers have prospects of legitimacy, inclusion, recognition of their rights and access to services. The collaboration should be supported by technical capacities on both sides. Participatory enumeration activities jointly undertaken with authorities, or supported by them, can lead to:

- Strengthened acceptability and legitimacy of the process by local communities through tapping local knowledge
- Trust and confidence of all parties
- Effective utilisation of existing competencies and resources
- Quality of information gathered
- Fewer disputes among local residents and between communities and authorities
- Effective responses to local conditions and priorities, and
- Opportunities for further engagement between the community and authorities.

(Mundy, 2010)

6.1.6 Case Study: Participatory Enumerations for Tenure Security

One of the earliest examples of an enumeration of informal settlements was the “people’s census” of pavement dwellers in Bombay (Mumbai), India. A pivotal 1985 Supreme Court of India ruling allowed the demolition of pavement shantytowns in the city of Bombay on the grounds that the sidewalk was for “public” rather than private use. At the same time, it indicted the Bombay municipality for harbouring “prejudice against

the poor and the destitute”. In response to this striking paradox, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) jointly initiated and organised an enumeration of pavement dwellers in Bombay (it was published in 1985 as *We, the invisible – a census of pavement dwellers*) (Patel, D'Cruz, & Burra, 2002; SPARC & PRIA, 1985).

As part of the enumeration process, meetings were held with pavement dwellers to discuss and debate issues such as why the census was important and how the information was to be used. People were kept informed at all stages of the process. The census questionnaires used were explained to people in order to clear any fears and suspicions. Each area received a copy of their data and a version of the report in their own language. The aim was to use the gathered information to dispel various negative myths about pavement dwellers and in doing so to achieve “legitimate” visibility for them. They were convinced that the information would force the hand of the authorities to recognise pavement dwellers and “somehow stave off the demolition of their homes” (SPARC & PRIA, 1985).

The participatory nature of the process made it transparent. Thus all of the data were made available to the people who were surveyed, but the enumeration itself was conducted by a group of outsiders who were concerned about the pavement dwellers' situation (instead of by the pavement dwellers themselves).

Mumbai relies on its extensive suburban railway system to get its workforce in and out of the central city. Several million passenger trips are made each day on the five main railway corridors. However, the capacity of the railway system is hampered by illegal settlements that crowd both sides of the tracks. By 1999, nearly 32,000 households lived in shacks next to the tracks, including many living within less than a metre of passing trains. The households lived there because they could not afford better options

as they needed the central location to get to and from work. But, they had to face not only the constant risk of injury or death from the trains, but also high noise levels, insecurity, overcrowding, poor quality shelters and no provision for water and sanitation. The Indian Railways, which owned the land would not allow the municipal corporation to provide basic amenities fearing this would legitimatise the land occupation (which they considered illegal) and encourage the inhabitants to consolidate their dwellings. So the inhabitants spent long hours fetching and carrying water – a task that generally fell to the women. Most households had no toilet facilities and had to defecate in the open. Discussions with the Railway Slum Dwellers Federation (to which the majority of households along the railway tracks belonged) made clear that most wanted to move if they could get a home with secure tenure in an appropriate location.

A relocation programme was developed as part of the larger scheme to improve the quality, speed and frequency of the trains. This was unusual on three counts. First, it did not impoverish those who moved (as is generally the case when poor groups are moved to make way for infrastructure development). Second, the actual move involving nearly 60,000 people was voluntary and needed neither police nor municipal force to enforce it. And third, the resettled people were involved in designing, planning and implementing the resettlement programme and in managing the settlements to which they moved.

Perhaps the most important feature of this resettlement programme was the extent to which those who were to be resettled were organised and involved before the move. First, all huts along the railway tracks and their inhabitants were counted by teams of Federation leaders, community residents and NGO staff and done in such a way that the inhabitants' questions about what was being done and how the move would be organised were answered. Then maps were prepared with residents where each hut was identified with a number. Draft registers of all inhabitants were prepared with the results returned to the communities for checking. Households were then grouped into units of 50 and these house groupings were used to recheck that all the details about

their members were correct and to provide the basis for allowing households to move to the new site together. Identity cards were prepared for all those who were to be moved and visits were made to the resettlement sites. Then the move took place with some households moving to apartments and others moving to transit camps while better quality accommodation was being prepared. Interviews in 2002 with the relocated people highlighted the support that the inhabitants gave to the resettlement and their pleasure in having secure, safe housing with basic amenities.

No process involving so many people moving so quickly is problem free. For instance, the Indian Railways started demolishing huts along one railway line and 2000 huts were destroyed before the Alliance managed to get the state government to decree that the demolitions must stop. Land sites were identified to accommodate the evicted households and the Federation was given the responsibility of managing the resettlement programme. Schools in the area to which they moved could not expand enough to cope with the number of children; many households had difficulties getting ration cards (which allows access to cheap food staples and kerosene through the public distribution system); and the electricity company overcharged them. The resettlement could have been better if there had been more lead-time with sites identified by those to be relocated and prepared prior to the resettlement.

Despite some problems, the MUTP resettlement programme was carried out better than other large resettlement programmes and has set precedents in how to completely involve those to be relocated in the entire process.

6.2 Participatory Town Planning

Town planning aims to utilise land and resources to the best advantage for the use of people. It has a strategic intent, i.e., *to address local needs by maintaining and improving the quality of life and services for residents, and regulating growth of the town/city.* To fulfil its strategic mandate, a plan incorporates specific environmental, social and economic goals such as quality housing for all; opportunities to work; and access to basic services such as drinking water, sanitation, quality education and healthcare, transportation, recreation and social amenities.

Town planning in countries such as India tend to be top-down, technical expert driven exercises. The planning agency, usually an external group comprising of a few influential interest groups and techno-consultants, have remained oblivious of the fact that factors of diversity, pluralism and iniquitous environment also influence people's access to development resources and equal attainment of development outcomes.

The issues of socioeconomic and political marginalisation, the needs and requirements of population living in informal settlements lacking basic infrastructure and services, and imbalance in the sharing of resources have generally remained unaddressed in town plan preparations. The provision for public participation has largely been token participation limited only to displaying the development plan for a certain period of time to allow "public comment" before formal approval of the plan is granted. With no community participation in the preparation of the plan, the local population felt no ownership towards it.

Note Bank: The Traditional Town Plan

The Traditional Town Plans have tended to:

- Focus on narrow technical issues with little use of local knowledge;
- Be data and information hungry;
- Result in maps or other outputs that local people may not understand; and,
- Fail to tease out complex problems, such as vulnerability.

(Goldman & Abbot, 2004)

The importance of “bottom-up” approaches to urban planning addressing the micro-realities of each area is increasingly being recognised the world over. Consultations with local communities are therefore an equally important aspect of development as is co-ordination between the plan maker and the governing authority. Consultation improves the council/government’s relationship with the community and leads to better decisions. It allows people interested in, or affected by, projects to offer their point of view before a decision is made. (Kaur Guneet, 2007)

6.2.1 Decentralisation and Participatory Town Planning

Participatory town planning received a major fillip on account of decentralisation reforms that seek to bestow local governments with more responsibilities and makes them more accountable to their citizens.

In the last two decades local level decentralisation with enabling legal frameworks and institutional channels for citizen participation initiatives have provided a new climate in many developing countries. Decentralisation legislation have set legal requirements for citizen participation in local government planning. Plans are meant to be integrated and

multi-sectoral, and supposedly guide spending allocations.

Note Bank: 74th Constitutional Amendment Act and Participatory Town Planning in India

The 74th Constitutional Amendment enacted in 1992 guarantees the existence of municipalities as institutions of urban local governance. The state governments shall devolve authorities, funds and functionaries as necessary for the municipalities to become institutions of local governance in urban areas.

The Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution of India lays down the functions of urban local bodies, lists urban planning including town planning, regulation of land use and construction of buildings and the planning for economic and social development as key functions of urban local bodies.

Town planning is one of the important responsibilities of the municipality. Municipalities are supposed to be responsible for preparing comprehensive development plans and their effective implementation. To achieve effective democratic urban governance, municipalities are expected to foster civic engagement in planning, resource allocation, utilisation and efficient service provision in the towns.

The principles underlying participatory town plans are to give people a say in the decisions that may affect them and to ensure that development interventions are appropriate to the needs and preferences of the population that they are intended to benefit. The participatory approach in town planning has a broader aim of strengthening local urban self-governance institutions and the participatory planning agenda therein, in order to:

- Develop a vision statement for each urban centre through consultations – the vision statement to guide the preparation of the zoning plan and its implementation;
- Identify a set of projects for implementation through a structured consultation process;
- Prepare a phasing plan for these projects with municipal stakeholders;

- Integrate these projects into the municipal budget to make them financially viable;
- Prepare area-specific urban design guidelines – for slums, the inner city, heritage precincts, etc;
- Demarcate areas to be developed as town development schemes for the next 5, 10 and 20 years based on people’s consensus and needs;
- Build the capacity of the urban local body and create a process to review the plan every year and make appropriate modifications if required; and
- Ensure that the informal sector and those living in slums/informal settlements become an active part of the planning process and that their aspirations and interests are highlighted in the development plan. (Sheikh & Rao, 2007)

Participatory town planning can be undertaken by government agencies or other development agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs) at the national, regional, municipal or community level. Most of the methods and tools are inexpensive and simple to use and many have been designed for use with or by community members and do not require literacy.

The types of stakeholders participating in this approach can range from rural or urban local communities, CBOs and other CSOs in the case of local development planning, to larger CSOs, international NGOs, the private sector and academia in the case of national or even regional development planning. The level of stakeholder participation varies greatly depending on how seriously the approach is taken, and can range from minimal, i.e., involvement only in information gathering or consultation to more active forms such as identifying, prioritising and designing the development programme/activities.

While participatory town planning is generally initiated by the government or development agency involved, there are also opportunities for CSOs to take the lead. For example, there are many instances where NGOs have organised and facilitated participatory action research to help development decision makers learn about local

needs and preferences in order to plan locally-appropriate interventions. Other CSO led approaches include awareness-raising and mobilising communities and citizens to encourage them to get involved in development planning processes; building the capacity of local-level stakeholders to participate in these processes; and campaigning for or against particular development interventions. In the best instances, long-term working relationships develop between, for example, local government offices and NGOs or development agencies and the communities in which they work, to enable the planning to benefit from the knowledge and experience of different stakeholder groups. These linkages may take the form of formal partnerships between the parties involved or informal arrangements based on mutual trust.

6.2.2 Participatory Tools

There is a vast array of tools available for participatory town planning. The following list illustrates some of the more commonly used ones.

- *Information-sharing tools:* News and updates on a participatory planning process can be transmitted via traditional media such as newspaper, radio and television or electronic media such as websites and emails or via meetings and presentations with the communities in a given geographical area.
- *Consultation tools:* Stakeholders who are either interested in or likely to be affected by the development decisions can be consulted through discussion forums such as round tables, public hearings, town meetings, community debates, focus groups, or electronic conferencing, surveys, opinion polls, etc.
- *Collaborative planning tools:* These include: *structural* mechanisms such as stakeholder representation on decision making bodies, establishing of local-level planning committees, participatory budgeting, or finance schemes to fund

community-managed development; *technology based* tools such as participatory geographic information system (GIS) or 3-D modelling; and *process methods* like participatory action research (PAR) and community learning, based on PLA such as community mapping, priority ranking and wealth ranking.

- *CSO-led tools to support participatory planning:* CSOs can help promote and facilitate participatory planning in many ways, such as:
 - *Campaigns:* CSOs can organise campaigns to influence development planning by actively supporting certain initiatives like the provision of basic services to poor communities or demanding the withdrawal or revision of other inappropriately planned initiatives.
 - *Mobilising communities:* CSOs can play a key role in mobilising communities and citizens, encouraging them to get involved in development planning processes. For example, this could include raising the awareness of local people about particular development issues and building their capacity to seek outside action as well as taking their own actions to address pertinent issues. (Rietbergen-McCracken,2005)

6.2.3 The Process

The participatory town plan preparation process involves extensive consultations and participation throughout the development and zoning plan making process. This includes the identification of stakeholders, conducting city development strategy workshops, sharing of the conceptual plan and getting stakeholder inputs through working group meetings. Thus, the plans evolve through both structured and unstructured dialogue with all stakeholders, with special emphasis on poor groups and other groups usually marginalised from planning and development. Before the formal plan

preparation process starts, local government, including elected representatives and state-level planning officials from both the urban and the housing and environment departments, need to be involved through a training workshop. The idea is to de-mystify the language of the “technical process of urban planning”. The content of the sensitisation workshop includes aspects of spatial planning, the legal framework, financial operation plans and municipal budgets. The workshop, therefore, ensures that even after plans are submitted to the state government and sanctioned, local government officials and people’s representatives will know something of the nuances and intricacies of the plans and can take rational, consistent and informed decisions during their implementation. Thus, this initiative seeks to overcome delays in plan implementation, poor quality plans and un-implementable proposals that have been common in the past, mainly due to the lack of the basic knowledge of the key players.

Note Bank: The Process

- Design of an integrated planning system by combining the community component with the more conventional planning framework used by the government/development agency;
- Situational analysis of the area including variables such as poverty levels, distribution of ethnic groups, presence of CSOs, etc;
- Selection of pilot communities based on the situational analysis to test the participatory planning methods and introduction of the proposed planning exercise to the communities through meetings with local leaders and community members;
- Training of community-level facilitators and government/development agency staff in the participatory methods through field based workshops;
- Planning and implementation of community-level planning by small teams of trained community members and government/agency staff working in each community. These may include participatory methods such as visioning, ranking, livelihoods analysis, etc;
- Feedback to communities of the outcomes of the planning processes and how these will be taken forward by the government/agency involved;
- Analysis of outcomes of all the community-level planning exercises and identification of key issues;

- Participatory workshop(s) or task forces involving community representatives and government/agency staff and decision-makers to draw up development plans based on the outcomes of the community-level planning plus other sources of information like secondary data, market surveys, capacity assessments, etc;
- Presentation workshops to highlight the process and outcomes for the decision-makers of the government body/development agency and other external stakeholders like partners, donors, etc; and
- Development of follow-up actions including plans for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process using similar participatory techniques.

(Rietbergen-McCracken,2005)

6.2.4 Outcomes

- *Strengthened voice:* Participatory planning processes can give people, particularly the poor and marginalised sections of the population, more voice and influence over development decisions;
- *Better informed plans:* By consulting those whose needs the plans are meant to fulfil, the resultant development interventions are more likely to be relevant and appropriate to those needs;
- *Strengthened capacity of citizens:* Through their involvement in participatory planning activities, local people and CSOs can learn more about the decision-making processes of government bodies and can acquire valuable skills for identifying, analysing and prioritising development issues, and for articulating their needs and concerns to the relevant authorities;
- *Strengthened capacity of governments:* Government staff involved in participatory development planning not only can learn the use of participatory methods and approaches, but can also benefit from a “reality-check” by seeing for themselves the condition of the local people and the relevance of existing or planned development interventions;

- *Better understanding:* By working together, different stakeholder groups develop mutual understanding and trust among themselves and can learn how to collaborate on any follow-up activities and any future joint initiatives;
- *Enhanced transparency and accountability:* Participatory planning processes open up the operations of the government and development agencies to public scrutiny and help set up mechanisms whereby these agencies are held accountable for the implementation of the plans; and
- *Strengthened democracy:* Participatory town planning can create processes that are more democratic and equitable, enabling citizens to share decision making powers with their locally elected representatives and other external agencies. (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2005)

6.2.5 Case Study: Participatory Town Planning in Rajnandgaon and Janjgir, Chhattisgarh, India

PRIA initiated a participatory town planning process in two urban centres, viz., Janjgir and Rajnandgaon of Chhattisgarh state in India. This approach aimed to strike a balance between inclusive town planning and working within the legal framework. The initiative brought together various stakeholders in urban town planning, viz., the state government, municipal staff, elected representatives and citizens and civil society groups to decide on the future of their towns. This was perhaps the first initiative in India in which a CSO sought to address issues of equitable and integrated urban development at the city level, focusing on technical issues of town planning and backed by public participation (Sheikh & Rao, 2007).

The Process

- (1) **Liaising and Negotiation with the State Government:** Support from the state government was sought in order to initiate the planning process, give formal validity to the process and secure the requisite secondary information and data from the government.

- (2) **Signing of Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipalities:** Apart from the state government's information, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed to legalise collaboration between the municipality and the agency involved. The understanding was that the municipality would partner in the entire process in terms of local support and participation.

- (3) **Orientation of Municipal Officers and Elected Representatives:** A two-day training workshop was conducted for local government officials and elected representatives along with officials from state departments in the state capital. The workshop included training in basic elements of development planning and preparing a zoning plan and a town development scheme. The workshop also allowed the discussion of basic concepts of good governance and participatory planning along with the need for reforms in municipal finance and accounting. Ways in which to increase sources of municipal income and implement the plan and projects were also discussed. The training sessions helped to improve all participants' understanding of technical aspects, legal provisions, statutory planning procedures and methodologies for preparing participatory plans. The workshop was particularly useful in helping local government stakeholders articulate a vision and identify the important issues for their towns. This might sound obvious, but in the past many town plans have been prepared by state government organisations with little involvement of officials or politicians for the town that is being planned for.

- (4) **Preparation of a high quality base map:** The cadastral map, which had plot level details, was digitised and overlaid to correlate both. Using geo-coded satellite imagery a good quality map was prepared. Once the draft base map was prepared, ground checking was undertaken to verify the details and improve the accuracy. The maps and drawings showed property boundaries, building typology, settlement densities, watersheds, public utilities and land use. This provided a physical base from which different groups could identify their homes and settlements and express their concerns, and the base map was exhibited at strategic locations in the towns. A detailed, clear base map for the whole urban centre enabled all stakeholders to understand its physical base and growth and stimulated ideas and discussions. People's concerns/issues were also mapped and recorded by development professionals at various facilitation points.
- (5) **Data Collection and Stakeholder Consultation:** The backbone of participatory town planning is the public consultation for capturing the resident's view of his/her town and its development road map. Extensive public consultations were held. Awareness about the intervention was created through distributing pamphlets, issuing press releases and in the form of advertisements on local television channels. In both towns the administration made appeals to the public, through advertisements, to participate in the process.

This focus on getting the views of individuals from the marginalised sections and informal groups was to draw in the opinions of those who do not have a tradition of active engagement in planning. There was also a more formal process for civil society participation as 20 stakeholder groups such as local community organisations, officials, market organisations, traders, unions and informal sector organisations were identified and consulted through semi-structured interviews. Other important stakeholders were from the field of academia, the media, politics, health, public works departments, and transport and youth groups. Their opinions

were especially sought with regard to specific sectoral issues that were their main concerns.

In the second phase of consultations, the towns were divided into clusters, each comprising a few wards, and public meetings were conducted in smaller groups. This was a more intensive approach, with meetings lasting half a day and held at nodal locations in the clustered wards. The process also facilitated the exchange of information between all parties, not just information provided by the planning authority to others. Particular attention was paid to supporting the contribution of groups who are not usually reached by public participation strategies, for example, home based workers, cobblers, rickshaw pullers and Dalits.

(6) City Development Strategy Workshop: To synthesise the public consultation and to develop a vision for the city, the representative groups of stakeholders were invited to take part in a city development strategy workshop in both the towns. The workshop agenda was to:

- Present the base maps and data to stakeholders to validate the inputs received so far;
- Develop a vision statement;
- Conduct a SWOT analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats);
- Discuss strategies for future development; and
- Identify sources of revenue for projects.

The stakeholders were asked questions about contentious issues likely to need mediation and negotiation. Active dialogue between various groups helped to reconcile differences within the agreed rules and time-table. The role of the facilitator (PRIA) was to simplify the technical jargon to allow meaningful local participation.

- (7) **Preparing Conceptual Plans:** Based on people's suggestions, the concerned agency prepared a draft conceptual plan and a development roadmap. The main contents of this draft were preliminary road network, land use zoning, building control regulations and identifying areas of future expansion.
- (8) **Preparation and presentation of final plan:** Based on the collated data, draft development and zonal plans were prepared. It was then presented to concerned local bodies and government officials and to the state urban departments. Suggestions from these agencies were incorporated and the modified plan was sent for sanction to the planning authority.

6.3 Popular Theatre

Popular theatre is educational drama or theatre for social change. It aims to create awareness by exploring issues in creative and exciting ways. This form of theatre aims to combine entertainment with an exploration of attitudes and to share knowledge in order to stimulate positive social changes. The terms “theatre for development”, “theatre for the oppressed”, “participatory theatre”, “community theatre”, “intervention theatre”, “protest theatre” and “theatre for social change” are often used interchangeably and are associated with the transformation of a social reality by using community and individual participation.

In popular theatre, actors interact with the public (audience), based on a real problem. Throughout the event, the public participates to adapt, change or correct a situation, an attitude or a behaviour that is developed during the show. The play presented to the public becomes a mirror of the problems experienced in the community. The participatory approach provides an opportunity for the public to think, talk and ask questions about these problems. As the audience watch rather than live the experience, they also objectify the problems, and in so doing start to think critically about possible solutions or alternate actions. Combining sympathetic involvement with the opportunity to observe, analyse and form opinions regarding the characters’ actions creates a condition where audience members want to think; they have the opportunity to solve the problem in a safe but vital environment. The public’s experience – dialogue, reflection and active participation in seeking solutions to issues of concern in their community – is the beginning of a process of social transformation. The public is forced to propose an approach that could improve the situation that is being presented. Different audience members are on stage offering ideas. They become stakeholders in the piece and at the same time agents of social change.

6.3.1 History

Any discussion of the history of participatory theatre must begin with a discussion of the work and theories of Paulo Freire. His theories of education and its role in effecting social change are fundamental to popular theatre.

Paulo Freire rejected the “banking concept” of education, whereby students are empty vessels that have to be filled with “deposits” of information by teachers who manage the till. He argued against this model, fearing that the teacher-student dichotomy was counterproductive to the real aims of education. This hierarchy limited the ability of learners to develop important critical faculties and, most importantly, deprived them of the agency they needed to make their education truly relevant in their lives. Dialogue is central to the Freirean methodology, setting all parties on an equal playing field and encouraging collaboration and the development of critical skills of analysis, interpretation and articulation.

Augusto Boal, one of the founders of popular theatre, was a Brazilian. He worked with Paulo Freire and then went on his way developing popular theatre. Similar to Freire’s observations of the teacher-student divide, Boal began to grow uncomfortable with the conventional dichotomy between actors and the audience that pervaded theatre around him. Boal applied many of Freire’s techniques for the classroom as a way to democratise theatre. If change within a community was going to occur, it would not be triggered by outside ideas imported by a troupe of actors, but would happen only when a community was given a forum for sharing their own ideas, understanding one another, and developing ways of affecting change together. Like Freire’s vision of a teacher as facilitator, Boal worked to transform his troupe; they would no longer be the dispensers of a message to a passive audience, but a group that could create a space for dialogue with and within their audience. Boal’s popular theatre has expanded into a range of techniques which motivate the spectator to actively contribute to the dialogue onstage and help search for new collaborative ways forward.

6.3.2 The Process

Popular theatre includes a number of steps. Each step has its own value and they all contribute to the success of the following step.

Problem Identification: The issues and characters in a play should reflect the reality of the community as much as possible. The actors should try to understand:

- How the population lives (their way of life, the type of work and jobs in the context, cultural aspects and customs in their daily life, relationships among the genders and the generations);
- The community structure (relationships between the population and the authorities, the role of tribal chiefs and other such influential people in the community);
- The average education level; religious norms; existence of other associations and social or cultural movements that influence society;
- Conflicts experienced by the population, more specifically:
 - The parties in conflict (their positions, their interests)
 - The responses, the attitudes, the behaviours in relation to the conflict until now: who intervened and how until now;
 - The efforts made and/or the desires about how to transform the conflict;
 - The aspects that could result in the outbreak of violence in the conflict.
 (Slachmuis, 2010)

When using Friere's methods, the first step is to find out from the representatives of the theatre group what the group feels strongly about. What do people talk about? What makes them emotional? What worries them? Conversations with individuals, group discussions, walking around and listening to what people talk about in the shop or at the clinic are useful methods to find out the important issues. Brainstorming can also

generate important themes or problem areas. Any one issue which seems to be of most importance is chosen to be presented in a play.

Analysis: The problems are analysed by putting together all the information collected by the actors on the ground. They review the problem identified to make sure it is appropriate with the theme of the mission and the socio-cultural and security environment in which the performance will be made.

Codification: The problems are put into dramatic representation. The elements of a story are agreed upon, based on the best ideas proposed by the actors with the appropriate characters. The actors further work at creating characters, plots and scenes.

Preparation of the Performance's Location: Based on the location, the group will use appropriate tools to effectively create the setting, in a visible and secure place, taking into account the challenges and obstacles of the location.

NOTE BANK: Planning and Running a Workshop**Note Bank: Guidelines on Preparation of the Performance's Location**

- **Where one can perform?**

In a place that is accessible to the target audience: if it is the general community, it could be in a room, in the street, next to the market or where a large number of people could be attracted. This theatre can also target a specific audience (e.g., women, the differently-abled, and the demobilised) and for this reason, it could be performed in a closed-off place to create trust among the target group.

- **How does one choose the place?**

Access to the performance should not be subject to any restrictions. The place should be large enough to accommodate the audience. It must be accessible. The acoustics must be good. If they are not, one should use a sound system.

- **How does one arrange the location?**

For the half-circle, one should look for a background: placing oneself either against a wall, a tree, or a barrier. Working in a half-circle lets the actors and conductors better address the audience and it is easier for everyone to follow the action and the discussion.

- **Promotion and publicity**

It is always important to inform the local authorities and ensure that the theatre group has permission to perform in public. To ensure that the public is informed about the theatre's mission, it is also important to notify the public through appropriate means for transmitting

Presentation: Here is how a show unfolds and interaction with the public is organised. This description provides a model that could be amended in relation to the target audience and context.

- **The actors welcome the audience:** This can be done through theatrical games, singing, drumming and dancing, or interactive games with the audience. This is done to encourage trust with the audience, and to create an interest so that the audience pays attention to the show.

- **Introduction:** The conductor presents the show's goal and the reasons why it is taking place. He/she announces the show and invites the audience to pay attention, in order to participate later through participatory theatre.
- **Beginning of the performance:** The show begins with the first scene. The whole show is played out.
- **First questions:** The conductor asks for reactions from the public, by asking (for example), "Do you recognise this situation? What do you think of the situation described in this show?"
- **Repeat the play:** If necessary (based on the context and audience concentration), have the actors re-enact the entire show. (Slachmuis, 2010)

Discussion of Issues and Solutions

The conductor asks the audience to give a summary of the show, by pointing out the message targeted by the show. She/he invites the person to give a testimony of her/his story, and to explain the link between her/his own story and the story that was just played out. Ask the person how she/he would have reacted when faced with this situation. After having given his/her point of view, have the person play the role of one of the actors to show a different version of the same scene. The person replaces one of the actors in the scene; he acts until the moment when he can clearly see the change. The conductor asks the audience its opinion on the suggested change supplied by the audience member.

6.3.3 Case study: Participatory Theatre: Acting against Violence in Northern Nigeria

Context

This case study explains how popular theatre has been used as a tool to research conflict and issues of violence in northern Nigeria. The research was conducted in Kaduna, Kano and the Plateau states in northern Nigeria, where there have been incidences of violence around issues of ethnicity and religion. The research aimed to explore the ways citizens from situations of violence could be moved to active citizenship through social action. The research work focused on the intersection of religion, ethnicity and violence to understand expressions of identity, constructions of citizenship and the prospects for reducing future violence. The Theatre for Development Centre (TFDC) based at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Kaduna State, led the exercise (Abah, Okwori & Alubo, 2009).

Rationale

The TFDC used participatory theatre as a tool for researching citizenship issues because:

- High levels of illiteracy in the communities called for tools that people could fully understand and through which they could articulate their views in their chosen language and manner.
- The participatory action research (PAR) approach afforded significant participant ownership of the research tools and process. The supplier of the information is

covered by “artistic license”, which ensures their material is treated as fiction, removing fears of repercussion.

- The participatory process, including the open presentation of “findings” or outcomes to the dramas and invitation to intervene in them is a spur to reflection and self-critical analysis.
- The open presentation of the dramas is a platform for surfacing a plurality of views on emotive issues in a peaceful and constructive way. Allowing participants and the public to change the ending of the drama sows a seed for the communities to change their violent reality the next time they are threatened with an outbreak of violence.

The Process

The TFDC engaged two liaison people, one man and one woman, in each community who belonged to CBOs there and were well known and respected both among their communities and by the TFDC principal researchers. These people were intermediaries between the communities, the chiefs and the TFDC. Each community also selected a man and a woman to be part of the research teams. Team members were trained to be community researchers, gathering information, and performing the drama. They remain a resource group in their communities, to give reality to the project and to ensure that the discussions are sustained.

First a quantitative survey was carried out with 145 respondents, gathering data on community relationships and unsafe places, the frequency and severity of episodes of violence, and a range of demographic, economic and livelihood variables. The research team then interviewed ten individuals in each community, the Chief, a religious leader, two adult men, two adult women, two younger men and two younger women. In these video-recorded interviews, information was gathered using a checklist based on the three principal components of the research.

The resulting information was used by the whole team in each state to develop a drama, which was performed jointly by the teams from all five communities. The community was given a proposal to develop a drama piece in which the central character encounters friends, colleagues and neighbours who have different opinions on religious and ethnic issues from him.

The members of the CBOs devised the dramas and performed them. The building of the drama in each of the States allowed the young people to engage in a discussion on the issues, to learn the drama process and how to facilitate discussions and questions at the end of the performance, around who had gained and who had lost from the riots.

Outcomes

In every location, there was a lively post-performance debate. Performers became facilitators, asking their community members for comments on the issues they saw in the drama. When disagreements arose, members of the audience were invited to assume the role of the character in the contested section of the drama, allowing for debate and further analysis of the issues. Theatre thus played multiple roles of information gathering, feedback, analysis and triangulation or validation of facts.

Rehearsals and performances were a learning experience for participants. Working together, Muslims and Christians were enabled to hear different sides of the story, which they could never have imagined. For example, the Muslims discovered that the Christians, like them, were victims of rumour and that Christians were equally victims of the greed of politicians. Spontaneous outbursts such as, “You see, we have all been used and dumped”, and “We have killed each other for nothing”, were common.

Each drama represented happenings after the violence had already occurred; none depicted the violence itself. For instance, in Kaduna, the drama was about a young carpenter Musa sitting desolate and despondent in his workshop. His clients had been reduced to a trickle because most had relocated to communities where they felt safe and were scared of visiting their old communities. We see him warn his friend, who has fallen in love with a girl from “enemy territory”, not to visit the girl as he would doubtless be killed. The friend visits all the same and instead of being killed is well received. He also brings back the news that the government has convened a meeting of the victims of violence to a school that day to make compensation payments. Musa and others rush and benefit from the exercise. Victims get paid only one-third of the compensation due to them. While the core messages of rumours and deception of the poor by the elite remained in all three states, in Kano the central character became a trader; in Plateau, it was a community worker.

The drama indirectly identified actors in the violent events. Speech patterns and mannerisms of walking and behaviour easily gave away the real people involved who were mostly young boys in the case of the Muslim perpetrators and community youth in the case of the Christian perpetrators. Young Muslim boys were disconnected from their parents and attached to Islamic teachers who tutored them in the Quran. Often begging for food, their vulnerability makes them fertile for recruitment and they are used as foot soldiers in times of violence. The youths in the Christian communities were mostly secondary school drop-outs who did not have jobs or means of survival and who had taken to drugs and drink for solace. They saw violence as an opportunity to vent their anger on those who they believed were responsible for the state of their existence. The media and most of the literature on violence had pointed to Islamic and Christian fundamentalists as the perpetrators of violence, but the dramas suggest something different. This information would not have surfaced had the researchers just conducted a questionnaire survey.

The research findings showed how organised religion impacts on violence, and deeply rooted animosities lie behind the eruptions. The quantitative survey showed that most people do not believe that contemporary violence is a result of religion. Rather, they see religion as the organising platform. This analysis offered a more nuanced understanding of the conflict rather than merely labelling it ethno-religious. It came out clearly from the drama that rumour was a decisive factor in the escalation, and in some instances the instigation, of violence. It emerged from the analysis that Muslims and Christians were equally neglected by the government. This was useful in tackling misconceptions in both groups that their “rivals” were better off than they were.

A useful characteristic of participatory theatre in this research context is that it was a useful tool for distancing and depersonalisation. The technique facilitated the discussion of sensitive matters, which respondents would not talk about in interviews or answer in questionnaires. Some characters in the dramas were played by people who had experienced the incidents in real life, who, while not prepared to admit their involvement in reality, accepted performing it in the play as fiction. In one location a female actor showed in her role an intricate knowledge of how a particular house was torched, that only one who had participated in the act could have known. Drama allows the full range of signs, movements, posture and expressions, which are used to convey or hide meanings.

Two factors led to these outcomes. One is the participatory method used; the second is the experiential lives of the communities. This is the most important meaning of “creating ownership” in this research case, not just participants’ ownership of the research process but the participants’ ownership of arguments and issues that shape their lives. Owning the research process through participating in drama and discussion sharpens the debate and understanding of those same issues. The creative methodology afforded them the additional opportunity to discover their own perceptions, attitudes and mindsets, through interrogating their “common sense”, “news” and

stereotypes of “the other”. The fact that people were talking about their real life experiences of violence lent urgency to the subject matter and when this urgency encountered an enabling method, people engaged constructively.

From data collection, through analysis and story formulation to presentation and post-performance discussion, popular theatre methods were used in action as well as research. By participating, the communities increased or validated the knowledge at their disposal. In the light of new understandings gained by experiencing other perspectives, they unpacked the existing situation and were presented with choices for altering it in a transformative way.

6.4 Participatory Video

Participatory Video (PV) is a set of techniques to involve a group or community in shaping and creating their own film. The idea behind this is that making a video is easy and accessible, and is a great way of bringing people together to explore issues, voice concerns or simply to be creative and tell stories. This process can be very empowering, enabling a group or community to take action to solve their own problems and also to communicate their needs and ideas to decision-makers and/or other groups and communities. As such, PV can be a highly effective tool to engage and mobilise marginalised people and to help them implement their own forms of sustainable development based on local needs.

NOTE BANK: Characteristics of Participatory Video

- **Engagement:** Video is an attractive tool, which gives immediate results.
- **Empowerment:** It is a rigorous but fun process giving participants control over a project.
- **Clarification:** Participants find their voices and focus on local issues of concern.
- **Amplification:** Participants share their voices with other groups or communities, including decision-makers, donors and the general public.
- **Catalysing:** Participants become a community, which takes further action.
- **Inclusive and Flexible:** It can be worked with a wide range of groups from global to local.
- **Accessibility:** Living stories are captured by communities themselves; projects can be documented and evaluated; policy information and decisions can also be transferred back to the community level through PV.
- **Equipping people with skills and positive attitudes:** Group-working and listening skills, self-esteem building and motivation techniques; PV develops an active role for participants in improving their quality of life.
- **Disseminating good practices:** A range of impressive initiatives and suggestions can be documented cheaply and effectively, by those directly involved, and shared across

the country and even further abroad; policymakers can be deeply affected by powerful stories and images captured at, and by, the grassroots.

- **Revealing:** Helping us identify issues/changes we may not be aware of.
- **Building bridges:** Decision-makers, scientists, other diverse stakeholders and the public can connect with PV films and learn from communities or groups who are marginalised. Videos can be streamed and downloaded freely and shared across boundaries. Thus PV has the potential to bridge the digital divide.

(Lunch & Lunch, 2006)

Whilst there are forms of documentary filmmaking that are able to sensitively represent the realities of their subjects' lives and even to voice their concerns, documentary films very much remain the authored products of a documentary filmmaker. As such, the subjects of documentaries rarely have any say (or sometimes have some limited say) in how they will ultimately be represented. By contrast, in PVs the subjects make their own film in which they can shape issues according to their own sense of what is important, and they can also control how they will be represented. Additionally, documentary films are often expected to meet stringent aesthetic standards and are usually made with a large audience in mind. The PV process on the other hand is less concerned with appearance than with content, and the films are usually made with particular audiences and objectives in mind (Lunch & Lunch, 2006).

6.4.1 History

Participatory videos were probably the work of Don Snowden, a Canadian who pioneered the idea of using media to enable a people-centred community development approach. This took place in 1967 on the Fogo Islands, with a small fishing community off the eastern coast of Newfoundland. By watching each other's films, the different villagers on the island came to realise that they shared many of the same problems and

that by working together they could solve some of them. The films were also shown to politicians who lived too far away and were too busy to actually visit the island. As a result of this dialogue, government policies and actions were changed. The techniques developed by Snowden became known as the Fogo Process. Snowden went on to apply the Fogo Process all over the world until his death in India in 1984.

Since then, there has been no uniform movement to promote and practice PV, but different individuals and groups have set up pockets of PV work, usually moulding it to their particular needs and situations. Participatory video has also grown with the increasing accessibility of home video equipment. (Lunch & Lunch, 2006)

6.4.2 The Process

- Researchers and/or local people recruited from target groups in the community act as facilitators.
- The team trains and supports groups to use the video to capture their views. Those who commission the research can decide on using standard questions for video interviews which match those written in the questionnaires. Alternatively, or in addition, these can be left open for the groups to create themselves as they prepare to film.
- Draft edits of the video are produced at several stages and screened for the groups so that the facilitators get feedback to help them create a true picture of the diverse opinions in the final video.
- Re-visiting the groups several times develops trust and confidence and enables people to learn about the statutory process and to keep abreast of the project as it evolves.

- One meets local people face-to-face as the footage captures the feelings and rich personality of the community.
- All footage is also transcribed, typed and added to the data collected from the wider research process so that the views captured on film are heard along with the views collected in the questionnaires, as well as by other quantitative or qualitative methods.
- The video can be shown to decision-makers and to community representatives so that action can be taken directly.
- By playing back footage, people are able to add to their ideas and share one another's concerns. As a consensus-building process this develops understanding of other stakeholder perspectives.
- Watching back and paper edits: It gives the chance to challenge the researcher's perceptions and what is considered important and the participants thinking. This process requires the willingness to learn from the participants, as every decision taken by the community is an insight into where they are coming from.
- Ideally PV should be the tool used in participatory learning and action processes to build capacity and confidence and used to promote the engagement of disadvantaged people in communication, dialogue, negotiation and the production of knowledge.
- Participatory video is rewarding for researchers, as it helps them connect with the people and engage more, create genuine participation, fun and interest, and stay connected to the people even when they leave the field. It brings the field to the office, avoiding abstraction while looking at footage, as it gives more details and enables deeper thinking about the things that were said and how they were said, transcribed and translated. (Lunch & Lunch, 2006)

6.4.3 Case Study: Participatory Video in Researching Violence

This case study draws upon the experiences of the Development Research Centre for Citizenship, Participation and Accountability (Citizenship DRC) where PV was used as a tool of PAR. The work was carried out by researcher-activists working with local activists, community groups and citizens in violent contexts in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The research sought to understand how people living in the poor areas of Rio de Janeiro could build a bridge between violence and citizenship through participatory social action. Working in violent *favelas* (slums) and housing estates, the process involved creating participatory discussion groups drawn from different segments of the community. Participatory video was one of the several tools used in the research process. The main contribution of PV was not in generating empirical findings, but in challenging patterns of power and control. The community activists with the help of video films started debates with municipal and national policy makers on the topic of security in *favelas* (Wheeler, 2009).

Context

Rio de Janeiro is one of the growing number of “mega-cities” across the world, where large percentages of the population live in uncertain and poor conditions and illegal housing. In the *favelas* and housing estates, drug trafficking groups and para-police militias have become the dominant powers in these communities. The state is not a powerful actor, and the ability of any part of the state or government to change this situation is limited.

Research was conducted in Quitungo, Guaporé and Santa Teresa. Quitungo and Guaporé are communities made up of two large housing estates and three *favelas* inhabited by approximately 40,000 people in the city’s largely industrial North Zone.

Despite having among the highest levels of violence in Rio, Quitungo and Guaporé have not experienced significant interventions by the government or external NGOs. It is controlled by two different factions of a para-police militia. Santa Teresa is a middle class neighbourhood in the centre of the city, surrounded by *favelas* dominated by drug-trafficking factions. Several of the *favelas* have been sites for large government-sponsored upgrading projects and other interventions by external NGOs in the past ten years.

Methodology

The overall research methodology drew on elements of PAR and PLA, which treat research as a process that can create emancipatory knowledge by involving participants as active researchers. In particular, this research was designed to give the participants the opportunity for “collective self-reflective” enquiry.

The research process facilitated public debate through participatory discussion groups in public spheres, connecting people of different social classes, genders, age and social positioning. Community researchers – seven in Quitungo and Guapore and three in Santa Teresa – were the key actors throughout the research process. All had pre-existing community leadership roles, but little or no experience with conventional research. The researcher (Joanna Wheeler) provided intensive training in PR, including basic PV and camera skills. These individuals, selected to reflect the diversity of their communities in terms of their demographic profiles and community roles, collaborated in stakeholder analysis, developed research themes, facilitated research meetings, mobilised participants and helped to create PVs.

A range of PLA methods such as Venn diagrams, problem trees, calendars, timelines, community mapping and transect walks were used during 60 participatory discussion

groups with cross-sections of the community on themes they had identified. Other methods included a questionnaire survey applied to 350 residents, the use of secondary survey data, 30 semi-structured interviews, participant observation and several policy dialogue sessions with local, state and federal government and NGO representatives. Videos were used as one among many other tools as a participatory medium for research and transformative action, and also to train researchers and to document the research process and meeting proceedings. At the end, three participatory films were created addressing the central research question of how violence affects people's lives and what steps they could take to remedy the situation.

As the community researchers became increasingly confident with participatory tools, the researcher assumed a supporting role, among other things facilitating weekly meetings for ongoing analysis and reflection on emerging findings and a final workshop pulling together key results from the participatory discussion groups. They also provided training on how to use the research results, including discussions on how community researchers could use them strategically in their own work.

Participatory video for strengthening the research and communication process

Each of the three films made had a different focus and theme, reflecting the views of the group making it. The creation process was participatory. All participants received training in basic filming skills and put these to use. The community researchers were trained in basic editing skills.

While the videos may not directly challenge those responsible for violence, or provide unique empirical insights, the process of making them did give participants a greater

degree of control over the research process and communication of findings, and helped build their confidence and their trust in the research process. It also helped create an opportunity for interaction between diverse groups of people who might not otherwise have listened to each other's perspectives on the violence which affects them all. A significant dimension to the role of video was the validation of people's perspectives and views through public screenings. The processes of interaction that was catalysed through the videos, which extended understanding and solidarity, helped provide positive images to challenge negative stereotypes. It also served as a feedback mechanism for research participants. Because of their easy replicability and visual nature, the videos facilitated communication of the research beyond the group immediately involved, including dialogues with policymakers.

Throughout the process of creating the films, participants expressed their perceptions of violence and how it affected them. Many older women saw violence as the result of poor parenting on the part of other women, who they perceived as resistant to advice or criticism. They also focused on how the effects of violence, which they summarised as "prison, hospital or cemetery", affected mothers, causing them despair and loss. Children involved in the video process wanted to show how the influence of the wrong kinds of friends could lead to their involvement in violence and how the lack of attention from parents and adults and the absence of appropriate leisure facilities contributed to the problem. Community leaders focused on how they have tried to counteract the effects of violence and social exclusion, and the government's failure to support them in this.

As the process of creating the films involved a broad spectrum of people, these different views were included to varying degrees in the final products. The need for groups to work together to agree on a single story-line for each film led to some interesting debates about which dimensions of violence they should show.

The medium of video required a scaling back of the risk in what people said and portrayed. Yet at the same time, people were more willing to listen to what others were

saying when they watched it on video than they would have in face to face encounters. This kind of listening in such settings is not something that is easily achieved by other methods, even given the limitations.

Another role of the video was providing almost instant feedback to research participants – an important ethical obligation in a participatory research process. The footage from participatory discussion groups were screened on the same day for those involved. Copies of the films were distributed to all participants; community leaders showed the film on a course about working with the police to reduce violence, and as a result other leaders became interested in replicating the process.

The films helped to communicate the research to a range of audiences, and their efficacy at doing so proved to be a major contribution of the method. Having used the films to illustrate how they were trying to address violence and to counter wholly negative labels and stereotypes, the participants closed them with messages addressed directly to parents, children and the government on how to reduce violence.

The films specially caught the attention of policymakers. It opened a debate with a panel of policymakers including a community leader, city councillor and representative of the Federal Ministry of Culture. The audience included community residents involved in making the films, community activists and representatives of NGOs, the state and city government. The films framed the debate in a way which would have been difficult to achieve through more conventional presentations or dialogue. As a result of the debate, the city councillor launched a programme using PV in over 40 communities across the city. The films were used to communicate the research to other researchers in an international research network, enriching comparisons of our experiences across contexts.

Think Tank

- Why are participatory research tools critical in development practices?

Summary

In this Unit we explored the participatory research tools in development practice. We understood that these tools are useful in understanding the experiences of participants and community. As these tools generate alternative perspectives on reality, both actual and possible, they are also well suited to the promotion of action through self-awareness reflection. When people themselves engage in the reflective processes, they are able to analyse their situations better and take actions accordingly.

Recommended Readings

Tandon Rajesh (Ed) 2005, *Participatory Research, Revisiting the Roots*, New Delhi, Mosaic Books

Chapter 25: “Enumeration” by Srilatha Batliwala and Sheela Patel

Chapter 26: “Popular Theatre” by Seemantinee Khot

Mundy, Paul (2010). *Count me in: Surveying for tenure security and urban land management*. Nairobi: UN HABITAT.

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