Training Manual
On
Participatory Learning Approach

The Leprosy Mission
Trust India

swedish
mission council
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Acknowledgement
The Leprosy Mission Trust India gratefully acknowledges the contribution of Khilesh Chaturvedi in developing the Manual for training on Participatory Learning Approach for use by Core Resource Team Members and others.

Foreword
As a leading organization in leprosy arena, to prepare the organization to address the evolving challenges faced by the people affected by leprosy, in 2010-2011 TLMTI went through a comprehensive process (country context analysis, stakeholder analysis, capacity need assessment) to come up with the country strategy 2011-2015.

The formulation of TLMTI Country Strategy brought in the awareness that there are systemic and staff capacity gaps within TLMTI to address the holistic needs of people affected by Leprosy. Therefore as a starting point, structural and systemic changes were taken up in the beginning of 2011. Thereafter the capacity building project for its staff has been undertaken.

The objective of the Capacity Building Project is to strengthen the capacity and knowledge of all TLMTI staff across all centers. The components selected are:

a) Advocacy  
b) Human Rights  
c) Gender  
d) Partnership  
e) Counseling  
f) Participatory Learning

The present manual on Participatory Learning Approach has been prepared to Train the Trainers at TLMTI who in turn will train other staff and help in taking Mission’s work forward. The Manual combines information on Participatory Learning Approach, types of Participation, Principles of Participation Learning and Action, Groups, Micro Planning, etc. The manual is aimed at developing an understanding on Participatory Learning Approach. I am confident and hope that the manual will be useful for all TLMTI staff and others.

Best wishes,  
Dr. PLN. Raju  
Deputy Director- Organisational Effectiveness, TLMTI
About The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI)

The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI) is one of the largest and oldest Christian organizations in India working for and with those affected by Leprosy. The global vision of TLM international is – Leprosy Defeated and Lives Transformed.

The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI) is working for transforming and empowering the lives of those affected by leprosy in India for the past 140 years. It works in 9 states through hospitals, community – based projects, vocational training centres, partner institutions and also supports the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP). *(For more information please visit our website: www.tlmindia.org)*
Training manual on Participatory Learning Approach

In a narrow sense, PLA is about a process and methodology of learning from people, applied only during the first phase of situational analysis of a project. But PLA, for its true value and worth needs to be understood in its broader sense, which is about working (and learning) with people throughout the development process. The path breaking work of Paulo Freire (1972) and later several interventions and studies showed that majority of people had been excluded from the development process and that their participation was possible and useful in improving the chances of success of the projects and programs. The concept and idea of participation was tried out through the world in 1970s to 1990s by Multi-lateral agencies, bilateral agencies, Governments and NGOs.

NGOs particularly successfully used PLA particularly in working with the marginalized and the poor who have been excluded from the main stream of development.

The key word in the above concept is Participation. The term ‘participation’ has different meanings for different people. It has been used to devolve power and decision-making away from external agencies, but also to justify external decisions. It has been used for data collection and also for interactive analysis. But “more often than not, people are asked or dragged into participating in operations of no interest to them, in the very name of participation” (Rehnama, 1992)

Several versions have been put forth to classify what may be called as "levels of participation".

A simple representation of these levels is given below:

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Observer  Advisor  Discussant  Decision maker
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In the above ladder of participation, an observer (community) is virtually a passive participant or not even worth calling participation. An advisor is a shade better but is yet very low in the ladder because the advisor is only heard when required and can be restricted at that. What happens to this advise is not in the hand of the advise giver (community) but the advise seeker (project managers). The discussant (community) is still better, with the project manager engaging with the community in a discussion, but the decision-making in this case too remains only with the project manager. The real and highest level of participation of community is as a joint decision maker in the process of
development. For true and total participation to take place it is more important that the people have control over the decision-making institutions and resources.

A more detailed version of the typology of participation is presented below.

**Typology of Participation**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Passive Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Participation in Information giving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Participation by Consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Participation for Material Incentives</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Functional Participation</td>
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</table>


The above typology of participation or levels of participation can be seen from two perspectives.

**Participation of people in project management**

This means involving people in the development activities from situational analysis / idea generation to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – involving people in the entire developmental cycle
Participation of people as owners and managers of their own organizations

In this perspective, people form and manage their own organizations, which could either be for self/mutual help (Empowerment – self help approach) or to claim their rights (Empowerment – Rights Based approach).

Both the above perspectives form part of Empowerment and Self-help or rights based approach of development as against a charity or welfare approach, or even a service delivery approach, where organizations or project managers are likely to engage the community as advisors or discussants rather than as decision makers.

**PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND ACTION APPROACH**

1. People as Focal Point

People (target groups) are the focal point. They should be involved right from the beginning i.e. right from the planning process

2. Emphasis on people’s experience

Accept the fundamental fact that common people have the experience. Any plan for their development should be based on the local people’s experience. New knowledge and outside knowledge should be provided. It is also necessary to respect, regard and accept target groups experience. They do not have degrees but have undergone real experiences, faced reality, fought with it and sustained. So build on knowledge based on their inputs.

3. Learning from and with people

We, who believe in sustainable development through participatory approaches, are working for a change. More often, we have a wrong notion that, we the outsiders can change the people and their conditions with external support. This is not sustainable. Participatory approach should focus on learning. If learning for change is more appropriate than simply acting for change. If learning occurs, change will follow. What change? Change in the present environment, individuals and groups.

4. Learning for Empowerment

Learning leads to confidence, self esteem, skill improvement and knowledge base. This leads to initiative of the person concerned for change in is / her situation. In this concept of learning for change, learning from each other is an important aspect. This process permits the participants to realize their own capacities to analyze, to question and to feel empowered in the process.

5. Community in control
The community participation means involving communities from planning to implementation, monitoring, evaluation and subsequent follow-up. Involving means not just taking community in the process but ensuring that they actively participate in the process and ultimately take control over the process.

6. It is volunteered but structured

The basic characteristic of participatory approach is that it is voluntary, not imposed. But responsibility should be there. Without responsibility “voluntary” has no meaning. Responsibility is also linked up with accountability. The question is how to bring these together. So planning should be followed by some concrete activities.

7. Role of outsiders as “Facilitator”

How this will happen? So certain conditions should be deliberately facilitated, structured for the same. The participatory process need change shifting of mental image, shifting of existing framework, re-engineering the present reality. The focus has to move from “NGO / organization (led) program” to “Community (led) program”

As a facilitator, the NGO has “to create an environment where the people feel encouraged and make efforts for their own development”. The control has to be with the people and not the NGO.
The concept can be further understood with some examples.

1. Farmer (facilitator) and the Plant (doer).
2. Midwife and mother.
3. Parent and the child.
4. NGO/Worker and the PO/Villagers.

‘While the farmer tills the land, provides inputs and care, the plant has to grow on its own. Similarly, while the midwife can create the necessary condition, guide the mother, and encourage and challenge her, the mother delivers the baby. Similarly, parents play the role of facilitator with the child. The child must make efforts to grow, learn things.

However, while a farmer and a midwife, despite wanting, cannot do what a plant or the mother has to do, that is not the case with parent and child example. Several mothers/parents end up doing what a child should do oneself such as eating, wearing clothes, doing homework. In all these cases while the end result of eating, wearing clothes, doing homework seems to have been accomplished the child has not done it one self, and has therefore failed to learn to do it and thus not develop in terms of these aspects. The case of NGO/PO is closer to the parent/child example rather than the farmer/plant example.

Ideally the NGO should:

- Educate how to form groups rather than form the groups.
- Teach how to conduct meetings rather than conduct meetings
- Teach how to write accounts rather than write accounts
- Train but allow the people to construct lift irrigation works
- Train but wait for people to perform the task (for example claim their rights from the government) rather than doing it for them.

The reasons why a parent/NGO end up doing the child’s/people’s works are:

- Lack of faith on people’s capacity.
- Lack of patience.
- Unrealistic targets & Pressure to accomplish targets.
- Sympathetic attitude.
- Pride/Prestige issue.
- Lack of right attitude.
- Lack of Know-How and skills.
- Own agenda

Once again, it must be reiterated that in participatory learning approach, the control and decision making about own fate has to be with the community. It is their development and they must be the point of reference, and must be in charge of the process of development. It is not the community, which participates in our program. Instead it is us who play a role of facilitator in the
community's development program and initiative.

In such an arrangement, even if the NGO or development project is an initiator of the idea, it must share the idea, the concept with the community, including the roles of the counterparts, of the community being in charge of their own development and of NGO playing a facilitative role and wait for the community to take the initiative.

Once the community agrees to work for its own development, the NGO needs to learn from the community about its life and issues using specific PLA tools and methods. It is the community which must organize itself for a rights based or self-help action and then prepare its plan of action, work on the plan and monitor and evaluate itself, with the NGO remaining in the facilitative role (providing options, building capacity, sharing examples, providing encouragement or challenge as the need may be). Ideally, the plans and projects of the NGO should come out of the processes of dialogue and planning at the community level instead of ideas being conceptualized within NGO offices.

It is necessary that the NGO wanting to be in facilitative role and its leaders, also adopt a facilitative style in their own organization instead of a directive style of functioning. Being facilitative and participatory in approach calls for a shift in management styles, culture and structures, from top down to bottom to top, from directive to facilitative and from target driven to process driven, from theme driven to community driven.

**Situational analysis through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

PRA is a *methodology* for interacting with villagers in order to seek their perceptions and thinking, *understanding* them and *learning* from them. The term "Appraisal" means assessment of a village situation; this would encompass both the potential, resources, capabilities, opportunities, facilities as well as their needs and problems. Earlier the emphasis on the investigations used to be only towards need identification but with PRA the perspective is more of a holistic understanding of the village community.

According to Robert chambers, PRA is "a growing family of approaches, methods, attitudes and behaviors to enable and empower people to share, analyze, and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, and monitor, evaluate and reflect".

PRA is a term which many PRA practitioners and trainers consider should only be used for a process which empowers local people. Good PRA is about empowering. It is linked with distinctive behaviors, attitudes and approaches. "We" are not teachers or transferors of technology, but instead conveners, catalysts, and facilitators. We have to unlearn, and put our knowledge, ideas and categories in second place. Our role is to enable local people to do their own
investigations, analysis, presentations, planning and action, to own the outcome, and to teach us, sharing their knowledge. We "hand over the stick" and facilitate "their" appraisal, presentation, analysis, planning, action, and monitoring and evaluation. They do many of the things we thought only we could do - mapping, diagramming, listing, sorting, sequencing, counting, estimating, scoring, ranking, linking, analyzing, planning, monitoring and evaluating.

Three common elements found in a PRA approach are:

* **Self-aware of responsibility.** Individual responsibility and judgment exercised by facilitators, with self-critical awareness, embracing error.

* **Equity and empowerment.** A commitment to equity, empowering those who are marginalized, excluded, and deprived, often especially women.

* **Diversity.** Recognition and celebration of diversity

**OBJECTIVES OF PRA**

1. To generate information and collection of data for immediate or future use.

2. For better involvement of people by learning about their perceptions, experiences and capabilities.

3. For learning the impact of the earlier ongoing policies and programs and to frame new one.

4. For cross checking the validity of the data collected from secondary sources.

5. For identifying their need and problems, constraints and opportunities.

**HISTORY OF PRA**

Before PRA came into practice rural tourism and survey were the two main methods used for gathering data and information from the rural areas. Rural tourism became less popular as it provided biased information collected in short visits to rural areas while survey involved a lot of cost, inaccuracy and delay. Thus during 1970's and 80's an alternative was found which was called as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). With this method there was a change in the perspective of development professional -- "We can learn from them". The emphasis was on appreciating indigenous technical knowledge of the rural folk. But in this method the emphasis was on “extracting” the information from the rural areas. The approach was “We” go to the rural areas and obtain data from “them” and process it.

It was in 1989 that PRA came in practice for the first time in India and Kenya. This term was coined by Robert Chambers. As the name suggests the emphasis in this methodology was on “participatory”. The change in perspective could be expressed in the following words: - “We go to the rural areas, it is the rural people who teach us, they present and share the data and do the analysis and
own the outcome.”

Some of the early PRA in Kenya was linked with the production of Village Resource Management Plans, and some with Rapid Catchments Analysis. In India and Nepal from 1989 onwards there was an accelerated development and spread of PRA with many innovations and applications. Parallel developments took place in other countries around the world, with lateral sharing and an explosion of creativity and diversity.

Some of the methods come from social anthropology. Some, especially diagramming, were developed and spread in Southeast Asia, as part of agro ecosystem analysis, originating in the University of Chiang Mai in 1978 with the work of Gordon Conway and his colleagues. For RRA, the University of Khon Kaen in Thailand was a major source of innovation and inspiration in the 1980s. Other methods, like matrix scoring, seem to have been new in the early 1990s.

**DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RRA, PRA, PLA**

RRA originally stood for Rapid Rural Appraisal, but its approach and methods are also used in urban and other contexts. Later it was realized that "Relaxed" seemed to be better than "Rapid".

PRA originally stood for Participatory Rural Appraisal, but its applications are in many, many contexts besides rural and good practice is far more than just appraisal.

PLA stands for Participatory Learning and Action and in practice is used interchangeably with PRA.

RRA is about finding out. It is data collecting, with the analysis done mainly by "us". Good PRA/PLA, which evolved out of RRA, is in contrast empowering, a process of appraisal, analysis and action by local people themselves. There are methods which are typically RRA methods (observation, semi-structured interviews, transects etc) and others which are typically PRA/PLA methods (participatory mapping, diagramming, using the ground in various ways, making comparisons etc, and often in small groups). PRA/PLA methods are used in an RRA (data collecting) mode, and vice versa.

*Good PRA is a process, not a one-off event.* It involves much more than just appraisal. "Participatory learning and action" is a more accurate title for what many practitioners of PRA believe in and are doing, but PRA remains the usual label. In Pakistan PRA now stands for Participation-Reflection-Action, because at its core are self-critical awareness, personal behavior and attitudes, and engagement with action.

**SPREAD**
PRA has expanded and spread:

- from appraisal and analysis to planning, action and M and E
- from rural to urban
- from field applications to applications in organizations
- from a few sectors and domains to many
- from NGOs to Government Departments and Universities
- from a few countries to many
- from South to North
- from methods to professional and institutional change
- from behavior and attitudes to personal change
- from action to policy influence
- from practice to theory (asking - why does it work?)

The spirit of inventiveness and improvisation which is part of PRA is spreading, and helping people in different parts of the world to feel liberated and able to develop their own varieties of approach and method. People (both local and outsiders), once they have established rapport, enjoy improvising, varying and inventing methods and applying them as part of participatory processes. Creativity has been shown by fieldworkers, and by local people with whom they have been interacting. PRA activities are often engrossing, popular and powerful.

**CONCERNS**

There has been a mass of bad practice of PRA. Quality assurance has been a concern among practitioners and trainers for the whole of the past decade. Dangers and abuses have included:

- using the label without the substance!
- failing to put behavior and attitudes before methods!!
- rushing and dominating in the field!!
- donors' demands for training in a day or two, with lecturing, without fieldwork, and then implementation in communities as a one-off in a short time.
- donors and governments demanding instant PRA on a large scale. The labels "RRA" and "PRA" have been used to justify and legitimate biased, rushed and unself-critical work. Any approach or methods can be used badly, and RRA and PRA provide some excruciating examples of bad practice.
Donors and Government Departments, and even NGOs, themselves need institutional changes - of cultures, procedures and rewards - if they are to promote and sustain good participation and good PRA. It is no good preaching participation at the grass roots while maintaining an authoritarian hierarchy "above", with donor or department-driven targets.

**PRINCIPLES OF PRA**

- **Optimal ignorance, and appropriate imprecision** - not finding out more than is needed, not measuring more accurately than needed, and not trying to measure what does not need to be measured. We are trained to make absolute measurements, but often trends, scores or ranking are all that are required.
- **Off settings Biases**: Such as spatial, project, person – gender etc, seasonal, professional. One has to go with an open mind and not with set ideas.
- **Rapid progressive learning** - flexible, exploratory, interactive, inventive
- **Reversals** - learning from, with and by local people, eliciting and using their criteria and categories
- **Triangulation** - using different methods, sources and disciplines, and a range of informants in a range of places, and cross-checking to get closer to the truth through successive approximations
- **Direct contact** - face to face, in the field
- **Seeking diversity and differences** - PRA is an exercise, which is open to diverse thinking, perceptions and ideas and thus we need to take a holistic view and cover all aspects of a situation.
- **Listening and learning through participation**: Equal participation is necessary and the facilitator must be a patient and keen listener with a curiosity to learn about new communities, their lives and cultures etc.
- **Congenial Attitude and Behavior**: Easy environment and relaxed atmosphere favors good result. An atmosphere of bonhomie fosters informality, openness and a free sharing of information as well as stronger rapport.
- **Delearn to learn** - Much of our knowledge is still useful but unless we start by delearning and putting our knowledge, and pre conceived ideas in second place, we cannot effectively learn from the villagers.
- **Critical self-awareness** about attitudes and behavior; doubt; embracing and learning from error; continuously trying to do better; building learning and improvement into every experience; and taking personal responsibility.
- **Changing behavior and attitudes**, from dominating to facilitating, gaining rapport, asking local people to teach us, respecting them, having confidence that they can do it, handing over the stick, empowering and enabling them to conduct their own analysis
- **A culture of sharing** - of information, of methods, of food, of field experiences (between NGOs, Government and local people)....
- **Commitment to equity**, empowering those who are marginalized, deprived, excluded, often especially women.
THE PRIMACY OF BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE METHODS

APPROACH AND METHODS FOR PRA

"Approach" is basic in conducting. If attitudes are not right, many of these methods will not work as well as they should. Where attitudes are right and rapport is good, it is often surprising what local people show they know, and what they can do.

PRA entails shifts of emphasis from:

- dominating to empowering
- closed to open
- individual to group
- verbal to visual
- measuring to comparing, ranking and scoring
- and of experience to fun

Crucial Reversals

We have too often adopted an attitude of acting as if we know everything about everything. The result of this is that as soon as we get to the community we start trying to teach them instead of listening and learning.

There are three specific areas in which attitudinal reverses have to occur and these are:

- In our attitude to learn.
- In our attitude to being open
- In our attitude to seeing things differently.

♦ LEARNING
Developing the right attitude to learning has a prerequisite and that is recognizing that the community knows more about itself than we do. Since they are born into that environment and have continued to struggle in it, it stands to reason that they are the ones who know their own environment best. Recognizing this helps us to be interested, be curious and ask questions with genuine interest

♦ BEING OPEN
Being open basically means not trying to bulldoze our priorities on to the community. It means listening to them even when their priorities might be quite different from what we thought they were. It also means facilitating those who
can’t read and writes to speak out. It involves making special efforts to make weaker, marginalized and overlooked people express themselves.

♦ SEEING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
By overcoming biases on personal preference and our presumptive- elitist- educational arrogance. To do this successfully one has to learn how to ask open-ended questions like? Where? When? How? And what else? The more one asks the more one learns. Once we are able to affect this crucial reversal in attitude we are able to learn from the community and with openness SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY…. For a change, the way the community does!

HOW TO WORK WITH VILLAGERS

REAL LEARN
R- Respect the people L- Listen
E- Encourage the people to share ideas E-Encourage
A-Ask questions A-Ask
L-Listen carefully R –Rev
N-Note

“How do we get the people to participate in our program?” is an often-asked question by many sincere workers. The question itself embodies the answer ... it is not THEY participating in our programs but us participating in their programs!
CONCEPT OF A GROUP

What is a group
A group is a collection of more than one person who comes together for the fulfillment of a common cause. Groups are also often referred as Community Based Organizations.

A group has the following characteristics:
- An objective or goal, or a common and shared purpose
- A framework or boundary in terms of time and space. A group functions for a specific period of time. A group has a time bound plan. The time limit is decided by the members themselves.
- A definable membership which is relatively stable.
- Ongoing interaction and interdependence between members
- Group consciousness or a conscious identification with each other. Every group has an identity and the group struggles hard to strengthen its identity
- The ability to act together as one unit or organism.
- Some of the members in the group have the capacity of leadership so that they can give a right direction to the group.

We are all in some way or other, members of group—groups like the family, a club, an organization, and so forth. Is a group just a collection of people? What distinguishes it from any accidental or incidental gathering of people, from a crowd or mob? The above distinguishing features differentiate it from a formal group from any other collection of people.

Thus, a number of individuals standing at a bus stop waiting for the same bus would not qualify to be called a group. But if an accident occurs on the road and these individuals begin to act cooperatively, united by a common concern for the accident victim, they might briefly become a group.

A group can be defined as a platform where people make collective endeavors for addressing common needs. A group can also be defined as, “two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person.”

The many potential benefits of group include:
- Providing an important source of stimulation
- Creating higher quality solutions than most individuals working alone can create.
- Providing structure that encourages a sense of involvement in a large organization.
- Serving as a vehicle for organization development efforts.
- Offering a means of satisfying relationship / belongingness and thus providing a source of satisfaction.
- Providing an opportunity for more individuals to develop and utilize leadership skills and fulfill personal needs.
Bringing about a structure that helps individuals to realize that everyone needs to depend on each other in order for the community to develop and succeed.

**DIFFERENT TERMINOLOGIES REGARDING GROUP**

There are many terms used for different types of groups. One should be very clear with the terminologies used in the development sector regarding groups.

The different terminologies used are:

1. Thrift and credit group
2. Savings and credit group
3. Self help group
4. Water user’s group
5. Women health group
6. Mahila Mandal
7. Panchayat Samiti
8. Forest protection group
9. Youth group
10. Children’s group
11. Farmer’s group
12. Cluster
13. Village Development Committee
14. Federation
15. People’s organization
16. Community based organization

The groups are given the terminology according to the purpose of forming the group. Every group has its own objectives, activities, set of norms and functioning pattern.

The purpose of each group is elaborated further:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Name of the group</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Thrift and credit group</td>
<td>Inculcate the habit of savings among members and fulfill their small needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Self help group</td>
<td>All round development/Micro enterprise development</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Water Users group</td>
<td>Agriculture development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Women health group</td>
<td>Safe motherhood and child care</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mahila Mandal</td>
<td>Empowerment of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Panchayat Samiti</td>
<td>Village development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Forest Protection Group</td>
<td>Protection of forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Youth Group</td>
<td>Youth development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Children’s group</td>
<td>Holistic development of children</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Farmers Group</td>
<td>Increased production of crop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Cluster / federation</td>
<td>Addressing issues that groups can not individually solve</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SELF HELP
We can define self help as when a person or a group takes an initiative and makes their continuous efforts to fulfill one own needs and to solve their problems.

SELF HELP GROUP
We can define self help group as when more than one person makes a collective effort to fulfill their common needs and solve their common problems.

Technically speaking all groups are self-help groups. But in our development sector in the last few years we have seen that thrift and credit group has been vastly successful. Thrift and credit group is a type of self-help group. Government of India, international funding organizations, NABARD and other donors referred saving and credit groups as Self Help Groups.

NEED OF GROUP FORMATION
We need to understand groups in greater depth, so that we function more effectively as group members. In the context of Participatory Development, moreover groups have special relevance for the following reasons:

- Group is a **basis for action and change**: Learning is seen as leading to change: in behavior, attitudes, self concept and so on. An individual needs to try out the learning and experiment with changed behavior in a secure environment before applying the learning in the outside world. The group provides a measure of support and reassurance. Moreover, as a group, learners may also plan collectively for change action.

- Group is a **building block of people’s organizations** when working towards social change, we are all involved in organizing and strengthening groups. The village ‘sangams’, Mahila Dals, Panchayat Samitis are all small groups. In larger units, the decision making bodies are also small groups like the executive committee. By reinforcing a base of small local groups, we make people’s organizations more effective.

- Group is a platform for **pooling resources**: To undertake an activity, a group’s resources are far greater than that of a single individual.

- Group helps in easier **consensus – building for undertaking new activity**: It is easier to undertake a new activity if some others around us also share our feelings about it. Being in a group enables discussion and consensus on the issue.
- Group is podium for pooling together of experience: A group represents the thinking, wisdom and experience of a number of people.

- Group facilitates easier communication to and from community: It becomes easier to communicate. It becomes easier to communicate information between the community and outside sources through a group composed of members from that community.

**Six Pre Requisites of Group Formation**

![Diagram showing the pre requisites of group formation]

**FACTORS NECESSARY FOR SUSTENANCE OF GROUP**

- **Clarity of the objectives**
  Every group has a certain purpose for its formation. It has an objective to achieve. There should be clarity among the members of the group as to why there is the requirement of collective action and what the goals to be achieved are. Group should not be formed for the sake of forming. Then such type of group without a purpose or an objective does not survive for a long time.

- **Acceptance of objectives**
  The objectives of the group are discussed and decided in a participatory manner with all members of the group. The objectives decided upon are unanimously accepted by all. If there is a doubt or a query regarding the purpose in the mind of any members of the group, it should be immediately put forward and discussed in the group.

- **Unanimously selected leader**
The selection of the leader in the group should be done unanimously where every member will be giving their opinions. It should not be the decision of one or any influential member in the group.

- **Dynamic leadership**
  The leaders in the group should be self motivated, energetic and active. Leaders should take initiative in preparing and implementing plans for the betterment of the group. The leader should have problem solving attitude and the capability of involving all the members and leading the group.

- **Mutual trust, Peer pressure and cooperation**
  There should be an ongoing communication within the group which will create a transparent atmosphere and lead to mutual trust. There should also be inter-dependability within the group and a feeling of cooperation and support among the members. All these aspects will lead to a sustainable group.

- **Participatory norm making**
  Effective functioning of the group requires certain norms and guidelines according to which the group functions. Immediately after the formation of the group there is the process of norm making. The norm making procedure should be participatory involving all the members and taking their opinions. So that the norms made are by the due consent of all members. Participatory norm making in a round about way will make the members abide by the norms. If any of the norms are not followed by any one member then there will be a peer pressure on him/ her to follow the norms. This will lead to sustenance of the group.

- **Open discussion**
  As told earlier, there should be regular meeting and an ongoing communication in the group. The discussions in the group should be open so that transparency is created.

- **Unanimous decision making**
  Decision making in the group should be agreed upon by all. The decision cannot be taken only by the group leaders but the other members are also to be equally involved in sharing concerns and issues and coming to a conclusion or a judgment.

- **Willingness and capability to resolve conflicts**
  Group dynamics are a very common feature in the group. The leaders as well as the members should have the problem solving attitude. The leaders in particular should have the potential to understand the conflicts, analyze them and resolve them.

- **Maximum attendance in the group meetings**
  It has to be seen that that the members in the group take interest in the group affairs and attend the meetings regularly for an ongoing communication. This is very important for the sustenance of the group.
Abiding by the norms and maintaining discipline
The members should follow the norms and abide by the rules which are decided in the collective manner. For example, Minutes have to be read in the meetings and then signed by the members of the group. This has to be strictly followed. Otherwise if anybody does not follow the norms it can lead to the group to collapse.

STAGES OF GROUP FORMATION AND FUNCTIONING
The group formation and functioning is divided into 4 stages:

I STAGE - GROUP FORMATION

II STAGE - GROUP STABILIZATION

III STAGE - GROUP DEVELOPMENT

IV STAGE – GROUP SUSTAINABILITY

GROUP FORMATION
This stage begins with the forming of the group itself which includes:

- Enrollment members
- Setting objectives
- Preparing norms
- Dividing responsibilities

Viewing the group as a whole we observe definite patterns of behavior occurring within the group formation stage. These can be conveniently grouped into sub stages and phases. The group formation stage is further divided into four sub stages, according to the changing patterns of group behavior.

- FORMING
- STORMING
- NORMING
- PERFORMING

FORMING
The initial stage in the life of a group is concerned with forming a group. This is the period when habits of coming together, sitting and meeting are established. This stage is characterized by fear, suspicion and anxiety of members. Members seeking safety and protection, tentativeness of response, seeking superficial contact with others, demonstrating dependency on existing authority figures (trainers or facilitators), complaining about physical and trivial matters (light,
sleeping and food arrangements, seating etc). Members at this stage either engage in 'busy' type of activity or show apathy.

**STORMING**

The second stage in the group is marked by the formation of dyads and triads (sub groups). Members seek out familiar or similar individuals and begin a deeper sharing of self. Continued attention to the subgroup creates a differentiation in the group and tensions across dyads/triads and feel strong enough to challenge the authority figure. Strong dyads attempt to show defiance against authority. Focus on task performance is beginning to emerge, but energy is mostly spent within a subgroup. Pairing is common phenomenon. We also see conflicts between individual interest and group interest. Leadership starts emerging. Procedures, rules and roles are established for solving various problems.

**NORMING**

The third developmental stage is marked by a more serious concern about task performance. The dyads/triads begin to open up and seek out other members in the group. Efforts are made to establish various norms for task performance. Members begin to take greater responsibility for their own group and relationship while the authority figure becomes relaxed. Dissimilar, members in the group are accepted and interaction among dissimilar people takes place around the task. Greater trust among the group members develops and group becomes a cohesive unit.

**PERFORMING**

This is the stage of a fully functioning group where members see themselves as a group and get involved in the task. Each person makes a contribution and the authority figure is also seen as part of the group. Group norms are followed and collective pressure is exerted to ensure the effectiveness of the group. The group redefines its goals. The long term viability of the group is established and nurtured.

These stages too take place sequentially and the possibility exists for the group to slip back on the basis of certain events or experiences within the group.

**GROUP FUNCTIONING**

Stages of group functioning is divided into four stages:

*Stage -1 – Group Formation (0-3 MONTHS)*

**Characteristics**

- Irregular meetings
- Non – fulfillment of individual responsibilities
- Individual differences among members
- Some members over dependent on the leader, others doubting the leader
- Withdrawal of some members and joining of new ones
- Leaders not capable to shoulder responsibility
- Looking up to leader to guide, help, solve problems
• People other than members raising doubts causing disturbance, discouraging members

Role of facilitator
• Educate the members about their rights and responsibilities
• See these in relation to long term gain of the group
• Present case studies of successful groups
• Repetition of norms – emphasize on need for adherence to norms
• Community meetings to educate other stakeholders, influential people.
• Trainings with games and exercises on developing leadership, mutual faith and trust.

STAGE II - GROUP STABILIZATION (3-6 MONTHS)
Characteristics
• Stabilized membership
• Clarity of objectives
• Meetings more regular but with help of worker
• Savings, paying dues
• Beginning to visit banks
• Demand for capital from organization
• Raised awareness for education, health
• Dependence on leader for writing records, resolving differences
• Leaders, members more responsible than past
• Greater trust on each other
• More emphasis on individual benefit than on group benefit

Role of facilitator
• Make the leaders and members overcome the fear of making mistakes
• Discussing mistakes not for putting blame but for finding solutions
• Explain the relationship between group and individual development with examples
• Knowingly missing to attend meeting in between and later following up to see what the group did - emphasizing on learning to work independently
• Training on group management issues – decision making, planning, dividing responsibility, managing finances and maintenance and up-keep of equipments, record keeping etc.

STAGE III - GROUP DEVELOPMENT (8-12 MONTHS)
Characteristics
• Organizing meeting by themselves
• Managing financial transaction by themselves (if there are any)
• Record keeping by themselves
• Discussing issues and finding solutions
• Acceptance of solutions by all members
• Group starts developing linkages with government and non-government institutions.

Role of facilitator
• Making the group monitor itself
• Helps when the group is unable to solve any problem
• Facilitate rotations of leader
• Facilitates linkages with different institutions
• Reduced number of visits
• Advanced training on sustainability of groups.

STAGE IV – GROUP SUSTAINABILITY (12 MONTHS AND ABOVE)

Characteristics
• Financial sustainability-group manages its own expenses
• Increased transparency among the members regarding financial as well as other decisions taken.
• Strict adherence to norms
• Full discharge of own duties
• Ability to discuss and resolve conflict
• Develop new ways of working
• Full control over resources
• Constant liaison and linkage with other institutions.
• Independent management or records and registers.

Facilitator role:
• Play the role of consultant – Give opinion when asked for
CONCEPT OF MICRO PLANNING

What is a Micro Plan?

The Micro plan can be defined as a “plan, which is formulated by the community/Community Based Organizations (CBO) themselves, beginning from assessing and analyzing the situation, prioritizing the needs, planning according to the needs. A micro plan must lead to implementing, monitoring and evaluation by the community/CBO.

The plan is a participatory plan, ensuring the community’s contribution and ownership in every aspect of the program.

The process of planning till few years back followed a top down approach, as a result of which people were not involved in the process and the plans developed were unrealistic, often addressing wrong concerns. The second stage was when plans were prepared together with the community but with a dominating role of the NGO perhaps due lack of facilitation skills or lack of conviction on the part of NGO. Micro planning, on the other hand adopts a bottom up approach, where the plan for people’s development is developed with the community and then it move upwards following the bottom up approach. This makes process of planning not only participatory but also realistic and need based. The participation of the people is as decision makers. This approach also helps to increase transparency since information is available with the community people.

Micro planning calls for a shift in the paradigm, where a wider role of the people is being visualized in their own development process. Micro planning is also a means for empowering the people by building their capacities to plan, execute and monitor development initiatives for themselves. It is emphasized that one pre-requisite for participation is presence of urge to develop amongst the people. This helps them to become more sensitive and take part in the program in an effective manner. Community participation in a program further yields better results and helps ensure sustainability.

The risk of micro planning is that if the micro plan is not facilitated properly, then, it could bring adverse results too. People may disown the process than accepting the responsibility. The people may also get a subtle message that it is actually the NGO, which likes to control the process. So much of the success of a micro plan is dependent on the facilitation part.

Need of micro planning

- To develop a sense of responsibility in the community towards their own development
- To develop belongingness and a sense of attachment with the development program
Participation of the people in the success and failure of the program
To develop the capacity of the people in the community through the micro planning process
To have transparency in the program
To engage different stakeholders, particularly women in the decision making process in micro planning so that they get an exposure and an experience which is an important step in their empowerment
To make the community realize their important role in micro planning and implementation
Everybody in the community has the information about the plan
To predict the future problems in the plan and take necessary actions so that the plan is more realistic
To take initiative in mobilizing the local resources

Process of Preparing A Participatory Plan?

A. Identifying the village/community
B. Environment building
C. Situational Assessment
   • PRA
   • Baseline Survey
   • Analyzing the data and preparation of report
D. Identifying the major issues in the village
   • Presentation of report
   • Highlighting the core issues
   • Prioritization of core issues
E. Identification of the core group
F. Participatory Workshop for preparing the ground for Micro plan
   • Discussion on the importance and need of micro plan
   • Discussion on the format of micro plan
   • Decide on the norms
   • Decide the time as to when will the community meet for the micro planning
G. Participatory workshop for preparation of micro plans
H. Presentation of the plan in the General Body for seeking approval

NORMS OF MICROPLANNING

These norms must be prepared together with the people. It is not necessary that all the norms should be decided. Under no circumstances, the facilitator should dictate the norms. Some of the possible norms are:
➢ Opportunity to all
➢ No pushing of thoughts
➢ No argument (facilitator should not scuttle the thinking and articulation of the participants in enforcing this norm)
Purposeful and limited talk (Facilitator may give polite reminders, should not use it to discourage people from talking, particularly those who are shy and afraid to talk)

Opportunity to women

- One person to talk at a time and no subgroup formation (Do allow debate on issues as per need)
- No moving out while discussions are on
- Proper documentation
- Voluntary participation, free and frank discussions
- Respect each one’s opinion
- No individual benefits (optional norm)
- No benefit to decision makers (optional norm)
- Keeping common concerns in mind

**Caution:** The facilitators must not create a situation where the free flow of thoughts and the spontaneity gets crushed. There should be no attempt to bring in an atmosphere of seriousness that actually creates tension and artificial feeling for the people. The people must feel comfortable and relaxed and get fully involved.

**What is a plan?**

Plan is a sufficiently detailed conceptualization and description of results to be achieved together with the process to be adopted, the resources required, the people responsible and the time line.

What are the main components of a plan?
- Defined objectives
- Specific time period
- Defined place
- Series of sequential activities
- Resources

**Seven Steps of Micro Planning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO?</th>
<th>WHERE?</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
<th>WHOM?</th>
<th>WHAT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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WHEN?

HOW?

The seven steps/questions of planning consist of 6 Ws and 1 H.

The seven steps/questions can be elaborated as below:
1. Who stands for beneficiaries?
2. Why will speak of the needs of the area or the beneficiaries or the change that needs to be brought about.
3. When refers to the time frame of the plan.
4. What will speak of the activities to be carried out.
5. Where refers to the place where it will be implemented.
6. How will answer the steps or methodologies adopted in implementing the plan.
   By whom will explain the people responsible for implementation.

**Format of Micro Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No.</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Local resource</th>
<th>External Resources</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Responsible person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What is an objective?**

"Results achieved at the end of the plan period".

The objective should be SMART.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Specific/ Shared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Measurable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Achievable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Realistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Time bound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example – 1**

Objective: From Sept 2002 to Sept 2003, 100 women will be literate (as per the one year defined standard of TLC) in village Chanda so that there is an increase in their level of literacy and self-confidence.
Here in this above example:

- Who speaks of the 100 women
- Where is defined as the village Chanda
- What speaks of making the women literate
- How much speaks of the extent of change that is as per the six months defined standard of TLC.
- When speaks of the time when the plan will be implemented to accomplish the results of increase in their level of literacy and self-confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Economic Development</td>
<td>1. Increase in income by Rs. 250 per month of 70 women through poultry in village Koshba of Barkhattha block of Hazaribagh district in one year period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Women Empowerment</td>
<td>In village Korche of Ramgarh District, 100 women will form 10 self help groups so that they develop a habit of savings in one year time period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Water Management</td>
<td>4. In village Chechak of Bharkhatta block, at least 40 families out of total 100 families will be benefited by constructing check dam in one year time period. (from January 04 to May 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social Development</td>
<td>5. In Lolo village of Ramgarh Block, there will be 50% reduced deaths from malaria in one year time period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Agriculture Development</td>
<td>6. From September 2002 to February 2003, in Kucchu village of Ormanjhi Block 40 farmers (men and women) will have increased technical information in order to increase their production from 30 to 50 quintals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example of the Micro Plan Format

**Theme:** Women Development

**Objective:** To strengthen women's saving group so that they develop a habit of saving, and in the time of need have access to financial resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Internal Resource(s)</th>
<th>External Resource(s)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>To increase the number of members in women's saving group.</td>
<td>1st July 2001, 1st Sept 01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Sita Sen President of the federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>To conduct meetings with maximum attendance in the saving group</td>
<td>Every month</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Federation president,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Training of 2 saving groups</td>
<td>1st Sept 01, 1st Nov 01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2000/- IFFDC</td>
<td>2000/-</td>
<td>Fed President IFFDC (Female extentionist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>To give loan/credit from saving group</td>
<td>From Aug 01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Group President,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>To increase the amount of money in savings group</td>
<td>Every month</td>
<td>By the members of the savings group</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>President,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>In monthly meeting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>President, Women Coordinator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Things to Remember**

- Objectives need to be SMART.
- Language should be simple and not too technical.
- The activities should be logically thought of and it should be in a proper sequence.
- The time column of the format should be filled with specific dates and should not be vague.
The column of responsible person should be filled properly giving the names and designations of persons who will take up the responsibility.

In the column of external resources, it should be mentioned the source from where the resource is available.

**Facilitative Participative Interactions**

- Informal and conducive setting
- Need based participation
- Non threatening environment
- In built feedback mechanism on understanding.
- No grades
- Self-esteem is respected.
- Needs to be based on real life experiences.
- Higher attention and participation level.
- Seating arrangements that facilitate group discussion.
- Give space to participants.
- No blank eye contact - project confidence and self-assurance.
- Needs to be very energetic.
- Is based on participants’ place/ needs/ convenience
- Open-ended questions should be asked to facilitate more answers and opinion.
- Where there is doubt, clarifications have to be sought.
- Remarks should be encouraged

**Things to be considered while conducting a Micro Plan**

- Use of local language while facilitating the micro plan.
- Setting a time with the community is very important.
- While facilitating the micro plan the facilitators should sit at the same level with the community in order to bring about more freeness and openness.
- Involving both male and female members in developing the micro plan.
- The entire process of micro planning has to be followed stepwise.
- While prioritizing the problems one should be very clear along with the community to select the parameters on which the prioritization has to be done.
- Norm building must be an important part of micro planning process.
- The concept of objectives should be clearly explained to the community so they are able to understand the need of developing the objective before beginning the micro plan.
- Explaining the format in detail about each column so that there is no doubt remaining within the community. But the format should be evolved and not presented. People should understand that the format is just a convenient framework to present the decisions.
• Filling the format in a chart paper so that it becomes very convincing to the community.
• The person responsible column has to be filled up with the consent of all the members present as well as the member whose name is being proposed.
• One person should not be given all the responsibilities.
• Make sure it is the community that makes the decisions.
• The resource column should also be very specific mentioning not only the amount but also the source of resource.
• Detailed information and a situational assessment are very important before preparation of a micro plan in a community.

Note for the Facilitator for conducting Micro Plan

• Information and knowledge about micro planning.
• Information regarding the community.
• The facilitator should carry the required materials like the chart paper, sketch pen etc.
• There should be teamwork and coordination between the facilitators.
• There should be division of responsibilities among the facilitators before facilitating the exercise.
• At the beginning the facilitator should give a clear explanation about the objective of his visit to the community.
• Before the exercise there should be presentation of the findings of the community to seek clarifications.
• The facilitator should always ask open-ended question, which will leave more scope for the community to think and analyze the situation.
• The facilitator should see that all the members are giving their views in developing a plan.
• Sometimes too long discussion may make the environment more tiresome. The facilitator can conduct games and energizers to create a more relaxed and a fresh environment.

Golden Rules for Micro Planning

1. Points to remember before micro planning
   ♦ A complete village assessment and problem analysis has to be done.
   ♦ Awareness and information regarding various govt. and non-govt. Schemes being implemented in the village.
   ♦ The facilitator should have the role clarity before conducting micro planning.
   ♦ The facilitator should be well prepared before facilitating the micro plans. (Micro plan format, PRA report)
   ♦ Identification of a place so that everybody sits comfortably.
   ♦ The target group should be informed before hand about the time and place.
The target group should be aware with the objectives of the meeting and be prepared to take the lead role.

The facilitator should go with a positive attitude and a trust in the community that they can plan by themselves.

The facilitator should prioritize the problems and then facilitate to take on one issue.

To know how far the community is ready to develop the plan.

2. Points to remember during micro planning

- The micro plan should be facilitated in small groups.
- There should be total participation of all the members present in the meeting.
- There should be free and open discussions without any type of hassles.
- Build the self-confidence of the target group.
- Let the community take the decisions. The facilitator should not try to force his views and suggestions.
- There should be no hurriedness to complete the micro plan. Let it be in its own natural pace.
- The micro plan should be developed looking at the capacity of the target group.
- Do not deviate from the issue.
- Do not go into unnecessary arguments.
- The plan should be developed depending on the understanding and level of the target group.
- Do not give the responsibilities to one person.
- Monitoring should be the part of every plan

3. Points to remember after preparation of the micro plan

- The plan should have a general consent in a village meeting.
- To see whether the implementation of the micro plans is done in time.
- Whether the persons responsible are doing their jobs.
- To create transparency in the implementation of the plan.
- To see that the plan is not deviated from the objectives.
- To see that activities are done as per plan.
- To monitor the work simultaneously so that if there are any mistakes, then the necessary corrections are done.