

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Mechanisms Which Encourage Beneficiary Participation in Decision Making in Rural Development Assistance Projects in Developing Countries.

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This study was designed to discover how beneficiary participation in decision making can be encouraged and enhanced in rural development assistance projects in developing countries. The study sought to increase the understanding about how beneficiary participation occurs through the identification of patterns, processes or techniques in development assistance projects that enhance the ability of local people to gain control of the benefits and decision making processes in projects affecting their lives.

The data for this study were obtained from telephone interviews with seven individuals who are or have been rural development assistance project managers. A constant comparative method of qualitative data analysis was employed.

The findings indicated that community participation is encouraged and enhanced in projects that involve a few salient activities, relatively less complex inputs and consequently less money than larger, more complex projects. These projects should be based on a felt need in the community and be designed to fit community capabilities. As such, they enhance the power of participation to produce a recognizable benefit and to provide a sense of progress toward community established goals. In addition, community

participation is encouraged when some investment is required from the community.

Investment creates ownership and tests the value and appropriateness of the activity to the community.

The case studies suggested that participation is a process that requires support at the community level, from intermediary organizations and from donor agencies and national governments. At the community level, the most practical and effective vehicle through which to implement participatory projects is existing community organizations. These organizations generally possess the necessary skills to be, and by definition, should be involved in all phases of the project from design to evaluation. Locally identified leaders, while a two-edged sword, are necessary for the effectiveness of local organizations and for the endorsement of project activities.

Intermediary organizations emerge in this study as key actors in the participatory development process. These organizations act as catalysts and linkages by informing and sharing information with communities; by helping communities gather data about themselves in identifying the most critical problems; by mediating in conflict resolution; and in obtaining funds and other forms of assistance from outside the community. Their role is characterized by an approach to rural communities that is both understanding and interactive.

Donor organizations and national governments are seen in the role of development coordinators. The coordinator role is responsive to community desires and strives for equality among diverse groups and communities. They emphasize a "process" approach to development administration. As a result of effective participation, rural poor communities are able to meet their basic needs, solve their problems, and achieve the power to control their lives.

In terms of mechanisms encouraging beneficiary participation, this study recommends the following:

- * Participatory development should be viewed as a process of trial and error learning whose goal is community empowerment. Empowerment signifies the degree to which people have gained the capacity to obtain results which they intend to obtain from their involvement in decision making in the development process.
- * Intermediary organizations must assume a key role in the participatory development process. These organizations are composed of sensitive and understanding people who are dedicated to community participation. The function of these organizations is twofold. First, they act as links between donor agencies or national governments and local communities. Second, they function as catalysts in participatory development. The goal of these organizations is to facilitate the building of community capacity in terms of skills and knowledge to the point that the community no longer needs their assistance.
- * The appropriate roles of donor agencies and national governments in participatory development is as coordinators of development assistance projects. This role requires them to provide funds specifically for participatory development; to strive for equity in funding different groups and communities; and to adopt a "process" style of project administration that is seen as most conducive to participatory development.
- * Projects aiming at encouraging beneficiary participation should start small, with a few relatively simple activities that respond to local needs. These activities are most effectively implemented through existing local organizations that are characterized as having control of financial resources, legal authority, involvement in all project activities from design to evaluation and are led by community appointed leaders.
- * It is more important to emphasize "how" projects are implemented rather than "what" is accomplished. This "how" necessarily involves beneficiary participation which is defined as the participation of beneficiaries in their own development by controlling resources, defining needs and making decisions about how these needs can best be met.

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**MECHANISMS WHICH ENCOURAGE BENEFICIARY PARTICIPATION
IN DECISION MAKING IN
RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROJECTS
IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

CHAPTER 1

The Concept of Development Assistance

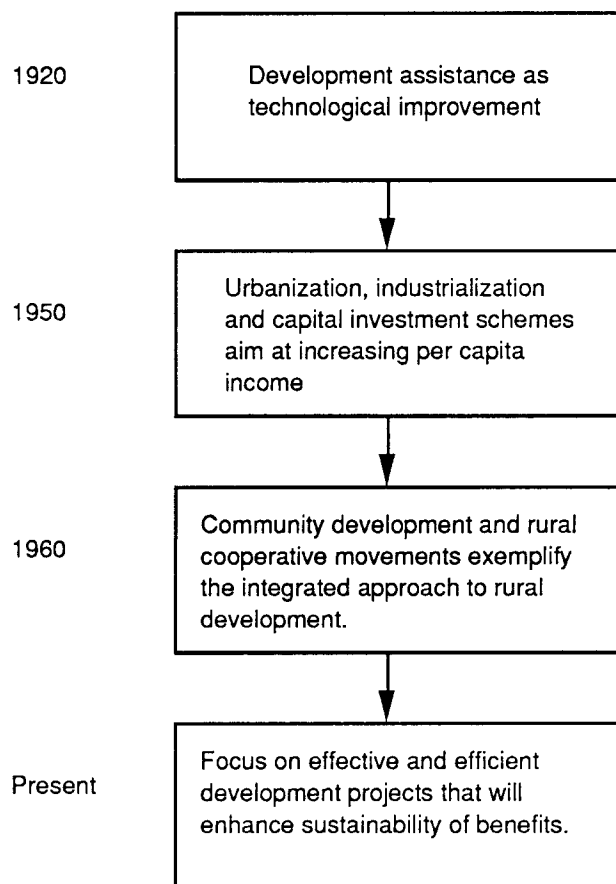
In the context of this paper "development assistance" refers to the flow of aid, financial, technical, educational, technological or material, to developing countries (Welsh and Butorin, 1990). From a historical perspective, the concept of development assistance had as its' earliest usage emphasis on technological change. This emphasis arose out of the technological advances of the late 19th and early 20th century "Industrial Revolution." During this period, extensive social and economic development and change in Western society came about primarily as a result of broad technological advances. One consequence was the beginning of a process of technological proliferation and exportation. Both national governments and private organizations established programs exporting technology for development. For example, the early 20th century saw many church-related organizations, such as the Mennonite Central Committee and Agricultural Missions, become involved in efforts to transfer improved technologies in medicine, education and agriculture to developing countries (Mumaw, 1987).

Development assistance on a large scale started with Marshall Plan aid for the reconstruction of Western Europe following World War II (Morse & Gow, 1985). During this period the aim shifted from a focus on technological improvements to an approach emphasizing economic well-being. One of the first U.N. documents on development planning in 1947 stated that "the government's ultimate aim in economic development is to raise the national welfare of the entire population" (Katz, 1988, p. 6). This period saw the beginning of the use of development strategies employing

Western development approaches emphasizing capital investments, mass production, centralized development planning and advanced technology. A primary goal of these strategies was to increase per capita income (Mumaw, 1987). Implicit in this approach was that development necessarily led to the exploitation of natural and human resources. The emphasis was on development as an action performed on resources with the goal of improving the state of people's well-being through an increased flow of goods and services.

By the 1970's, development assistance strategies and designs began to undergo a period of reformulation. It was recognized, after two decades of intensive development assistance work worldwide attempting to implement a strategy of development based on producing gains in economic well being, that few examples were evident of any positive, stable and long-term effects. Further, beyond the export of financial and technological resources, it was being recognized that successful development depended on a myriad of factors including an understanding of what drives and sustains developmental change and innovation; the importance of social and cultural patterns in target populations; organizational and individual relationships to the development environment; infrastructure variables; and the availability of natural resources to name but a few. There was recognition that development could no longer be conceived of as an act of transplanting; rather, it had to be viewed as an act of adapting to local needs and conditions. In short, the complexity of development as a process was beginning to be understood (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Evolution of Development Assistance Ideology.



Current development ideology views the provision of development assistance resources, except in the case of emergency relief donations, as investments intended to generate a flow of benefits that endures after the external funds cease (Goldsmith, 1988). The underlying implication is that planned development does not and cannot end with the application of technology or financial resources. The aim must be to institutionalize for the long term the valued products of development activity. The proper focus of development assistance; therefore, is to avoid creating dependence on the part of developing countries on the continuous supply of external financial and technical assistance. More importantly, a process must be established which fosters an indigenous capability to produce and sustain developmental change.

To summarize, time, experience, increased understanding, variations in resource availability and changing values of donors and developing countries have all had an impact on the concept of development assistance. The ideological focus has shifted from an orientation on development through technological infusion, to development aimed at increasing economic well-being through financial aid, to the current focus which views assistance as investments aimed at generating a sustainable flow of benefits.

Current Development Assistance Reality

David Korten (1987) argues that two conditions currently dominate development assistance reality: the persistence of poverty and a declining availability of financial resources. Poverty continues to persist at intolerable levels in developing countries while, with a net out-flow of financial resources, these countries become increasingly debt burdened in the face of dwindling development assistance from industrialized countries. A major factor contributing to the persistence of poverty is the disappointing record of the past decade of development initiatives in which unprecedented emphasis and funding from government and international aid agencies has not led to noticeable improvements in the productivity, general welfare or sustainability of benefits to the poor, who account for a majority of the developing world's population. Many areas of the world have in fact seen true declines in levels of production and welfare. For example, development assistance has had little impact on problems of unemployment, underproductivity, natural resource degradation and high rates of urbanization. The net effect of coupling these problems with rising population and deteriorating economic conditions has been actual increases in the absolute degree of poverty (Cohen, Grindle, & Walker, 1985). In short, these facts indicate that a major failure of development assistance efforts to date has been in their inability to significantly benefit the poor majorities in developing countries (Finsterbush & Van Wicklin III, 1989; Halpern,

Ingle, and Brinkerhoff, 1988; International Development Management Center [IDMC], 1988, 1987; Cernea, 1987).

The Mandate for Participation

Analysis of development assistance project experience in various parts of the world has identified community participation in decision making in development assistance projects as an important factor for ensuring the relevance, effectiveness, and long-term success of those projects (Finsterbusch & Van Wicklin III, 1989, 1987; Goulet, 1989; Cernea, 1987, 1985; Midgley, 1986; Zaman, 1984; Cohen & Uphoff, 1980). The concept of participation has been recognized to be of such importance that it has been firmly ensconced as a policy of U.S. foreign assistance. For example, the concept was made an integral part of the "New Directions Mandate" ratified by the U.S. Congress through the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973. This legislation reoriented the priorities of U.S. foreign assistance policy by targeting assistance directly at the rural poor with participation as a major theme. The mandate was a public commitment to the ideology that the economic benefits of development assistance should be "widely and significantly shared by the poor" and that the poor, including women, should be actively engaged in decision making in ways which increase "their technical skills and/or their capacity to organize for common purposes and for greater access to the benefits of development" (Korten, 1980, p. 482-483). Further, the declaration of the "Basic Human Needs" doctrine endorsed by the International Labor Organization, the World Bank and other international aid organizations emphasizes explicit efforts to redirect development aid toward the poor and to increase local participation in development assistance projects (Finsterbush & Van Wicklin III, 1989). These actions, based on the conviction that development must be people-centered instead of production-oriented, have firmly established "beneficiary participation" as a central concept in the articulation of development assistance to the rural poor in developing countries.

A Need to Understand the Mechanisms Encouraging Participation

As a development assistance strategy, beneficiary participation focuses on people as central to social and economic development and change and sees human will and capacity as the most critical resources in these processes. This is not a new or controversial idea; many development assistance professionals are convinced that participation by beneficiaries in their own development will generally enhance project effectiveness (Finsterbusch & Van Wicklin III, 1989, 1987; Goulet, 1989; Cernea, 1987, 1985; Paul, 1987; Midgley, 1986; Cohen & Uphoff, 1980). For example, Midgley (1986) notes that participation is advocated not only as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of the development project process by lowering costs and "smoothing" implementation but also because "it fosters a sense of belonging and the integration of communities: this, in turn, helps local people to contribute positively to national development" (p. 34). However, despite these and other lofty sentiments regarding the usefulness of beneficiary participation in development assistance efforts, there is considerable uncertainty regarding what mechanisms encourage participation and how participation takes place. Indeed, a number of authorities (Paul, 1987; Midgley, 1986; Cernea, 1985; Korten, 1983, 1980) agree that there appears to be a substantial lack of understanding about how the concept of participation is established in operational reality. Although the literature suggests that the concept of beneficiary participation has substantial merit in terms of improving the equity, effectiveness and sustainability of development assistance projects, little has been provided in the way of concrete methods for operationally establishing participation. Furthermore, while many governments and donors are convinced that participation is useful and appropriate, they are unlikely to employ it as a development assistance strategy without some guidance about how to do so.

Problem Statement

Between 80 and 90 percent of the population of developing countries live in rural areas and are engaged in subsistence agriculture (Omo-Fadaka, 1982). Rural development, a process which aims at improving the living standards of these rural communities in a self sustaining way, is a major goal of many national development plans and a substantial proportion of foreign assistance programs (Bryant & White, 1984). Within the process of rural development it is increasingly recognized that the people of indigenous communities have an essential role to play. Specifically, community participation in development assistance projects and programs is seen as a crucial factor in the change process. However, a problem exists in that, while participation has been proclaimed as an important component in effective and sustainable development, a failure often occurs in translating this goal into practice. What is needed is the elaboration and dissemination of guidelines on the use and implementation of beneficiary participation.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to discover how beneficiary participation in decision making can be encouraged in rural development assistance projects in developing countries. This study seeks to increase the understanding about how beneficiary participation occurs through the identification of patterns, processes or techniques in development assistance projects that enhance the ability of local people to gain control of the decision making processes in projects affecting their lives.

Review of Related Literature

This study proposes an operational definition of participation that directly addresses the issue of beneficiary control in the decision making processes in rural development assistance projects. Beneficiary participation is defined as the "organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in a given social

situation on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control" (Wolfe, 1982, p. 87). The fundamental element in this definition and the central theme of this study is "control," that is, the extent to which beneficiaries participate in their own development by controlling resources, defining needs and making decisions about how these needs can best be met (Stone, 1989).

Many proponents of beneficiary participation are concerned with establishing mechanisms which will elicit participation in rural development assistance projects. However, creating effective participation is not easily accomplished; there is no established plan or blueprint to guide action. The way a community participates depends on its' sociocultural background, the current political situation of the country, the design of the project, economic variables, infra-structure variables, personnel variables and historical variables. Therefore, interventions or mechanisms encouraging participation must necessarily be tailored to the specific project environments into which they are to be implemented; it is impossible to transfer forms of participation intact from one project to another (Sheng, 1989; Gow & VanSant, 1983). Realistically, it is only by sharing the life in a rural community with the people and on the basis of a thorough understanding of their needs and aspirations and through a relationship of trust built in the daily struggle of life can one determine whether or not a particular activity is genuinely participatory (Bugnicourt, 1982). Such an approach, however, is not always feasible, and therefore reliance must be placed on the substantial body of available literature to identify potential mechanisms encouraging beneficiary participation and adapt these to on-going development assistance projects. The literature suggests three general areas of study for discovering such mechanisms: 1) the motivation to participate; 2) the organization of the beneficiaries; and 3) project management related factors as mechanisms encouraging participation.

Motivation to Participate

The motivation to participate focuses on the distinction between participation instigated from outside the community by the state or other elite/outside groups (e.g., donor organizations or national governments) and that arising from below, originating in the local community itself. It is important to focus on the issue of motivation because the different sources of motivation often reflect differences in the objective of participation, and this can affect the standard of participation (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980). Essentially, the issue of initiative or motivation is concerned with whether participation is compulsory or voluntary.

Top-Down or Bottom-Up

Consideration of issues surrounding the motivation to participate generally reflects the debate over the relative merits of "top-down" versus "bottom-up" approaches to participatory development. Based on a review of the literature the most frequently heard views regarding this issue support the bottom-up approach (Goulet, 1989; Hall 1986; Cernea, 1985; Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Hollnsteiner, 1982; UNICEF, 1982). This perspective argues that the beneficiaries themselves know what is the most appropriate course of action for a development project to follow and that they should therefore have some control over the decision making processes affecting their lives. When the initiative for participation grows from the bottom-up, needs and designs are locally defined with control over process factors an implicit goal. Specifically, when participation is initiated at the grass-roots level, the aim is primarily one of improving the groups' own position vis-a-vis control. The implication is that voluntary participation initiated from the grass-roots level is the most effective departure point for establishing participatory development. In other words, participation initiated from below comes closest to true participation because it "reflects a voluntary and autonomous action on the part of the people to organize and deal

with their problems unaided by government or other external agents" (Midgley, 1986, p. 27). However, despite experience showing that rural communities do have the impetus to plan and execute a range of development activities in their own interests, these interests often conflict with those of the central government so that such independent initiative is either discouraged or suppressed. Governments and outside agents with a firm commitment to directing change and pursuing economic and social goals, often feel they cannot afford to allow a level of participation that would compromise these goals (Hall, 1986).

On the other hand, official initiatives for participation are unlikely to help the poor or even be very successful in initiating participation (Hollnsteiner, 1982). A number of authorities suggest that participation initiated from the "top-down" represents a contradiction in terms, is inconsistent with democratic values and is very difficult if not impossible to attain (Hall, 1986; Gran, 1983; Hollnsteiner, 1982; UNICEF, 1982; Korten, 1980; Cohen & Uphoff, 1980). They argue that this approach contributes little to the longer term goal of local capacity building and project sustainability. Participation in these cases is viewed as a way of getting local communities to work toward governmental ends. Some measure of social control over the communities is often a major objective (Goulet, 1989; Rondinelli, Nellis, & Cheema, 1984). For example, many "participatory" projects initiated from above are established to take advantage of cheap local labor for the construction of a public works project or aim at gaining the acquiescence of the community through negotiations with local elites (Hall, 1986). Moreover, when participatory projects are imposed from above, it is often without a thorough understanding of local social, economic, physical and organizational conditions and as a result either generate opposition in the local community or encounter such apathy that the projects are doomed to failure from the outset.

Paradoxical as it may seem, however, promoting bottom-up development through participation often requires outside efforts (Uphoff, 1985; Zaman, 1984). A third approach to development assistance asserts that the more closely that the development process is examined the clearer it becomes that important elements have to be supplied by resources outside the local community. This approach argues for a compromise between the bottom-up and top-down paradigms. For example, a number of authorities (Blase, 1989; Cohen et. al., 1985; Johnston, 1982) argue that important elements of the development process must be instituted at the policy level. They argue that a wide range of host country and donor agency policies impact development assistance and that a favorable policy environment is essential if development efforts are to be effective. This necessarily includes an understanding of what kind, for whom and in what context productive policy incentives can be developed and implemented in order to enhance local participation. The contention is that participatory development activities will not work unless individuals and organizations at all levels are encouraged to adopt appropriate forms of behavior that facilitate change in the long run.

In addition, Zaman (1984) cites a number of sociological and anthropological studies of rural society in developing countries which have found local organizational and institutional structure to be extremely weak. On this basis he postulates that, given the "structural fragmentation and the organizational weakness at the local level," participation mobilized from the outside may have an important role to play in development assistance activities (p. 11). The implication is that encouraging beneficiary participation can be facilitated by outside involvement and support. For example, many outside change agents, such as "non-governmental organizations" [NGOs] and "private voluntary organizations" [PVOs], follow ideologies which view participation as a desirable goal. From their perspective, the initiation of participation from outside the community is viewed as a "pump priming" process designed to facilitate local participation with the intention that the outside impetus will disappear when the

people begin to realize their dormant capabilities (Goulet, 1989). The objective of this type of participatory initiative differs qualitatively from that initiated by the state or other elite groups. Instead of aiming to manipulate the local community to serve someone else's purposes, the aim is to empower them to control the decision making processes affecting their lives.

Mutually Reinforcing Motivations

It appears overly simplistic to deduce that all participatory initiatives arising from outside the community are manipulative in nature and not conducive to local participation (Hall, 1986). Bryant and White (1984) proposed that there is much evidence suggesting that for rural, poor communities to develop effective participatory processes within the context of an existing social structure support of outside groups or individuals is essential. For example, several authorities (Midgley, 1986; UNICEF, 1982; Cohen & Uphoff, 1980) have determined that local participation can be successfully initiated through the formulation of specific projects from "above," such as social development projects, that command popular support. An important conclusion to be drawn is that, insofar as participation is a process and an approach to solving local problems that requires action at many levels, the foundation for participation is likely to be stronger where there are mutually reinforcing motivations. The motivation to participate should not be confined to the project beneficiaries; the motivation to participate should be "conceived in a way that mobilizes the best ideas and energies of people at all social levels" (Uphoff, 1985, p. 390). Rural communities new to participatory problem solving often require cooperation, advice and support from outside the community. Therefore, the process of encouraging beneficiary participation will be most effective and the result most desirable when the initiative is shared and prompted by mutually supportive and reinforcing activities and aims both from inside and from outside the community.

The Organization of Beneficiaries

Cohen and Uphoff (1980) contend that one of the hypothesis most worth examining in regard to beneficiary participation is the extent to which "organization" is a crucial factor in establishing the process of participation. Organization refers to the "purposive arrangement of human resources into modeled sets of social interaction and normatively regulated behavioral patterns for performing definite functions and attaining predefined objectives" (Cernea, 1987, p. 10). The organization of beneficiaries represents a structured network of roles which obey a system of rules and act to guide individual action and to coordinate group action. Such organizational functions to increase the potential for collective action in pursuing set goals and objectives; that is, organization increases the capacity for participation.

The organization of community participation can take a number of forms, and a large variety of such organizations have traditionally existed and continue to exist in developing countries (Cernea, 1987). These include, for example, water-users societies, credit associations, marketing or other types of cooperatives, development committees, farmer organizations, womens' groups, self-help groups, tree-growing associations and labor exchange associations. Local organizations can be formal in the sense of having legal authority and by being linked to and supported by the central government through legal and administrative procedures (Midgley et al., 1986). They can also be informal grass-roots organizations characterized by less structure and enduring through popular involvement and support rather than legal authority (Hakim, 1982; Hollnsteiner, 1982).

Local Organizations as Vehicles of Participation

Based on the literature, a consensus emerges that local community organizations can be effective mechanisms promoting participation (Midgley, 1986; Gow & VanSant, 1985; Uphoff, 1985; Korten, 1983; Hakim, 1982). Organizations can provide

vehicles for collective participation in policy decisions at the national or regional level and can also help insure that the influence of the rural poor on decision making at the local level is real and sustained. More specifically, local organizations constitute the means through which the rural poor are brought into the center of the development activity in order to make the development participatory. Gow and VanSant (1985) state that local organizations are commonly regarded as the most practical and effective way to encourage participation. Local organizations enhance the development process by:

- * Acting as mechanisms for maintaining two-way flows of information between project officials and the community
- * Reducing risk to a minimum
- * Exploiting economies of scale
- * Adapting project activities to local needs and conditions
- * Encouraging the commitment of local resources to the project
- * Providing the membership with an active political and economic voice by exercising influence over local officials and by putting forth claims on the government
- * Sustaining project benefits
- * Facilitating the equitable distribution of benefits throughout the community.

New Versus Existing Organizations

There is a debate regarding whether community participation in development projects can be best encouraged by working through existing organizations or by creating new organizations. Donaldson (1987), for example, viewed existing village organizations as available and effective mechanisms to promote beneficiary participation in the planning and implementation of rural development assistance projects. Uphoff (1985), on the other hand, noted that not all existing organizations are suitable

channels for development projects. "Often local organizational structures that could facilitate participation in projects are either very weak or nonexistent" or controlled by a single person, suggesting that new organizations may be more appropriate for formal development projects (p. 384). Esman and Uphoff (1984) cited a study by Charlick that indicated the capability for achieving local participation was best achieved where both new and existing organizations were associated with a project. Figure 2 summarizes and outlines the major arguments surrounding this issue.

The debate between the use of new or existing organizations is complex. Three propositions; however, recur in the literature. First, the organization of beneficiaries is an effective mechanism encouraging participation in rural development assistance projects (Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Korten, 1983). Second, the development assistance project intending to encourage participation must work with the local community in determining whether or not an organization is needed and if so, how it can best be developed and implemented (Korten, 1983). Third, while some form of organization will likely be needed in each participatory project, the exact form of organization that is appropriate will vary from project to project (Uphoff, 1985). Thus, the choice between working with existing organizations or creating new ones has to be context and task specific. Where local organizations exist that are appropriate to project needs, they should be used. If no such organizations exist, new ones should be built (Bryant & White, 1984). "The working assumption should be that local organizations represent valuable social capital that should be discarded or bypassed only when they are clearly unsuitable" (Esman & Uphoff, 1984, p. 243).

Figure 2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Existing Organizations versus Creating New Organizations.

Advantages

Existing Organizations

Patterns of leadership are already established.

Linkages are already in place.

Traditional functions and roles are well established.

The organization is culturally consistent and is acceptable to the local people.

The legitimacy of the organization has been established through governmental support.

The organization has access to indigenous information and local resources.

The organization is more aware of local needs.

The organization may not require legal or statutory action to incorporate project activities.

New Organizations

New organizations can incorporate adequate management and technical skills.

Can define organizational functions to meet project goal and objectives.

Can introduce new group boundaries as a means of expanding participation.

Can incorporate specific incentives for linkages.

Can introduce accountability specifically for project goals.

Creates new channels for interaction between rural communities and governmental or project officials.

Creates new leadership.

Disadvantages

May be unrepresentative of the target population

Boundaries of influence may not relate to project functions.

May lack the necessary capacity in terms of management, problem-solving, or technical skills and may therefore require restructuring or capacity-building to carry out project activities.

The traditional organizational structure may be unable to accept innovation.

The organization may have a history tied to undesirable actions (for example, it may have a colonial heritage).

Participation in the new organization may be perceived as illegitimate or outside of community norms.

The new organization may be seen as a competitor for scarce resources.

Must establish new community level linkages.

Initially not familiar with local cultural norms or needs.

Can be viewed as bypassing local leaders.

May be perceived as being manipulated by outsiders.

May require high level intervention to establish a new organization.

Capacity Building

A problem often faced by projects promoting participation is a lack of organizational skills (e.g., coordinating meetings, reaching consensus, keeping records, or handling funds) on the part of local participants (Korten, 1983). One response to this is to focus on building the capacity of rural, poor communities so that they can better identify and implement solutions to their problems. Capacity building represents the ability to:

- * Anticipate and influence change
- * Make informed decisions
- * Attract resources
- * Manage resources to achieve objectives (Gow & VanSant, 1985).

The concern for capacity building parallels a local organizations' movement toward greater beneficiary participation and is based on two factors. First, the requirements for coordinated action are increased when local participation is encouraged. For example, communication demands become more complicated as the number of entities involved (e.g., the local community, project staff and government personnel) increases. Second, facilitating a broader role for the community in decision making will bring people into the process who have limited managerial and organizational skills. In addition to all the normal management demands of development projects, participatory arrangements add such elements as ambiguity about respective roles of staff and local leaders, lack of clarity about specific responsibilities and the tendency of local elites to obtain a monopoly on project benefits (Bryant & White, 1984). Three important mechanisms for building the capacity in participatory organizations emerge from the literature:

- * Provide training to support the targeted organizational behavior
- * Enhance the ability of the participatory organization to have a positive beginning

- * Identify and implement effective local leadership

Training

As noted earlier, in many rural communities the people have had little experience in developing and operating participatory organizations and consequently lack necessary technical and managerial skills. One effective approach to use in dealing with this problem is offer some type of training program which not only teaches technical, organizational and management skills but which also provides information about the development assistance being offered (Korten, 1983). Uma Lele (1975) contended that a training approach to rural development is one of the most promising ways to bring about lasting change. Indeed, training for participation is recommended by a number of authorities who argue that introducing participatory development practices generally requires training of community members, project staff and government officials (Midgley, 1986; Uphoff, 1985; Bryant & White, 1984; Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Johnston, 1982; UNICEF, 1982).

Training of government and project staff for participatory activity is important for several reasons:

- * Effective training facilitates an increased responsiveness to the needs of the rural poor by generating among the staff a more realistic and sympathetic understanding of their problems and conditions (Esman & Uphoff, 1984).
- * Training enhances staff commitment to and support of participatory goals (Gow & VanSant, 1985).
- * Successful training increases technical, organizational and communication skills of staff.
- * Training helps reduces staff resistance to change (Gow & VanSant, 1985).

For the local community, training is one of the most commonly proposed solutions to the ineffectiveness of participatory organizations (Midgley, 1986; Lisk, 1985; Esman & Uphoff, 1984). It is argued that projects which aim at promoting higher levels of participation must necessarily focus on training as a means of equipping the community and its' leaders with the requisite abilities for assuming greater responsibility in decision making. Esman and Uphoff (1984) reviewed a number of case studies and concluded that both technical and organizational training is important and that if the subject matter is closely related to the interests and needs of the participants the "training will be well, even avidly, received" (p. 229). In addition, the provision of relevant training presents an area where the intervention of international donors can efficiently benefit local participation. Lisk (1985) suggested that the development of practical and relevant training materials and methods is a relatively low cost contribution which can contribute notably to local leadership, organizational development and hence participation .

When providing training for participation Korten (1983) warned that if broad based community participation is desired then providing training only to local leaders is likely to be inadequate. The problem with training only local leaders is that the newly acquired skills and knowledge act to separate those trained from the rest of the community. Esman and Uphoff (1984), for example, contended that one of the major factors leading to organizational oligarchy is a widening skills gap between leaders and followers as the former gain expertise. The implication is that better organizational performance occurs where both community members and leaders receive training. Furthermore, training both community members and leaders is one means of avoiding the take over of participatory organizations by local elites. The effective operation of participatory organizations is a function of the performance and accountability of leaders which depends heavily upon the active participation of community members. "Leaders accomplish group goals through the work of members, and having more

members willing and able to take initiative and responsibility multiplies group capacity" while at the same time it enhances the ability of the group to hold the leader accountable (Esman & Uphoff, 1984, p. 250).

Training as a Strategy for Encouraging Participation

To summarize, the literature suggests that training which is closely related to the needs and interests of the participants can be a productive tactic for establishing community participation. Training is most effective when provided for community members, leaders and project staff because it enhances commitment to participatory goals, allows the joint development of participatory skills which builds capacity, enhances organizational performance and provides a means for accountability.

A Positive Beginning

The failure of local community organizations to reap the optimistic expectations that are often sown in establishing participatory development efforts reduces the credibility of those organizations, creates disillusionment among members and leads to the erosion of beneficiary participation. "Initial rebuffs and disappointments may discourage members, persuade them that the organization is doomed to ineffectiveness and convince them that they are better advised to pursue their interests through particularistic, rather than collective, channels" (Esman & Uphoff, 1984, p. 197). The implication is that local participation is enhanced if community organizations are able to achieve some early successes in terms of providing needed goods or services. It is therefore important in promoting participation that local organizations have a positive beginning.

Mechanisms encouraging early successes and a positive beginning for local organizations centers on three issues. First, when an existing organization is identified to promote participation in a project or a new organization is formed for such a purpose

the organization should meet some clearly recognized need (Esman & Uphoff, 1984). By meeting a need that has been clearly defined by the local people the organization will engender at the outset understanding and support from the community at large.

Second, when promoting participation through local organizations, project objectives ought to be specific and clearly defined. Objectives so defined provide straightforward criteria for assessing activity and progress. Ill-defined, broad or vague goals and objectives are not conducive to promoting effective action (Hakim, 1982; Cohen & Uphoff, 1980).

Third, a successful way to strengthen an existing organization or to build a new one is to focus on a single task or a few important tasks to be accomplished (Bryant & White, 1984; Gow & VanSant, 1983; Uphoff, 1985; Hakim, 1982). Encouraging local organizations to perform a few tasks well rather than to diversify will give the participants competence and confidence in the ability of their organization to be effective. The implication is that projects should start with a few relatively simple activities that can respond to local needs. Furthermore, caution must be taken not to load too many responsibilities on the organization (Uphoff, 1985). For example, increasing "paperwork" through outside demands for information, "red tape," and bureaucratic delays should be minimized so that the organization can get on with the job at hand (Hakim, 1982). Measures such as these aimed at keeping participatory operations simple function to mitigate against organizational frustration, time delays and enhances the ability of the organization to get things rolling in a positive way. Thus, progress for community participation proceeds best when it proceeds in an evolutionary manner.

Operationally, a number of authorities have commented that beneficiary participation can be effectively initiated through the creation of specific projects that command popular support (Donaldson, 1987; Midgley, 1986; Esman & Uphoff, 1984). These authors suggested that projects designed around the creation of a productive physical infrastructure such as buildings, irrigation channels, link roads and water or

grain storage facilities can provide an effective beginning to a beneficiary organization. These projects can easily become an educational process in itself; they meet a recognized community need; they are reasonably simple to plan and implement insofar as it represents a single task; project progress can be easily assessed; and the result is a physical asset which acts as an incentive to encourage further participation in the project.

In sum, positive initial experiences with participatory organizations builds the capacity of beneficiaries to gain competence and confidence in the decision making processes. Positive beginnings are enhanced by projects that meet a clearly recognizable need, that keep initial activities simple and familiar, that focus on one or a few important tasks and that have clearly defined organizational goals and objectives.

Local Leadership

The subject of local leadership in participatory development emerges as a complex, contingent, transitory and variable phenomenon. Although this phenomenon attracts a great deal of attention in the literature, its' impact on participatory development is not easily explained. For example, local leadership is seen as important for its role in identifying and articulating problems to be solved, in planning and implementing courses of action, in mobilizing and managing resources, in resolving conflicts, in facilitating community participation in decision making and in various other tasks in which local organizations are involved. Strong, committed leadership is seen as essential to the development of participatory organizations and to their ability to function effectively (Gow & VanSant, 1985; Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Hakim, 1982).

On the other hand, as organizations evolve to serve the interests and enhance the participation of community members in the development process, effective leadership is most likely to be drawn from those individuals who are relatively more advantaged, prominent or closely connected with the local power structure. A potential danger

emerging from this situation is that community representation will be parochial; the interests and aspirations of the community at large may not be taken into account in the decision making process. Local leaders, especially those in established leadership positions, are stationed where they can easily serve their own interests or those of a certain local constituency that supports them and their views. A number of authorities caution that while local leaders may mobilize people and resources effectively, they operate under conditions that are ripe for corruption (Midgley, 1986; Gow & VanSant, 1985; Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Hakim, 1982). Furthermore, there is a danger in placing too much responsibility on individual leaders and particularly of allowing charismatic or inspirational leaders to dictate activities. Dependence on one imposing leader is not only a sign of organizational weakness but is associated with a high rate of project failure because if these leaders lose interest or cease to function effectively for whatever reasons, community participation programs often breakdown.

One cannot assume; however, that established or more advantaged leaders will necessarily dominate local organizations to benefit of themselves or, conversely, that leaders from impoverished backgrounds will be more motivated to help the poor out of a sense of "noblesse oblige" (Esman & Uphoff, 1984). There are examples in the literature to both verify and contradict both views. Traditional leaders can be good or bad leaders for community participation projects. The important point is that programs attempting to circumvent traditional leadership are not feasible. Such attempts will either fail or some outside authority will be needed to take the place of the local leaders, thereby inhibiting participatory input (Gow & VanSant, 1985). In practical terms, there may be no alternative but to work with existing local leaders...[e]ven if traditional leaders are not dynamic and supportive, their position is usually so dominant that it cannot be simply ignored" (Esman & Uphoff, 1984, p. 251).

Community Selected Leadership

A principle for establishing effective local leadership is to encourage the community of beneficiaries to create and chose its' own leaders (Esman & Uphoff, 1984). When looking for someone to provide initiative and leadership in organizing the community for participation, projects are most effective when they utilize "natural leaders"; that is, people who are accepted and put forth by the local community as appropriate leaders (Hage & Finsterbusch, 1987).

Project Management Factors

From the perspective of donor agencies local participation is important in the management of development projects because management decisions often involve political as well as technological choices. When choices are made which direct benefits to some groups rather than to others, politics are involved and participation can make a difference in the distribution of benefits. These types of political choices continue throughout the various phases of a project (Bryant & White, 1984). At every stage of the project process there will be questions about who is to participate and how that participation is to occur. Donor agencies and governments responding to these questions in ways which encourage beneficiary participation necessitates consideration of three issues: (1) design projects that are small with simple management procedures; (2) decentralize project management; and (3) adopt an approach to project management that includes experimentation, flexibility and a willingness to work closely with project beneficiaries. Each of these will be treated in the following sections.

Project Size

The thesis that many development assistance projects are too big and complicated to allow effective beneficiary participation is the most consistently supported finding in the literature (Gran, 1983). For example, Gow and VanSant (1985, 1983), Bryant

and White (1984), Gran (1983), Cohen and Uphoff (1980) and Chambers (1978) contended that development projects that are large, complex and highly technical are antagonistic to participatory development. This view asserts that poor people cannot participate effectively and efficiently in projects which are on a scale beyond their understanding. Large, complex projects create distance between the community and project staff, require more effort on the part of project staff, take longer to produce tangible results and inherently contain a greater number of unforeseen problems.

On the other hand, effective participatory initiatives are those designed around small projects that have simple and direct management procedures (Uphoff, 1985; Bryant & White, 1984; Gow & VanSant, 1983; Chambers, 1978). Small project size implies a focus on projects that start with one or a few important activities that respond to locally defined needs and that produce tangible results quickly. Project simplicity refers to the design of projects so that they fit the information, administrative and technical capacities within a community. Devising and implementing small projects with simple procedures is an essential part of any participatory, poverty focused rural development project. Even when programs are large, components of the projects should be small with an emphasis on capacity building at the local organizational level rather than on inputs of capital or imported technology (Midgley, 1986; Gow & VanSant, 1985).

Decentralization

Decentralization refers to the transfer or delegation of decision making control in development assistance projects from a centralized authority to local communities. The process of decentralization, while it neither assumes nor implies participation, can make positive contributions that support the participatory development process (Gow & VanSant, 1985, 1983; Rondinelli et al., 1984; Rondinelli, 1981; Montgomery, 1979). These contributions include, for example, increasing access of the rural poor to

government and donor agency resources through the establishment of working linkages, helping to insure an equitable distribution of benefits, improving the technical and administrative capabilities of local organizations, enabling those most in touch with local problems to make changes and have input into project plans and designs and fosters more timely decision making by reducing delays and difficulties (Bryant & White, 1984; Rondinelli et al., 1984). Furthermore, analysts for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have found that decentralization is an essential factor in increasing the scope of decision making available to local participants and in building institutions that encourage, structure, focus and stabilize community participation (Rondinelli, 1981). This complex of factors implies that the participatory process is, in essence, an integrated system of decentralized decision making by local organizations and their leaders (Gow & VanSant, 1985).

A review of recent experience with decentralization in developing countries indicates that most successful cases of decentralization have occurred when the process was centered around specific administrative functions; when it was associated with projects that were small in scope with relatively simple management procedures; when local organizations were given adequate time to gain the necessary skills and capacities; and which included a training component (Rondinelli et al., 1984). These findings support an emerging theme that decentralization, as with other participatory mechanisms, must be viewed as a process of incrementally building the capacity of local organizations. The implication is that a great deal can be achieved in terms of decentralization and hence participation through small-scale, incremental transfers of power and decision making control.

Financial Responsibility

If local organizations are to be effective as participatory conduits they need to have some legal authority and some measure of power or discretion in decision making.

One factor that has been identified as central to this concept is the ability of local organizations to acquire some degree of autonomous financial responsibility (Midgley, 1986; Bryant & White, 1984; Rondinelli et al., 1984; Montgomery, 1979; Chambers, 1978). Most local organizations in developing countries are extremely limited in terms of financial resources. For participation development to be effective, local organizations need some degree of financial discretion. They must not only have access to outside funds but must also have the power to raise revenues for themselves. Rondinelli et al. (1984) contended that transferring financial resources is a simple and reasonable solution to the problem of how to turn responsibility for development projects over to poor local organizations. "It is better to start decentralization by giving the organizations to which responsibilities are transferred money to allocate rather than rules to follow...the concrete tasks of allocating resources will do more to galvanize local action than even the grandest abstract discussions" (p. 75).

Decentralization: Necessary for Effective Participation

To summarize, decentralization has been found effective in increasing participation in a number of locales, has increased the capacity of local organizations to control decision making processes and influence central government agencies and has increased the amounts of national resources made available for local development. Decentralization implies investing local organizations with adequate decision making power including control of financial resources and requires that these organizations be given the necessary time to master appropriate decision making functions.

Project Management

A major criticism of past development assistance efforts centers on a management model that follows a set of prescribed steps beginning with problem identification and concluding with project evaluation. This approach is generally

characterized as providing little flexibility in terms of change or adaptability. The major focus is on project planning through the specification of goals, objectives, outputs, predetermined time frames, level of inputs required and implementation schedules. In short, what this model provides is a static equation for the implementation of a designed-in-advance solution to an externally identified problem (Brinkerhoff & Ingle, 1989). However, because of the subtlety, complexity, uncertainty and dynamic nature of the participatory development process, as well as the unpredictability of the setting in which it is applied, it is highly unlikely that project management can collect all of the information that is needed when designing effective and sustainable activities (IDMC, 1987).

Process Model

In response to this weakness, a "process" model of management has emerged. The key features of this model include the design of short-range, contingent options that allow for incremental [trial and error] project adjustments, decentralized decision making, shared authority, non-hierarchical and facilitative leadership, participatory planning and implementation, informal and interactive communication, continuous information gathering and experimentation (Brinkerhoff & Hopkins, 1989). This model assumes that not enough is known or can be learned prior to project implementation to ensure project success and sustainability.

Design and implementation are merged so that the project is modified and adapted as knowledge is acquired about the specific environment. Each redesign effort represents an experimental solution, to be tested and then redesigned again based on accumulated learning in the face of the uncertainty and complexity that characterize sustained socioeconomic development (Brinkerhoff & Hopkins, 1989, p. 489).

The process approach is also characterized by clearly defined project objectives. These objectives; however, are established with considerable openness and flexibility in order to allow for adaptation to changing conditions. Community participation is a key in that

goals, targets and schedules are developed and subject to revision as necessary based on input from the local beneficiaries (Korten, 1980). As a result, goals and processes become more clearly defined as their implementation approaches.

In summary, "it is essential to reorient development administration so that bureaucrats in operating ministries and donor agencies can facilitate participation, innovation, be responsive to sudden change or new opportunities...and learn while doing" (Cohen et al., 1985, p. 1212). The task of management in participatory development requires an emphasis on experimentation, flexibility and the willingness to work closely with project beneficiaries in order to learn about and respond effectively to local needs and constraints.

Summary and Research Areas

Many development assistance professionals are convinced that participation by beneficiaries will generally enhance project effectiveness (Finsterbusch & Van Wicklin III, 1989, 1987; Goulet, 1989; Cernea, 1987, 1985; Cohen & Uphoff, 1980). Little, however, has been provided in the way of specific methods for establishing participation operationally. The question remains, "How can participation be implemented?"

The purpose of this study is to address this question with the goal of increasing the understanding about how beneficiary participation occurs and can be enhanced in rural development assistance projects. The assumption is that through effective participation rural communities will be able to achieve control of decision making processes and project benefits. Therefore, this study seeks to identify patterns, processes and techniques in development assistance projects that enhance the ability of local people to gain control of the benefits and decision making processes in projects affecting their lives. The major research question of this study is "How can project managers facilitate the participation of local communities in their own development?"

A summary of the review of literature indicates the following areas to examine in answering this question:

- * The motivation to establish community participation in decision making in development assistance projects is most effective when the impetus for participation is prompted by mutually supportive and reinforcing activities from both inside and outside the community.
- * Projects that aim at encouraging community participation in rural development assistance projects should be small in scope and oriented around relatively simple activities. In addition, the projects should be based on local needs and conditions and attuned to local capabilities while oriented toward increasing local skills and capacity.
- * Local organizations are practical and effective vehicles for implementing community participation. The type and function of the organization; however, will vary from project to project and should be determined in dialogue with the community. From a donor perspective, attention should be given to establishing a productive and rewarding beginning for local organizations, encouraging local leadership and providing training where necessary in relevant participatory skills to both staff and community.
- * Project management requirements for participation include an emphasis on experimentation, flexibility and a willingness to work closely with project beneficiaries. Decision making power must be decentralized to local organizations if effective local participation in development initiatives is to be achieved. An important component in the decentralization of decision making power includes the control of financial resources.

These themes form the foundation of this inquiry.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

This study was descriptive and qualitative in nature and employed an ethnographic case study approach. Wiersma (1986) describes ethnographic research as the "process of providing scientific descriptions of educational systems, processes and phenomena within their specific contexts" (p. 233). Several features common to the use of qualitative research can be identified. First, the focus of qualitative research is on understanding human behavior which requires an awareness of the framework within which the research subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions (Vulliamy, Lewin, & Stephens, 1990). This implies a preference for research procedures that produce descriptive data such as peoples' own words or observable behavior rather than data produced from experimentation under artificial conditions (Wilson, 1984).

Second, qualitative research aims at generating hypotheses and theories that emerge from the data rather than testing preconceived hypotheses. The focus is on inductive rather than deductive reasoning. For example, qualitative research is seen as a "discovery oriented approach that minimizes investigator manipulation of variables and places no prior constraints on what the outcomes of the research will be" (Patton, 1990, p. 41). The purpose of the present study was to "discover" a rich picture of how the process of beneficiary participation is encouraged in rural development assistance projects. For this reason, hypotheses "per se" were not part of this study.

Third, qualitative research is holistic in that it focuses on providing an explanation of human behavior that is related to the ways people themselves interpret their social situations. This interpretative paradigm requires the researcher to interact with the people being studied in order to gain an understanding of how they view the world (Vulliamy et al., 1990; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). This perspective asserts that human behavior cannot be understood without understanding the framework within which the research subjects interpret their own thoughts, feelings and actions (Wilson,

1977). Human behavior and organizations are seen as "social constructs created by people rather than as the product of external forces which mould action in ways which can be predicted by empirical research" (Vulliamy et al., 1990). The present study combines an interpretive theoretical framework with a qualitative research technique that focuses on project managers' perceptions regarding the processes of participatory development.

Finally, because qualitative research is formulated as an interpretative paradigm where hypotheses are not used, statistical analysis is not made a part of the research model.

Focus of Study

This study focused on what occurred in specific rural development assistance project settings to encourage the participation of local community members (i.e., intended beneficiaries) in decision making in development projects. The study sought to examine the phenomenon of beneficiary or community participation as it was experienced by different project managers in different project settings. The investigation was concerned with how the project managers described and explained the process of encouraging participation. In doing so the study interpreted the perceptions and meanings related to the process of encouraging participation as described by the project managers. This interpretive approach assumed that by describing and understanding project processes from the respondents point of view it would be possible to isolate critical mechanisms that have contributed to community participation in rural development assistance projects. In short, this study looked at what the project managers experienced in terms of implementing projects which involved local participation, the obstacles they had encountered in the process and how they interpreted their experiences.

Sample

The data for this study were obtained from telephone interviews with seven individuals who were at the time of the study or who had been rural development assistance project managers. Direct quotations from these interviews form the raw data of this inquiry. The interviews for this study were conducted during March and April 1991. The respondents included a Senior Resource Manager for a church related community development organization with operations involving over 100 projects in various parts of Africa; a Senior Representative for Brazil for an international governmental funding agency with project funding experience in Latin America and the Caribbean; an officer of a non-governmental organization (NGO) with hands-on project experience in small enterprise development and projects focusing on increasing the food production of small farmers in a number of West African countries; an officer of an NGO with experience as a community development project manager in Tanzania; a former volunteer for an NGO with eight years experience in agricultural and community development work in Botswana; a former community development project manager for an NGO with 11 years experience in Brazil working in crop production and improvement and house, cistern and outhouse/privy construction; and a Women in Development specialist with 12 years experience with rural development assistance projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and currently employed by a government supported voluntary organization.

Purposive (Patton, 1990) or theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used. This procedure is based on the delineation of areas of research interest and on the identification of theoretical factors thought to affect these areas. Patton (1990) asserted that the logic and power of this approach lies in selecting "information rich" cases. That is, the purpose is to "select information rich cases whose study will illuminate" the areas of interest that are the focus of the research (p. 169).

Within the context of this study, information rich cases refer to the extent to which individual project managers [the units of study] were involved in projects that were oriented toward community participation in decision making processes. The study sought to interview project managers who had experience in rural development projects that employed community participation as a strategy. The criteria that respondents had to have for inclusion in the study include: three or more years experience as rural development assistance project managers with involvement in projects oriented toward community participation in decision making processes and current residence in the United States. These criteria were chosen for two reasons. First, the experience of the researcher suggests that at least three years experience with participatory rural development assistance projects in developing countries provides adequate background for responding to interview questions addressing the issue of community participation. The extent to which respondents met this criteria was established through preliminary telephone conversations. It should be noted that all respondents but one had experience considerably in excess of three years. Second, the criteria of residence in the United States provided the researcher with timely and affordable telephone accessibility to the respondents.

In selecting respondents for this study, maximum variation selection along several lines was sought (Patton, 1990). In terms of geographic area of experience, respondents were sought who represented the major regions of the developing world. Respondents were chosen who had project experience in various parts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Variation was also sought in terms of organizational affiliation. Respondents were chosen who had worked for a variety of organizations including governmental organizations, church and non-church related NGOs, voluntary and non-voluntary organizations, funding agencies and organizations that provided expatriate personnel for in-country grass-roots development work.

This maximum variation strategy of purposeful sampling aimed at describing central themes that cut across a great deal of respondent and project variation. The logic behind this approach, as Patton (1990) asserted, is that when selecting a small sample of great diversity the data collection and analysis will yield two important kinds of findings. First, detailed descriptions of each interview will be produced that are useful for documenting the uniqueness of each case. Second, the heterogeneity of the cases will enhance the significance of any shared patterns that are revealed. "Thus, the research using a maximum variation sampling strategy is not attempting to generalize findings but is looking for information that elucidates programmatic variation and significant common patterns within that variation" (p. 172).

Based on consultations with development assistance professionals and on a review of relevant literature it was determined that many of the successful programs stressing community participation as an approach to rural development have been implemented by NGOs. In several cases these organizations provided a starting point for the selection of information rich cases. Respondents were also selected through personal contacts, prior experience of the researcher, as well as through a process of "snowballing" in which one respondent led the researcher to other respondents (Patton, 1990). As a result of this process, a purposive sample seven of development assistance project managers who had extensive experience with projects that stressed community participation was identified.

Data Collection

An interview guide (see Appendix A) was used to guide the questioning of the respondents. The interview guide represented a list of questions or issues to be explored during the course of in-depth relatively open-ended telephone interviews. The interview guide was designed to provide a framework within which the respondents (project managers) could express their own understandings using their own words about

the process of implementing community participation based on their experience in various project settings. This research format was used for several reasons. First, the interview guide assured that basically the same information was covered in each interview. This allowed for the comparison of data among cases. Second, the guide provided subject areas within which the interviewer was free to probe in order to more fully illuminate that particular area. Third, the guide allowed the interviewer to build a conversational style into the interview while maintaining a predetermined focus. Fourth, the guide enhanced the ability of the interviewer to best use the limited time available for the interviews (Patton, 1990).

Content Validity

The content validity of the interview guide is concerned with whether or not the questions are pertinent to the categories inferred from the related literature. In order to establish the content validity of the interview guide the instrument was tested and revised using a panel of experts. The content validation of the interview guide was established using four Oregon State University faculty members who had at least three years of international experience with development.

In determining the content validity, a preliminary interview guide consisting of an inventory of 13 potential interview questions was drawn from the review of related literature (see Appendix B). The initial stage of the validation process began in March 1991, and involved eliciting a reaction from each member of the panel of experts as to whether or not there is ambiguity or redundancy within the potential inventory of interview questions. The panel of experts was instructed to reject, retain or retain through modification each of the questions listed in the inventory. The inventory of questions was reviewed, revised and summarized on the basis of panel inputs and a final interview guide of 10 questions was developed.

The Interviews

Preliminary telephone conversations with project managers regarding their qualifications and willingness to take part in this study were conducted in March and April 1991. During the course of these conversations the respondents were informed of the general topics to be covered in the interview, the methods to be used to collect data and of the procedures to be taken to protect them as respondents in this study. If the respondents were found to be qualified and willing to participate in the study, an interview time was established. The selected respondents were then sent a letter that contained a copy of the interview guide, a brief description of the objectives of the research, of the methods and procedures to be used and a description of the methods to be taken to protect them (see Appendix C).

The seven interviews were conducted by the researcher using the interview guide during March and April of 1991. Each interview lasted from 30 to 40 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Because the recordings included the subjects' names and the identity of their organization the tapes were erased when this project was completed. Names of individuals and organizations were altered in the transcriptions to preserve respondent anonymity.

Data Analysis Strategy

A constant comparative method of qualitative analysis was used in this study. The method combined an explicit coding procedure with a style of theory development in which theoretical notions were redesigned as the interview transcripts were read and concepts and propositions were developed in order to begin to make sense of the data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). While rigorous, the constant comparative method is not designed to allow two analysts working independently with the same data to arrive at the same results. "It is designed to allow, with discipline, for some vagueness and flexibility that aid the creative generation of theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 103).

Plausible hypotheses about the problem were suggested but not provisionally tested.

There were four stages in the constant comparative method of data analysis:

1. Data making or specifying the incidents applicable to each category of analysis
2. Data reduction or integrating the categories and their properties
3. Inference or delimiting the theory
4. Analysis or writing the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Data Making

Data making was accomplished by analyzing each interview to categorize segments which contained project managers' perceptions or descriptions that related to the community participation issues raised in the interview guide or to new issues. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) define categorization as "the generation of the properties and attributes that the data units of a category share" (p. 170). The categorization process first required this researcher to describe what was observed, to divide the observations into units and to specify how the units were alike or different. Although categories of data can be produced directly from inspection of the data, the categories of were established in advance based on a review of related of literature and their "a priori" relevance to the overall research question. The goal of the initial categorization was to compare the categories that emerged from the individual interviews with the categories that were identified a priori as a result of the literature review.

The process of data making involved thoroughly reading the interview transcripts and categorizing the data according to the similarities or differences of the individual responses to each a priori category or "coding." During the coding or categorization process, the basic defining rule for the constant comparative method was followed: "While coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 106). This process represents the first step in the grounded theory style of analysis

and is designed to allow the researcher to discover all the themes or categories that are contained in the data in addition to the ones established a priori.

In summary, the first step in the data analysis procedure for this study involved noting relevant responses of each respondent to each interview item; comparing each response to the other responses in order to identify categories, patterns or themes; comparing these themes with the a priori categories; compiling any additional categories or themes; and summarizing and recording the results in written form. Each interview was coded into as many categories of analysis as possible as these categories emerged or as they fit into existing categories.

Data Reduction

Once the data were coded into categories it was possible to reduce the entire set of data to analyzable form. This task was accomplished by integrating the categories or establishing linkages between the categories through a process of comparing and contrasting, by identifying underlying associations, and by inference (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The goal of this process was to analyze the properties of a single category and to look for relationships between categories in such a way that the product is a unified whole.

The objective of the integration procedure was to analyze the summary statements that emerged during the initial categorization procedure and to produce a set of analyzable factors. This analysis resulted in the emergence of the following summary data categories:

1. Scope of activity of local organizations
2. Characteristics of project activities
3. Characteristics of donor agency/government management activities
4. Effects on rural communities

Inference and Analysis

Although the process of constant comparative analysis is described as a four step methodology, the processes of inferring from the data and analyzing the data were performed from the very beginning and continued simultaneously throughout the study. An early level of inference and analysis occurred during the initial coding of each relevant response in each of the interviews. This was accomplished by resolving all of the statements into categories and summarizing and recording the results. A higher level of analysis occurred during the integration of categories and involved systematically delimiting categories to include only those that are related in sufficiently significant ways to be used in the generation of a unified theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Accomplishing this task involved analyzing each individual data category using sociologically constructed and "in vivo" codes (Strauss, 1987). Sociological codes are formulated by the researcher. They are based on a combination of "scholarly knowledge and substantive knowledge of the field under study" (p. 34). In vivo codes are taken directly from the language of the respondents.

Validity and Reliability

LeCompte and Goetz (1984) describe reliability and validity in qualitative research as having both internal and external dimensions. External reliability is concerned with replication and refers to the degree to which independent researchers would generate the same data in the same or similar settings. Internal reliability is concerned with the extent to which, within a single study, multiple observers agree or disagree. Regarding validity, these authors state that internal validity refers to the extent to which researchers measure what they think they are measuring. External validity is concerned with the degree to which the abstract constructs generated are applicable across groups and studies.

This study contained several measures that address the issue of external reliability. First, a step-by-step description of the data collection methodology of this study was provided for the scrutiny of interested parties. This information could serve to lead other researchers in replicating this study. Second, external reliability was enhanced by clearly outlining the theoretical basis and defining the concepts that have shaped this research (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Finally, the researcher has sought to identify and describe the general strategies used for analyzing the qualitative data. This procedure provides subsequent reviewers with a map for reconstructing the original analytic strategies.

Internal reliability is a function of inter-observer reliability in which the concern is for "agreement on the description or composition of events" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 218). These authors suggest five strategies for reducing threats to internal reliability. Two such strategies, the use of "low-inference descriptors" and mechanically recorded data, are employed in this study. First, the strategy of low-inference descriptors was implemented through the use of verbatim transcriptions of the telephone interviews. Verbatim transcriptions comprise a set of concrete and precise material that provides reviewers of this study the means for accepting, rejecting or modifying the researchers' conclusions. Second, by mechanically recording the data all data generated in the interviews are preserved in an unabstracted way, thus strengthening the reliability of the results.

Patton (1990) describes the triangulation of qualitative data sources as a means of "cross-checking the consistency of information derived at different times and by different means within qualitative methods" (p. 467). In other words, triangulation is qualitative cross-validation. In the present study, triangulation was used to address the issue of internal validity. The cross-validation of data was achieved by addressing the a priori research categories with multiple interview questions. For example, the a priori category dealing with local organizations as practical and effective vehicles for

implementing local participation was addressed during the interviews from several different perspectives. Question 3 approaches the issue by inquiring about the effectiveness of using existing organizations versus creating new organizations or of using no organizational strategy at all as development strategies. Question 6 is concerned with the presence of skills and capacities in rural community organizations for implementing and managing development assistant projects. Question 7 asks about the respondents experience with local leadership and its positive or negative effects on the performance of local organizations.

In summary, approaching the a priori categories in this study from different perspectives using different interview questions enhances the likelihood that the data thus generated are consistently addressing the categories of interest.

Threats to external validity are components of a study that obstruct or reduce its comparability or translatability. Comparability refers to the degree to which a study can be compared to other studies that address related issues. Transferability is concerned with the extent to which the theoretical components and research techniques of a study can be understood and applied by other researchers (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). To establish external validity the "typicality of a phenomenon, or the extent to which it may be compared and contrasted along relevant dimensions with other phenomena" must be demonstrated (p.229). In the present study, this problem is addressed by a maximum variation sampling strategy. The inclusion of respondents with project management experience in a variety of locales, with a cross section of project activities and with an assortment of development agencies supports the study's generalizability.

CHAPTER 3

Findings

The findings of this study are presented in two parts. Part I describes the analyses of the data related to the process of encouraging beneficiary participation that emerged from the interviews. The focus is on describing a picture of community participation based on the patterns or themes discovered in the informants' responses. The analysis of these data resulted in the emergence of the following summary data categories:

1. Characteristics of project activities
2. Characteristics of local organizational activity
3. The role of intermediary organizations
4. Effects on rural communities

Part II of this chapter combines the data patterns of the interviews with concepts out of current literature into a model of rural development assistance in which projects are viewed as participatory learning systems. This model presents a unified picture of participatory development as a system in which communities increasingly gain the skills and abilities to identify problems and to design, implement and adapt solutions consistent with their needs and capabilities.

Part I

Characteristics of Project Activities

Project characteristics as a data category contains four factors: projects should be small, involving relatively simple activities that are attuned to the capacities of the local community; projects should be based on the real needs and interests of the community; projects should produce a recognizable benefit; and the initiative for participation should be supported at the community as well as the donor agency/government level.

Small Projects with Activities Attuned to Community Needs and Capacities

A number of authors (Gow & VanSant, 1985, 1983; Bryant & White, 1984; Gran, 1983; Cohen & Uphoff, 1980; Chambers, 1978) view development projects that are large, complex and highly technical as antagonistic to participatory development. This view asserts that rural communities cannot participate effectively and efficiently in organizations and on issues which are on a scale beyond their understanding. The interviews support this perspective. The weight of evidence indicates a relationship between project success, size, complexity of activity and degree of participation. Smaller projects with relatively less complex project activities were seen as facilitating community participation which, in turn, enhances project success:

I think in general there is a pretty good correlation between sort of effectiveness of participation, project success, and size of project and easiness or difficulty of the task.

The cases reveal that this relationship is based on several factors. For example, extensive technical assistance or a series of complicated inputs places project activities beyond the capabilities of local communities. In these cases, the ability of the community to understand and control the decision making processes in the project is severely handicapped. As a result, a high level of community control will be difficult to achieve:

[M]y experience is that really the bigger and more complex the project the less likely...that there is real community participation. Or at least there may be community participation but not community control.

The notion of complexity is also related to the breadth of project activities such as in so-called integrated rural development projects. One organization preferred to withdraw from such an approach because:

What was meant by integrated rural development projects was really nothing more than the simultaneous implementation of discreet project activities...[and there] wasn't necessarily linkage between...these various elements of the project...That's why its often the case that the intended

beneficiaries are overwhelmed, that while the various components might be valuable they probably should not be attempted simultaneously.

The implication is that attention should be given to the range of activities and the effect on overall participation. Multiple activities, for example, should be linked so that they reinforce each other in such a way that more benefits accrue and that project beneficiaries are more able to understand the necessity of participation. On the other hand, there is evidence in the interviews as well as the literature (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980) suggesting that a wide range of project activities leads to inadequate participation in all of them.

Large projects are viewed in the case studies as projects that require high levels of technical inputs and involve numerous activities. These types of projects also demand large inputs of money. The respondents suggest that large amounts of money tied to project activities often present an obstacle to community participation due to the increased likelihood of government interference and corruption:

I think the more money that is poured into [projects] the more difficult it is to [maintain] community participation...and not make it a free for all with the government...[The more money a project requires the higher the likelihood of corruption] so I think that it is...better to keep it smaller in size and in money.

In summary, the case studies indicate that projects involving numerous activities, extensive technical assistance and large amounts of money should be approached with circumspection. Such projects are unlikely to achieve any high degree of participation. The weight of evidence suggests that community participation is best encouraged in projects that involve fewer, relatively less complex inputs involving relatively smaller amounts of money. If multiple activities are necessary these activities should be linked in such a way that communities are capable of understanding and controlling the decision making processes. The implication is to design projects that are within reach of community capabilities.

Needs and Interests of the Community

A consensus among the case studies indicates the importance of project activities that are directly related to the needs and interests of the community. What is needed are:

Projects and processes that truly relate to the real needs of the community...[project] activities which are at the very core of people's needs and interests.

Understandably, the logic behind this approach is that if an activity has no relevance to the needs of a community there will be no motivation to participate. The result is proposing or funding a project that does not have community support and is not something in which people are prepared to participate. This is a real danger in the sense that it is not uncommon for a donor agency or national government to embrace the notion of community participation but push projects that are based on an agenda that is not related to community needs:

A lot of organizations talk the lingo of community participation but because they have their own particular focus they can't help but move the dialogue in their direction.

In other words, while it may be easy for development organizations to impose an agenda on a rural community through a project, a more realistic approach is to support projects that respond to a community's expressed need:

It is easy to try and drum up needs. But to wait and respond to an expressed need [should] definitely be a goal.

In summary, the respondents in this study felt that rural communities are more than eager to participate in project activities if those activities address a felt need within the community. This view is consistent with that of a number of authors (Uphoff, 1985; Bryant & White, 1984; Gow & VanSant, 1983; Hakim, 1982) who contend that projects should start small, with relatively simple activities that can respond to local needs. These projects enhance the power of participation to produce a recognizable benefit and to provide a sense of progress toward community established goals.

Initiative

A final characteristic of project activities relates to initiative: the origin of the responsibility for establishing community participation in project activities. All cases indicated the importance for the initiative to participate to come from three levels: the local community, intermediary organizations and donor agencies.

The respondents in this study represent both intermediary and donor organizations. All of these organizations felt a responsibility for and demonstrated a commitment to establishing community participation in project activities. For them, community participation is a key feature in an effective development strategy. One respondent working for a U.S. government supported funding agency put it like this:

Participation, ever since this organization was created, has been one of the primary features it looks for in projects. And you can pretty much separate out the projects that have been approved by [this organization] from those that have not based on the issue of participation. We also look at technical feasibility and economic feasibility and things like that but participation is absolutely essential.

These organizations supported participatory activities yet waited for project ideas to come up from the grass roots. In these cases, it was common for the donor agencies to work through intermediary organizations. Intermediary organizations such as PVOs and NGOs are based in country and function as links between the communities and donors. For example, one project started at the community level with:

A group of elders that got together and they first of all approached some of the local churches that were doing work out there and asked for this type of assistance. And that local church then went on to contact several funding or donor agencies. And that is how [my organization] got involved.

The case study evidence suggests that links between rural communities and donor agency or government activities play a decisive role in participatory development. These linkages are grounded in participatory initiatives which are supported at all levels of the development process. On the other hand, the respondents viewed one sided initiatives as ineffective. For example, top-down initiatives, even when through intermediary

organizations, were seen as inadequate. These initiatives were seen as dictating projects and activities to communities. This approach is unworkable because the projects are not really dependent on the types of things people are interested in doing for themselves.

One respondent suggested that:

The days of people here in North America or Europe or...sitting around figuring what needs to be done to solve the situation in Africa is pretty well over...those kinds of projects just don't work...the community is just not interested in it. So it just doesn't go. [D]uring our years there we had many friends and colleagues from other organizations who were involved in some of these sorts of projects. And they always wondered, 'Well, why don't people want to work?' Or...'Why isn't the community interested in it?' And that [the top-down initiative] is a big part of it.

One characteristic of top-down initiatives contributing to their ineffectiveness is that people are often given something for free and as a result there is no community investment in the project:

The people are used to projects coming through so they tend to flock to the first meeting thinking they are going to get a free handout because most government projects promise something for free. Although it may be delayed by months or years before it comes. In our projects, generally we make the people pay for everything.

This approach was viewed as successful because the communities were invested in the project. Investment is a key word and it can take many forms. It is important because it implies the ownership of project activities:

We've through experience...seen that it's real important to encourage...local participants to invest...initially their ideas...invest their time, their energies, and...whatever they [can] contribute...If you've invested all the things I've mentioned you really have a feeling that you own the outputs of a project, [that] its up to you to carry through.

The implication is that people will make an investment in participation only when it is rational to do so. It is rational for communities to participate in project activities when the benefits are attainable through participation. If it is possible to attain some benefit at a lower cost (or for free), that route will likely be taken, and there will be no motivation to participate. Thus, participatory development projects should be presented

as involving some "quid pro quo" from the community. This tests the premise that the dimensions of the project are agreeable to the beneficiaries and that the project is of value to them.

To summarize, the case studies and literature suggested that participation is a process that requires support at many levels. This process will be most effective when the responsibility for participation is shared and prompted by mutually supportive and reinforcing activities and aims both from the community, the intermediaries, and the donor agencies. In addition, participatory projects should require some investment from the community. This investment can be either material or human resources. Investment creates ownership and tests the value and appropriateness of the activity to the community.

Characteristics of Local Organizational Activity

As noted in the review of literature, local organizations represent a valuable mechanism in the establishment of community participation (Midgley, 1986; Gow & VanSant, 1985; Uphoff, 1985; Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Korten, 1983; Hakim, 1982). The interview data echo this assertion. The picture that emerges is one in which existing organizations are seen as being involved in all project phases including design, management and evaluation. In addition, local organizations are seen as possessing the skills necessary to adopt these roles. Local leaders are viewed as a "two edged sword" who are necessary not only for the effectiveness of local organizations but also for the endorsement of project activities. Finally, to be effective in dealing with outside agencies local organizations must have a legitimate power base.

Existing Organizations

In contrast to the debate in the literature over the preferability of using existing organizations versus creating new organizations as conduits of community participation,

the majority of cases in this study indicated that using existing organizations was a far more practical and effective approach. As the literature (Honadle, Walker, & Silverman, 1985) suggests, with existing organizations patterns of leadership are established, linkages are in place, the organization is acceptable to the people, more aware of local needs and has access to indigenous information and resources. The picture that emerged from the interviews reveals there are generally an abundance of organizations, some very informal by Western standards, but nevertheless quite suitable for project activities:

[W]hat we found to be the best was to use what was already there. One of the traditional sort of committee discussion forums was...a village elder committee or something like that. Where there was a chief and there was a group of elders and the rest of the community at-large could...fit behind that ring. The community would come together to discuss anything of importance or even disciplinary action in the community. And we found that as much as possible to channel projects or ideas or any questions we had through that type of a forum worked out very well. [I]n most of these countries there [are] village development committees [and a number of other types of organizations]...So to tag into to one of those organizations, one of those sub-organizations is also was also quite effective. I think in fact there is [such] an over-abundance of committees or organizations [or] organizational structures that it would be ludicrous to try and create too many more.

The creation of new organizations is ill-advised because these organizations are the result of an external intervention. One outcome is a weak organization:

[F]rom what I've seen those organizations are much more fragile...because they are not born...out of any shared or felt need of the community but rather a external stimulus. And they tend to be dependent, even more dependent on the existence of the program that created them such that when funding dries up...or the specific project [ends, the organization dies]. Let's say an association was formed to participate in a program where they could get government funding to build bridges or something, little bridges. So they get their grant to build the bridge, they build the bridge and that's over [the organization ends with the project].

Another outcome is that the organization is susceptible to corruption or:

You know, 'boufing' the project, you 'bouf' the gasoline. You know its...diverting funds and diverting resources into people's pockets. And so when you create a new organization you increase the chances of...'boufing' because there is not strong leadership.

Still another concern is with control; created organizations are more easily manipulated by outside interests:

Another thing that happens sometimes is...when there has been outright political motivation in communities, especially in urban areas where there exist strong communities or slum dwellers associations, governments will come in and create parallel structures which they can control politically. This will be especially true when the...organized group that exists represents opposition in one way or another.

In summary, existing organizations are the appropriate mechanisms through which to channel participatory activities. In the cases where there are no suitable existing organizations, new organizations should be created with great care because there are a number of shortcomings with artificially induced organizations. In addition, the process of establishing legitimate and effective organizations requires a growth period. As Hakim (1982) notes, "organizations need time to grow and mature" (p. 139). The weight of evidence from this study agrees:

For groups to become functional and successful they have to go through a process. Groups go through processes. And those processes take time. And I think when outsiders come in and say that this has to be run solely by a group and somebody says fine we'll form a group today and get this tomorrow it just doesn't work.

Community Skills

Midgley (1986) suggested that worldwide project experience demonstrates that rural communities do have the impetus to plan and execute a range of development activities in their interests. The case studies confirm this view and suggest that beneficiaries should participate in all stages of a project:

[I]t would commonly be held by most people who work in development that a project has a much greater chance for success if the people...who are supposed to benefit from it have been involved in the design of the project. That's the surest way to make sure that it responds to their needs rather than the needs somebody 3,000 miles away perceives or dreamed up or happened to be interested in. So we would expect the participation in coming up with the idea for the project. [We would also expect] participation in the actual running of that organization...And a third kind of participation we increasingly try to push for would be in if the project is to be evaluated or in

any way studied that there be active participation by the beneficiaries in the evaluation process. That it serves as a learning process for the beneficiaries.

The weight of evidence not only indicates that beneficiaries should participate in all project phases but also that the skills necessary for such participation were commonly present in rural communities. Respondents found community members "quite capable" to assume leadership positions in project organization, problem solving, and management. The portrait that appears in the interviews is one in which there are:

None of these positions that shouldn't be held by the people although at times that perhaps I felt that of necessity is that they should hold all of these levels if we want the projects to be self-sustainable. And in fact I have seen communities in which there are people that are capable of handling all of these positions.

An interesting aspect that appeared regarding skills for participation was that while local communities have the requisite skills for participation these skills are not necessarily present in the form which Westerners would construe them. So while rural communities have the skills to identify problems and to organize and implement solutions they often have significant problems understanding and complying with the administrative and reporting procedures of donor agencies. For example, having the necessary skills:

Doesn't mean that the poor people in the community can sit down and fill out an AID log frame for project design...I mean I've had endless conversations with peasant farmers...and when you ask them to tell me what the work plan is they don't understand. But if you use some sort of analogy; well, describe to me how you go about planting your crops. They'll say, well, first we do this, and then we do this. If you can find the...language to translate, people do have the skills to at least understand what their problems are and oftentimes see some very creative solutions to them.

In sum, the case studies indicate that communities possess the basic skills to effectively control project activities. Yet many of the policies and procedures of donor agencies are not oriented toward working effectively within these capabilities. The implication is that these agencies must judge the participatory effectiveness of their

practices and procedures. Many are likely to require some reorientation if they are to become accessible to and consistent with the skills present in rural communities.

Local Leaders

Local leaders are seen as a two edged sword who are necessary not only for the effectiveness of local organizations but also for the endorsement of project activities. Local leaders enhance project effectiveness because they can mobilize material and human resources and, if they enjoy community support, provide a sense of cohesiveness for the goals that are being pursued. On the other hand, as the literature (Midgley, 1986; Gow & VanSant, 1985; Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Hakim, 1982) indicates, local leaders occupy positions in which they can easily serve their own interests or those of sub-groups that support them and their views:

I think local leadership is going to make or break a project. I don't think there is any way of getting around it. [Y]ou hear more bad stories than you hear good stories [about local leaders]. But...to me that is like saying, "The rain is nice...we need the rain but we don't need the thunder and lightning." [I]ts one of those things you have to deal with. [W]e had situations where there were...good capable leaders who did a very good job. But I don't know what happened along the way. [T]here were problems with finances or...there were all kinds of different problems. [A] leader would suddenly not be such a good leader and the community would a turn against him understandably and that would throw the project into upheaval and there would have to be some restructuring and let things settle down. And hopefully a new leader or a group of leaders would emerge to take up the vacuum. [T]hat is to be expected. I don't really see much alternative to that.

The case studies support the literature in this regard; leaders may be good, and they may be bad, but they cannot be ignored and in fact should be used whenever possible.

There are several reasons for this. In the first place, it is important to tap into the local leadership to get their endorsement of project activities:

Because unless an activity is sanctioned by a village chief or by the powers that be you will not be successful and I frankly do not care what anybody says.

You have to use the legitimate power source and the legitimate power source in the community has to sanction your work. They have to.

Secondly, leaders that are community chosen are better known, enjoy a higher level of trust and are more easily held accountable than leaders that are imposed from outside:

And the community deals with them in totally different ways. The community, I think, tends to be a little bit more afraid and unsure about the government officials and are of course a little more trusting of the local leaders, the chief...the people in the government never felt like they had to do any kind of reporting of anything to the community. I didn't see any real dedication to the community in that respect. And the local ones of course were, they had to be.

Finally, leaders that are community appointed can be dealt with by the community if they are not fulfilling their duties and meeting community standards:

I'm thinking of one case where a the community finally felt the leader that they had...chosen wasn't fulfilling what they thought their leader should be. So they had a meeting, well a series of meetings, and finally demoted the person and chose another leader.

Legitimate Power Base

A final theme related to local organizations that emerged from the case studies was that, in order to be effective in dealing with outside agencies, local organizations need to have a legitimate power base. The ability of organizations to be effective decision makers grows out of such a power base. Hope (1983) supported this contention and asserts that effective community participation requires a redistribution of power. This notion is directly related to the concept of decentralization. Decentralization refers to the transfer of decision making control in development assistance projects from a centralized authority to local communities. The literature (Midgley, 1986; Bryant & White, 1984; Rondinelli et al., 1984; Montgomery, 1979; Chambers, 1978) suggested that a factor central to decentralization is the ability of local organizations to acquire some degree of autonomous financial responsibility. The case studies agree that

transferring financial control to local organizations is a simple and reasonable means of establishing a source of decision making power at the local level. However, simply granting of financial responsibility is not enough because:

[Y]ou see financial empowerment now but very little actual control by the local people.

The question is: To what extent does financial responsibility at the community level really translate into more widespread decision making control? As one respondent observed:

A lot of the people I have talked to they really do see [that if] you give the people the money, you let them make decisions and that's what control is. And I think that is [only] a test of control.

The interviews suggested that financial control alone is not adequate; it needs to be complemented by legal authority:

This legal authority is important...[in] that at some point a community organization [must] become an official non-governmental organization, registered as such with the government.

Legal authority is seen as providing the communities a means for establishing autonomy.

In addition, it implies a political system supportive of community or organizational activities. Legal authority is granted enough importance that one organization represented in this study:

Require[s] for funding that the people, to get a grant from [this organization], be a legally registered not-for-profit organization in their country.

In sum, while the respondents agree that financial control of projects at the community level is important, it is not sufficient. Financial control needs to be complemented by legal authority in order for communities to establish an effective power base for decision making control. Legal authority is formal recognition and approval by national governments of participatory activities. Implicit in this

recognition is the creation of mechanisms for effective involvement in all aspects of decision making in development projects (Midgley, 1986).

The Role of Intermediary Organizations

The interviews are very expressive about the role which intermediary organizations (PVOs and NGOs both indigenous and foreign) should play in rural development and about how that role should be played. These organizations are viewed as links and buffers between donor agencies and national governments on the one hand and rural communities on the other hand. The role of these organizations is to act as facilitators in the development process. Their objective is to provide information and skills to communities and to develop a sensitivity to the sociocultural environment in these communities. In approaching this task, the case studies suggest that intermediary organizations should adopt an approach in participatory development that is best summarized as being understanding and interactive.

An Understanding Approach

For intermediary organizations, adopting an understanding approach to development assistance involves a sensitivity to the culture, history and language of the community. The need for this type of understanding grows out of the uneven relationship that exists between donor agencies or national governments and the local people. To the rural poor, the people in these larger organizations represent a class set apart in terms of educational background and problem-solving skills, access to resources and perhaps cultural as well as ethnic background. These are differences that cannot be hidden, are sensed by the communities and produce a feeling of disparity that is threatening to poor people. One respondent, who spent eight years with an intermediary organization, put it like this:

I think the most difficult thing[s]...we struggled with [was] the fact that the color of our skin, the educational background we have and the economic resources we have at our disposal puts us in such a different category than our neighbors. [W]e lived right in the village in a grass hut next to a lot of people...just the idea we can solve whatever problems or obstacles that come in our way. That is a different sort of mind set than happens on [the] subsistence level. So, you felt a lot of disparity there between the people you worked with and yourself and that was a real difficult obstacle to deal with. Because people can sense that and it is a real threatening sort of thing.

The result is the planting of a formidable obstacle to the establishment of a participatory process. One role of intermediary organizations is to overcome this obstacle by gaining an understanding of the underlying cultural fabric of the local community and, in doing so, gaining a more accurate perspective on what the role of development assistance is in that community:

[O]n the side of the expatriate or the outsider who's going into a community...I think that some understanding of the cultural, historical background of the community [is necessary]. What makes this village or what makes this group of people tick? [Understanding] that is real essential to [being successful]. How else can you go in there and evaluate what your role should be? How are you going to know when people start coming up with ideas are they just trying to make you happy or [are they voicing] something they really want? You...have to have some way of understanding all of the input you are getting to try and allow the community to generate a project, [and] to lead a project...So that's crucial."

Understanding breaks down barriers and helps outside personnel to gain a foothold of legitimacy in the community. Essential to any process of understanding is communication. When working in rural communities in developing countries the issue of communication centers around language and the need to have some facility with the local language. Without the ability to communicate on local terms gaining legitimacy will be a difficult test:

[A]s an outsider it is very difficult and from [the perspective of this organization] if you are not culturally sensitive and you have no language skills and don't have a technique for hanging around and learning a little bit about the community you intend to work in you are going to struggle because you are going to struggle with the illegitimacy factor; that you have no legitimacy. Period.

An Interactive Approach

Establishing legitimacy based on understanding and effective communication is the first step in the formation of trust. The interviews suggested that this trust building process takes time, patience and implies an approach to development that is interactive. The picture that emerges from the case studies indicated that for an intermediary organization adopting an interactive approach includes two factors. First, it involves establishing a consistent presence within the community. Second, it means working reactively rather than proactively.

Establishing a consistent presence means living in the communities with the people at their level of comfort. It means, for example, spending:

"[T]he first three years...or four years of [a] project...working with [a] group of community leaders...just finding out what they wanted.

It means participating in all aspects of community life. It means caring, sharing, giving and even:

Dependency. If you can go [into a community] kind of low key and have to depend on your neighbors for a few things. Or at least try to be a little more [dependent] so there can be a little more reciprocity in your relationship that makes a big big difference.

Second, it involves working reactively rather than proactively in communities. This means that intermediary organizations are working with rather than for communities in accomplishing tasks. The question, then, from this perspective becomes one of finding:

Ways of pulling back and allowing [the] strengths [of the community] to come forth. [Of] freeing up [the] local people there to find ways of solving their own problems. And...our role not being so much as the ones to solve the problems but to...give them room to solve problems.

This involves adopting a role as a helper in development activities rather than as an instigator of activities. This is a difficult role for Westerners because they often go into poor communities with a number of preconceived notions, preset agendas and time lines.

These concepts; however, do not mesh with the idea of change as it is understood in the community. We expect change to occur rapidly; the community may not:

You know we expect something to happen in two years and nobody else does. Change takes a generation so they [the local community] can't figure out what our hurry is. And I can't either.

But if the goal is community development then the outsider must adopt a secondary role, letting the community set the agenda and assume the leadership in activities.

Furthermore, intermediate organizations must avoid offering too much assistance. A great obstacle to community development is the give-away mentality; offering too many goods and services to communities. This approach is good for encouraging people to "milk the system" but does not impart the necessary skills to sustain local development:

[I know of a country that] is a perfect example. [This country]...probably get the most development aid of anyplace, of anybody in West Africa. [I]t's a nightmare. They have not built the capacities of [these people]. The...people do not know how to sustain themselves. All they know how to do is stick their hand out and ask for more. And it's really destructive because the money is going to run out someday and where are they going to be?

Clearly, building local capacities does not involve the giveaway of goods and services. Rather, it points to the importance of divesting power and having the patience to allow local leadership to emerge and develop. The implication is for intermediary organizations to work toward working themselves out of a job. The essence of this role involves functioning as a transfer mechanism for information. The need for the sharing of information emerged repeatedly in the interviews. The consensus among the case studies indicated that access to information represents one powerful mechanism by which rural poor communities may change their lives. Intermediary organizations have an obligation to transfer this information in a form in which it can be effectively put to use:

[A]n organization which works with the grass roots...has a function of demystifying and interpreting information about rights, privileges, what

government policies mean in the particular area in which the group is working be it housing, be it agriculture, be it microenterprise or whatnot. And the information is explained in such a way that people in the communities can not only understand it but learn how to act upon it and use mechanisms in the society to redress grievances and to exercise their rights.

The weight of evidence suggested that intermediary organizations have an important role to play as catalysts of change in the development process. The case studies indicated repeatedly the necessity of a process which encourages and supports poor communities in group decision making on possible courses of action, implementation, monitoring and evaluating their own progress. Intermediate organizations were used as linkages in this process. These organizations served as a liaison between the rural poor on the one hand and bureaucratic imperatives of donor agencies and national governments on the other. The interview data suggested the duties of intermediary organizations includes passing on needed skills to communities, forwarding project proposals from communities to appropriate organizations, dispersing funds from donor organizations and assisting communities in meeting the administrative and reporting requirements of donors or governments.

In summary, intermediary organizations focus on an understanding and interactive approach to development assistance. This approach aims to avoid the imposition of outside values and centers on facilitating development that is based on community need. In addition, it aims to provide access to activities and information that build the capacity of communities to decide upon, implement and control their own development process. When it works:

Incredibly poor people who have virtually nothing with the right kind of assistance from enlightened intermediaries have been able to organize and redress their grievances and really exercise their rights and have gotten what they wanted.

Effects on Rural Communities

The image that emerges from the interviews is of a development assistance process empowering communities to gain an awareness of the reality surrounding them

in terms of problems and solutions, of choices open to them and of their capacity to transform this reality. The projects and experiences revealed in the interviews demonstrated that the force and vitality of poor people can be unchained when they have a stake in the direction of their lives. If people can get the feeling that they have the power to improve their lives and that they can control the process the results can be significant. For example, one subject identified a situation in Kenya in which this process produced a notable change:

[W]omen were not allowed in this particular part of Kenya to eat chicken...and eggs while they were pregnant. So there was the whole problem of protein deficiency and [health problems for both mother and child]. So through this whole process they realized and kind of took to heart that the culture was having a direct affect on their health and the health of their infants. So they went to the traditional leaders and the village leaders and basically negotiated a change in the culture. And...that's development. That is much more important than building a well or planting a few trees or whatever...I think what we are really trying to do is to get a process like that where people can look at their own situations and do something about it by themselves that doesn't require...someone from the outside...I think when people start to see that sort of thing or that that sort of thing is possible even on the smallest conceivable scale they realize that the time is worth the investment.

The indication is that the net effect of development assistance on the rural poor should be to initiate a process of empowerment. Empowerment signifies the degree to which people have the capacity "to obtain results which they intend to obtain from their involvement in decision making" in the development process (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980). The implication is that beneficiary participation cannot simply be a formal action with little meaning. It is of necessity an activity that develops a community's capacity to control processes that could change their lives. For project managers, the responsibility is one of helping people help themselves, of:

"Working with people in terms of empowerment and showing people how to recognize what their talents are and what their strengths are.

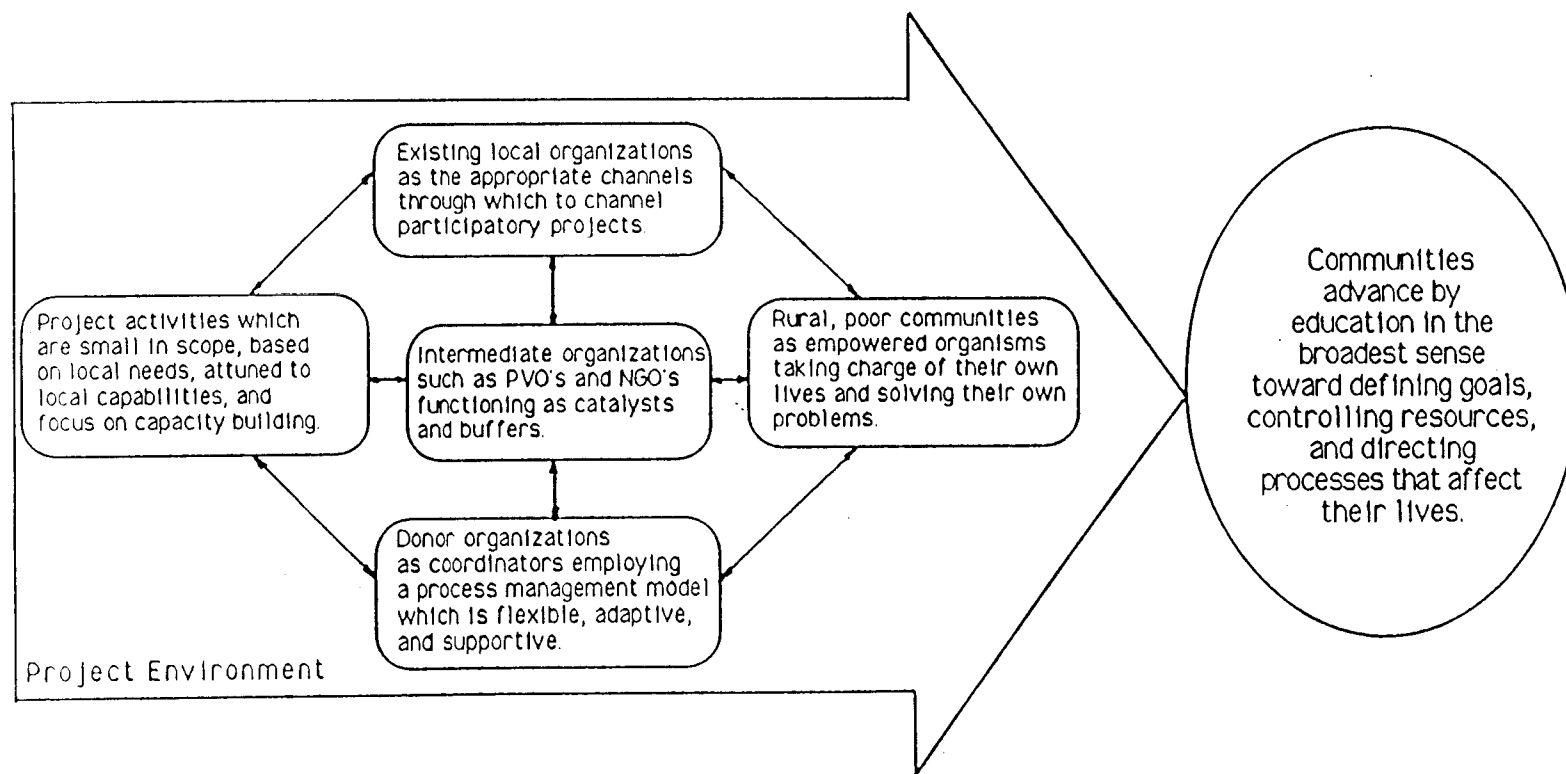
The essence of this process is the establishment of an educational process whereby poor communities begin to master the skill necessary to identify, create, implement and control solutions to local problems.

Part II

The Model

But how to translate these aims and aspirations emerging from these case studies into operational projects? Based on this inquiry and the review of literature the indication is that key strategies involve the promotion of initiative, self reliance, capacity building, autonomy and control. These strategies rely on a process of learning that leads to the empowerment of rural communities. This study proposes a model that aims at the creation of a project environment that addresses this issue (see Figure 3). This model views development as a change process that is dependent on learning. The model represents a process of trial and error learning that gradually moves projects and community processes along a path of increasing capacity, self-reliance and control. Projects are seen as organisms that exist over time and as part of a larger system. The specifics of this model are formulated by rural communities as they learn how to participate in and control the development process. In general, the model focuses on two important catalysts: adaptation and community feedback. Communities provide feedback by learning to assess their situation from a holistic perspective. Participatory projects which are supported at all bureaucratic levels, which have a flexible design and have personnel in close contact with rural communities put this feedback to work, learning of their errors quickly and correcting them without delay.

Figure 3: Model of a Rural Development Assistance Project as a Participatory Learning System.



Intermediary Organizations

Intermediary organizations play a key role in this model. These organizations act as linkages and catalysts in the development process by informing and sharing information with communities, by helping communities gather data about themselves in identifying the most critical problems, by mediating in conflict resolution and in obtaining funds and other forms of assistance from outside the community. In accomplishing these tasks, it is necessary that intermediate organizations be sympathetic to community participation, understand and are sensitive to local situations and cultures, interact with the community in a nonelitist manner and are open to learning. As development catalysts, intermediate organizations must establish a consistent presence in rural communities and work to reverse the interaction between bureaucrats and the poor from a 'top-down' give-away orientation to a more bottom-up, responsive model. Finally, as communities gain skills and capacities the role of these organizations will diminish.

Donor Organizations and National Governments

The role required of donor agencies and national governments in this model is that of coordinator of development assistance activities. The coordinator role is responsive to community desires and strives for equality among diverse groups and communities. This role necessitates some learning and adaptation in the approach of donor organizations and national governments to rural development. For example, the literature indicated that "progress" for these organizations is often measured in terms of expenditures. This requires moving money in limited time cycles while paying only "lip service" to participation. The emphasis is on large projects in which participation is often untenable. Thus, projects that involve more money and represent large physical infrastructures tend to displace projects that focus on the time consuming development of the social components that enhance community empowerment. This indicates a need

for donor agencies and national governments to make explicit and adequate financial commitments to participatory development. In addition, there must be an effort among these organizations to share responsibilities at all stages of the project cycle. This can be facilitated by an emphasis on a "process" approach to project administration. The key features of this model include the design of short-range, contingent options that allow for incremental (trial and error) project adjustments, decentralized decision making, shared authority, non-hierarchical and facilitative leadership, participatory planning and implementation, informal and interactive communication, continuous information gathering and experimentation (Brinkerhoff & Hopkins, 1989). The proposed model also suggests that donor organizations and national governments devise evaluation schemes in which rural communities can establish their own criteria for success and gather and analyze their own data. In this way these communities will be better able to profit from lessons learned as a result of their experiences. Finally, donor evaluations should emphasize the issue of equity, or "who benefits" from a project, with a special eye for the gender perspective. As one case study articulates:

[P]art of the problem in the last 50 years is that historically donor agencies have neglected the role that women have played in [the] economic development in their country. So [if] you are looking at sustainability and capacity building you have a hard time finding it...you cannot talk about development and you cannot talk about participation or capacity building without talking about the role of women.

Local Organizations

The model proposes the use of existing local organizations as the appropriate mechanisms through which to channel participatory activities. The activities of local organizations in this model are characterized by participation in all project activities from planning and design to evaluation. Local leaders are essential to the effectiveness of local organizations because they can mobilize material and human resources and, if they enjoy community support, provide a sense of cohesiveness in project activities.

Further, local organizations require a legitimate power base which includes both control of financial resources and legal authority. Such a power base provides a means for establishing autonomy and implies a political system supportive of community or organizational activities. The function of local organizations in this model is to enhance the power and ability of communities to deal with external change agents. However, in dealing with these change agents, local organizations will encounter obstacles.

Therefore, a network of supportive intermediate organizations is necessary to provide assistance in overcoming these obstacles.

Rural Communities

For rural communities, growth occurs through effective participation. Effective participation enables communities to meet their basic needs, to solve their problems and to achieve the power to control their lives. This is the essence of development; a process in which people learn to take charge of their own lives and to solve their own problems. Development occurs when people have the confidence, capacity and knowledge to initiate change. This process "is much more important than building a well or planting a few trees." Although the means and the ends of a development assistance project go hand-in-hand, how the project is executed is more important than what is accomplished. And the "how" must include beneficiary participation.

Project Activities

Project activities in this model start small, with relatively simple activities that can respond to local needs. From this perspective, the goal is to design projects that are within reach of community capabilities. These projects enhance the power of participation to produce a recognizable benefit and to provide a sense of progress toward community established goals. In this way, communities can gain the confidence and competence to undertake more complex and long-term activities. These types of projects

may be slow to implement because participation implies going at the community's pace; rural, poor communities often take time to realize what they can achieve.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

Substantive community participation has been recognized and mandated as an important strategy in increasing the effectiveness and success of development assistance projects (Gow & VanSant, 1985). However, in spite of the appeal in the language and ideals of participation little has been discovered in the way of methodologies to implement this approach (Cernea, 1985). If beneficiary participation is to become more than a popular phrase, mechanisms encouraging participation must be defined and implemented. The present study sought to increase the understanding about how beneficiary participation occurs in rural development assistance projects through the identification of patterns, processes or techniques that enhance the ability of local people to gain control of the benefits and decision making processes in projects affecting their lives.

This study used case study data collected in seven telephone interviews with development assistance professionals who have been involved in projects in which participation was an integral part of the development strategy. The findings from these interviews indicated that community participation is best encouraged in projects that involve a few salient activities, relatively less complex inputs and consequently requires less money than larger, more complex projects. These projects should be based on a felt need in the community and be designed to fit community capabilities. As such, they enhance the power of participation to produce a recognizable benefit and to provide a sense of progress toward community established goals. In addition, community participation is encouraged when some investment is required from the community. Investment creates ownership and tests the value and appropriateness of the activity to the community.

The case study data suggested that participation is a process that requires support at the community level, from intermediary organizations and from donor agencies and

national governments. At the community level, the most practical and effective vehicle through which to support and implement participatory projects is existing community organizations. These organizations generally possess the necessary skills to be, and by definition, should be involved in all phases of the project from design to evaluation. Locally identified leaders, while a two-edged sword, are necessary for the effectiveness of local organizations and for the endorsement of project activities.

Intermediary organizations emerge in this study as key actors in the participatory development process. These organizations act as catalysts and linkages by informing and sharing information with communities, by helping communities gather data about themselves in identifying the most critical problems, by mediating in conflict resolution and in obtaining funds and other forms of assistance from outside the community. Their role is characterized by an approach to rural communities that is both understanding and interactive.

Donor organizations and national governments are seen in the role of development coordinators. The coordinator role is responsive to community desires and strives for equality among diverse groups and communities. They emphasize a 'process' approach to development administration.

As a result of effective participation, real development occurs in that rural poor communities are able to meet their basic needs, solve their problems and achieve the power to control their lives. The implication is that how a project is executed is more important than what is accomplished.

Based on these findings and on the conclusions reached in a review of literature, a model of participatory development was proposed. This model views development as a change process that is dependent on learning. As a result of learning, projects and community processes move along a path of increasing efficiency. Because of the complexity of the participatory development, the specifics of this model are tailored by rural communities to specific project environments in which it is implemented.

Development practioners should adopt a view of participatory development as a process of trial and error learning whose goal is community empowerment.

Empowerment signifies the degree to which people have gained the capacity to obtain results which they intend to obtain from their involvement in decision making in the development process.

Intermediary organizations must assume a key role in the participatory development process. These organizations are composed of sensitive and understanding people who are dedicated to community participation. The function of these organizations is twofold. First, they act as links between donor agencies or national governments and local communities. Second, they function as catalysts in participatory development. The goal of these organizations is to facilitate the building of community capacity in terms of skills and knowledge to the point that the community no longer needs their services.

The appropriate roles of donor agencies and national governments in participatory development is as coordinators of development assistance projects. This role requires them to provide funds specifically for participatory development; to strive for equity in funding different groups and communities; and to adopt a process style of project administration that is seen as most conducive to participatory development.

Projects aiming at encouraging beneficiary participation should start small, with a few relatively simple activities that respond to local needs. These activities are most effectively implemented through existing local organizations that have control of financial resources, legal authority, are involved in all project activities from design to evaluation and are headed by community appointed leaders.

It is more important to emphasize "how" projects are implemented rather than "what" is accomplished. This how necessarily involves beneficiary participation which is defined as the participation of beneficiaries in their own development by controlling resources, defining needs and making decisions about how these needs can best be met.

Recommendations for Further Study

As this study suggests, small projects are best suited to a participatory development model. However, large technical transfer projects are critical to the development process. To better address the needs of the rural poor, these projects need effective input from this sector of society. Therefore, a need exists to understand how large technical transfer projects can implement a participatory model of development. This study should address the issues of how donors agencies and national governments, intermediary organizations and rural communities interact in making the large projects relevant, effective and sustainable.

In order to better understand how to implement participation in rural communities, a study aimed at determining how extension services in developing countries can be effectively used in a participatory model of development is needed.

Finally, there is a need to develop and disseminate sector specific project guidelines on participatory development relevant to specific country contexts. This study should address questions of how specific kinds of projects in individual countries can best be implemented using a participatory model of development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Guide

1. In the overseas rural development projects with which you have been associated, was community participation a goal? Would you briefly describe what type of project(s) you have been involved in?
2. What functions are important for local participants to have in rural development projects? (For example, should they participate as manual labor? Or as decision makers in projects planning, management, and administrative functions? As fund raisers? Some other function?) Why?
3. What is the most effective way to organize communities for project participation? (For example, do pre-existing community organizations play a role in encouraging participation? Or are creating new local organizations more effective for this purpose? Or was no formal organizational strategy used at all?) How would you evaluate the effectiveness of this approach?
4. What is the most effective source of the power or authority for local participants? (For example, legal authority, financial power, political power, the power of popular appeal, or some other source?)
5. What was the source of the initiative that resulted in local participation being made a part of the project(s)? (The community? The government? The development agency? Some other source?) How did this initiative work? What incentives, if any, were offered?

6. Were there skills that were needed for participation that were not present in the community? What, if anything, was done to address this issue?

If some type of training for participation was provided, what was the nature of that training? For whom was training provided? (government, project staff, local people, local leaders, all, or none?) How was the effectiveness of the training evaluated? (For example, did it enhance commitment to participatory goals? Aid the development of participatory skills? Enhance the performance of the local organization?)

7. What has been your experience, both positive and negative, with local community leaders in projects involving community participation? (This question may address but is not limited to the following issues: Effective leadership styles (strong versus weak leaders, formal versus informal leadership); the issue of shared control; the involvement of minority groups).

8. What, if any, has been the relationship between the size and complexity of the project and community participation? (For example, do project size and complexity affect communication between government/agency staff and the local community? And if so, what is the affect on encouraging local participation?)

9. What would you characterize as the major mechanisms that contribute to the development of effective local community participation? Why?

10. What are the major obstacles to implementing local participation?

Appendix B

Delphi Panel Validation of Interview Instrument

Background

Many development assistance professionals are convinced that community participation will generally enhance project effectiveness (Finsterbusch and Van Wicklin III, 1989 & 1987; Goulet, 1989; Cernea, 1987 & 1985; Cohen and Uphoff, 1980). Yet while the worth of the concept of community participation has substantial merit in terms of improving the effectiveness of development assistance projects little has been provided in the way of concrete methodologies about how to establish participation in operational reality. The question remains, "How can participation be implemented"? The purpose of this study is to address this question with the goal of increasing the understanding about how beneficiary participation occurs in rural development assistance projects. This study seeks to identify patterns, processes, or techniques in development assistance projects that enhance the ability of local people to gain control of the benefits and decision making processes in projects affecting their lives. The major research question of this study is **"How do project managers facilitate the participation of local communities in their own development?"**

This study focuses on the following areas of interest in seeking an answer to the above question:

1. The motivation to establish local participation in decision making is most effective when the impetus for participation is prompted by mutually supportive and reinforcing activities from both inside and outside the community.
2. Projects that aim at encouraging local participation in rural development assistance projects should be small in scope and oriented around relatively simple tasks and management procedures. The assumption is that such projects are better able to

respond to local needs and conditions, are essential in the process of building local capacity, and enhance the ability of government and donor staff to establish participation in decision making processes.

3. Local organizations are practical and effective vehicles for implementing local participation. The type and function of the organization, however, will vary from project to project and should be determined in dialogue with the community. In addition, attention should be given to organizational capacity building including an understanding of the importance of a productive and rewarding beginning for local organizations, how to effectively deal with local leadership, and the significance of providing training in relevant participatory skills to both project staff and community.

4. Project management requirements for participation include an emphasis on experimentation, flexibility, and a willingness to work closely with project beneficiaries. Decision making power must be decentralized to local organizations if effective local participation in development initiatives is to be achieved. An important component in the decentralization of decision making power includes the control of financial resources.

Research Instrument

The instrument to be used in this study to collect data is an interview guide. The interview guide represents a list of questions or issues to be explored during the course of a telephone interview. These questions will be used in in-depth, seemingly open-ended telephone interviews with a number of rural development assistance project managers. The interview guide is designed to provide a framework within which the respondents (project managers) can express their own understandings about the process of implementing community participation.

Directions

The major objective of the Delphi procedure is to determine the items to be included in the research instrument. The panel members have as their role the establishment of the content validity of the inventory instrument. For each of the items on the following inventory you are to mark the item to indicate whether you RETAIN, REJECT, or RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION the item as part of the final interview instrument. If you wish to retain the item with modification please write the modification in the space provided. Please make every effort to reject any questions you feel are not relevant or to modify questions you feel are not well focused. A primary concern of panel members should be to make the interview guide as succinct and to the point as possible. A goal is to limit the telephone interviews to 30 minutes.

1. Could you briefly describe your background and experience with rural development projects? The types of projects involved you have been involved in? Your roles in the projects? Where did these projects take place?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

2. In your experience, what was the most effective source of the initiative to make community participation a part of a project? (The community? The government? The development agency? Some other source?) How does this initiative work? What incentives, if any, were offered? Were there problems or obstacles? Describe.

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

3. In your experience, were projects most effective in encouraging participation when a pre-existing community organization was used, when a new local organization was created for project purposes, or was no organization was used at all?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

4. If a community organization was used, did the members have all the necessary skills to participate effectively in project activities? If not, how were these skills provided or enhanced?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

5. If some type of training was provided, what was the nature of that training in terms of goals and activities? For whom was training provided (government, project staff, local people, local leaders, all, or none)? What effect did the training have (for eg., did it enhance commitment to participatory goals, aid the development of participatory skills, enhance performance of local organization, make local leaders more easily accountable)?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

6. What is your experience with projects that undertake activities aimed at providing the local organization with immediate and tangible benefits as a means of building local confidence and competence? What were the activities? Did these activities address needs that were clearly recognized by the community? What effect did these type activities have?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

7. What has been your experience with local community leaders in projects involving participation?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

8. What is your experience with the issues of small versus large and simple versus complex projects? What are the lessons you have learned regarding these issues and their relationship, if any, to community participation?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

9. What are your impressions regarding the issue of local control versus centralized control as they relate to community participation?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

10. What kinds of functions do you feel it is important for local participants to have in rural development projects? (for eg., should they participate in planning, management, administrative functions, decision making, other?) Why?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

11. How would you describe the degree of interaction, coordination, and balance of power necessary between government/agency staff and the local community in order to make participation effective?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

12. Based on your experience, what is the most effective source of power for a local community organization involved in participatory development activities? (eg., legal authority, financial power, political power, the power of popular appeal, or some other source?) Why?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

13. As a project manager, how do you judge the importance of the following factors in encouraging local participation in development projects:

A well defined and detailed project plan?

Flexibility in project plans and the ability to make mid-course changes?

Experimentation with different aspects of the project as a way of making the project more efficient and effective?

Monitoring and feedback from project activities? Who monitors? When? What is the information used for?

RETAIN ____ REJECT ____ RETAIN WITH MODIFICATION ____

Modify as follows:

14. Suggested additional items:

Appendix C

Cover Letter

March 1, 1990
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR

Name of Respondent

Address of Respondent

Dear Sir or Madam:

The purpose of this letter is to formally request your voluntary participation in a study, to provide you with a copy of the research instrument (an interview guide), a brief description of the objectives of the research, the methods and procedures to be used, and a description of the methods to be taken to protect you as a respondent in this study.

The concept of beneficiary participation has substantial merit in terms of improving the effectiveness of rural development assistance projects yet little has been provided in the way of concrete methodologies about how to establish participation in operational reality. This study seeks to identify patterns, processes, or techniques in development assistance projects that enhance the ability of local people to gain control of the benefits and decision making processes in projects affecting their lives. The major research question of this study is "How do project managers facilitate the participation of local communities in their own development?"

Although the information you provide will be very important in answering this question, your participation in this research is voluntary. If you choose to volunteer for this study you will be interviewed by telephone. With your permission, the interview will be recorded. A copy of the interview instrument is attached.

Sincerely,

Reid A. Bates
Project Coordinator