

The Efficacy
of
Participatory Strategic Planning Approaches
To
Organisation Building:
Process, Problems and Prospects

By

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Chapter One

1.0 Research Design

1.1 Background to the study

Various methodologies and approaches have been experimented in the last one-decade or so in an effort to cause an effective institutional and human resource capacity building at both organisational and target community levels. Management operations in various development organisations have diligently

sought to perfect institutional strengthening towards greater efficiency and effectiveness through participatory assessments and planning processes. On the other hand, local communities have been made to go through such processes as Participatory Rural Appraisals followed by Community Action Plans (CAPs), all aimed at consolidating and enhancing local capacities towards self-management and sustainability. The main purpose for the research at hand is to establish in which ways these methodological experiments have borne fruits in attaining capacity building for effective and sustainable human development, if at all. In particular, the research will focus on the efficacy of participatory strategic planning approach (es) towards this end.

It is widely held that once you give a hungry person a fish, you will feed him/her for a day, but if you teach him/her how to fish, he/she will feed himself/herself for lifetime (KCDF, Annual Report, 2002: 3-4), Unpublished). This assumption has now been challenged as inadequate in itself. It has become increasingly necessary to realise that the fisherman or woman would have to acquire adequate confidence to defend his/her right to fishing as those in power could prematurely decide to withdraw his/her license to fishing without notice. They could even pollute upstream by planting a toxic factory that kills all the fish down stream. On the other hand, the government could as well decide to over tax the production of fishing-nets or impose deterrent tariffs against the importation of the inputs required to manufacture the fishing-nets, thus making fishing industry uneconomical venture. Cultural and religious factors have sometimes worked against the active participation of men and women in determining their political, social and economic destiny.

Often we have witnessed in Kenya, unemployed school leavers being assisted by NGOs and well-wishers to acquire the necessary skills towards self-employment. They are then assisted with the initial capital to start-off with small hawking activities. However, such structures are vandalised overnight by urban authorities or subjected to arson fire to pave way for grabbing of the plots by power brokers. This again attests to the fact that it is not enough to equip the poor with the survival skills. They will also need to organise themselves to build a collective bargaining power to defend their interests against the interests of their rivals, the custodians of political and economic power, who often thrive at the expense of the poor and the marginalised.

In the same vein, true development does not begin with the installation of a village well. It is what happens 'behind the well' that attests to the quality of the development brought about by the existence of the well (KCDF, Annual Report, 2002: 3-4). A benevolent donor could as well have planted the well there. This would be a false start if certain factors were not considered such as:

Who identified the need for the well?

Whose well is it in the first place, on whose land and on what terms?

What role did the community play in decision-making e.g. in choosing a well (as opposed to other water harvest options) and deciding on its site?

What contribution did the community make in terms of resources towards the accomplishment of the well project?

How did the implementation of the well impact on the power alignment and leadership structures in the community?

What local organisational framework was put in place for the efficient and effective management of the water supply?

What skills and experience did the people acquire during the installation of the well for its future maintenance and sustainability?

All these questions and more, suggest that quality and sustainable human development can only be found in what lies 'behind' the well, and not in the well itself. In other words, true development process is complex and calls for a number of factors, which

have all along either been taken for granted or overlooked altogether. A holistic development process should therefore of necessity concern itself with human needs that transcend physical factors or what has been termed as basic needs. Yet, there is no dispute on the fact that, until recently, community development has nearly exclusively been understood as an effort to meet people's basic needs. Our hypothesis in this research holds that participatory strategic planning is an effective methodology towards claiming and attaining the holistic realm of community development. The process is characterised by demand pulled (as opposed to donor driven) development planning by the people and for the people. It is an empowering process that will enable people make informed choices and decisions based on collective analysis.

1.2 The problem statement

1.2.1 Introduction

It is doubtful as to whether there is anybody known in human history to have stopped change. Infamous dictators of history are only known to have postponed or delayed it. Change will certainly take its course. Hence the option we are left with is either to be reactive or proactive to change. One will either choose to be proactive by initiating, causing and managing change or reactive by only managing the effects of change as it comes. It is believed here that participatory methodologies represent a force of an idea whose time has come. How can we therefore hasten its impact and maximise its benefits by being more pro-active than reactive?

Three development paradigms will be discussed below. The *Conventional Development* paradigm, often referred to as *Modernisation Development*, will be highlighted as an approach whose impact has left a lot to be desired. *Social Welfare* paradigm will be discussed as a rescue mission for the casualties of the conventional paradigm. Participatory Development paradigm will be discussed at some length as ‘an idea whose time has come’. There will be an attempt, both now and in chapters to follow, to draw out insights and ideas from available literature on empirical experiences with this participatory development approach.

The problem is that a number of professionals and institutions who advocate participatory methodologies tend to peter-out when it comes to the practical defence and application of the methodologies. They cannot prove their conversion and commitment, and in particular, they often do not trust local people’s potential to handle evaluation (Feuerstein,1986:10-11; Freire,1970:36,41). They tend to disown the same beliefs they advocate. Consequently they can hardly be trusted to sustain efforts to promote genuine participation. At best, they apply participatory methodologies on ad hoc basis, “marked by attempts to reform the existing conventional approaches in such a way that they become ‘more’ participatory” (Oakley,1990: 3).

1.2.2 Specific problem addressed by this thesis

This thesis is built on the assumption that people’s levels of commitment to a cause that calls for

collective intervention, is directly symmetrical to the level at which the people themselves are involved in the initial decision-making and planning stages of that intervention. The more involved or consulted people are, the greater will be their commitment in the implementation and maintenance of the project involved. In other words, people will sacrifice more for what they have played part to create, than for blue print plans handed down to them for implementation from 'experts'. This is the hypothesis the research at hand seeks to pursue and establish. That is, whether or not participatory strategic planning can pass as a more suitable alternative approach to conventional planning by ensuring more authentic stakeholder participation, true sense of stakeholder ownership of organisational planning processes, and enhanced stakeholder sense of responsibility and commitment to the organisational cause. These are often the fundamental pillars for organisational sustainability. However, the results of the field research will be interpreted against the unique realities of the local context, which might not necessarily be universal.

However, for people to assume such responsibility and sense of ownership, capacity building becomes imperative right from the early stages. Here capacity building is conceptualised as the process of instituting a continuous adjustment of the change agents' as well as the stakeholders' attitudes, values and practices from a state of conformity to that of transformation. It involves building up appropriate knowledge and skills aimed at strengthening each partner's ability to make effective decisions on what to do in their own circumstances and assume full responsibility over the consequences of those decisions. The process challenges partners to efficiently marshal available resources towards meeting their own needs as they identify, create and optimise on opportunities in life. Meanwhile the stakeholders seek to influence policies that govern their communities and the society at large to ensure that their individual and collective needs and rights are accommodated (Mulwa, 1999, unpublished).

The research had a mission to establish as to what extent participatory planning practices within Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Non-governmental organisations have managed to meet the capacity building expectations as understood above. It is also in the perception of the researcher that knowledge is still limited on the extent to which participatory methodologies are efficacious in specific contexts such as the polarised realities of complex organisations and the less sophisticated community based organisations within Kenya. How can one effectively promote participatory methodologies in

development contexts where the supremacy of modern technology, corporate and interpersonal competition and individual ambitions outweigh the sentiments of local creativity, cooperation for common good and collective ambition?

1.2.3 Objectives of the study

These are threefold:

To investigate on the wider developmental and methodological context of participatory strategic planning and the way it has been applied in various operational contexts (the processes – discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four).

To establish the limitations associated with the methodology against its efficacy as a tool for capacity building, both at the organisational as well as at the target group levels (problems – discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight) and

To identify the potential and prospects in the methodology towards greater efficacy in future efforts in capacity building for organisation strengthening (prospects - discussed in Chapter Seven and Eight).

1.2.4 Research questions

An hysteric reaction to participatory approaches to organisation and community development is currently sweeping across major developmental institutions and programmes in Africa with the promise that there will be a difference this time round in efforts to alleviate poverty among the marginalised masses. The approaches have come in different fashions and packages. More often than not, these packages are brewed in developed world and handed down to the third world countries in form of published materials and through a milliard of development consultants.

Several questions can be advanced at this juncture in an effort to isolate the research problem at hand. However it should be noted that some of the questions below would be responded to through literature review, while others will be catered for in the research activity itself:

1.2.4.1 Research Proposal Questions that gave direction to the literature review

What development paradigms have dominated the scene of social development over the years and what have been their strengths and inadequacies (discussed in Chapter Two)?

Why this sudden upsurge of the interest in participatory methodologies in the development circles and in particular in Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and in Community Based Organisations (CBOs) alike? What has this new paradigm to offer towards realisation of quality human development (discussed in Chapters Two and Three)?

Can participatory methodologies still pass today as ‘an idea whose time has come’ as opposed to the more conventional methodologies whose emphasis is delivery of services, technology and development inputs characterised by top-down planning (discussed in Chapter Three)?

What are the common philosophical trends, principles and factors cutting across the board of various participatory methodologies? Under what circumstances are participatory methodologies best suited to make an impact (discussed in Chapter Three and Four)?

1.2.4.2 Research Proposal Questions that gave direction to the empirical field research

To what extent do the exponents of participatory methodologies commit themselves as genuine practitioners, as opposed to the rhetoric of survival (whether individually as professionals or as part of the institutions that promote participatory development – discussed in Chapter Seven)?

To what extent is Participatory Strategic Planning efficacious as a tool for capacity building in specific contexts of community based grassroots organisations (discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight)?

In which ways can Participatory Strategic Planning process ensure true sense of ownership of the outcome of participatory strategic planning among programme stakeholders? Will Participatory Strategic Planning guarantee the necessary sense of local ownership and local responsibility crucial to the sustainability of community projects (not losing the sight of the fact that the factors of sustainability can often take years to mature – discussed in Chapters Four, Seven and Eight)?

What effects (both positive and negative) have these participatory methodologies had in building both human resource and organisational capacities for sustainable development? (What impact are these participatory methodologies having so far in the field towards the empowerment of local stakeholders – discussed in Chapters Two, Three, Seven and Eight)?

To what extent is Participatory Strategic Planning methodology applied, relevant and appreciated towards the empowerment of CBOs (discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight)?

What problems are experienced in the efforts to scale-up participatory strategic planning methodologies as an instrument for organisational and community capacity building? What challenges and limitations

have been experienced with the application of these methodologies (discussed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight)?

What prospects exist towards enhancing the value and efficacy of the participatory strategic planning methodologies for greater impact (discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight)?

What lessons can be drawn from the foregoing experiences to feed into the existing volume of knowledge in the sector (discussed in Chapter Eight)?

1.3 Conceptual Foundations of Social Development Paradigms

1.3.1 ‘Modernisation’: A development paradigm that has tended to ‘fail’

The ‘modernisation’ development paradigm has dominated the development scene for about half a century now. This is the kind of development that sought to maximise on the immediate concerns with the accumulation of commodities and financial wealth. As a result of the many years of such ‘accumulation’, we are informed that one billion of the world’s people live in absolute poverty, a condition described by former World Bank President McNamara as “so characterised by malnutrition, illiteracy and disease as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency”(Porter and Clark, 1985:1). The Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2001: 9), also supports this assertion as it observes that, of the 4.6 billion people in developing countries, more than 850 million are illiterate. Of these, 64% are women. The report adds that nearly a billion people in developing countries (22%), lack access to improved water sources, while 2.4 billion (52%) lack access to basic sanitation. Nearly 325 million primary and secondary age girls and boys are out of school. Of these, 56% are girls. Eleven (11) million children under age five are said to be dying each year from preventable causes – equivalent to more than 30,000 a day. An estimated 1.2 billion people (26%) within developing societies live below the international poverty line of less than \$ 1 a day. This reality is said to be unacceptable in a world so plentiful (World Bank, 2002:ix)

The report further informs us that a total of 34 million people in developing countries were living with HIV/AIDS by end of 2000. A total of 163 million children under age five were underweight in 1998 (UNDP, 2001: 9). While infant mortality in the developed world was 18 in 1985, the average was 110 in Africa. Life expectancy was placed at 73 and 50 respectively. If per capita Gross National Product

was the reliable or at least universally acceptable indicator of development, this was US \$9,380 for developed world in 1985 against US \$750 for Africa (Mulwa, 1994: 11-12). This reality has led Mahbub UI Hag to conclude:

After... decades of development ...when you tip aside the confusing figures on growth rates, you find that for about two thirds of humanity the increase in per capita income has been less than one dollar a year for the last 20 years. Even this increase, miserable as it may seem, has been unevenly distributed, with the poorest 40 percent of the population hopelessly squeezed in its struggle for existence and sometimes getting even less than what it received 20 years ago. (Porter and Clark, 1985:4)

We are informed that as much as 55 percent of bilateral aid to (under-) developing countries in 1981 was tied aid. This was 75 percent for (bilateral aid from) Britain alone that year. This meant that the proportion of the aid that was tied would finance projects mutually identified by both the recipient and donor government, and that the projects had to import all its capital and expertise requirements from the donor country including the technology and its spare parts. The recipient country has minimal choice within these conditions, sometimes having to accept obsolete technology with spare parts costing as much as 25 to 30 percent above the prevailing market prices (Mulwa, 1994: 12).

Pricing of primary commodities from the South to North is yet another area calling for attention. Even though the South had no control over the pricing of manufactured goods and technology they import from the North, ironically their primary commodities are priced at international markets whose forces are again controlled by the North. This is the double tragedy suffered by the South. It is this kind of development that has produced big income disparities between (but also within) countries. The social gap between the South and the North (as well as between people of the same country) has continued to widen. Imminent social disruption has generated insecurity among and within nations. As a consequence, the world was reportedly spending more on military in two days than United Nations spends on health, food and education in a whole year (Porter and Clark, 1985: 1).

In economic terms, development means “the capacity of a national economy, whose initial economic

condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its Gross National Product (GNP) at rates of perhaps 5% to 7% or more” (Todaro, 2000:14). It is expected that with this rate of growth, which should always be greater than the country’s population growth, rapid development would be attained for that country. Hence, ‘per capita income’ comes handy as the appropriate measurement in this context. It is this kind of ‘development understanding’ that has dominated the scene of development planning over the years. This is the kind of development characterised by emphasis on economic growth, productivity and accumulation for further reinvestment. Economic growth, it is assumed, automatically promises better education, better health and better infrastructure and better social welfare for all as a result of what is termed as ‘trickle down effect’.

Apparently, it was not in the interest of development planners to consider any possibilities of adverse social implications of the development strategies they adopted as long as the “growth” indices were positively appreciating. Such ‘development’ had destabilising effect on the socio-cultural fabric of the traditional rural communities. The labour mobility and the out flux of the populations from the traditional communities for wage employment (both in large farms and in the cities) resorted to the disintegration of traditional institutions, people’s kinship patterns and cultural values. In fact, for the development planners to break through the core of traditional knots, they had to use such tactics as displacement of people from more potential to less potential lands (some being rendered landless in the process) thus reducing the people’s potential of producing for self-sufficiency, and therefore creating the need for supplementary income.

This was especially common in the advent of the colonisation era and even during its hegemony as much as after independence. Taxes were imposed, payable in monetary form. This conditioned peasants to grow cash crops to raise taxes. Hence use-value production in agriculture gradually gave way to cash crop production to enable families meet the growing needs in the cash economy, including the purchase of manufactured goods from the city. Whenever peasants resisted such forms of ‘modernisation’, political control was imposed. People were coerced to comply with taxation requirements by selling their labour to raise taxes. However, the last few decades have seen a growing call for a rethink and redefinition of

development with more objective reassessment of societal priorities and goals. This call was triggered by a realisation that despite the remarkably impressive economic growth records in a number of developing countries, as a result of the rigorous capital-intensive development strategies of the late 1950s and 1960s (the heydays of green revolution) the problems of hunger, unemployment, malnutrition, poverty, and political and social desegregation have not been solved. As observed by Todaro (2000,14), “the levels of living of the masses of people remained for the most part unchanged. (This) signalled that something was very wrong with this narrow definition of development”.

It has been observed that during this modernisation era, economists tended to dominate the development debates, heavily influencing planners in the development field. This explains the tendency to emphasise on economic growth, industrialisation and productivity as synonymous to development, a notion soon to be challenged and disapproved from empirical research (Bryant and White, 1982: 5). This also explains why assessment approaches have for a long time been characterised by heavy statistical and quantitative measurements which other social sciences could not offer (Bryant and White,1982: 6).

Sometimes economists responded to this crisis by critiquing the earlier models of development, which they themselves had advocated. For instance, Bryant and White (1982:16) would argue that, “no matter how ‘developed’ an economy is, if only a small segment of the population benefited from it, development has not occurred.” Especially under outright challenge was the assumption on the ‘trickle-down’ effect to the less fortunate, which never came true. It had become clear that the poor, (a product of modernisation process) would not benefit in the absence of relevant policy orientation that ensured equitable sharing of the benefits of development.

What is the significance of the foregoing figures? In my opinion, they converge to confirm one thing: that the modernisation development paradigm has failed to cause equitable development. Income disparities do not only exist between the developed and the developing countries, but also within the developed and the developing countries as well.

1.3.2 Changes in policy and approach: A development paradigm fading away

“If we refuse to learn from our past and ignore the lessons from our mistakes, we would erroneously brag about our ten years of working experience, when instead, we should actually be talking of one year experience repeated ten times!!” (Dr. Eric Amit, 1980 – Diploma Student Lecture at Coady International Institute, Canada).

“I heard a very moving account of how, after a particularly severe drought, a community was approached by one of the NGOs to plan, in a participatory way, how to distribute the food aid. The community was clearly in dire need, with signs of critical malnutrition already evident in the young and old. In the discussion that followed, the community questioned whether food was really what they needed. ‘How many more times will you be prepared, or able, to feed us every time the rains don’t come? What we really need help with is the harvesting and storage of water so that we can grow our own food” (CDRA, 2000/1: 11)

Todaro (2000:14) has observed that economic development came to be redefined during the 1970’s, in terms of reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context of economic redistribution. According to Todaro, the questions to ask about a country’s development are: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? Todaro (2000: 15) would argue that if all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result ‘development’ even if per capita income doubled.

A new perspective on development became imperative in the wake of this unexpected realisation. In its 1991 report, World Bank articulates the new understanding of development in the following declaration:

The challenge of development ...is to improve the quality of life. Especially in the world’s poor countries, a better quality of life generally calls for higher incomes – but it involves much more. It encompasses as ends in themselves better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom, and a richer cultural life (World Bank, 1991: 4).

Todaro concludes this line of argument by observing that:

Development must therefore be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving major

changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty. Development, in its essence, must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better (Todaro, 2000: 16).

True development process is complex and calls for a number of factors, which have all along either been taken for granted or overlooked altogether. It is now believed that for sustainable development to be realised, the kind that will have a long-term and positive impact on people's lives, the people concerned should participate in the development process. This involves participatory processes of needs identification, setting of development priorities and the participation of the relevant stakeholders in the implementation, evaluation and sharing of benefits or loss accruing from their efforts.

The emerging endeavour to redefine development and its meaning saw an emphasis shift from exclusively economic growth orientation to a mutually complementary concern for income distribution; from production per se, to the production for the satisfaction of human needs and from technology emphasis to the concerted effort to develop human resources (Imboden, 1978:11). Underlying this shift are the issues of power and choice – who is to decide the direction and nature of change. People like Mahabub came up with more hard-hitting critiques arguing that:

We were taught to take care of our GNP since this would take care of poverty. Let us reverse this and take care of poverty first since GNP can take care of itself for it is only a convenient summation and not a motivation for human effort (Hag in Pokharel, 1980: 12).

1.3.3 Structural deficiency identified

Causes of underdevelopment are fundamentally structural. From the basis of this premise, it is imperative that any genuine strategies for social development would have to seek redress on structural issues. These structural deficiencies include poor peasant access to government services. It also includes low participation of the people in decisions that affect their lives; weak grassroots organisational

framework that could effectively represent peasant interests; powerlessness of the local people in the hands of local money lenders, traders, and politicians and dependency and despair which characterises peasants' lives.

These issues are not irrelevant to our area of concern in this discussion – the efficacy of participatory strategic planning as an alternative development strategy. It is clear that neither increased economic growth, nor increased aid offers solution. The underlying question is structural. Another development paradigm is necessary. An alternative approach to rural development planning is called for. Equally important, is a different yardstick for determining 'progress', to more objectively assess the effect of increased production on the lives of the majority of the people in the society. That raises the question of distribution – development with equity. For while 'change is scientific, progress is ethical' (Russell, 1950). Hence "no matter how 'developed' an economy is, if only a small segment of the population benefited from it, development has not occurred" (Bryant and White, 1982:16).

1.3.4 Contextualising participatory strategic planning

In the last ten years or so, participatory methodologies have come as 'an idea' sweeping across Africa, with power to reckon with. Soon after the post-independence euphoria of early 1960s, it was realised that time had come for people to take greater control of their own lives including in the realm of social development. The aura of political independence started losing momentum as people became more disillusioned with the economic exploitation and social impoverishment that led to further deterioration of the standards of living for the masses. A different kind of 'liberation' was becoming necessary.

In the participatory paradigm of development, it is believed that people cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves. An outsider seeking to develop a local person by giving handouts or charitable services cannot give the person pride and self-confidence in himself or herself as a human being to own and make use of those facilities. Worse still, the beneficiary will usually see no need to maintain the facilities long as the benefactor continues to provide.

According to Julius Nyerere (1973:58-60), people will only develop themselves "by what they do; they develop themselves by making their own decisions, by increasing their own knowledge and ability and

by their own full participation - as equals". Participatory community development is therefore perceived as a process by which a community or a group of people strives to make it possible for all of its members to satisfy their fundamental human needs and to enhance the quality of their lives. It is about people and the way they live, work and relate. It is not about objects, things or services given to them. The purpose of objects, things, services and indeed the economy is to serve the people (Hope and Timmel,1996:86). People should, of necessity, participate in decisions that affect their lives. This serves to instil local responsibility as well as enhancing their own sense of dignity and worth. It is believed that people will give their total support to initiatives that they help to create. The foregoing arguments complement UNDP's understanding of human development below:

Human development is about much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. People are the real wealth of nations. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have, to lead lives that they value. And it is thus about much more than economic growth, which is only a means – if a very important one – of enlarging people's choices. (UNDP, 2001: 9)

However, UNDP is quick to point out that in order to enlarge the choices, it would be imperative to build human capabilities through capacity building programmes. Such an effort would enlarge the range of things people can do or can be in life. Thus:

The most basic capabilities for human development are to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community. Without these, many choices are simply not available, and many opportunities in life remain inaccessible (UNDP, 2001: 9).

1.4 Scope of the research

The research concerns at hand lie under Development Studies as a Department and Community Development as a Sector. In particular, the research seeks to critically look at the effectiveness of selected participatory methodologies that have recently been popularised as tools for organisational development and community empowerment.

More precisely, the research focuses on the efficacy of Participatory Strategic Planning process, and its application in Community Based Organisations. However, the theoretical framework covers a fairly wide range of contemporary debate on the efficacy of participatory methodologies and their relevance in community empowerment and sustainability of the impact of social development programmes. The researcher has sought to provide some theoretical overview on other selected participatory development methodologies and in particular Participatory Rural Appraisals and Participatory Evaluation. This is meant to provide the wider context of values and practice of participatory development within which context participatory strategic planning falls. An effort is made to raise critical questions based on the empirical field experiences with the application of these methodologies. While the theoretical foundation of this thesis cannot be complete without the methodological polemics, the breadth and depth of such a debate is, however, limited by the scope of this study.

As far as was possible, the research remained localised within Kenya. However, one out of the six respondent organisations for the research was picked from Tanzania. On the other hand, while the research methodology laid emphasis on qualitative information, some reasonable amount of quantitative data was also gathered to give credence to the findings.

1.5 Methodological approach to the research

1.5.1 Sampling

Sampling is the use of definite and defined procedure(s) in the selection of a part of a total population for the purpose of obtaining from it descriptions, estimates and analysis of certain properties and characteristics of the whole (Feuerstein, 1986: 75-76). It also has the crucial purpose of predetermining from where or from whom information is to be obtained before commencing data collection, and thus

avoiding bias. According to Feuerstein (1986: 75-76), sampling is not an easy process at all. There are times one may have to choose between collecting too much information based on an imperfect sample or less information based on a more carefully chosen sample. One would rather settle down with little but useful and reliable information than vice versa. A cook will not need to eat the entire pot to determine whether or not the food is ready. Testing small portions from various sides of the pot is all that is necessary to ensure fair representation of the whole food in the pot.

The idea behind sampling is that the samples, from which the inferences or generalisations regarding a given population have to be drawn, have to be selected in such a way that each member of the population being studied has an equal probability chance of inclusion in the sample. This involves randomisation at one stage or another, based on the various characteristics or properties composing the population under inquest.

Bearing the foregoing wisdom in mind, the research at hand conducted sampling through a combination of approaches. Basically, respondents were staff from selected non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs). Members of the beneficiary communities interviewed were self-selecting as these were the community constituencies in partnership with the sampled organisations.

The initial criterion for developing sample-frame as a basis for sampling exercise was 'all those organisations which have undertaken participatory strategic planning of one kind or another, in the last five years, under the facilitation of PREMSE Africa'. Individual respondents, who included the organisational staff and the board members, were involved through semi-structured interviews (SSIs). These were sampled from the list of participants of the participatory strategic planning process previously undertaken by their organisations. Besides SSIs, focus group discussions were held with board, staff and members of target community for in depth discussions on their experiences with the participatory strategic planning process.

1.5.1.1 Types of sampling considered

Basically, two methods of sampling were considered: the purposive and probability sampling.

Purposive sampling: This method involves deliberate identification of certain members of a population on the basis of a pre-determined characteristic. In our case at hand, the predetermined characteristic is those organisations which had undertaken participatory strategic planning in the last five years under the facilitation of PREMESE Africa. This criterion invariably determined the ultimate sample-frame.

Probability Sampling: This method involves randomisation, the main purpose of which is to ensure that final sample selected is fairly representative of the whole population in each one of its characteristics. With probability sampling (sometimes called objective sampling), one starts by identifying, naming or numbering all the categories of the population such as villages, houses, people, families, groups or organisations, giving each an equal chance of being chosen into the sample. This is termed as sample frame. It is from this sample frame that one can randomly choose a sample. It is called probability sampling because all members of a population in a sample frame start off with a probable or equal chance of being chosen for the ultimate sample.

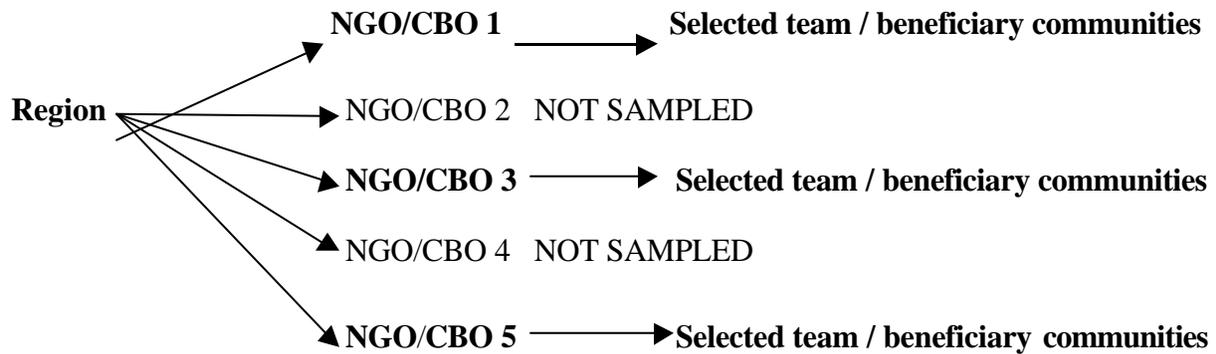
Some probability sampling methods adapted from Feuerstein (1986: 75-76), are discussed below. Some of these will be applied in the research at hand.

(i) Systematic random sampling: With this method, every member of an identified population of research interest, is given a number. These form the sample-frame. The researcher then selects systematically from the sample-frame every second, third or fourth member of the population as serialised in the sample-frame. The size of the sample to be selected is pre-determined as may be required by the research (a guide for determining sample size is provided in *Table 1* below).

(ii) Multi-stage stratified random sampling: This is a sampling exercise that seeks to choose a sample from different layers or strata of a population or section of a community. The research at hand conducted this as demonstrated below:

Figure 1: Multi-stage stratified random sampling





The above multistage stratified random sampling ensured each specified stratum of population was proportionately represented in the sample. The variable sub-populations were deliberately considered for sampling. This is perceived to be one of the most effective strategies to minimise sampling-error.

(iii) Substitution sampling

Field circumstances might dictate that the researcher considers the application of this type of sampling. This happens in cases where a sampled respondent is absent or found to be unable to respond to the interview for one reason or another. In such a case, if the dropout rate is too alarming, some further sampling could be done within the field to substitute the same.

1.5.1.2 Determining sample size

Determining sample size depended on a number of factors. The most important of these factors are the resources available for the research, including number of enumerators to be deployed, money and time. However, it should be born in mind that too small a sample size poses specific problems in representation of the whole population, thus enhancing the chances of unreliability or invalidity of generalisations. This can adversely affect the credibility of the research outcome as observed by Fitz-Gibbon and Morris (1987:42) thus:

Small numbers make some statistical analyses impossible and where analysis can be performed small samples reduce the likelihood that even fairly substantial differences will

be statistically significant. This is because statistical tests take into account the size of the groups producing the means being compared when determining significance. The smaller the group, the less likely it is that the mean produced actually reflects the mean that it is supposed to represent.....

Below is a standard guide that informed the sampling exercise during the research at hand.

Table 1: A guide to determining sample size

(Casley and Kumar, 1988:83)

Total No. of Groups	Suggested Sample %	Corresponding Figure
100	15	15
200	10	20
500	10	50
1000	5	50

According to the table above, it is proposed that sample size would ultimately be determined by the population size. Thus the smaller the population, the bigger the percentage of the population is required for sampling and vice versa (Casley and Kumar, 1988:83). Invariably, it follows that, the larger the sample, the less the possibility of sampling error.

It has been observed that after a certain sample percentage (usually 20%), the effect of the sample size on a research outcome remains constant, or normalises. By these standards, the minimum survey sample is recommended at 10% where large population is involved. Sampling error is known to depend more on the actual size of the sample rather than on the sampling percentage or fraction. For example, there is likelihood of a greater risk of sample-error in a 10% sample of a population of 40, than a 10% sample of a population of 1,000. The chances of fair representation in the former case are less than in the latter and more so, where stratified sampling is not considered (Casley and Kumar, 1988:83-84).

There are also non-sampling errors which could equally affect the results of the research analysis. These include listing errors, omission errors, interview errors, non-responses, measurement errors, interview-recording errors, errors of coding and errors of data entry.

There are also programming or data processing errors. All these will have to be borne in mind by the researcher in the case of the research activity at hand.

1.5.2 Methods of data collection

Contrary to a common belief, participatory methods of research do not necessarily negate the efficacy of rigorous conventional methods of research. For sure, we need scientific methods of data collection even in participatory research designs. The challenge is how to make such methods fit the people

instead of alienating them. For this reason, efforts were made during this research to ensure that as far as possible, the various stakeholders participated in the design and control of the methods instead of the methods controlling the stakeholders as has appeared to be the case in conventional research. Below are the methods used for data collection during this research.

1.5.2.1 Literature review

The study initially sought to establish and understand the theoretical meaning of the key concepts raised in the topic of research, leading to the investigation on their applicability and outcome in the context of the purpose of the research at hand. An extensive literature review was made.

Application

Literature review is fundamental in this study. It involved library research. It also involved a hunt for relevant literature (and especially working documents) from relevant institutions.

1.5.2.2 Case study review

“A case study can explore a field or situation, refining or ruling out preliminary hypothesis and suggesting new ones and possibly providing orders of magnitude of key features” (Casley and Lury, 1987: 66)

Both participatory and conventional methods of research were applied in data collection. Use of questionnaires and focus group discussions was predominant. This involved in depth study of the practical application of participatory strategic planning methods. A measure of case study analysis was involved focused on the organisations sampled. Lessons were drawn from such analyses in accordance with the focus of the research.

A case study is a description of a particular experience, in a way which helps others learn from that experience (Rugh, 1986:22). It involves a detailed description of a relatively few people or items, which generally represent properties of the larger. Usually, sampling for case studies is done on the basis of the particular features as decided by those involved. It is therefore more of a purposeful than simple random sampling. However, even though no random sampling may be desirable, care is in case study identification to ensure that representation of various types of interest in the study is present (Mulwa, 1994:196). “If selected at random, some types may be over-represented and others not represented at

all. Stratification may resolve this problem, allowing for a random selection in each stratum”(Casley and Lury, 1987:64). According to Casley and Lury, case study is more of a data collection approach than a methodology. A variety of data collection methods can therefore be employed on a case that becomes an object of study. In our case at hand, all the organisations sampled were more or less treated both as case studies as well as sampled population.

1.5.2.3 Participant observation

“Strictly defined, a participant observer participates in the activities that are the subject of his study. Increasingly, however, the definition is used to embrace a lengthy residential observation with only incidental actual participation” (Casley and Kumar, 1988: 41)

‘Seeing’ and ‘listening’ are the key words in defining observation. Participant observation is a method of data gathering, which is more qualitative in nature than quantitative and has been commonly used by anthropologists (and social scientists alike). It requires direct observation of an activity, behaviour, relationship, phenomenon, network, or process in the field (Casley and Kumar, 1988: 41). The observer seeks to go beyond the superficial to probe on the perceptions, beliefs, values and attitudes of the people involved. A participant observer tries to be reasonably integrated and accepted into the local community in order to be able to achieve the in depth observation as necessary. At the same time, a researcher is expected to maintain external objectivity. This is precisely the purpose of going to live in the community for a length of period.

Besides establishing a rapport and getting more acquainted with the socio-economic milieu, (which the researcher should initially be familiar with), the researcher establishes people’s feelings and attitudes towards the programme or project under investigation, towards the promoting agency, towards material and technical inputs provided, towards relationships with the extension staff, as well as towards dynamics of participation in project planning, implementation, leadership, and the project benefit accruing to members. The observer or researcher should conduct himself or herself in a manner that people will come to see and accept him or her as a person rather than as a professional. For best results, the observer should be able to develop interest in the local language, preferably a person who shares a common cultural inheritance with the community of interest. One of the main advantages of this approach is that project dynamics are observed within a natural setting. It gives an opportunity for

correlating events, which have taken place separately and over a length of period of time thus establishing the trend as opposed to snapshot approach of an interviewer.

Observation can be obtrusive (everyone knows why the researcher is there) or unobtrusive (people are not told the real purpose of a visit) or may not know they are being observed (often, they do). The participant observer will nevertheless establish adequate rapport with the people to enable him/her be more than a passive observer, and yet effectively be able to remain less than full-fledged participant in what he/she observes. The observer will attempt to avoid associating with local cliques but of course when strong controversies militate against the weaker groups, it would be more compelling for the observer to take side. He/she should be aware of and sensitive to artificial behaviour resulting from the observer's presence.

Below are the advantages and disadvantages of Participant Observation adapted from an interpersonal dialogue between the Researcher and Dr. Feuerstein, Oxford, June 1990 (Mulwa,1994:247):

Advantages of participant observation

- Can study something in natural its setting
- Easy to do, requires minimal preparation
- Can reveal what villagers may not notice or mention
- Holistic, takes many factors and influences into account
- Rapid and cost effective
- Effective in identifying intended and unintended project outcomes.

Disadvantages of participant observation

- May be observer-biased, so better to use a team instead of an individual
- Units observed may only give limited information
- Actually observing can influence behaviour of those studied
- Can be expensive if over prolonged beyond the necessary limits of information gathering.

Application of participant observation in the research at hand

Participant observation method was applied spontaneously alongside other methods of data collection. Hence, observation was applied in the field data collection to reinforce qualitative evidence or data. In this case, obtrusive observation was applied in which everyone knew why the researcher was conducting interviews.

1.5.2.4 Focus group discussions

(Mulwa,1994:247)

Among participatory data collection methodologies to be applied will be focus group discussions. This is a small group discussion of about 6 to 12 people. It is made up of selected representatives of the larger group or community. The topic of discussion is usually identified prior to the discussion meeting as the issue of focus.

Advantages of Focus Group Discussion

Provides an opportunity to go deeper into issues as the group is relatively small

It is easier to handle most controversial issues in a small, manageable and less threatening group

Reduces individual inhibitions and fear

Fresh ideas and insights can be generated as people discuss building on each other's ideas.

Disadvantages of Focus Group Discussion

Needs highly experienced facilitator who can moderate the discussions

Moderator may also be biased

Few participants can dominate the meeting.

Making Focus Group Discussion more participatory during the research at hand

The researcher should help the respondent groups to remain focused and avoid sidetracking

The researcher should encourage all respondent group members to speak with equal opportunity (not just the most senior or most vocal)

The researcher should help the respondent group look for deeper meaning, e.g., for a "yes" or "no" answer, he/she will ask "why"?

The researcher should avoid being critical or judgmental, since there will be no right or wrong answers. Instead, he makes the effort to restate people's opinion and where necessary, simply ask them to explain their point of view

The researcher develops the discipline to listen and listen carefully.

The researcher should partner with a member of the opposite sex to maintain gender sensitivity.

Application of Focus Group Discussion in the research at hand
Focus group discussions were predominant all through in this research.

1.5.2.5 Semi-Structured Interviews

Definition

Semi-structured interviewing (SSI) is one of the main tools used in participatory research. It is a form of guided interviewing where only some of the questions are predetermined. SSI interviews do not have to use a formal questionnaire (even though this may also be used). Often a 'checklist' of questions is adequate as a flexible guide. In contrast to the formal survey questionnaire, many questions will be formulated during the interview (as in a journalistic interview). If it becomes apparent during the interview that some questions are irrelevant, they can be skipped. Questions usually come from the interviewee's response, observations of things around, and use of the interviewer's own experience in the use of the tool (making the best judgement at the spur of the moment).

Types of Semi-Structured interviews (SSIs)

There are two types of SSIs. These are described below.

Individual interview

This is meant to obtain representative information. Information obtained from individual interviews is more personal than for group interviews, and is more likely to reveal conflicts within the community since respondents may feel they can speak more freely without their neighbours present.

Interviews are conducted with purposely selected individual respondents. For instance, SSIs can be applied among a sample of contact farmers, or innovative farmers who have tried recommended

technologies or successfully developed improved technologies, women farmers who are both members and heads of households, farmers who represent major cropping systems in the area, poor farmers with very limited resources or traditional farmers who have resisted new technologies. Interviewing a number of different farmers on the same topic will quickly reveal a wide range of opinions, attitudes and strategies. The bias of interviewing only one sex must be avoided. Ask individual respondents about their own knowledge and behaviour, and not what they think about the knowledge and behaviours of others.

Many communities have at least one ‘trouble-maker’ who disagrees with everything. Responses from these persons can provide valuable cross-checks and useful insights that may not result from the other interviews. Random interviews with passer-by (e.g., during cross-walks) may also reveal useful information and unexpected viewpoints.

Key informant interview

This is meant to obtain special knowledge. A key informant is anyone who has special knowledge on a particular topic (merchant on transportation and credit, midwife on birth control practices, farmer on cropping practices). Key informants are expected to be able to answer question about the knowledge and behaviour of others especially about the operations of the broader systems. While there are well-known risks of being misled by key informants’ answers (and therefore cross-checking is necessary), key informants are a major source of information. Valuable key informants are ‘outsiders’ who live in the community (like school teachers) or people from neighbouring communities (‘outsiders’ with inside knowledge), including people who have “married into” the community. They usually have a more objective perspective on affairs in the community than the community members themselves.

Advantages

- It is a relaxed dialogue, in a relaxed atmosphere.
- There are usually no rules to be followed as the interview can be conducted while people are working on an activity. (Do-It-Yourself –DIY).
- The interviews can be continued at another time if necessary.
- The checklist allows room to probe deeper with additional questions (e.g. follow-up new

dimensions of information)

-The friendly atmosphere could be an advantage for gathering more sensitive information.

Disadvantages

-Interview session can easily sidetrack and therefore waste time unnecessarily.

-Requires experience interviewer

-There is danger of bias.

Making SSIs more participative

-Use flexible checklist instead of questionnaires.

-Seek to hear the views of the more vulnerable groups, if they are represented.

-Use open-ended questions and join the respondent in his/her work while discussing.

Guidelines for SSIs

-Have a mental checklist of questions but be open to new questions.

-Prepare a list of key questions and key probes which result in a whole series of new questions (e.g. “what crop varieties have you experimented with in recent years?”)

-Case studies, stories, household histories and profiles can be used to analyse how a conflict was resolved, what coping strategies were used in a crisis, etc.

-Use contrast comparisons e.g. ask group A why group B is different or does something differently and vice versa.

-If you have to use fixed questionnaires keep them short and use them only at the end of an interview for a clear and narrowly defined purpose.

-Use sequences or chains of interviews (e.g. alternate between group, individual and key informant interviews).

-For each interview add general information on the informants as basis for interpreting responses by different interviewees (age, gender, number of children, marital status, religion, socio economic status). Add the name of the interviewee if authorised by the interviewee.

Note-taking

Good, detailed and comprehensive recording is essential for SSIs. Number questions and mark answers clearly. Assign one member of the interview team as note-taker (but rotate this task).

This allows the other team members to concentrate on the interview and not to be distracted by writing. Design recording tools, which facilitate later analysis of the collected data.

Record what is being said, what you see and use literal quotations to ensure accuracy.

In situations where note-taking is difficult or impossible, write down a few quick notes as a memory aid immediately following the interview or observation. Later, in the evening of the same day, write up completely detailed field notes. Don't delay this, as you may forget.

Finish the interview politely, by thanking the interviewee and inviting for any question(s).

SSIs were extensively used with individual respondents during the research at hand.

1.5.2.6 Community Interviews

(Adapted from Pietro, Ed. 1983:*passim* and Casley and Kumar 1988:*passim*)

A Community Interview is a structured assembly for a group of people that provide a forum for gathering collective opinion on issues of particular concern.

Advantages of community interviews

It is possible to enlist public opinion on issues as opposed to collating from individual respondents

There is a sense of collective responsibility and therefore it may be easier to gather a more classified or sensitive information in such a forum from individuals

Emotions, feelings and concerns may more easily manifest themselves in a crowd environment than in individuals. There is sense of identity security in a community.

It is more cost-effective

Disadvantages of community interviews

Some people may fear to say the truth in public for fear of being victimised afterwards. This is particularly so in the presence of power brokers/opinion leaders in the community

There are chances of domination by the opinion leaders, or indirect suppression of views, feelings.

The moderator may easily be biased in soliciting opinions from particular members of the

community e.g. the best speakers and most talkative

Requires highly trained and experienced facilitator with adult education, group dynamics and conflict management skills.

Making community interviews more participatory during the research at hand

The researcher will break the community into small discussion groups from time to time

At times it might become necessary to split into gender groups (men-women), interest groups (sociologists, agronomists, engineers, farmers, traders, teachers etc.) or age groups (adults and youth) to maximise participation and triangulate the results

Use flexible checklist or group discussion questions instead of a questionnaire

Control the likely domination by more powerful personalities and gatekeepers, by interviewing them prior to the community interviews.

Application of community interviews in the research at hand

Community interviews were applied at the beneficiary constituency level to assess the collective impression on the impact of participatory strategic planning sessions at that level.

Questionnaire as a conventional method of data collection

The questionnaire method, one of the predominant conventional methods of data collection, was used to collect hard data necessary to validate the research outcome. A questionnaire is a set of written or printed questions organised in a systematic way for the purpose of eliciting information from respondents. Care was taken however, to make the questionnaires as user friendly as possible. Below are some considerations made.

Advantages of a questionnaire (Adapted from Pietro -Ed.- 1983: 126).

Can be completed without an interviewer being present, hence can be relatively inexpensive

Questions are standardised; each respondent is asked the same questions, in the same way

They allow for more privacy, particularly if distributed by mail

Well-designed questionnaires are easy to analyse.

Limitations of questionnaire method

It can be too impersonal, too business-like

Has been over used, people are tired of filling them out

Those carrying out surveys gain more power against their respondents

Non-literates and children may not be able to use them without assistance

Respondents tend to say what they think the researcher wants to hear. People will choose to be polite and not controversial

There can be low rate of response where the questionnaire is posted and not administered

There is little opportunity to verify (or clarify) what people have said (it may not be clear or may not be the truth).

Strategies employed to make questionnaire more user friendly

Provide opportunity for the respondents to critique the draft questionnaire

Allow enumerators to participate in pre-testing the questionnaire

Ask members of the programme under investigation to assist as interviewers, thus enhancing people's involvement

Present the participants with the feedback on the information gathered from the interviews. People validate the information or at least challenge it appropriately if necessary. This way, people ultimately own up the information and identify with it. Avoid closed ended questions.

1.5.3. How data was analysed

The data analysis was both quantitative and qualitative. The most challenging concern in a research of this kind has often been that of developing and managing qualitative indicators of change. Assessment of

levels of methodological efficacy and the scope of enhanced organisational and human resource capacity and empowerment can only be possible through relatively large application of qualitative indicators and qualitative methods of analysis.

In this case, proxy indicators were applied to ‘stand-in-for’ the actual indicators of aspired change. Hence, proxy indicators were used to assess and explain:

Acquisition of knowledge (leading to)

Change in attitudes (leading to)

Change of practices and behaviour

1.5.3.1 Analysing qualitative data

“How do we measure human development? Firstly, you must have an understanding of what development really is – not so straight forward to understand, but it is quite possible. Then you have to apply the basic principles of measurement (which people write about using all kinds of big words) but it is basically understanding where things are now and creating a picture of that, and then intervening into that picture in some way, and then developing another picture of how it is after you have intervened. So there are three essential elements: there is the before, the intervention and the after. ---The picture that I am suggesting is one of the easiest ways, a story – it is a narrative description of the situation you describe”. (CDRA, 2000/1: 6)

The research at hand drew heavily from “*Before and After Scenario*” tool of analysis of qualitative information. Even though quantitative data was gathered, narrative description of the “*Before and After Scenario*” formed the basis for the extrapolation on the meaning of the quantitative data. This involved the description of the situation ‘after’ the application of the participatory strategic planning as compared to the situation ‘before’ when conventional methods of planning reigned. That is, an effort was made to deduce nature and scope of impact or change on the observable variables within the units of investigative research at hand (Organisation, Staff and Beneficiary Communities) since the introduction of participatory strategic planning. This assessment was made in the light of the major concerns of the research: the efficacy of participatory strategic planning in building local capacities, in community empowerment and in ensuring sustainability of accruing benefits.

An illustration is given below based on some of the issues of concern for the research at hand indicating the ‘*Before and After Scenario*’.

Table 2: Before and After Scenario

BEFORE TRAINING	AFTER TRAINING INTERVENTION
<p>Planning practice largely based on the intuitions and assumptions of the organisational management, expert advice from planning bureaucrats or/and donor driven priorities</p> <p>Conventional, expert-driven planning with low or no involvement of other stakeholders</p> <p>Low level of cooperation among inter-departmental or sectoral staff</p> <p>Low participation by stakeholders in the execution of programme or organisational plans</p> <p>High incidences of interpersonal conflict with negative effect</p>	<p>Planning practice largely based on thorough needs assessment at both individual and organisational levels of stakeholder interests.</p> <p>High involvement of various stakeholders (including programme staff, management and beneficiary communities among others) in planning and priority setting. High levels of participation with everybody contributing ideas</p> <p>High level of cooperation among inter-departmental staff characterised by significant interaction through joint planning sessions, joint implementation activities, joint monitoring visits to projects and joint evaluation and review sessions</p> <p>High sense of motivation, commitment, ownership and collective responsibility by each stakeholder at their levels of operation</p> <p>Constructive approach to conflict management with operational teams</p>

It should be noted that ‘Before and After Scenario’ is a tool that is developed by the researcher for use in collection of qualitative data. The specific issues of focus are usually determined by the variables of observation to be provided depending on the specific concerns of the research.

Table 3: Assessing qualitative change as compared to quantitative
(Adapted from Oakley, 1985:7-8)

INDICATOR	Units of measurement	Time Span	Report format
Quantitative	Hard data that can be quantified	Any one time	Analytical with statistical figures and tables
Qualitative	Largely observational and descriptive to establish trends Where hard data is used, it is meant to provide quantitative value of trends	Over a period of time for comparative purpose	Analytical Interpretative on events and trends Descriptive Narrative Creative presentations e.g. case studies and role plays

1.5.3.2 Presentation of findings

For presentation of findings, analytical framework in form of ‘Star Matrix’ has been found appropriate where qualitative indicators are involved. This tool is useful in presenting a complete picture of trends on variables of change in focus. An illustration on ‘Star Matrix’ is presented below:

Star matrix: assessing team relationship needs

The concept of star-matrix was developed by PREMESE Africa Development Institute, as a modification from participatory rural appraisal basket of tools. It has especially been extensively

applied in organisation assessment activities of PREMESE Africa. This tool is useful in presenting a

complete picture of trends on variables of change in focus. It has been found a useful tool in providing a comparative pictorial summary where multiple variables are involved. From such a tool, it is easy to extrapolate the 'low' and 'high' points and trigger animated group discussions around that. Its use is convenient across the board of educational divide, as its interpretation is intelligible to both sophisticated groups as much as to less sophisticated and illiterate groups.

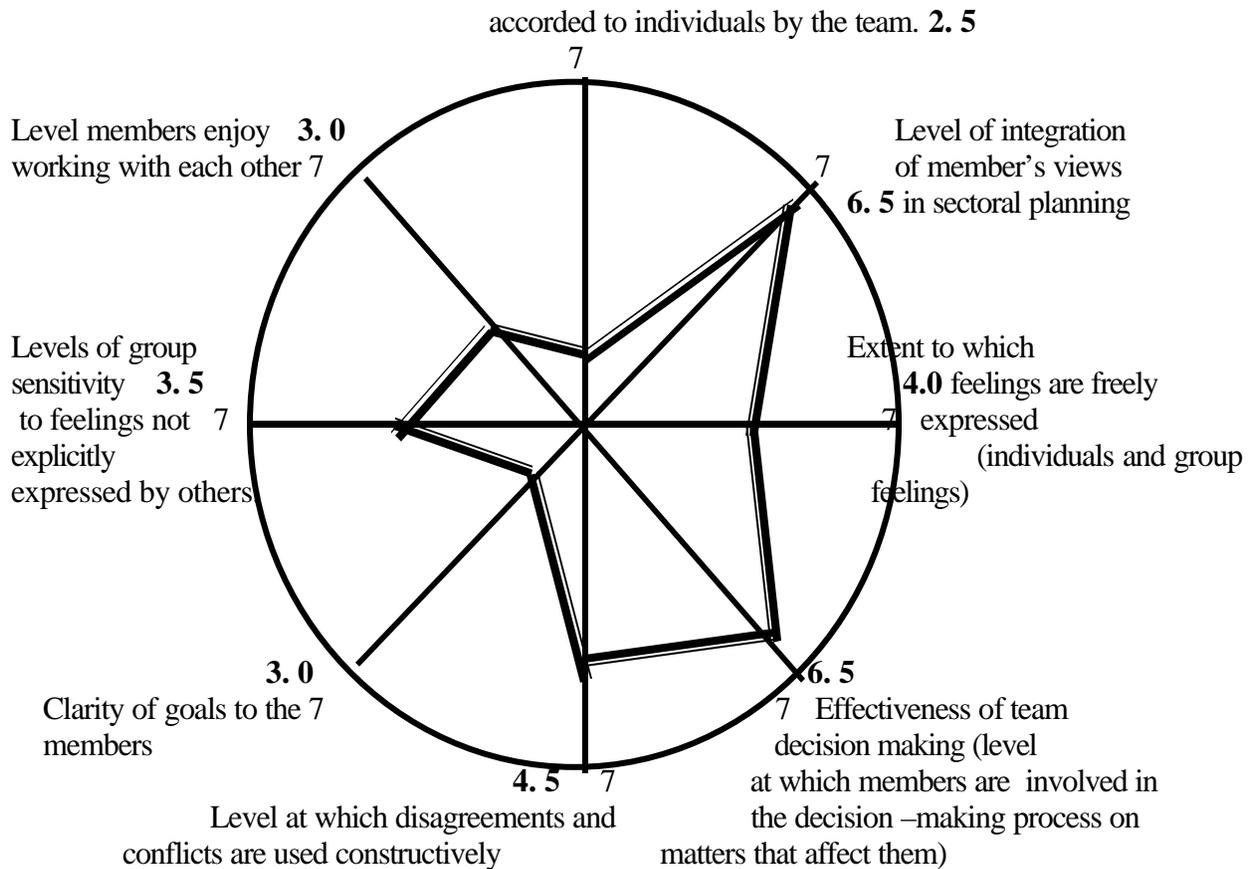
In developing a 'Star Matrix' on Team Relationship illustrated below, the facilitator asks each team member to assess his/her team on the basis of variables given on the wheel below. Each variable is explained to the team and questions of clarification dealt with before the individual assessment begins. After the individual scoring, team members are put into sub-groups, preferably sectoral, sectional or departmental groups, where they will assess the team relationship at their units of operation. Averages are taken for each variable to determine the sectional/departmental scores. An overall team performance is determined by calculating averages. An example is given here below.

Figure 2: Team effectiveness and relationship

Source: PREMESE Working Materials 2000

Very Poor 0 _____ **7 Excellent**

Levels of encouragement,
support and appreciation



Observations

According to the hypothetical illustration above, this team was strongest in the integration of views of members of staff at sectoral levels (6.5 out of 7, that is 93%). Equally strong is high level of collective participation of members in decision-making on matters that affect them. Everybody's views are taken into consideration in team deliberations. Decision making in the team is pretty democratic with high level of involvement of team members, particularly in decisions that directly affect them.

The team is weakest in their ability to give each other support and encouragement in the time of need (2.5 out of 7, that is 36%). Appreciation of individual members by their colleagues is not expressed, a fact which could easily compromise people's self-esteem. No wonder, therefore, despite the high degree of participation and integration, team members do not as yet enjoy working with others. Clarity of team goals is also low.

Recommendation

Team building sessions are recommended for this group. The curriculum should put emphasis on trust building and teamwork. Sessions on giving and receiving feedback would be useful towards learning to express appreciation for others.

1.5.4. Conclusion

The foregoing Chapter focused substantively on the matters pertaining to the research design for this thesis. It has served to set the stage for our entry into the literature review arena. We now know with reasonable precision, the kind of specific information to be hunted for in the available stock of secondary sources on strategic planning as a discipline. Having said this however, it is notable that our library research involved a deliberate effort to investigate the practice of strategic planning within the wider context of participatory development. The fundamental thrust in our literature review sought to establish the authoritative contemporary literature that existed on participatory development and participatory strategic planning in particular. The search is meant to acclaim on the efficacy of participatory strategic planning approaches in organisation building.

The theoretical framework is expected to build-up to a systematic field research to test the theories in the light of our hypothesis. The last section of Chapter One has given us the precursor for the basic research modalities adopted in this study activity as pertains to the sampling and data analysis methods. There has been a deliberate effort to extrapolate lessons based on the empirical research outcome as opposed to relying exclusively on the normative information from literature or on the knowledge already held by the researcher on this subject.

Chapter Two

2.0 Conceptual Foundations of Social Development Paradigms

“We must work like bees and go after the honey, or like flies and go for the waste” (The Mayor of Kisumu City, Kenya: Daily Nation, October Friday 15th, 2002).

2.1 Paradigms of development alternatives

2.1.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, three major paradigms of social development interventions will be examined. These are the modernisation, social welfare, and participatory development paradigms. The purpose is to provide the wider framework of development polemics within which development planning approaches are determined. In this regard, it is within the context of participatory development paradigm that participatory strategic planning is borne. Hence, the analysis on each of the three paradigms will be an attempt to highlight on the concept, its application, its potential and its limitations within the wider concern for sustainable development and development with equity.

2.1.1.1 Some philosophical perspective

It would be appropriate to state from the out set that this thesis is an earnest attempt to investigate on the ‘truth’ (which can be relative), or the ‘state of affairs’ (which is more realistic though can be subjective) as pertains to the dynamics, forces and trends of social change in society in the name of development. We are approaching this task from the basis of ‘love and pursuit of wisdom’, which is essentially what has been termed as philosophy (Barry, 1983:11-12). According to Chukwu (2002:25), this involves a critical inquiry into fundamental postulations that the scholar holds as hypothesis, leading to authoritative extrapolations based on empirical experience from investigation of reality. It is intended that the investigation at hand will be more analytic than speculative. That is, as far as possible, observations and conclusions will be adduced to evidence either from primary or secondary sources. At times, we will appear like we are interrogating the obvious, but the underlying principle is that of beginning from the known in order to more clearly identify the possible path to the unknown. Hence, to borrow from the philosophical ‘*principle of verification*’:

...a sentence is factually significant to any given person if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express – that is, if he knows what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept it as being true or reject it as being false (Ayer, 1991: 24)

The other observation worth of making at this juncture as borrowed from the conventional wisdom is that the same way there is no one best form of organisation, there can be no one best way to create strategy. Similarly, there is no one best way ‘to do management’ as no single prescription works for all

organisations at all times. Hence, our analogy that follows in the succeeding Chapters will rely heavily on descriptive theory from literature review (presentation of empirical reality as it is in practice), leading to an attempt to make some extrapolations and conclusions on the normative, that is, what we think the reality is supposed to be (prescriptive theory) based on the out come of the investigation at hand.

2.1.1.2 The historically dominant paradigms

In the context of the foregoing perspectives, there is overwhelming evidence from literature (as will be referenced later in this Chapter) pointing out that modernisation and social welfare development paradigms have for decades dominated the scene of social development. The modernisation development paradigm is associated with the conventional development planning that tends to identify ‘advancement’ with making tools of development newer, bigger, more sophisticated and not the least, more productive. These tools include infrastructure, communication network, technology, energy supply, education and such like. People only come into the scene as a source of supply for the much-needed (often cheap) labour and not as the fundamental purpose for such development planning. No wonder therefore, in this paradigm, people are rarely consulted and least involved in making choices on the priorities for the kind of development they would wish to see. In modernisation paradigm, central planning bureaus are exclusively dictated by national development priorities, which are often determined in the light of national economic investment opportunities and political efficacy.

Where does social welfare development paradigm linkup with the modernisation construction? Owing to its characteristic orientation in economic development through capitalist mode of production and accumulation, modernisation development construction has tended to create social classes in society. The majority of these are the poor masses that supply the ‘sweat capital’ for modernisation process. They are the social casualties of a development paradigm that has systematically enriched a few at the expense of the majority.

In response to the emergent phenomenon, benevolent and charitable service organisations have offered to assist the poor to cope with the reality and sustain life despite the circumstances. This ‘partnership’ involves the provision of free services and material help to the poor in bid to mitigate against their suffering. Such assistance comes in various forms, such as subsidised medical care, free handouts and

school fees sponsorships among other forms. These kinds of intervention meant to relief the suffering of the poor and rehabilitate their lot is what has been referred to as the social welfare development paradigm.

2.1.1.3 Participatory development, a relatively new paradigm

Participatory development paradigm will be examined under the assumption that it is an idea whose time has come. This relatively new paradigm will be discussed in an effort to establish as to whether or not it can pass as an efficacious alternative to the other two paradigms. Its central motivation is people and their aspirations. In fact, it would advocate that people's needs should be the primary purpose for any development planning and intervention and that other developmental concerns should not only be secondary, but should also be at the service of the people.

2.1.2 The concept of sustainable development

Running through this Chapter and beyond will be the constant reference to the concept of 'sustainable development'. It is for this reason that it is deemed necessary to devote some time at this early stage in an effort to establish the meaning of the concept right from the on-set for the purpose of this paper.

2.1.2.1 Sustainable development from macro-perspective

To understand sustainable development, it would be instructive to adopt a phrase adduced to Smith, whereby we can observe that it is a concept that is still "in an Alice in Wonderland world where words still mean what you want them to mean" (Smith, 1979:58). In this case, it would be realistic to acknowledge that there is no universally acceptable definition of what sustainable development entails (Sharachchandra, 1991:607). However, a number of authors on the subject tend to espouse the theory that equates sustainable development with the sustenance of ecology (Pepper, 1998:1-7; Rees, 1989:1-7; Brookfield, 1991:113-119). However, other writers such as Basiago (1995:109-119); and Franks (1996:53-60), have a more holistic view of sustainable development. In their view, the concerns for sustainable development cuts across the board of sectors to embrace the sustenance of natural resource systems, institutional development, appropriate management skills, economic, ethical and sociological concerns.

Admittedly, the notion of ‘sustainability’ is said to have emerged from ecologists in 1972 (Basiago,1995:109). According to Basiago, it is the quest to make modern civilisation ‘sustainable’ that inspired the UN’s Stockholm Conference in 1972. Some years later, Brundtland Commission gave the concept some shape when they defined sustainable development as ‘development which meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (Brundtland, 1987). In the more comprehensive version, the conference defined sustainable development as:

...a process in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony, and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations.
(Brundtland, 1987)

The foregoing understanding of sustainable development is wholesome and holistic. It embraces the environmental concerns of sustainability (protection of biodiversity, including preservation and conservation of natural resources), economic concerns of sustainability (accounting for natural resources including putting controls against pollution), technological concerns of sustainability, and institutional concerns. More importantly, all the concerns raised here constellate at the human person as the ultimate purpose for sustainable development.

Basiago (1995:109-110) stretches our imagination as to how far the concerns of sustainability can be extended and for a good reason. He argues that sustainability is as much a political question as it is with ‘liberty’, and ‘democracy’. With the experiences of acid rain, global warming, ozone depletion, deforestation and desertification, global security is jeopardised. Other real threats to sustainability of life are said to include population pressure (with increasing unemployment and out-pacing of the land capacity) and social and ethnic tensions (which tend to destabilise social harmony and governance).

2.1.2.2 Sustainable development from micro-perspective

There is a whole world of difference between project sustainability and sustainable development. In short, while project sustainability concerns itself with the continuity of a project until it attains its set

objectives, sustainable development is concerned with the continuity of the positive development impact associated with the project. In other words, the latter concerns itself with the change in the quality of life of the people wrought by a project intervention. Swanepoel (1993: 2), captures the essence of sustainable development in the following statement, without necessarily mentioning sustainable development itself:

When people are involved in a community development project, their objective is always concrete. The objective can be precisely described and can quite often be seen and touched. The peculiarity, though, is that while people are striving towards a concrete objective, they at the same time reach abstract goals that they may not even have thought of. While striving to get a clinic established (a concrete objective) they gain in something abstract such as self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and human dignity. These abstract gains are the enduring and permanent results of community development which enable people to help themselves.

I believe what Swanepoel refers to, as concrete objective are the concerns at the level of project sustainability, while what he refers to, as abstract gains are the concerns at the level of sustainable development. The latter have more to do with human development than material development.

From the literature reviewed above, and the experience of PREMESE Africa (Working Papers, Module 4, 2003:67), sustainability concerns at community level can be summarised as below.

Social sustainability

Restoration of people's sense of worth, dignity and self-belief should be one of the major preoccupations in this concern. No matter how much and how long we sing the song of self-reliance and sustainability, our cause will amount to naught unless this is complemented with an effort to flush out dependency attitude among the target groups. This entails the cultivation of a sense of self-worth among the communities despite their financial poverty.

In this context, external partners should be wary of the temptation of doing for the community what it

can do for itself. Partner agencies should avoid giving any thing for free to the people no matter how 'poor' they may appear to be. It is better to ask for local contribution, no matter how little. The ultimate aim here is to give people the necessary support to rediscover, restore and preserve their potential. They are enabled to maintain their sense of self-respect regardless of their social status or gender differentiation.

Economic sustainability

This pertains to the ability to create and mobilise resources sufficient to cater for internal needs. It includes strengthening people's ability to identify, procure and employ available resources – whether human or material (both local and, where necessary, external), but without creating dependency. Of importance is the promotion of creative local fund raising strategies including the promotion of savings and credit schemes (both for organisational staff as well as for the community). However, savings and credit schemes should be handled with care, as they can be very delicate. If care is not taken, it is possible that the poor people would lose colossal amounts of their meagre savings through corrupt officials managing such a schemes. The initiation of income generating investments is also advisable as long as these are managed profitably. People should learn to generate income through viable projects. Meanwhile, people should be assisted to develop the kind of management skills, which will enable them to use the available resources effectively and efficiently.

Communities should be challenged to initiate some non-donor funded projects as early as possible. This will not only be a source of pride in their own potential to make things happen, but will also provide an excellent learning opportunity on self-management.

Environmental sustainability

This involves the sustainable use of resources and preservation of the environment. People should develop the ability to generate, exploit and replenish resources in such a way as to ensure adequate resource-base to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the survival of the future generations. This is the basis for a sustainable future.

Strategic and organisational sustainability

Of paramount centrality here is organisational development through structural transformation.

This involves effort to transform dominant institutions in the community towards becoming more responsive and more sensitive to local needs and aspirations. The result would be widened scope of transparency and accountability to the public. It also ensures the protection of civil rights and promotion of social justice. The sensitive structures will challenge people to deal with the root causes and not symptoms of problems. This entails 'going beyond fishing' described by Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF, 2002:3-4), as selflessly pushing forward for people's rights. For example, protecting the stream from pollution by industrialists who wield immense economic power. The new spirit is characterised by equitable distribution of power, wealth, resources and opportunities.

Maintained consistency in the quality of leadership and management input is critical. Projects and other community initiatives have often collapsed when they lose momentum in quality leadership and management. This will happen as a result of flawed processes of leadership identification or change of management whereby nepotism and corruption has been allowed to rule. Affectionate tendencies in particular have led to loss of objectivity and professionalism in the management of community projects, in which influential group members fight for their relatives and friends to assume management positions for which they are neither trained nor talented.

Consistency in quality management is borne of determination by stakeholders to place the right people in their rightful positions of responsibility commensurate with their experience and talents and where necessary, their training as well. In fact, it does not always follow that the best trained are the most effective leaders or managers. Other factors such as honesty, transparency, creativity, commitment and self-drive should be considered among others. It should not be hard to spot talented persons in any given undertaking. Sometimes it calls for taking risks to experiment personalities. Appropriate training for capacity building should complement this intuitive identification of talents. However, should the person fail to perform, his or her replacement (or relocation) should be immediate and non-compromising. Maintaining consistency in leadership quality will call for professional discipline on the part of those responsible for decision making, most important of this being quick reaction to correct management errors. Avoidance of unnecessary procrastination in the implementation of critical management decisions is also instructive.

Promotion of community based organisations as power instruments at their levels of operation is imperative. This is an effort to build collective power and solidarity through the formation and consolidation of community-based organisations and other related local structures. Through this effort people attain self-leadership skills as they build organisations, which are self-managed, including the ability to manage internal affairs through a democratic and participatory decision-making. In this process, all community members participate in decision-making as they take control of their own lives with minimal or no external help. They also assume full responsibility for the decisions they make including the consequences thereof.

There is need to foster integrated approach to community development as a strategy for building sustainability. Programmes genuinely interested in people's welfare and sustainability should of necessity seek to accommodate the diversity of people's fundamental human needs in one way or another. These include the physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs. This calls for multi-sectoral approach as opposed to piece-meal, sector-specific strategies characterised by professional biases. Where a partner is limited in scope, linkages and networking with other actors should be sought.

Open information sharing systems are fundamental in efforts to build sustainable development infrastructure. There is no dispute on the fact that knowledge is power. A truly empowering initiative should therefore seek to establish open information flow and information sharing within people's organisation. This includes the sharing of the latest technological information that would enhance people's sense of control and autonomy. Open community forums, community libraries, collective / communal information bureau (where they can send and receive messages to and from the outside world using modern but affordable communication technology), community theatre, and such like would be alternative options towards this end. When people learn to access and create information of their own, they will be on their way towards a sustainable development process.

Equally important is that people should learn to forge the necessary contacts and linkages, for example, to access human resource inputs. It involves the effort to reach out for collaboration and networking with others who share similar goals and vision. This leads to the consolidation of people's power,

knowledge and creativity including self-assertion and determination. Insights and lessons drawn from sharing experiences and ideas with the collaborating partners reinforce this. Finally, it is strategically advisable to establish an open dialogue between partners involved in a given project undertaking, right from the early stages, in bid to draw-up a joint phase-out plan. To establish a strong base for local sustainability, external partners have the obligation to initiate clear and transparent phase-out plans and share the same with the communities concerned. In this case, their exit will not come as an embarrassing surprise to the community.

Technological sustainability

Promotion of appropriate technology has become one of the key strategies to build technical sustainability in projects and programmes. It involves, but not limited to, the effort to promote the use of Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK). People seek to adapt new technology as they integrate it with traditional technology in such a way as to achieve its control. As a result, it is assumed that people will be able to produce goods and services for self-sufficiency and surplus for 'export' in exchange for goods and services that cannot be produced or generated locally.

People need to attain self-sufficiency in social and technical skills that enable them meet their own needs by getting the appropriate training and exposure. Such skills would sustain internal operations at peoples own pace and space without having to resort to dependency on external expertise except when most necessary. These include leadership skills, management skills, organisational skills and the training of para-technicians and para-professionals (sometimes referred to as community own resource persons).

2.1.2.3 Conclusion

These concerns on sustainable development are not irrelevant to our wider concerns for community empowerment through participatory strategic planning. In fact, sustainability concerns are more methodological than otherwise. The fundamental question is basically on 'hows' of doing development responsibly, without compromising the survival of the future generations, as much as guarding against the possibility of creating dependency that undermines the sense of local responsibility and local ownership. Building the sustainability of community projects is as much of a collective responsibility as it is a

methodological choice for the change agents. This is precisely why participatory methods of planning are meant to complement the wider concerns for sustainable development.

The aim of the review that follows below as pertains to the development paradigms in the interplay on the social development arena is to establish the credence (or lack of it) of each of the development paradigms within the wider context of the interest of this study. The researcher does not intent to approach this discussion from a *tabula rasa* (empty-mind) disposition. Hence, whenever appropriate, he will take the opportunity to share some of his field experiences over the years of involvement in community development processes. The role of Community-Based Organisations (CBO's) will be accentuated as instruments to facilitate effective community participation and empowerment as they seek to optimise people's systematic social analysis as a basis for informed collective action.

2.2 Modernisation development paradigm

2.2.1 Introduction

Modernisation is an approach to social development that has dominated the scene for decades. Basically, modernisation paradigm is inspired by economic growth and accumulation of wealth, characterised by heavy investment on physical structures and technology. Some of the typical interventions characteristic of this paradigm are presented in the *Figure 3* below.

2.2.2 Perception of causes of poverty in modernisation paradigm

In strictly conventional sense, the causes of poverty in modernisation paradigm are believed to be *endogenous*, that is emanating from within the people. This is a paradigm that tends to lay the blame of poverty on the 'victims' of poverty themselves. In this context, poverty is seen as emanating from factors that border with 'carelessness' or 'ignorance' among the poor who do not understand 'the things of development'. Such include over-population; laziness; laggard attitude leading to low adoption of modern technology; which again leads to under-utilisation of natural resources; people's primitive way of life; low education or illiteracy as the people do not utilise the available opportunities for education; inadequate physical structures and infrastructure;

inadequate exports as the poor do not readily cooperate with agricultural extension workers who promote cash crops for instance; lack of money as the poor do not want to work, neither do they have the relevant skills for salaried employment.

The list for the blame on the poor goes on endlessly. Hence, Waller observes: “The barriers to economic growth were seen as the attitudes, beliefs and structures of traditional societies, lack of skills, lack of technology and lack of infrastructure” (Waller, 2002;*passim*; an internal working paper of ACORD, unpublished). As can be imagined, approaching the ‘victims’ of poverty with this attitude angers them even the more, as the UK Coalition Against Poverty observes:

Poverty is not a word people like to be associated with. There are too many myths about the poor – that they are lazy and unfit, or helpless and pitiful. The stereotypes are all negative. Poverty is maintained in part through the myths and stereotypes, which blame and shame people in poverty.... Over-blaming crushes people’s spirit and confidence (Thekaekara, 2000:563).

Economic growth is seen as a product of a modernisation process that seeks to reverse the situation of the poor by addressing the endogenous factors that perpetuated poverty. It is assumed that the benefits of economic growth would trickle down to everyone (Waller, 2002, internal working paper of ACORD, unpublished). By implication, all these factors point out to specific types of intervention characteristic of conventional development practice reigning predominantly over the years. These include family planning campaigns, importation of technology to modernise production, traditional literacy campaigns, proselytising of the ‘heathens’, construction of sophisticated highways and introduction of high tech communication and such like. The development process is characterised by the coercion of people into community development projects. The assumption is that, since the people are believed to be lazy, they should be forced into their own development, as they will later appreciate when they begin to reap the fruits. Hence, in this framework, heavy-handed leadership is imperative to control people and conform them into obedience.

2.2.3 The genesis of community development concept and how it relates to modernisation paradigm

2.2.3.1 Who constitutes a 'community'?

It would be appropriate to open this debate by making effort to understand what we mean by the word 'community'. This has meant different things to different people. According to Midgley (1986:24-25), community is usually defined in terms of geographic locality, of shared interests and needs, or in terms of deprivation and disadvantage. Edwards and Jones (1976:12), share similar line of thought as they define community as a grouping of people who reside in a specific locality and who exercise some degree of local autonomy in organising their social life in such a way that they can, from that locality base, satisfy the full range of their daily needs. Zentner (1964:420-423), concurs with the utilisation of an habitational space in the understanding of community, but adds that the common bond could also be collective occupation. He considers group structure, integration around specific goals, local autonomy and local responsibility as fundamental ingredients too. However, De Beer (1984:42-43) has effectively challenged the 'local autonomy' perspective, and the contention that people in a community should have the ability to 'satisfy the full range of their daily needs' from local resources. He argues that, while it is possible to create a community, external forces will exert influence over its form. He considers it too idealistic to expect a community to be absolutely 'self-contained' in the supply of all its needs. In other words, it should be acknowledged that we live in a world of interdependence. Hence, ideally, those who form a community will essentially be the best suited to define it.

2.2.3.2 The genesis of community development

'Modernisation' is said to be the 'successor' or 'perfector' of 'community development' practice. On the other hand, community development has been perceived as the vehicle that has carried modernisation through the key epochs of development history following the World War II.

According to a number of authors, a more recent origin of community development is attributed to the practice of agricultural extension instituted in 1870 in some Midwestern states of the United States of America (Brokensha and Hodge, 1969: 36-39; Mayo, 1975: 134). The aim for the agricultural extension is said primarily to have been to *transfer knowledge* regarding agricultural practices and

techniques and, later on, also to promote self-help projects in rural areas (Cornwell, 1986:11). Reinforcing the belief that ‘community development’ concept was first conceptualised in America, Phifer et al. (1980:19), argue that it started in 1908 with the launching of *Country Life Commission Report* and the subsequent enactment of Smith-Lever Act in 1914.

These developments are said to have led to the institution of *Cooperative Extension Service* characterised by the promotion of *community organisation*, “in order to promote better living, better farming, more education, more happiness and better citizenship”(Phifer et al, 1980:19-20). All these efforts are categorised as the genesis of community development, as people sought to organise themselves and articulate their needs and wishes towards common good (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 2).

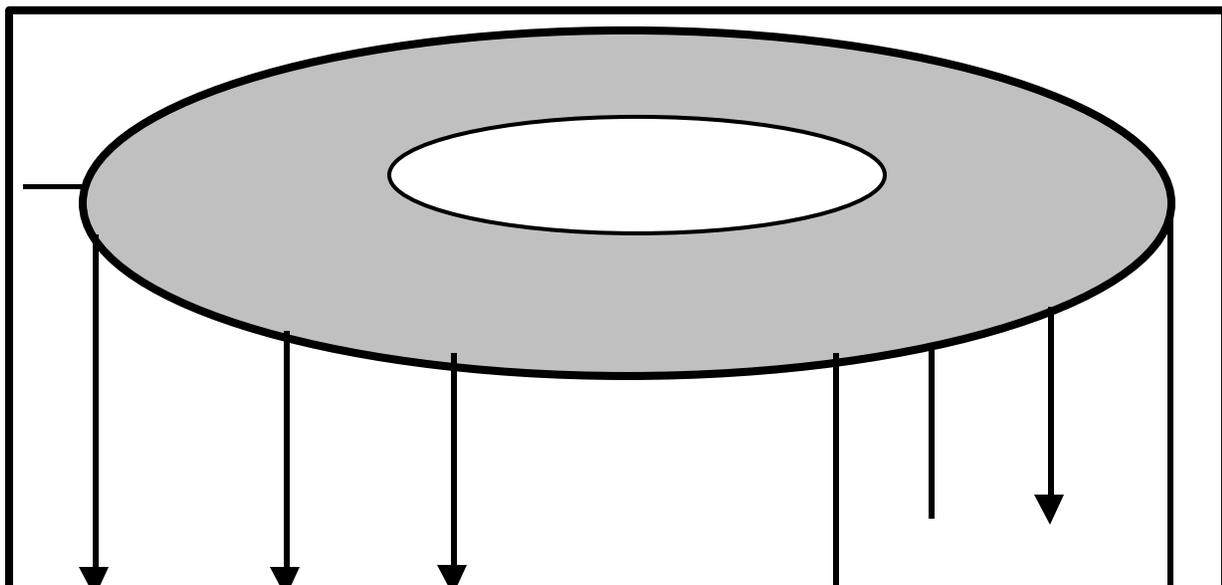
This understanding of community development concept has been challenged by other scholars such as Ponsioen (1962:53). An example is given of community development efforts of the Institute for Rural Reconstruction, which is said to have been created as early as 1921 in India (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:2). Dasgupta (quoted in Brokensha and Hodge, 1969: 40-41) observes that its aim was:

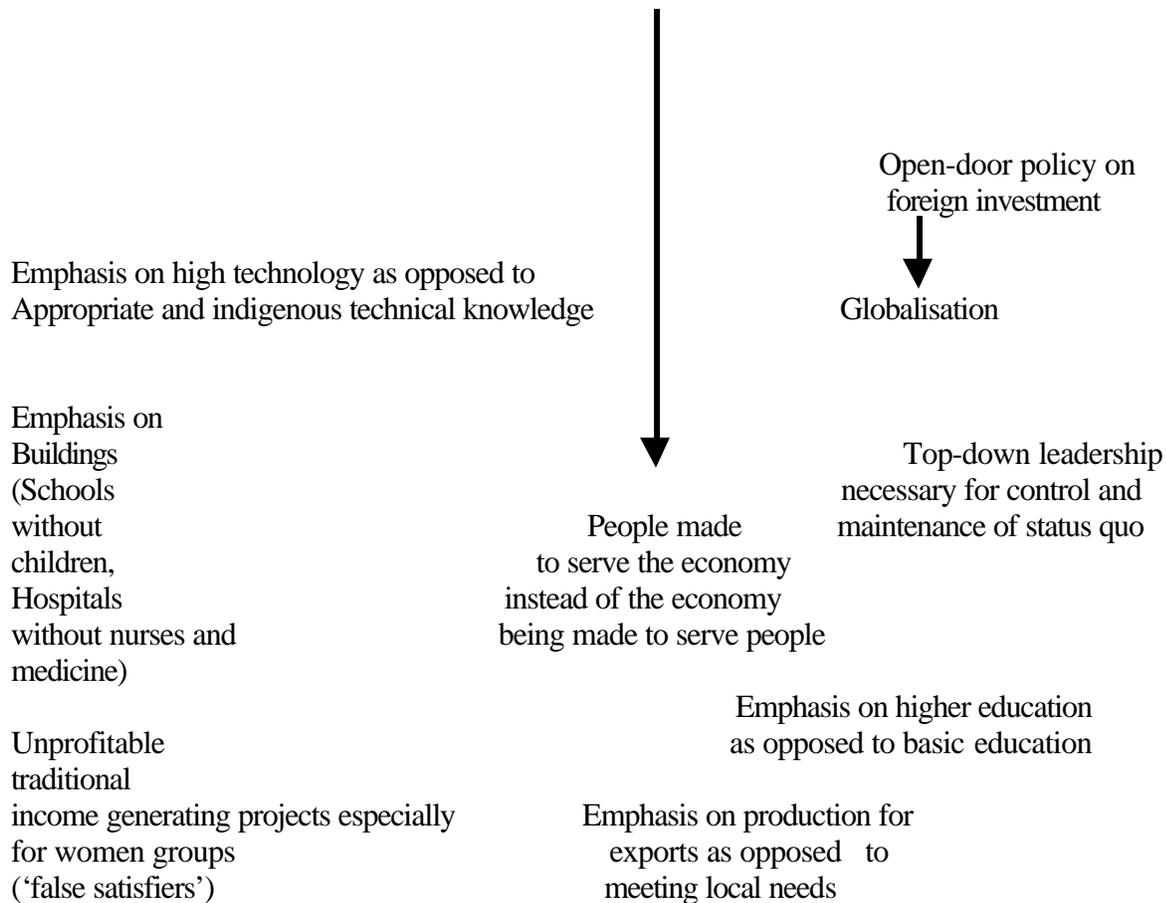
...to bring back life in all its completeness, making the villagers self-reliant and self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural tradition of their own country and competent to make efficient use of modern resources for the fullest development of their physical, social, economic and intellectual conditions.

Among the emphases put in institute’s programme was the use of resources to the fullest. There is also emphasis on the need to approach development from an integrated or integral point of view (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 2). A similar effort on community development is quoted from Gandhian rural reconstruction experiment in 1931, but whose emphasis was *self-sufficiency* and *change of attitudes* as prerequisite for community development (Brokensha and Hodge, 1969: 41). It is believed that the British colonial powers started borrowing the lessons from these efforts to develop community development policies for India and the African colonies from 1944. “By the end of the 1940’s, the term ‘community development’ was in use worldwide’ (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:2). By then, it was

used to denote government programmes aimed at the stimulation of local initiative for community self-development efforts (Cornwell, 1986:16).

Figure 3: Modernisation development paradigm interventions





Some of the lessons drawn from these early experiments with community development are:

That the role of village level worker (local leadership) is critical for the success of community development initiatives. This is the key person for community sensitisation, community organisation, and community training in knowledge, skills and for change of attitudes among other activities.

Where the felt needs of a local community are directly addressed by a community development initiative, it will be possible to harness local resources and solicit peoples' commitment in support of such efforts.

Problem-solving-oriented framework of development will assure spectacular success as long as projects

seek to address the felt needs of the people, and are led by clearly visioned project leaders of strong (though not dominant) personality. However, local community initiative should be encouraged at all times for self-sustaining development.

That, careful selection is made for project staff responsible for the implementation of projects. These are then given thorough training in the appropriate skills.

Where the foregoing factors are missing, community development will end up benefiting the elite more than the poor villagers at whom programmes are initially aimed.

2.2.4 Community development ‘modernised’ with massive mobilisation of resources for the purpose

According to Patton (1986:9-20), it was immediately after the World War Two, that massive resources were mobilised by governments in Europe and America and pumped into post-war reconstruction schemes. Such important institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were established in 1944/5 and charged with the responsibility of managing these resources for world development through reconstruction of what was destroyed by the war and ‘modernisation’ of infrastructure. The two institutions were assigned to assist in the mobilisation and management of resources for post-war reconstruction programmes, mainly in education, health, social welfare, housing, agriculture and other related sectors. The reinforcement of community development concept in the 1950’s as the national development policy in many countries (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 3) was one of the consequences of this marshal plan for modernisation. As a result, there were massive community development investments, both from public as well as private sector organisations.

One of the much publicised modernisation scheme was the Green Revolution era of 1960’s. This saw a massive mechanisation of agriculture, complimented by the invention of high-yield seed varieties of rice and other crops in Asia and Latin America among other regions. In addition, there was a wide variety of fertilizer and more effective insecticides. The new technology-intensive approach to rural development was soon accepted as the panacea for rural poverty alleviation in developing countries. This was because of the massive grain production that was being witnessed (Worsley,1984;*passim*; Esman,1978: *passim*). Rural economic growth was evidently undisputable. With this kind of modernisation,

community development trends took a new, but curious turn.

2.2.5 Community development expectations doomed; modern economic prescriptions held responsible

Ironically, the same time production skyrocketed, rural poverty is said to have deteriorated in both absolute and relative terms (Frank,1981:*passim*; Worsley,1984; Esman,1978). There was massive hunger among the large part of the populations amidst national food self-sufficiency. Thus, the World Bank observes:

In the mid-1970s, the World Bank estimated that nearly 85 percent or more than 750 Million of the people in developing nations were living in relative poverty, earning less than \$75 a year; two-fifths subsisted in absolute poverty on annual incomes of less than \$50 (World Bank, 1975:passim).

In modern economic terms, development has meant “the capacity of a national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its Gross National Product (GNP) at rates of perhaps 5% to 7% or more” (Todaro, 2000:4-14). It is expected that with this rate of growth, as long as it always remains greater than the country’s population growth, rapid development is attained for that country. Hence, ‘per capita income’ comes handy as the appropriate measurement in this case. It is this kind of ‘development understanding’ that has dominated the scene of development planning over the years. This is the kind of development characterised by emphasis on economic growth, productivity and accumulation for further reinvestment, clouded with an assumption that economic growth is key to ‘progress’ through modernisation. Economic growth, it is assumed, automatically promises better education, better health, better infrastructure and greater scope of people’s social welfare as a result of what is termed as ‘trickle down effect’.

As Murphy observes, modernisation development paradigm is built on the premises and conviction that “there is a natural order, design, and progress in things’. The theory believes that humans have the capacity and responsibility to promote and direct progress through the application of science and

technology. In modernisation theory, progress is equated with technological invention and capitalist enterprise (within a relatively more liberal framework), industrial development, economic growth, and the expansion and integration of markets. Murphy observes that these engagements have come to be treated as the normative and natural vocation of all human beings and societies (Murphy, 2000:339).

It has been observed that during this modernisation era, economists have tended to dominate the development debate, heavily influencing planners in the development field. This explains the tendency to emphasise on economic growth, industrialisation and productivity as synonymous to development, a notion soon to be challenged and disapproved from empirical research. This also explains why evaluation approaches had for a long time been characterised by heavy statistical and quantitative measurements which other social sciences could not offer. As observed by Todaro “the levels of living of the masses of people remained for the most part unchanged”, pointing out that something was very wrong with this narrow definition of development (Todaro, 2000:4-14).

Evidence from empirical research over the 1970’s and 1980’s (Imboden,1978:*Passim*; Worsley, 1984; Esman, 1978; Frank, 1981; George,1986:*passim*) suggests that modernisation programmes have had no significant positive impact towards equitable development. It has been observed that many years of development work have not succeeded in preventing conflicts and crises either (Eade and Williams, 1995:819). Eade and Williams go further to surmise that: “*Inappropriate forms of development may even have sown the seeds of conflict or exacerbated the inequalities that generate it.*”

2.2.6 Frantic search for alternatives in national development policy and planning strategies

The major causal factor for the negative economic scenario was the concentration of production resources and assets among a few hands as the small farmer sold his/her land and consequently got squeezed out or turned into a landless squatter or a farm labourer. According to the literature available, this was actually the first glaring experience with the negative effects of modernisation paradigm. This reality called for urgent global change in development policies and practice. Thus:

Changes in development policies during the 1970s resulted from a number of converging forces. In part, they evolved from the realization that macroeconomic development strategies after the Second World War had not been effective, trickle-down and spread-effects promised by conventional economic theory had not materialised in much of the developing world and could no longer be used as the basis for planning (Rondinelli, 1993: 9).

One such change was the methodological shift with the introduction of the Integrated Rural Development (IRD) as well as the Basic Needs Approach (BNA) in the 1970's. Basic Needs Approach is said to have originated from the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation. Its emphasis was the broader concern to eradicate poverty, to attain concrete needs experienced by the poor (Cornwell, 1986:23). Streeten (1981:xi-xii) explains Basic Needs Approach as follows:

The objective of a basic human needs approach to development is to ensure that all human beings should have the opportunity to live full lives. To this end, the approach focuses on receiving access to minimum levels of consumption of certain basic goods and services. The basic needs approach ... attaches fundamental importance to poverty eradication within a short period as one of the main objectives of development. It defines poverty not in terms of income, poverty lines, and deciles (sic) of the income distribution, but as the inability to meet certain basic human needs on the part of identifiable groups of human beings. Poverty is characterised by hunger and malnutrition, by ill health, by lack of education, of safe water, of sanitation, of decent shelter. A vital aspect of the elimination of poverty, then, consists in securing access to these goods and services by the poor.

The IRD and BNA were part of the efforts among development planning bureaucrats and practitioners alike to correct the negative trends. While community development stressed the mobilisation of local resources, IRD and BNA were more concerned with the delivery of services and inputs to rural areas where poverty was perceived to be rampant (De Beer, 1998:3-4). As a whole, this change involved a drastic policy shift. This was shift from an exclusive concern with promoting rapid growth in gross national product through capital-intensive industrialisation, export production and construction of large-

scale physical infrastructure, to ways of stimulating internal demand, expanding economic participation, developing human resources, and reducing disparities in income through ensuring equity in the distribution of the benefits of development attained from economic growth (Rondinelli, 1993:9).

However, even these new experiments did not yield any significant results towards correcting the situation of the poor at the grassroots. It has been observed that many agricultural rural development projects implemented under the IRD were not successful owing to the fact that much of the resources mobilised ended up strengthening institutions at the central government level, paying little attention to local organisations (Rondinelli, 1993:65 and 67). On the other hand, owing to the bureaucratic bottlenecks, project managers in remote rural areas are said to have frequently suffered delays in obtaining supplies and equipment. They could therefore hardly implement projects on schedule, resulting in cost overruns. Few of the benefits of IRD projects are said to have been sustained when foreign assistance ended (Rondinelli, 1993:65 and 67). The two approaches were also said to be lacking in methodological vigour. At best, however, they hatched the exciting debate on radical vis-à-vis liberal approach to development. It is this debate that eventually saw the birth of participatory development that basically challenges the status quo, the structures that maintained and reinforced inequality (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:5).

2.2.7 Redefining development theory and practice

People's empowerment, a virtue grossly overlooked or neglected in the exclusivity of conventional economic development practice, became widely acknowledged as a critical and imperative component in poverty reduction strategies with the advent of participatory development approaches. The thrust in community empowerment is by and large, expected to cause equitable redistribution of the benefits of economic growth. As awakened people develop the capacity to claim or demand their right of share and access, empowerment process will ensure sustainability of people's share of social dividends that accrue from national economic growth. The relatively impressive economic production records of the 1960's and 1970's did not meet this expectation.

Todaro (2000:4-14) has observed that during the 1970's, economic development came to be redefined in terms of reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context of

economic redistribution. According to Todaro, the questions to ask about a country's development are: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result 'development' even if per capita income doubled.

In fact, it is the negative effects associated with the history of modernisation paradigm that led to the emergence of the relatively more recent phenomenon of participatory development crusade. This way, modernisation became the precursor to the participatory development paradigm. Consequently, efforts were put in motion to change the international aid policies with the new realisation in the 1970s of the deteriorating status of poverty among the large majority of populations (Rondinelli, 1993:9). Bilateral and international assistance organisations alike are said to have reconsidered and modified their aid strategies in the early 1970s.

In 1973, for instance, the United States Congress issued a new mandate to the US Agency for International Development to give the highest priority to activities in developing nations that directly improve the lives of the poorest of their people and their capacity to participate in the development of their countries (Rondinelli, 1993:11).

In this case, Rondinelli observes that more attention had to be given to programmes for redistribution, institution-building, population control, labour-intensive and small-scale industrialisation, agricultural expansion and human resources development (Rondinelli, 1993:64).

2.2.8 Modernisation through globalisation

"Whatever else may be uncertain, one can predict with reasonable confidence that ideas about development policy in less-developed countries will continue to change fast, and that by the end of the century they will be very different from today" (Chambers, 1993: 3).

*"We know what globalisation is all about. We used to call it colonisation."
(Coady International Institute Student, Coady News Letter, 1999, Canada)*

"If imperialism is the latest stage of capitalism, globalism is the latest stage of imperialism". (Rajae, 2000: 32)

What is globalisation? Globalisation has been understood as the effort building a society that is economically interdependent and the integration of all national economies into one economy within the framework of capitalist market” (Rajae, 2000:24). Globalisation today, more than ever before, has made groups and individuals to interact across frontiers, without necessarily involving the state. This happens partly because of new technology, and partly because states have found that prosperity is better served by releasing the creative energies for their people than by restricting them.

It is apparent that there is a universal ‘consensus’ sweeping across the nations of the world pointing to a new style of modernisation in the name of globalisation. Sometimes, it may appear like a global conspiracy among the rich nations of the world, so powerful a wave that the poor nations find themselves ambushed, perhaps unaware, often helplessly resorting to re-activism. Development has been seen as a process of growth stimulated by transfer of technology, a transfer in one direction, from rich and powerful to poor and weak, from first to last (Chambers, 1993:9). Reflecting on this, Murphy (2000:330) observes that:

The forces associated with economic globalisation and the apparent supremacy of market forces have unleashed a range of political and social processes that have served, and were indeed designed to enrich and empower the few at the expense of the majority. These include phenomena such as the rise in armed conflict, threats to food security, the loss of livelihoods and traditional ways of life of millions of people worldwide, the commodification of social provision, assaults on national sovereignty, and the privatisation of citizenship.

The foregoing discussion reflects the level of desperation brought about by the economic globalisation, the new concept of modernisation. This process is said to have led to the escalation of the growing masses of “permanently marginalised and impoverished people who are the majority of virtually every nation, including the growing underclass in the more affluent industrialised countries” (Murphy, 2000:331).

Chambers (1993:9) contends that the local producers have had to undergo a systematic process of erosion of their attitudes and traditional values. This has eventually led to the abandonment of their systems of production, after having been made to believe that modern systems and modern tools of production were more superior. In the capitalist framework, modern systems of production such as mechanised agriculture, use of chemicals, and genetically engineered hybrid seed, among other technological forms of revolution, would primarily be considered more efficacious in attaining surplus production for markets. Apparently, family food self-sufficiency is of secondary importance in this case unlike in traditional production sector.

To attain this modernised production, development extension workers have had to change the local people's perspective in an effort to 'modernise their attitudes'. On this, Chambers observes that people have been socialised to hold industry as more valued than agriculture, large-scale agriculture than small-scale, coffee than cassava, tractors than bullocks or human power, exotic cattle than indigenous, and cattle more than goats, hens or bees (Chambers, 1993:9).

2.2.8.1 How globalisation has manifested itself to date

Globalisation is a concept and practice that is as old as modernisation process itself, only that the pinnacle of its impact seems to have been felt significantly in the recent years. This explains the upsurge of the contemporary analysis and the unprecedented concern on the effects of globalisation among social scientists and civil society organisations alike.

Globalisation has manifested itself in a variety of ways. Among the different facets of globalisation and its impact include the following (World Bank Policy Research Report, 2002:*passim*; and Rajae, 2000:*passim*):

The terrorist attacks on the US on September 11, 2001 (believed to be one facet of globalisation, or at least, a consequence).

Globalisation is being accomplished as the Four Corners of the world get connected with each other through the World Wide Web. This stimulates new optimism of humanity's potential for living together in harmony. Development of internet and easier communication and transportation around the world has facilitated globalisation

The spread of HIV-AIDS alongside the accelerated life-extending technologies

Is the growing phenomenon of civil wars (and ethnic clashes for that matter) part of globalisation?

Could there be international connection fuelling internal conflicts in developing countries? With what interests, be they economic, religious, cultural and political? Where do the arms come from? Who buys the local exports in exchange for firearms or to enable the repressive government earn the necessary revenue to buy arms to suppress its subjects?

The connection that exists between the escalating out-flux of nationals mainly from developing to the developed countries (whether as refugees, labour migrants or in the name of the so called 'green card') and the international labour demand.

2.2.8.2 A Statesman's Perspective on Globalisation

In a more tacit way, President George Bush disclosed the ambitious agenda of globalisation crusade and the pivotal role played by the America as the architects of democratic machinations that form the basis for the crusade. This was all revealed in a speech he delivered to the 45th session of UN General Assembly in October 1990 (Rajae, 2000:20). This was after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the punishment of Saddam Hussein for invading Kuwait:

I see a world of open borders, open trade and most importantly, open minds, a world that celebrates the common heritage that belongs to all the world's people, taking pride not just in hometown or homeland but in humanity itself. I see a world touched by a spirit (like) that of the Olympics, based not on competition that's driven by fear but sought out of joy and exhilaration and a true quest for excellence. And I see a world where democracy continues to win new friends and convert old foes and where the America's - North, Central and South - can provide a model for the future of all mankind, the world's first completely democratic hemisphere. And I see a world building on the emerging new model of European unity, not just Europe but the whole world and free.

This revelation presents food for thought to the newly globalising countries towards better proactive planning in the process of their own globalisation. It calls for those who seek to enter into the fold to do

so with clear purpose and terms. Otherwise, it is possible to follow other people's vision and sing their agenda only to end up losing one's own vision and self-identity.

2.2.8.3 Effects of globalisation: the benefits

For the sake of objectivity, we will hereby review some of the alleged benefits of globalisation particularly identified by the World Bank (World Bank Report, 2002). These benefits are said to include: faster economic growth, higher living standards, and new opportunities. However, it is feared that such benefits are not equally distributed. In fact, it can be argued that, if equity was to be made a serious global development agenda, through more equitable spreading of wealth, technology, knowledge and ideas the world has the means to improve the situation of poor people. But there has to be the political will in order for that to happen. If there was the political will to address the issue of equity and social justice as a primary goal, rather than just the expansion of world markets, then the governance of the global system could be changed through regulating markets, through global democracy and through respect of international rule of law to deliver that equality. Achieving economic growth and equality for all should be compatible. _

2.2.8.4 More specifically, below are some of the benefits alleged to have been realised so far from globalisation crusade:

Generally, globalisation is said to reduce poverty because more integrated economies tend to grow faster and this growth tends to be widely diffused. The case in point is given as the rapid growth and poverty reduction in China, India, Hungary, Uganda and Malaysia as a result of globalisation. These countries are said to have been poor 20 years ago.

According to the World Bank Report (2002:5); and Rajae (2000: 20-25), some of the benefits of globalisations include the following:

- Poor countries with around 3 billion people have broken into the global market for manufactured goods and services. Among the most successful of these newly globalising developing countries include Uganda, India, Malaysia and China.

- Globalised developing countries have increased their per capita growth rate from:

1% in the 1960's to 3% in the 1970's; 4% in the 1980's and 5% in the 1990's

(In 1990's the economy of Developed economies grew by only 2%)

-About 20 years ago, most exports from developing countries were primary commodities, now manufactured goods are predominant as a result of globalisation.

-Globalisation declares free trade and liberalisation of domestic economies.

-As a result of economic integration, the number of poor people in developing countries living below international poverty line of 1 USD per day declined by 120 million in 1990's. This was facilitated by domestic reforms covering governance, investment climate, and social service provision.

-International action has provided more access to foreign markets, technology and aid for newly globalising countries. With integration or globalisation, trade barriers are reduced or completely removed as an incentive.

-Life expectancy and schooling are rising within the new globalisers. In Uganda, poverty fell by 40% during the 1990's and school enrolments doubled.

2.2.8.5 Effects of modernisation through globalisation: the challenges

This includes economic impoverishment and isolation. While the new globalisers are beginning to catch up, it is believed that much of the rest of the world, with 2 billion people, is either already marginalised or is in the danger of becoming marginal to the global economy (World Bank Report, 2002:5). Incomes have been falling in those countries and therefore poverty rising. Murphy (2000:331) observes that: "Inescapably, one of the most dramatic effects of globalisation has been the intense localisation of its impact on ordinary people".

Murphy argues that the more we have globalised the systems and mechanisms of production, marketing and financing, the more we have ended up isolating and marginalising individuals, their families and their communities. These are those who may not afford the cost of utilising these services and sustaining their participation in the systems. Consequently, the circumstances of their lives are worsened. "And yet, within this isolation and 'particularity' are the seeds of resurgence of community itself, and of the age-old strategies of cooperation and mutual support that have characterised human habitation and interaction through out history" (Murphy, 2000:331).

Conspiracy theorists fear that globalisation could be a new wave of imperialism whereby the rich nations will dominate over the poor nations as the former get richer and the latter get poorer. As Murphy holds that, globalisation is not a natural event, an inevitable global progression of consolidated economic growth and development. Rather, it is the option that has been chosen and implemented by the global powers, using as a cutting edge the multiplex instrument known as structural adjustment, which has been imposed as a condition for debt restructuring and IMF loans worldwide over the past 20 years (Murphy, 2000:331).

Murphy holds that the fundamental and explicit goal of structural adjustment has been to liberalise international financial and commercial enterprises, and the global markets in which they compete, from the control or influence of individual governments through the deregulation of trade and commerce and the privatisation of the social functions of the state. Thus:

A necessary aim of this process has been to diminish the economic independence and sovereignty of nations and integrate them within a global economic system and a trade and investment regime that will regulate and govern national policies in the interest of the 'free' market and international commerce. This process is virtually complete and has been a resounding and tragic success, so much so that the elite who drive this global regime are now desperate to reverse some of the most disastrous effects of these policies and to stabilise what has become an extremely volatile political and economic global situation (Murphy, 2000:332).

In this regard, the immediate concern remains as to how the developing countries could ensure they guard themselves against the extension of economic dominance by foreign corporations over the poor societies with a consequent loss of their political sovereignty to decide on their own futures; to decide what sort of society they want to build (Waller, 2002).

Even though from a populist source, a more recent example of the disastrous effects associated with globalisation through foreign aid should suffice to drive the point home. The all too familiar 'expert'

advice of the Bretton Wood institutions on structural adjustment is reported to have backfired in the case of some six southern African countries, with Malawi glaringly faced by the worst scenario of imminent food riots. Reports from World Food Programme indicate that 13 million people in the six countries were at risk in early 2002. These are: Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Mozambique. They will need to import a whopping 4 million tonnes of food within the year to avert the risk of human catastrophe (Nation, June 8th, 2002:12).

This affirms Murphy's contention that, despite the impressive, all time record increases in food production in the past 50 years, in reality the world's food supply is less secure today than ever before. He observes that, with no doubt, today there is enough food produced for all; indeed, in many sectors there is vast over-production. On the other hand, however, Murphy laments that this unparalleled production, that sometimes involves exotic food varieties, has had negative effects. It has devastated landscapes, local markets, and livelihoods. "It is a manifestation of the contradictions inherent in global food systems that threaten the security of most poor people every day", he concludes (Murphy, 2000: 334-5).

It is with this kind of scenario in view that political leaders at the Davos 'economic summit' in June 1999 revealed the growing preoccupation with the need to rebuild and protect the institutions of national governance in order to forestall the crisis and anarchy that international capital sees clouding the horizon. This economic summit does not mince its words lashing at what appears to be conspiracy between the international economic cartels of exploitation and what they regard as brutal national governments to optimise the benefits of globalisation at the expense of the masses. On this the summit laments:

...the vision of democratic national governments that promote and protect the common interests of their citizens, to whose social and cultural needs as well as their economic well-being they respond, has been destroyed – even as rogue governments hide behind notions of sovereignty to resist international sanctions for their brutal repression on internal dissent.... Everywhere, the institutions of governance have been eroded and have lost legitimacy with their populations. The primary function of the state has become that of social control within its borders along with the imposition of policies to attract and serve

the national and international economic interests that are now essential to 'develop' and integrate the national economy within the global system. Yet even this minimal goal is barely realistic in a system where the strong consolidate and increase their wealth while the weak compete with the weaker and are increasingly diminished (Murphy, 2000:332).

2.2.8.6 Consequences of foreign aid

Foreign aid, being one of the key cogs in the machine driving the global economic system, needs to be revisited and its impact reassessed to determine who is 'aiding' who or who actually is in business and at whose cost. An analysis on the proportion of what has been termed as foreign aid against the gross national income of the donor countries reveals volumes in this regard. Take the USA for instance. Though her USD 10 billion annual contribution to aid is said to be the highest individual sum of all donor nations, the US spends the least of all donors. Her foreign aid amounts to a dismal proportion of less than 0.1 percent of her gross national income (Sunday Nation, June 9th, 2002:18). This is said to be only a fraction of what USA contributed 10 to 20 years ago. This means that the USA's foreign aid contribution has been contracting over the years. The significant part of the USA's foreign aid goes to Israel (30% or USD 3 billion), and Egypt (20% or USD 2 billion), much of which is spent on consolidating the military muscles of the two countries.

Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) is the name given to a set of economic policies required of highly indebted countries by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as the relatively more recent condition for the poor countries to receive financial assistance. The two Bretton Woods institutions are believed to have come to existence in 1944, in an effort by developed countries to create a resource pool for post war reconstruction. However, this original purpose has been overtaken by world business dynamics over the years, making the two institutions the largest multinational financiers of developing countries.

The SAP prescriptions started in the early 1980s. These are aimed at liberalising a country's foreign investment climate by eliminating stringent trade and investment regulations, boosting foreign exchange earnings by promoting exports, and reducing government deficits through cuts in (mainly social) expenditure. These were basically made to put some financial (management) discipline on the recipient (and the corrupt) governments of the South, to ensure they operated efficiently and effectively.

These lending bodies put stringent demands on the borrowing governments in return for accepting their money. A government is required to cut down on budget deficits, which means, in practical terms, cutting down on public expenditure on social services such as health, education and subsidies on strategic commodities such as foodstuff. In recognition of the hardships that follow, some lending institutions advised the 'beneficiary' government to set aside a 'social fund' to cushion the effects of SAPs (MWENGO Update; Jan/Feb 2002:10).

An astounding account on the effect of foreign aid is cited in the case of African countries. In spite of the populist nature of the source, it raises eyebrows to realise that while the World Bank and IMF have given about \$1 trillion in loans since the 1960s, per-capita growth rate in many African countries over the last 20 years has been zero. For instance, Zambia has received an infusion of \$2 billion during that period, but living standards there are reportedly lower than at independence in 1964 (Sunday Nation, June 9th, 2002:18). In fact, Zambia is said to be many times poorer today than it was at its day of independence.

According to the analogy in the Sunday Nation, the fund (IMF/World Bank) has for decades imposed its will on the countries of the South, reshaping their economies with virtually no input from the millions of people affected by their policies. The fund has ensured that governments are powerless by threatening to cut off international financing if its adjustment policies are not implemented. It is apparent that reorientation of IMF and World Bank programmes towards institution-building, governance, and participatory processes are designed not to change the currently unsustainable, undemocratic and inequitable path of global economic change but to overcome obstacles in the form of non-commitment by the recipient countries. The writer asserts that there were more people living in absolute poverty on

less than a dollar a day to day, than there were when the IMF/World Bank institutions began operations half a century ago.

Some political analysts believe that foreign aid has been used for a long time during the Cold War to woo countries into the two major political divide. For this reason, it is now doubtful than ever before whether it has been a genuine concern for the World Bank and IMF to improve the welfare of the beneficiary countries as such. An account has been given (albeit by one of the populist dailies) to the effect that during the Cold War, much of this aid was political bribes to corrupt African dictators to ensure that their countries were pro-West, and that there was only perfunctory attention by the West to issues such as poverty alleviation, infrastructure, development, education, health and access to water. Corruption was tolerated, in countries like Zaire, Kenya and Liberia, and as long as the countries remained pro-West, there was no sanction. The cheques kept coming, no matter what the leadership did with them. In the post-Cold War world, all this has changed, and for the people of Africa, it is double tragedy. First, we received but crumbs in assistance due to Cold War politics, while our dictators fattened their foreign bank accounts, and now, we are made to repay huge debts for loans that did not benefit us, further eroding our chances of ever ensuring decent standards of living for the majority in Africa (Sunday Nation, June 9th 2002:18).

It seems like some countries will soon be due for auction as their cumulative debt obligations are getting to proportions that are beyond their ability to repay.

Huge increases in the interest rates that were originally agreed mean that in many cases countries have already paid back what they originally borrowed, plus interest and yet they still owe money ('Forgive Us Our Debts' Workshop, January 2000).

In this context, it is believed that the recent effort for loan cancellation by the IMF and the World Bank at the benefit of the most affected countries in this respect was a cleansing effort to wash away the guilt among the donors. It was evident that millions of people in the affected countries were sinking deep by day into abject poverty and misery while the West enjoyed the fruits of their ingenuity and craftiness with globalisation. *"Uganda, for instance, spends about \$80 million a year to repay its foreign*

debts, which is about 250 percent of its annual exports, and this after it has had much of its \$4 billion debt cancelled.” (Sunday Nation, June 9th 2002:18).

It has been noted that, when foreign aid failed to deliver the expected benefits, and particularly when poor countries could not honour the debt repayment schedules owing the deteriorating levels of poverty:

...structural adjustment programmes were introduced to balance public expenditure and tax revenue and to reflect the liberal views of key world leaders calling for a reduced role of the state in people’s lives. The SAPs led to increased poverty for many Africans and contributed to a massive rise in conflicts across Africa. At the same time the conditionalities attached to the SAPs led to the opening up of Africa to foreign direct investment. The fact that this was mostly in extractive industries (oil, gold, diamonds) confirmed for many that the only beneficiaries of the SAPs were those in the North who needed cheap raw materials and who now owned Africa’s capacity to produce them (Waller, 2002).

2.2.8.7 Globalised territorial invasion

With the internet communication, sovereign territorial states have lost their relevance. There is no more control on information flow. The age of global governance is said to have began. The globalisation crusade seems to lead to cultural or institutional homogenisation. This is being challenged by those negatively affected. For instance, should democratic path or democratisation experience of various countries be the same as what the Western countries perceive of democracy? Shouldn’t diversity be respected? It is important that global trade and investment agreements respect countries’ freedoms in a range of areas from intellectual property rights, cultural goods and environmental protection to social policies and labour standards. In this respect, a Malaysian Youth Movement has this to say:

Globalisation is showing itself to be ‘gobbalisation’, whereby the dominant western economies might well swallow all of us, ending forever the myth of national sovereignty and ridiculing the struggle of all Third World peoples to be the determiners of their own lives. If ‘one world’ is the coming reality, it must be a people’s world and not a world of masters and slaves (Rajae, 2000: 32).

In this regard, Waller (2002), points out that it seems to be part of the wider agenda in globalisation to seek to establish global standards of right and wrong, in other words global ethics, such as the enforcement of core labour standards pushed by trade unions and key NGOs of the North during World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Conference of December 2000, in USA. Other areas pushed for global standardisation of ethics include standards against child abuse such as laws pertaining to child labour, sexual child abuse and child slavery. Additionally, part of the efforts involves the possibilities of patenting traditional products (including traditional crop seed varieties among other local products) by foreign companies claiming that they 'new' products genetically engineered from the West. Given these trends, it would be instructive to take greater interest in finding out as to what other local 'traditional out-fits' have lost patent rights over the years.

However, these efforts were vigorously opposed in the WTO conference. But who opposed it? It was not the Multinational Corporations (MNCs) as would have been expected, but the governments and NGOs of the developing countries, leading to what has been termed as the North-South divide. It is not stated explicitly as to what prompted the developing countries to resist the WTO's efforts to standardise these ethics, but Waller surmises that it could be because developing countries do not have the resources and the experience to support, protect and advance national interests in the face of globalisation (Waller, 2002). It is also logical to assume that the governments of developing countries realise they are too weak to fight for and defend their rights in the face of the Western block. This realisation makes them extra cautious when it comes to formalising agreements, and much more so when certain aspects pertaining to internal governance and patent rights have officially to be enacted as a point of reference for control.

What else has appeared to be globalised territorial invasion has been the demands by the Western block for developing countries to adopt the western type of multiparty democracy as the only prescription for what will pass as authentic pluralism. Without this will be no aid, foreign investment, and to be sure, there will be no consideration for debt relief either. The result? The most recent Zimbabwe and Zambia styles of democracy with complete manipulation of the electoral process through rigging. Uganda has rejected this prescription and developed her own unique 'democratic system' void of

multiparty provisions. Nevertheless, their system has been applauded as a showpiece-case of positive impact of globalisation (Waller, 2002).

The global structures, with the varied economic, political and military power of their members, are using the processes of globalisation to define that balance (between individual freedoms and the need for equality) in a way that is appropriate to their own circumstances. This loss of sovereignty is as much an issue as the merits or otherwise of the values being espoused through globalisation". (Waller, 2002)

Murphy has this to say on the crucial and growing role of civil society movements and the governments of the affected countries in the defence of their own people against the adverse effects of globalisation:

The abdication of government and retreat of the state from its role in social welfare and development (and more so with the advent of structural adjustment programmes) has led local communities to come together to analyse and create their own solutions to the crises they are experiencing.... we are now seeing local associations reach out to others in their communities, and beyond to the national, regional, and international level in strategies of mutual support and collaboration on major issues such as ending violence and constructing peace; enforcing government and corporate accountability; promoting democratic governance, human rights, social equity and economic opportunity; protecting local food security and traditional primary producers; and conserving the natural and cultural environment, including biodiversity (Murphy, 2000:338).

The countries that have achieved higher growth are said to be those that have successfully integrated into the global community and attracted foreign investment. And that in turn depends in large measure on the quality of governance a country enjoys. Countries can only compete in the global market if their people have the benefit of the rule of law, with effective state institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect of human rights and a say in the decisions that affect their lives. If developing countries succeed in creating the right economic and social environment, new technology puts many things within their reach that previously were not, as long as such technology

remains people-centred in every sense of the word.

2.2.8.8 *The effects of liberalised foreign investment policy: the case of East Africa*

Taking East African countries as our point of reference in this analysis, we would want to compare their performance in their recent ability to attract foreign investment. We find a very interesting scenario. While Kenya is on record as a favourite destination for foreign investors for many years since independence, the reality is different to day. A study by the Federation of Kenya Employers – FKE (Sunday Nation of May 26th, 2002), indicates that Direct Foreign Investment in Kenya dropped by over 90%, that is from Ksh. 249.6 Billion in 1978, to less than Ksh. 23.4 Billion in 1998 (from \$79 Million in 1980, to \$57 Million in 1990 and to \$19 Million in 1991). This is the time foreign investment is said to have been picking up in Uganda and Tanzania (who have provided more favourable environment within the period to attract foreign investors) as shown in *Table 4* below.

Table 4: Net Direct Foreign Investments In East Africa (In Million Dollars)

YEAR	KENYA	TANZANIA	UGANDA
1970	14	0	4
1980	79	0	0
1989	62	-2	6
1990	57	0	0
1991	19	1	0
1992	6	3	12
1993	2	23	55
1994	4	50	88
1995	33	120	121
1996	13	150	121
1997	40	158	175
1998	42	172	210
1999	42	183	222
2000	127	N/A	N/A
2001	50	N/A	N/A

(Source: Sunday Nation of May 26th, 2002)

From the above table, it is evident that Kenya has been losing the grips on foreign investors in the last six years or so, while at the same time Tanzania and Uganda have had their best seasons. According to political analysts, Kenya lost her grounds owing to a number of self-inflicted political and economic blunders. The attempted coup of 1982, leading to the legalisation of single party state, insecurity associated with the ethnic clashes of 1992 and beyond, the political instability associated with the multiparty era, the corruption scams reported on the foreign press by day (including Golden-burg, unsecured loans leading to the collapse of financial institutions and Parastatals among others), and not the least, the poor economic performance that dates back to 1994, all account for the declining foreign investment in Kenya as the country's image abroad got tarnished.

It should also be remembered that in 1992, monetary supply in Kenya went up by 44% leading to the worst ever inflation yet to be experienced in Kenya at the rate of 60%. The worst moment for Kenya was 2000 when the country recorded a negative growth rate for the first time since independence (Sunday Nation of May 26th, 2002). The FKE report in March 2002 indicated that at least 140 foreign investor businesses had pulled out of Kenya in the past three years as a result of poorly performing economy. Up to 106 local companies have closed down over the same period (Sunday Nation of May 26th, 2002).

2.2.8.9 *The aftermath of modernisation*

Below is an example of the negative effects of globalisation from a case in Philippines:

In 1967, a road connecting the (Laguna Lake) village to the municipal town centre was constructed. This was a modal point in that small village's history – the start of its integration into the markets. By the mid 70's Ferdinand Marcos' 'green revolution' was at its peak, successfully introducing modern high-yielding varieties of rice. Farm harvests tripled. An extension-credit-and-input package programme facilitated the diffusion of these varieties (Waller, 2002, Unpublished Paper).

Land reform was implemented along side green revolution. Its first step was to connect share tenancy into household tenancy with rent fixed by government at a low rate. This radically changed land tenure relationships – and resulted in a major income transfer from landlords to tenants.

By the mid-seventies, this village therefore seemed poised for development and prosperity. But something went wrong. In the 1990's statistics showed that overall rural poverty in the Philippines has not changed. In the village itself, while a number of tenants improved their economic status, the numbers of landless agricultural workers increased and food security remained a problem. ...Integration into the market meant more volatility. The green revolution indeed increased yields significantly, but huge supplies led to a sharp decline in the domestic price of rice. Because the government was unprepared for this development, the ironic result of increased yields was a sharp contraction in incomes.... Overall, it widened the income-disparity in the village (Waller, 2002, Unpublished paper).

According to NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa's Development), despite the years of modernisation through foreign aid and the Structural Adjustment Programmes, 340 million African people or half the population of the continent, live below the international poverty line of US \$ 1 per day. The mortality rate of children under 5 years of age is 140 per 1000, and life expectancy at birth is only 54 years. Only 58% of the population have access to safe water. The rate of illiteracy for people over 15 is 41% (MWENGO Update, Jan/Feb 2002:2).

The foregoing reality serves to justify and reinforce the contention that SAPs have not just failed to pay attention to social services of the people; they have been the very roots of Africa's economic and social crises (MWENGO Update, Jan/Feb 2002:10). This outcome is unlike what has all along been promised by the lords of foreign aid in negotiations for SAPs: that is, suffer the bitter roots of structural adjustment today, enjoy the fruits forever. The latest wave, apparently orchestrated by the lords of globalisation to put the last nail on the fate of the poor countries, is the demand to privatise social services by attracting foreign investors to provide the same. This is precisely how "globalisation has increased the ability of the strong to advance their interests to the detriment of the weak" (MWENGO Update, Jan/Feb 2002:10).

To implement SAPs and other politico-economic conditions annexed as pre-conditions for the support

of new 'globerlisers', "*government policies have been complemented by organised violence – literally terrorising people off the land and out of production*" (Murphy, 2000:334). It makes redundant and obsolete the skills and products of entire strata of society, particularly primary producers - farmers, herders, fishers, foresters, miners, artisans - essentially making them economically 'useless' and rendering them economic foreigners within their own society. That is how globalisation has divided humanity into a privileged class of people referred to as 'cosmocrazy', (those wealthy minority who control the world economy), and a marginalised class of downtrodden souls condemned to a life that is poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

Nyoni concurs with the foregoing analogy, perceiving the whole saga of globalisation as more of an internationally well organised syndicates of conspiracy to dominate and mercilessly exploitation the weaker countries. Nyoni believes that the conspiracy is determined to see the poor rather removed from the face of the earth than see them change their situation or have them gain real power over their own fate (Nyoni, 1987:51-56).

But, it should be remembered that violence breeds violence, and especially if the victims of such violence are both those with nothing left, and therefore nothing to lose. According to Murphy, experience has shown that whenever governments unleash violence on the poor, the latter responds with full force, not just towards state institutions but also to all those they consider enemies against their welfare and survival. This has often been a vengeful reaction given their current state of poverty, despondency, frustration, despair and lack of any reasonable horizon of prosperity and hope for a humane future (Murphy, 2000:335). Such violence may take on new images of identity such as ethnic, political or religious forms in an effort to win public sympathy.

According to Murphy, those who become socially and economically dislocated by such social milieu as described above drift to the cities and across borders to join the tens of millions of rootless people forced into the international wage economy. Murphy concludes with the observation that, while the reality of globalisation would ensure the movement of goods and money gets relatively free passage, the movement of people is more restricted than ever before – except for the globalised elite (Murphy, 2000:335).

2.2.8.10 Way forward for those who care

“We must make haste. Too many people are suffering. While some make some progress, others stand still or move backward and the gap between them widening.... The injustice of certain situations cries for God's attention. Lacking the bare necessities of life, whole nations are under the thumb of others” (Pope Paul, 1967:150).

According to Murphy, it is only when ordinary men, women and children in cities and villages around the world can make their lives better, will we know that globalisation is indeed becoming inclusive, allowing everyone to share its opportunities. That is the key to eliminating world's poverty. With this optimism, Murphy (2000:331) observes that:

...hope remains for a positive and fundamental transformation that can bring peace, justice, and universal dignity to the human community. This hope is rooted in the reality that around the world, and as never before, people are engaged in dialogue and debate about national neo-liberal economic policies and the effects of globalisation. At the heart of this dialogue is the question of whether it is still possible to bring about a truly free, humane, equitable, and just world, and how such a historic project might be re-launched and realised within this new century.

Several options are proposed below by Waller (2002, Unpublished Paper), towards the realisation of this hope.

-Objective analysis of concepts: NGOs and civil society organisations should give a lead in providing critical review on the effects of globalisation as moral watchdogs for the poor. They should make their constituencies aware of the purpose, facets, consequences as well as the benefits of globalisation and how the poor national can be more pro-active than reactive to the waves. Civil society movements should initiate objective analysis of concepts and practices of globalisation among their stakeholders. This involves availing resource books to the field and policy teams. People's awareness and access to relevant information is a critical step in the process of making informed opinion and decisions. Like wise, we need to concern ourselves with the question as to how the poor nations can be made more proactive than re-active? Do we have to wait

until the negative effects of globalisation engulf us or how can we throw our views into the boiling pot and influence course for globalisation?

-Redistribution: Focus on income redistributive reforms (for instance through fair pricing, better access to land and affordable credit for the poor). We need to consolidate our focus on income redistribution programmes. This will include measures towards ensuring direct access to markets and therefore better value leading to better returns for the local products.

-Civil society empowerment: Increased local people's control of their destiny (empowering the local people). This involves building the bargaining power of the poor ('capability building' and 'social capital formation') through formation of community based organisations and civil society movements and linkages for social action. This enables the poor to build social structures and infrastructures necessary for them to deal with the market and governments as well as other constellations of power.

-Holding governments accountable: Education campaigns are necessary in order to hold our structures of leadership accountable to the poor. Improved politico-economic strength of grassroots movements should translate into increased state accountability to the poor. This would be so at different levels as the poor capture the power or mandate to return them or throw them out during elections. We can choose the people we want.

-Poverty targeted interventions: Poverty targeted planning and allocation of resources (deliberate targeting of the poor). This will call for enacting policies that exclusively target the materially poor and the less fortunate in resource allocation and development planning.

-Creation of safety nets: Creation of safety nets for the poor includes measures such as creation of animal or crop insurance against diseases and drought. It may also involve creation of social security system for the compensation of the poor in cases of loss, such as low credit for restocking after devastating effects of drought. Do we have policies in this direction? Blaming the farmer for not being innovative will not make any difference. Often, the poor are slow to innovate simply because they are rational and calculus. They will consider whether or not there are safety nets to assure them in the event of calamity from the innovative initiatives. Risk aversion mechanisms in rural development agenda will have to be intrinsic in any development planning. In industrial economies, for

instance, the large-scale deprivation is prevented by ‘guaranteed minimum values of exchange entitlements’ through social security system.

-Stockpiling of food at the community level: Try stockpiling of food commodities at community levels through community based food stores, which will assimilate surplus produce. This initiative would prevent the draining of grains from the communities during bumper harvests at throwaway prices only to ‘import’ the same in few months’ time at triple the selling price. Such schemes should be insured and protected by the government, to ensure local self-food sufficiency with stocks that are affordable to the poor.

-Protection over domestic producer: Protect domestic producers against subsidised imports that are unnecessary (unfair competition). For instance curtail the food relief distribution at times of bumper harvest. What happens to the human dignity when relief handouts overshadow development initiatives? Use tariffs as safeguards against commodity dumping from across borders e.g. by imposing heavy taxation of food imports to deter imports of food products whose production is heavily subsidised by foreign governments. This renders the imports unfairly competitive and advantaged in local markets over local products, thus killing the local industry.

-Legal rights approach: This involves lobbying and advocacy for legal rights and policy change. It appeals for the ‘fight’ for the legal entitlements of the poor, instead of buying favours with handouts and services. What are the poor entitled to? The process involves fostering entitlement advocacy whereby the poor is enabled to take control of strategic assets such as land that guarantee sustainable development. This should be spelled out more rather than simplistic focus on their basic survival needs. For instance, instead of an apparent need for restocking for the pastoralist, those who care should gear their interventions into the improvement of livestock markets to ensure fair return for the pastoralist. On this concept, Murphy laments that, “To the limited extent that the state intervenes to provide any meagre assistance to those in need, it is dispensed as charity, not as an entitlement of citizenship” (Murphy, 2000:334). This charity perception should change to ‘rights’ perception.

2.2.8.11 Conclusion

In the foregoing analysis, we have argued that globalisation is the latest tool for modernised. This is being drummed up by the North to the South as the 'modern' package of Structural Adjustment Programme. We have also seen the polemics in different facets of debate for and against globalisation. Some pointers on the possible way forward have also been highlighted.

A few concluding observations would be imperative at this juncture. Through the spreading of wealth, technology, knowledge, and ideas, the world has the means to improve the situation of the poor people if the political will could be generated to do so. If there was the political will to address the issue of inequality and social injustice as a primary goal, rather than just the expansion of world markets, then the governance of the global system could be changed by regulating markets, through global democracy and through respect of international rule of law to deliver that equality. Achieving economic growth and ensuring equality for all should, of necessity, be compatible.

Thus, the central challenge we face today is to ensure that modernisation becomes a positive force for all the world's people, instead of leaving billions of them behind in filth. If we are to get the best out of globalisation and avoid the worst, we must learn how to govern better at the local and national levels, and to govern better together at international level. We must think afresh about how we manage our joint activities and our shared interests, for many challenges that we confront today are beyond the reach of any state acting on its own.

We need to emphasise on the fact that states (and in particular, new globalisers) can draw strength from each other by acting together within common institutions based on shared rules and values. Governments must work together to make the mitigation against the negative effects of globalisation effective. But governments alone are not going to make this happen. Civil society organisations should play a significant role in lobbying and agitating for a more just society. These include youth and women group net-works, farmers associations, non-governmental organisations, community based organisations, the legal fraternity, the academia, trade unions, and such like professional and grassroots organisations. These have become the conscience of the society where religious bodies have failed to do so. Their role will have to be heightened and magnified in future.

While there is much that poor countries can do to help themselves, rich countries have an indispensable role to play too. For them to preach the virtues of open markets to developing countries is mere hypocrisy if they do not open their own markets to the countries' products, or if they will continue flooding the world market with subsidised food exports, making it impossible for farmers in poor countries to compete. Nor can they expect developing countries to listen to their pleas to respect global environment unless they are ready to alter their own irresponsible patterns of production and consumption.

Developing countries must be enabled to export their way to prosperity, but many of the poorest, especially in Africa, will need a lot of help before they can do that. Everyone now agrees that the burden of debt must be lifted from the poorest countries. But rich countries have not yet come up with sufficient policies to do so. And many countries, whether indebted or not, need help to reach the stage where they can produce goods and services that the rest of the world wants to buy. They need infrastructure and technical assistance, especially to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, which is now crippling some of Africa's strongest economies.

Many developing countries also need help in resolving destructive conflicts and rebuilding a peaceful, productive society. Private companies as well as governments, have an obligation to consider the interests of the poor, when making investment choices and pricing their products. Since private companies are expected to be the biggest beneficiaries of globalisation, it is therefore in their interest to make it sustainable, by making it work for all.

We are now going to look at the social welfare development paradigm, strategies that have been devised to provide safety-net for the social casualties of modernisation process. These are the poor, the landless, the unemployed, the traumatised as a result of civil wars and other forms of social tragedy, frustrated school dropouts whose career dreams have been prematurely terminated due to poverty, those afflicted by natural calamities such as floods and drought as they live at the peripheries of the centres of modernisation and those chronically sick, who cannot afford the cost-shared medical services as imposed by the donor conditionalities. These would have to be incorporated in the mainstream of development. However, the short cut has been to give them handouts for relief. It is only sensitised

development planners who will seek to involve these categories of population in finding lasting solutions for their predicaments, towards becoming masters of their own destiny, as they organise to demand their rights.

2.3 Social Welfare Development paradigm

2.3.1 Introduction

Even though social welfare services were fairly characteristic of the public and private community interventions of pre-World War Two era, these became more significant with the modernisation experience of post-World War Two. According to Patton (1986:9-20), pre-World War II social welfare services were basically provided by the relevant government ministries and charitable agencies, notably religious organisations. Characteristic of these services were rehabilitation homes for the disabled, health services, education and such like. These were usually provided free of charge to the public, with heavy subsidies from the government.

According to Oxfam, any situation involving the severe disruption, distress, and suffering of people constitutes an emergency that demands humanitarian response (Eade and Williams, 1995: 811). Drawing from life experience as a development practitioner, the more obvious characteristics of social welfare development response include benevolent services, which involve distribution of ‘handouts’ associated relief of suffering. These involves the distribution of ‘handouts’ such as food, medicine, clothing, and shelter but also provision of services such as free education, training and nursing care. The philosophy behind the ‘handout’ culture here connotes not just the tangible and intangible resources involved in the exchange, but more fundamentally, the what lies behind the act of giving ‘freely’ to the otherwise deserving poor. Those who perpetuate this nature of services are usually motivated by altruism, while religious bodies have the spiritual dimension as their source of inspiration. What is common among them is that they are genuinely committed to the alleviation of human suffering.

2.3.2 Perception of causes of poverty within social welfare development paradigm

It is believed that the type of social analysis and the understanding of what leads to a particular life

situation will largely dictate our nature of response to that situation. In the context of social welfare development paradigm, causal factors of poverty are believed to be supernatural, beyond people's control, hence, people deserve to be assisted. These include harsh environmental and climatic conditions, adverse weather, natural disasters, depleted soils, bad luck, fate, the will of God and other such like factors perceived to be beyond people's control.

2.3.3 The practice and the assumptions

The act of giving free 'gifts' in an effort to ameliorate the situation of the poor may carry with itself a number of serious assumptions, which will tend to contradict the aspirations of a self-propelled development planning among the poor. Administration of 'handouts' to the poor often presumes that the recipients are utterly helpless and that their situation can only be equated to that of a child who may not be in a position to take care of oneself unless spoon-fed. It also assumes that the benefactor will always be around and endowed with enough resources to sustain the supply of the handouts.

These are assumptions that should be appropriately challenged. It is not true that the poor have nothing to offer. They have survived all these years without the benefactors. They have the potential to change their lot given the motivation. Perhaps capacity building that releases the potential in them would do more for their future sustainability than the short-term benevolent measures. The benefactors will not be there for the poor endlessly, given the donor fatigue and the diminishing resource base.

However, on the other hand, it is also true inequity and poverty make people more vulnerable to the effects of natural and industrial hazards. On this, Eade and Williams (1995:811), argue that environmental degradation, for instance, is not only itself often poverty-related but is also said to exacerbate such hazards. They also observe that crisis that may require emergency social welfare response may also arise from "*broader patterns of social and economic injustice or discrimination against specific groups of people, which compound their vulnerability*". For instance, the violent ethnic clashes in some of the African countries (which have come to be popularly known as ethnic cleansing) witnessed in the wake of multiparty political crusades, minority groups have been displaced and made both landless and homeless 'refugees' within their own countries. These require not only support in building their own capacity to claim for their right to land, home and freedom, but also short-

term measures to meet the immediate survival needs. This calls for social welfare intervention.

The Social Welfare paradigm is associated with the philanthropic works of aid agencies, invariably referred to as charitable organisations. According to Eade and Williams, emergency interventions are necessary responses to avert suffering amongst people. Thus:

Prolonged crisis and unpredictable turbulence present aid agencies with major challenges, not only to their overall thinking and policy-making, but also to their capacity to plan ahead, or to determine what kind of actions are most appropriate in each situation. They are often tempted to see development and relief as different in kind, rather than as different facets of the same approach (Eade and Williams, 1995:810).

Local philanthropy in developing countries is gaining momentum in the new millennium with more vigour given the gradual dwindling of overseas funding to charitable work. There is correspondingly a growing recognition of contribution from the corporate private sector to the charitable work that seeks to ameliorate the situation of the poor. This corporate social responsibility, exercised by both private and parastatal sectors, is increasingly gaining momentum. This is exemplified by the Kenya Pipelines Company Managing Director during the commissioning of a 16 Million Kenya Shillings' (USD 205,000) community water project supported by the parastatal in one of the remote areas of Kenya, thus:

...we must strive to enter into a closer working relationship with our host communities through which the pipeline passes....This is the first big project that we are donating to the community. This company is owned by the Kenya Government and it is only fair to plough back some of the benefits to the tax payers (Daily Nation, Thursday, July 25, 2002:36).

This spirit of local self-help through appeals for philanthropic support from private corporate sector is spearheaded by both indigenous non-governmental development agencies as well as local community based organisations. This is a timely strategy given the growing threat presented by the phenomenon of diminishing funding from conventional donors. For this reason, more and more resources generated from

philanthropic appeals are being channeled to the kind of interventions that have the potential for sustainable development as opposed to social welfare services associated with handouts. For instance, in the case of the 15 km pipe Kiunduani Water Project cited above, which has just been completed through the support of Kenya Pipeline Company, is said to benefit 5,000 people including shopping centres and various community institutions. A local water committee has been established for the day to day management of the supply. They charge Ksh. 2 (USD 0.025) per 20-litre jerrican. This revenue will go into the expansion and maintenance costs for the project (Daily Nation, Thursday, July 25, 2002:36-37).

Eade and Williams are authoritatively assertive that for best results, emergency or humanitarian assistance should not remain strictly defined in terms of material inputs such as food aid and medical relief. They warn that such exclusive emphasis on relief handouts will tend to weaken and undermine people's existing capacities in local production systems, local organisations, and local self-esteem.

This in turn may lead to a weaker civil society, and possibly reinforce the very factors, which are the cause of the crisis. Emergency relief should not be narrowly defined as relief inputs, but also include more dynamic concepts such as, 'relief production', 'relief employment', 'relief income generation', 'relief education and training', 'relief institutional development', or 'relief awareness raising' (Eade and Williams, 1995:824-825).

2.3.4 The consequences of social welfare development paradigm

This paradigm leads to the creation of dependency syndrome among the recipients of handouts as people get hooked to 'assistentialism', the state of helplessness awaiting 'rescue missions'. In the case of 'handouts for work' such as food for work, people usually do not see the need to sustain the projects they had started once the source of such handouts is exhausted or depleted. They will sit and wait for the benefactor to come back, no matter how long it will take. Ironically, field experience has shown that given more resources, those hooked into the dependency syndrome would not mind undoing the work already accomplished as long as it is another deal for food for work for instance. In this case they would be ready to demolish dams they have built, up-root trees they planted or demolish bench terraces they dug through food for work, as long as this guarantees continued flow of more handouts. In some cases, the beneficiaries have turned around to 'demand' the continued flow of such services and handouts as if

it had become a right. This is the time people have been hooked into dependency syndrome. This is a state in which one's dependency on free gifts, handouts and assistance of one kind or another becomes so much of a habit that it can even be demanded as a right. At this point, the dependency level is so high that it becomes a mental alienation.

However, it has appeared like communities who are enlightened would go more for sustainable development than for social welfare service. CDRA quotes a case in point as follows:

...after a particularly severe drought, a community was approached by one of the NGOs to plan, in a participatory way, how to distribute the food aid. The community was clearly in dire need, with signs of critical malnutrition already evident in the young and old. In the discussion that followed, the community questioned whether food was really what they needed. 'How many more times will you be prepared, or able, to feed us every time the rains don't come? What we really need help with is the harvesting and storage of water so that we can grow our own food' (CDRA , Annual Progress Report – unpublished- , 2000 / 1: 11)

Owing to the historical relationships of dependency between communities and their governments, the former will tend to depend on external change agents, donors or other outsiders for their development. To overcome this, it is necessary for outsiders to make it clear right from the entry point, that the relationship between the community and external change agents has a time frame. From that perspective, it is possible to workout with the people a 'phase-over' or 'phase-out' plan from the initial stages of a new partnership. This involves efforts to create new change agents from within the community as early as possible. These are the teams that will sustain the external change agent's roles once the latter takes exit. It should be made a policy not to do for the people what they can do for themselves.

This tradition and relationships of dependency have to be broken, in which communities have tended to depend on the government or benefactors to do things for them, or looking up to those working in the city to 'bring' development to the rural villages. Conventional development practice has tended to erroneously believe that a true developer is the one who attracts external resources into the community.

Hence communities would expect material handouts and deliveries from development agencies through local 'change agents'. Given this backdrop of dependency mentality, Mathie and Cunningham, argue that, it is little wonder the success and effectiveness of local leadership begins to be judged on how many resources are attracted to the community, not on how self-reliant the community has become. Members of the community begin to believe that they were deficient and incapable of taking charge of their own lives and of the community. "Not surprisingly, community members no longer act like citizens; instead they begin to act like 'clients' or consumers of services with no incentive to be producers" (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002:4).

This dependency syndrome makes local leaders begin to spend more of their time begging for assistance from external donors including all sorts of benevolent institutions regardless of their conditions for such assistance. Consequently, local leaders begin to deal less with their own communities, with the conviction that only outside experts can provide real help (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002:4). The dependency attitude is usually characterised by apathy, an unwillingness by the local people to take initiatives on their own. Thus:

...an atmosphere of passivity and dependence prevails in rural communities. Local initiative, when taken at all, has evolved into a dismal shadow of its true potential. People have become accustomed to petitioning those in authority, or donors with outside resources, to do something on their behalf. They reinforce a self-perception of themselves as submissive objects of development rather than active players. The result is predictable: with a shrug of the shoulders, many villagers spend a lot of time waiting for development to happen through the efforts of others and point accusing fingers when it doesn't take place (Bergdall, 1993:3-4).

This attitude can only be overcome through a genuine and deliberate effort on the part of the external change agents to resist the temptation of doing things for the people. External change agents should guard against reinforcing community dependency in their own professional conduct. Genuine capacity building efforts towards effective community empowerment should be enhanced, within the context of the understanding that the capacity builders themselves are not indispensable. At the community level,

people develop their own community resource persons to effectively substitute the external change agents.

In the same vein, people should be dissuaded from depending on 'shadow leadership'. These are people voted into local leadership positions but who work and live away from the community. They tend to be elected just because of their social standing, being perceived as important and powerful within the community. Dependency on such absent leadership will reinforce inertia among the people, thus retarding progress as planning and follow-up on community development projects suffer poor attention.

People should be made to experience the joy of self-reliance, the dignity in the ability to attain community aspirations through self-help. This will be an impossible expectation where the change agents happen to perceive themselves as the 'saviours' of the people instead of facilitators and enablers of people's process of self development. Equally important is the need to develop effective methods for challenging attitudes of dependency, and instead facilitating the kind of process that instills local responsibility through local decision making and action. Empowering approaches to this end will be non-hierarchical, and truly participatory.

2.3.4.1 Conclusion

As observed above, dependency syndrome or 'relief mentality' within communities has historical origins and is difficult (though not impossible) to overcome. The expectations of free handouts among people are not inborn but acquired from people's past experiences.

It is usually left at the discretion of those charged with the responsibility of administering social welfare interventions to determine when it is the appropriate time to administer the same and to whom. They determine whether people really need relief handouts at any one given point in time. In other words, genuine response to a need that calls for handout intervention will involve a critical discernment on the right time for such in the light of prevailing circumstances, the right place and the right target group. Otherwise the common experience has shown that relief beneficiaries sometimes end up selling the handouts in the markets when the timing is wrong or when the relief handouts do not really meet their felt

needs.

It can be appreciated that 'handouts' will not only be necessary but critical in situations of emergency occasioned by catastrophes such as floods, fire, earthquakes, wars and prolonged drought among others. However, even where handouts are imperative as a short term measure to alleviate suffering, there is need to build on local coping strategies. This will strengthen the local capacities should similar circumstances keep reoccurring in future. This will help to avoid creating a situation whereby people become perpetual dependants on external assistance and handouts. Hence, the fundamental concern here on the inadequacy of social welfare development intervention is not just to do with the act of free distribution of relief handouts. It is mainly the hows of executing the intervention that raises concern. The foregoing sentiments are reinforced by Oxfam, who proposes that both long-term as well as short-term interventions should, of necessity, be handled in such a manner as to strengthen people's existing capacities to manage themselves without undermining their potential to sustain themselves equitably in the future (Eade and Williams, 1995:824).

Beneficiaries of free services and handouts are often treated with disrespect by their benefactors simply because their situation of need is perceived to have rendered them helpless and hopeless. They are seen as people without rights, not even right to be treated with fairness. Relief distribution in refugee centres is a classic example where the recipients have often had to resort to violence to fight against the humiliation. However, Eade and Williams note that:

...if people are aware of their own rights as well as of the responsibilities of governments and international bodies in defending these, they are better able to use existing instruments, such as the press, or human rights legislation, to call the relevant institutions to account (Eade and Williams, 1995:818).

Some fundamental guidelines have been proposed by Eade and Williams (1995:833-837) to earn credibility and nobility to relief interventions where relief handouts (as enumerated in *Figure 4* below) are provided as the inevitable cause to relieve suffering:

Relief intervention should be limited to a short-term measure to ameliorate suffering. This should be complemented with planning for long-term and sustainable interventions that seek to address the root causes of the undesirable situation. In other words, programming must not exclusively be pre-occupied with meeting urgent needs but should seek to integrate such efforts that address the social/organisational and motivational/attitudinal elements as well. Conversely, every development intervention should anticipate and be designed to prevent or mitigate disasters.

To do nothing is better than to do something badly. Agencies should not intervene in a crisis unless it is to support local capacities.

The nature and modalities of the relief operations will have to be decided upon and managed by the beneficiaries themselves. This will ensure people's sense of worth and self-respect is maintained despite the negativity associated with relief handouts. In fact, experience has shown that:

The people affected by an emergency are likely to know better than anyone else what action is required; but perhaps lack the resources to carry it out, may not be organised in any way to work together, or may need training in relevant techniques or organisational development (Eade and Williams, 1995:837).

Ideally, it is the people who benefit from the relief who should give lead in drawing up the terms, conditions and policies to govern the operation. This of course will have to be done in consultation with the donor partners. The point here is that, to preserve people's sense of dignity, they should not be treated as spectators of the intervention on their behalf, but instead, should demand the position of an equal partner at the negotiating table.

Hence:

People should maintain the right to turn down the offer for assistance or terminate the contract at anytime without the obligation to give reasons.

There is no such thing as relief projects that are neutral in terms of development. They either support it or undermine it. Hence, development agencies that work in areas prone to crisis should understand the need not only to anticipate the effects of disasters on their long-term work but also to address people's vulnerabilities through that work. Thus every disaster response should be based on an

appreciation of local capacities and should be designed to support and increase these.

Indigenous agencies are in a better position to respond developmentally than outside agencies. Outside agencies that are already present are better able to respond than those arriving to deal with the crisis. Agencies that identify themselves as development agencies can provide more creative relief in an emergency (especially in areas where they are already involved in long-term work), than those which exclusively focus on relief administration.

Both relief and development should be more concerned with increasing local capacities and reducing vulnerabilities than with providing goods, services or technical assistance. In fact goods and services should be provided only insofar as they support sustainable development by increasing local capacities and reducing vulnerabilities.

But, is it really true that the beneficiaries cannot afford to contribute towards the cost of such handouts, even on a cost-sharing basis? For instance, one would have to critically determine as to what circumstances would justify free agricultural inputs to a community, as opposed to soft credit? How long should these free inputs be provided before the community can facilitate its own access at its own cost? What does free distribution do to people's sense of dignity? How do we ensure the recipients' self-respect is not injured in the process?

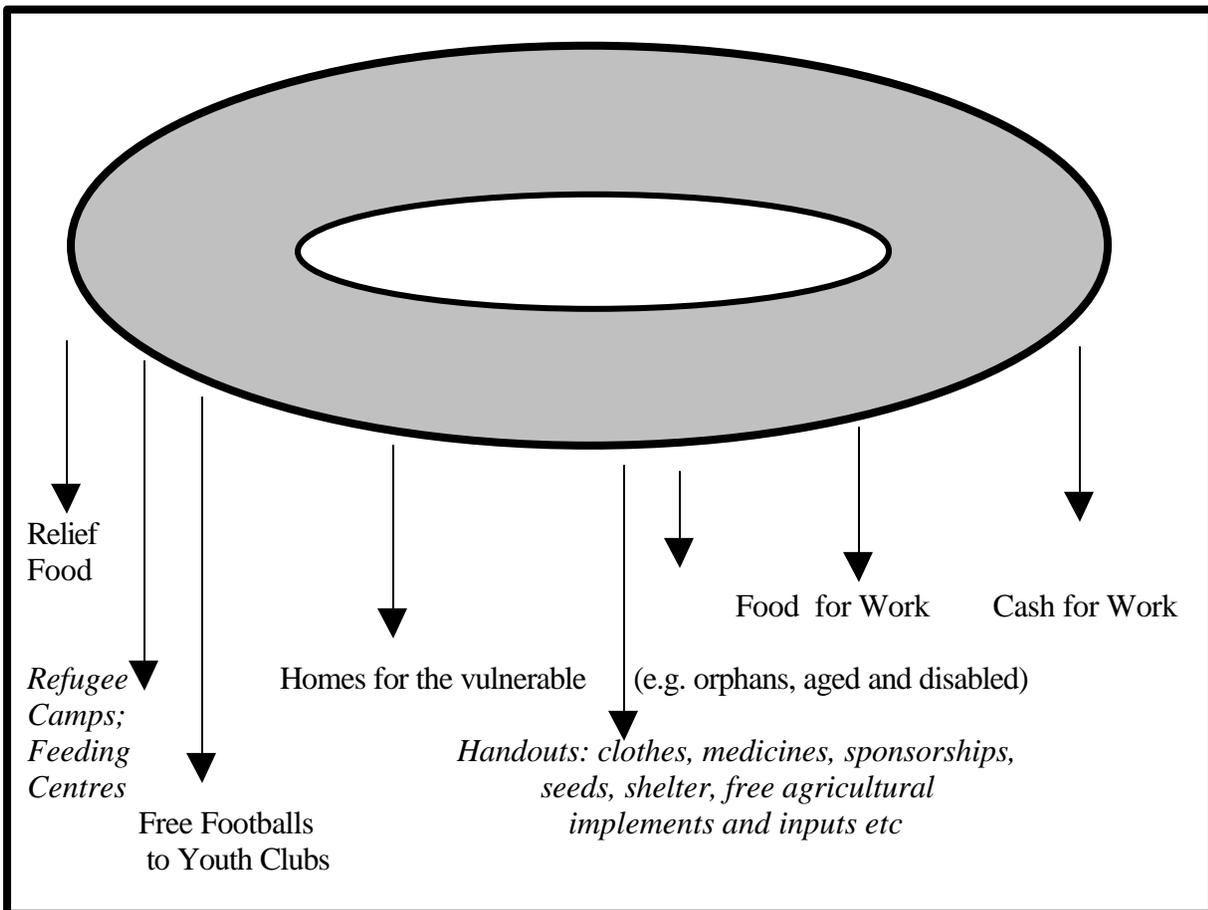
Sensitised development planners would seek to involve the beneficiaries of social welfare interventions in determining their priorities and their future. With appropriate social awareness, beneficiaries of social welfare services would be able deal with the inadequacies in the paradigm. They would demand to be treated with respect for instance. They may also demand to be involved in making choices, planning and decision making even in the provision of the welfare services. But of course, social welfare would be the least desirable choice of development intervention, given other choices. There is no doubt that it diminishes people sense of dignity and worth.

Therefore, it is instructive that in planning for emergency interventions, a balance should be drawn between the timely delivery of assistance, and the longer-term implications of the way in which it is provided. In other words, the modalities of design and management of any relief intervention should be

considered as important as the appropriateness of the goods and services being delivered. Thus:

Experience suggests that the programmes which have adapted best in times of crisis have been those that have invested, over the years, in the development of people and organisations, who had the skills, capacities and, above all, self-confidence to propose and manage their own activities (Eade and Williams, 1995:829)

Figure 4: Social Welfare Development paradigm interventions



2.4 Participatory Development: A timely paradigm shift

“How do victims themselves perceive their poverty? They live it; they know it best, beyond all outside concepts”
(Thekaekara, 2000: 570).

This section does not intent to exhaustively discuss the concept of participatory development *per se*. This will be discussed at a greater depth in the next Chapter. However, this section will exclusively focus on the centrality of fundamental human needs as the basis for holistic human development. This is the tap-root of participatory development paradigm.

2.4.1 Introduction

From an article entitled *‘Beyond Fishing; Behind the Well’* by Mutuku (KCDF Annual Report 2002:3-4), a critical presumption has been advanced around the old adage that: *‘give a hungry man a fish, and you will feed him for a day; train him how to fish, and you will feed him for a life time’*. Mutuku has raised doubts on the adequacy of the analogy in the adage. She has argued that it is not enough just to turn a ‘beggar’ into a fisherman. That is only part of a long journey to freedom from hunger and servitude for the beggar. Mutuku points out that the newly-made fisherman would need to acquire the self-confidence that comes from full knowledge of legal provisions that protect his right to fishing. Nothing could prevent those in power from scuttling that legal right unless the fisherman is aware of his rights and has the ability to defend those rights. It is also possible that the fisherman’s ability to sustain his livelihood through fishing, will again depended on the good-will of the owner of fishing equipment which he perhaps rents. On the other hand, authorities could decide to licence industrial investors upstream whose factories emit toxic waste that end up killing all the fish down stream. The fisherman is doomed, in spite of the skills.

To make the matters worse, the government could as well decide to impose tax on the production of fishing-nets regardless of how this hits at the small fisherman. It could also impose deterrent tariffs against the importation of inputs required to manufacture fishing-nets, thus creating scarcity, resulting in high cost of nets. This makes fishing industry uneconomical venture for the poor fisherman. In some cases, cultural and religious factors have sometimes prohibited the possibility of active participation of women in certain activities such as fishing. Hence, they would depend on men for their feeding even when they could acquire the skill to fish for themselves and claim

economic independence.

Take for instance unemployed school leavers who may have been assisted by a non-governmental organisation to acquire the necessary skills towards self-employment. They are then assisted with the initial capital to start-off with small business stalls or '*Jua-Kali*' (informal sector) shelters for their small-scale enterprises. However, such stalls may be vandalised overnight by urban authorities or subjected to arson fires to pave way for grabbing of the plots by power-brokers. This was not uncommon in recent past of the history of Kenya. Again this attests to the fact that it is not enough to equip the poor with the survival skills. They will also need to organise themselves to build a collective bargaining power to defend their interests against the interests of their rivals, the custodians of exploitative political and economic power.

In the same vein, true development does not begin with the installation of a village water well. It is what happens 'behind the well' that attests to the quality of the development brought about by the existence of the well. A benevolent donor could as well have planted the well there. This would be a false start. Quality and sustainable development can only be found in the story that lies 'behind' the well, and not in the well itself.

2.4.1.1 The implications

A seasoned development animator will therefore not stop at impartation of survival skills to those who need them. He or she will seek to go beyond that by helping people to build mechanisms that ensure their ability to defend their right to survival. For instance, he would need to organise people to develop marketing structures for their surplus production, thus attaining collective bargaining power. This suggests that acquisition of survival skills is only but the beginning of a long process of empowerment. Without people's structures of participation and empowerment (such as alternative community service organisations), their efforts are bound to have little or no consequence in improving their lot. This is unlike the assumption held

over the years which has seen emphasis laid on the acquisition of technical or productive skills to enable the poor fend for themselves. Development planners had forgotten that a well-trained farmer, fully backed by innovative technology and extension network, might not successfully disentangle oneself from

poverty unless such efforts are complemented by just policy framework. Without appropriate marketing policy for instance, all the toiling by the peasant farmer would be lost to traders, who maximise on their profits through exploitative pricing mechanisms.

In other words, true development process is complex and calls for a number of factors, which have all along either been taken for granted or overlooked altogether. It is for this reason some scholars, notably MaxNeef (et al.1989:1), Nyerere (1973:58-60), and Kaplan (1996:*Passim*) have suggested that, a holistic development process should of necessity concern itself with human needs that transcend physical factors. For instance, Nyerere conceptualises development with a political leaning as follows, leaving no doubt that true development is not about material acquisition, but about human growth dimension, thus:

Freedom and development are as completely linked together as are chickens and eggs! Without chickens you get no eggs; and without eggs you soon have no chickens. Similarly, without freedom you get no development, and without development you very soon lose your freedom. Development brings freedom, provided it is development of people.... But people cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves. For while it is possible for an outsider to build a person's house, an outsider cannot give the person pride and self-confidence in themselves as human beings. Those things people have to create in themselves by their own actions. They develop themselves by what they do; they develop themselves by making their own decisions, by increasing their own knowledge and ability and by their own full participation - as equals. (Nyerere, 1973:58-60).

There is no dispute on the fact that, until recently, community development has nearly exclusively been understood as an effort to meet people's 'basic needs' in the sense of tangible material provision. In line with this, the International Labour Organisation defines the basic needs as entailing two components: "minimum family requirements for consumption such as adequate food, shelter, clothing, household equipment and furnishings; and essential community services such as portable water, sanitation, health services, educational facilities and public transport" (Rondinelli, 1993:67). Even though this understanding of basic needs is relatively comprehensive, nevertheless it tends to concentrate nearly

exclusively on the kind of needs that of necessity seek to keep people alive. However, people do not necessarily live for them alone. Human life has more fundamental purpose than just eating and drinking.

Even though the Maslow's (1954;*passim*) concept of hierarchy of human needs remains the pioneer effort that merits attention to illustrate some basic points, a number of scholars have challenged this. They seem to have built their new theories on human needs from Maslow's own conviction that "man does not live by bread alone – *if he has enough bread*" (Gran, 1983:156). Others who have emerged with a new emphasis on non-tangible needs (sense of dignity, sense of belonging, and self-esteem among others) as bearing equal importance as the tangible needs, include Lutz and Lux,1979;*passim*; Horvat,1982;*passim*; and MaxNeef (et al. 1989:1). However, Gran argues that this relatively new concept remains a far-fetched idea for many elite. He observes:

Distressing or incomprehensible as it may be to many elites, there are things more fulfilling than great political power or material wealth. That so many people cannot see beyond these relatively infantile needs suggests widespread and common blockages to human development (Gran, 1983:156)

The holistic view on the approach to meeting the complexity of human needs is also articulated by Rajae within the wider context of modern global change. He espouses this perspective as follows, with an underlying challenge levelled at development planners and practitioners to be more innovative:

...the combination of the fall of the bipolar world system, the coming of the information revolution, and the emergence of postmodernist thinking has ushered in a new epoch. Its new mode of production challenges existing views and requires an imaginative mode of thinking. The existing paradigms do not completely grasp the nature, the consequence, and the implication of the present transformation. Yet, because the other important variable of the equation – namely, humanity – has remained relatively unchanged and still requires a life of security, and dignity, this imaginative thinking requires a holistic view that accounts for both change and continuity (Rajae, 2000: xiii).

I believe, Rajeev is challenging us to climb onto a new plateau of development analysis, possibly towards a new development paradigm still on the horizon, in resonance with the challenges of the new world order. Whatever the case, the search should continue for a more humane, equitable and more just development relations that seek to address the holistic fundamental human needs. This is in line with the deductive perspective that: “Development, in its broadest meaning, is the liberation of human potential” (Gran, 1983:2).

2.4.2 ‘Wheel of Fundamental Human Needs’: The basis for Participatory Development paradigm

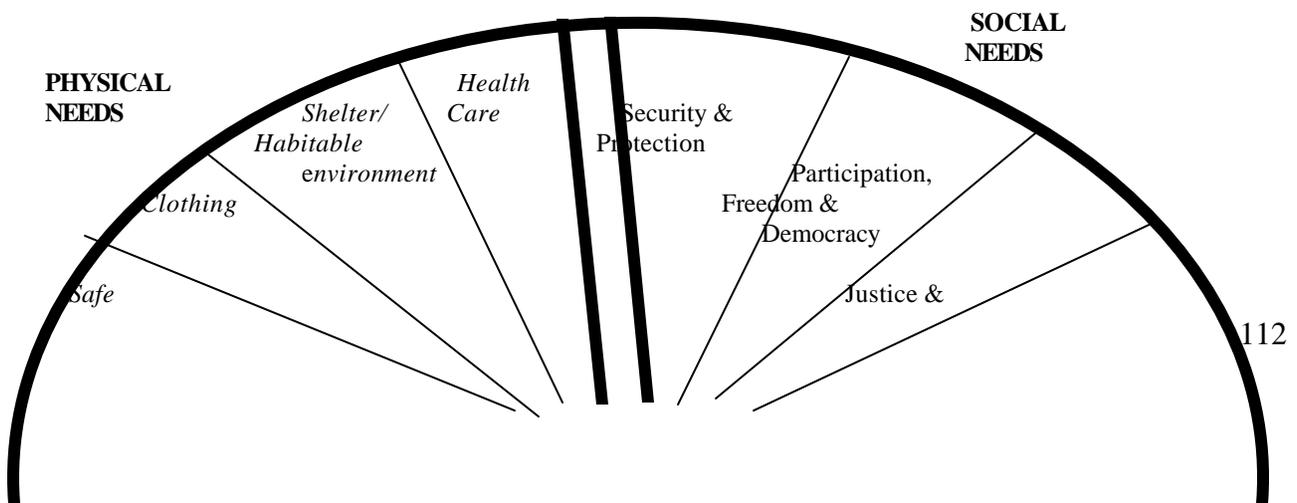
The theory of the Wheel of Fundamental Human Needs below captures similar sentiments as pertains to the holistic approach to human needs for quality and integral human development.

This is an input based on a radical perception of development by a group of Latin American. Scholars. MaxNeef (at al. 1989:1) summarises the work done by a team of researchers from five Latin American countries of South America in 1985/6 in a wheel. The uniqueness with this theory is the emphasis laid on the fact that all human needs have equal importance. The only difference is that one need may be more urgent than the others at any one given moment depending on the immediate circumstances.

However, PREMESE-Africa (Diploma Manual, 2002:16) has adapted the Wheel Theory to suit the African context. Of significance is the centrality of spiritual needs to attain holistic human development, an aspect missing in the original wheel.

Figure 5: The Wheel of Fundamental Human Needs

(Adapted from MaxNeef, et al.1989:1)





According to the theory behind this wheel, quality development is about meeting fundamental human needs which are perceived to be in four dimensions: physical, social, psychological/emotional and spiritual. Thus, in this context, quality development is conceptualised as:

...a process in which a community of people strives to make it possible for all its members to satisfy their fundamental human needs and to enhance the quality of their lives. Development is about people and the way they live, not about objects, things or services given to them. No one can develop other people; it is something that a community or a society does for itself....However, it is possible to facilitate a community process in which people come together: start to listen to and support each other; identify their problems and the needs which are not being met; see what is blocking them from meeting these needs; recognise fruitless ways of trying to satisfy these needs....agree on ways of moving towards true satisfaction of these needs; and plan action together to make their lives more fulfilling (Hope and Timmel, BK 1, 2000:86).

Similar sentiments on the centrality of the people in determining quality development are shared by Eade and Williams (1995:9). They observe that the quality of a development process should be assessed by

how much it has ended up strengthening people's capacity to determine their own values and priorities, and to organise themselves to act on these. The process will therefore, in essence, involve empowerment efforts that enable men and women to bring about positive changes in their lives as they seek to transform their situation and the society at large by challenging poverty, oppression and discrimination towards social and economic justice.

Fundamental human needs are universal and the way in which any community attempts to satisfy these needs and enhance the quality of its life is the basis of its culture. The 'satisfiers' to these needs vary according to time and place, climate, resources and culture.

2.4.2.1 Physical Needs

Food, fuel and water

We need a balanced diet for our bodies to be strong. We need appropriate, affordable and readily available fuel or any other source of energy for reproductive (domestic) and productive (industrial) use. While for some it is firewood or charcoal, yet for others it is gas, electricity or coal. According to the United Nations (Daily Nation of Tuesday 19th December 2000), 80% of Africans rely on firewood as their primary source of energy. However, drought and desertification were rapidly diminishing forests and other woodlands from which communities derive firewood as the United Nations report observes:

Africans may soon be forced to eat raw food as a result of shortage of firewood as the cost of firewood and charcoal is now greater than that of food. We may reach a point where we will have to stop cooking altogether (Daily Nation of Tuesday 19th December 2000).

We also need to have reasonable access to potable (or safe) water fit for human consumption, realising that a multitude of rural and urban-slum diseases are water borne. And yet, according to Human Development Report (2000), only a paltry 46% of Kenyans have access to clean water (Daily Nation, October 15th, 2002, 9).

Clothing

We need appropriate clothing, not only to protect ourselves against cold and other unfavourable climatic

conditions, but also to safeguard our own self-respect and dignity. The nature of clothing, however, will of necessity be dictated by our cultural expectations. Hence wearing a suit and a tie should not necessarily mean better 'development' than a simple cloth over the shoulders and the waist worn by a pastoralist in a hot climate. The nature of dressing will therefore be dictated by one's cultural and physical environment.

Shelter and habitable environment

We need reasonable shelter, in a habitable environment or a suitable place to live in. Homelessness is inhuman. We need protection against rain, cold, sun, wind and dangers from wild animals among others.

We need an appropriate and reasonably decent shelter worthy of human dignity. The kind of shelter where there is no over-crowding. As in the case of clothing, the cultural and physical environment will largely determine the nature of the shelter and its appropriateness. Hence a glass or stone house with asbestos roof should not necessarily be considered an indicator for 'better housing' than the 'Igloos' of Eskimos in Greenland or 'Manyattas' of the Maasai people of Kenya.

Health care

We need to be healthy to live happily and productively. We need to be healthy to be able to exploit our full potential and happiness in life. We need dependable, reasonably good, accessible and affordable health services including a clean environment, safe water, secure supply of medicine, adequate and qualified medical staff, and adequate medical facilities. These will form a fundamental basis for a reasonable sense of health security vital for the full stretch of human potential.

2.4.2.2 Sociological Needs

Participation; Freedom And Democracy

We need to get involved in matters that affect our lives. We need to be within the decision making circles. At least we need to be consulted when decisions have to be made that affect our lives. We need to have a voice in the society, to be given an opportunity to make our own contribution no matter how humble. We need to participate not just spectate. We need independence and space to do what we want to do as long as it does not interfere with other people's freedoms and independence.

Justice and peace

Regardless of age, there is this deep-seated urge to be treated with fairness and justice. We also need peace to go about our business. We need freedom to make mistakes, as long as we are willing to take responsibility over the consequences of such mistakes. We need space to determine our own future, our own destiny. Struggle for justice and peace is not possible working in isolation. We need to associate with and seek support and solidarity with others of similar convictions. People over the history have gone out of their way to fight and struggle for Justice and Peace at the cost of many lives. Dedan Kimathi, a Kenyan Freedom fighter, once said “*I would rather die on my feet, than to live on my knees*” (From a dialogue with Ngugi wa Mirie, Harare, 1992). The colonialists hanged him for that conviction. It is this same concept that has led Gran to conclude that: “Humans will sometimes desire a greater measure of autonomy than a greater amount of material wealth, defining security in ways the outsider cannot easily see” (Gran,1983:157).

Legal rights for the poor and the deprived will need to be spelled out including respect for the poor people’s entitlement rather than simplistic focus on their basic survival needs. “*All things were made for people. People have the right to find in the world around them all they need for life and for progress. (The earth has been made) and all that it contains for all people to share*” Hope and Timmel, BK 1, 2001:122).

A United Nations (UN) Global Consultation conclusion on the Right to Development in 1991 is not inconsistent with this understanding of development as it observes that:

Development is not only a fundamental right but a basic human need, which fulfils the aspiration of all people to achieve the greatest possible freedom and dignity both as individuals and as members of the societies in which they live (Eade and Williams, 1995:10).

Others who have perceived basic needs as human rights include Burki who has argued that the access by the poor to a bundle of essential goods and services is tantamount to accessing his or her basic

human right (Burki, 1980:18). This same view is strongly advocated in the United Nation's policy as evidenced by the consistency with which the Director of the Division of Human Rights is reported to have argued that: "...concern for human rights should not be a marginal activity within the UN system, but should become the core element of development strategies at all levels" (Ekins, 1992:66).

Rest and Recreation

All work without play makes Jack a dull boy and Jill a dull girl. We need to take time from our serious work and tight schedules and have a rest. We need to relax at the appropriate moments. These are moments when we choose to do only what gives us pleasure and relaxation. People have many ways of relaxation, and whichever one chooses, it should be able to re-create the body, mind and spirit. This moment of play, a joke, a little jump, a little song, a little sleep, whatever it is that you like to do to relax, is precious. Without rest we burn out. We need to retreat, to reflect and think about our being, our inner person in order to move forward.

Security And Protection

The society, community and the family should provide this to an individual. We need to feel secure enough to go about our self-actualisation. The society and family will ensure security and protection to its members by fostering good and harmonious relationships within the family and between the family and the neighbours. For those who can afford, family security has also been sought through taking appropriate insurance cover. We need secure jobs and secure sources of income. We need state and legal protection against our enemies. We need hope for a secure future both for our children and ourselves. We need protection against epidemics, floods, raids and such like calamities.

Cultural Identity, Affiliation And Belonging

Human beings cannot live in isolation from others. Our existence is affirmed by the existence of others, or indeed, by being recognised by others. It is only when we are assured of belonging to a community that we gather the courage to exert our full potential and become self-actualised.

Reliable Information, Communication And Mobility

According to the 1994 World Disaster Report, published by the International Federation of Red Cross

and Red Crescent Societies:

One of the principles of a democracy, however defined, is that the people have a right to participate in decision-making and it follows from this that they must have access to information if they are to exercise this right responsibly (Eade and Williams, 1995:818).

Not only do we need to be informed by having access to information, but also we need correct and dependable information. We need information that we can comprehend and make use of. Absence of reliable information drives people into state of speculation and rumour mongering. The human craving for information will not allow an information vacuum to exist. Access to information is therefore considered a fundamental human need, the basis for informed choices and effective decision-making.

Human beings will interact and associate in order to grow as individuals, as well as communities. That interaction is facilitated by easy and effective means of communication. This includes good road network, availability of vehicles or other means that facilitate mobility, telecommunications contacts, etc. We need to be informed, to have access to information. We need correct and dependable information. We need information that we can comprehend and make use of. Not a junk. Absence of reliable information drives people into state of speculation and rumour mongering. The human craving for information will not allow an information vacuum to exist. Sharing and access to information is therefore considered a fundamental human need, the basis for informed choices and effective decision-making.

2.4.2.3 Psychological Needs

Education

We need to acquire knowledge. Education is not only recognised as a fundamental human need, but is recognised as a universal human right. It is therefore the right of every citizen in a nation, male or female, to have access to education. We need education in order to master and ‘conquer’ the world around us, to unwrap the mysteries of life and subdue nature. We need education to invent and discover. We need to understand not only all what is happening around us, but also how it affects us now and in the future. “Starving a person’s mind hurts them as much as starving their body” (Hope and Timmel, 2001:122). We need to understand our social, economic, political, and cultural milieu in order to be able, not only

to fit into it, but also to make meaningful contribution in shaping it. Therefore the role of the educated person should be to demystify what looks mysterious to others. The kind of education we are talking about here is not limited to but transcends formal to include non-formal and informal education.

Dignity and Respect

A Counsellor was admonishing a delinquent teenage-boy who had committed the most abominable things that can ever be imagined. He had lost his sense of self-worth. The disapproving reaction of his neighbours to his behaviour had made him believe that he was good for nothing. However, the Counsellor knew that if only he could help the boy regain his lost sense of self-respect and worth as a human being, he would have started him on the road to recovery.

An idea struck in the Counsellor's mind. He took two 100 US\$ currency notes. One was dirty, soiled and creased. The other was brand new and therefore clean and straight. The Counsellor held the two bills and asked the boy which of the two would buy more wares in a shop than the other. After thinking for a while, the boy said that they would buy equal amount of wares. "Why and one is in such a bad shape?", inquired the Counsellor. "Because despite the physical state of the filthy note, the value remained the same", the boy responded. "You have answered well", said the Counsellor. "In the same way, your worth as a person has not changed because of your past. You are still a creation in the image and likeness of your Creator. You have a dignity that no one can take away from you except yourself. By failing to recognise that self-worth in you as a person, you are denying yourself the privilege of being a human-being created superior to all other creation. You are equal to the son of the King of the land in the eyes of your Creator. Your behaviour may have been bad, but you are not bad yourself.", concludes the Counsellor. This had a complete transforming effect on the boy.

What does this story teach us about human dignity? Sense of self-worth is a basic need for human living.

We need to protect our dignity as human beings. We are not just another person. We are not just part of a collective census figure. We like to be known by our names, our past achievement, our talents, our professional prowess, our families, our communities, and our nationality. Not only do we need assurance that we are special, but we expect to be treated as such by others. We deserve respect and

we long for it. We like to know and identify with our cultural roots, which give us identity in society. In other words, we expect to be treated as important. We want to be appreciated and admired.

Productive Self-Actualisation through maximising talents

Right from our childhood, there is that curiosity within us to create and achieve our full potential. We seek to optimise our talents. There is that urge and desire to do it better than the past, than yesterday, than the ordinary. This urge needs to be cultivated (not stifled) and an appropriate climate created to nurture people's creativity and self-actualisation in whichever way possible. This is usually attained through an opportunity for meaningful work (not just another job). Hence employment does not only seek to meet physical needs, but also psychological if it is the kind of work that you choose and like to do.

Love, Affection And Procreation

Nobody can be so rich that s/he will not need others. We need to be loved, as much as we need somebody to love. True love cannot be bought. It has to be given freely and received voluntarily. Our immediate families can best provide this affection and by extension the neighbouring community and the society at large. Hence, it is important for our children to experience this affection, first and foremost from home. When we do not get adequate love in our child life, we often find it difficult to fit harmoniously into the society as adults. Similarly, there is that deep urge to ensure our own continuity as a human race, as a nation, as a tribe, as a clan, as a family. We do not expect to get extinct at any one historical stage. Love and affection in families guarantees our continuity.

2.4.2.4 Spiritual Needs

At the centre of all these are our spiritual needs. No matter what we believe-in, whether religious or atheist, our spiritual needs remain part of our fundamental needs. We need the opportunity to nourish our beliefs and the values we hold as our 'religion'. We need the satisfaction of this need for the fullness of our lives, as there appears to be a vacuum in every human being that can only be filled by the super natural dimension of reality.

2.4.3 Conclusion

Causes of poverty as understood in this paradigm are believed to be ‘exogenous’ causes, that is, emanating from societal factors external to the victim. These include:

Inadequate social awareness and therefore disorganisation among the affected

Poor, corrupt and unaccountable leadership

Insensitive and inefficient service structures

Unfair or unjust trade relations

Poor governance, with non-democratic practices

Unpopular public policies

Concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few.

With similar a perspective on the causes of poverty, Murphy observes that:

People are poor because of the way humankind acts and behaves – that is, how we run our affairs, and in whose interests the world is organised and managed. Wars do not just happen; they are declared and waged by human beings. Tyranny does not just emerge; it is the brutal and intolerant exercise of power by a few people over the many. People are not simply poor; they are impoverished. That is, the affairs of humans are the acts of humans and the responsibility of humans. We either condone the way the world is organised and managed, or we change it. And if we wish to change it, then we must try to describe it accurately (Murphy 2000:341).

In conclusion, it is vital to note that physical needs are satisfied to keep us alive, but are not enough to maintain our full humanity - we do not live for them, but we need to meet them to live. Relief supplies and other similar handouts are false satisfiers. They are not the solution to perpetual hunger and poverty in the society. On the other hand, no one fundamental ‘need’ should be met in isolation of others. An integrated approach to development is therefore preferred for holistic human development, the kind of approach that puts into consideration the need to meet the fundamental human needs in their entirety. This makes it necessary for different field development actors specialising in various sectors to forge linkages and collaboration by integrating their services.

According to MaxNeef (et al.1989), social evils such as alcoholism, drug abuse, rape, murder, suicide, and theft are but symptoms of unmet fundamental human needs. More police and cells are not really the solution. Experience has shown that a multitude of these needs are more easily met in working collectively through groups than through individuals in a community.

The participatory human development approach is accommodative, open and creative, drawing heavily on life experiences of those involved and constantly responding to the emerging and changing aspirations of the community. This model of development puts people at the centre of development process and not on the periphery. Economic growth is not for the exclusive benefit of a few in societies at the expense of the majority. Fair distribution of national wealth and resources is of critical concern.

It should, however, be noted that even though the three development paradigms discussed above may be in conflict, they may not necessarily be mutually exclusive in their application. Ideally, they should be complementary. On this, Eade and Williams (1995:826) observe:

In the NGO work, the search is therefore for an appropriate mix of long- and short-term responses.... There are, of course, situations where difficult choices have to be made between mutually exclusive options; but routinely to adopt an exclusive rather than inclusive approach to problem solving may hinder rather than stimulate creativity. The dangers of concentrating on one area to the exclusion of the others can lead to undesirable results: for example, prolonging crises through ignoring opportunities to enable people to lobby for peace, or failing to relieve human suffering by ignoring short-term material needs.

Nevertheless, having said this, it is appropriate to immediately caution that social welfare and modernisation paradigms have in the past proven to be grossly inadequate in the efforts to bring about holistic and quality human development. Under the circumstances where any one of the two (or both) is considered a necessary intervention to complement holistic development planning, its design and integration will have to be conceptualised within the womb of human development orientation.

Care should be taken to ensure participatory development values remain intrinsically embedded in

situations where social welfare and modernisation types of response are the most appropriate, maintaining the pivotal position of people as the architects and the purpose of the development planning. A pragmatic approach will dictate the need for integral application of the three paradigms depending on the issues and circumstances at hand. But at no time should the centrality and the dignity of the human person be compromised, insubordinated, or substituted, neither under the guise of charitable welfare support nor under the excuse of ‘civilisation’ through modernisation.

Obviously, each of the three paradigms has its own strengths and weaknesses. We need to judge when we can apply which paradigm for what purpose, guarding against creating dependency. Life is not static but constantly dynamic and changing. Therefore we need to adapt different models at different times. It is also instructive to note that:

...given the inter-related causes and consequences of complex emergencies, humanitarian action cannot be fully effective unless it is related to a comprehensive strategy for peace and security, human rights and social and economic development” (Eade and Williams, 1995:812)

In other words, the pragmatic approach to participatory human development will, when appropriate, embrace social welfare and modernisation components. That is, an approach with a human face. In a world where there are currently 20 million refugees, at least as many internationally displaced persons, and approximately three times as many economic migrants through out the world (Eade and Williams, 1995:813), relief industry is likely to remain with us for a long time. However, relief handouts should strictly be limited to ‘emergency’ situations only to the most deserving cases and only when there is dire necessity. Otherwise, Eade and Williams are quick to caution that, where relief managers are not on the alert, violence and war may be perpetuated by the beneficiaries of relief as a means for some groups to ensure their own economic and political survival (Eade and Williams, 1995:814). Besides this, people should maintain the right to decide on their priorities.

In the realm of modernisation intervention, it is true that we need innovative technology and not the least, optimal returns of investment in form of high production. However, this should not be at the detriment

of some sections of the community who are often marginalised when it comes to sharing the fruits of high production. In this case, people should control new technology, with exotic and innovative technology integrated to complement indigenous technical knowledge as opposed to seeking to displace it altogether or competing with it.

Hence, it becomes imperative that we use a mix of paradigms as we react to life's reality of varied challenges. The question is how we can use the participatory paradigms, supported by other paradigms when and as may become necessary, but exploiting to the full its advantages in facilitating integral human growth where people take responsibility with full dignity in shaping their own destiny.

Ideally, the participatory development paradigm should be preferred as it cultivates a sense of responsibility and ownership within the people. This compliments the sentiments raised in the Wheel of the Fundamental Human Needs, as people's sense of dignity and self respect is enhanced. However, sometimes such a choice is made in a matter of emphasis in situations where a call for a mix of the three approaches to development becomes the only pragmatic option.

It would rightly be expected that the debate on participatory development approaches is key and central to the concerns of this study. For that reason, the foregoing review on the same does not provide adequate theoretical foundation as a basis for searching the place of participatory strategic planning (to be discussed in Chapter 4). Hence, it has become necessary to dedicate the next Chapter (Chapter 3), to a more detailed examination on the concept of community participation and empowerment as a virtue in both theory and practice. A focus will be made on the role of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) as instruments for community mobilisation and transformation. The CBOs also provide suitable organisational framework at grassroots level through which the initiation, management, and sustenance of participatory strategic planning activities can be ensured. Community Based Organisations will also be expected to provide effective post-planning follow-up to ensure effective implementation of community plans.

Chapter Three

3.0 Participatory development and the role of Community Based Organisations (CBOs)

3.1 Concept and practice of participatory development

3.1.1 Introduction

The ensuing discussion on participatory development is not unrelated to the immediate concerns of this

thesis on the efficacy of participatory strategic planning in organisation strengthening. As reflected in the foregoing Chapter, the polemics on development paradigms hinge around their potential (or lack of it) to bring about people's empowerment, a prerequisite for sustainable development with equity. This virtue can only be guaranteed where there is optimal participation of the local people right from the planning stages of any development endeavour. This is one way to ensure people assume full responsibility over their own development processes including the consequences of the decisions they make.

However, according to Swanepoel (1993:3), it should be born in mind that there is no one 'correct' way of doing community development or development planning for that matter. He argues that it would require a super-human being to provide a perfectly clinical way of doing community development, knowing exactly what to do. Hope and Timmel have advanced a similar argument as they contend that:

Now we find that, on a great many issues, the so-called 'experts' have been wrong. This is particularly so in the field of development, where again and again the advice of outside 'experts' has led to greater poverty. There is a new awareness now, that on all the major problems that face the modern world, no experts have all the answers. Each may have valuable information to contribute, but we need dialogue to draw in the insights of all who are concerned as we search for solutions. Local participation is crucial for effective development (Hope and Timmel, BK1, 1996:17).

Both Swanepoel and Hope and Timmel agree on the fact that the critical characteristic of (community) development is that it is a learning process. As people tackle one issue after another, the success they attain towards reaching their concrete objectives gives them not only a learning opportunity on how to tackle the next task better, but also builds their own self-confidence. They come to discover their own potential and what they can do to make a difference in their lives (Swanepoel, 1993:3). Thus:

By gaining in the ability to reach certain objective, people also gain in self-sufficiency. Their reliance on external resources to reach an objective diminishes, and when they become self-reliant, they also gain in human dignity.

These reflections lead us to the contention that participatory strategic planning is a learning process by

the stakeholders involved in a development undertaking. In this case, our review on participatory development in this Chapter will pave way for our deeper understanding on the complexities of participation, within which participatory strategic planning is hatched. It is fundamentally a process of learning by doing. Those involved are not afraid of making mistakes as long as such mistakes are borne of a genuine effort to experiment new and better ways of doing development. More importantly, participatory development practitioners are keen to draw lessons from their experiences and experiments. Every 'mistake' is perceived as a learning opportunity. This is an attitude that would often be missing in the world of conventional development where the so called 'development experts' are adored as the custodians of development wisdom. This, in my own view, sets the stage for the major conceptual difference between participatory development paradigms discussed in Chapter two.

However, for people to take initiatives, their capacities will have to be built. On this Swanepoel has this interesting observation:

People ...are often reluctant to take the initiative, partly because they are not sure of themselves and partly because they are not used to it. They are used to the fact that some authority or organisation takes the initiative. In most cases they are quite willing to follow passively. There may be a very good reason for this attitude, such as that the opportunity for conflict in a society is largely diminished when decisions are made externally. Passive submissiveness, however, will not help to make them self-sufficient (Swanepoel, 1993:4).

Capacity building on the part of the local people will be imperative for them to begin to take initiatives. Such capacity building will have to focus on four major levels to be complete in itself: change of people's own attitudes towards building self-confidence and sense of self-worth as they realise their potential to transform their own circumstances; expanding people's perspectives, knowledge and awareness through appropriate exposure and training; enhancing people's abilities through training in appropriate skills; and strengthening people's organisational capacity. However, what do these concepts truly represent?

3.1.2 Capacity building

Local capacity building is believed to be an essential factor for the sustainability of community development initiatives. In this regard, it is therefore vital to demystify the concept right from the onset. According to a paper on capacity building presented by Mulwa (1999, Unpublished), to a conference in Nairobi:

Capacity building is a continuous process of enhancing stakeholders' knowledge and skills as well as adjusting stakeholders' attitudes, values and practices. The process involves efforts to strengthen each partner's ability to make effective decisions on what to do with their own lives and assume full responsibility over the consequences of those decisions. Hence, capacity building involves building up people's self confidence by change of attitudes and imparting the relevant skills and knowledge that will ultimately enable them to effectively manage their own lives on their own. The process challenges stakeholders to efficiently marshal available resources towards meeting their own needs as they identify, create and optimise opportunities in life. Meanwhile, the stakeholders seek to influence policies that govern their communities and the society at large to ensure their individual and collective needs and rights are accommodated.

According to Eade and Williams (1995:9-24), capacity building is the process of strengthening people's ability and capability to determine their own values and priorities, and to organise themselves to action on these priorities in life. It is about women and men becoming empowered to bring about positive changes in their lives. It is about personal growth, nourished by public action. It is also about both the process and the outcome of challenging poverty, oppression, and discrimination, and about the realisation of human potential to cause justice. Above all, it is about enabling people to engage in the process of transforming their own lives, and transforming their own societies.

3.1.3 Empowerment

Empowerment can be conceptualised as a process that involves people gaining the strength, confidence, and vision to work for positive changes in their lives, individually and together with others. People become empowered by their own efforts, not by what others do for them. When development

programmes are not firmly based on people's own efforts to work for change, their impact may be disempowering.

3.1.4 The genesis of participatory development

As noted earlier in Chapter One, this study is mainly focused on the rural setting. This does not in anyway suggest that urban development is irrelevant to our concern for community development. However, we want to acknowledge the fact that the majority of people in developing countries, (and more so in the African region), live and work in rural areas. Even though some of the worst forms of poverty and deprivation would be found in urban slums, majority of the poor and the most deprived would be found in rural areas (Rondinelli, 1993:64). It is for this reason that in the debate that follows in this Chapter as well as elsewhere in the thesis, much more reference is made on rural area development.

Participatory development paradigm is meant to correct the inadequacies encapsulated within the modernisation and social welfare dispositions and practices discussed earlier. Time has come when it dawns on development planners that neither increased economic growth, nor increased foreign aid offers solution to the alarming proportions of deepening poverty within the developing countries. The underlying question is structural. An alternative paradigm becomes necessary. An alternative approach to rural development is called for. Equally important, is the need for a different yardstick for determining 'progress'. Measurement parameters that will more objectively assess the effect of increased production on the lives of the people in the society become imperative in the context of the new development paradigm. This raises the question of fair distribution or development with equity. No matter how 'developed' an economy is, if only a small segment of the population benefited from it, development has not occurred.

Participation is a concept that has been popularised in community development since 1970s. As observed in the foregoing Chapter, Integrated Rural Development (IRD) approach that dominated the development scene in mid and late 1970s was its precursor. The IRD operated on the assumption that sectoral integration was imperative to check on the phenomenal dismal impact experienced then from community development initiatives. It was believed that integration, as opposed to the isolated action of

various departments and sectors, would lead to symbiotic effect thus enhancing efficiency. Even though this new strategy had its own benefits, the expected ‘miracles’ were not forthcoming.

It was soon realised that sustainability of community projects continued suffering as long as development professionals kept on doing everything for the people. It was identified that the largely heavy-handed methodological approaches employed that time were responsible for this inadequacy. It is the methodological choices and processes involved during the entire project cycle that ultimately determine what happens after the project-funding phase is over. Keen observers tend to point out that numerous community projects collapse soon after the handing-over ceremony by the donor.

Why has it been so? Empirical observations indicate that community projects often collapse due to various factors, the most critical of which has proved to be low or non-participation of the key stakeholders (and community in particular) in decision-making. Conversely, where the target community is fully involved, there will not only be high sense of local ownership, but equally important, high chances of project sustainability. People are also likely to experience positive impact from their own project initiative. The fact that people are involved right from the planning stage, it is expected that the development project will address people’s top priority needs with significant impact towards their ultimate goal. In this regard, it has been observed that:

Popular participation has become a buzz-word in the development community in recent years as more and more actors have realised that improvement in living conditions are not brought about from above by some benign agency but by the beneficiaries themselves taking an active part in the process of bringing about the change. But the practice of popular participation rarely matches its rhetoric. Doing it is difficult and it involves a lot of learning not only by the people but also by the professionals who work with them (Bergdall, 1993: xii).

However, it would be fair to acknowledge at this juncture the fact that community participation has meant different things to different people. Hence, there can be no single definition or universally accepted understanding of the concept of participation. The practice of participation is equally relative,

as its interpretation and therefore its application will largely be dictated by the circumstances on the ground. For some, participation is an effort to involve the community in the implementation of already drawn-up blueprint plans. For political scientists, participation is a springboard into issues of polity, presently sweeping across the African continent. This embraces the practice of multiparty democracy, challenging the politics of exclusivity in favour of inclusive, plural governance (cf. Bergdall, 1993:1). On this same line of argument, Oakley and Marsden assert that participation is “the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control” (Oakley and Marsden, 1984:18). For others, participation is nothing short of local decision-making mandate by the people and for the people, on matters that affect their lives.

Whichever way we may want to look at it, there can be no universal definition. However, whatever creates a sense of local ownership and local responsibility should be more desirable as this ensures relevance to the local context and not the least, sustainability.

3.1.5 Types and levels of participation

"Poor people are rarely met. When they are met, they often do not speak. When they do speak, They are often cautious and deferential, and what they say is often either not listened, or brushed aside, or interpreted in a bad light" (Chambers, 1983:104).

Below are different types and levels of participation. This particular section has largely been adopted from Mulwa (2000:17-51). The polemics on the concept of participation presented here from a diversity of secondary sources provide yet another proof that there is no one universal definition or understanding of participation. One's understanding of the same will largely be influenced by the type of exposure one has had with participatory methodologies and the context within which one has operated in as s/he seeks to apply the methodologies.

3.1.5.1 Participation as an element in a at top-down development framework

There are three types and levels of passive or masked participation. This is the kind of participation, which is outside people's control and therefore whose design and purpose is externally conceptualised.

These levels have been identified here as ‘extractionist’, handout ‘induced’ and ‘vertical’ as described below.

'Extractionist' Participation

This type of participation is reminiscent with central government development planning where ‘blue-print’ plans are drawn-up and handed down for execution through government extension network. In this framework, planning bureaucrats see participation as a process of drawing-in people into the implementation of pre-determined development goals. In this case people are seen as a resource potential that needed to be mobilised. Communities have readily available and free labour for 'rural modernisation' programmes, which Knoetze (1983:99-100) terms as “sweat equity”.

This approach emphasises the indispensability of central government planning bureaus in the identification, planning and implementation of development activities and projects. It also involves peoples' (often involuntary) financial and material contribution towards public projects. In the words of Bergdall, participation in this case, has meant nothing more than:

“...voluntary contribution by the people to one or another of the public programmes supposed to contribute to national development but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the programmes, or criticising its content” (Bergdall, 1993:2).

This type of participation has been referred to as ‘extractionist’ approach (Leonard-Ed.,1973:61; Wanyande, 1987:94-102; Mulwa, 2000:23). By and large, ‘extractionist’ approach is preferred by authorities as people’s labour, material and monetary contribution goes a long way to subsidise development project budgets. This view is held by Bhatnagar and Williams who observe that:

Sometimes governments support popular participation because contributions from beneficiaries and NGOs supplement the meagre resources they have at their disposal for development activities.... Thus beneficiaries may be expected to contribute labour and capital or to undertake ‘self-help’ to maintain the project. Popular participation may thus be used to facilitate a collective understanding and agreement on cost sharing and its

reinforcement (Bhatnagar and Williams -Eds. 1992:28-178).

Munguti, focusing more on the concept of 'free labour' in participation, has similarly observed:

...by community members offering themselves for manual work ... many implementers of programmes have reported high levels of participation. An estimate would be given showing how much the free labour force reduced the total costs (Munguti, 1989:13).

In 'extractionist' orientation, people are often treated as objects to be acted upon by development experts (Bryant and White:1982). In this paradigm, people are stripped off decision-making responsibilities regarding community development planning and the concomitant project initiatives. Explicitly or implicitly, people are treated as objects of change and relation between the planning bureaus and the people takes the form of a subject acting upon an object as people are dictated upon on what to do. People are only expected to obey what authorities and planners tell them to do.

Through carefully planned manipulation loaded with participatory slogans and rhetoric, people are degenerated into mere tools for the execution and implementation of plans or priorities drawn out by others. The approach assumes that people do not know what their development needs and priorities are and what ought to be done to solve the development problems. Law enforcement and punitive measures are usually employed to coerce people to co-operate where persuasion fails. Such approaches doubtlessly create room for abuse of power and not the least, the undue appropriation of development benefits by a few for whom it was not initially intended in the first place. Blair laments this same fact thus:

The fact is that community development favoured village elites, who were, after all, in the best position to take advantage of whatever rural development efforts might be introduced from the outside (Blair, 1985:254).

On the other hand, coerced participation is not consistent with democratic values that one may wish to associate with participatory development process. With 'extractionist' approach, the credit on the

success of projects is accorded to the project staff while its failure lays the blame on the 'lazy' and 'conservative' rural poor.

In a more subtle perception, this type of participation has been referred to as “participatory partnership” (Bergdall, 1993:7). In this context, it is perceived as an approach that seeks to include people in the planning and implementation of large development projects, which are usually externally initiated, funded and ultimately controlled. This approach attempts to create participatory partnerships between development authorities and the rural population. In this context:

Input of opinions and ideas might be collected from local people prior to project planning; this is incorporated by outside officials who actually prepare project plans. Or in a more crude form, authorities might bring plans that have already been formulated externally and submit them to local people for their rudimentary comments and tacit approval. Rural populations may or may not be included in some aspect of project implementation and evaluation (Bergdall, 1993:7).

It is important to note here that with the above 'extractionist' analogy, however, we do not intend to create the impression that development planners and administrative authorities have no role to play in facilitating participatory development. Neither do we intend to imply that people's local contribution in free labour, and material resources is not important for a participatory development process. The crux of the matter here is the question of the quality of people's level of participation in decision-making regarding the development process. The less the decision-making scope by the people, the more the 'extractionism' is embedded in this kind of participation. Conversely, the greater the scope of decision-making by the people, the less the prevailing conditions would be conducive to 'extractionism'.

'Vertical' participation

This kind of participation manifests itself in the circumstances where community power brokers develop mutually beneficial relations with individual elites or government officials as the basis for people's mobilisation for participation. Examples include patron-client networks and political alliances. In both these cases, the people are not as concerned with influencing the government as it is with receiving

immediate or long- term benefits from that relationship. Such forms of participation are perpetuated by local power brokers within the communities who form the links between the people and the patrons. These individual power brokers usually have direct alliance with government officials or and politicians. They benefit individually from such relationships of vertical linkage, usually with some 'peanuts' reaching the people they represent. People are kept under illusionary expectations of security in time of hardships in addition to the occasional and insignificant trickles of material benefits from the top. In this model, people are drawn in or co-opted into the execution of top-down determined development plans and projects (De Beer and Swanepoel,1998:22).

Another form of vertical participation develops when people's chosen representatives turn out to be compromised or 'bought' by powers that be, even though initially intended to be a genuine representation. This begins with a community appointing one or more of their formal representatives in a decision-making organ. The basic understanding is that unless people are represented in such bodies, their interests, preferences and demands would most likely be sidelined or overlooked. In this case people's participation is understood in terms of representation. In some cases of 'vertical' representation, leaders handpick representatives. This way it becomes possible for the authorities again to 'co-opt' the representatives without much resistance.

The only solution, is for the people concerned to have their own independent organisational power-base such as a community based organisation. This is where people are elected by their own organisations to represent them in the boards of public organs or service organisations. As community representatives, they posses some genuine bargaining influence over the outcome of deliberations through some form of give-and-take process.

The issue is not whether people should rely on their representatives or not but the question of democratic choice of their representative(s). They need their own power base as an organised homogenous group of people with common interest, which are specific and clear to their representatives. Such an arrangement is seen to be more efficient than a mere mass representation without clear line of accountability on the part of the representatives to the people. Representative's influence could also be enhanced by reducing the social gap between them and that of the majority of

the members of the body they will participate in. This might be a difficult consideration for a group but it is worth being aware of its advantages. The ultimate aim is to minimise, as far as possible, any chances that would give rise to 'partial-participation'. Partial participation is understood as a process in which two or more parties influence each other in the making of decisions but the final power to decide rests with only one party. The ideal situation is that of 'full-participation' in which each individual member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of the decisions taken. This is rarely the case.

Handout-induced participation

Participation has also been understood in terms of the handouts receivable from a development activity. This perception has been more associated with economists and technocrats, who, even though conceding the widespread failure of conventional development approaches in the alleviation of poverty, yet maintained the supremacy of development expertise and technical know-how over the potential for the ordinary people to assume such responsibility. Their argument is that since poverty is basically caused by mal-distribution of the benefits of development, it would consequently suffice to emphasise on 'equitable' distribution of growth through handouts to the people and leave the development designs to the experts. Hence, people's participation is attained through their 'fair' share in the benefits in form of handouts.

The 'handout-induced' approach to participation tends to maintain the supremacy of professional knowledge and expertise, which leads to bureaucratisation of professional services (perhaps inadvertently so, since professional services are scarce anyway). This often stifles people's initiatives, as people have to wait for professional guidance and approval to make any progress. Dependence therefore, develops and leads to paternalism. The orientation of this approach is the 'modernisation' school of thought, which believes that poverty is in essence endogenous (or internally generated). It is believed here that poverty is caused by internal factors such as ignorance, diseases, disasters, climatic conditions and the like. People are understood to exacerbate the situation of poverty through 'laziness' and unwillingness to work. With this understanding in mind, development planners perceive the solution of poverty as essentially a matter of delivery of materials and goods for distribution to the people within a package of technological assistance as defined by the experts.

On the other hand, the professional technicians could only disseminate their know-how to few and carefully chosen local people within the context of 'demonstration projects'. The training involves gradual dissemination of skills to the local people (usually relatively better-off farmers) coupled with rigorous supervision and follow-up through extension service network, guarding against 'misuse' or 'abuse' of the newly acquired knowledge and skills. It is believed that at this stage, people do not have to understand everything since the extension staff is 'always' available. Some areas of information are too technical and scientific for the common person to be able to follow. Instead, the trainees would be advised to follow just what they have been told to do by the experts and the benefits would be overwhelming.

This model is characterised by an attempt to bring development to people through deliveries of knowledge and resources from outside. With this approach people would be more apt to listen and cooperate with those who promised some kind of immediate material benefits than those who promised some better times to come sometimes in the future. This way, the human development ideals are sacrificed for immediate gain. People would thus be more likely to appreciate an intensive expert-led 'knowledge-banking' lecture in a training environment to be immediately rewarded with a certificate than a participatory experience-sharing workshop facilitated by a community animator. In the former case, people's participation would be measured by numbers of attendance and questions raised after the lecture sessions.

Conclusion on the top-down approaches to participation

In participation as an 'element' of a wider top-down approach, development designs, there would usually be no concern for 'target-groups' specified as beneficiaries. The entire community is usually seen as beneficiary. For this reason group cohesion becomes highly volatile in the absence of reasonable group consciousness. Groups are therefore temporal 'make-shift' structures formed either for political purposes or simply to attract external aid and donations. Incentives in the form of charity such as food-for-work, (even in the absence of famine), tools for work, clothes and such like would not be uncommon where this approach is cherished. Donations are sometimes disseminated arbitrarily to entice people and induce their participation. However, experience reveals that such initiatives are built on

'quicksand' since just the same way groups are hurriedly formed to receive benefits, they crumbled and disappeared as soon as hope for further aid and incentives evaporate.

It should be noted however that we are not implying a disregard for the positive effect group loans and grants can bear in facilitating genuine participation among the poor. Grassroots initiatives among the marginalised groups would be less adequate in the absence of some kind of external support whether moral or material. The impoverished communities are marginalised through processes of external designs which have left people's resources plundered.

On the other hand, external support helps in the process of restoration of people's resource-base and their struggle to de-link from exploitative relations with the local elite. Such support could be moral, material or legal. In the same vein, food relief would be imperative in situations of hardship. For sure, people would require immediate relief in situations which slow-down their struggle to overcome forces that threaten their ultimate survival. After the food shortage season is over and harvest returns, then such relief, like food-aid, becomes irrelevant as a suitable support mechanism in the participatory development process.

Similarly, we do not intent to create the wrong impression that political alliances and individual linkages with supportive officials in authority are not important strategies in the process of participation towards effective people's development. What we are saying with the foregoing analogy is that such factors have been manipulated in the name of participation to serve dubious interests of others and not necessarily those of the people for whom development interventions were meant to benefit in the first place.

3.1.5.2 Participation as a fundamental bottom-up development approach

"Any attempt to understand the poor and learn from them, has to begin with introspection by the outsiders themselves. We have first to examine ourselves and identify and offset our preconceptions, prejudices and rationalizations" (Chambers, 1983:104).

Authentic participation

This type of participation is the ideal model, which seeks to empower the powerless towards assuming full responsibility over their own destiny within the framework of their cultural and socio-economic realities. Poverty is believed to be a structural product whose blame could not in any way be attributed

to the poor people's behaviour but to the structural forces of local and global society. Hence, it becomes everybody's responsibility to make the world a better place and more hospitable for every single human person. Cernea (1992:2) stretches our imagination by suggesting that the term 'participation' in itself does not adequately address the issue of ownership of local initiatives. He argues that people who take control of their own lives through making their own choices and priorities, planning, implementing, and making judgment on the project's success or failure cannot be said to have 'participated'. According to Cernea, in such a case, they "*do not just 'participate' in development: they simply do it. They are the actors and managers of their own economic growth, survival, and change programs*" (Cernea, 1992:2).

Bhatnagar and Williams (1992:177) conceptualise participation as:

...a process by which people, especially disadvantaged people, influence decisions that affect them...Participation means influence on development decisions, not simply involvement in the implementation or benefits of a development activity, although those types of involvement are important and are often encouraged by opportunities for influence.

With the 'disadvantaged', Bhatnagar and Williams focus on materially poor, those who have no access to social amenities such as education and health, minority ethnic groups and victims of gender discrimination. They see popular participation as incomplete without the empowerment component. They perceive empowerment as a "more equitable sharing of power and a higher level of political awareness and strength for disadvantaged people". In this context, they argue, "the most important result of a development activity might not be an increase in economic production or incomes but rather the development of people's capacity to initiate actions on their own or influence decisions of more powerful actors" (Bhatnagar, et al. 1992:178).

The underlying assumption in popular participation is that it will of necessity, be characterised by capacity building efforts among the beneficiaries. This will serve to contribute to the sustainability of development benefits beyond the period of external intervention due to enhanced beneficiary interest

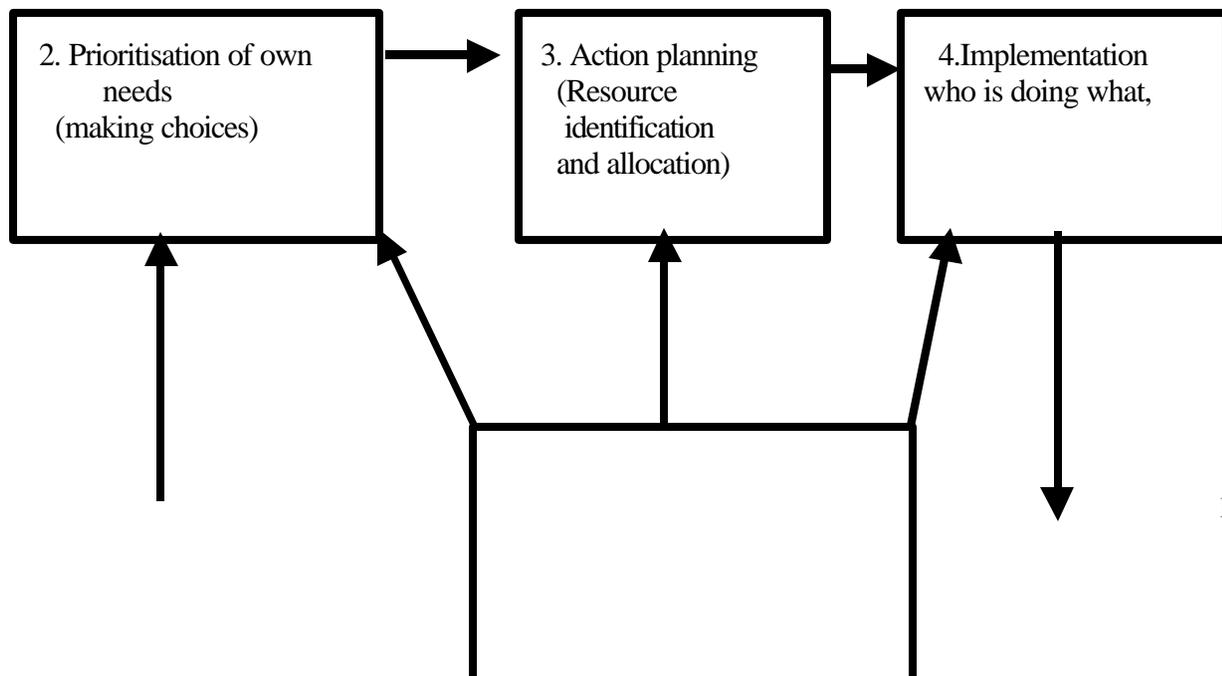
and competence in development management (Bhatnagar et al. 1992:178).

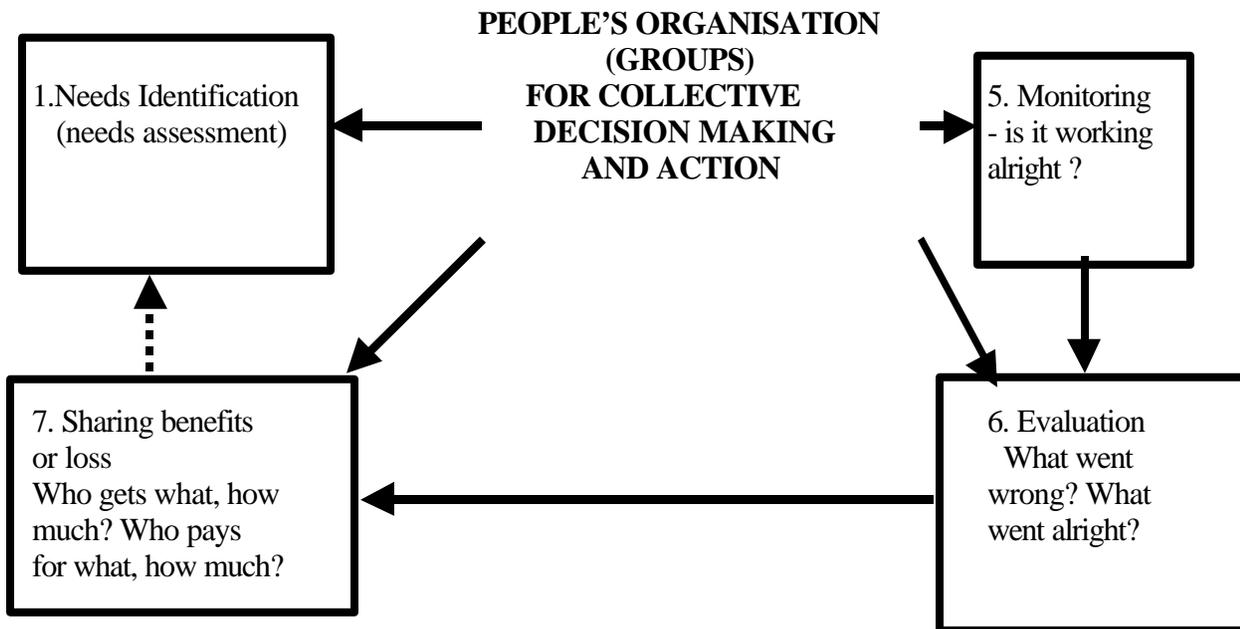
The promotion of popular participation is concerned with the distribution of power in society, for it is power which enables groups to determine which needs and whose needs will be met through the distribution of resources (Fernandes and Tandon, 1981:5).

Genuine participation practice will not only seek to involve the beneficiary communities in project design and implementation, but more importantly, the process will seek to link people's felt needs with the project goals and objectives. This is another milestone consideration in ensuring local ownership and the sustainability of project benefits long after donor funding is withdrawn.

Active participation in community development essentially involves the aspects presented in the *Figure 6* below:

Figure 6: The components of authentic participation





Note: In actual project development dynamics, the process is not necessarily linear, moving from number one to seven. Hence the different stages presented above may keep interplaying and overlapping.

Table 5: Approaches To Participation
(Adapted from Cohen and Uphoff, 1977,106)

Typology of Participation	Nature of Participation	Incentive/Assumption	Outcome
1. PASSIVE a) Extractionist	People contribute free labour and other resources for the execution of plans drawn by experts. They do what they are told.	Law enforcement, persuasion or coercion. People do not usually know what is good for them: neither can they work together voluntarily. Experts know best. Administration should push people.	People's shattered sense of dignity, irresponsibility in maintenance. The poor made poorer. Benefits largely appropriated by others and not the poor.

b)Vertical	People affiliate with powerful individuals in society; their patron's brokers tell them what to do. In other cases, people are represented by individuals or teams in supra-village bodies, etc. Such representations are more symbolic than effective.	Trickle-down effect (to the people) is expected. Future protection / security expected. The need to adore a symbol of power associated with patrons is another incentive. Development is only possible by drawing important personalities from external sources to the community.	Patron-client relationships between people and leaders. Power brokers appropriate more benefits than the people they represent. Co-option of elected people's representative. Paternalism develops. Competition within the community, among power brokers and among rival patrons.
c) Handout induced	People are told what to do by experts. Usually they are not asked to contribute in material form but in labour. Heavy delivery of both knowledge and resources from 'centre' to the 'periphery'. Attempt to develop people through intensive grants, loans, inputs, technology etc.	Food for work, paid manual labour, tools for work, relief handouts, etc. People believed to be poor and too ignorant to contribute and decide for their own development. People will only develop by pulling in as many external resources and handouts as possible. Good developers are those who manage to bring these into the community.	Paternalism and fatalism/dependency. Poor community cohesion. Competition within the community. Activities end with withdrawal of external resources. Irresponsibility.
2.ACTIVE (Authentic)	People are highly motivated to develop themselves. External (and later internal) animators help build people's awareness, not only their potential to transform their reality. People take active responsibility in decision-making, identification of development priorities, implementation and its evaluation. Local contribution maximum.	Incentive includes people's small successes, which boost their morale. External support through change agents (animators) to offer encouragement. People see themselves as the most important resource for their own development. Other resources are secondary.	Self-esteem, self-actualisation, sense of dignity. People break out of their powerlessness. Sustainable process of development. People take responsibility for maintenance and continued use of facilities.

3.1.5.3 Summary on levels of participation on a continuum

Figure 7: Levels of participation



Passive participation

1-2: Decisions and plans are made from above. People are not consulted. Experts carry out their own 'needs assessment', often from secondary documentary sources or file study on the profile of

the area. The area is not visited for observation. Instead, experts use national development priorities as a guide. People will only see contractors and their machineries move in and start constructions. Local contribution may or may not be required of the people. But leaders at public meetings inform people what the project is all about and how it will benefit them.

3-4: As above, but this time, people's contribution is a requirement. This is in form of labour, local materials and sometimes-financial resources.

5: In addition to 3-4, this time people are consulted, either through public meetings, or through interviews in a baseline survey. People are asked to express their views about the proposed intervention. Their views may or may not be incorporated in the final project design.

Active participation

6-7: Development interventions are based on base line surveys made to establish local priorities or needs. However, the outcome of such surveys will largely be limited to the sectoral orientation of the intervening organisation. Health related agencies will only carry out health related surveys. The same can be said for education, food security and credit oriented agencies among others. People will be required to make a local contribution in labour, materials and finances but also to a lesser extent, in ideas. There is heavy dependency on the 'external leaders' or donors for direction, financial and technical support. In fact, paternalistic recipient-donor relationship will be accentuated. It is not until towards the end of the project intervention that people will be made to form committees for management of the project as the 'external leaders' or donors prepare for exit.

8-9: As above but formation of committees is a requirement from the 'external leaders' or donors right from very early stages. People will be expected to make their own decisions, but which they cannot implement without approval from the donor. There is heavy dependency on the donor for direction, financial and technical support.

10: People are free to make their own decisions, which leaders or donors will abide with. If the 'external leaders' or donors cannot comply, people are free to look for alternatives, including

alternative ‘external leaders’ or donor partners. People assume responsibility over their own decisions and the consequences thereof. Local committees are formed in their own volition and not because it is an external requirement. This is meant to steer the project development. In fact, in this case, local committee exists long before the project idea. The committee applies to the ‘external leaders’ or donors for support as may be necessary. Such support may not even be in monetary form. The ‘external leaders’ or donors are required to keep the project leadership fully informed about their policies and limitations, including regular update on any resources held by them for the project. Ideally, the project funds are transferred to local project account, with the project leadership taking legal responsibility over the accountability of the same. Local capacity building, through training and institution building, is crucial in this paradigm as local institutions and human resource get prepared for eventual phase out of the external change agents. Regular consultations are seen to be healthy among the partners or stakeholders involved. There is relationship of equals characterised by respect, trust and responsibility.

According to Chambers (1993:12), this new approach to development calls for a paradigm shift. A shift from the conventional approaches to extension that are fundamentally ‘banking’ in nature, ‘imparting’ technical knowledge and skills to local people; to mutual learning process between the local people and the extension workers. This paradigm shift is summarised in the *Table 6* below.

Table 6: The Paradigm Shift: Conventional ‘blue-print’ vis-à-vis Participatory Development

(Source: Adapted from Chambers, 1993:12).

Characteristic	Conventional blue-print	Participatory learning process
<i>Idea originates in; setting development priorities</i>	Capital city, central planning bureau	Village, the rural poor know where the shoe pinches most
<i>First steps</i>	Data collection and plan	Awareness and action
<i>Design</i>	Static, by experts	Evolving, people involved
<i>Supporting organisation</i>	Top down formal organisations, with formal registration	Community based organisations which are net-worked to consolidate power-base and bottom-up initiatives
<i>Main resources</i>	Central funds and technicians, usually funded by the central government or by external donors	Local resources and assets are the most critical, local people come first
<i>Staff training and development</i>	Class-room, didactic	Field-based learning through action
<i>Implementation scope</i>	Rapid, widespread in geographical coverage	Gradual, localised with limited coverage before possible multiplication, at local people’s pace
<i>Management focus</i>	Spending budgets, completing projects on time	Sustained improvement and performance
<i>Agents of change</i>	Extension workers	The people themselves assisted by indigenous facilitators or internal animators, community resource persons
<i>Content of action</i>	Standardized	Diverse
<i>Communication</i>	Vertical; orders down, reports up	Lateral: mutual learning and sharing experience
<i>Leadership</i>	Positional, changing	Personal, sustained
<i>Evaluation</i>	External, intermitted	Internal, continuous
<i>Error</i>	Buried	Embraced, a learning opportunity
<i>Effects</i>	Dependency-creating	Empowering
<i>Associated with</i>	Normal professionalism	New professionalism

3.1.6 Empowerment and participation

3.1.6.1 Power - what does it entail?

Power here is understood in general terms as the ability for one to make others act according to his or her wishes or to work for him or her thus meeting his/her specific interests. In this context, power has to do with influencing others’ behaviour to meet one’s own needs, requirements or standards (Mulwa, 2000:35).

Empowerment is essentially a political process that seeks to redistribute power in favour of the poor and the disadvantaged. It involves the relinquishing of power from personalised and/or institutionalised monopoly into the hands of the ordinary people, the process of devolution of power to the powerless. It is a process whereby the marginalised groups in the community take the initiative for full responsibility over their own lives as subjects of their own history. The process is marked by an effort by the grassroots to develop new knowledge and skills, which serve people's specific needs. This will include the appropriation and adaptation of technology in extension services so that it serves the people in response to their development priorities and in the context of the people's specific cultural setting and experiences.

People's empowerment entails the process of building up people's capacity to influence those in authority in determining public policy. Such collective influence on public policy should represent people's specific and collective interests and aspirations. Empowerment will also imply building up people's capacity to take active responsibility over their own decisions and the consequences of those decisions. It is the process of enabling people to assume the responsibility to shape their own destiny. The core aim in popular participation is the distribution of that power in the society.

According to Eade and Williams, empowerment entails a measure of people's capacity to bring about change, whether this is modest or far-reaching in its impact. It involves enabling individuals and groups to develop enough courage and confidence to challenge and overcome oppression and injustice (Eade and Williams, 1995:12). It is power, which enables groups to determine which needs, and whose needs will be met through the distribution of resources. Thus:

Empowerment means that people, especially poorer people, are enabled to take more control over their lives, and secure a better livelihood with ownership and control of productive assets as one key element. Decentralization and empowerment enable local people to exploit the diverse complexities of their own conditions, and to adapt to rapid change...(as they) generate their own innovations, find their own solutions, and determine their own pathways (Chambers, 1993:11).

In yet another perspective, it can be asserted that poverty does not exist in Africa because of lack of resources. It is a question of inequity in power relations. We have either put in place structures that stifle the people's participation in the decision-making process or none at all. According to albeit a populist source, studies on poverty and experiences from other parts of the world have shown strong links between popular participation and a decrease in resource imbalances (Daily Nation, Wednesday 15th November 2000, 6).

Oxfam is similarly assertive on the responsibility of the people towards their own empowerment as they observe:

...the poor and marginalised people have the right to decide their own priorities in overcoming the forces which oppress or exploit them, and to work for social and economic justice. It follows that women and men have the right to organise together, in order to bring about equitable change, and to shape the decisions which affect their lives (Eade and Williams, 1995:10).

It is within this framework of understanding that it becomes imperative to discuss the place of power relations in poverty analysis towards effective poverty alleviation programmes. Basically, it is power relations, which ultimately determine who gets what and whose needs are to be given priority in policy formulation within a community. The poor are often the least represented in circles where such decisions are made.

Below is a discussion on different types of power. This is meant to clarify in us, not only the types of power inherent in us (whether active or potential), but also how that power could be harnessed in the efforts to empower the powerless poor.

3.1.7 The pyramids of power and the root causes of poverty

(Hope and Timmel, BK 3, 1996:102-107)

Powerlessness and causes of poverty are closely related. A community's position of power (or lack of it) will determine the scope of its opportunity to influence public policy. Where influence on public policy

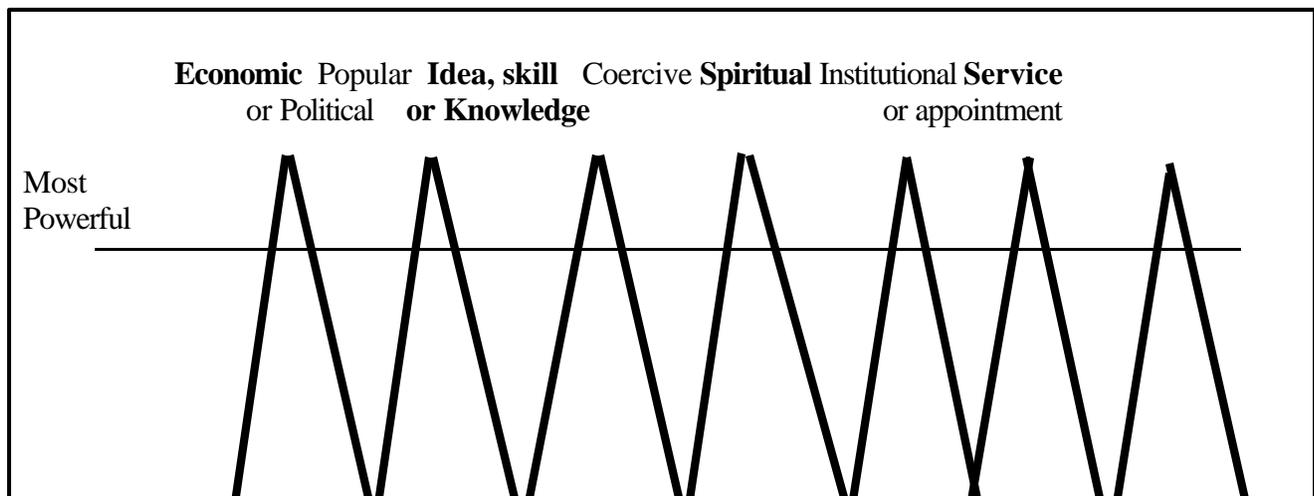
is optimal through effective representation, people's interests and aspirations are more likely to be catered for. In such a case, it would be expected that people's priorities are given the consideration they rightfully deserve and that people have a fair access to national resources and life opportunities. On the other hand, owing to the democratic environment characteristic of an empowered community, the latter will be expected to initiate local decision-making and take full responsibility over the consequences of those decisions.

In social science, power can be defined as that ability by a leader (or a group of people) to influence others to do one's will, whether that will is for personal or public interest. Below is a set of seven pyramids of power. Each of these kinds of power gives persons or people concerned the ability to influence public policy:

3.1.7.1 Economic power

This is the kind of power acquired from one's material accumulation, whether such wealth is legally or illegally obtained. Economic power can either be inherited from family property, acquired from political patronage, or hard earned with savings and investments plans. More often than not, economic power has been used as a stepping-stone towards the acquisition of political power. Regardless of the way it is obtained, elevated economic status has been equated with success. The concomitant immense purchasing power and the connections with highly placed persons in society puts the rich people in a position of advantage when it comes to the influence on public policy. They are listened to and their views rarely challenged. This way, their interests are more protected by the system as compared to the interests of the poor.

Figure 8: Pyramids of power



Less
Powerful

Least
Powerful

PEOPLE PROVIDE THE BASE FOR THOSE IN POSITIONS OF POWER

3.1.7.2 Political (Popular) power

“Each day, we individually strive to rise above poverty. If we pooled our resources, took advantage of each other’s strengths, we would be less vulnerable to the vagaries of poverty”. (Daily Nation, Wednesday 15th November, 2000:6)

Ideally, political power should come from the people. It is the power of numbers. It has sometimes been referred to as popular power. It is the power bestowed upon somebody by the people, and it is only the people who have the authority to strip-off the power from the person. A good example is members of parliamentary who ascent to their positions of power through popular vote. It was through the popular power that our freedom fighters pushed on their struggle with confidence on behalf of the people. It was through popular power that the multi-party era of pluralism was re-born in Kenya in 1992. Attempts are known to buy popular power from the people but power captured this way does not last and if it lasts, it is laden with shame.

3.1.7.3 Idea (or skill or knowledge) power

“The experiences of women all over the world demonstrate that they have had more gains from civic empowerment than from donor handouts to groups that are more benevolent than developmental ”. (Daily Nation, Wednesday November 15th 2000:6).

The old adage ‘knowledge is power’ serves to describe this kind of power. Most professionals depend on their power of knowledge and skill for their survival and public influence. Be it a city tailor, a village mechanic, a medical doctor, a mason artisan, a pilot, a shoe shiner, a village medicine-man or a traditional birth attendant, all and each has a special place and a unique contribution to make in the

society. The skill and know-how gives him or her some kind of power that cannot be taken away by anybody. The use of this power at the right time will influence decisions and the lives of others and the life of the community at large. This can either be abused or be made a blessing to an entire community.

3.1.7.4 Coercive power

This is sometimes referred to as the ‘power of numbers’. It is one of the most abused types of power as a short cut to the use of logic. Coercive power can be assumed by anybody any time, young or old, as long as the person has access to the means of enforcing physical threat and physical punishment by force. The more this kind of power has been used, the more irrational judgments have been enforced. It should actually be the last resort after every other alternative has failed. The same way fire can be abused instead of being put at service to mankind, coercive power can be abused for selfish purposes.

3.1.7.5 Spiritual power

This is the power to conquer evil. It has a supernatural dimension. It can also be abused by people to enrich themselves. Ideally, spiritual power should be a manifestation of God to mankind, with the virtues of empathy and sympathy. The opposite of this is the spirit of evil, which seeks to destroy.

3.1.7.6 Institutional power / power of appointment

This is the power that comes from an institutional appointment. The power bestowed upon some body by the institutional hierarchy. Members of Parliament are elected by their constituency to acquire the popular power. However, when they find favour with the Executive, they may be appointed as cabinet ministers. No wonder, therefore, ministers do not automatically lose their parliamentary seat by being dropped from the cabinet, until they are voted out by their electorate.

3.1.7.7 Power of love and service

The late Mother Teresa of Calcutta demonstrates the best example of this kind of love. She died a poor woman but she has made millions ‘rich in spirit’ for her unconditional love. She was famous and ‘powerful’, so powerful, that she would be accorded state reception and security whenever she visited a country. She was accorded state burial too.

3.1.7.8 Conclusion

Power is not necessarily evil. It all depends on how one chooses to use it. It is a tool or an opportunity that can be used for the common good or for selfish gain. Power can be used to uplift or condemn one's subjects. The natural law calls us to use our positions of power to promote virtues of love, peace and justice for all, regardless of race, creed or religion. That is, power is supposed to be for the good of others. In this case, one can only empower others from a position of power. One cannot 'give' or share what one does not have. Most of us may lack the power of appointment through which we can make or influence public policy. We often lack economic power too. But we often possess other forms of power in us which we have not used for the common good.

We have the opportunity to love by being present with those who need us most. It will often be more pleasant to spend a day in the company of the director of that important corporate firm discussing global opportunities, than with the breast-feeding mother in the slum discussing matters of hope. We may get embarrassed, if not disgusted, by this street child running after us calling us dad or sister. How about the pickpocket on the verge of mob justice, who catches your eyes for salvation? It is through this power of love that people start foundations and other related charitable organisations to support the cause for the needy. We can, in our own small way, make a contribution through an act of love for those who need us most, instead of just sitting there to lament on how unfair and oppressive social systems have been.

We have the power of skill and knowledge that can be used to influence public policy. Some of us are fortunate enough to possess institutional power in addition to the idea power. Others are charismatic enough to mobilise populations for the common good. The question is how have you used your position of power to empower the powerless, no matter how humble that position may be?

3.1.8 Community empowerment through nine-element cycle

The purpose of these elements is to ensure a thorough understanding of the key components, which are critical for any quality community development programme to be considered 'authentic'. The original elements were four (Change of attitudes, Promotion of people's organisations, Strengthening the Economic Base, and Networking for linkages). These were originally conceptualised by a Sirilankan scholar, Tilakaratna (1986). PREMESE Africa Development Institute has added five more elements based on their field experience with various community development programmes (PREMESE: Basic

Reading Manual – Module 1, 2002, Unpublished).

3.1.8.1 Change of attitude / building alternative value system

-We need to facilitate the emergence of more humane values and attitudes among our people, such as the deliberate option for the poor in our targeting:

The people of Israel have sinned again and again, and for this I will punish them. They sell into slavery honest people who cannot pay for their debts, the poor who cannot repay even the price of a pair of sandals. They trample down the weak and helpless and push the poor out of the way.... You people hate anyone who challenges injustice and speaks the whole truth in court. You have oppressed the poor and robbed them of their grain. And so you will not live in the fine stone houses you build or drink wine from the beautiful vineyards you plant. I know how terrible your sins are and how many crimes you have committed. You persecute good people, take bribes, and prevent the poor from getting justice in the courts (Amos 2:6-7; 5:10-13).

-Change from the outright tendency to condemn those afflicted ('blaming the victim') as an easier option, than taking the time and the pain to understand their circumstances

-Change from attitude of competition for individual gain to that of cooperation for common good, from the spirit of selfishness and individualism to the spirit of collective sharing

-Change from individual 'show-pieces' to teamwork, appreciating the contribution of others

-Change from counting ourselves as more important than others, to seeing others as equally capable or even counting them as better than us

-As professionals we need to develop faith in people and appreciate them for who they are and not what they are, that is regardless of their social status in the community

-We need to appreciate that illiteracy is not disability, but just lack of a skill. Do we realise that we have thousands of professors out there in the villages but who cannot read and write? They only missed the opportunity for formal education. If there were anything wrong with them, we would not be where we are as they brought us up when we could not take care of ourselves.

-From hopelessness and fear to faith in the future and faith in themselves and their potential to transform their own situation

-We need to appreciate others who do not belong to our circles: religious, political, ethnic, age, gender etc. All we need is to form a rainbow out of our differences.

-We need to instil morals of accountability and transparency as opposed to the assumed heroism in stealing the public kit without impunity or guilt.

3.1.8.2 Promotion of people's democratic organisations

-Creation of Community Based Organisations as instruments of decision-making and community action as opposed to “individual farmer contact” which tended to promote individualism

-Promotion of democratic ideals and practices right from our small groups of action. If our Small Christian Community group does not allow sharing of ideas and views among members, people's participation in deciding on matters that affect them, peoples participation in sharing of responsibilities and people's regular determination of their leadership through democratic elections, how would we expect ourselves to demand leadership accountability from our community and national leadership?

-We need to create parish development committees as community instruments to monitor and ensure only relevant projects are started with the potential to make a difference in the lives of the people, to coordinate parish development initiatives and to ensure proper accountability in their management

3.1.8.3 Capacity building

-Instilling self confidence among the people, cultivating sense of dignity and self worth

-Training people in skills that will enable them claim a measure of autonomy from perpetual dependency on professionals: e.g. Para-professionals and Para-technicians such as Community Based Health Workers -CBHW (to bridge the gap between the usually scarce community health services), Community Animal Vets -CAVs- or Bare-feet Para-vets, pump attendants, mill operators, traditional birth attendants -TBAs and traditional healers among others.

-Training in management skills such as leadership, accounting, business management, etc.

-Training in social skills for awareness and self-defence such as para-legal skills, HIV/AIDS awareness, lobbying and advocacy skills (not enough to acquire the skills alone)

-Developing organisational management capacity such as formation of properly constituted and representative boards and committees, organisational constitution, operational policies, effective accounting systems, competence of human resource, etc.

3.1.8.4 Consolidating people's economic base

Seeking to strengthen the economic position of the poor through initiatives, which have the potential for wealth creation towards poverty alleviation. This will call for business and market surveys to establish feasible alternatives such as:

- Setting in motion efforts to establish income saving projects by the people and for the people. These include savings clubs (savings and credit schemes), but also consumer cooperative initiatives that help consumers to acquire their services, grocery or farm inputs etc, at cost price.
- Initiating income generating projects which are profitable and have the potential for surplus income that can be shared among members as dividends: includes processing industries, cottage industries, marketing, commodity exchange etc. Groups are hereby advised to choose only those economic initiatives, which are profitable, which tend to attract ordinary business people.

3.1.8.5 Improved living standards right from family level

Ultimately, good development should be measured by how much it has improved the living standards at the family level.

- Are schools, water sources, health facilities, and other related amenities nearer home? Are they accessible by all members of the community? Are they affordable?
- What direct benefits accrue for members of an income-generating project? How do members of the family realise these benefits?
- Do families have the necessary skills to improve their own living standards at their levels?

3.1.8. 6 Networking and linkages.

- Networking involves promoting horizontal and vertical linkages among community organisations and among those who promote those organisations.
- It is through these networks that the power in numbers is realised and a collective vision for a better society articulated.
- These linkages also become source of nourishment and affirmation. Solidarity and support help to strengthen the weak and keep the vision alive.

-Commitment to social justice and struggle to protect individual and collective rights are reinforced through such networking initiatives.

3.1.8.7 Phase out / phase over plan

-A time comes when an external change agent has to physically withdraw from the community.

If the change agent happens to be from within the community, a time comes when he/she has to phase-over more and more responsibilities to the target group. This unties the change agent's hands to enable him/her move on to reach out to new communities and groups.

-The phase-out / phase-over does not have to be an overnight activity, but it is a gradual process already conceptualised and planned for. It is not and should never be a surprise move.

3.1.8.8 Continuous reviews / collective reflection and learning

A seasoned community development process will ensure continuous and participatory reviews as regularly as possible towards excellence. These could be in form of participatory self-evaluations as well as externally facilitated reviews. The truth remains that a development undertaking that is not evaluated is a resource wasted. It is from such reviews that a management team will not only establish the worth of what they do but also justify the costs involved in the light of the results and their effectiveness. Reviews will also provide an opportunity for collective learning. Reviews enable people to take a chance to explore the possibilities that exist in their way. They look at those un-tapped potential and opportunities, as they reflect on the past and the present to chart out a course for the future.

3.1.8.9 Institutional strength as a promoting agency

We cannot intervene to improve on other people's situations if our own is in shambles. It is therefore imperative for change agent organisations to undergo self-examination towards strengthening its own position as an effective and efficient entity before they can competently go around building the organisation capacities of their partners. This will involve looking at such areas as:

-Does the organisation have a corporate vision, mission, strategies and values?

-Does the organisation have a board or a committee that oversees its operations, that can hire and fire that is the custodian of organisational constitution

- Are there policies, norms and working guidelines known to all those who work in it
- Does it have a legal identity, is it visible in society

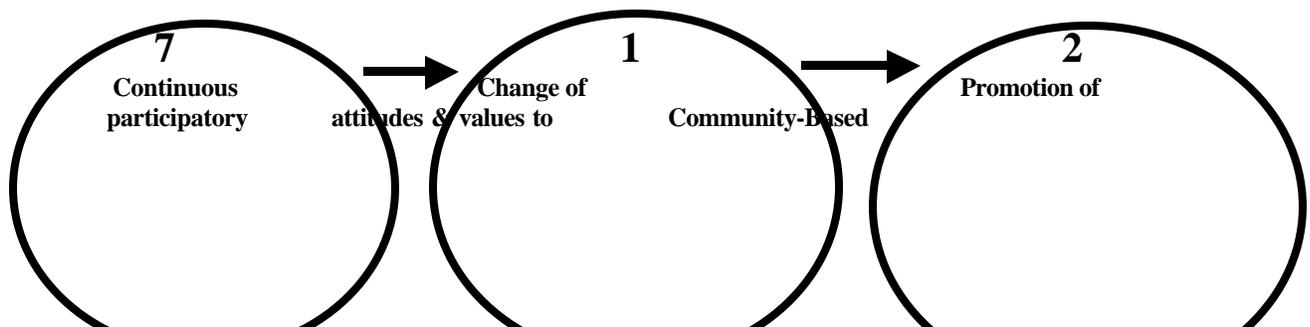
- Is there personnel policy, employment contracts, job descriptions and role divisions, do the staff do what they are trained to do, does it have qualified staff trained for the job, are procedures of appeal clear and accessible
- Is staff welfare spelt out such as what governs leave, termination of contract, procedures and factors for demotion and promotion, are these clear and known to all, are they predictable, are there regular performance appraisals
- Is there adequate working space, are office facilities adequate
- Does the organisation effectively deal with its own contradictions and doubts (operational doubts, priority doubts, ethical doubts and efficiency doubts)?
- Is the organisational methodology and management style empowering and participatory?
- Promotion of methods of work and extension that compliment organisational vision, mission, values and aspirations
- Use of consultative and participatory methodologies that seek to empower the powerless
- Orientation of staff to ensure they stand by the organisational ideals, vision and values
- Living out what we believe and preach as an organisation in our relations between ourselves, with our neighbours and with our clients
- True sense of partnership reflected in our day-to-day working relations with the target groups
- Showing seriousness in commitment and conviction on the organisational ideals, vision and values by encouraging staff who cannot bend to or subscribe to them to seek for alternative sources of living elsewhere.
- Training and sharing with stakeholders to understand the organisational ideals, vision and values
- Planning based on the needs and priorities of the target group for which organisation exists

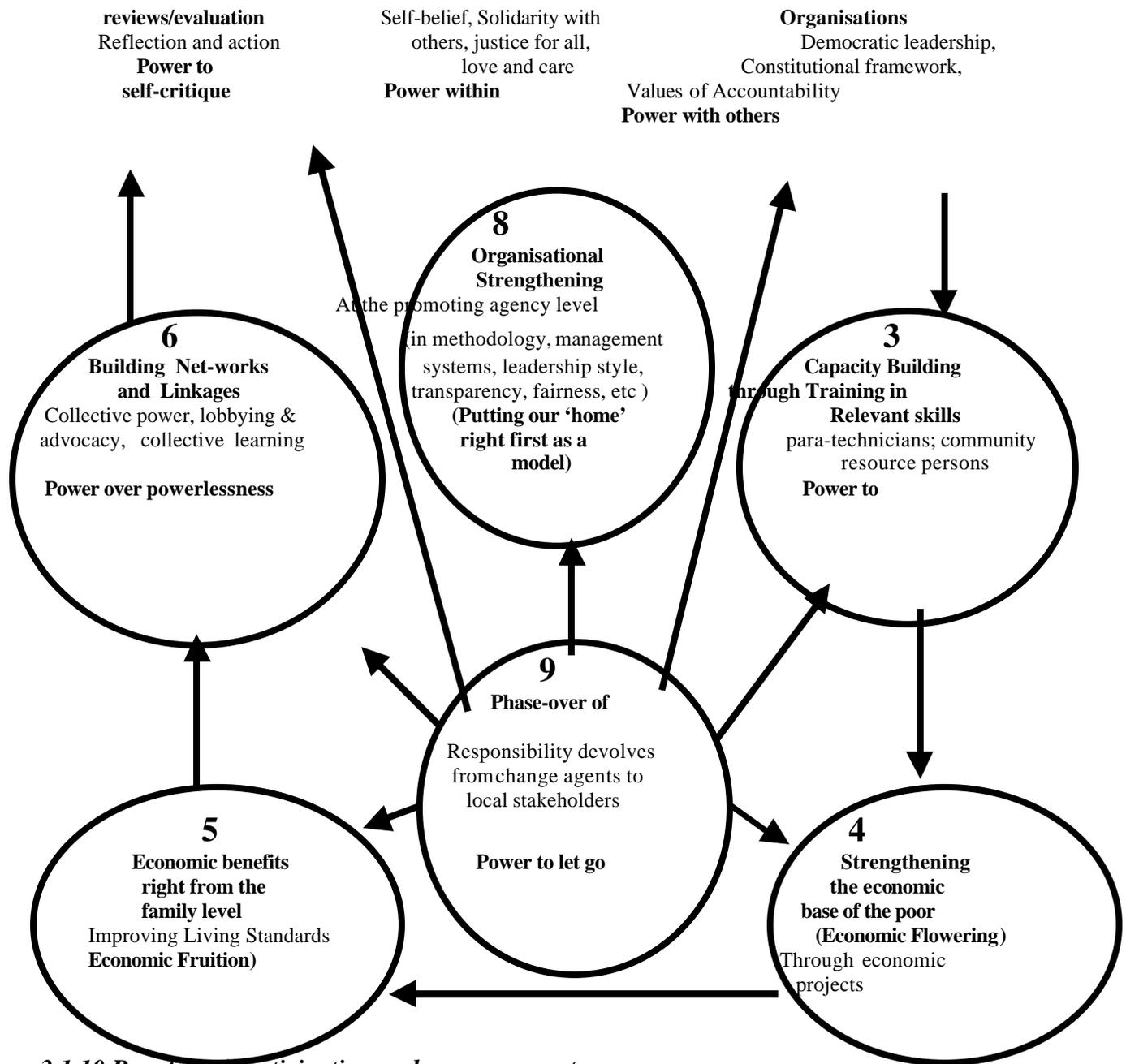
3.1.9 Summary on the Nine Element Cycle of Community Empowerment

Below (*Figure 9*) is the summary of the nine element cycle discussed above. It is believed that a programme that meets the standards explicated in this model is a programme that has the ultimate

potential for community empowerment. The numbering has no implications on the relative importance of the elements as all the elements have equal importance. Cycle can start at any one element, it is not a linear development.

Figure 9: Summary on the Nine Element Cycle of Community Empowerment





3.1.10 Benefits of participation and empowerment

(Adapted from Chitere, 1999:2-19)

It has been established that with in the promotion of participatory processes, innovative technology can be tried out by local groups in good faith, that is, without undue local resistance or suspicion often associated with imposition from outsiders. This is possible owing to the open communication and a

relationship of mutual trust fostered through use of participatory methodologies.

Usually, in participatory framework of development, the local cultural context is put into consideration at all times, giving the cultural values the full respect deserved. Any new values introduced are negotiated to the satisfaction of the local people where participatory methodologies are involved. For instance, a requirement by the government to dig and use pit latrines among some communities in a district in Northern Province of Kenya, had to consider the cultural implications, as anybody defecating in a 'house' structure is culturally required to slaughter a goat (MELI Community Awareness Workshop Report, 2000). How many times a day would a family slaughter goats after using a modern toilet? A participatory framework of decision-making and project planning will put all these questions into consideration in a mutual dialogue among partners.

With people's participation, it is possible to optimise use of local resources, local talents, local experience and local technology. This serves to supplement any external support as well as building the foundation and spirit of self-support.

People need to have a say in the appropriation and allocation of national and community resources meant for their own development. Participatory decision-making gives them this opportunity. Deciding for people curtails their growth in taking responsibility over their own development.

When people influence national and local decisions, there is wider scope of attaining social justice, basic human rights and freedoms. This comes as a result of the empowerment effect that goes with popular participation. Equity is also achieved as sharing of resources (nationally and regionally) becomes a collective responsibility. Policy framework for sharing modalities is developed too.

In participatory development, there is decentralisation of management responsibilities, which helps to optimise use of human resource and talents for common good.

Weakened sense of community social relations is restored through participatory development practices. Modernisation and urbanisation has tended to breakdown such relations, replacing them with

competition and individualism. Community responsibility over its own destiny creates an opportunity to restore social fabric that makes a community (such as kinship and extended family values).

Community participation instils local responsibility over the future of projects beyond the funding cycle. Sustainability is assured where there is true local participation that ensures a sense of local ownership.

Community participation checks on the damaging effects of handout delivery approach whereby ‘things’ are done for people - dams are constructed, roofing provided for schools, and cattle dips constructed only to give a few examples. This has often gone into waste as people soon resign from responsibility over what has been imposed on them.

There is better sectoral coordination where communities determine their priorities. The demand-driven approach ensures no sector can brag of being more important than other sectors. Chances are minimised for the overlap of services from various agencies as dialogue is optimised. Further more, as communities take control over the services rendered by outsiders, there is bound to be better coordination and harmony.

Community participation enhances people’s political awareness as they learn to voice their views and concerns. It is a training ground for democratic practices in society.

3.1.11 Obstacles often faced in the promotion of community participation and empowerment

There are a number of obstacles, which work against the promotion community participation. These have been established as a result of empirical research, providing some basic guidelines for facilitating optimum participation in people’s authentic self-development. These are discussed below.

3.1.11.1 Central control reinforced by absence of effective methods of mobilisation

According to Bergdall (1983:3) the forging of a single national identity from different ethnic, religious, and tribal backgrounds was an overriding priority for young African governments after independence. The prospect of community autonomy within the African polity is to date perceived as a threat to central

authority and by extension, to national unity. This is considered an obstacle to authentic community participation as communities would not claim the necessary autonomy and freedom to conduct their own affairs without the interference of the statutory authorities.

In Kenya for instance, communities have to continuously seek for permits and authority to implement a wide range of their local decisions and initiatives. Civil society groups and organisations in Kenya are not only required to register with the relevant ministries, but also ensure submission of progress reports to the ministry authorities on a regular basis, otherwise they are threatened with deregistration. They are required to produce a letter of introduction from the relevant government ministry in order to open a bank account or seek for a credit facility. Ideally, a village community in Kenya would require a government permit to start a tree nursery or develop a water source. It is these kinds of controls laden with bureaucratic and technical bottlenecks, which tend to stifle local participatory initiatives. This way, Bergdall concludes:

...the prospect of independent power centres...(is) aggressively discouraged....The slightest sign of independence or autonomy is often dealt with quickly and harshly. It is not surprising that an attitude has emerged whereby rural people believe that the lead in development activities should be taken by recognised authorities (Bergdall, 1993:3).

This dependency on central authority has made people so passive that, as Swanepoel (1993:10) would argue, "People are therefore loath to do anything for themselves and often expect to be paid for any effort on their part for the community well being". People also develop apathy, accepting to live with their poverty rather than facing the risks of change (Swanepoel, 1993:10).

Social scientists have argued that methodologies for social action should be sought to enable people go about their own development activities without the often unnecessary central controls which tend to stifle local responsibility and initiative. Empirical research has tended to point out that participatory approaches are often hampered by lack of suitable methods and processes for organising people's participation (Cernea, 1992:3). It would naturally be expected that, the less people have control over their own lives in the absence of collective goals and appropriate methods of mobilisation, the more the authorities that be will have the 'excuse' to exert central controls. Cernea asserts that it is imperative to

consider employing effective ‘social methodology’ to facilitate people’s involvement in bottom-up participatory planning, if success would be expected in bringing about authentic participation.

Field experience has shown that local elite will seek to domesticate and ‘pocket’ change agents, who seem to make a difference by creating awareness and autonomy among the people (PREMESE Basic Reading Manuals, Module One, 2001:29 - Unpublished). This effort will be more aggressive on realising that the change agents are awakening people against the interests of the elite and power brokers. It is believed that the elite and legitimisers will tend to make an outsider ‘blind’ by not allowing him or her to see the full picture of the local reality. Often, they have interests to protect, whether for themselves or by proxy. It is advisable, in this case, for change agents to keep distance but maintain diplomacy with the elite. It is advisable to seek to work more closely with newly emergent leadership. It is more prudent to seek to disengage from the elite and legitimisers as soon as possible, once the community has accepted the presence of the external change agents and adequate rapport created.

3.1.11.2 Illiteracy

According to Swanepoel (1993:9), illiteracy causes inferiority complex among the people. Fear makes people abstain from taking initiatives, “thinking that they cannot make any worthwhile contribution”. In this case people believe that innovation must come from the educated people, or from the rich. Illiterate people also come to realise that they cannot develop their own organisations on their own since they will need a literate person to keep records for them. This limitation works against people’s self-confidence and independent action.

3.1.11.3 Presence of corrupt and unaccountable leadership

The presence of community leaders with selfish motives makes community entry for external change agents a nightmare. The best is to maintain diplomacy until such a time the community develops enough awareness and confidence to tell such leaders off or replace them altogether. However, the situation is aggravated by people’s apathy, a general belief that nothing can change, that their destiny is predetermined and cannot possibly be altered. In this context, people resign from responsibility over their own lives, giving leaders free passage to exploit them. People begin to blame supernatural powers such as witchcraft or fate for their predicaments. This leads to hatred among neighbours, with the belief

that one's suffering and predicaments are caused by the neighbour who doesn't like him or her.

This situation is compounded by people's poor knowledge on the social dynamics of exploitation in their communities. People are sometimes exploited because they are so docile that they would not realise they were being exploited. This is usually coupled with a culture of silence. Conscientisation and lobby activities will release people's critical faculties and open their eyes to reality. In this sense, 'conscientisation' is perceived as a process "in which men (*sic*), not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the sociological reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality" (from de Silva, et al. 1979: 56). This is expected to lead into action for transformation.

3.1.11.4 Limited resources and expertise

Empirical observations have held that rural communities often have limited organisational and managerial skills. This status is said to expose rural community initiatives not only to the vulnerability against intentional mismanagement and theft, but also causes projects to fail due to inadequate planning. In addition, self-help projects are easily frustrated because of inability to analyse problems and formulate simple solutions (Bergall, 1993:4). The challenge is made more complex by the fact that even though women form the bulk of community labour force for community projects, they are often marginalised when it comes to access to information, decision-making, and access to opportunities for training meant for capacity building. More men than women benefit from these opportunities. These negative experiences are said to have discouraged communities (and women in particular) from putting more efforts in future.

The state of limited resources goes beyond skilled manpower to include financial and material resources. This slows down the pace of community development processes. Here we are not talking about lack of resources per se. Quite a large variety of resources are available within many communities. But we are talking about their inadequacy of those resources for the actualisation of community plans for people's short term and long term aspirations. Money, for instance, happens to be a scarce resource in most rural communities where a better economy tends to be more prevalent. However, the same communities will be endowed with more natural resources of one kind or another.

However, this view is challenged by a recent realisation out of research that rural communities, however poor, are often endowed with assets. This realisation has led to the popularisation of what has been termed as ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) approach. This approach seeks to identify and employ community's resource potential (in form of latent community assets) for community development. Thus:

Such unrealized resources include not only personal attributes and skills, but also the relationships among people through social, kinship, or associational networks...As an approach to community-based development,(ABCD) rests on the principle that the recognition of strengths, gifts, talents, and assets of individuals and communities is more likely to inspire positive action for change than an exclusive focus on needs and problems...Focusing on uncovering the merits of all members encourages a spirit of egalitarianism, even in societies that are hierachical in structures and differentiated by culture, educational background and gender (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002:3).

3.1.11.5 Unconducive customs and traditions

While it is not true that customs and traditions will always work against new and innovative ideas from without, experience tends to indicate that many a times people are obliged to follow customs and traditions even if they work against development (Swanepoel, 1993:10). Customs and traditions can be valuable resource as a point of reference for people's sense of identity and self-confidence. However, experience indicates that communities will often tend to regard externally initiated ideas and innovations with suspicion, and sometimes with contempt. The rationale behind this reaction is that people have lived with their problems long enough to develop coping mechanisms. New possibilities will tend to disrupt the comfort of the status quo and traditional practices and therefore will be perceived as threatening, hence, the resistance. External community animators (the messengers of the new ideas and innovations) are therefore not readily accepted, not without suspicion and subsequent scrutiny. 'Are the outsiders genuine in their concern about our fate? What is their interest? What do they gain out of helping us?' These are some of the typical questions in people's minds, which should be addressed through open dialogue. Creation of good rapport in this case becomes a critical requirement. In fact, the success in

initiating participatory community processes will largely depend on the animators' ability to effectively build trust.

Cultural limitations to popular participation will also include unpopular beliefs and taboos that have tended to lower the quality of peoples' participation. For instance, for most rural communities in Africa, it is a taboo for women to sit with men in public and participate in decision making. It is also unacceptable for men and women to exchange their socially defined roles within rural communities in Africa. For instance, despite the gender awareness, modern (leave alone the traditional) men in Kamba community (the community where the writer is born) will find it unacceptable to baby-sit their own children, to help out in the kitchen or do laundry even when their wives are sick.

Another example could be drawn from the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Kenya. It has now been established from medical and social research that FGM, a traditional practice among many African cultures, has no known benefits, either to the victims, or to the society at large, unlike the commonly held belief. On the contrary, FGM has been condemned, not only as a violation of human rights against women and innocent children, but also as a health risk too. Despite this knowledge, it has been revealed (albeit from a populist source), that in Kenya, traditional FGM 'experts' and some medical practitioners alike are still perpetuating this heinous practice (Daily Nation, Wednesday 26th of December 2001:10). At least 38% of Kenyan girls aged 15-19 years are reported to undergo FGM annually. This is indeed "nauseating, repugnant and illegal", the Daily Nation reporter observes. Justification? It is perceived to be a fundamental act of identity within the communities concerned. In Kenya, FGM is practiced for customary and traditional reasons, as part of the initiation rite to adulthood, and also to enhance gender identity (Daily Nation, Wednesday 26th of December 2001:10). This example serves to illustrate how powerful cultural values and practices can be against the modern way of looking at life issues including human rights.

Customs and traditions should be evolutionary and adaptable to the changing socio-political and economic environment. Where people keep them static for one reason or other, they can become obstacles in the way of development (Swanepoel, 1993:10).

3.1.11.6 Contradictory approaches and policies among field actors

Contradictory policies and practices among field development actors have tended to compromise the quality of participation within communities. For instance, while one actor in a particular community may choose to promote handout-free type of community mobilisation which ensures sustainability, another development actor in the same community may choose to give handouts to induce people's involvement. It is most likely in such a scenario, that beneficiary communities will choose to identify with the immediate benefits thus compromising on the long term benefits of authentic participation. A more coordinated approach among the development actors should be more preferred in this case.

3.1.11.7 Dealing with institutional bureaucracies within the area of operation

There would ordinarily be many circumstances where community aspirations are delayed for too long owing to bureaucratic bottlenecks. Bureaucracies will make community activities such as follows insurmountable as required in some of the countries in Africa owing to the centralised government controls discussed earlier: registering community groups; opening a bank account; getting a business licence; getting permit for community meetings; getting authority to invite visitors from other countries to visit the village; and so forth. It is the role of the change agents, not only to break through the unnecessary bureaucracies but more importantly, to train community members to deal with or where necessary, avoid such bureaucratic bottlenecks.

3.1.11.8 The challenge of a 'Lone Voice'

Proponents of participation and empowerment of the weak and the poor as a basis for human development are usually unpopular with authorities or the custodians of institutional power. For this reason, the protagonists of social justice are usually ostracised, not only by these authorities but also by their unconverted colleagues, and worse still, by the same communities they 'fight for' (until such a time the communities will have adequate awareness to open up their eyes to the reality and come to know the truth).

In some cases, the employer (and sometimes the projects donors themselves) may not entirely agree with the new set of values, which tend to tilt the power pendulum in favour of the powerless. This

change in the power pendulum sends ripples right from the community level to the organisational hierarchy. Research has established that the initial reaction of those in power to the new set of values has been that of suspicion and defensiveness.

As noted earlier, conventional development practice has tended to believe that a true developer is the one who attracts external resources into the community. On the contrary, the new participatory development approach emphasises local initiatives, optimising use of local resources. This scenario makes the advocates of self-reliance rather unpopular and soon leads to what has been termed as the 'Lone Ranger Syndrome' on the part of the development practitioner. Sometimes s/he is not readily acceptable, neither by authorities at various levels, nor by the target group s/he purports to work for. However, when people come into grips with the long-term benefits of the participatory approach, then the animator becomes the 'darling' of the people.

On the other hand, change agents are also facing the role-model challenge. They are often accused of 'preaching water but drinking wine'. The new set of values embedded in the womb of participatory development challenges its advocates to manifest the same in their own lifestyle as well as in public leadership. More so, converted practitioners will have to be in the forefront in matters of accountability and transparency in institutional management. It therefore demands self-sacrifice, professional discipline and self-denial at the personal level. In fact it demands some kind of a religious commitment to live up to the expectations.

Most development practitioners involved with participatory development will either be employees of non-governmental organisations or Churches or personnel from bilateral funded government programmes. The employing organisations not only have their own interests to protect, but sometimes operate under strict statutory regulations under which conditions they are licensed to exist. Such restrictions determine how far an organisation can go in the 'politicisation' of the development process. Yet, participatory development is not apolitical in nature. It advocates the transformation of the status quo for better practice. This transformation will tend to be conflictual, and therefore political. Authentic participatory development involves capacity building which will have to go beyond teaching people how to fish, (assuming the capacity builders themselves know how to fish), to include sensitising people to

protect their right to fish. For this reason, capacity builders often find themselves at a loss when it comes to raising issues pertaining to social justice, as well as organisational transparency and accountability.

3.1.11.9 Middle-class dilemma

In most cases, external change agents working among the poor are often quite well educated people. Their socio-economic status qualifies them for the middle class bracket and beyond. They are often stationed in the remotest villages, semi-deserts and slums, working under difficult circumstances where social amenities and recreational facilities are scarce. On the contrary, their peers working in the urban areas have all the amenities and niceties the urban environment can offer to a middle class professional.

Those working in the hardship areas will rarely expect significant promotions in their relatively small organisations. In addition, the kind of work they do compels them to work long and odd hours including weekends away from the comfort of their families. They are under constant temptation to give up this hardship and ‘cross-the-floor’. After all, they have the qualifications to enable them acquire secure and highly paid jobs in comfortable urban environments. In such circumstances, capacity building through the change of attitudes becomes even more critical as a motivating factor.

3.1.11.10 Development workers’ biases

These are biases that development practitioners ought to be aware of as they can overshadow objectivity during their work as community development animators. Often we may not be conscious of our biases and prejudices which so heavily influence our day to day relationships, decisions and choices. Self awareness is perceived to be desirable if to guard against and deal with those prejudices effectively. What are some of the beliefs and values that we sometimes manifest in words or actions but which, when brought to our objective consciousness, we are either ashamed of or simply seek for an escape by disowning them outright. Being aware of these biases is the first step towards overcoming them. Chambers (1983:13) has identified the following biases (and they could be more):

Beliefs and Values bias - Our religious beliefs may tend to pull us more to some sections of the community while overlooking others. These are sentiments which are built in us over a

long period of time, sometimes since our childhood. We have been socialised to believe that our religion or our faith is the right one, the holy cause, and that all the others are lost and need to be prayed for or brought back to the fold. This disposition can create a bias in the way we judge others and therefore in the way we relate with them.

Cultural and Language bias - We are pulled more to people we understand than those we don't. We tend to associate more, understand better and feel more comfortable with the people we share common cultural background. We share a language through which we can express our deepest feeling and desires without fear of being misunderstood. The language with which we learnt to ask for food and water when we were younger. That's why we may tend to feel so deeply on our cultural affiliation. This can easily lead to bias in our relationships.

Ethnic bias - Many communities in Africa tend to be divided along ethnic lines. It is important for development workers to be conscious of this possibility as they also belong to an ethnic group themselves. They should consciously avoid appearing to be discriminative in their transactions and working relations with the communities they serve. The temptation is more real where it happens that their own ethnic groups have borne the brunt of discrimination on one time or another, or have suffered as victims of ethnic conflicts.

Socio-economic bias - For obvious reasons, it is more attractive and prestigious for an extension worker to visit an elite family than a poor one. Development workers should watch out for this temptation. It is more likely to get personal incentives in appreciation and wider publicity for services rendered to an elite client than to a poor farmer. In an ideal situation, either priority should be given to the poor who can not afford alternative (privatised) services or atleast make the distribution of such services equitable.

Gender bias- Women farmers or project participants are said to be easily overlooked when extension workers have to make a choice in their visits. Most extension workers happen to be men and that fact alone influences their perspective and decisions on gender issues. On the other hand, a number of cultures in Africa would see it as a violation of community norms for a male extensionist to visit and

discuss issues with a woman in the village. It is a taboo that should be respected, but at the same time challenged to create room for a more healthy gender relationship, without using the cultural dimension to marginalise women from development processes.

Age bias - Likewise, care should be taken not to marginalise youth and the older generations. We need to know what their expectations, views and worries are in the community.

Ideological bias - Political divide, with the advent of pluralism in the political governance, has become pronounced in many African communities more than ever before. Such ideological differences can easily become source of bias for development workers who have also to make political choices and declare their political position. Party politics should not be allowed to interfere with or weaken our objectivity in socio-economic and political analysis. Do we even need to publically declare our political party affiliation? How would this affect our relationship with those who do not subscribe to the policies of our own party of affiliation?

Professional bias - We tend to listen, hear and understand only what falls under our area professional specialisation. We may inadvertently tend to create an impression that other areas of life-concerns are not as important. It is good to be aware and avoid the temptation of professional bias. The fact that one is a water engineer, does not necessarily mean water should come as the top most priority wherever he/she will work. Health, or food production could as well be more of priority than water in different areas. This calls for an effort on our part as professionals to realise what we do not know and cannot offer. We then need to stretch out and liaise with others who have what we cannot offer to the communities owing to our professional limitations.

Spatial bias - Choice of place to visit is equally important. We tend to visit communities on the easier reach, eg. by the main roads, or nearer to urban centres than in marginal remote areas. Development inputs seem to be more concentrated near to the roads and in urban centres, including telephone lines, electricity and water pipes. Research has also been concentrated in these areas where access is easy. The elite have found it more comfortable to settle in such areas, making prices for land in these areas too expensive for the poorer families. Since we often do not have time with our busy

schedules, we find it easier as development workers to make quick visits to the more accessible zones. This is also where we dash to expose our visitors who equally do not have enough time to venture into the remote interlands.

Dry Season bias - We avoid field work during rainy seasons as we want to avoid the challenges associated with we terrains. And yet it is during this season when the people need us most. There are more diseases, people are weak working hard on their farms, roads are more difficult to pass and therefore urban supplies are at their lowest level in the villages. It is during the rain season that people are hungry as they would have exhausted their food reserves by then.

We prefer community visits during dry season when we cannot get stuck in the mud. This is the time we will see least of people's hardships as they will have harvests, water borne diseases will be at their lowest while roads will be in relatively good conditions.

Diplomacy bias - We tend to be ashamed to be seen walking with the poor and destitutes of the community. According to the experiences of Chambers, the elite will often shield the visitors from direct contact with the real poor. It is perceived undesirable, waste of time and rather embarrassing for the visitors to have a chat with the poor in the village. It is feared that the poor will tell the truth about the poverty and the suffering of the people which is considered impolite and embarrassing to the visitors. It should be remembered that the poor have their own stories to tell which are often totally different from the stories of the elite group. Give them a hearing.

3.1.12 A critique on the practice of participation

This being an academic thesis, it serves appropriately to raise some polemics at this stage on some of the challenges in the practice of participation in community development. This critique is intended to be a cautionary measure more than a misnomer against the principles and practice of participation. Where evidence is available from empirical research, this will be quoted to support any strong conclusions and observations advanced in this regard. However, where such evidence is not available, the issues at hand will only be raised as doubts for further research.

3.1.12.1 Rhetoric vis-à-vis the empirical, idealism vis-à-vis realism

First and foremost, we need a critical look at the rhetoric vis-à-vis practice on the ground, idealism vis-à-vis realism. To what extent have the proponents of participation given lead as models in putting principles of participation into practice in their own world of management practice? More often than not, the so called protagonist of participation have tended to peter-out when it comes to the actual practice that genuinely seeks to involve the ordinary people in supposedly participatory development processes. These ‘champions’ of participation will rarely trust the local people enough to let them make their own independent decisions in their own local participatory projects (Feuerstein, 1986:10-11; Freire, 1970:36,41).

There appears to be a tendency by those in positions of power and authority to manipulate the populace from time to time in the name of participation to meet their personal interests. Community mobilisation has been a popular slogan, providing a convenient entry point, even for those with private agenda. We can surmise here with high level of precision that many organisations that promote participatory development among their target groups (whether intermediary, implementing or donor agencies) are themselves often non-participatory in their management practice. This may be a sweeping statement as there will always be fairly genuine organisations out there.

This is obviously a contradiction. Hence, the practice of authentic participation in this case, remains elusive, and especially where it demands genuine dialogue among equals. Power sharing happens to be the core to the practice. This is not often pleasant news to those in power as they have interest to protect, whether personal or organisational interests. Participation, in such circumstances, is reduced to an artificial and passive activity, often meant to hypnotise donors and benefactors (including governments and the public who support the donors) for the purpose of fund raising, with little or no conviction and commitment on the part of the practitioners. This reality is reinforced by the common acclamation among scholars that there cannot be universally acceptable definition of participation, neither standardised practice in the application of the principles of participation (Mulwa, 2000:20-21).

3.1.12.2 Abdication of leadership and management responsibility

It is possible for those in leadership to abdicate their obligation to provide quality management service, under the excuse that they were promoting people's participation, which emphasises on collective responsibility. This is gross misrepresentation of the practice of participation and people's empowerment. Participation should not necessarily compromise on efficiency and effectiveness, the fundamental values in management practice. Bryson (1995:9) shares similar sentiments as he espouses the argument that participatory methodologies and processes should not be a substitute for quality leadership aimed at enhancing organisational performance. He concludes by asserting that, where leadership (particularly the key policy and decision makers), is not committed to the values of participation, those who promote people's empowerment will labour in vain. Experience has shown that in such a case, the management is likely to neglect the outcome and therefore plans would suffer non-implementation. This is tantamount to wastage as participatory processes tend to consume colossal amounts of resources to be realised.

3.1.12.3 Politics of inclusion vis-a-vis exclusion

Debate still rages as to whether or not participation campaigns should exclude the rich and the powerful whose interests are often threatened by the autonomy of the poor and powerless. In this regard, Bhatnagar argues that, "the concept of participation should not be limited just to disadvantaged people.... Focusing on disadvantaged people as opposed to all people results in a class-biased definition" (Bhatnagar, et al. 1992:180). This kind of argument contradicts the whole essence of 'participation', which seeks to promote equitable development that ensures equal opportunities between the rich, and the poor by empowering the latter.

However, while the idea of supporting the poor exclusively remains sensible, what the principles and practice of participation may be lacking is the explicit acknowledgement of the need to strengthen the management practice among the organisations for the richer and more powerful groups. This may be achieved through professional support to rid (their organisations) of non-democratic practices, corruption (that is often manifested through poor transparency and lack of accountability among the leadership), and by instilling in their membership alternative value system where they come to appreciate the cause and struggles among the poor members of their communities. Such support can be extended to these groups at a professional fee, which revenue may be re-channelled for the support of the poor.

This way, the sensitivities of exclusion may be minimised.

3.1.12.4 *'Influence' or 'control'?*

As observed earlier, it is expected that participation will enable the poor to have greater influence on public policy and decisions that affect them. In programmes that genuinely seek to empower the powerless, the goal posts of ambition should be moved beyond a mere influence to a total control of those decisions that affect them, as well as the public policy. However, for this rather ambitious vision to be attained, it will have to be shared, first and foremost among the poor people themselves, and by all the stakeholders concerned with the welfare and empowerment of the poor. It should not just be a vision of the vanguards or protagonists of social change as has often tended to be the case. This weakens the vision. As Bhatnagar argues, the emphasis should instead be put on enabling the poor to have “control” over their own lives and over the institutions that govern them including the government itself.

According to Bhatnagar, “...people need not participate in external interventions; they (should) live their lives. External interventions interfere in their lives, and, therefore, the onus lies on external agencies, not people, to devise methods to participate” (Bhatnagar et al. 1992:181). But of course, this challenges the external change agents to let go of their control as they immerse themselves into people’s own plans. As World Bank puts it: “One of the most difficult challenges,...(is) giving up total control, or ‘letting go’ of the notion of the right way, the right order, the right answer” (World Bank Report in Eade and Williams, 1995:820). Similarly, in favour of the idea of letting go, Eade and Williams conclude that, “Aid agencies should recognise that the best of intentions do not guarantee totally positive outcomes” (Eade and Williams, 1995: 820).

3.2 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Evaluation (PE): Finding the Fit

3.2.1 Introduction

“It is easy to make judgments – that’s evaluation. It’s easy to ask questions about a programme – that’s evaluation. It’s easy to disseminate a report – that’s evaluation. What’s hard is to put all these pieces together in a meaningful whole, which tells people something they want to know and can use about a matter of importance. That’s evaluation” (Patton 1986:322).

This section aims at conceptualising the two practical participatory approaches to rural development and institution building. These approaches, and PRA in particular, have dominated the scene of participatory development since 1980’s (Chambers, 1994:1253-1268). PRA has become so much popularised that it has tended to overshadow other participatory approaches to development. For many people, participatory methodologies are simply synonymous to PRA, and PRA to them means every aspect of participatory development designs. Whatever the case, genuine participatory methodologies are complementary in philosophy, values and ultimate vision. This is how the thrust of participatory strategic planning fits into the jigsaw.

The central focus of this section is to seek and establish the link and complementarity between the concept and practice of participatory rural appraisal and participatory evaluation. This analysis is meant to set the stage and pave way for our investigation into the concept and process of participatory strategic planning to be discussed in Chapter 4. The common denominator in these approaches is perceived to be their strength in empowering the less powerful in the society as a prerequisite for ensuring local ownership, as well as equitable and sustainable development.

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is a process that seeks to mobilise local communities in their effort to collectively determine their development priorities and the resource potential that exists for local development. PRA seeks to raise and bring to the fore information that is fundamental to participatory strategic planning. On the other hand, participatory evaluation will be more appreciated and relevant in programmes that are originally designed or planned within the participatory development framework. We will reflect on the processes of participatory rural appraisal and participatory evaluation as an integral part and parcel of project management cycle. An attempt will be made to explore the theoretical foundations behind the concepts, accentuating their inherent value as strategies for organisation building.

3.2.2 Understanding Participatory Rural Appraisal (P.R.A)

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) has been described as a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local (rural and urban) people to express, enhance, share and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act (Chambers, 1994:1253-1268). Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) is acknowledged as the precursor to PRA. According to Chambers:

RRA itself began as a response in the late 1970's and early 1980's to the biased perceptions derived from rural development tourism (the brief rural visit by the urban based professional) and the many defects and high costs of large-scale questionnaire surveys (Chambers, 1994:1253-1268).

PRA, however, is said to have much in common with RRA but differs basically in the ownership of information, and the nature of the process. In RRA, information is basically more elicited and extracted by outsiders as part of a process of data gathering in what has been termed as quick and dirty snapshots. On the contrary, information gathering in PRA is more generated, analysed, owned and shared by local people at their own pace as part of a process of their own empowerment, without the need to hurry to meet externally imposed deadlines.

In fact with RRA, the information extracted is basically for the use by professionals. However, the fake PRA by borrowing from its methods for quick eliciting of the data they require. That ends their relationship with the community, and often, that is the last thing community will hear about the activity as no feedback can be guaranteed. The professionals are not obliged to do so within RRA context.

According to Chambers, PRA approaches and methods present an alternative to questionnaire surveys in appraisal and research, and generate insights of policy relevance. In questionnaire interviewing for instance, power and initiative lie with the interviewer, unlike in PRA where it is the reverse. A questionnaire is administered to the person interviewed, who is generally regarded to as the respondent – a person who replies or reacts. Chambers continues to observe that the questions and the categories in a questionnaire are those of the interviewer, who also records the ‘response’. The professional concern is more with the data than with the people providing the information.

PRA believes that meaningful change must come from the people if to remain relevant and sustainable. Opuka observes that PRA is challenging a common practice where by aspiring communities have learnt to speak the ‘language’ of various Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other similar development agencies. People will speak ‘water language’ to water related agencies and speak ‘livestock language’ to livestock related agencies. Efforts therefore should be made to break through this culture, which has led to irrelevant interventions being introduced to docile communities. PRA will enable those concerned and involved to keep pace with changing perspectives, needs and aspirations of the people, to act according to people’s real needs (Opuka, 2001:16).

Opuka goes on to conceptualise PRA as a way of learning from and with the community members. The learning process is not just for the sake of it but a means to an end. It is aimed at transforming people’s own reality and living conditions that may be undesirable. Learning process is realised as an outcome of the following PRA activities: Developing a profile of community problems; analysing the problems; ranking the problems (prioritising them); identifying the opportunities for action to solve those problems; and developing a Community Action Plan – CAP (Opuka, 2001:16).

As such, PRA challenges change agents to reverse or switch their roles from doing, to facilitating, from

telling and teaching, to listening and learning and from prescriptive, to participatory planning. With PRA approach, outsiders do not dominate and lecture. Instead outsiders learn new ways of facilitating change through sitting down to listen and learn. In PRA context, outsiders do not transfer technology or impose their own view of reality. Instead they allow local people to learn from one another. The local people will discard what is irrelevant from the outsiders' inputs as they experiment with new ideas wrought by collaboration with the outsiders. It is a mutual relationship of equals (Chambers, 1997:103). It is a process of capacity building for the local people. Capacity building is about power sharing; it begins when the outsider stops talking and starts listening. It begins at the outsider's willingness to unlearn in order to begin to learn. Capacity building is about the outsiders letting go so that the insiders can simply get going (Mulwa, 2002: 86).

PRA provides a suitable entry point for programmes geared towards community empowerment through building local responsibility and sense of ownership. The more developed and tested methods of PRA which have had significant impact over the years include: participatory mapping and modelling, transect walks, matrix scoring, pair-wise ranking, well-being grouping and ranking, seasonal calendars, institutional Venn diagrams, and trend lines and historical profiles of change analysis. It is not within the scope of this thesis to go into the analysis on the application and efficacy of each of these PRA methods. However, it is worth noting that among the sectors that have extensively used these PRA methods worldwide include natural resource management departments, agriculture, health, nutrition, food security and programmes for the poor.

3.2.3 Understanding participatory evaluation –P.E

From the conventional practice, evaluation has been a preserve of the so called 'evaluation experts' and their paymasters, usually the donors. On the other hand, when managed at the intermediary organisation level, evaluation has been treated with the highest degree of secrecy, as Gran puts it:

Evaluation in development, as in most human activities, is neither a neutral nor a popular pastime. Those who plan and implement development projects do not want to see critical information surface that could hurt careers or pay checks. Those who benefit most from project activities do not want this noticed in a way that would threaten their

gains. Benefits are often concentrated among a small elite who have used the project as a confidence mechanism, a process of maintaining and enhancing their economic and political advantage. Open discussion would not be profitable. It is little wonder that development evaluation, as historically practiced by major donor agencies, does not provide the systems feedback that would result in major systemic change or improvement (Gran, 1983:291).

But what is meant by 'evaluation' in the first place? From field experience, it can be deduced that to evaluate is to find out or form an idea of the amount or value of something. It involves helping those who are involved in different kinds of development programmes to assess the value of what they do. Hence, it involves judging the worth or appraisal of value. Evaluation investigates the consequences of dynamic programmes that attempt to alter key variables in people's lives (Feuerstein, 1986:1-7).

Evaluation is an act of retrospection. The word evaluation can be used to imply many activities of that retrospection, ranging from a cursory project visit to a very elaborate research project. It is a process of reviewing both actions and assumptions behind an intervention. It is a reflection that helps us to choose a better direction or ascertain how to proceed, and if we weren't too sure, then it helps clarify where we want to move in the future. To achieve all this, evaluation can no longer be a simple *precise photograph* of a project situation but a dynamism that involves observation and interpretation of a phenomenon of social change.

Evaluation is a process, which attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives, aims and purposes. Evaluation is an act of looking back in order to locate where one is in relation to where one wants to go or what one is set to achieve. It is an act of looking back to see where and how fast you are going and then estimating when you are likely to reach your destination (Feuerstein, 1986:1-7).

The process of evaluation becomes a participatory undertaking when each of the key stakeholders controls the process, and makes use of the information derived from the evaluation outcome for management decisions at their level of operation. This is the most effective way to make evaluation not

only relevant but also useful to the local project constituency.

3.2.4 People - centred approaches

The emergence of Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Evaluation approaches in 1980's marked the beginning of a new rural development management era. Despite its relatively slow pace, there is evidence that the practice of participation has infiltrated the length and breadth of rural development endeavours in developing societies. Participatory approaches have not only triggered interdisciplinary interest but have also exerted influence in social development policy and planning circles, both at micro and macro levels.

Much of the success in the promotion of participatory methodologies could largely be attributed to academic institutions where rural development personnel have often been trained, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) actively involved with experiments in the field. Equally pivotal in the promotion and support of participatory methodologies are donor organisations based in developed countries. In particular, the highly motivated NGO staff, usually deeply committed to their work and long-sighted in their plans and operations, account for a great deal of the current widespread practice in spearheading participatory development approaches.

Emergence of 'participation' as a new development thrust has elevated centrality of the 'human person' in development thinking with unprecedented commitment to 'people' as the purpose of development. The primary concern now is how development endeavours can improve the lot of people's lives in developing their capacities and inherent potential for self-actualisation and enable them assume responsibilities that go with self-determination. Material development is no longer seen as the primary motivation for development endeavours although it is a necessary 'dividend' of the participation development process. Experience has shown that unless people are central actors in activities and programmes that affect their lives, the impact of such interventions would either be negative, irrelevant or insignificant in transforming people's lives. In this regard, a beautiful evaluation experience has led to the following observation:

Nobody viewed the exercise as if there was going to be an expert from the outside doing an impact assessment of a project that he had known nothing about a couple of months before. All of those involved had seen it more as a process of listening to what everybody had to say and pulling this all together with the hope that it would trigger off some critical thinking about the role and impact of the Project (Thekaekara, 2000:571).

3.2.5 A painful process of change

Participatory approaches to development planning, management and evaluation fundamentally involve a painful process of change. They call for change of attitudes and structures, which are treasured and cherished by those in power. They challenge the attitudes intrinsic in the conventional methods of planning and evaluation whereby development is externally defined and delivered to the people through extension network, and ultimately evaluated by external missions. Management experts are seen as possessing the ‘tricks’ necessary to fix plans and conduct objective assessments.

Power hinders learning. Those who were wrong were powerful. They were senior, almost all men, mostly white, and influential, whether through age, professional authority, control of funds, or position in a hierarchy. Their very power conditioned their perceptions and prevented them from learning (Chambers, 1997:32).

The set of values that hindered the learning among professionals is embroiled in the womb of ‘modernisation’ development paradigm discussed earlier in this thesis. In this context, professionals as ‘experts’ are made adjudicators to determine whether or not ‘development’ has taken place within a community development setting. They use parameters and standards largely set by outsiders, mainly the donors. They did not know they were often wrong in their thinking, attitude, and approach. Little did they know they were not the real experts on local development affairs. Thus:

Those who were wrong had had long education and training, whether as macro-economists, engineers, agronomists, ecologists, foresters, administrators or social scientists...Most were specialists. All were linked in with other professional colleagues around the world. Through letters, the telephone, workshops, conferences, and professional journals and papers, they were in touch with their professional peers and with current dominant values and beliefs. Their learning was, then, more likely to come laterally or from above than from below; and to follow current ideologies and fashions (Chambers, 1997:31).

It is not a coincidence that there is perfect harmony of perception between Chambers (1997:31) and Hope and Timmel (1996). The latter argue as follows:

Now we find that, on a great many issues, the so-called 'experts' have been wrong. This is particularly so in the field of development, where again and again the advice of outside 'experts' has led to greater poverty. There is a new awareness now, that on all the major problems that face the modern world, no experts have all the answers. Each may have valuable information to contribute, but we need dialogue to draw in the insights of all who are concerned as we search for solutions. Local participation is crucial for effective development (Hope and Timmel, BK1, 2000:17).

This sounds a prophetic voice. Prophetic in the sense that these views are not only radical but also unique and 'strange'. Most likely, such perspective would hardly be popular among the professionals themselves. Perhaps those who advocate the same ideas would run the risk of ostracism. Radical discourse of this kind is known to have in the past earned the advocates crucifixion on the cross or led them to the gallows in the hands of the powerful. Why? Because it is prophetic, it is therefore unpopular. Public opinion, often laden with myths and half-truths, would be more popular since it is the 'normal' and therefore non-threatening.

The Chancellor of Daystar University had equally a scathing attack of the professionals in his speech during the 24th graduation ceremony of the University (15th, June, 2002). He lamented that African professionals in particular, have allowed themselves to be compromised in what he called ‘professional prostitution’. This is the situation where the professionals have accepted to exchange their professional integrity (for not standing up for the truth) with a paycheque from their masters. They have often failed to stand up for justice and the welfare of the masses they represent.

The PRA and PE are among the numerous efforts in the field of rural development, which seek to redistribute power in favour of the powerless by transforming attitudes among both the people and the professionals. They seek to devolve power to the people, not only for development priority setting but also for the assessment, review and evaluation of the consequences of the choices and decisions they make. PRA and PE have therefore emerged as complementary to the whole thrust in participatory development efforts.

Even though PRA and PE practices do not seek to dislodge professionals out of business, they certainly call for a new set of values and attitude among the professionals themselves. They call for the recognition of people’s stake as equal partners not only in project planning, but also in its evaluation. Hatch emphasises this fact by declaring that: “A community incapable of evaluating its own undertaking is a community that cannot manage the project itself”. (Hatch, 1983:7).

Participatory Evaluation and Participatory Rural Appraisal call for the recognition and respect for local knowledge and experience as well as people’s ability to assess, review and judge their own experience with a reasonable measure of objectivity. The role of external facilitator takes a new and different shape, assuming a new set of values and responsibilities as defined by the community. Invariably, the external facilitator becomes more of a ‘process facilitator’ than ‘dispassionate observer’.

3.2.5.1 Living in two worlds

Chambers (1983:29) identifies two polarised worlds of rural development orientation. These are the ‘academics’ and the world of ‘practitioners’. On this he observes:

At one pole we have academic social scientists preoccupied with the 'what?' and 'why?' of development and underdevelopment¼especially who gets what, why and the processes which they see as determining the answers; and at the other pole, we have practical administrators and technical scientists who concern themselves with the 'how?' of development, trying to change things and trying to get things done. (There exists) physical, linguistic and experiential distance between these two groups, each with its own culture¼and often there is little sympathy or communication between them. To hear a seminar in university about modes of production in the morning and then attend a meeting in a government office about agricultural extension in the afternoon leaves a schizoid feeling. One might not know that both referred to the same farmers, and might doubt whether either discussion had anything to contribute to the other (Chambers, 1983:29).

According to Mulwa (1994:7), the world of conventional researchers who conduct base-line surveys, and the so called professional evaluators, emanate from academic orientation deeply rooted in the observance of such research values as 'objectivity', 'neutrality', 'impartiality', 'independence of researcher' and 'validity' of the outcome. While these concerns are justified from scientific point of view, they tend to negate or overlook the fact that causal factors of reality are relative, and therefore neither singular nor linear but complex. Human behaviour and the dynamics of human relations are also complex and therefore may not be predictable, or may not fit into an all time scientific formula. For this reason, the world of participatory processes would emphasise more on the centrality of the people's control of their own learning processes as opposed to the imposition of external designs and judgements associated with academics.

In this regard, Chambers (1983:29) observes that 'academics' are perceived as unpredictable and intolerant, lovers of endless debates and fruitless arguments, 'muttering to one another in private languages'. They are seen as alienated from the realities of the present life by their illusionary expectations of a 'new world'. Hence, "they criticise but do nothing constructive... question priorities instead of getting on with the job...look for things going wrong (and) write about failures not successes". On the other hand, practitioners have been accused of being "narrow minded...and at best reformists", unaware of the dynamics of the social milieu they live in.

Reflecting on the two polarised worlds, Chambers advances the theory that academics are oriented in their training to criticise ‘and are rewarded for it’. They are taught to argue and to find fault. Practitioners on the other hand constantly seek opportunities to act and improve on the current situation. While academics look for ‘what has gone wrong’, practitioners look for ‘what might go right’. Hence, one has a negative view of reality while the other maintains an optimistic attitude. Practitioners are committed to making better world to come here and now whereas the academics have a vision of a better world to come without offering clear and practical guidelines towards that illusionary world.

3.2.6 Who should be involved in PRA and PE?

It is believed that a programme that has evolved through the participatory processes of identification, planning and management should of necessity be appraised in the same spirit. Local stakeholders should therefore maintain a key role throughout a programme cycle. If they were able to manage the programme during its implementation phase, it should be possible to evaluate it as well.

The participatory approaches are in direct conflict with the conventional practice. Take conventional evaluation for instance. Donors are not only the prime movers but also the key determinants of the person of the evaluator, timing for the evaluation exercise as well as the evaluation purpose and parameters. The insistence of a donor to claim the whole credit for a positive change experienced within a project area is both unfair and unrealistic. It negates the fact that other causal factors of change may be on the interplay with the donor-funded intervention. On this, Thekaekara quotes a project evaluation experience as follows:

Often assessments occur at the behest of a donor. This is because the unstated purpose of most assessments is to justify to a donor agency, and they in turn to their respective donors, that the money has been well spent. In a project which has multiple donors – which most projects do – one can imagine what happens. Such an approach is not only going to throw up a fragmented and lopsided view of the change process but is also likely to result in confusion and competition on the issue of attribution...It all leads to a lot of organisational heartburn as activities that are up-front tend to get the credit...

For example, the reduction of crime was claimed as one of the primary changes that have taken place. The police can claim it is because of their excellent service. Some residents think that it has more to do with the refurbishment of the houses and the sense of community brought in by the MNP (housing project). The Youth Worker from the Baptist Church, or from social services, may also have contributed. In a desperate bid to justify their existence, this competition between services may result in services pitting themselves against each other. If one talks to the people themselves, one realises that the truth is that all these services, perhaps along with other factors like a general improvement in the economy have, together, contributed to the reduction in crime...To assess impact we have to take a holistic approach that presupposes a complementarity between different actors (Thekaekara, 2000:568-569).

In participatory evaluation process, the programme donor(s), the programme team (staff and management) and the beneficiary constituency are called upon to participate jointly in drawing up of terms of reference on the purpose, scope and the parameters for a PE or PRA activity. They participate in data collection and extrapolation of both its meaning and recommendations for the way forward. This leads to joint planning in response to emerging questions and challenges that need attention. This process ensures true local ownership and commitment not only to the exercise and its outcome but more importantly, to the future programme evolution.

More importantly, since community development is essentially a learning process, Swanepoel calls our attention to the fact that the participation of the members of beneficiary community in the evaluation of their project accords them an invaluable opportunity to draw lessons from praxis. Thus:

The learning process is ...enhanced by involving people in evaluating what they have done during a project. Through evaluation, they really learn what the consequences are of their own decision-making and action. One cannot learn without evaluation. This holds true for community development too. Therefore to make the most of community development as a learning process, participation in evaluation by the people is an absolute necessity (Swanepoel, 1993: 4).

3.2.7 Why promote PRA and PE approaches to programme management now?

“It’s the best possible time to be alive, when almost everything you thought you knew is wrong” Chambers, 1997: 102)

There are valid reasons why the participatory approaches to evaluation and rural appraisal should be preferred as complementary to participatory strategic planning. These are:

It provides an opportunity for the programme stakeholders to initiate open discussion on issues they were either afraid to face collectively or were unwilling to discuss altogether.

It accords an opportunity for the various programme stakeholders to get a better and deeper understanding of their programmes as each compares own efforts with the efforts of other partners.

It is possible to clarify first hand field impressions during the participatory data analysis as well as during draft report validation session with various stakeholders. This enhances the accuracy, relevance and therefore validity, and quality of the information gathered.

The process accords an opportunity for the stakeholders to challenge each other and give each other both negative and positive feedback without fear of intimidation or reprisal. In this case, it becomes an opportunity for the strengthening of partnerships among stakeholders towards better future management of the programme. At the end of the day, there is high sense of process ownership as community constituency presents and defends the PRA and PE findings to the wider forum of programme stakeholders during data validation. It is therefore expected that the level of utilisation of PRA and PE results and the stakeholder commitment would equally be high.

3.2.8 Fundamental beliefs behind participatory evaluation and participatory rural appraisal

There is no community that will be unable to assess and identify their own development and learning

priorities. Similarly, communities will usually be able to monitor and evaluate their own projects, which they themselves have initiated and managed for their own purpose, given capacity building efforts for them to develop the relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes. Participants of community projects have often proven to effectively conduct objective appraisals and evaluation where the purpose is understood and the necessary skills are imparted to them.

Involvement of project participants in project identification, monitoring and evaluation can be of great value since they not only have first hand experience with the project but also have more relevant details and insights than any outsider.

The primary focus of PRA and PE should not be fault finding but rather seeking to build on any existing potential and positive trends, and drawing lessons for better performance in future.

Genuine PRA and PE processes are only possible in a relationship among equals. Such relationships can only develop over an historical context of learning and growing together among stakeholders.

No uniformity in PRA and PE processes should be expected. The depth and quality of the processes will largely depend on the overall methodological orientation of the promoting organisation and the historical context of the relationship with its stakeholders.

Both trickle-down and trickle-up of information and experiences among stakeholders should be enabled and equally valued. Hence, the outcome of internal appraisals and self-evaluations among local stakeholders should be shared with the donors and valued accordingly respected by acting upon them.

It is advisable to de-link appraisals and evaluations from the funding cycle where possible. This will ensure best results, as the stakeholder emotions associated with the consequences of evaluation will not influence the objectivity of those involved. At least the project continuity in the short term will not depend on the outcome of the appraisals and the evaluations.

Projects have failed to remain sustainable (after the donor pulls out) as a result of poor sense of local ownership on the part of beneficiaries. It is also unethical for outsiders to invade into the 'project-bed-rooms' in the name of evaluation without due respect for the privacy of the 'occupants'. This is wrong and a violation of people's rights. Donation of resources to the poor should not give any one the right to violate their right to privacy. PRA and PE will correct this anomaly by enhancing the sense of local control and ownership of the project cycle.

Evaluation processes should acknowledge that the causal factors of change in a programme are not

linear but complex. In this sense, an evaluator should appreciate that positive change in a programme area may be attributed to factors emanating from other influences outside the programme design and its scope.

3.2.9 A new concept in the place of indicators as benchmarks for evaluation

There seems to be a newly emerging practice in evaluation that discards or seeks to demean the previously cherished centrality of change indicators as a benchmark for project assessment. Their articulation is demanded during project planning. In critique to both conventional and participatory evaluation, the importance of indicators is being questioned. Thus:

In a more traditional approach, predetermined impact indicators are the usual starting point. In a carefully planned and well-managed project, one would expect that these indicators had been defined from the outset by the project itself. In the absence of such specified indicators, an impact assessment team would draw up these indicators with project personnel and then set about measuring impact against the chosen indicators. One way or the other, the starting point is invariably a clearly defined set of impact indicators. (Never mind all the midnight oil burned in differentiating between output and outcome and impact indicators, let alone the debate about the need for universal indicators!) (Thekaekara, 2000:569).

In this sense, community perspective, which is fundamentally qualitative (as opposed to quantitative), is held with high esteem. The community's views and conclusions about its project reality are regarded as equally (if not more) important as compared to the perspective of the conventional evaluator extrapolated from the purportedly objective research design. Thus:

...if change is seen essentially as a political process, which must have implications for the economic and other aspects of the community, then the starting point of assessing change has to be the community itself. How do they perceive themselves and their lives? With the Matson Neighbourhood Project, the absence of such predefined indicators coupled with the open-ended approach allowed us to evolve a methodology where the community was the starting point. The fact that the MNP had such a strong community focus – not just as end users of the

services but as the protagonists in the entire development drama – left us with no doubt that the methodology for the case study (assessment) would have to be community-focused in keeping with the approach and entire culture of the Project. A community's change process is not just a management exercise – it is a part of their daily struggle and for most poor communities it is very often the purpose of their lives...A difference between community perception and figures should lead us to re-question both the community's perception as well as the validity of the figures. Which brings us to another lesson learnt (Thekaekara, 2000:569-570).

The foregoing experience sounds a caricature of reality, but it is an approach to project evaluation that truthfully complements the values embedded in participatory development practice. In this context, the views of the people are given prominence over the external views. For such qualitative, community oriented evaluation process to earn respect from the conventional professionals, it calls for change of attitudes among both the outsiders (to begin to value the views of the local people and accept to learn from them), and the community alike (to begin to believe in themselves and what they know). Professionals are also challenged to begin to develop new methodologies and approaches to project review that gave the local people for control of the process, thus reinforcing their commitment to the implementation of the outcome. This calls for an overhaul on both planning and evaluation practice. It is very rare to find the perceptions of the community occupying the superior place in the empirical realm of any planning, review or assessment. At best, community views have been used only to underscore and justify a point made by a table of figures, where in fact it should be the other way round (Thekaekara, Ed. 2000:570).

3.2.10 The three pillars of PRA

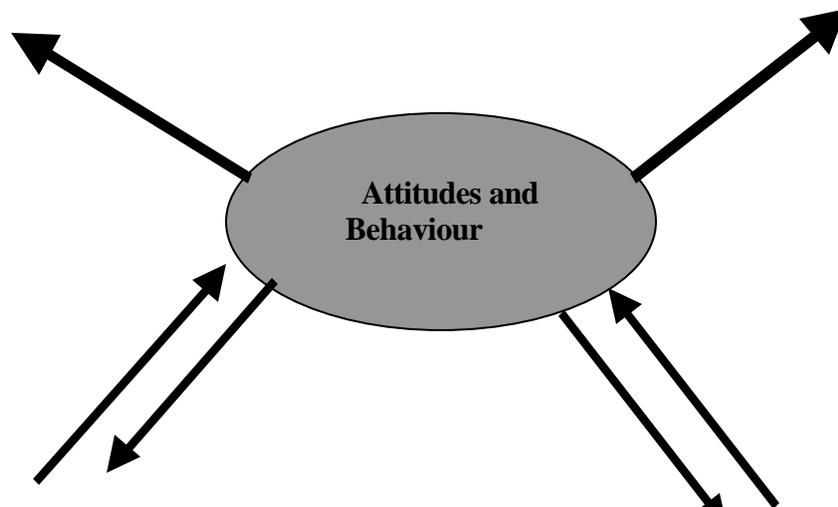
Participatory Rural Appraisal is founded on three critical pillars. Without either of these in place, PRA is rendered impotent. These are summarised in *Figure 10* below:

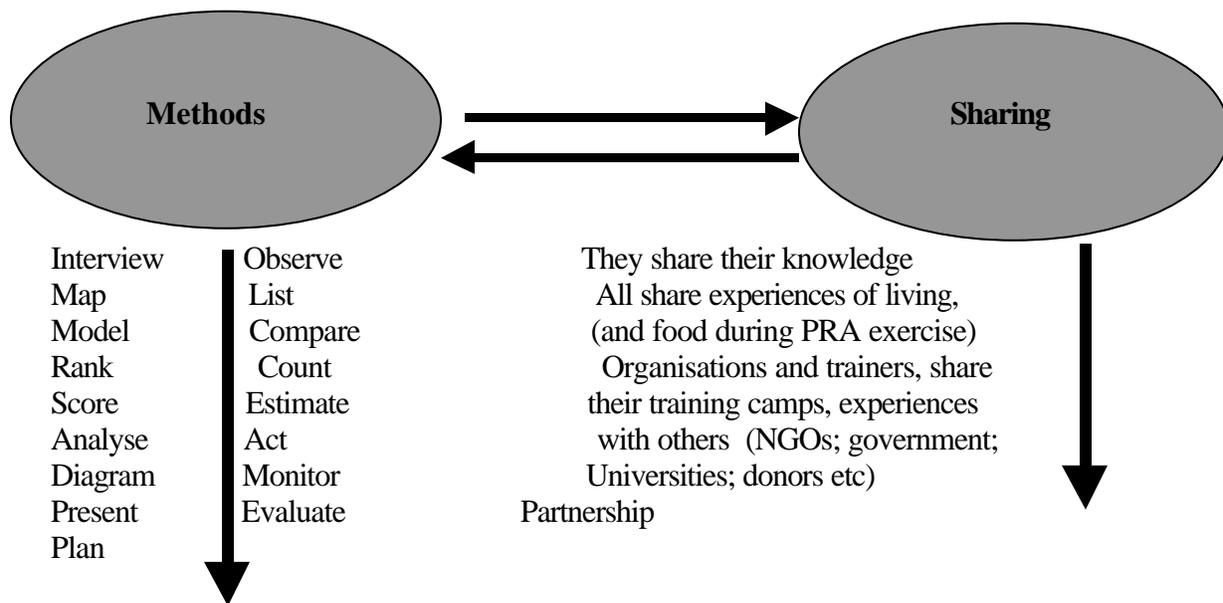
Figure 10: The three pillars of PRA (Source: Adapted: From Chambers, 1997:105).

Handover the stick

They can do it
Use your own best judgement at all times
Sit down, listen, learn, respect
Unlearn
Relax
Embrace error

Facilitate
Don't rush
Ask them
Have fun
Be nice to people





3.2.11 Challenges, dilemmas and lessons learnt from the field application of PE and PRA

Below are the challenges, dilemmas and lessons from the researcher's field experience with the application of both participatory rural appraisal and participatory evaluation for the last ten years. This section aims at highlighting some of the practical problems to be experienced in the application of participatory methodologies in community development, and in particular participatory planning (which incorporates PRA) and participatory management (which incorporates PE). The major purpose is to extrapolate lessons in contribution to the wider pedagogic reservoir of knowledge from empirical realm towards best practice.

3.2.11.1 Cost Factor

Now that PE and PRA are more people centred methods as compared to the conventional approaches, they tend to consume longer duration to process people's discussions as they contribute their creative ideas and share their lived experiences. People also take time to innovate and experiment new ways of doing things. All these processes of learning tend to take much more time than straightforward lectures. Where paid consultants are the process facilitators, they tend to be more expensive as they take longer

with the processing as compared to lecturing. This makes participatory processes relatively more expensive both in human resource and financial input as compared to the conventional delivery of knowledge.

Lessons

PRA and PE budget vote-heads should be drawn-up and build into the programme budgets right from the budgetary stages of project conceptualisation and design. This will enable a pro-active incorporation of PRA and PE as central activities of a programme cycle as opposed to reactive tendencies of 'including' PRA and PE as after-thoughts. This consideration will help to avoid the common mistake of upsetting programme budgets from time to time in order to cater for PRAs and PEs to meet donor demands.

Ensuring effective program monitoring and documentation systems that seek to collectively (involving various stakeholders) gather and manage programme data in such a way as to keep the vital information on the finger tips of the stakeholders is an equally important strategy for cutting t down on the costs of field data collection during PRAs and PEs exercises. This would make it less necessary for PRA and PE teams to spend many days on field visits, as it will be possible to extract up to date and reliable information from monitoring files.

3.2.11.2 Conflict

Stakeholders in an evaluation setting are often found to harbour unresolved interpersonal, intra-group or inter-group conflicts. These conflicts tend to re-surface from time to time during the PRA and PE activities. These often manifest themselves through clique groupings, which are not uncommon particularly at the early stages of the PRA and PE exercises.

Lesson

Now that participatory methodologies involve lots of interpersonal processes of interaction, efforts should be made to iron out areas of conflict (or at least to acknowledge and bring into the surface any existing differences), which could jeopardise the process and therefore compromise the quality of the outcome. At best, people should be accorded opportunity to establish areas of

discontent even if it may mean agreeing to disagree, rather than allowing simmering negative feelings to destroy good work.

This calls for basic skills and solid experience among PRA and PE process facilitators in such social skills as adult education methods, group dynamics, process facilitation and ability to resolve conflict when wounds begin to open up during the process of open dialogue. Such efforts set the stage for a new era in future programme management after the PRA or PE exercise is completed. However, we should be forewarned that an attempt by an amateur who is not equipped with adequate skills and experience to manage and resolve conflict may spell doom and catastrophe as it may lead to crisis as things and groups fall apart and out of control.

3.2.11.3 Objectivity vis-à-vis subjectivity

There have often been attempts from time to time by programme staff and sometimes community ‘gate-keepers’ to explain away or dismiss programme weaknesses or negative aspects of information gathered from the communities during PRA and PE exercises. This is usually an effort to disown responsibility over the unpleasant realities emerging from the exercises. The scenario is complicated by the fact that some of the key programme officers or key community opinion leaders would be at the centre stage as field data collectors and interpreters. Unfortunately, our experience shows that negative feedback from colleagues is often mistaken for personal vendetta.

Lessons

We have learnt that competing departmental teams or rival communities tend to take negative feedback on their departmental or community programmes as personal attacks. This is more so where different departments or communities are asked to assess their neighbours (as would usually be the case in participatory methodologies). We have also learnt that hard evidence from field data (whether qualitative or quantitative) goes a long way to calm down the flaring anxieties and defensiveness following negative feedback emanating from PRA and PE activities.

However, it seems like a measure of subjectivity cannot be ruled out in participatory processes. This will even be worse where such assessments take place towards the end of a project cycle to

determine whether or not the project funding will be continued. The programme teams and communities alike tend to be hypersensitive and extremely defensive in such circumstances. This is because the outcome is seen to reinforce of compromise on the project sustainability and therefore people's survival and job security among the project staff. It is therefore instructive to de-link the project funding cycle from the appraisal and evaluation exercises. For best results, it would be desirable to conduct participatory appraisals and evaluations when the project funding is potentially assured awaiting the outcome of such exercises to give the funding a direction.

3.2.11.4 Clash of expectations

It tends to baffle some communities and some programme teams alike, and especially those operating at the lower programme levels when they find themselves being consulted on base-line surveys through PRAs and programme evaluation through PE, processes that traditionally were the exclusive preserve of professional consultants. They often wonder why they have to be consulted at all, and whether or not the consultation is genuine.

Lessons

The role of external consultants as process facilitators should be discussed or spelled out and clarified right from the start including the nature of the methodological orientation of the activities at hand. This would minimise both the unrealistic expectations often associated with PRAs as well as eliminate fears associated with evaluation true to conventional approaches to surveys and evaluations. People's participation in these exercises remain paramount as it is believed that not only do people know what is best for them, but that recommendations that come from within are more likely to be implemented than those from without. Hence, 'professionals' should be willing to let-go their perfectionist tendencies and allow others to make mistakes and learn from them. Care should be taken to ensure that no under-currents exist to undermine joint discussions among stakeholders. No vetoes, no godfathers or godmothers and no inner circles should exist to sanction people's decisions.

3.2.11.5 How much is too much?

With the commitment to bring on board the diverse expectations from various stakeholders on a survey

or an evaluation at hand, there is realistic danger of being superfluous which involves falling into the temptation of biting more than a team can realistically chew. Given the aura of excitement surrounding participatory exercises, the challenge to remain focused is greater.

Lessons

Given budget and time constraints, there has to be a limit as to how much of the issues can be brought on board whether in an appraisal or an evaluation. It would be advisable to maintain caution against the ever-creeping temptation to bring on-board too large size of terms of reference in the name of representation of stakeholder expectations. If possible all stakeholders should be represented in the planning sessions for PRA field activities, as well as in evaluation focusing workshops prior to the field evaluation activity itself. This is where there will be prioritisation of issues of focus.

3.2.11.6 Hierarchical structures: 'New wine in old wine skins?'

It has been doubtful as to how far one could go with the application of participatory methodologies in non-participatory structures. There will often be the possibility of resistance against the process by the stakeholders of the old school of thought. To be sure, not all practitioners are converted into participatory methodologies, even though they may preach it. In fact, the biggest challenge to the future of participatory methodologies is not from without, but from within. The biggest challenge is the 'prostitution' of the methods by practitioners whose domineering attitudes are still predominant. They abuse participatory methods, especially when they happen to hold positions of power and policy influence within their organisations.

The initial reaction from unconverted authorities tends to be that of bewilderment bordering with suspicion and then resistance. As the lowest cadre of organisational membership is brought on board on an equal relationship with the senior managerial team, to assess the performance and shape up the future of a programme, the latter have tended to view the process with some measure of cynicism. However, it seems that it is the commitment of donor partners to the participatory processes, which has kept the practice alive in such top-down organisations as a precondition to continued funding. In this case, it would be expected that such participatory efforts are frustrated immediately donor funding ceases, in the

absence of organisational conversion into the desire for genuine community empowerment and therefore commitment to the methodologies that would facilitate the attainment of the same.

Lessons

The commitment of donor partners in participatory processes is a crucial factor to the success and sustainability of PRA and PE practices. This does not necessarily suggest paternalistic relationships but more of support and affirmation in venturing into the world of less familiar approaches and methodologies. The process facilitators have a crucial role to guard against hijacks and manipulation attempts over the process by the unconverted programme management. Continuous reassurance is necessary to calm down initial fears of the management and win its support. In retrospection, those in power should have trust in the people of humble background; the wretched of the earth, allowing them to make judgment over their own work. Care should also be taken to ensure there exists no danger of manipulation of the PRA and PE process and outcome, especially by the more powerful partners, through sugar-coating of findings and rhetoric against fundamental changes, which may threaten the status quo.

Having said this, it should be noted that capacity building efforts would be necessary to ensure that each stakeholder has the necessary minimum conversion into participatory approaches to development. This guarantees the minimum attitudinal requirements necessary for an authentic participatory process to take place.

3.2.11.7 Are PRA and PE applicable where the subject of investigation is sensitive?

Would participatory methodologies of assessment meet donor expectations of accountability despite being a fundamentally local activity of the people, by the people and for the people? Would people's participation compromise the objectivity of the outcome, and therefore raise questions on its reliability? These are questions that have raised lots of controversy on the relevance of participatory methodologies when dealing with sensitive matters such as accountability, ethnic conflicts, misappropriation of resources by the management, incompetence among senior management staff and such like. To what extent would participatory approaches remain relevant where the effectiveness or competence of a chief executive officer is in question?

Lessons

Even though participatory methodologies are transparent in nature with the potential of bringing to focus even the most sensitive issues of programme management, prudence should be exercised however to avoid character assassination. It should also be remembered that programme stakeholders are presumed innocent until proven otherwise with sufficient evidence. It is a fact that the life of the organization will continue long after the assessments are over and therefore whatever happens, should be done with utmost care not to jeopardise human relations among the various stakeholders. Having said this, it should be noted that not all issues of concern in an organisation should wait for PRAs and PEs. Auditors should handle issues pertaining to suspected misappropriation of resources for instance, while matters of professional indiscipline is an agenda for the management. It is advisable for these sensitive questions to be dealt with separately (whether before or after PRA/PE) to clear the air and avoid the possibility of their sensitivity derailing the PRA or PE exercise.

3.2.11.8 Dealing with our own professional biases

Often, field practitioners and central planners alike, have tended to work and collaborate more closely with those who are like-minded with them, those who understand faster or those who are better educated. We also carry with us sectoral biases of ‘specialisation’ depending on the nature of our professional orientation. We tend to choose to work more closely with people of our own gender than the opposite gender. We tend to be biased against the poor in favour of the elite, those who share more or less similar background and interests with us (middleclass dilemma). All these and more are biases we live with as development practitioners, often practising them unconsciously.

Lessons

We need not only be aware of our typical biases but also acknowledge them publicly whenever there is an opportunity to do so. This way, it becomes easier to focus on them and help others as well to acknowledge their own biases as undesirable reality that should be dealt with. In the process, we need to emphasise on working in multidisciplinary teams. This helps to offset or weaken the biased view of reality.

3.2.11.9 The extractive character of participatory approaches

A common anomaly with the application of PRA and PE is the apparent extractive practice rampant among the practitioners. This cannot be blamed on the character of the methodologies themselves but the level of conversion among the practitioners. Often those who practice the methods leave training centres more equipped with the PRA / PE tools and skills than the necessary change in attitudes. During such training, which often last for a day or two (blaming training budget constraints which may not allow longer period of training), trainees are rushed through the PRA / PE 'tricks' for a 'quick-fix'.

Usually, such efforts are meant to satisfy two major donor requirements: the introduction of participatory methodologies in project management cycle and to spent the capacity building vote head before the fiscal year ends. In this case, the 'trained' practitioners will still be found teaching more than learning, talking more than listening, tight and anxious more than relaxed, directing more that taking the backstage. At the end of the day, the practitioner takes away the appraisal or evaluation findings to prepare a report for his/her organisation. Such reports are styled in such as a way as to meet the fundraising needs of the organisation, but not necessarily for the purpose of the target communities. Rarely do the target communities hear about the outcome of the PRA/PE exercise except, perhaps, by chance as field workers are seen implementing what the organisation has planned for the community. This, to say the least, is blatant abuse of participatory methods among unsuspecting communities.

Lessons

Training sessions in participatory methodologies should seek to take more time focusing on whys of the participatory methodologies than hows. Hence, emphasis should be given to conversion from the traditional way of thinking, unequally relating to the local people, acting bossy, and investigative assessments laden with intimidation when it comes to project evaluation within the local communities. This conversion is attained through change of attitudes. Attitudes are changed mainly where the mode of training is experiential based, with adequate opportunity for experience sharing through simulations and role-plays followed by group discussions for collective analysis.

3.2.12 Conclusion

We have discussed in a reasonably great detail the efficacy, relevance, challenges and the potential in participatory methodologies in community development. It has been argued in this section that participatory development is about power sharing. It is the process of devolving power to the people, power to make decisions on matters that affect their lives as they assume full responsibility over the consequences of those decisions.

The participatory development paradigm is preferred to other paradigms as it seeks to focus on the human growth as the ultimate 'reason' for development initiatives. People's empowerment is the direct product of participatory leadership practice. People who are empowered can act for themselves.

Nevertheless, application of participatory methodologies requires high level of flexibility within the framework of pragmatic disposition. The secret of success in their application lies in the facilitator's ability to adapt both self and the methods to fit changing social, economic, political, organisational and physical contexts, as there can be no one best way and universal formula in dealing with people. This calls for an accommodative and experiential approach to community development, including planning and its management, as a basis for collective learning. In participatory development, it is believed that no body can rightly claim monopoly of knowledge, or expertise, since nobody can know everything there is in the complexities and relativity of reality. Similarly, there cannot possibly be total ignorance among the people on circumstances that they have lived and experienced for years, no matter how poor and marginalised they may be (Freire, 1996:*passim*). In this regard, participatory methodologies will seek to take advantage of people's experiences as a basis for collective sharing of knowledge and information. This leads to informed planning for the future. Gran also asserts this fact in the following words, specifically referring to participatory evaluation as a process of empowerment that protects the interests of the beneficiary constituency in a project:

...without mass empowerment in the evaluation process, the interests of the majority will not be served. The more removed evaluation is from the people and the processes involved in

design and implementation, the more likely the evaluation product will reflect external bureaucratic and political needs. The only way to counter elite interests is to build a constituency that will support and carry out such an alternative approach (Gran, 1983:291).

But this aspiration for capacity building among the people does not just happen overnight. It is a process that will involve building the self-confidence in people to the realisation that they had the potential to manage their own development affairs. It is a process that brings a local community to the realisation that it is only them who can effectively change their own situation. Outsiders are then seen as external change agents 'visiting' as short-term partners to support people in their aspirations and struggles. The change agents remain just what they are: external. It is with this realisation by both the local people and the change agents themselves, that genuine local participation can be expected. However, authentic participation will more likely be attained where a community is organised into structural instrument that facilitate and defend people's cause.

Below, we will reflect on the role of community-based organisations (CBOs), which includes civil society movements, as instruments for facilitating people's participation and empowerment through collective sharing, collective learning, and collective action. The discussion will seek to highlight the factors that strengthen or weaken the position and growth of CBOs towards fulfilling their transformative mission.

Community Based Organisations are perceived as efficacious instruments, not only for facilitating collective participatory planning, but also for ensuring structural framework necessary for post-planning support and follow-up among stakeholders. With a CBO stakeholders, we have in mind such groups as women and youth groups, farmer's associations, artisan groups, saving and credit groups, agricultural marketing groups, school committees, health committees, field community animators, external change agents, and such like. These would be expected to partake in shaping up the future of their community through the participatory strategic planning. This is why it becomes imperative to understand the concept behind CBO and how it works.

3.3 Role of Community Based Organisations in facilitating Participatory Development

3.3.1 Introduction

Before we can delve into understanding the role of community based organisations in community development, it would be rational at this juncture to endeavour to establish some common understanding on what entails the term ‘community’. We are deliberately avoiding an attempt to define it, as such an effort would be futile and unrealistic. Community is an elusive concept that defies definition, as it can have different meanings in different places and circumstances.

Human society consists of individuals and institutions. Institutions are groupings of people with some common characteristic, circumstance or goal and with certain organisation. Families, schools, churches and various interest groups are such institutions. Some are formal and some are less so. Most have a certain hierarchical structure. These various institutions are bound together by people (individuals do not belong to one institution only), and by interests. They also interact with one another in various ways that suit those interests (Swanepoel, 1993:11-12).

Existence of shared norms and values is a critical criterion of community formation. A community would usually share a common bond, be it geographical (or residential), social (such as religious affiliation) or occupational among others. It is usually people within the same organisation who share a common outlook or vision. At the centre of it all, people involved will be concerned about a certain problem or need (Swanepoel, 1993:12-13). With this backdrop of an understanding, we will now investigate on the meaning and relevance of community based organisations within community development context. The promotion of Community Based Organisations as instruments of community empowerment is a relatively new concept. Admittedly, there has always been community development initiatives promoted through self-help community groups such as women and youth groups among others. However, the tradition in the past tended to see these groups as mere conduits for channeling ‘development handouts’. It was believed (and still remains a fact) that distribution of such (otherwise meager) ‘development tokens’

through groups (rather than to individuals) is more cost-effective. While the idea of such service delivery groups was noble, the motive tended to be 'selfish'; as such 'development providers' served their own ego through what appeared like altruism and compassion for the poor. In reality, the practice created paternalism with the emergence of 'godfathers' and 'godmothers' for the community groups. These are power brokers, or economically well-endowed individuals who provide handouts to buy group loyalty. This is tantamount to hijacking communities for auction. No wonder therefore, the impact of such efforts towards the eradication of poverty has been miserably dismal with too thin coverage and the concomitant dependency.

Reflecting on the same, Johnson lashes out at development agents, blaming the perpetuation of poverty more on their approaches than other factors. He argues that efforts should be made to devolve the responsibility for community development to local community groups:

...we, as development agents, are part of the problem and not always part of the solution. There are ample studies, reports, workshops, and meetings designed to learn more about people who are poor. But as we start a new century, there are more people living below the poverty line than ever before. This is not just a result of population increase, but a failure on the part of governmental and non-governmental organizations to address the issues that perpetuate poverty...some of the bigger constraints to eradicating poverty are more likely to be found within the approaches and the activities of development agencies themselves... Development agencies outside the community are too bulky and slow to respond effectively because of their bureaucratic structure and distance from the community members. There is a need to build the capacity of local groups and village governments to better provide this immediate support (Eade 2002:135-136).

Community Based Organisations, if started and supported with the right motive, have the potential to become effective vehicles for community empowerment and people's participation in decision-making on matters that affect them. They create an opportunity for the otherwise powerless sections of the community to acquire collective bargain and solidarity necessary for lobbying policy change in their favour.

3.3.2 What CBOs are and what they are for

Community based organisations are voluntary associations where people organise together in order to mobilise the potential of their collective power. A number of writers have sought to highlight the crucial place of community organisations in participatory development processes. For instance, Bhatnagar (*et al.* 1992, 178), see CBOs as popular organisations where people act in concert, as members of groups or communities, to decide and act on issues which can best be solved through collective action. This includes collective learning from sharing experiences and confidence building. Through CBOs, people establish democratically controlled structures whereby they can profit from economies of scale. According to Bergdall, community based organisations, and in particular their apex organisations, are intended to serve as a mechanism for increasing the voice of the people in political discourse (Bergdall, 1993:5).

The process of empowerment of the small farmers for instance, is only possible through their own organisational framework as an instrument of self-defence. In other words, the establishment of autonomous small farmers institutions at the lower levels of society is perceived imperative as a means to counter-balance the larger power constellation at higher levels. Hence, in this case, CBOs serve to consolidate grassroots collective capacity for self-defence.

Community Based Organisations (CBOs) fall under the cluster often referred to as civil society organisations. Civil society organisations include non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions, national networks and associations, lobby movements, clan groups, self-help women, men and youth groups, religious based groups, welfare societies, co-operative societies, traditional/cultural institutions, business groups, professional associations and such like. The common characteristic with these groups is that members voluntarily come together to work for a common goal. Murphy takes us a step further in an effort to understand the civil society movements:

...civil society – a term which, like globalisation, denotes and connotes a wide range of meanings – refers to the sum of citizens organised into formal and informal associations to contribute to their collective lives and communities and to propose and contest social and

economic policies with their fellow citizens, their governments, and the state. ...we are now seeing local associations reach out to others in their communities, and beyond to the national, regional, and international level in strategies of mutual support and collaboration on major issues such as ending violence and constructing peace; enforcing government and corporate accountability; promoting democratic governance, human rights, social equity and economic opportunity; protecting local food security and traditional primary producers; and conserving the natural and cultural environment, including biodiversity (Murphy, 2000:338).

Ideally, a CBO is initiated, managed and owned by the members themselves in that given defined parameters of 'community' bond. CBOs can either be formal (registered by government authorities and governed by hierarchical structures of leadership with a binding constitutional framework) or non-formal (unregistered group with a loose management structure, often guided by cultural values of common good). In either case, the process of CBO formation should be voluntary, and genuine, borne out of self-determination by the members to work together. We can refer to this type of CBOs as 'organic' CBOs. That spells out their spontaneous and natural evolution. On the other end of the continuum, are CBOs abruptly formed for the sole purpose of attracting donor money? We can refer to these as 'makeshift' groups. These often disband either immediately after the funds are secured or when the members realise that no more external aid is forthcoming for the group.

3.3.3 What could lead to the pre-mature collapse of CBOs?

Learning from the history of community groups, including the farmer's cooperatives in East Africa (Bergdall, 1993:5-8), below are some of the common factors that have led to the collapse of grassroots organisations.

3.3.3.1 Hijacking from above

Strong top-down sponsorship of groups by external donors has tended to weaken allegiance of the leadership and staff to the organisational membership. In this case, group leadership tends to pledge its loyalty and accountability wholeheartedly and directly to the sponsor as opposed to the membership. As

a consequence, such an organisation is run from above, with the staff responding to the directives of their paymasters as opposed to the wishes and aspirations of the membership.

Similarly, stringent government legislation and administrative obligations handed down by the government during the registration of a grassroots organisation soon becomes source of weakness against effective and efficient operation of such an organisation. The high degree of state control that follows and the concomitant bureaucracy becomes an impediment to the smooth running of the organisation.

There has been tendency by the more powerful, better-connected members of the rural organisations to hijack organisational leadership and thus end up reaping more benefits of the organisational business as compared to the ordinary members. Besides, malpractice, complimented by unqualified management, has resulted in low efficiency of such organisations.

From the foregoing lessons, Bergdall observes that “*simple logic leads one to conclude that people’s organisations will be much more successful if they emerged from below rather than being imposed from above*” (Bergdall, 1993:6). This should be instructive enough for those who tend to hold the rather popular school of thought that successful community development initiatives are only those sponsored by a powerful donor partner such as the government or an external donor partner. Ironically, the reality is the opposite.

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3.3.3.2 *Heterogeneous membership threatens harmony*

In order to be effective instruments of transformation and authentic representation of collective interest, organisations for the poor must of necessity be formed of homogeneous membership. One way of achieving this is to ensure that local groups are formed around some concrete specific problem of interest e.g. women groups to fight against male chauvinism, small farmers’ groups to fight for fair prices for their crops and school-leavers groups for job-creation. There is wide consensus from empirical research that the rural poor will participate more effectively where membership recruitment is homogeneous, thus avoiding the danger of domination by a few powerful elements in the membership and therefore inhibiting the participation process.

Common interests among homogeneous individuals bring them together, sometimes in crisis or other times by a shared vision of the future. In most cases people who face a similar set of circumstances will form homogeneous groups spontaneously. By doing so, they find a strength, an ability to generate change (or indeed to resist change) that they could never achieve on their own. People who advance the argument in favour of homogeneity in membership in community organisations include Verhagen (1985:*passim*), Oakley and Marsden (1984:*passim*), Galjart (et al. 1982:*passim*), Uphoff (et al. 1979:*passim*) and Fernandes (et al. Ed. 1981:*passim*). There is consensus that, where membership is homogeneous, the danger of domination by a few powerful elements to inhibit the participatory process can be avoided.

3.3.3.3 Limited social awareness leading to increased vulnerability

Conscientisation programmes are fundamental to the entire process of empowerment for the poor. There are four major elements in this effort. First the transforming process is on-going and ever deepening. It begins with the raising of awareness, leads to action and is followed by reflection. Every action, triggers some form of reaction. This is why reflection after action becomes critical, in an effort to locate those reactions and their implications on the wider goal. The integration of action and reflection leads to a more profound awareness, which in turn animates further action. Second, the process of conscientisation takes place within a group. Joint reflection empowers community action, as it links together and enriches individual member's perception of the action. Thirdly, conscientisation enables people to really understand their situation and to remove the myth with which social structures often perpetrate undesirable conditions. It enables people to see more clearly their role in shaping a more just and humane society. And fourthly, the ultimate aim of conscientisation programmes and engagements is to change unjust social, economic and decision-making structures, which are the root causes of poverty and impoverishment. The process of reflection and action, however, has to be facilitated, whether by an external or internal animator. It has to be systematic too if to bear any significance as an historical phenomenon through which people get enriched by their 'praxis'. People critically analyse their social situation with view to building alternative and more just structures in society.

Conscientisation will enable people to emerge from the magical view of their environment and the

mystification of powers that oppress them, to demythologise the reality as a result of critical consciousness. This is perhaps what has led to the conclusion that: “The experiences of women all over the world demonstrate that they have had more gains from civic empowerment than from donor handouts to groups that are more benevolent than developmental” (Daily Nation, Wednesday November 15th 2000 page 6). Realisation is the way to begin to understand one’s inherent potential to shape one’s own future and transform the environment at large. Reflecting on this reality, the original designer of the “concretisation” methodology Paulo Freire, observes that one of the distinguishing traits of man is that only he can stand off from the world and the reality of things around him. Only man can stand at a distance from a thing and admire it. From this dialectical relationship, men and women are able to consciously act on the objectivised reality (Freire, 1970:57).

3.3.3.4 Crushed, crippled, and demoralised spirit as a result of poverty

The critics of conscientisation exponents have often accused them of being too dogmatic and detaching rationalisation from reality thus creating a gap between awareness building and strengthening the economic base of the poor. They have argued that the raising of people’s critical consciousness has been over romanticised at the expense of their economic welfare. The mistake is trying to place too much emphasis on changing attitudes without providing avenues through which these changes may take place. If it were to be implemented effectively and within the realms of reality, conscientisation will have to address the inegalitarian forms of distribution of resources in society and involve the generation of material benefits and organisational structures as well as accompanying changes of attitude.

Other critics would be more emphatic in denouncing the polarity that has been artificially created between ‘concretisation’ and ‘economics’. Conscientisation that does not improve the economic lot of the poor will only end in frustration. Just as there was a close relationship between action and reflection, theory and practice, there is also one between tangible objectives like increased access to land or higher wages and the intangible ones like improved levels of awareness and strength of people’s organisations. Ideally, the achievement of one should lead to the improvement of the other.

If one is working with the really poor, the material conditions have to be improved fast (mainly of course through people’s own efforts). The poor are not going to be interested in consciousness-raising for its

own sake. All consciousness-raising must lead to an improvement in their material conditions and vice versa. In fact, this dichotomy between organisational work and programmes for economic development is false and misleading. Hence, concretisation that does not seek to strengthen the economic base of the poor is highly deficient and remains weak and fragile. Conscientisation alone, without corresponding initiatives by the poor to improve their economic strength, could, after a point erode their enthusiasm and even create frustration among them. Cernea puts it more bluntly by arguing that, “Economic benefits must give people reasons to participate” (Cernea, 1992:1). This of course, tends to over simplify the purpose of participation. Nevertheless, the caution is valid, as poverty alleviation should be born in mind through out the struggle to actualise people’s participation.

3.3.3.5 Non-democratic political environment contradicting the process of empowerment

The absence of minimum democratic provision that would enable people to freely associate as citizens of a society, spells doom for the hopes of genuine participatory development process. On this Woolcott and Narayan (2000:227) note that; *“Weak, hostile, or indifferent governments have a profoundly different effect on community life and development projects, for example, than do governments that respect civil liberties, uphold the rule of law, honor contracts, and resist corruption.”*

An African Conference on Popular Participation, the first ever on the continent, was held in Arusha, Tanzania in February 1990. It was attended by 500 delegates representing 21 African governments and numerous non-governmental organisations and had the following resolution (among others), which would not be irrelevant to our concern:

.... The political context of socio-economic development has been characterised in many instances by over centralisation of power and impediments to the effective participation of the overwhelming majority of the people in social, political and economic development.... Nations cannot be built without popular support and full participation of the people, nor can economic crises be resolved and human and economic conditions improved without the full effective contribution, creativity and popular enthusiasm of the vast majority of the people.... We therefore have no doubt that at the heart of Africa’s development, objectives

must be the ultimate and over-riding goal of human-centred development that ensured the overall well-being of the people through sustained improvement in their living standards and the full and effective participation of the people in charting their development policies, programmes and process and contributing to their realization (Oakley, 1990)

It is hoped that many African governments took the liberty to sign this document. Needless to say, this would facilitate the participatory development efforts on the African soil thus rewarding the isolated but determined initiatives that exist today.

3.3.3.6 Large projects are difficult to manage, and compromises quality and unity of purpose

Authentic popular participation is a process that may (or perhaps should) begin with humble and small-scale initiatives by the people. It is assumed that success in relatively small initiatives give people the necessary self-confidence and equip them with the necessary lessons required to embark on more ambitious initiatives competently. Through accomplishing small-scale projects, villagers can gain experience in the practical management of organisational details like budgeting time and money, working together, and accounting for funds. (Bergdall,1993:17). It also follows that, the bigger, more complex and more sophisticated a project, the larger the role of external change agents, and the smaller the chance that ordinary people will take the initiative (Swanepoel, 1993:6). On this Mulwa argues:

As a child learns to walk, so the rural poor would need to learn to take responsibilities in their new participatory programmes. This gradual process would take place best where it begins with less ambitious projects which the local groups can handle within their scope of limited managerial and material resources (Mulwa, 2000:47).

It should be borne in mind that, when people fail in their initial project attempts, this tends to reinforce their doubts in their potential and ability to transform their own reality. Often, such failure emanates from seeking to initiate and implement too ambitious projects without prior relevant experience. Hence, its is instructive and imperative that people's participatory experiences should start humbly and grow with experience with future planning for expansion based on concomitant lessons. Since community development is essentially a learning process, people should start with what they know (Swanepoel,

1993:6).

Similarly, for CBO's to be effective, they should be made up of small and manageable size of membership whose strength comes from linkages and networking with other like-minded groups. Hence:

It is clear that the action group in community development cannot be an amorphous mass of individuals. It must be possible to define it in terms of some criteria. It is also clear that the size of a group and the proximity of its members are important aspects for community development. The larger the group, the more difficult it will be for them to identify a common need and objective; and the further away they live from each other, the more difficult it would be to come together for collective action (Swanepoel, 1993:13-14).

3.3.4 Benefits of CBOs as instruments for community participation

CBOs are important vehicles for community development for many reasons. The people own them – this brings forth the “sense of ownership” which is so fundamental to the success and sustainability of community-based projects.

By coming together, people create for themselves the opportunity for collective analysis of their situation. This deepens their awareness on matters of social concern beyond the superficial realm of understanding. They can also act collectively for a common good. Many community members can be reached with minimal effort and resources when they are in groups.

The CBO approach seeks to correct “contact farmer” bias, which has tended to marginalise the smaller farmer. A contact farmer is usually better off and relatively better endowed with resources and skills as compared to an ordinary farmer. This is usually the person invited to training sessions and educational tours organised by development agencies and subsequently visited by the extension workers. It is assumed that by concentrating skills and subsidised inputs in him (they are usually men), there will be a trickle-down effect on the smaller farmer as he/she learns from visiting and observing the performance of the neighbour contact farmer. On the contrary, the CBO approach enables all members in a community

to benefit equitably from such services regardless of social standing.

CBOs accord an opportunity for extension workers to reach many people within a short period (multiplier effect). CBOs are more cost-effective as they seek to maximise use of local resources within the CBO itself, both human and material resources. It is cheaper (in time and resources) to reach individuals through their groups than through their individual farms.

The CBO approach seeks to build on the cultural tradition of self-help. CBOs enhance scope of participation, sourcing from broad-based talents, experience and skills among members through collective learning. There is an enhanced sense of collective responsibility towards sustainability of local initiatives.

Community-based organisations, which incorporate civil society movements, provide a fertile ground for the consolidation of democratic civil society. They become the training ground for democratic ideals and practices in society. They become the democratic bronchi necessary for the healthy functioning of the institutions of governance (lungs) of a society. In fact, reports are rife that civil society organisations are changing the political landscape of some countries in Africa.

One of the most important (recent developments) has been the emergence and strengthening of civil society in Africa, especially when donor countries decided to assist civil society organisations directly at the end of the Cold War, partly due to the endemic corruption of many states. This nascent civil society has also played a critical role in acting as checks and balances to repressive African regimes (Sunday Nation, June, 9th 2002,18).

A good example of this was the recent successful effort led by civil society movements and NGOs in Zambia to thwart Fredrick Chiluba's attempt to change the constitution to allow him run for a third consecutive term as the President. In Kenya, the ongoing constitutional review became a reality following insurmountable pressure exerted on the government by the civil society movements through creative advocacy (including NGOs, religious bodies, the press, Churches, legal and human rights lobby groups, among others) without which the state would not have initiated the process. Sam Njoma, the

President of Namibia, succeeded in cowing down the civil society to renew his term for a third term against the constitution and the will of the majority. President Mulusi of Malawi is yet another most recent example. He is currently pushing for the change of constitution to allow him run for a third term. However, sure enough, he is already confronted with people's resistance. He has had to interfere with the freedom of the judiciary to declare popular demonstrations against his bid illegal.

CBOs are a base for launching economic empowerment of a community as members pull meagre resources together for common good. This enhances the bargaining power in defence of people's economic interests. CBOs create the power in numbers, as members share risks in their support system as a group, whereby the weak have security in times of hardship. This reality is captured in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach as noted by Mathie and Cunningham:

By mobilizing these informal networks, formal institutional resources can be activated – such as local government, formal community – based organizations, and private enterprise. In fact, the key to ABCD is the power of local associations to drive the community development process and to leverage additional support and entitlements. These associations are vehicles through which all the community's assets can be identified and then connected to one another in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness (Mathie and Cunningham, 2002:5).

It is believed that it is easier to facilitate community development processes through groups rather than through individuals. Groups are more easily accessible and move faster in activities as they experience synergy and symbiotic effect.

An international symposium on The Challenge of Rural Poverty held in West Germany in 1987 concluded with sentiments similar to the foregoing argument as they observed in a resolution that, participatory development would realise its full transforming potential:

...only through the motivation, active involvement and organisation at the grassroots level of the rural people, with special emphasis on the least advantaged, in conceptualising and

designing social and economic institutions including co-operatives and other voluntary forms of organisation for planning, implementing and evaluating them.

Mulwa (2000: 36) similarly highlights the centrality of autonomous rural organisations but further argues that such organisations would need some supra-village linkages as support framework, with additional support from like-minded development agencies or any other legally established organisations. However, such support should guard against creating paternalism and new forms of dependency syndrome and paternalism. Experience has shown that community organisations that operate in isolation (lacking support linkages) do not stand the turbulence from the forces whose interests they contradict. Efforts to organise the poor will usually trigger a backlash of resistance from the more powerful groups with dynamism of conflict developing in the process. Bergdall puts this fact more forcefully thus:

Any serious effort that involves social change will certainly cause confrontation...Short of revolution, participatory development programmes are almost always going to be vulnerable to charges from radical observers of being merely reformist (Bergdall, 1993:13).

Hence, rural organisations serve to empower the poor by giving them collective bargain and collective voice. They build a countervailing power with which to confront the powerful economic, social and political forces, which normally interact to maintain their silence and poverty. These organisations provide important factors in education for awareness and exchange of information. They enable groups within rural society to achieve influence over others or act as a forum where decisions can be made.

Such organisations are found and managed by the people themselves, not for them. They will of necessity succeed only where there is a foresighted, highly motivated and selflessly committed, altruistic leadership from within. Such leadership is not in short supply in local areas, it only needs to be identified and prepared through appropriate orientation.

It should also be noted that it is not just any organisation, which could promote participation and empowerment. There is paramount need for the organisation itself to be participatory in its management and operation. It would be unrealistic to expect rigid, bureaucratic and dominating structures to operate

effectively as instruments of participation and empowerment.

3.3.5 Conclusion

Root causes of poverty and underdevelopment are complex. Hence, everybody in a community should have a role to play in seeking for lasting solutions. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to suggest that response to rural poverty through conventional 'expert-led' project-approach has made significant difference towards poverty alleviation. Apparently, it has done little more than treating the symptoms. In fact, there exists overwhelming evidence (Bhatnagar and Williams - Eds, 1992:*passim*; Bryant and White 1982:*passim*; Buhera, 2000:*passim*; Cernea,1992:*passim*; Chambers,1993:*passim*; Eade and Williams, 1995:*passim*; George,1988:*passim*; George,1986:*passim*) linking causes of poverty more to unequal power relations than to simplistic analysis that has often led to income generating activities in response to low levels of income. Such responses only end up sedating the potentially explosive reality, postponing critical questions beneath where the real solutions to the challenges of the rampant poverty would be found.

It is power relations that determine patterns of distribution of regional and national wealth. It is power relations that determine as to who will be mandated to make what decisions for whom at what level. Hence, while the conventional project approach basically seeks to address the productivity questions, the actual root causes of poverty tend to lie deeper and therefore are often overlooked by intervention strategies based on superficial analysis. In other words, the root causes of poverty are often more difficult to address as they are 'political' in nature, requiring 'political' response. This begins with creation of critical awareness within the society leading to collective lobbying and organising for action for change. In deed, such lobbying entails conflictual, and therefore political response.

Quality development should therefore be 'self-made'. Each stakeholder in a community has to be involved in the community's processes of development without exception, since all have a stake in bringing about quality and equitable community development. In the process, however, care should be taken to protect the interests of the weak and vulnerable groups against the powerful. It is in this regard that the role of community-based organisations becomes critical as instruments of self-defence for the poor (Verhagen, 1985:1-2). Support from more formal, legally established organisations reinforces the

power-base for the poor. Mulwa has captured this reality as follows:

Once (people's) organisations are in place, they will need some supra-village linkages as support framework, with additional assistance from some, preferably, non-governmental development agencies or any other legally established organisations. Such help, however, should guard against creating paternalism and new forms of dependency syndrome. Experience has proven that unsupported, rural organisations may not survive the turbulence from the forces whose interests they contradict. Any efforts to organise the poor will inevitably trigger a backlash of resistance from the more powerful groups with conflicting dynamism developing in the process (Mulwa, 2000:36).

Poor categories of rural populations embrace the materially deprived and impoverished, women and children, subsistence farmers, small traders, the chronically sick, the disabled and such like. Their views are often overlooked or ignored altogether by the elite, those who are economically powerful, politically influential and well connected. This is the lot that cannot believe that the poor rural people would know anything of consequence. The indigenous technical knowledge has been rejected just because those who possess it are not professionals, but illiterate, of low status and poor (Chambers, 1993:6).

Transparent and accountable leadership is what it takes to ensure authentic participation of all stakeholders, with impartiality is the guiding virtue. As noted above, lasting solutions to rural poverty are 'political' in nature. They have more to do with just, transparent, and accountable leadership. Those solutions usually call for structural transformation. This again involves difficult options, now that the common expectation is that community development practitioners should be apolitical in their professional conduct.

In spite of our rather elaborate exposition on participatory development, it is vital to acknowledge at this juncture that there is no single path to development, neither can there be a particular universal formula on how to do development. Alonso concurs with this view as he declares:

...what the study of history shows us is that there is no single path to development. The

paths towards progress followed by specific countries at different times have diverged greatly. There is no theoretical or empirical foundation to the argument that there is but one single and universally valid body of fixed prescriptions. Each country must seek its own route to progress, based on its own assets, taking into account its own history and particular circumstances (Alonso, 2000:352).

According to Chambers, equitable development that has the potential to eradicate poverty will only be realised when values among professionals are overhauled. That is, when our professionalism reverses power relations. This involves ‘putting the last first’ by deliberately choosing to work among the poor and those more deprived, changing our research methods to incorporate the experiences and the views of those regarded with contempt due to their illiteracy, and especially those in rural areas. Research approaches and methods should be made more holistic and experimental and located more in field conditions. Roles are reversed, with poor people as teachers and experimenters. Research priorities are determined not by scientists but by the poor themselves (Chambers, 1993:9).

Equipped with this new set of values, it should be possible for development practitioners to set in motion a human centred development, a process that acknowledges the centrality of the human person as the purpose and the architect of community development. As Chambers concludes that:

...the paradigm shift depends on professional people. They are the key. The problem is not ‘them’ (the poor), but ‘us’ (the not poor). The massive reversals needed to eliminate the worst deprivation need professionals to fight within the structures in which they find themselves. Most, however trapped they feel, have some room for manoeuvre and can find allies. Major shifts come not just from big decisions, though they help, but also gradually through a multitude of small decisions and actions, which together build up into a movement. The basic issue is power. Those with power – ‘us’ – do not easily give it up. The challenge then is to find ways in which more and more of those who are powerful and privileged can be enabled to work to start and strengthen processes which in turn enable and empower those who are weak and deprived (Chambers, 1993:13-14).

In this Chapter, we have discussed in reasonably great detail the practice of participatory development and the role of community based organisations as its vehicle. We have explored the potential it holds and challenges on the way towards ensuring quality human development. We have also argued that, while each of the three paradigms discussed so far remains a necessary option depending on the circumstances at hand, it should nevertheless be born in mind that attainment of quality human development for the majority of the populations and their enhanced levels of empowerment ultimately justifies the means. To claim legitimacy, various development interventions will therefore have to remain focused on such values. This will only be realised where stakeholders participate in their own development right from the development planning stages, including their participation in making decisions that affect them. Participatory development embraces rights approach to development that is concerned with issues pertaining to fairness in distribution of economic growth, justice that produces true peace, and the supremacy of human dignity. With effective facilitation, participatory strategic planning is one of such interventions that will empower those involved. It will instil a sense of collective responsibility as long as it remains inclusive of all those concerned.

For many years, conventional development designs had relegated the role of development planning exclusively to technocrats often locked up in planning bureaus. What came out of such bureaus are water-tight or blue-prints plans handed down to the people to implement. In this case, field extension workers under various government departments complemented by local authorities provided the necessary structural framework to enforce the implementation of such plans by the people. The plans were not to be changed or altered in any way, by anybody other than the technocrats from the planning bureau. This way, people are reduced to mere tools employed to execute such plans, assumed to be for their benefit.

The consequence of such approach is that projects are not sustainable owing to the poor sense of local ownership. Project maintenance largely remain the responsibility of the external technocrats whose availability involves bureaucratic procedures and heavy costs. Such projects usually collapse for lack of maintenance as local people are resigned from responsibility.

The preceding Chapter on participatory development and the role of CBOs has set the stage for us to

investigate more deeply on the efficacy of participatory strategic planning as an alternative to the conventional planning practice. We envisage participatory strategic planning as a tool for organisation building at community level, complementary to the wider development concerns in people's empowerment. It is assumed that participatory strategic planning would cultivate, consolidated and actualise people's sense of local ownership and therefore local responsibility. These are the pillars of sustainable development, as people become masters of their own destiny.

The next Chapter will be devoted to the discussion on the process of participatory strategic planning, including an effort to understand the concepts involved.

Chapter Four

4.0 Participatory Strategic Planning Process for Organisation Building

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Background to organisation development concerns

In this Chapter, effort is made to establish important arguments as pertains to the practice of participatory strategic planning, in particular highlighting what the process entails. The discussion in this Chapter is meant to pave way for our field study in an effort to test and validate the arguments advanced thereof and in particular as pertains to the efficacy of participatory strategic planning as a tool for organisation strengthening.

4.1.1.1 Limitation experienced with literature review

An important constraint was experienced in literature review as pertains to the material that should be covered in this Chapter, a limitation that needs to be pointed out right from the outset. The researcher has established that, while *strategic management* is a discipline that is extensively researched and documented, apparently the same case does not seem to apply to *strategic planning* per se, (leave alone participatory strategic planning), which is a sub-set component of the wider strategic management discipline. The researcher ended up reviewing but only a limited selection of contemporary authors, mainly from the consultancy world, who have experienced and documented their lessons and insights on strategic planning mainly from their empirical practice.

In fact the researcher had to order or import some of the literature reviewed from the University

of South Africa Library and others from networking with friends studying in the United Kingdom during the period of the study.

4.1.1.2 *Is participatory strategic planning another development fad?*

Rhetoric in form of development buzz-words have come and gone, but the lives of the majority who form the bulk of the target groups have either been left unchanged, or more often, worse-off. The relatively more recent concepts which had dominated community development practice for nearly two decades such as rapid rural appraisal (RRA), participatory action research (PAR), participatory rural appraisal (PRA), participatory urban appraisal (PUA), participatory learning and action (PLA), and community based organisations (CBOs) among others, are rapidly fading away to pave way for new concepts such as globalisation, civil society organisations (CSOs), lobby and advocacy and rights based development among others.

Lamenting on this, Bryson (1995:10) observes that many leaders and managers are likely to groan at the prospect of having yet another new management technique (such as participatory strategic planning) imposed upon them as an offer for what now works. Bryson argues that managers and practitioners have all too often, seen such techniques fall by the wayside after a burst of initial enthusiasm. Managers in particular are justified to feel like victims of some sort in these management strategy experiments.

However, it has been argued that, unlike these other management techniques, participatory strategic planning would not just be a passing fad as it builds on the nature of *political* decision making (Bryson, 1995:10). According to Bryson, so many other management techniques have failed 'because they ignore, try to circumvent, or even try to counter the political nature of life in private, public and non-profit organisations'. Essentially, the political dimension of participatory strategic planning is the effort to incorporate the views and interests of various stakeholders. This effort is a powerful political statement in itself. Barry (1997:3), observes that since 1980s, some non-profit organisations have found strategic planning to be key to their success. Ironically, others have not had such a good experience with it, as they got bogged down in the process, or developed strategic plan that was not particularly useful. As a result of such contrasting experiences regarding the efficacy of formal strategic planning, it is feared that the approach may not be around for long (Bryson, 1995:10). However, on the other hand, should such a tragedy become a reality, then the blame should be laid, not on the methodology per se, but more on

the competence of its practitioners. Depending on the quality of the facilitation of the process, experience with participatory strategic planning will either get worse as a result of its abuse over the years, or get more perfected. If it is done well, one evolves beyond a strategic planner to a strategic manager (Bryson, 1995:10).

4.1.1.3 Complementary to capacity building

We would like to see participatory strategic planning endeavour as complementary to capacity building efforts. We surmise that low impact of many development projects and programmes can be traced back to non-functionality of the management systems of the facilitating organisations. This includes the concerns pertaining to the efficacy of the planning approaches employed in the light of people's development priorities and the development of their inherent capacities and potential to manage their own lives. The ultimate aim of a capacity building organisations should be to facilitate the development of self-determination among the people for whom it operates (De Beer, *et al.* 1998:50). The attainment of this goal would be manifested in a scenario whereby the local people are enabled to identify and prioritise their own needs as they plan for action to transform their situation on their own.

This goal will be stated in the documents of many development organisations in developing countries. However, more often than not it will remain a wishy-washy utopia. The larger blame for such a situation can be laid upon the inadequacy in organisational good-will, as well as poor management systems and practices. The leadership in such organisations has often sought to maintain and protect the status quo through unpopular policies, thus blocking all the possibility of planning for desirable change, as change is seen as a threat to the status quo, or more precisely, to their vantage positions of power. These organisations lack the kind of administration that will respond quickly and creatively to changes (Rondinelli, 1983b:148).

4.1.1.4 Founder syndrome becomes an impediment

The scenario would be worse where 'founder syndrome' exists. This is the situation whereby the pioneer members of these organisations are so protective of the original ideology, vision and identity that any proposal for change is perceived as dissidence or personal attack. Yet, quality community development can only effectively be facilitated by the kind of organisations that have the attitude and the

capability of a learning organisation (Korten, 1980:498). Such organisations will be characterised by “capacity for response and anticipatory anticipation, must embrace error, must plan with the people and link knowledge building with action” (De Beer and Swanepoel 1998:50). On the other hand, the management will often blame its staff for non-commitment and therefore poor organisational performance and low impact of projects and programmes. These unhealthy accusations and counter accusations among key stakeholders have led to the need to invent more inclusive and participatory methods of organisational development (such as organisational capacity assessment and participatory strategic planning) as the basis for organisation strengthening.

4.1.1.5 The expected effect of organisation capacity assessment

In the past, capacity builders have been busy with ‘panel-beating’ and giving ‘facelift’ to non-performing organisations. These types of interventions are characterised by staff training activities of all kinds. However, at the end of the day, little or nothing changes in the way the projects, programmes and the organisation works despite the heavy investment in human resource capacity building through training. Those involved soon come to realise that it is actually more often the ‘organisational entity’ itself that requires a major engine-overhaul, as opposed to the facelift through painting and the panel-beating. It is only after thorough organisational capacity assessment that it can more clearly be determined when, where and how to carry out strategic planning more effectively. An organisational capacity assessment exercise, would be able to establish one or more of the following:

- What kind of institutional support and strengthening would be required? or
- What kind of strategies would be necessary to resuscitate or salvage an organisation that is in ‘intensive-care-unit’ status? What if the organisation is beyond salvation?
- What kind of mechanism would be necessary to put in place to instil courage and provide safety-nets that would enable the organisation to phase-out honourably and bravely enough to appreciate and share with the wider society the lessons learnt?

4.1.1.6 Consequence of the growing significance of civil society organisations

As discussed in Chapter Two, structural adjustment programmes have seen the decline in government funding in favour of funding through non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

and community based organisations (CBOs). This has led to the increased emphasis at the donor circles on the need to strengthen civil society organisations as vehicles for democratisation (Murphy, 2000:338). In turn, NGOs have developed policies giving preferential option for the poor and the marginalised in society in an effort to foster equity in the access to world resources. It can be appreciated that NGOs would more often than not have a cutting edge in their culture of relatively greater effectiveness, efficiency and accountability as compared to their governmental development agency counterparts within the same areas of operation. Non governmental organisations are less bureaucratic and therefore operate with greater speed. They also have the advantage of learning more from transactions with their partner organisations based in developed countries where management research and practice is more advanced. Hence NGOs are expected to bear greater impact with less resources.

This assumption has led to the increased NGO funding in the recent times, with resultant rapid expansion of the NGO sector. According to the Chairman of NGO council, in his speech at the closing ceremony of Organisation Development Workshop for Act!on Aid Kenya, at Kiboswa in 1999, Kenya had 1100 registered NGOs as of April 1998. There were many more but unregistered NGOs, with 240 new entrants every year (Sunday Nation of February 14th 1999, Nation Printers, Nairobi). According to the Sunday Nation of March 10th, 2002, there was a whopping 4,000 non-governmental organisations in Kenya, both registered and unregistered. The annual NGO economy in Kenya was said to amount to Kenya Shillings 6 to 10 billion in 1998 (Sunday Nation of February 14th 1999, Nation Printers, Nairobi). According to the same source, 13% of foreign aid to developing countries is channelled through NGO sector. In 1970 US \$ 2.7 Billion was channelled through NGOs. This grew to US \$ Billion 7.2 in 1990 (Sunday Nation of February 14th 1999, Nation Printers, Nairobi).

The consequence of this kind of growth in quantity has often been serious compromises on NGOs' management capacity and quality. Of the 1100 NGOs registered in Kenya, close to 80% did not operate under NGO principles and values as at 1999 according to the Chairman of the NGO Council. About 25% of these NGOs did not even exist other than on paper, in form of a registration certificate. Numerous others are said to be 'brief-case' NGOs, with only voice recorders in what is purported to be their offices. Could it be the same concern that led to the deregistration of 410 of Kenyan NGOs

within the first quarter of 2002 (Sunday Nation, March 10th, 2002)? This explains the recent upsurge in concerns for organisation building within the NGO sector. Organisation capacity assessment provides the entry point to this end.

Let us now examine the basic concepts of participatory strategic planning. This is basically a post-assessment activity to solicit consensus among the key organisational stakeholders on the way forward.

4.1.2 Planning as a tool for organisation building

4.1.2.1 Introduction

Conventional practice in planning has over the years tended to depend nearly exclusively on the expertise of planning bureaucrats. These planning bureaucrats, owing to their specialised training, are expected to project (whether accurately or otherwise), the future economic reality of a society, calculated on the basis of scientifically established variables. Such economic projections based on national economic baseline surveys conducted by economists, have in the past been used as the basis for national and regional development planning. It is this type of planning by a handful of experts dominated by economists that has tended to dominate over the national development planning in many countries.

This way economists have tended to dominate the development debates, heavily influencing planners in the development field. This explains the tendency to emphasise on economic growth, industrialisation and productivity as synonymous to development, a notion soon to be challenged and disapproved from empirical research (Bryant and White,1982:5). This also explains why assessment approaches have for a long time been characterised by heavy statistical and quantitative measurements which other social sciences could not offer except the economists (Bryant and White,1982:6).

The result of this kind of planning which does not make reference to people's own perspectives and priorities has been a miserable failure to attain equitable national development. With this kind of planning, the rich get richer, as the poor get poorer. In fact, a large majority in the society experience economic decline (or at best stagnate) as the economically privileged take the advantage of opportunities that are only accessible to the economically powerful and politically well connected.

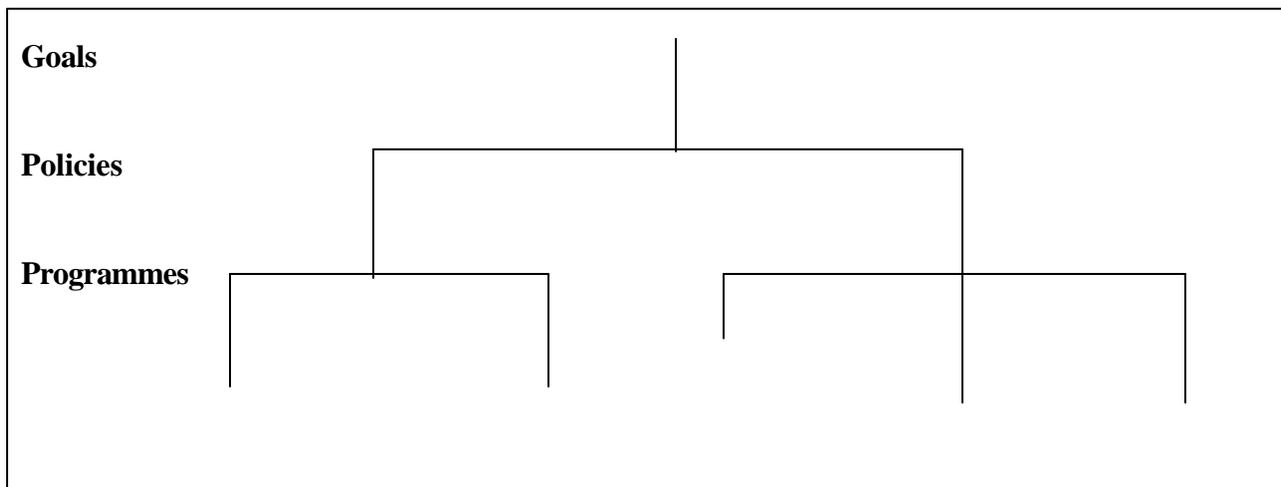
Sometimes economists responded to this crisis by critiquing the earlier top down models of development, which they themselves had advocated. For instance, Bryant and White (1982:16) argue that, “no matter how ‘developed’ an economy is, if only a small segment of the population benefited from it, development has not occurred.”

Under outright challenge especially, was the assumption advanced by the ‘trickle-down’ effect theorists. This was a wishy-washy expectation that in spite of the lopsided economic development that enriched only a few in society, there was usually a trickle-down of benefits to the less fortunate. This remained just an assumption, as such expectations were never realised in true sense of benefits that would make a difference in the lives of people. It had become clear that the poor, (a product of modernisation process) would not benefit in the absence of relevant policy orientation that ensured equitable distribution of the benefits of development.

4.1.2.2 The two models of approach to organisational planning

According to Bryson (1995:11-12), there are two models of planning: the rational planning model and the political decision making model. The rational planning model embraces the more conventional practice discussed above, that has for long dominated the scene in development planning in both public and non-profit organisations. In this model, it is believed that for an organisational entity to be effective in planning, such an exercise will have to be focused on areas of consensus such as organisational goals, policies, programs, and actions necessary to achieve organisational aims. In the absence of such consensus, there will have to be someone with enough enforcing power and authority that consensus does not matter (Bryson, 1995:11).

Figure 11: Rational Planning Model



Actions

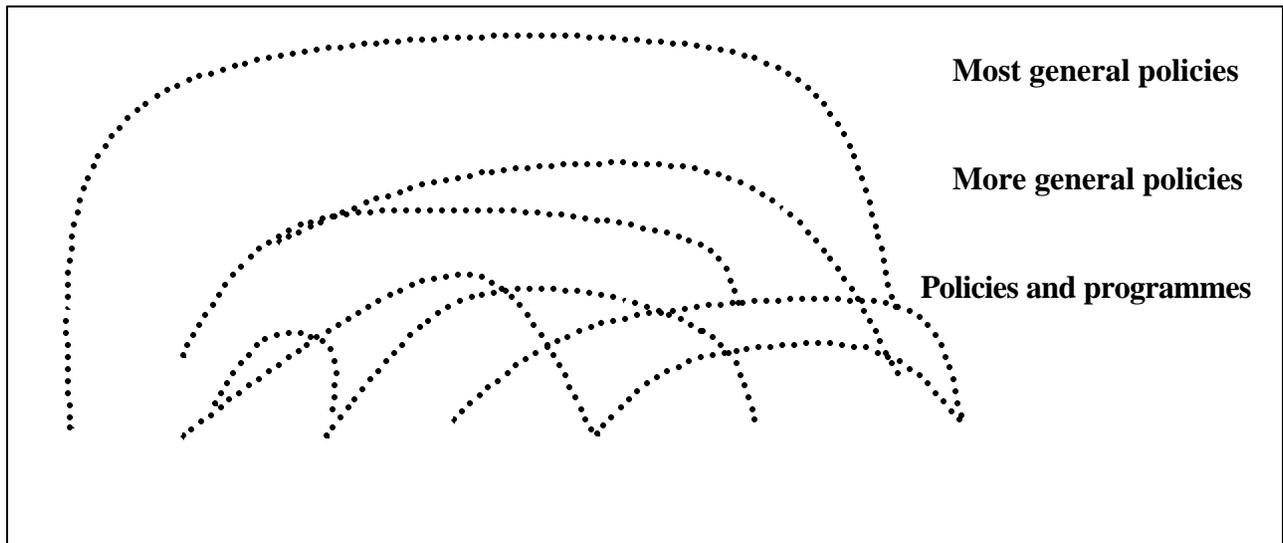


Source: Bryson, 1995, 11

But Bryson is quick to add that this assumption does not hold true in most circumstances, favouring the ‘political decision making model’ instead. The rational-deductive model follows the traditional logic of reasoning. This is the basis of Logical Framework Analysis for instance, in which, it is logically assumed that, all other factors constant, employment of resource inputs will involve activities, which in turn result in the attainment of programme objectives, which are derived from programme goals.

In contrast, political decision-making model is inductive. It begins with issues, which by definition involve ‘conflict’ and not necessarily consensus. The conflict may be over the expected results, or the means, timing, location, reasons for change, political efficacy of the issues at hand, or philosophy or methodology at work (Bryson, 1995:11). It is in the process of resolving these conflicts of interest that policies and programmes are created to deal with the issues. Such policies and programmes must therefore be ‘politically’ acceptable to the parties involved or affected for their implementation to win their necessary support. This is precisely why all the more, the participation or representation of key organisational stakeholders in the planning process becomes imperative and not just a desirable option. The heart of the participatory strategic planning process is the identification and resolution of strategic – that is, very important – issues as perceived by the various stakeholders (Bryson, 1995:11).

Figure 12: Political Decision Making Model





Source: Bryson, 1995, 12

The ‘political’ dimension here implies the effort to resolve the issues of conflicting interest among stakeholders. This is where the logic of trade-offs and compromises plays a pivotal role to enable those involved arrive at an acceptable working formula.

The two planning models discussed above are not always incompatible. On the contrary, it has been suggested that, for best results, the two should be complementary. After the political decision-making dynamics clarify the issues at hand and establish some consensual agreements on what policies and programmes will best resolve key issues, it would be logical to employ the rational planning model to concretise goals, policies, programmes and actions (Bryson, 1995:12).

4.1.3 Development planning

Planning is said to be the most important and yet one of the most misunderstood aspects of community development (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:52). It should essentially be a responsibility and preoccupation of the local people, and not a preserve of central planning bureaus on behalf of those on the periphery, as has often been the case in the past. If we all agree to the understanding that community development is a conscious and collective participatory process through which the people concerned gain greater control over their environment (Rogers, 1976:225), then the community has a central role to play in planning for the kind of activities that will bring about the desired development. But for a planning process to make sense and maintain credibility, then it must be followed by action for implementation (Abdalla, 1977:153; Vente, 1970:101).

Unlike in the conventional practice where blue print plans are handed down by the ‘experts’ to the implementers, it is now widely acknowledged that people must be involved in the conception and design of their own projects. This is the only way to ensure a sense of local ownership and therefore

sustainability of the project benefits. People will normally make relatively simpler project designs that are intelligible to them and within their reach in resource requirements and management capacity. The simpler and the less sophisticated a plan is, the higher are the chances that it will be implemented by the people (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:52) as they maintain more control over the factors of its success such as monitoring, evaluation and the ongoing adjustments. It is in this sense that technically correct and comprehensive type of planning has been censured by a number of social scientists.

Korten, for instance, laments that the so-called blue-print approach erroneously assume that the knowledge required for the preparation of a programme or project design can be treated as an independent input from the considerations on the local capacity to implement and utilise the results of such programmes and projects (Korten, 1980:499). As a result of this belief, the decision making role is assigned to the external professional planners who are the furthest removed from the local reality (De Beer and Swanepoel , 1998:52). Such technocratic plans are bound to be incompatible with the local decision-making realities, where community development processes are governed by uncertainties. In this sense, flexibility is considered a central virtue in project implementation within the wider context of interactive learning (Rondinelli, 1983b:17; Korten, 1980:449).

Emphasising on the same concept of planning as a learning process, Ackoff (1984:195), contents that the process of planning becomes more important than its intended outcome. Thus:

Development is a product of learning, not of production; learning how to use oneself and one's environment to better meet one's needs and those of others. Because the development process is essentially a learning process, one person cannot develop another...Now, how can we plan for development understood in this way? The answer ...lies in who does the planning because the principal benefit of planning is not the derived from consuming its products ...but from participating in the planning process ...Therefore, effective development planning cannot be done for some by others.

Swanepoel (1997:151-155), supports the same point of view equating participatory planning to a learning process. Swanepoel argues that it does not matter whether that kind of participation is full of

flaws as of beginners, what matters most is that people are learning to improve on their own action, gain self-sufficiency and self reliance towards self-help.

Hence, according to Swanepoel (1997:151-155), a good planning initiative that takes cognisance of learning as central to the process should bear the following characteristics:

It must be flexible and incremental: Empirical experience compels the conclusion that project circumstances and conditions are unpredictable and therefore changes in design or/and implementation plans are bound to occur during project execution. Hence, broad outlines are what is required in the initial project planning while the meticulous planning details can only realistically take place on a step-by-step basis. The lessons gained from project implementation experience as gathered from an ongoing evaluation of the process provides an opportunity to adjust decisions regarding action on a continuous basis. The whole operation is therefore hinged on the principle of flexibility. In other words, planning must, and can only be in the short term. Long term planning in community development is largely unrealistic. The changing circumstances do not allow that.

Objectives must be attainable in a fairly short period: People who are learning to be self-reliant and who are building on their own capacity are at high risk and lose heart easily. Quick results are an inspiration and a morale booster.

Planning must be simple: The learning process is enhanced by single, small actions, while sophisticated planning removes the people from the planning forum and replaces them with technocrats.

A summary is given below pertaining to the critical milestones of a planning process, both from a more conventional school of thought (Wileden, 1970:165), as well as from the relatively more contemporary perspective (Bryson, 1995). The two authors present paradigms with invaluable comparative value. This is more so given the reality in the long period of quarter a century that lies between them. A lot is bound to have changed within that period.

Observations

While the conventional approach proposed by Wileden (1970:165) suggests that we begin the planning process with ‘problem identification’, the contemporary participatory planning perspective suggests that we should begin by creating a visual scenario of the kind of future we aspire to see at the end of our intervention. In fact, it is not the problem (and therefore by implication, not the project idea) that should come first, but the description of the kind of future that is desired. What kind of a society, community, or organisation do we aspire to see in the future as compared to the reality of today? This can be referred to as our ultimate goal, or practical vision.

The second step, in this case, will be the identification of what Wileden (1970:165) refers to as ‘problems’ (which comes first in his proposed stages of planning). In our case, we will refer to these as ‘contradictions’ or ‘blocks’ that lie on our way, or that prevent us from reaching or attaining our practical vision. Hence, they should come second.

Considerations on the different strategic options to remove the contradictions come third followed by an analysis of the available resources. This will help determine which alternative strategy or method would be viable for action to remove the contradictions in the light of people’s resource capacity. SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable - or attainable -, Realistic and Time-bound) objectives are then developed on the action strategy chosen. Annual plans of action are drawn up based on these objectives, broken into quarterly segments. Meanwhile responsibilities are shared out and assigned to various players from among the participating stakeholders. Participatory monitoring and evaluation systems are collectively designed involving all the key stakeholders. This is one sure way to ensure that the systems are user-friendly and intelligible to the end-users. Hence, at no time will the facilitating agency need to go out to ‘inform the community’ as such (Wileden, 1970:165) since community will be represented in the planning process as part of the key stakeholders.

In conclusion, De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:54) caution that one has to be very careful when assigning organic community processes like planning to the concept of ‘steps’. They argue that planning is a process whose sequence may repeat it-self several times. The logic implied in the idea of ‘steps’ is that one action has to be completed before it leads to the next on the ‘production line’. This is not

always the case in volatile circumstances under which projects are planned and implemented.

Table 7: Conventional vis-à-vis participatory planning paradigms

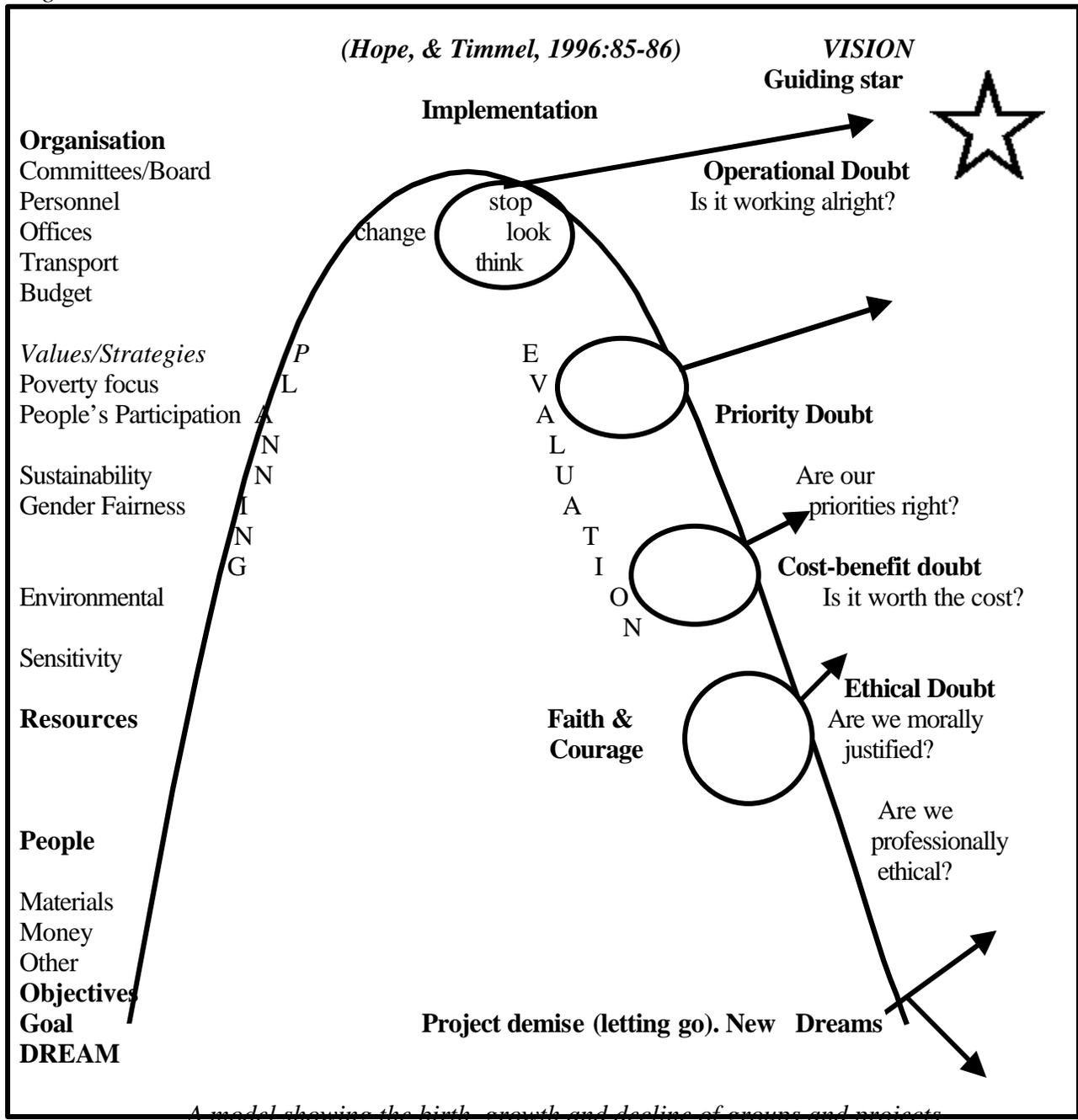
Conventional planning perspective	Participatory strategic planning perspective
<p>1. Identifying the problem or problems</p> <p>2. Agreeing on goals or objectives</p> <p>3. Discovering and studying available resources</p> <p>4. Considering different methods of solving the problem</p> <p>5. Deciding on the alternative to be followed</p> <p>6. Developing a plan for putting the alternative into action</p> <p>7. Assigning responsibilities</p> <p>8. Informing the community</p> <p>9. Following through on the plan</p> <p>10. Evaluating the plans</p>	<p>1. Describing the desired future, painting the scenario of the way life should be (the practical goal)</p> <p>2. Identifying the problem or problems. That is, establishing the factors that are blocking or preventing people from attaining that reality (contradictions)</p> <p>3. Considering different methods of solving the problem. That is, exploring possibilities or alternative strategies and options available for removing those blocks or contradictions</p> <p>4. Discovering and studying available resources</p> <p>5. Deciding on the alternative to be followed given resource limitations</p> <p>6. Agreeing on objectives</p> <p>7. Developing a plan for putting the chosen alternative into action</p> <p>8. Assigning responsibilities</p> <p>9. Instituting participatory monitoring systems that involve various stakeholders</p> <p>10. Participatory evaluation sessions are planned for, ensuring the involvement of key stakeholders</p>

(Adapted from Wileden, 1970 and Bryson, 1995)

4.1.4 The Parabola Model of planning and management

This model stresses the importance of common vision, values and clear objectives in a team or organisation. It provides some important criteria for building commitment, and a very reliable framework, which helps them to proceed step by step together.

Figure 13: The Parabola Model



4.1.4.1 Dreaming: a precursor to effective development planning

The parabola is a geometrical shape used often in graphs. The theory was developed by Hope and Timmel (Hope, & Timmel, 1996:85-86). They observe that every new undertaking begins as a dream, a new insight, an idea on a new possibility. But this dream has to be shared with others in order to be reconsidered, challenged, built, improved and finally adapted by the wider community. Of course, there are dreams, which may not call for group action. However when we talk of a project or a programme, we imply a group vision, whereby the dream will only become a reality to the extent that those who first think of it are able to share their vision with others. For sure, many people have had dreams, which remained ‘castles in the air’ and never came down to earth. However, a project dream cannot remain in the realm of thought alone (otherwise) it would be merely uncorrected speculation with no material purpose behind it (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:52).

4.1.4.2 Needs assessment through appropriate survey methods

While project management embraces planning, implementation, monitoring for control purposes and evaluation, it is not clear however, exactly where planning begins and ends in a project cycle (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:51). According to them, however, most scholars are in agreement that “a community development project starts with the identification of a need or the realisation that there is a need”. Identification of community needs is regarded as “the aspect that will elicit a commitment from the people to continue with the process of community development” (Jeppe, 1985:28). The sharing of the vision becomes a reality through needs assessment followed by group discussions and analysis. This will not only confirm the need for change, but also clarify the scope of the problem at hand and the resource base available. Base-line surveys give a clear indication as to where the journey begins, and by knowing the starting point, one can start estimating the length of the journey. We should not forget, however, that local sense of ownership and therefore the sustainability of what comes out of our efforts will ultimately depend on our rapport with the people more than any other factor. We should therefore take time and go at people’s own pace as we get to be known and to understand the local circumstances as outsiders.

4.1.4.3 Resource procurement and organisation development

A development project or programme will usually involve some organisation building. Some kind of structure would have to bear the programme responsibility and accountability, be it a management committee, or a more formal structure such as an advisory body or a board of directors. Usually such a structure would include some representatives of the wider group of project beneficiaries. This forms the ‘organisation’ part of the parabola. Such organisation bears “legal-holder” status of the project on behalf of the wider community.

The Project Management team is responsible for project planning, budgeting, resource identification and resource procurement and allocation. Of course, in a participatory development context this is not done exclusive of the project beneficiaries. In fact, the project beneficiaries are the main actors, only since they cannot all act on practical details as a group, they would have chosen a small committee to execute their ideas, plans and deliberations.

A resource profile indicating what resources are available where will assist in estimating how long the journey might take to reach the aspired destination (s). Resources here include people (and project staff), money, equipment, technology, transport, spare parts, stationery and the like. Equally important is to ensure there is adequate monitoring machinery in place before the project takes off.

4.1.4.4 Project implementation, monitoring and evaluation

While monitoring is a continuous activity throughout the project cycle, evaluation becomes critical at the project implementation phase. The parabola model argues that this is the “doubting” phase of a project, doubt becoming an important ingredient for project management ingenuity. Parabola identifies four major doubts: Operational Doubt, Priority Doubt, Ethical Doubt and Efficiency Doubt. .

4.1.4.5 Dealing with doubts through evaluation or / and organisational capacity assessment

Operational doubt – pertains to such questions as:

-Is it working alright?

- Are spare parts readily available when needed?
- Are raw materials and other resources readily in supply as required?
- Are the linkages between one system and another well networked to avoid delays and backlogs?
- Is skilled labour readily available for instant repairs?
- Is each member of staff playing his/her part or have they abdicated expecting to be supervised over?
- Does the project/organisational committee or board meet as regularly as it should?
- Do such meetings make quorum?
- Does the project/organisational membership meet as regularly as it should?
- Do such meetings make quorum?

Priority doubt - raises questions such as:

- Are our priorities right? Should we continue allocating our meagre resources to the same undertaking?
- Should we continue building more youth polytechnics or should we instead consolidate the few polytechnics we have by ensuring adequate supply of tools? Should we instead shift our attention from youth polytechnics to the efforts to settle-down those who have left polytechnics by assisting them with some business training and initial capital?
- Should we continue investing in building big hospitals, or should we instead shift emphasis to preventive health care and training of as many community health workers as possible to reach the remotest villages?
- Is the socio-economic situation favourable to justify continued sustenance of the same priority?

Ethical doubt - brings to mind moral questions such as:

- Is it wrong or right?
- Is it right to keep feeding people with food aid even when they are not in distress, in fact when they are harvesting their grains and in plenty? How does this affect people's morale and sense of dignity?
- Should communities be paid (whether in money or kind) for labour to implement their own projects?
- Should we continue building elaborate and expensive educational and medical institutions in the cities, which are only at the service of those more endowed with resources in the society, or should we shift our resource allocation in favour of the poorer communities, etc.
- Is it ethical to promote pig-rearing projects in predominantly Moslem communities?

-Would the state be justified to pass the hotly debated proposal to distribution condoms among teenagers in our schools?

Cost-effective doubt - the efficiency question. Is the project paying? Are the results worth the effort? Are the outputs commensurate with the inputs? Are the number and value of eggs from a poultry project commensurate with the labour, time and material input over a given period of time?

Usually, such questions become more urgent if the accounting system is not efficient enough to give a better picture of the actual financial status of a project as often as required.

4.1.4.6 The pain of letting go at last.

It is not always easy for one to admit a mistake or a problem in an undertaking that one treasures as a source of pride and self-worth. It even becomes more painful when the conditions dictate that the project has to be discontinued and a new dream ushered in. This can be a threatening experience especially to those for whom the project was initially their brainchild. But it is advisable to take heart when necessary to dream new dreams and learn from the past. Other times new dreams may not be desirable, but instead, perhaps seek to renew one's focus in the old dream, jump-starting the same, but this time with renewed vigour and better strategies, based on lessons drawn from past experiments and experiences.

4.2 Participatory strategic planning as a component of strategic management

“Men, I want you to fight vigorously and then run. And as I am a little bit lame, I'm going to start running now”. (General George Stedman, US Army, Civil War – in Bryson, 1995 – The general's strategy for the survival of his men on realising that they were outnumbered by their enemy).

4.2.1 Introduction

“There is nothing as practical as a good theory.” (Mintzberg and Quinn, 1996)

Essentially, participatory strategic planning is a subset of the wider strategic management practice. In this section, we will specifically look at the practice of participatory strategic planning, beginning with an attempt to understand the concept, what purpose it is meant to serve in an organisation, as well as the challenges the exercise poses to an organisation.

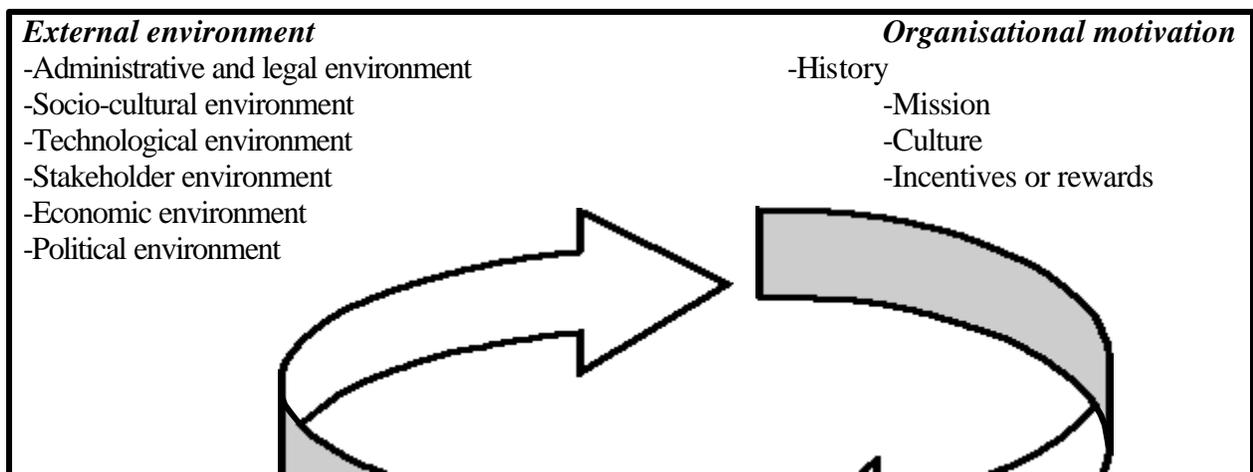
Participatory strategic planning should be understood as a component of the wider discipline in best organisational management practices. In this regard, there are four broad areas of focus, which have direct bearing on the organisational well-being. These are the external environment, organisational performance, organisational motivation and organisational capacity (Lusthaus, *et al.* 1999:45). These are further expounded below and summarised under *Figure 14*.

4.2.1.1 Organisational performance

According to Lusthaus (et al. 1999:46), the quality of organisational performance will only be assessed on the basis of the organisational outputs, as the product of planned organisational activities towards the organisational mission. However, the judgement on the organisational performance may vary with stakeholders depending on their particular expectations from the organisation. The target groups may judge the organisational performance by the amounts of material benefits accruing directly to them, or the frequency of supervisory visits made by the staff to the groups. On the other hand, the organisation management may judge its performance by the number of target groups attaining self-reliance in the management of their own affairs, or claiming autonomy and attaining independence in sourcing of group resources. This is precisely why defining of organisational

mission and performance indicators should be a collective responsibility among stakeholders to ensure this diversity of expectations is captured.

Figure 14: Four areas of focus in organisational well-being



Organisational capacity

- Strategic leadership
- Human resources
- Financial management
- Organisational process
- Programme management
- Infrastructure
- Inter-institutional linkages

Organisational performance

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Relevance
- Financial viability

4.2.1.2 External environment

According to Lusthaus (et al. 1999:52), this concern is recognisance of the fact that no organisation exists in vacuum. It will inextricably be linked to a country or a region with social, legal, technological, political, cultural and economic realities that will directly or indirectly affect the operations and the performance of the organisation. Organisational mission, policies, and strategies will therefore largely be dictated or influenced by this environmental reality. It therefore becomes imperative for stakeholders to analyse external environment during participatory strategic planning exercise in order to understand the external forces that help to shape an organisation. Equally important is the stakeholder environment. This is articulated through stakeholder analysis which leads to better understanding of the roles played by various stakeholders, their expectations in relation to the organisational services, their perceptions on the issues and challenges facing the organisation, as well as the resources they may be in a position to contribute towards the goals of the organisation.

4.2.1.3 Organisational motivation

This area of concern pertains to what motivates the organisation into the kind of 'business' it is involved with. In some, altruism (the opportunity to do good, selflessness) could be the driving force, while to others, it is maximising of profits that count. Yet to others, the driving force is the superego in form of

personal ambitions of the key players. In a normative perspective, organisational motivation is encapsulated in its mission statement. Its articulation is heavily influenced by the important organisational historical milestones (such as the story about its beginnings and evolution, rate of growth, awards of achievement, and significant changes in structure and leadership). Organisational motivation is also determined by the organisational internal culture, its nature and system of incentives or reward systems, and its values and beliefs about the organisational niche in society. These are considered key elements of organisational motivation (Lusthaus, et al. 1999:57). All these are critical aspects that conspire to provide a strong reference point for organisational motivation.

4.2.1.4 Organisational capacity

Organisational capacity may be understood as the ability and capability of an organisation to manage its own affairs and attain reasonable levels of organisational performance and effectiveness in meeting its mission and set goals with minimal or no need for external support.

Essentially, participatory strategic planning should seek to address the organisational capacity gaps. Organisational capacity assessment would not only enable stakeholders establish the status of the capacity of various organisational elements, but should also lead to an informed analysis on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing the organisation based on the outcome of such an assessment. A comprehensive organisational capacity assessment will cover such areas as follows:

- Legal Personality; Stakeholder Support; And Organisational Identity
- Organisational Vision; Mission; Goals; Objectives; Values And Strategies
- Personnel Management And Staff Welfare Policies
- Administrative Systems And Procedures
- Financial Management Systems
- Governance And Management Styles And Structures
- Human Resource Capacity (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities And Attitudes)
- Sustainability In Material And Financial Resource Base
- External Relations, Net-Working And Linkages
- Programme Performance And Community Participation

-Gender Balance And Sensitivity

Samples of organisational capacity assessment tools are attached in *Annex 1* of this thesis.

4.2.2 What and why of participatory strategic planning

According to Bryson (1995:5), participatory strategic planning has, until 1980s, primarily been applied to public sector, and specifically to military organisations and parastatals. Private sector was quick to identify the benefits of participatory strategic planning. No wonder therefore much of the strategic planning practice to date has been witnessed more in profit-making private organisations than in non-profit community service-organisations. This has been promoted in the private sector within the wider context of strategic management. However, strategic planning approaches developed in the private sector can help non-profit organisations, as well as communities or other entities, deal with their dramatically changing environments, and thus can help them be more effective.

4.2.2.1 What it is

The term ‘strategy’ has been used in this text to indicate that strategic planning involves identification of strategies towards the realisation of a practical vision (goal). A strategy is seen as the approach or method to be used (step by step) by an organisation to most effectively accomplish its mission towards a practical vision. It is simply a set of concepts, procedures, and tools designed to help leaders, managers, and planners think and act strategically. It can help an organisation focus on producing effective decisions and actions that further the organisation’s mission, meet its mandates, and satisfy key stakeholders (Bryson, 1995:9). However, there should be strong linkage between strategic thinking and strategic action to actualise an authentic participatory strategic planning cycle.

Participatory strategic planning is a *process* (Barry, 1997:5). It is therefore not a once-off activity but an ongoing or continuous process. It is a process that helps stakeholders in an organisation or a programme determine *what* they intend to accomplish in a specified period of time (whether months or years), and *how* they would direct the organisation and its resources toward accomplishing these goals. According to Kreitner (1995:173): “Strategic planning is the process of determining how to pursue the

organisation's long term goals with the resources expected to be available". Participatory strategic planning will concern itself with establishing or reviewing:

- The vision, mission, goals and values of the organisation
- Whom the organisation will serve
- The organisation's role in the community
- The kinds programming, services, or products the organisation will offer
- The resources needed to succeed – people, money, expertise, relationships and facilities
- And how the organisation can best combine all the above to achieve its mission.

Fundamentally, participatory strategic planning concerns itself with what an organisation or a community should do to improve its performance. Bryson defines strategic planning as “a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organisation is, what it does, and why it does it.” (Bryson, 1995:5). While some approaches to participatory strategic planning will tend to lay more emphasis on *process* (full participation of key stakeholders), others will lay more emphasis the shaping of *policy* and *direction setting* regardless of who participates as long as the key decision and policy makers play the significant role. The former has been referred to as ‘political approach’ to participatory strategic planning, while the latter is more of a ‘technical approach’. In this sense:

the strategic planner (or planning team), should be hybrid, so that there is some assurance that both ‘political’ (in the sense of diverse stakeholder interests) and technical concerns are addressed. Further more, since strategic planning tends to fuse planning and decision making, it is helpful to think of decision makers as strategic planners and to think of strategic planners as facilitators of strategic decision making across levels of functions (Bryson, 1995:5).

In Lusthaus (et al. 1999:63) view, participatory strategic planning comprises thinking ahead and responding to organisational environment to achieve its goals. This involves the development and implementation of activities that will lead to the long-term success of the organisation. The strategic plan is a written document that sets out the specific values, mission, goals, priorities, and tactics that your

organisation will use to ensure good performance.

4.2.3 Why do organisations engage themselves in participatory strategic planning?

Essentially, participatory strategic planning is meant to identify gaps in the organisation's performance and suggest ways to close these gaps (Lusthaus, et al. 1999:63). Through participatory strategic planning, an organisation will be able to anticipate and capitalise on opportunities in the external environment that can be tapped towards organisational growth, but also predict threats to the organisational well-being so that appropriate intervention may be initiated to safeguard the organisation's performance and survival.

Barry (1997: 4-10), comes up with five major reasons as to why organisations choose to carry out participatory strategic planning. These are summarised below as follows:

- To adjust to the rapidly changing community conditions that require new responses and alliances.
- A desire to have a greater impact.
- New financial pressures or competition sometimes forces an organisation to plan for its very survival
- To align organisational mission, programmes, resources, and relationships.
- Pressure from donors to their partner organisations to develop plans for the future

From a conventional business perspective, strategic planning is seen more as a tool not only for helping an organisation attain its goals, but also maintaining a competitive edge than otherwise. Thus:

The whole purpose of strategic planning is to help a company get from where it is to where it wants to be, and in the process to develop a sustainable advantage over its competitors (Thomson at al.1987:33)

Despite being an effective process of self-diagnosis, organisation assessment would not in itself be complete as a tool for organisational transformation without a planning exercise. Planning will obviously be the most logical step forward after taking stock of strengths and weaknesses in an organisation or a programme. Such planning will largely be based on, but not limited to, the identified opportunities for change in response to the challenges and priorities raised. The old adage stands true today as it did for

ages: to fail to plan, is to plan to fail. The process should essentially begin with the development of or revisiting basic organisational components. These are Vision, Mission or Purpose and Strategy. However, we will first take some time to investigate on the meaning of Strategic Planning itself, including its wider context.

It is instructive right from the onset to remind ourselves on the fact that the same way there cannot be one best form of an organisation, there cannot be one best way in creating a strategy for management. No single 'prescription' works for all organisations. Hence, it is recommended that those yearning to be professional and seasoned planners in social development programmes, should seek to systematically explore a variety of approaches to create a deeper and more useful appreciation of Participatory strategic planning processes.

This section is meant to stimulate that exploratory interest in the reader. However, an effort will be made to share a particular methodological orientation in participatory strategic planning as borrowed from Institute of Cultural Affairs school of thought.

4.2.4 Questions answerable by an effective planning process

Drawing from the researcher's own field experience, it appears not only appropriate but also imperative to raise the following questions at the outset of a planning focusing session. These questions are considered pertinent to effective participatory strategic planning:

1. Where are we standing today (what is our mandate – vision and mission - and how effectively are we addressing that mandate)?
2. Where do we want to go from here (what should be our vision and mission to day and in the future)?
3. How do we get to the realisation of the new vision and mission (strategies)?
4. What is our blueprint for action (budgets)?
5. How do we know if we are on track (monitoring and evaluation)?

4.2.5 Common challenges (or dangers) which make participatory strategic planning processes less than a fulfilling experience in an organisation:

These factors should be born in mind in order to avoid repeating mistakes committed by others in the past:

- The process tends to make organisation's stakeholders nervous and confused the first time through, as planning is generally regarded as a preserve of experts (planning bureaucrats).
- With too ambitious leadership or poor facilitation, people may easily get bogged down with the process by making it superfluous or too complicated with unnecessary details, instead of focusing on the essentials.
- The timing may not be suitable for all, thus resulting in disjointed participation or non-attendance by some segments of stakeholders
- Key people may not be productively engaged thus making future implementation of the new plans impossible without their full understanding and support.

According to Barry (1997:4), all these problems can be avoided with a little forethought and better preparation that seeks some measure of consensus with key stakeholders through consultations prior to the planning activity. In fact, according to Bryson (1995:19), a survey carried among four non-profit and public organisations in USA that had successfully undertaken strategic planning, the following were the main factors accounting for the effectiveness of the process:

- Each organisation had leaders willing to act as *process sponsors* to endorse and legitimise the effort. Even though the leaders did not have to participate themselves, they however made it publicly clear that the exercise was critical for the organisation and that key decision makers were expected to participate for best results.
- Each organisation had *process champions*, people who were keen and committed to making the process work. The process champions did not bring with them preconceived ideas, even though they held their own views. They consistently resisted the temptation to use their own positions of influence to push their views through as this would compromise on the richness of the outcome. It would also weaken levels of commitment among the stakeholders in the implementation of the outcome. They had the strong belief that people knew what was best for the organisation and that their role was to facilitate a process that will enable people come up with the answers.

-There was clear understanding among key decision makers as to what strategic planning was and what was expected from the process.

-Each organisation ensured the process was structured on the basis of strategic thinking and action.

-Each organisation established a strategic planning team to steer and oversee the process including ensuring consultations take place as may be necessary pertaining to the major decisions on the planning activity, including the collection of information, preparation for meetings and drafting of a strategic plan arising out of the exercise.

-Each organisation had identified the critical issues to form the agenda for the strategic planning (these were identified on the basis of serious threats facing the organisations and the missed or the potential opportunities that should be captured.

-In each organisation, the planners were careful to consider strategies that were politically acceptable, technically workable, and ethically responsible.

-Each organisation relied on outside assistance from experienced consultants to help with the process.

-Each organisation did whatever was necessary to avoid getting so bogged down in the process that it lost sight of what was truly important: strategic thought and action.

4.3 The Participatory strategic planning Process

4.3.1 Introduction

This format of Participatory Strategic Planning is adapted from the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) Kenya, following training sessions they offered to PREMESE Consultants in 1995. The ICA approach to participatory strategic planning (which will be described below), begins its focus in form of a practical vision, with long range aspirations of 3 to 5 years (or even more).

The rest of the process puts emphasis on short-range concrete plans of 90 days to one or two years.

The process assumes that the future is unpredictable and therefore 'concrete' long term planning cannot be realistic.

This type of strategic planning is guided by people's collective wisdom and experimental realities. Participatory strategic planning is highly participatory and practical, with planners drawn from both the worlds of management, as well as frontline field practitioners. This is different from the 'Ivory Tower Syndrome' characteristic of conventional planning where bureaucrats plan for others to implement. Participatory strategic planning builds on people's creativity and collective consensus, respecting people's priorities and choices. To attain full participation, participatory strategic planning uses the 'workshop method'.

In the researcher's own experience with the ICA style of participatory strategic planning, the method is evidently thorough and comprehensive in that it seeks to maximise on the views of stakeholders. The stakeholders' planning workshop provides an opportunity for invaluable dialogue and debate that leads to consensus and commonality in purpose. Time is accorded for individual reflections, leading to collective reflections in sectional teams before the plenary sharing. This process ensures the views of each and every person are taken into consideration as critical to the success of the entire process. (Other advantages of this approach to participatory strategic planning will be highlighted in the conclusions and recommendations arising out of the field research. These will be presented in Chapters Seven and Eight of this thesis).

4.3.2 A working definition of participatory strategic planning

Drawing from the empirical perspective, participatory strategic planning is a collective undertaking among stakeholders in a group or an organisation that seeks to establish as precisely as possible, the desired future in a given area of mutual interest. The collective effort leads to the identification of scenario of the desired future as clearly as possible. Besides, contradictions are also located that would prevent the group or organisation from attaining its future aspirations. Stakeholders then make practical strategic choices for actions which are most appropriate to remove those contradictions.

Participatory strategic planning is therefore a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions which shape what an organisation or a group aspires to be and to do. Within this process, stakeholders make fundamental decisions in the full light of the resource potential, both that is within their disposal, as well as that can be procured. The process is careful not to assume reality, seeking to

build plans on concrete information generated from thorough environmental scanning. It is from such environmental scanning that internal strengths and weaknesses as well as internal potential that exists for organisational transformation are identified. Meanwhile, external opportunities and threats are also identified and drawn into consideration. Ideas and proposals generated from a participatory strategic planning process are organised into strategic options for action that are prioritised into short-range, medium-range and long-range action-lines.

4.3.3 Some fundamental considerations to optimise the benefit of participation of all stakeholders in participatory strategic planning process

It is deemed necessary to acknowledge right from the onset that all stakeholders of an organisation or a programme are treated with equal importance when it comes to participatory strategic planning. It should essentially be a collective responsibility, where the implementation of the outcome would be expected to be a collective responsibility too.

Within this framework and backdrop of understanding, it should be realised that all the people participating in the process are treated as ‘experts’, who bring with them a wealth and diversity of experience and knowledge (gained through years of practical experience) into the ‘boiling pot’ of a planning process. Hence, all should be given a chance to contribute and each one’s views should be listened to and carefully considered. Ordinary community representatives will bring with them insights out of their accumulated wisdom (Bergdall, 1993:147).

During the process, deliberate effort should be made by the facilitators to ensure optimum participation of marginalised groups that would not normally be vocal in the face of the educated male elite. These groups include women, youth and the illiterate or ill exposed. From time to time, formation of small group discussions for in depth analysis during the planning sessions should consider grouping participants in the lines of those interest groups. This will certainly ensure their voices and views are represented in the outcome of the planning process. It is even advisable to postpone a planning event should such vulnerable groups fail to turn up despite having been invited. This would send a strong message that such groups, no matter how humble, form a critical part of the whole body of stakeholders. Such an action may be incomprehensible by the local elite and the community constituency

at large. This is because in the conventional development practice, the local elite are held with unusually high esteem as ‘the people who matter’, as though the less endowed did not.

On the need for full participation of women in particular, Bergdall pleads:

Women are consistently left on the fringes of most development activities. Though women supply the bulk of labour when local projects require it, they have minimal access to information, education, opportunities, or decision making. This is particularly tragic because women, as caretakers of rural families, are extremely practical. They can bring much needed common sense to project planning, but are usually excluded from the process (Bergdall, 1993:4).

4.3.4 The critical role of the process facilitator

According to Bergdall (1993:150), being a facilitator is a new and unfamiliar role to many people. Most extension workers are more familiar with teaching than facilitation, since they are subject matter specialists. However, facilitation requires process specialists as opposes to subject matter specialists. It is the art of initiating exchange that generates information as a basis of learning among those people involved as they source from their lived ‘expertise’.

The temptation that looms among facilitators is to give long lectures in sessions, which are supposed to be collective sharing. After all, that is what we know best: lecturing. That’s how we were taught in school. That is the easiest way of knowledge delivery as there is not much creativity required, and therefore, does not involve much risk, as one knows what to say at what point. One is sure to cover the curriculum in time where lecture is involved, as there is no time ‘wasted’. However, we are advised, as far as possible, to desist from the lecturing method during participatory planning processes as it does not cultivate and build on the creative potential of the participants. We are advised to avoid the traditional approaches associated with teaching and extension, which involve giving instructions “*in correct way to think and act*”. Instead action should emanate from a “*consensus of a social group itself, and should draw entirely up on people’s own creativity and knowledge*” (Bergdall, 1993:13).

On the other hand some participants will try to dominate discussions in the absence of effective facilitation. A facilitator should guard against such eventuality ensuring that all participants have equal chance to contribute. It should also be born in mind that there are neither right nor wrong responses from participants. When a superficial response is given by a participant, it is the role of the facilitator to assist him or her reflect more critically for deeper insights. Facilitators ensure quality thinking by raising probing questions that deepen reflection. They do not correct participants, but instead challenge them for deeper thinking, sometimes inviting other participants to build on the new insights proposed by the contributor. This way, quality discussion is assured (Bergdall, 1993:152-153),.

4.4 Preparations for a participatory strategic planning

4.4.1 Preparations by the management supported by the facilitator

The facilitators, jointly with the organisers of the event should ensure that participants or stakeholders expected to carry out the planning exercise are carefully short listed and invited giving them good enough notice (at least three weeks, preferably a month or more depending on their circumstances). Perhaps initial invitation could be by telephone (where applicable) or other less formal means, long before the date to enable them block their diaries accordingly. Then letters would follow for reminder and confirmation

The facilitator, jointly with the organisers of the planning event, should ensure that planning targets or objectives are clearly spelt out before the exercise begins: What out puts are expected from the planning exercise? Equally important is drawing up of the budget and fund raising for the event long before it begins. This will enable the purchase of the appropriate workshop materials and equipment including the necessary stationery, both for the use by participants as well as by facilitators and the management.

Where accommodation will be required, comfortable and suitable accommodation should be arranged to enable participants maximise their participation and output. Meals should be discussed with the centre to avoid last minute disappointments. The training venue should also be booked and confirmed in good time and in writing, again to avoid last minute disappointments.

Tentative workshop schedule should be ready at least one week before the exercise begins so that various people in positions of responsibility may append their comments. Care should be taken not to attach the actual timeframe. It would be better to discuss this with the participants on the morning they arrive. That becomes part of an icebreaking and team building exercise. It will also reinforce participant's commitment to the time frame they will collectively agree to. Where necessary arrangement should be made in advance for official opening function or statement. This would be best done by the top management of the organisation concerned as an indication of the importance of the exercise but also as a gesture of the organisation's commitment to the planning process.

4.4.2 Preparations on the part of the facilitator(s) prior to the workshop

A team rather than an individual should facilitate a workshop. This way the facilitators' teamwork becomes a model for the group. At least one full day of pre-planning by facilitators is required prior to the workshop. Facilitators who have not worked together before need some time to get used to each other.

If facilitating team members have travelled a long way, they should allow extra time for relaxation before the planning session begins. Relaxation of the team is important especially before the start of the workshop. This helps to allay fears and anxieties that facilitators may have.

A facilitators' contract will help them reach a consensus regarding the methodology, otherwise they may end up confusing participants when they start differing and conflicting on approaches. The contract is usually collective norms developed by those involved in the facilitation exercise on the lines of DOs and DON'Ts.

Check the following and confirm their availability as part of the pre-planning: newsprint papers (flip-charts), hospital cards, manila cards, felt-pens (markers), masking tape, writing materials and pens for participants, appropriate electronic equipments that will be needed (e.g. photocopier, overhead projector, video set and such like), wall displays posters as may be necessary, manuals and reports that may be required as reference or resource materials, name tags and pins and the like.

Ensure there is adequate wall space and flip-chart stands for the display of newsprint papers or posters. Lights, fans and electrical sockets also need to be tested. Try out electric equipment

in advance to avoid last minute disappointment and embarrassment.

Inspect the rooms offered for the working sessions to ensure they are suitable for the intended work (not too big, not too small, suitable chairs, suitable ventilation, etc.)

Where possible, avoid using desk or tables as they can act as barriers. Removing them when participants are already seated may make them feel rather uncomfortable. Either remove them prior to participants' arrival, or leave them. It is believed that to sit in a circle without the protection of a desk or table leaves people feeling just a little vulnerable, which is an invitation to them to be open to each other. Avoid having some shy people sitting behind others. Let each be in the circle.

Read the profile list of participants in advance to have some idea of the make up of the group (e.g. qualifications, levels of education, age, sectoral or professional distribution, strengths, anticipated difficulties such as language barriers, etc.).

4.4.3 As the planning exercise takes off

After the facilitator(s) is introduced to the participants, he/she updates the participants on the planning exercise with a brief introduction as to why it has been deemed necessary and why now. (The head of the organisation could also play this role). Participants are given assurance that their individual and collective contribution will be taken seriously as a building block towards the final product of the planning process. Clarifying how the plans will benefit the various stakeholders will reinforce their commitment and motivation.

Participants are made to collectively develop group norms: ground rules and regulations to be observed during the planning session. This could be followed by an effort to survey participants' feelings as follows: What:

- a) hopes and expectations do you bring with you into this planning session?
- b) anxieties and fears do you bring with you into this planning session?

'Community life' committees are also formed from among the participants at the end of the first day (or beginning of the second day when participants have an idea on the different strengths and talents among them). The responsibilities allocated should include that of a group leader. These committees will assist

in smoothening out the planning activity by managing various participant needs during the course of working. However, these committees may be unnecessary in situations where the planning session is short, that is lasting for only one or two days. The programme staff could handle the participant needs in such a case.

4.4.4 Building a conducive learning climate

(Adapted from Hope and Timmel, 2000 Bk. 2:9)

4.4.4.1 Room Arrangement

Research has shown that the arrangement of a room has a strong effect on participation in a discussion. Those who can see all the other faces are at an advantage and those who cannot are at a disadvantage. If people are sitting in rows, it is very unlikely that a good discussion will develop between them because they cannot see one another's faces. Most questions and comments will be directed to those facing the group. Every effort should be made to enable the participants to sit in one circle where everyone can see everyone else's face. If the circle becomes so big that people cannot hear each other, it is better to have two semi - circles.

4.4.4.2 Size of groups

The majority of people find it difficult to speak in a big group. Also there is usually not enough time for everyone to speak. Therefore if everyone is to participate actively, small groups are essential. It is recommended that a workshop should not exceed 30 participants for its effective management and easy interaction. Facilitators should be at the ratio of 1:8 on the average. That is, one person could facilitate a group of 10 participants or less while a group of 15 to 30 should have two or more facilitators.

The majority of people find it difficult to listen very attentively for long periods. Therefore contributions should be short and people should be given an opportunity to discuss in small groups the points raised in the plenary. Participants should be given questions leading them to express all they have learnt from their own experiences. This needs to be done in small groups. A facilitator can sum up these points briefly and add their own insights afterwards, instead of giving a long lecture telling people what they already know.

4.5 The broad-focused and issue-focused participatory strategic planning

4.5.1 Introduction

In this thesis, we propose two major entry points to organisational strategic planning. These are the ‘broad-focused’ organisational strategic planning and ‘issue-focused’ strategic planning. However, the two are not incompatible. In fact ideally, the broad-focused participatory strategic planning is the precursor to the issue-focused participatory strategic planning. The latter presupposes that the issue(s) of concern has been identified prior to the exercise from some form of social analysis or needs assessment which would have led to the identification of the priority issue(s). This is followed by issue analysis in an effort to understand the intricacies of the issue at hand including its effects on the programme or organisation.

4.5.2 Broad-focused participatory strategic planning for organisation strengthening

Broad-focused participatory strategic planning involves numerous stages of analysis. The entry point, for instance, could be organisational or community capacity assessment. This could be in form of participatory appraisals such as participatory evaluation or participatory rural and urban appraisal by the organisation and community involved. Any other participatory processes could be used to effectively establish the organisation’s or community’s real and potential capacity and the existing gaps. This provides the necessary stage for launching participatory strategic planning process with a clear sense of direction. In other words, such appraisals will lead to an effective identification of current status in organisational or community capacity, including its strengths (to build upon) and weaknesses (towards organisational or community strengthening).

Broad-focused participatory strategic planning usually requires the involvement of a wide range of organisational stakeholders. It is precisely for this reason that it becomes more difficult to organise an effective participatory strategic planning process in such a shared-power’ context. This is not only so because more time will be spent on striking a compromise in terms of timing for the planning exercise, but also one has to deal with the challenges of harmonising the diverse expectations of the various

constituencies, and especially the task of negotiating agreements. It will also involve coordinating activities and actions of numerous, relatively independent people, groups, organisations and institutions.

4.5.3 Why organisations are engaged in broad-focused participatory strategic planning

- To define what an organisation is, what it does and why it does it (Bryson, 1995, 8).
- To figure out organisational priorities on the face of a multitude of conflicting demands.
- To clarify what an organisation does well in, in order to do it better, and identify what else the organisation should be doing that is new.
- To adjust and align an organisation with new or contemporary management practices that require reinvention and new ways of relating.
- To adjust programme budgets to available funding where severe budget cuts are involved.
- To respond to competition realities through new strategies to remain at the cutting edge.
- To identify issues that need strategic response before they wreck organisation's foundations.
- To meet the demands or expectations of the donor or the organisation's board of directors.
- To coordinate better the organisational services with those provided by other actors.
- To prepare for a leadership change whether at the executive management level or at the board composition level.
- To educate, involve, and revitalise the internal stakeholders, particularly board and staff.
- To enhance the levels of organisational impact as an accountability measure to donors and other stakeholders.
- Now that everybody else is doing it, organisations decide to follow suit and carryout participatory strategic planning (Adapted from Bryson, 1995:6).

4.5.4 The key steps and tools for broad-focused participatory strategic planning

Some major steps of broad-focused participatory strategic planning cycle have been proposed as a guide in what has been termed as 'Strategy Change Cycle' (Bryson, 1995:12). These are presented in the chart below. It should be noted that the chart is based on concrete experiences in particular specific contexts. Hence, the proposed steps may not necessarily be applied verbatim but may be modified to suit different contexts. They will need to be adapted to make them applicable in one's own local situation, acknowledging the uniqueness of each context. It should, however, be born in

mind that the more unequal the relationship among various organisational stakeholders, and the more top-down is the working methodology employed by the intermediary (or facilitating) agency, the less relevant and suitable participatory strategic planning will be. The process is at its best where interaction is optimal in an environment of equal relationship, mutual trust, sense of teamwork and shared responsibility. The potential stakeholders and the steps involved in the process are presented in *Table 8* below.

Step 1

Joint decision on Participatory Strategic Planning

The first step is considered important as an effort to solicit commitment from key stakeholders, particularly the organisational decision makers, by getting them to agree to the process. Commitment will be reinforced by emphasising on the expected outcome and benefits of the planning activity to the organisation and the different constituencies. Where the implementation will involve multiple parties and organisations, then their conviction and participation becomes crucial. Thus:

Your first step is to organise the planning process. This step usually includes deciding that strategic planning is appropriate at this time; selecting a person or steering group to keep the planning on track; determining what people and groups will be involved; deciding if you need a consultant or other resource people; outlining the planning steps; and getting agreement to proceed (Barry, 1997:13)

There is no consensus from literature as to who should validly initiate the participatory strategic planning process. According to Bryson (1995:26) anyone among the key stakeholders should be able to initiate the participatory strategic planning process as the situation may warrant. It does not even appear a crucial concern either as to who initiates the process as long as what follows after the first initiative is a collective effort voluntarily supported by those concerned. However, some key responsibilities are outlined for the initiating party:

-Identify who the key decision makers are (prime movers), without whom the exercise is likely to be a flop

*Capacity assessment in organisational section teams

2. Organisational Capacity Assessment

*Possibility of conducting an organisational capacity assessment

*Strategic Planning Steering and Coordinating Committee Appointed_____

*External Facilitator discussed and identified

*Decide on Tentative Strategic Planning Terms of Reference (What are the expectations)?

1. Joint decision to develop a plan using a participatory strategic planning process

KEY: A-Donor Partner; B-Programme Management; C-Programme Staff; D-External Facilitator; E- Community Representatives; F- Collaborating agencies. () Denotes that the donor may or may not be physically present

N.B. Desk or File study is a continuous activity throughout the planning exercise and may commence as early as possible. However, it should be completed before the Strategic Planning activity as the information gathered will be useful to inform the planning process. File study is usually the responsibility of the External Facilitator.

way to solicit their commitment and support. This is an essential consideration, not only to the success of the planning exercise, but also for the future implementation of the outcome. Hence, to the extent that various stakeholders are involved right from the initial decision making stages, through the various stages of the planning exercise, to that same extent will the stakeholders identify with the outcome and its implementation.

The roles of steering committee for participatory strategic planning (Espy, 1986:16)

- ◆ *Identification of external facilitator and resource persons*
- ◆ *Drawing up of TOR for the external facilitating team*
- ◆ *Drawing up of preliminary strategic issues to be addressed*
- ◆ *Planning for the entire participatory strategic planning exercise including its objectives, timing, budgeting and fund raising*
- ◆ *Providing advice and guidance to the external facilitating team from time to time*
- ◆ *Steering the entire participatory strategic planning exercise as the body bearing the ultimate responsibility.*
- ◆ *Providing logistics for the smooth running of the exercise; including backup services such as secretarial services*
- ◆ *Short listing stakeholder invitees for meetings and workshops*
- ◆ *Updating donor and others concerned from time to time on the progress of the participatory strategic planning exercise through appropriate channels*
- ◆ *Back-stoppers and arbitrators in case of interpersonal difficulties pertaining to the planning process or activity*

The role of the external process facilitator in participatory strategic planning

- ◆ *Planning and facilitation of various stages and workshops involved*
- ◆ *Providing professional guidance during each stage of the participatory strategic planning process*
- ◆ *Ensuring a climate of dialogue exists among all the stake-holders at all times during the planning exercise - managing team conflicts as and when they arise*
- ◆ *Provoking or probing on deep seated issues beyond what looks obvious - e.g. poor field follow-ups: is it an issue caused by absence of transport, poor staff morale or unclear policy as pertains to the management of staff per diems? Perhaps it could be due to factors of over-centralisation of financial administration making it difficult to secure field allowances from administration that may perceive field visits as an excuse for staff to squander funds?*
- ◆ *Harmonising strategic issues as expressed by various stakeholders*
- ◆ *Ensuring reasonable levels of objectivity by challenging subjective conclusions for further evidence and therefore ensuring quality outcome of the entire participatory strategic planning exercise*
- ◆ *Writing and circulating draft plan document*
- ◆ *Refining and submitting the final plan document*

The following questions should be discussed thoroughly and openly before a team engages in an organisational strategic planning process:

- Why do we need a strategic plan at this point in time?
- Whose plan will this be ultimately, who needs it (hence who must be involved)?
- Why should it be a participatory planning process particularly?
- What does the process entail (such as phases, schedules, and tasks) and how will it be managed?
- What do we see as the major barriers to a successful participatory strategic planning process for our organisation at this point in time (poor leadership, communication problems, resources)?
- How can these barriers be addressed to give way to the planning exercise?
- What would be the expected direct and indirect costs for the planning exercise (resources, time, internal and external resistance to change)?
- How can we manage these costs?
- What direct and indirect benefits would we expect once the participatory strategic planning exercise is complete (such as better use of resources, better relations among stakeholders, good plan for change management, better informed and more involved stakeholders, greater cohesion, improved collective focus)?

A basic checklist for the above is presented below.

Profile for the planning effort

In preparation for the impending participatory strategic planning, it is suggested that key stakeholders go through the following checklist of questions and give their honest response:

- 1. Whose plan is it (whole organisation; sections within organisation; community; others)?*
- 2. What period will the plan cover (2yrs; 3yrs; 4yrs; 5 to 9yrs; 10yrs or more)?*
- 3. What concerns, problems, or issues do you hope the plan will address?*
- 4. Who is the force 'driving' the planning process (board; managers; donors; others--who)?*
- 5. Who are the process 'champions' committed to and inspiring the strategic planning process, determined to see it through (director/manager; unit team; management team; a staff member; donor representative; other---who)?*
- 6. Who will come on board as part of the coordinating committee to steer the planning process (board members; managers; other staff; other stakeholders; consultants)*
- 7. Who should be involved in the actual development of a strategic plan?*
- 8. Who should be involved in the review/validation of the draft plan?*
- 9. How many hours should we commit to the planning retreat (1-12; 12-24; 24-40; Over 40)?*
- 10. Are we using consultants or other resource persons? If so, what criteria will be used for their identification?*
- 11. Who will manage the overall planning effort?*
- 12. What sort of written plan do we envisage (short executive summary; a detailed process and content report; other---)?*
- 13. What is the expected time frame for the planning process (3 months; 6 months; 12 months; other--)?*
- 14. What resources do you need to complete the process and where will you get them?*

Below (*Table 9*) is yet another checklist that has been proposed as a guide for assessing and deciding as to whether or not a team or an organisation is ready to undertake a participatory strategic planning process:

Table 9: Should we proceed with the planning process?

Readiness criteria	Yes	No
Process has strong support from the management/donors (process sponsors)		
Process has strong 'process champions'(internal prime drivers)		
Resources are available		
Process is within our mandate (we have full authority to carryout planning)		
Benefits out weight costs		
There is no doubt the process will have real value added for the organisation		
It will be possible to link the process to existing operational plans and budget		
Based on the above responses, should we; Proceed?		
Wait for now as we work on the "No's" and change them into "Yes's" first?		
Forget about participatory strategic planning for now?		

Step 2

Organisation capacity assessment (OCA)

It is in the writer's opinion that an organisational capacity assessment should be carried out as a preamble to broad-focused participatory strategic planning. This is particularly necessary in cases where

an organisation has not for a long time had a major review such as participatory evaluation, or any other similar review that would have enabled the organisation locate its strengths and potential as well as its weaknesses and threats. Such information would form a strong basis for moving forward with planning as key issues of concern will already have been established and existing opportunities located as avenues for the necessary change(s).

Organisational biography ('stock-taking' through situation analysis)

This is another fundamental activity as proposed by Barry (1997:13). It involves an organisation carrying out a review of its history and current situation. This is done in view of both local and global social context. Milestone events and moments of the organisation are identified, their local and global context established and their effects on the organisation and stakeholders. In the process, it is possible to establish how various stakeholders coped with those events and lessons learnt identified. Groups involved in the process then begin to identify future possibilities and choices drawing from the lessons of the past. At this stage, it is possible to begin to identify the most critical issues concerning the organisation's future.

Step 3

Clarifying organisational mandate

Organisational mandate prescribes what must or should be done under the organisation's constitution and policies as well as under state laws and regulations (Barry, 1997:13). These form part of the 'limitations' on what the organisation can do and how it can do it. A mandate can be expressed formally or informally, such as through enactment of organisational policies and procedures (formal) or through stakeholder expectations (informal). Organisational mandates are usually found in or derived from the organisational vision and mission statements, as well as in core values and strategy statements.

Review of organisation's Vision, Mission, Strategy and Values and the stakeholder analysis

Vision

A vision is a statement of dreams or aspirations of an organisation. A good vision should be short, not complex and inspiring. In a participatory framework, all stakeholders should be involved not only in the formulation of a Vision statement, but also in its review from time to time. It is therefore a collective effort to develop a 'best' or 'ideal' picture of the society it serves in future as it successfully fulfils its mission.

...development of a vision can provide the concepts to enable organisational members to see necessary changes. This approach also is more likely to work in nonprofit than in a public sector organisation (Bryson, 1995:33-34).

A vision statement seeks to respond to the corporate concerns regarding 'where on earth we are going.' A successful change implies visualising the future – the desirable end. Major organisational change starts with a guiding philosophy, which will excite and inspire people and reflect their values.

Thus:

People are inspired by a clear and forceful vision delivered with heartfelt conviction. Inspirational visions focus on a better future, encourage hopes and dreams, appeal to common values, state positive outcomes, emphasise the strength of a unified group, use word pictures, images and metaphors, and communicate enthusiasm and excitement (Bryson, 1995:33-34).

A vision statement defines the organisational view of how it wants the country or region to be, i.e. a scenario of a 'reality to be' as opposed to (comparatively) the 'reality that is.' A vision statement is usually a utopia, usually removed from tangible reality. A vision is as wide as life itself. Though we may never attain it, a vision gives direction for making choices in planning and action. We can only effectively chart out our way forward where there is a 'star in the sky' to give us the general direction. That 'star' is our vision. Thus:

Such descriptions – as a vision statement – to the extent that they are widely known and agreed to in the organisation, allow organisational members to know what is expected of them without constant direct managerial oversight. Members are free to act on their own initiative on the organisation’s behalf to an extent not otherwise possible. The result should be a mobilisation and direction of members’ energy toward pursuit of the organisation’s purposes, and a reduced need for direct supervision (Bryson, 1995:33-34)

A good Vision Statement should :

- Express collective ideals
- Inspire people
- Create a ‘WE’ feeling in a group
- Provide a point of reference against which plans, actions and decisions can be judged
- Not define exactly how the end result will be achieved
- Be understandable by absolutely everyone
- Be what organisational staff live by
- Be simple. Complexity leads to confusion, it is not a sign of sophistication. It is believed that ‘Napoleon Idiot’ was maintained as a deliberate strategy to ensure all his staff clearly understood the instructions on the battle plans. Napoleon believed that whenever his ‘idiot’ understood the instructions, then it was a proof that they were simple enough for everyone of his generals to follow.

Usually, a vision statement will begin as follows:

- We envisage a
- We aspire to
- We hope to
- We believe.....

Mission

A Mission statement indicates the motivation for an organisation to pursue the stated Vision. A mission

statement also describes generally how the organisation will contribute to achieving its Vision. Mission defines the basic purpose or purposes of the organisation. Basically, an organisation's mission outlines why the organisation exists (Rue and Holland, 1989:7). Bryson (1995:33-34) is of similar opinion as he elaborates on why it is important for an organisation to develop its own mission statement:

Clarifying purpose can eliminate a great deal of unnecessary conflict in an organization and can help channel discussion and activity productively...More over, an important and socially justifiable mission is a source of inspiration to key stakeholders, particularly employees. Indeed, it is doubtful that any organization ever achieved greatness or excellence without a basic consensus among its key stakeholders on an inspiring mission (Bryson, 1995:33-34).

According to Rue and Holland (1989:7), a good mission statement should bear the following characteristics in order to be credible:

- Clear articulation on why the organisation exists
- Description of the organisation's basic services (products) and
- Definition of the organisation's target group or clientele (markets)

A mission statement should be formulated jointly with the representation of the key stakeholders to solicit everybody's commitment to it. There are fundamental questions which a planning team should address in drafting a mission statement: Who are we as an organisation (or community)? What is our purpose? What are the basic social, economic and political problems we exist to address? In general, what do we do to recognise or anticipate and respond to these needs or problems? This last question will reveal whether the organisation is active or passive, what it does to stay in touch with the needs it is supposed to fill, and in general what it does to make sure it does not become an end in itself. What makes us distinct or unique? Hence, if there is nothing unique or distinctive about an organisation, perhaps it should not exist. Who are our key stakeholders and how should we respond to them?

What is our organisation's current mission and how can we improve on it?

According to Bryson, the mission statement itself might be very short, perhaps not more than a paragraph or a slogan. But he advises that the development of the statement should grow out of lengthy discussion in response to the foregoing questions (Bryson, 1995:33-34).

Strategy

Strategies describe the approach or method (step by step) to be used by an organisation to most effectively accomplish its mission. The basic question is: How are we trying to achieve our objectives and carry out our mission? How do we deliver our services?

A strategy is defined as a pattern or purposes, policies, programmes, actions, decisions, or resource allocations that define what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it. Strategies can vary by level, function,, and time frame (Bryson, 1995:33-34).

The genesis of the word 'strategy'

The word "strategy" comes from the Greek word *stratego*, or *strategia*, a combination of *stratos*, or army, and *ego*, or leader. 'Strategy' therefore "connotes the art or science of directing military forces" (Rue and Holland, 1989:8). It began as 'the art of the general' and now has become the art of the 'general manager' (Bryson, 1995:33). The 'art of the general' implies the psychological and behavioural skills (including managerial, administrative, leadership, power and oration) with which the general mobilises his forces to overcome opposition and create a unified system of global governance.

A strategy is the pattern or plan that integrates an organisation's major goals, policies and action sequences into cohesive whole. It deals with the marshalling and allocation of an organisation's resources to complement its internal competencies and shortcomings, in response to anticipated changes in the environment and the challenges from the competition. Making a strategic choice involves the determination of the pathway to be adopted, after assessment of numerous alternative paths to an already established mission, or objective. "In other words, strategy outlines how management plans to achieve its objectives" (Rue and Holland 1989: 8).

Some of the common strategies associated with non-profit organisations include the following:

- Preferential option for the poor (poverty-focus)
- Community participation and empowerment
- Leadership training for capacity building
- Enhancing sense of local responsibility and self-reliance
- Building sustainability through creation of community based management structures
- Sustainable use of resources
- Gender sensitive planning

Values

Organisational values constitute what has been termed as the organisational culture. Organisational culture is described as the sum of the values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and meanings related to mission fulfilment. These make an organisation unique as they govern its character and behaviour (Lusthaus, et al. 1999:59). In addition to the forgoing elements that constitute an organisational culture, Kreitner (1995:284), emphasises on the aspect of *shared* (whether stated or implied) beliefs, values, rituals, stories, myths, and specialised language that foster a feeling of community among organisation members.

Organisational values or culture has been referred to as 'social glue' that binds an organisation's members together. Kreitner identifies some key characteristics of organisational culture and values. Among them is collective agreement and action on aspects of working modalities thus resulting to synergistic effect (that is 1+1=3). Of importance also is the existence of emotionally charged security blanket that gives a sense of belonging (for instance, in a Christian organisation, being born again could provide that emotional protection). Historically based relationships are also an important feature of an organisational culture, rooted in shared experiences over extended periods of time. This reality leads to a strong 'we' feeling. Notable also are inherently symbolic slogans and signs, such as reflected in the way people greet each other and the way they care for each other in times of need. Organisational values form a basis of predictability, conformity, and stability in the long term. However, organisational

culture and values are dynamic in nature in that they may change with circumstances or seasons such as having a new leader (Kreitner, 1995: 285).

Examples of core-values:

- Belief and commitment to team-work
- Sensitivity to gender fairness
- Environmental sensitivity
- Respect for the dignity of the person
- Belief in the synergy created through collaboration and networking with others
- Commitment to accountability and transparency
- Assuming responsibility without supervision
- Creating a climate of trust and acceptance
- Respecting each other's ideas
- Shared leadership and decision-making

Basically, organisational values are captured in statements of its core-values that seek to manifest the beliefs that bind people together in the organization. This includes the philosophy of life, which makes an organisation stand out as unique in a community or society. Hence, values will dictate the organisation's strategies and methods of working.

Stakeholder analysis for optimum participation

It has been strongly advanced that an organisation or community seeking to develop an effective strategic plan, should seek broad participation among its stakeholders. The key to success for public and non-profit organisation is the ability to satisfy its important stakeholders according to each stakeholder's criteria for satisfaction. The criteria for satisfaction for each stakeholder can only best be understood through the stakeholder's full participation in the planning process.

A stakeholder can be described as any person, group, or organisation that can place a claim on the organisation's resources, attention or output or is affected by the organisation's output. According to Bryson, a stakeholder is understood to be "any group or individual who is affected by or who can affect

the future (of the entity) – customers, employees, suppliers, owners, governments, financial institutions, critics” (Bryson, 1995:33). In a non-profit organisation, this will also include programme funders, the board of directors as well as other collaborating organisations or players in the field.

Stakeholder analysis is the means for identifying who the organisation’s internal and external stakeholders are, what their expectations are from the organisation, how they influence and evaluate the organisation, what the organisation needs from them, and how important they are to the success of the organisation. Such an information provides a useful basis for developing or refining organisation’s mission statement. This information will also help to determine who should be involved in the participatory strategic planning. Needless to say, the involvement of stakeholders in corporate planning will ensure their commitment and support to the organisational or community developmental plans. It is also another sure way to remain in touch with the reality in terms of ‘clientele’ expectations, in the light of their changing priorities and needs. This way, the service offered remains truly ‘demand pulled’ as opposed to externally driven initiative. Thus:

...an organisation’s mission and values should be formulated in stakeholder terms. That is, an organisation should figure out what its mission ought to be in relation to each stakeholder group; otherwise, it will not be able to differentiate its responses well enough to satisfy its key stakeholders. ...The key to success in public and non-profit organisations is the satisfaction of key stakeholders (Bryson, 1995:33).

In this case, participatory strategic planning will only be realised where there exists genuine dialogue between the various stakeholders as opposed to the conventional practice whereby the donor provided the planning framework and parameters and sometimes even the direction. The common excuse to scuttle the possibility of full participation of the local constituency in development planning process is that people are ill informed about the issues they are supposed to plan for. Hence, it is therefore assumed that they will not be in a position to make meaningful contribution into the planning pot. This assumption is no longer considered valid in the contemporary thinking within participatory development framework (Hope and Timmel, Bk 1, 1996:17). It is no longer valid to assume that it is only the scientific information held by the educated elite, and the external change agents that will be important for the local

planning process. The information held by the local people will be equally critical. Eade and William have the following observation in this regard:

As constructive dialogue and participatory planning become increasingly possible, activities and expenditure are likely to change. Consulting with local groups, and strengthening their capacity must be a priority – not at the expense of life saving rescue operations but as a complement to them. ...It is unrealistic and self-defeating to expect maximum information at the beginning of a process of dialogue rather than after that process has begun. ...Aid agencies should thus be open to change and ready to learn, and develop a culture that encourages challenges to their own thinking, from a range of different perspectives – especially those of the people they are trying to help (Eade and Williams, 1995:820-821).

Environmental scanning to establish 'the best fit'

Bryson (1995:5) observes that: “To deliver the best results, strategic planning requires broad yet effective information gathering, development and exploration of strategic alternatives, and an emphasis on future implications of present decisions”. As much as possible, Participatory strategic planning exercise should be preceded by an effort to scan both the internal as well as the external environment within which the organisation or community exists. Environmental scanning involves looking into both internal as well as external factors and realities of the organisation or programme. The idea is to establish data-base or information-base necessary for informed planning, the kind of information we need to ‘develop the best fit’ between the organisation and its environment, hence the best strategy within the organisational environmental context. Thus:

One discerns the best strategy by analysing the internal strengths and weaknesses of (the organisation or community and its values) and by identifying the external threats and opportunities in the environment and the social obligations of the firm (Bryson, 1995:5).

Environmental scanning will seek to gather both internal as well as external information (Espy, 1986:13). Internal sources of information will include programme annual and progress reports, organisational

capacity assessment reports, evaluation reports, staff appraisals as well as staff establishment (staff profile analyses). External sources of information will include community surveys, review of regional demographic profiles to be found in secondary sources and periodic government survey reports, socio-economic analyses of the area covered and such like sources.

It is through environmental scanning that an organisation would be able to determine the best course for the future (Barry, 1997:7). It is an effort to establish the fit among three forces: the organisation's mission, outside opportunities, and the organisation's capabilities. These concerns are further expounded as follows:

- The mission of the organisation – what we intend to accomplish, our organisation's overall goal, the reason we exist.
- Opportunities or threats our organisation faces – such as in relation to the resource-base vis-à-vis needs of the people we serve, needs of other stakeholders, competitors and allies or other major forces (social, economic, political or technological) that will influence our success or failure.
- Our organisation's capabilities – the current and potential resources and competence that our organisation has..

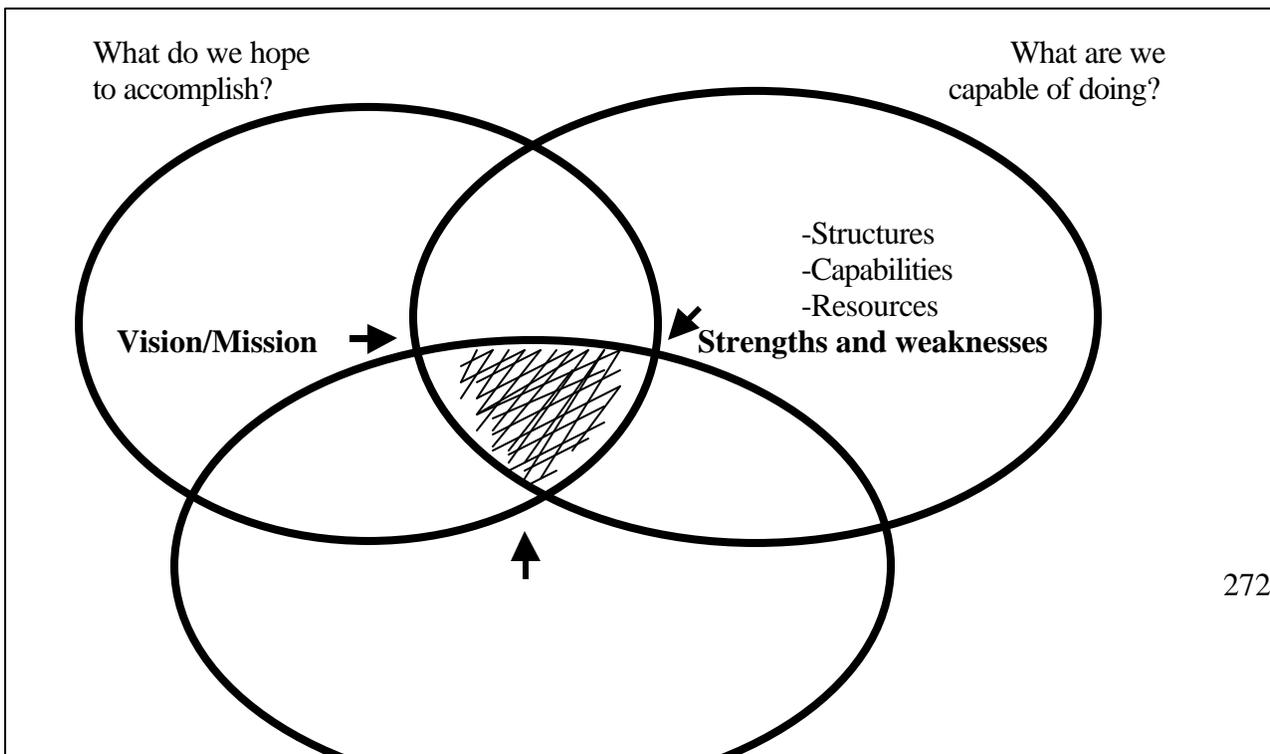
It is important to note that, whether or not we are ready for a change through strategic planning, our organisations will have to change. They will have to change because the world around the organisations is changing. The organisations cannot exist in a vacuum but will either be pro-active by planning to cause change, or reactive by continuously adjusting to the changes that occur around it. "In reality, strategic planning is a simple acknowledgement that your organisation is in fact going somewhere, and a means of creating a favourable future" (Espy, 1986:1).

The reality in the diagram above is attained through a systematic assessment of an organisation or community through what has been referred to as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. The SWOT component is said to be a primary strength of Harvard Policy Model of Strategic Planning (Bryson, 1995). But the main weakness of this analysis is that it does not offer specific advice on how to develop strategies, except to note that effective strategies will build on strengths, take advantage of opportunities, and overcome or minimise weaknesses and threats. It should always be emphasised that while the analysis of strengths and weaknesses is more inward looking

(internal factors of the organisation), the identification of opportunities and threats is more outward looking (external factors). In other words:

...strategic planning is the process of developing a shared vision of your organisation's future, and the major steps you will take to move the organisation in that direction. Such planning will help an organisation find the best fit between its mission, its capabilities, and its opportunities (Barry, 1997:8).

Figure 15: Finding the best fit through SWOT Analysis



Opportunities and Threats

-Needs of customers and other stakeholders

-Competitors and allies

-Social, economic, political, and technological factors

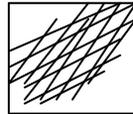
What is needed?

What potential can be tapped?

What threats are on our way?

What actually is feasible and what is not?

Key:



THE FIT

Source: Barry, 1997. p. 7.

The SWOT gives best results when organisational stakeholders are given an opportunity for individual reflections first. This is followed by a synthesis in stakeholder groups or departmental teams. The groups come together for a synthesis in plenary where views from various groups and teams are discussed and merged. The outcome provides a useful guide for the way forward with the planning exercise. The organisational strengths and the overall capacity to manage its own affairs effectively is established. The SWOT analysis clarifies the conditions within which an organisation operates, including the overall systems view of the organisation and the factors that affect it. The organisational weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats are analysed and prioritised. This serves to inform the substance of the planning agenda in the participatory strategic planning activity.

Identification of strategic issues

A strategic issue is any fundamental challenge affecting an organisation's mandate, mission, product, clients, financing or management. The identification of strategic issues is said to be the heart of participatory strategic planning. All other steps discussed earlier are meant to pave way to better articulate the strategic issues that need organisational attention. Once identified, these are categorised under short-term intervention issues (that need response in the next 12 months), medium term intervention issues (that need response in the next 13 to 24 months), and long term intervention issues (that need response in the next 25 months and above).

It should be noted that the issues identified are the major challenges facing the organisation and which

are likely to be the focus of the rest of the participatory strategic planning effort. Hence, each issue picked-on should bear more than one answer in an effort to sort it out, and at the same time it should be one the organisation can do something about. Also to consider are issues that are on the agenda of the organisation's board policy or on the agenda of the organisation's Chief Executive. Other factors to consider in isolating the potential issues for participatory strategic planning is the urgency of the challenges or opportunities the issues pose; the extent of impact the issues will have on departments or stakeholders depending on how many are affected; extent of organisation's financial risk or opportunity that go with the issues; issues that are likely to lead to new service goals and new programmes; issues that may call for significant changes in state policies; and issues that may lead to significant staff-down sizing or expansion. Also important to consider is the probable consequences of not addressing a particular issue depending on how sensitive or 'charged' the issue is relative to community's cultural, social, political and religious values.

Step 4

Preparation of the draft strategic plan

This is usually the responsibility of the participatory strategic planning team or the process consultant.

Step 5

Draft plan validation and adoption workshop

This takes place once the draft report is ready and has been circulated to the representatives of the key stakeholders for observations. One day would be adequate for validation exercise where the draft report had been circulated few days in advance. The plenary adoptions the report after all the clarifications and the necessary compromises and amendments have been made. Monitoring strategies are laid out to monitor the implementation of the new plan.

Step 6

Submission of refined plan

This is again the responsibility of the participatory strategic planning team or the process consultant. The

plan document binds the stakeholders as it provides the organisational direction in policy development, programme implementation as well as in other organisational operations. The plan is updated periodically, usually every one to three years (Barry, 1997:15).

4.6 Issue-focused participatory strategic planning

4.6.1 Introduction

Now that the key strategic issues and the goals for addressing each issue have been established, we can now move forward with the fine details of the participatory strategic planning process. According to Thompson, et al. (1987:34), effective participatory strategic planning process will take place within what they call “ends-ways-means” model. Expounding on the process, they would explain thus one would first establish corporate goal (what they call corporate objectives or *ends*). It is on the basis of such goal that one develops a strategy (or *ways*) for attaining the goal.

Then one marshals the necessary resources (*means*) for implementation of the strategy (Thompson, et al., 1987:34). This perspective on participatory strategic planning is consistent with Bryson’s ‘preferred’ process, whose origin he closely associates with the Institute of Cultural Affairs in the United States of America (Bryson, 1995:33-34). He argues that the first part of the process begins with the identification of a practical dream or vision for resolving a strategic issue. Barry (1997:6), explains that, “By ‘vision’ we mean a shared picture of the future you seek to create – what you believe the organisation can accomplish”. This may also be termed as a goal. This is what will commit the organisation’s stakeholders to helping bring about that picture to its realisation.

Next, the planning team should enumerate the barriers against the attainment of that dream, or practical vision. These may also be termed as blocks or contradictions on the way. However, Bryson concedes that focusing on barriers at this point is not typical of most strategic planning processes. But he argues that it is one way to ensure that any strategies that are developed deal with implementation difficulties directly rather than haphazardly.

Once the dream, or practical vision and the barriers to its realisation are listed, the team develops major proposals (also referred to as strategic options or strategic directions) for achieving the dreams, or visions either directly or indirectly by overcoming the barriers. He is, however, quick to caution that “Strategies must always be developed with implementation in mind” (Bryson, 1995:33). It is assumed here that ‘the team’ is representative of the key organisational or programme stakeholders from whom the proposals are solicited.

Next is an effort to prioritise the proposed strategic options. These would often be superfluous. However, prioritisation should remain focused on and guided by the efficacy of each option in addressing the barriers identified against reaching out to the desired goal or vision. Other important points of consideration in the prioritisation process include the following:

- Does the option bear higher comparative importance, relative to other areas calling for equal urgency in attention?
- Can the team guarantee the achievability of the option given the scope of resources available?
- Is the option feasible given the current socio-economic and political environment?
- Does the option by any chance coincide with significant recommendations carried forward from any previous evaluation or organisational capacity assessment?
- If implemented, will the option bear wide impact on the large part of the programme or organisation?
- Does the option seek to build on the existing organisation’s strengths
- Is the option consistent with what the organisation preaches, in terms of its vision, mission and values

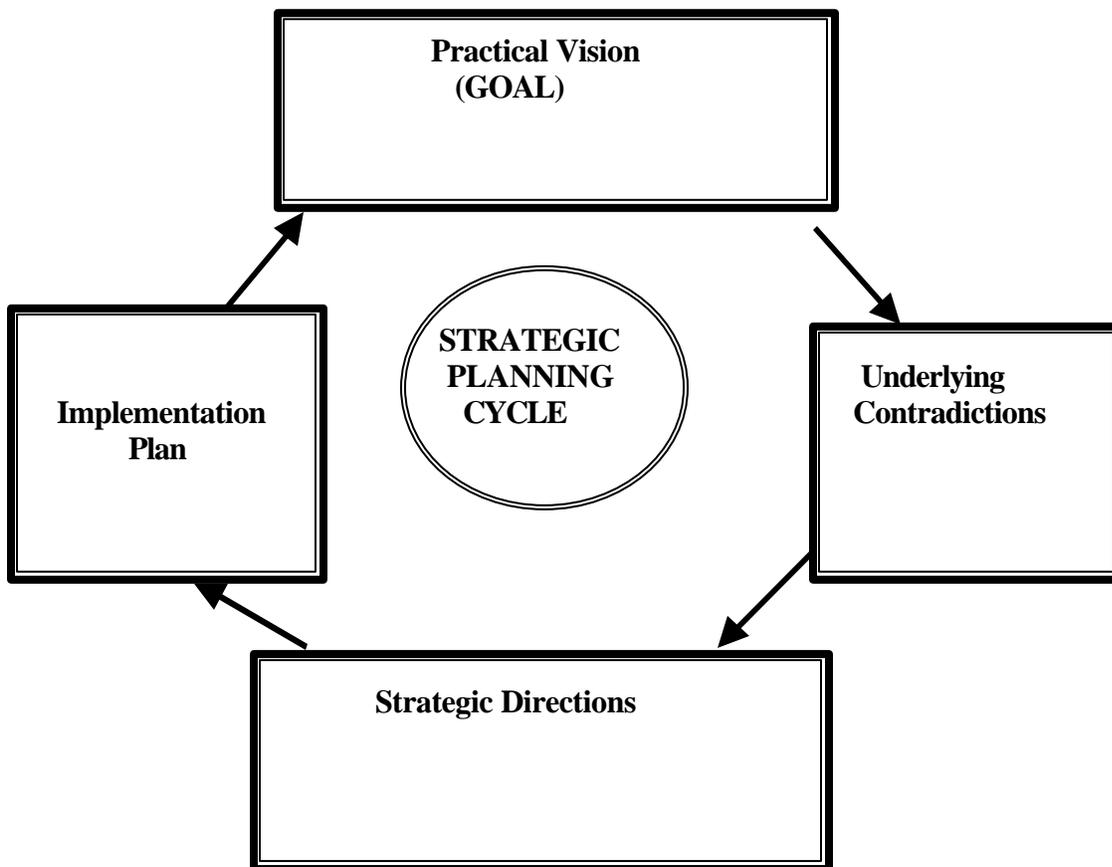
It should also be noted that the final choice will put into consideration other striking issues raised in group discussions that must be implemented in the next two to three years. Finally, a detailed work program for the next six months to a year must be spelled out to implement these actions (Bryson, 1995, 33-34). This is particularly important considering that more often than not, plans have been drawn and buried into shelves. This happens more often when plans lack concrete direction in form of fine details on the starting point for implementation.

Experience has tended to indicate that such thoroughness in planning as described above, and particularly the effort to involve various stakeholders, is bound to result in rich and

comprehensive plans. This is owing to the variety and diversity of view points generated from the stakeholders. Equally important is that such a process generates enormous sense of local ownership. This leads to voluntary commitment when it comes to the implementation of such plans.

The process described above is captured in the diagrammatic presentation below:

Figure 16: Issue-focused participatory strategic planning cycle



The process of the planning cycle above will be described below in inform of 'workshops'.

4.6.2 The workshop method of participatory strategic planning cycle

In reality, people's backgrounds determine their differences in perception as they come from different life experiences and educational backgrounds. They bring with them different areas of specialisation, culture, religion, and different levels of social status among other differences. These would bear great influence in the way they interpret reality. From this sense, it is believed in the workshop method that: no one can claim to know everything, and in the same way, no one is totally ignorant (Hope, and Timmel, 2000:17-19). It is on this theoretical basis that participatory strategic planning strives to solicit the views of every individual member of the participants involved in the planning process.

This requires the creation of a conducive climate where each and everybody is relaxed. People should feel free to try out new thoughts without fear of failure or intimidation. There should be full acceptance and trust to enable optimum participation of all. Team leaders and other partners should have faith in people's ability to make best judgements.

It is in the light of the above realisation that the workshop method in participatory strategic planning seeks to capture and tap the diversity of people's experiences in shaping their own destiny. The workshop method involves exchange of ideas and discussion of issues. Each member of the planning team is a participant and not in-attendance or observer. Action plans are drawn up and implemented by those who plan. They do not plan for others, but for themselves.

However, all said and done, empirical experience suggests that optimum participation will not just be realised by calling on people to get involved. The process is more complex than that as Bergdall observes:

It is a mistake to think, however, that if rural people are merely given an opportunity to be involved then fruitful participation will automatically follow. Many pitfalls await the unwary facilitator when villagers come to plan: repetitious speeches, wandering discussions, dominating leaders, petty arguments, emotionally charged sidetracks, bored silence, inconclusive results (Bergdall, 1993:154).

A facilitator of a participatory planning process should be well advised to bear the above caution in mind. It should also be born in mind that some participants will simply choose to withdraw and deliberately remain silent. This will either be because the practice of participation is too alien to their past experience where they have always been directed and instructed by the authorities on what to do, or simply because experience has taught them that opening one's mouth is taking a great risk, with all the possibility of victimisation on the basis of what they say. This is precisely one reason why the organisational leadership should give public guarantee at the early stages of a participatory planning workshop that no one will be victimised on the basis of one's contribution in the workshop.

Below, we will now look at each of the four workshops of a participatory strategic planning process.

4.6.3 The planning steps

Step 1

Practical Vision (Goal) workshop

A practical vision is both evolutionary and dynamic. It needs to be constantly reviewed and more importantly renewed. It is founded in the on-going learning by those involved in the organisation. It changes with both accomplishments and failures. It is through the constant focus on the practical vision that the rest of the planning exercise gets direction. Practical Vision is built upon the dream, vision, and the core values of an organisation.

Strategy development begins with identification of practical alternatives, and dreams or visions for resolving the strategic issues. It is of course important to be practical, but if the organization is unwilling to entertain at least some dreams or visions for resolving its strategic issues, it probably should not be engaged in strategic planning. In other words, if the organisation is willing to consider only minor variations on existing strategic themes, then it probably is wasting its time on strategic planning. After completing a strategic planning process, an organisation may decide that minor variation are the best choice, but if it begins the process with that assumption, it is wasting its time with strategic planning (Bryson, 1995:33-34).

The Practical Vision workshop (as well as other three workshops) would start with a focus question. The focus question helps the planning team to remain focused on the issues of concern without digressing.

Focus Question

A focus question should meet the following conditions:

Open ended

A good focus question should be open ended, ideally starting with “What”? or “How”? This allows diversity of opinions on an issue as it does not restrict discussion. Avoid using questions that would give a “Yes” or “No” answer.

Subject focused

The question should focus on substantive issues: either political, economic, social or a combination of either of these.

Experiential

A focus question needs to draw as much as possible from the practical experiences of all the people involved. If other things are focussed upon which are not deemed practical, then it will be difficult to implement.

Timely

The focus question stresses on the objective interests of the group involved in the planning process rather than the objective interest of an individual.

Rational

The issues to be focussed upon have to be approached with caution, knowing that participants themselves will be eventual implementers.

Example of a focus question on practical vision:

What would you like to see in the socio-economic well-being of this community in the next 3 years?

The process below is applied to process each workshop in an effort to bring on board all the concerns from all the participants:

Each individual participant is asked to brainstorm alone 5 to 10 points in relation to the focus question. In interest groups, participants would go into group discussions to generate 5 to 10 points or ideas which they put on cards. Each card (approximately 4 inches by 4 inches in size) should only bear one idea, presented in not more than five words.

In the plenary, interest groups share their points with room for discussions for clarification in cases where ideas seem not to be clear. Cards are posted on a large board in front of the plenary followed by an effort to organise the cards into clusters. Each cluster is given a title capturing the theme addressed by the issues raised in the cards within the cluster.

At the end of each particular workshop process, participants identify the central theme as reflected by the cluster titles. This is placed at a central place with all the other themes surrounding it. Participants then go through a reflective session on the implications of the outcome.

Reflections on the workshop process in participatory strategic planning

To be very systematic and orderly, the following steps provide the summary of workshop method. This will apply to each of the three workshops to be conducted to determine the practical vision, underlying contradictions and strategic directions.

I Context

Provide the focus question.

Focus the experience of the team.

Explain the process

II Brainstorming

Brainstorm on the focus question at two levels: at individual and group levels

Four groups are recommended for the exercise to avoid having too long reporting sessions

Ensure that each group puts its ideas on cards

Only agreed upon ideas within the groups are put on the cards

Ensure a maximum of 40 cards, that is not more than 10 from each group

III Organising

Put each card or idea on the wall or board for all to see and scrutinise.

Ensure this is systematic and each card is read out clearly and also seen.

Group the cards into clusters according to common intent or focus

IV Naming or titling

Identify suitable and appropriate titles for the clusters of cards developed.

Each title or name given to each cluster is the answer to the focus question.

V Reflecting

Reflect on the whole process from where it began.

Figure out if you can establish any pattern of some sort

Summary of the Workshop Process:

Focus question

Individual brainstorming

Group brainstorming (discussions)

Organising of cards to bring or clarify ideas.

Clustering of cards

Naming of clusters

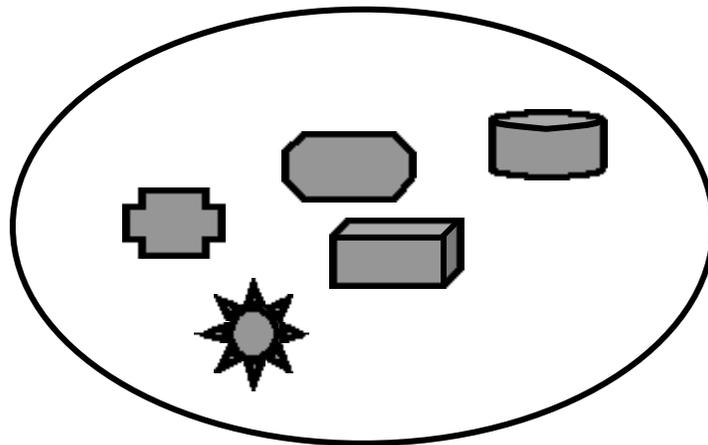
Organising of the titles around the key issue

Reflection

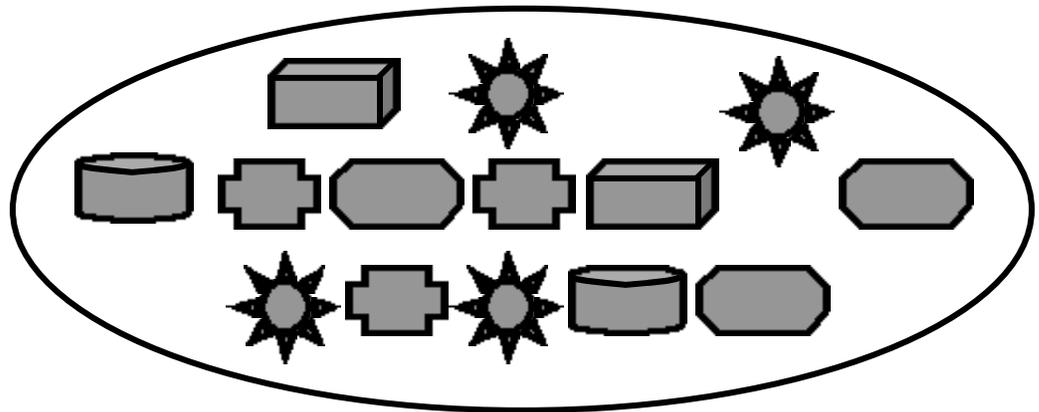
Bergdall (1993:166-170) presents the sequencing of the process in pictorial form similar to the one below:

Figure 17: Processing ideas from group participatory strategic planning session

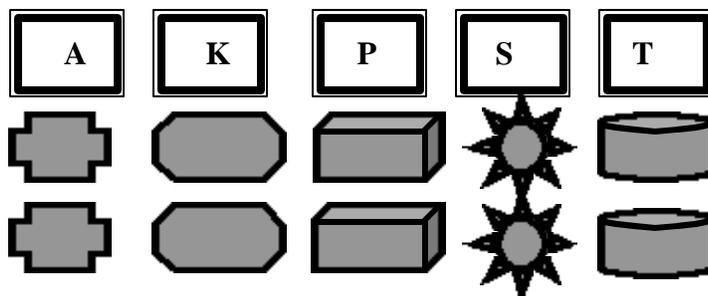
Ideas brainstormed from individuals

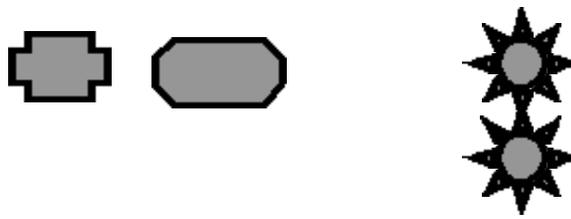


Ideas from small groups

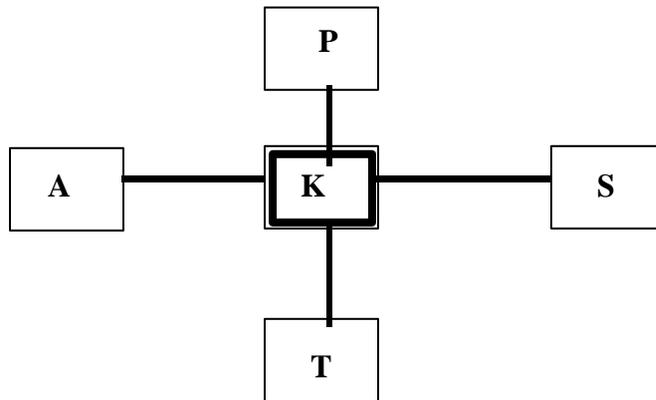


Plenary processing of ideas:
clustering and titling of similar ideas





Identification of central (or the key) theme from the above, around which all the other ideas could revolve



Step 2

Underlying contradictions

Underlying contradictions highlight the obstacles or the real issues that would hinder the realisation of the practical vision. When the relationship between the practical vision and the underlying contradictions is not clarified, problems and blocks become less important and tend to be overlooked or ignored as their true significance is not understood. Hence:

Next, the planning team should enumerate the barriers to achieving those alternatives, dreams, or visions, and not focus directly on their achievement. A focus on barriers at this point is not typical of most strategic planning processes. But doing so is one way of assuring that any strategies developed deal with implementation difficulties directly rather than haphazardly. (Bryson, 1995:33-34)

When expressing underlying contradictions, we avoid statements that start with: lack of ...; absence of...; no.....*Why avoid 'lack of?':*

- It reflects too simplistic analysis of situation (Is it really lacking absolutely?)
- This blocks critical thinking as it suggests that simply obtaining what is lacking can attain the solution.
- It is unrealistic to expect a situation of absolute provision, presence, enough or abundance of anything.

For instance, instead of saying lack of money, say:

Untapped financial resources

Inadequate funding

Poor financial planning

Un-prioritised expenditures

Unaccountable use of funds

Untapped income generating opportunities

Participants go into the same groups as of practical vision to discuss the focus question below for the underlying contradiction workshop.

Example of a focus question on contradictions:

What do you see as preventing or stopping this community from achieving the aspired socio-economic well-being in the next 3 years?

Step 3

Strategic directions

Strategic directions are proposals of the directions that the organisation needs to take to overcome the underlying contradictions towards attaining the practical vision. By being aware of both the vision and contradictions, the resulting plans should achieve higher impact with less effort. Thus:

Once alternatives, dreams, and visions, along with barriers to their realisation, are listed, the team develops major proposals for achieving the alternatives, dreams, or visions either directly or indirectly, through overcoming the barriers (Bryson, 1995:23-24).

While practical vision will focus on long term aspirations, strategic directions constitute proposals which are more immediate and are made for only one or two years, mainly focusing on problem-solving. Participants should constantly be reminded that the plans they make will be their own and not based on recommendations to be implemented by others. It is not a planning workshop for what someone else will do.

The strategic directions workshop considers the question of how obstacles can be overcome, by-passed or eliminated.

Example of a focus question on strategic directions:

What can we do to overcome the obstacles that are preventing our community from achieving the aspired economic well being in the next 3 years?

Criteria for the identification of strategic directions_ Bryson (1995:23-34), has given some guidelines for the selection of the most effective strategies towards the desired vision. He argues:

An effective strategy must meet several criteria. It must be technically workable, politically acceptable to key stakeholders, and must accord with the organization's philosophy and core values. It should be ethical, moral, and legal. It must also deal with the strategic issue it was supposed to address.

Step 4

Implementation stage

It is at this stage that those involved determine what proposals can be implemented in the next 12 months on the basis of priority. Hence, the proposals are prioritised using any effective and objective methods of prioritisation as will be determined by the planning steering committee. These are proposals that will respond to the contradictions already identified. Thus:

After major proposals are submitted, two final tasks remain. Actions needed over the

next two to three years to implement the major proposals must be identified. And finally, a detailed work programme for the next six to twelve months must be spelled out to implement the actions. (Bryson, 1995:23-34)

The prioritised strategic proposals are put on a one-year timeline in their order of priority. It is important that participants or the planning team develops activities for each of the proposals after which they can discuss and agree upon the exact quarter when the activities are to be implemented.

Prioritising

An appropriate question can be asked that challenges stakeholders in a planning workshop session to prioritise the emerging issues. This could look like this: “Looking at the options or issues raised from the participatory strategic planning exercise, which (3, or 5 or 10 etc.) issues would you consider the most strategic and important by their order of priority?”

Setting good objectives

Objectives are targets that organisational members steer towards. The term ‘objective’ has often been used interchangeably with a ‘goal’. Kreitner (1995:174) has argued that setting objectives is probably the single most important feature of the planning process. From the conventional school of thought, it has been observed that “as far as possible, objectives are expressed in quantitative, measurable, concrete terms, in the form of a written statement of desired results to be achieved within a given time period” (Raia, 1974:24). However, in participatory strategic planning context, an objective can be qualitative, that is, meant to attain the kind of change or targets that are intangible in nature such as good leadership practice, or increased capacity.

An objective should be:

SPECIFIC - Has only one intervention, a precise variable to be measured.

MEASURABLE - Can be evaluated on the basis of specified qualitative and quantitative targets. Data should be available or can be easily collected.

ACHIEVABLE - Should be able to be completed within a reasonable period of time.

REALISTIC - Should be within the (resource) means of the group/project

TIME-BOUND - Should have clear time limit within which activities are to be completed
A good strategic plan will therefore lead to good objectives, that will give clear direction, and purpose of action as they guide the implementation operations to actualise the strategic plan.

4.7 Other important considerations

4.7.1 Preparation of draft plan

Now that the planning activity is complete, what next? The plan document should be prepared as a point of reference, but also for wider sharing with other stakeholders and interested parties not involved in the process. Preparation of a draft plan may be delegated to the process consultant, an executive in the organisation or a key staff member in the planning department (Bryson, 1995: 23). The draft plan document should be distributed in advance to those expected to participate in the report validation workshop. This will save time and also ensure people have more substantial contributions to make.

4.7.2 Continuous process of review and evaluation

It has been noted that, even though the evaluation of the participatory strategic planning activity comes towards the end of the planning process, continuous review should characterise every step of the participatory strategic planning. This is the only way to ensure coherence and effective linkage between one step and the next. A continuous review will also establish the usefulness and relevance of the preceding step in relation to the next.

4.7.3 The time frame

Participatory strategic planning process, unlike the conventional approach, may be expected to consume time. The jostles involved in the preplanning phase as well as the trade-offs on interests among key

stakeholders when deciding on the issues of focus, will mean protracted bargains. For this reason, a lot of time is usually consumed before arriving at reasonable consensus. The whole process may last for anything between a few days to a few months. However, Bryson has the following empirical observation as a guide to busy executives when it comes to managing the final stages of a participatory strategic planning process through workshops and retreats that are planned as land-marks for consensus within the six-to-twelve month long process:

Many organisational strategic planning teams that are familiar with - and believe in – the process will be able to complete most of the steps in a two- or three-day retreat, with an additional one-day meeting scheduled three to four weeks later to review the resulting strategic plan (Bryson, 1995: 23).

According to Bryson, it should be noted that where the constituencies involved are more diverse such as in networks, communities and collaborators, the process may take longer as consensus is more difficult, as concessions are sought from various opinion leaders and member organisations.

4.8 Conclusion

In this Chapter, we have gone into great detail to review and analyse the process of participatory strategic planning. We have made a good attempt to reflect on the process from both normative as well as empirical perspectives. The Chapter has attempted to explore the available literature on the subject, which, admittedly, is relatively scarce. In fact, there seems to be more literature coverage on strategic management than there is on participatory strategic planning per se, which is a subset of the former. This can be explained by the fact that corporate sector has for long dominated research in the management scene, with much of the resultant literature focused more on the experiences of the wider corporate sector management than with participatory strategic planning specific.

The next Chapter will set the stage for field research, in an effort to test the theories explored in the foregoing Chapters, and in particular, the efficacy of participatory strategic planning as a management tool for organisation building.

Chapter Five

5.0 Field research on the efficacy of participatory strategic planning approaches in organisation building

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Approaches to research

Some of the key approaches to research designs have been discussed below. These have been identified in the context of the level of control of the researcher as compared to the level of participation of the object of investigation in the research activity (*Lecture in MA Class of 1990; University of Reading; Mulwa 1994:152; Unpublished MPhil Thesis*). These approaches are discussed below.

5.1.1.1 Observational Research

In this type of inquiry, neither the subject, nor the object of research has control over the research process. This has sometimes been referred to as ‘bird-watching’ research. That is, a person may count

birds as they pass overhead, or as they come to and leave a nest on a tree. The process simply involves watching and recording an activity over which neither the researcher nor the object of research has set deliberate controls. The object of the research may not even be aware that it is being investigated upon.

5.1.1.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation can either be obtrusive (everyone knows why the researcher is there) or unobtrusive (people are not told the real purpose of the a researcher's visit). Whatever the case, the key characteristic of participant observation research is that the control of the process or the activity being researched is entirely in the hands of the people, the objects of investigation. The researcher's control on the research environment and circumstances is either low or non-existent. The researcher's major role is to observe, record and interpret the dynamics as they unfold. In this case, the researcher usually seeks to become a natural participant in the activities or process being investigated upon. The object of research is usually in full control of the research activity at hand. In actual fact, the object of study is involved in the normal or routine activity, into which a researcher develops interest. In this case, the research carries out his or her research without requiring the environment of research to change in any way to suit the research design specifications.

5.1.1.3 Laboratory Research

In laboratory research, the object of inquiry is usually under the total control of the researcher. In this type of investigation, there are usually pre-determined hypotheses. Hence, the expected results will either confirm or reject the hypotheses. Examples of such research are laboratory experiments in science and medical laboratories.

5.1.1.4 Structured Formal Surveys

These are formal social surveys where closed questionnaires are applied. Such tools are usually prepared in advance of the inquiry, and pre-tested before use. The respondents provide data as they reply to the survey questionnaires. Usually, structured social survey designs have the provision for 'control groups' to provide comparative study value. These are the most commonly applied designs in social research. Their results are considered more objective, scientific and valid.

The major disadvantage with these kinds of research designs is that they can be too impersonal, and therefore less appropriate in social research contexts where the value of human dignity is held with high esteem. In other words, rigorous research designs, objective as they may appear to be, should not be arbitrarily applied in social contexts without due consideration on the potential consequences on social harmony of the community being investigated upon. Often, such designs, when administered without the necessary sensitivity, have tended to cause considerable disruption on the respondent's social environment. Research designs that have the potential to preserve the existing social harmony should be more preferred. These are approaches with a human face, that leave the respondent more self-confident and in control of their social circumstances. These are participatory research designs discussed below.

5.1.1.5 Participatory research

Participatory research approaches such as participatory evaluations, participatory appraisals, participatory action research, and participatory surveys, among others, are categorised under participatory research designs. In participatory research, both the researcher and the 'object' of investigation are in reasonably good control of the research tools, including their selection, design and adaptation to suit a particular purpose or circumstance.

Participatory methods of research do not necessarily negate the efficacy of rigorous, scientific (conventional) methods of research. For sure, we need scientific methods of data collection even in participatory research designs. The challenge is how to make such methods 'fit' the respondents' circumstances and build the respondents' potential instead of alienating them. In this context, it would be desirable that, as far as possible, the various stakeholders in a research activity participate in the design and control of the methods of investigation to be applied. This is to ensure that stakeholders in a research exert equal control over the process as that of the investigator, yet maintaining adequate scientific quality of the research design and process as to guarantee objectivity and therefore validity of the outcome. These are virtues of paramount concern in conventional research, and whose value cannot be ignored.

5.1.2 Relevance of the research approaches to the context at hand

The research leaned more towards participatory research and participant observation designs. That

means, even though the researcher played a key role in setting-up the stage and proposing the research questions and tools, the target groups (respondents) were given adequate opportunity to make their contribution into the research design. For instance, respondents were challenged to authenticate the adequacy of areas and scope of focus for the research. Proposals for additional areas and focus were considered for accommodation. Participant observation methods are most effective in assessing attitudes and behaviour (as pertains to the transformation of attitudes among the respondents as a result of exposure to participatory methodologies).

As far as possible, the data collection process was made participatory. Adequate and deliberate effort was made to create the kind of rapport with the respondents that would make them relax in a friendly and informal atmosphere. The researcher was aware that the quality of the data collected would, to a large extent, be determined by the quality of the rapport established between him and the respondents. Hence all possible precaution was taken to avoid the common mistake of creating artificial, dispassionate relationship between the researcher and the respondent, as is common practice with conventional research methods. Where the efforts to create rapport with the respondents is not optimised, the common consequence is the possibility of getting 'socially acceptable' responses. These are the kind of responses that are not genuine in themselves but meant to please the researcher and at the same time protect what the respondent considers as 'inside' or classified information whose release would depend on the level of trust that exists between them.

In the case of conventional research, it is erroneously assumed that the more formal the relationship between the researcher and the respondent, the more likely the information gathered would be original and authentic with minimum external influence from the world of the researcher. Therefore, such information is assumed to be more objective and valid. On the contrary, research and experience has tended to indicate that where artificial and formal relationships exist between the researcher and the respondent, there would most likely be low levels of trust and therefore the respondent is likely to give information but that does not necessarily reflect the true picture of reality on the ground (Feuerstein,1986;*passim*; Patton,1986;*passim*; Bhaduri, et al.1982;*passim*; Bhasin,1985;*passim*; Clark, et al. 1979;*passim*). Hence, the advantages of creating rapport with the respondents outweigh the likely dangers of collecting data that is inaccurate, and laden with the influence from the assumptions carried from the world of the researcher.

5.2 Sampling

5.2.1 Purposeful sampling method

Purposive sampling was applied to determine the sample that would be isolated for the purpose of the research at hand. This method involved pre-determining characteristics there were to guide us in the selection of the organisations to be interviewed. The major criterion applied here was organizations that had undertaken participatory strategic planning in the last five years under the facilitation of PREMESE Africa Consultants. This criterion invariably helped determine as to which organizations were to be considered to form the sample for the purpose of the research at hand. In turn, we were able to determine as to which persons would be interviewed from these organizations. The first criterion used was that they had to be ‘randomly’ picked from the sampled organizations and their key partners (that is beneficiary communities and the donor partners). The second criterion was that the persons to be interviewed must have participated in the participatory strategic planning exercise itself and not spectators. That is how the sampling method used in this research qualifies to be categorized as a ‘purposeful sampling’ method.

5.2.2 Determining sample size

Determining sample size in the research at hand depended on only one major criterion: the total number of organizations professionally supported by PREMESE Africa to carry out their participatory strategic planning in the last four years. This brought the total number to ten that could meet this criterion. However, despite the relatively small size of a sample, this was considered, to be sufficient for the purposes of the research at hand. It should be born in mind here that, as observed earlier, Participatory strategic planning is a relatively new management practice within community based organizations and non governmental organisations alike as part of the wider social sector, as compared to the corporate world of business.

Unlike an earlier prediction that too small a sample size was likely to pose specific problems in the validity of representation of the whole population, in our case this did not apply. This is because the bottom line of the sampling rationale was ‘all’ those organizations supported by PREMESE Africa to carry out their participatory strategic planning within the specified period of time. The fact that the entire population meeting the criterion was only ten organisations, this left the researcher with only one specific task: to strive to reach all the ten organisations. The researcher was fully aware of the argument advanced by Fitz-Gibson and Morris, (1987:42) that small sample sizes could face the danger of adversely affecting the credibility of the a research outcome, thus:

Small numbers make some statistical analyses impossible and where analysis can be performed small samples reduce the likelihood that even fairly substantial differences will be statistically significant. This is because statistical tests take into account the size of the groups producing the means being compared when determining significance. The smaller the group, the less likely it is that the mean produced actually reflects the mean that it is supposed to represent.....

This notwithstanding, the nature of the research at hand has made the researcher to focus more on the qualitative value of data than its statistical value. That is, even though statistical significance of the data was considered to give meaning to trends, rational responses given by the respondents to justify their scoring is given precedence in the analysis and in the effort to understand the reality. ‘Before’ and ‘after’

scenarios have also been used extensively to establish the trends regarding the impact of the Participatory Strategic Planning on the organisational capacities.

The standard guide given below provided the scientific justification for picking on the whole specified population for the purpose of this research. This is adapted from Casley and Kumar, 1988:83

Table 10: Sampling guide
(Casley and Kumar, 1988:83)

Total No. of population or groups on the sample frame	Suggested Sample in %	Corresponding figure in numbers
50 (and below)	(Possibly) whole population	The whole population
100	15	15
200	10	20
500	10	50
1000	5	50

As mentioned above, the initial criterion for developing sample-frame as a basis for sampling exercise was ‘*all those CBO’s and NGOs which PREMESE Africa (the employer of the researcher) provided professional support to undertake participatory strategic planning in their organisations, within the last four years*’. Initially, the benchmark was ‘within the last 5 years’ but this had to change when the sample-frame indicated that the earliest organisation among those facilitated by PREMESE Africa undertook its Participatory strategic planning in the year 2000.

5.2.3 Organisations sampled and the visitation itinerary

Below are the organisations that were ultimately sampled and visited for the purpose of the research at hand.

Table 11: Organisations sampled and the visitation itinerary

Organisation	Level of operation	Date visited by researcher	Venue of interview
1.Welfare Advisory Committee -WAC	Divisional Level	7 th February 2003	Dandora Nairobi
2.MAA Aids Programme	District Level	4 th February 2003	Isinya, Kajiado

3.Action Aid Kenya-Isiolo	Provincial Level	20 th March 2003	Isiolo
4.Peace-Net Kenya	National Level	14 th February 2003	Lavington, Nairobi
5.ADRA Kenya	Divisional Level	15 th April 2003	Imara Daima Nairobi
6.CARE Tanzania	Divisional Level	21 st April 2003	Imara Daima Nairobi

Observations

It should be noted that even though the original target was to investigate the entire population of 10 organisations which PREMESE Africa had facilitated to develop their strategic plans between 2000 and 2002, it was only practically possible to reach 6 of these organisations. The factors accounting for this shortfall are discussed under section 5.4 below.

5.3 Methods applied for data collection

5.3.1 Literature review

The study sought to establish and understand the theoretical meaning of the key concepts raised in the topic of research. This led to a reasonably broad, and yet meticulous and focused literature review to test the compatibility of (or absence of it) the research hypothesis at hand and the reality of trends on the ground based on past and immediate research outcomes on the same topic of concern. To this end, extensive literature review was undertaken. This involved library research (which has taken the researcher as far as the UNISA Library) as well as search for relevant information from relevant working documents in various institutions.

5.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (SSI and FGD)

A total of fifteen (15) officers were interviewed (See Appendix 2) from the six (6) organisations visited (See appendix 1). Basically two methods of data collection were largely applied. These were the semi-

structured interviews - SSI, and focus group discussions – FGDs (the process involved in these two methods is described in Chapter One, Section 1.5, Sub-section 1.5.2 of this thesis). The latter involved calling organisational teams to intensive, collective sharing of their experiences with the participatory strategic planning process they went through previously.

Focus group discussion was the predominant method of field data collection. The process was preceded by a quiet moment of approximately one hour meant to give each individual adequate time to fill-in a questionnaire. The researcher had predetermined this tool on the basis of the hypothetical research-objectives. The first organisational team to be interviewed was also meant to serve as a pilot study. This provided an opportunity to revise and adapt the questionnaire to suit the local context and circumstances better. In fact, the major adaptation of the questionnaire had more to do with the intelligibility of the tool for its technical language than its design and structure. It was possible to use the data collected from the pilot study as part of the research outcome given that the focus group discussion used to complement the questionnaire method opened the doors for valid qualitative information.

It is worth noting here that, within the context of participatory research as it was in this case, questionnaire is largely considered an imperfect tool. It is considered an inadequate tool given the factors discussed in Chapter One of this thesis (Section 1.5, Sub-section 1.5.2). However, the researcher was effectively able to adapt the tool as well as its application to 'suit' the respondent circumstances without necessarily compromising objectivity. Hence, use of the questionnaire as a tool for participatory data collection was largely maintained by using it as a guide for focus group discussions following the individual exercise in filling it. Even though the questions in the questionnaire were largely open-ended questions, this did not however provide guarantee for adequate generation of qualitative information. Nevertheless, with group discussions, it was possible for the researcher to employ probing technique to clarify implicit issues in the responses. In other cases, respondents were heard exclaiming: "Oh, I did not know that was what this particular question was seeking to find out". This way, it was possible to enlist much more in-depth information from focus group discussions.

5.4 Constraints experienced during data collection

The researcher had anticipated right from the design stage of this research that he would have a sample frame of less than 50 organisations and therefore a decision was to be made either to assimilate all of the organisations on the sample frame into the research or to conduct systematic random sampling and select a few. Altogether fifteen (15) respondents from six (6) out of the ten (10) organisations which had met the criterion discussed above were interviewed. This represented 60% of the organisations in the sample frame. It has been observed that after a certain percentage of sample (usually 20% of the population), the effect of the sample size on the research outcome remains constant, or usually normalises (Casley and Kumar, 1988:83). In this case, it is believed that the organisations visited provided sufficiently reliable data for drawing reliable inferences on trends. All of the six organisations interviewed are financially supported by locally-based subsidiary organisations of international funding agencies.

A number of factors account for the inability to reach the remaining four (4) organisations on the sample frame for the purpose of this research. These were as follows:

Insecurity: Two cases among the organisations that were not visited (MEDS Mandera and El Barta Child and Family Programme in Marsabit), were in the bandit-infested areas of North Frontier Districts. These are notorious districts with banditry attacks and visitors travelling into the area are required by law to seek for official security clearance or join a contingent of security convoy provided by the government. On the other hand, there are seasons the incidences of armed banditry attacks are so prevalent that it is momentarily declared a no-go-area by the government. This was the case during the research at hand. The researcher did not consider it prudent to take a risk in this case.

Confidentiality: It was not possible to get consent to visit the other two organisations. The researcher was of the opinion that the two organisations were not keen to share the reality of their organisational dynamics with an outsider. It was apparent that confidentiality was critical in these two cases and therefore they would not have been comfortable to divulge internal organisational information to outsiders. Even though this was not explicitly verbalised, the numerous fruitless efforts

to meet the management and discuss the possibility of such visit for data collection points out to this possibility.

Mandate: It would be appreciated that the researcher works for a consulting firm whose mandate towards an organisation usually ends at the end a consultancy assignment. In this case, the client organisation would have no obligations whatsoever towards the consultancy firm after the assignment is over. Hence, the sampled organisations had no obligation whatsoever towards the researcher on the basis of past professional relationship with his employer organisation. Their willingness to accept the researcher to carry out a research among them was entirely based on good will. This made the process of negotiation rather delicate. In at least two cases among those which were not visited, this reality was evident.

Constancy of data: By the time the researcher completed the sixth organisational interview, it was evident that the information gathered was largely constant; that is, there was no new information that was forthcoming. Responses were fairly repetitive.

5.5 Limitations related to the research design

It had been envisaged during research design that, as far as possible, use of questionnaires will be minimised or if possible, avoided altogether in favour of focus group discussions. The nature of information sought for in this research happens to be more qualitative than quantitative. Focus group discussions were expected to generate more qualitative information than a questionnaire would. An attempt to avoid use of questionnaire was also expected to facilitate more relaxed interview sessions, thus helping to enhance the rapport between the researcher and the respondents. However, it was eventually realised that exclusive group discussions would not be efficacious enough in the researcher's desire to enlist individual opinions and perspective. To address this limitation, the research process was redesigned to provide both use of questionnaire as well as group discussions. Group discussions were usually preceded by individual scoring of a questionnaire. This approach made sure

that both individual as well as collective views were captured. Each group discussion lasted for between one and a half to two hours.

5.6 How data was analysed

Ultimately data analysis was both quantitative and qualitative. In the researcher's opinion, the data provides sufficient evidence to test the methodological efficacy of participatory strategic planning as a tool for enhancing organisational and human resource capacity for self-management.

The research has relied to a considerable extent on a tool referred hereby as '*Before and After Scenario*'. This tool involves the construction of an hypothetical scenario on the expected 'situation after intervention' as compared to the present situation before intervention. The process involves a collective effort by stakeholders involved to enlist qualitative information guided by the comparative value of the situation before and after the said intervention. Even though quantitative data was gathered and analysed, its narrative and descriptive extrapolation provides the basis for deducing its qualitative value in terms of its relevance and implication. In other words, the analysis of the data collected from the field sought to establish the difference between the situation 'after' the application of the participatory strategic planning methods as compared to the situation 'before', when conventional methods of planning reigned. To capture this reality, an analytical framework, which has been referred to as 'Star Matrix' came handy. This tool has been discussed under Chapter One (Section 1.5, Sub-section 1.5.3).

5.7 Conclusion

In this Chapter we, have attempted to bring into the fore the research applications to be found in the research design of this study. This includes the methods of sampling applied, the actual methods of data collection used, the methods of data analysis employed, as well as the constraints experienced in the process of data collection. The Chapter that follows (Chapter six) will seek to select and present quantitative data raised from this research activity. This will provide a preamble to the Chapter that follows (Chapter Seven) which will predominantly seek to present qualitative information on the outcome of the research within the wider context of the original objectives of this research. The last

Chapter (Chapter Eight) will present salient observations, conclusions and recommendations within the realms of the concerns of the research, as well as recommended areas for further research.

Chapter Six

6.0 Analysis of field data and presentation of findings

6.1 Introduction

The data presented in this Chapter is that which exclusively pertains to its quantitative value. Specifically, the Chapter presents the analysis of respondents' profile. This is in an effort to establish the trend in the nature and calibre of organisational teams involved in organisational strategic planning. It is on this evidence that generalisations are made. However, this Chapter has made but only modest effort to extrapolate the implications of the quantitative data at hand. The rationale behind this choice is that the research at hand was more predisposed to the use of participatory methodologies than otherwise. Nevertheless, the actual research saw a pragmatic approach, with good blending between conventional tools of data collection (such a questionnaire) and the participatory methods (such as focus group discussions). The outcome of participatory methodologies is more of qualitative information than quantitative and vice versa. The qualitative outcome of the research will be found in Chapter Seven that

follows.

6.2 Presentation of the quantitative findings

6.2.1 Respondents' profile analysis

Among the questions raised as part of the concerns for this study was the extent to which the exponents of participatory methodologies commit themselves as genuine practitioners, as opposed to the rhetoric of survival (whether individually as professionals or as part of the institutions that promote participatory development). The respondents' profile analysis was part of the attempt to understand the person of the practitioner who is in the fore-front as protagonist in the application of participatory strategic methodologies. Who are they, and what characteristics do they possess that may inspire or discourage them in their commitment to the cause?

Below is the full information on the profile of the respondents interviewed during this research.

Table 12: Respondent's profile

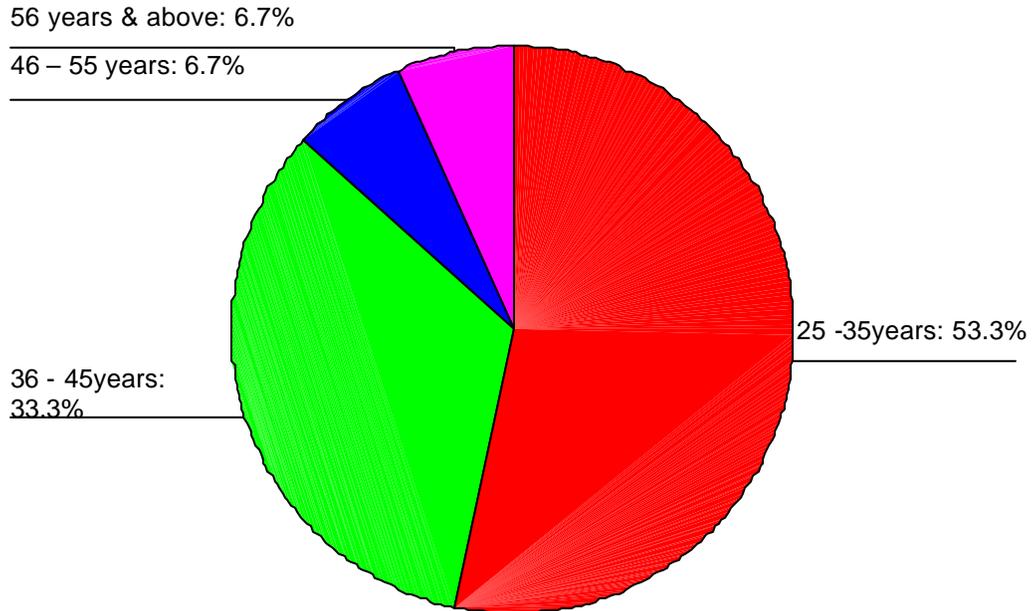
Coded Name of respondent	Age	Gender	Level of Education	Nature/length of professional training	Current position	Working experience	Service with current organisation
A. James Kamau	56	Male	O-Level	Certified Public Accountant (2 years)	Board Member (Treasurer)	34 years	20 years
B. Juma Idd Said	48	Male	O-Level	Banking (2 years)	Board Member	21 years	2 years
C. Violet M. Elaki	31	Female	O-Level	Computer skills (1 year)	Office Assistant	7 years	7 years
D. Jane Weru	29	Female	University Degree	BA- Business Studies (4 years)	Business Development Officer	3 years	1 year
E. John N. Ngugi	27	Male	University Degree	BA-Social Work & Community Development (4 years)	Housing Loans Credit Officer	2 years	1 year
F. Catherine Nasalan	25	Female	Diploma	Diploma in Business Administration (2 years)	Administrative Assistant	5 years	5 years
G. Jason Parantai	42	Male	Diploma	Certificate in Agriculture Extension (2 years) Diploma Community development (1 year)	Director	16 years	7 years

H. Mary Saitaga	29	Female	Diploma	Primary Health Care (4 years)	Community Awareness Officer	5 years	3 years
I. Safia Abdi	31	Female	University Degree	BA-Government & Philosophy (4 years)	Programme Coordinator	5 years	3 years
J. Amina Mohamed	36	Female	O' Level	Teacher (2 years)	Retrenched	20 years	5 years
K. Simon Masiku	39	Male	Advanced Diploma	Industrial Metrology (3 years)	Asst. Project Manager	11 years	2 yrs
L. Alex Nyago	31	Male	University Degree	MA Social Development (6 yrs)	Programme Coordinator	8 years	6 yrs
M. Tecla Wanjala	41	Female	Diploma	Social Development (2 years)	Executive Coordinator	12 years	7 years
N. Philemon Yugi	35	Male	University Degree	BA Nursing & Psychology (4yrs)	Project Coordinator	8 years	3 years
O. Matthew Kibe	43	Male	University Degree	BA-Social Work (3yrs) Diploma in Mass Communication (1yrs)	Project Manager	15 years	7 years

Table 13: Age distribution of respondents

Age bracket in years	Number	Percentage
25-35	8	53.3%
36-45	5	33.3%
46-55	1	6.7%
56 and above	1	6.7%
Total	15	100%

Age of respondents in years

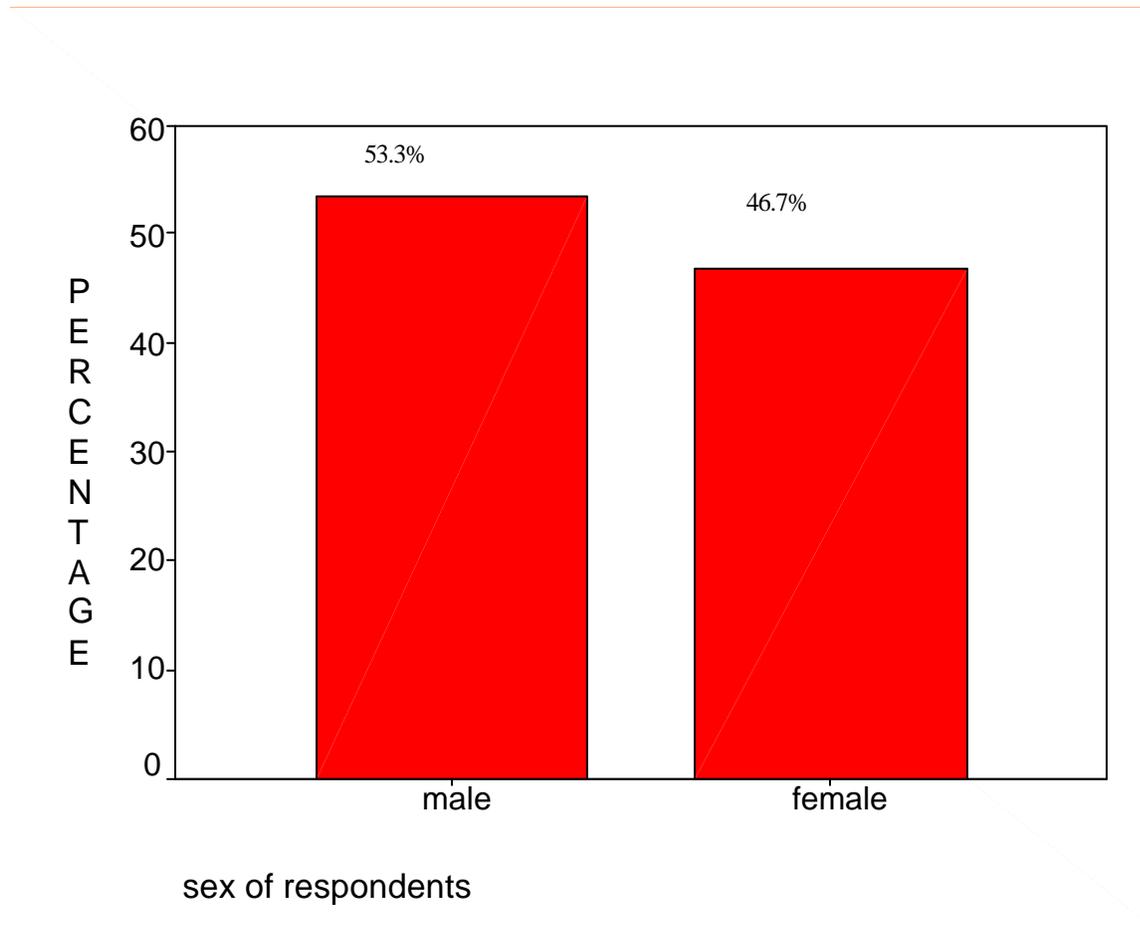


Interpretation:

The majority of the respondents who participated in the study were aged between 25-35 years at 53.3%. This is the most active age of the workers. The more experienced age of workers (36-45 years) was represented by 33.3%. However one respondent represented the retirement age of above 55 years. This is to say that all age groups of workers were represented.

Table 14: Sex of respondents

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	8	53.3%
Female	7	46.7%
Total	15	100%



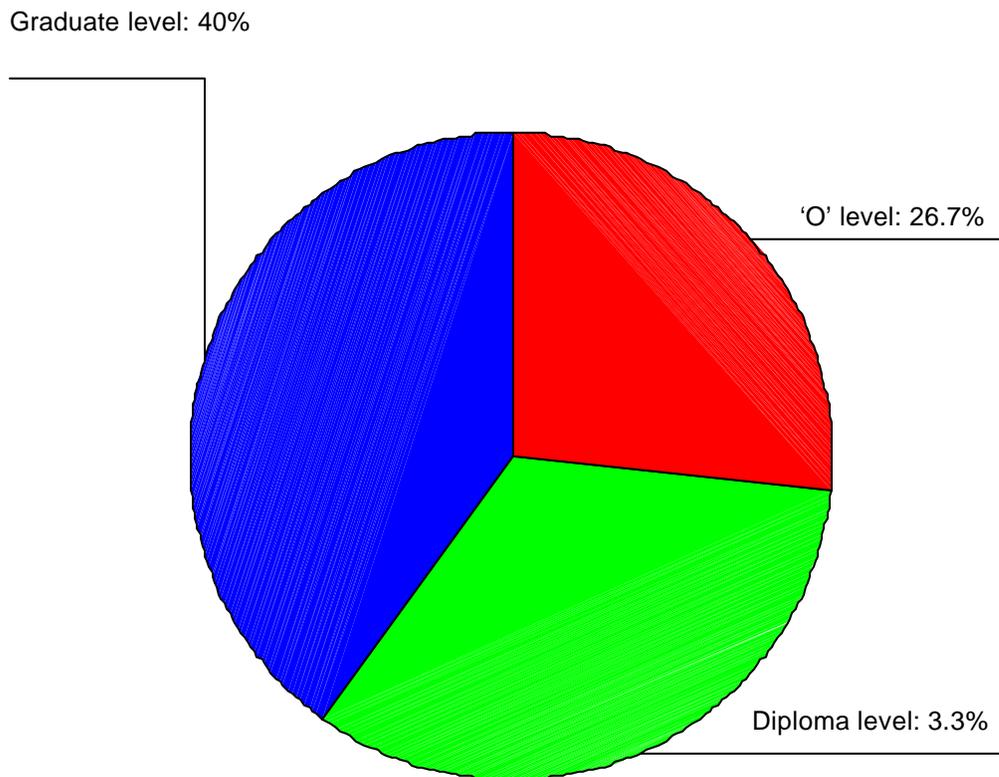
Interpretation:

There were 8 (53.3%) males and 7 (46.7%) females of the fifteen respondents who participated in the study. This reality is expected to take care of gender representation in the various perspectives advanced by the respondents as pertains to the concerns of this study.

Table 15: Education background

Level	Number	Percentage
O-Level	4	26.7%
Tertiary Diploma	5	33.3%
University Degree	6	40%
Total	15	100%

Education levels



Interpretation:

Of the 15 respondents, 40% were University graduates. The rest were non-graduates with either tertiary diploma (33.3%) or Form Four School leavers - O-level (26.7%). This means that 73% of the respondents, who had also played pivotal role in the management of the participatory strategic planning activity, had a career training for their jobs, a fact that would be expected to have had positive impact on the quality of the participatory strategic planning exercise.

Table 16: Professional cum sectoral specialisation of the respondents

Sector	Number	Percentage
Social / Community Development	6	40.0%
Business / Accountancy	4	26.7
Community Health	2	13.3%
Computer programmer / Technical	2	13.3%
Teaching	1	6.7%
Total	15	100%

Interpretation:

The study involved people of diversified sectoral specialisations. Not surprisingly, social and community development specialists dominated the career representation at 40%. This was expected since the organisations sampled were predominantly involved with social work and community development. Business sector rated second at 27%. Community health and technicians featured at 13.3% each.

Table 17: Length of professional training

Range in years	Number	Percentage
1-2	6	40.0%
3-4	8	53.3%
5-6	1	6.7%
Total	15	100%

Interpretation:

The majority of the interviewees (53.3%) were professionally trained at the tertiary and university level for three to four years. However there was a substantial number of respondents (40%) who were trained for not more than two years.

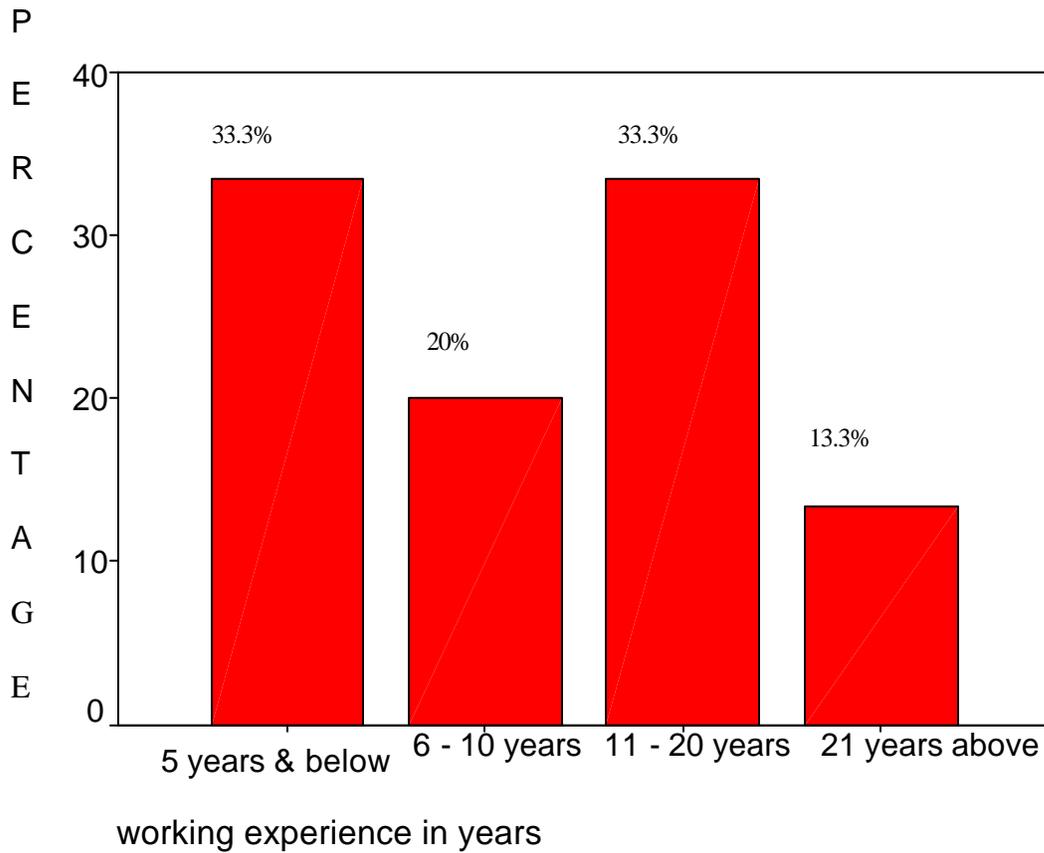
Table 18: Regional level of operation of the respondents (as per employer organisations)

Level of operation	Number of organisations	Percentage
National	1	16.7%
Provincial/Regional	1	16.7%
District	1	16.7%
Divisional	3	50.0%
Total	6	100%

Interpretation:

The large number of employer organisations of the respondents operate at divisional level (50%). Others are spread out in national, provincial and district levels. This means that most organisations contacted are operating more at the grassroots level than otherwise. Hence, participatory strategic planning was focused at that level too. It is paradoxical that in spite of this grassroots orientation, community representation in the participatory strategic planning process was minimal.

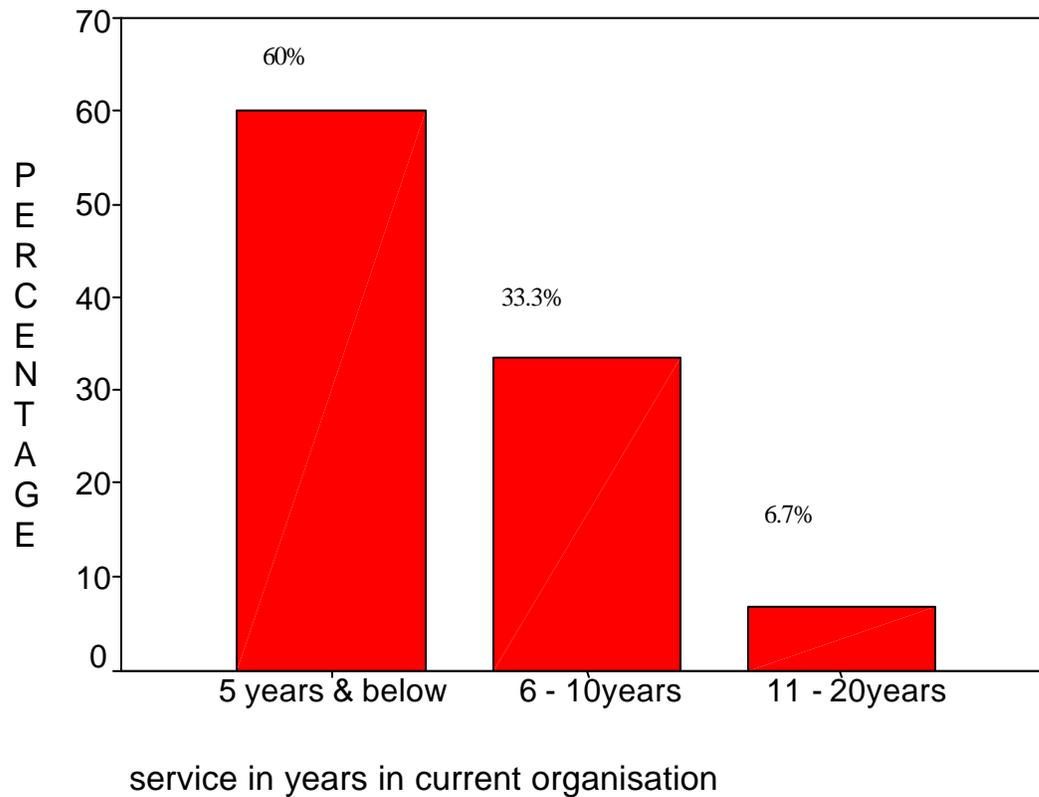
Working experience of the respondents



Interpretations:

Many of the respondents had worked either for eleven to twenty years (33%) or less than five years (33%). This sample was fairly representative of the population since both experienced and non-experienced people were involved in the study.

Length of service with current organisation



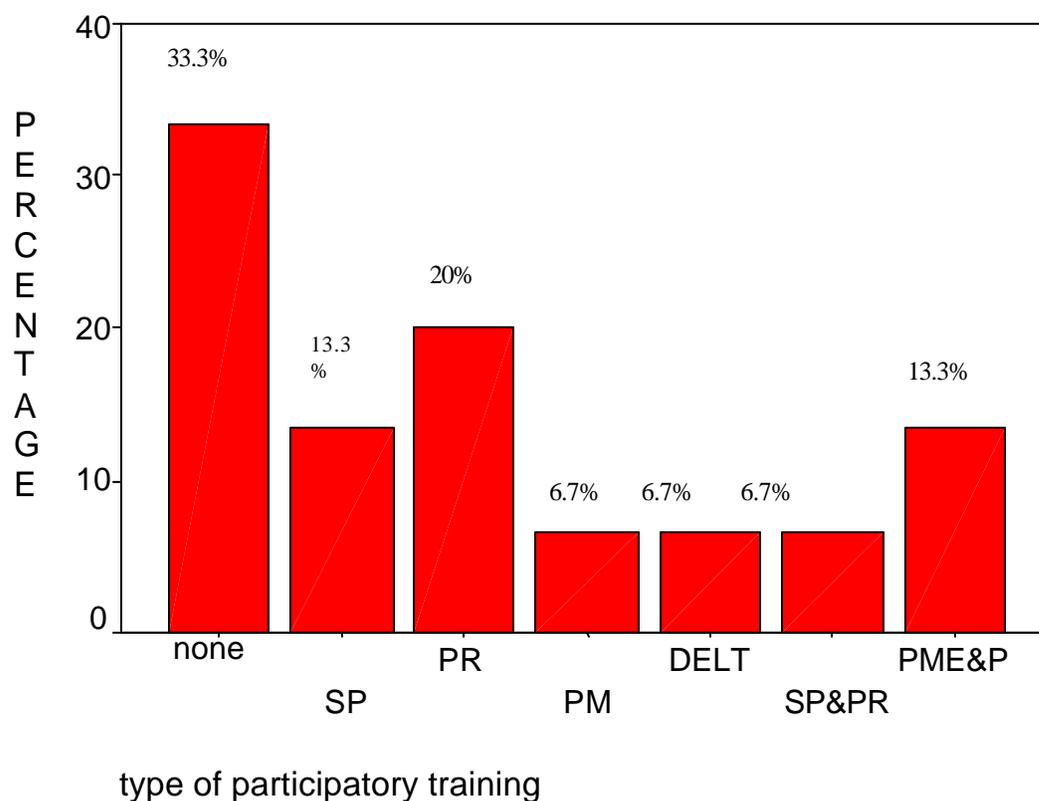
Interpretation:

Sixty percent of the 15 respondents had served in the current organisations for five or less years (4 had served for one to two years; while 5 had served for three to five years). Only 1 respondent had served the current organisation for more than 7 years. This shows that either labour force movement is quite high among the targeted respondents or the respective organisations are experiencing rapid growth in staffing recently. The consequence of the former assumption is that many among the staff involved in the participatory strategic planning may not stay in the organisations long enough to fully implement the plans or to make effective orientation to a new crop of staff to carry the banner.

Table 19: Participatory methodologies trained in

Type of participatory training	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
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None	5	33.3
Strategic planning (SP)	2	13.3
Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)	3	20.0
Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME)	1	6.7
Development Education and Leadership Teams in Action (DELTA)	1	6.7
Trained in combination of more than one methodology	3	20.0
TOTAL	15	100



Interpretation:

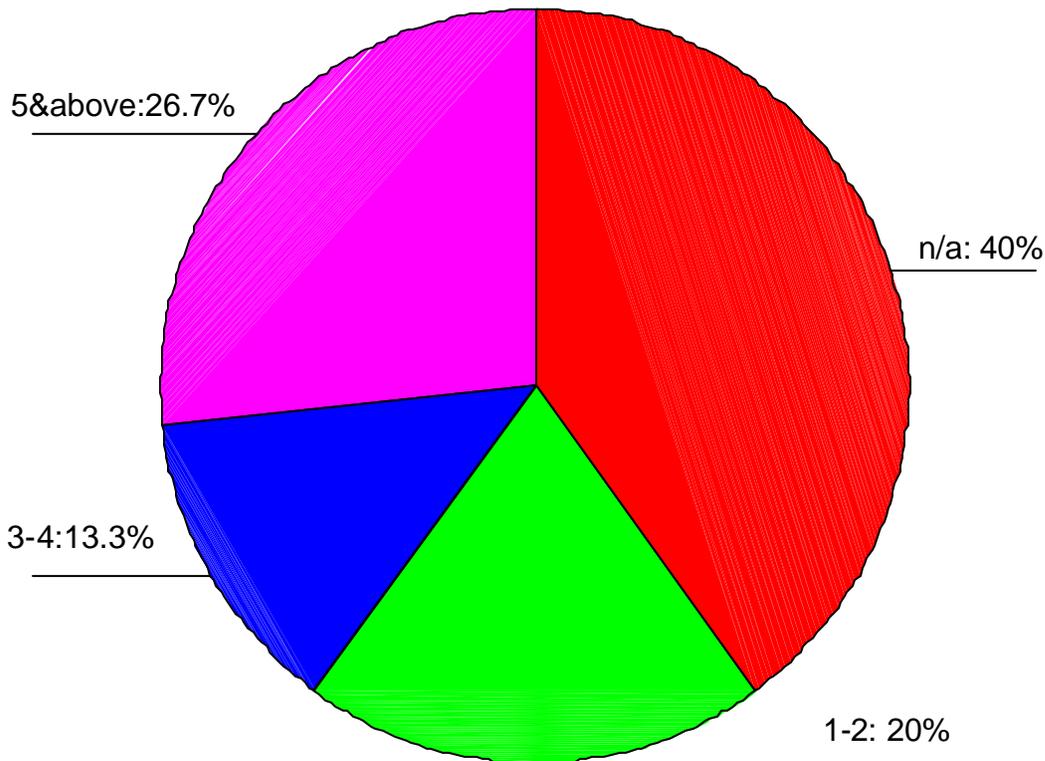
From the bar graph and the table above one third of the interviewees never attended any training in participatory methodology skills (33.3%). This is a relatively large number of untrained organisational team, that was largely assumed to be competent with participatory methodologies at the launching of the participatory planning. However about 66.7% had been trained in participatory methodologies. Only 2 of these (13.3%) had attended inductive training in participatory strategic planning prior to the strategic planning exercise. As a whole, the picture is indicative of participants in the participatory strategic planning who were fairly familiar with the nature of the participatory processes prior to the exercise. It

can be assumed that this contributed positively to the quality of the process.

Table 20: Application of skills acquired from participatory training

Duration in application of skills acquired from participatory training	Frequency	Percent
N/A	6	40
1-2 years	3	20
3-4 years	2	13.3
5 years and above	4	26.7
Total	15	100

Years of application of skills since training



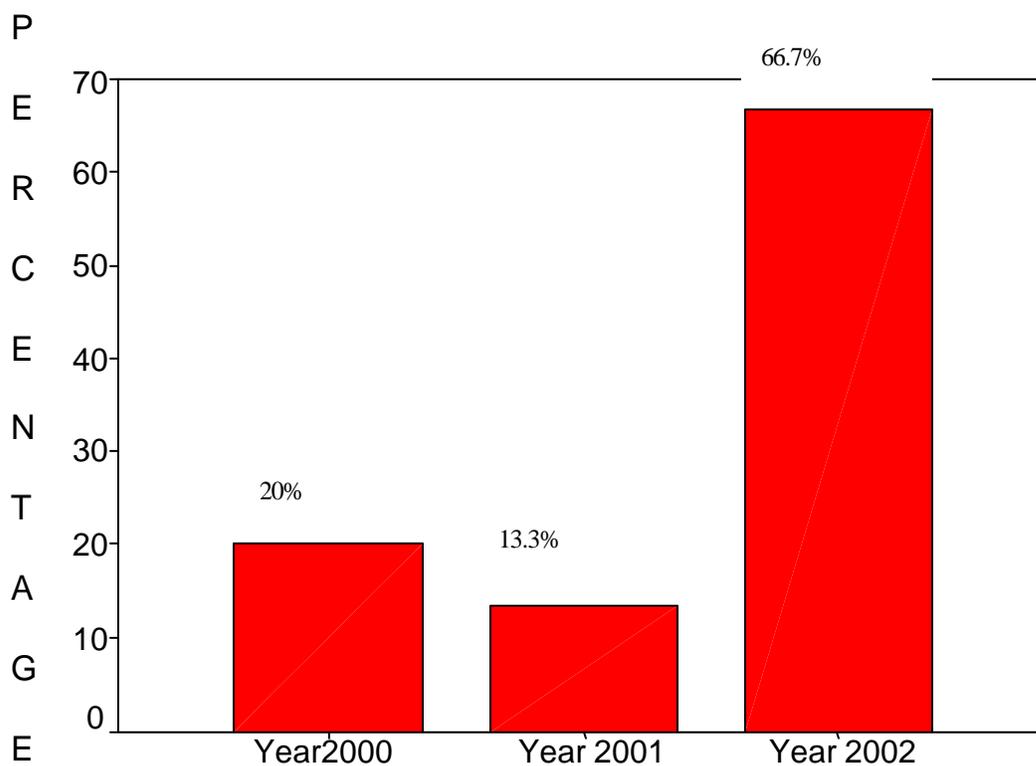
Interpretation:

From the table and the pie chart 33.3% had applied their participatory skills for one to four years while 26.7% had applied for more than five years. This is clear indication that a large number of respondents were already proponents and participants of participatory processes prior to the strategic planning exercise.

6.2.2 When sampled organisations were last involved in participatory strategic planning

Table 21: Last involvement in Strategic Planning (SP)

When last involved in Participatory strategic planning	Frequency	Percent
Year 2000	3	20
Year 2001	2	13.3
Year 2002	10	66.7
Total	15	100



when last involved in strategic planning (SP)

Interpretation

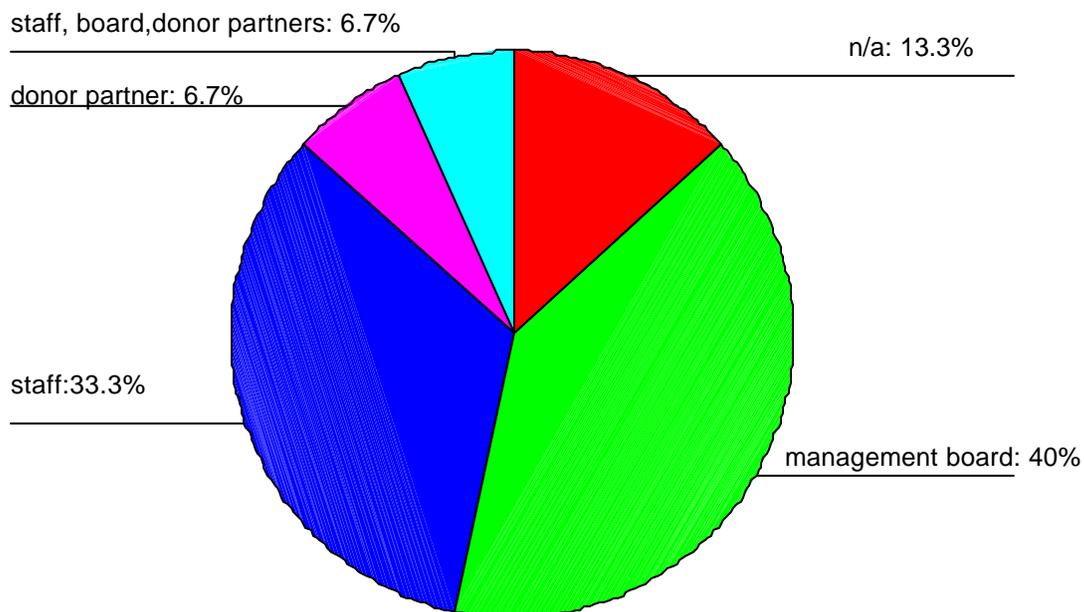
From the table and the bar chart quite a number of respondents (66.7%) were involved in Participatory strategic planning in the year 2002. This can be interpreted that there was more awakening in 2002 on the need to conduct participatory strategic planning by many organisations as compared to the previous two years.

6.2.3 Prime movers of the participatory strategic planning process

Table 22: Prime movers of SP

Who initiated participatory strategic planning	Frequency	Percent
N/A	2	13.3
Board management	6	40
Donor partners	1	6.7
Staff	5	33.3
Staff, board, donor partners	1	6.7
TOTAL	15	100

Who initiated strategic planning process



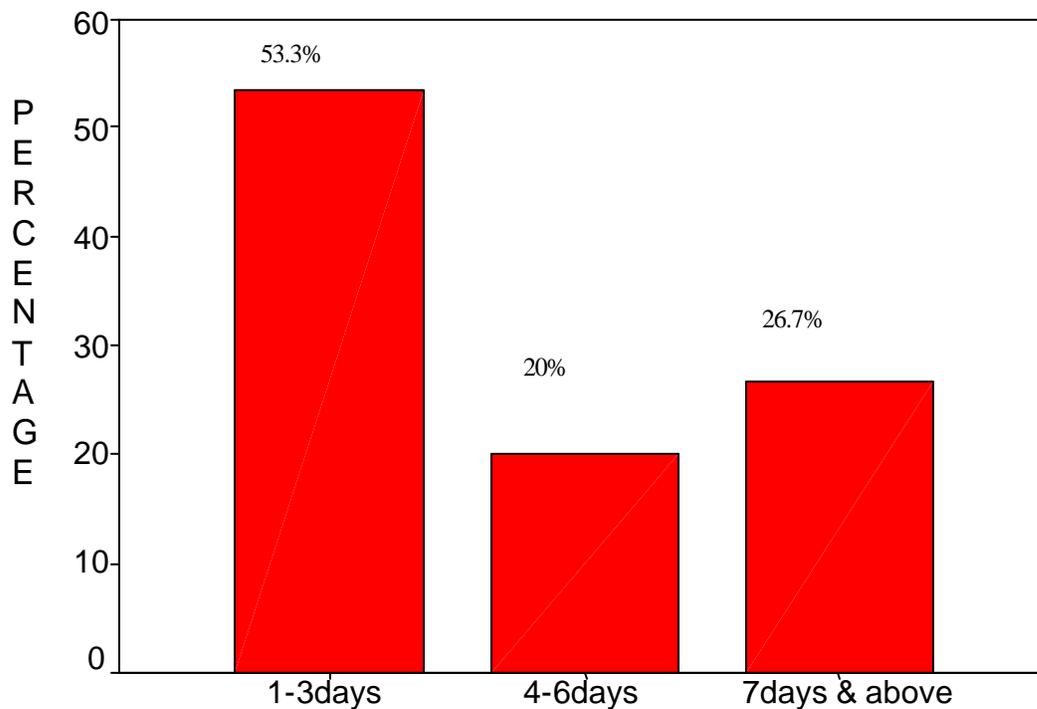
Interpretation:

From the table and the pie chart it can be concluded that the participatory strategic planning process is largely an initiative of organisational management boards (40%) and to a lesser extent, of the organisational staff (33%).

6.2.4 How long the Participatory strategic planning process lasted

Table 23: Length SP exercise lasted

How long was the SP exercise (days)	Frequency	Percentage
1-3	8	53.3
4-6	3	20
7 and above	4	26.7
TOTAL	15	100



how long the sp exercise took

Interpretation:

Predominantly 1-3 days registered as the period the SP exercise took place in the majority of organisations (53.3%). However, it is estimated that 26.7% of the SP exercises would take more than seven days. In some organisations SP took 4-6 days (20%).

6.2.5 Stakeholders that were actively involved in the Participatory strategic planning process.

Table 24: Stakeholder participation in SP

Stakeholder	Frequency of citation by respondents as having been involved in the Strategic Planning	Stage of involvement
Board members	11	All stages (in some few cases the board only came in at the planning workshop stage)
Organisation Staff	10	All stages (In some few cases the staff was involved only at the planning workshop stage. In at least one case, the staff was delegated with the responsibility of writing the plan document)
Donors	5	Sponsorship or funding of the planning activity and providing technical advice only
Community members	2	Participated as respondents in pre-planning evaluation or assessment. In very few cases community members were represented in the strategic planning workshops
Others (Local leaders and district heads of departments; Non-governmental organisations and other collaborators)	1	At planning workshop level

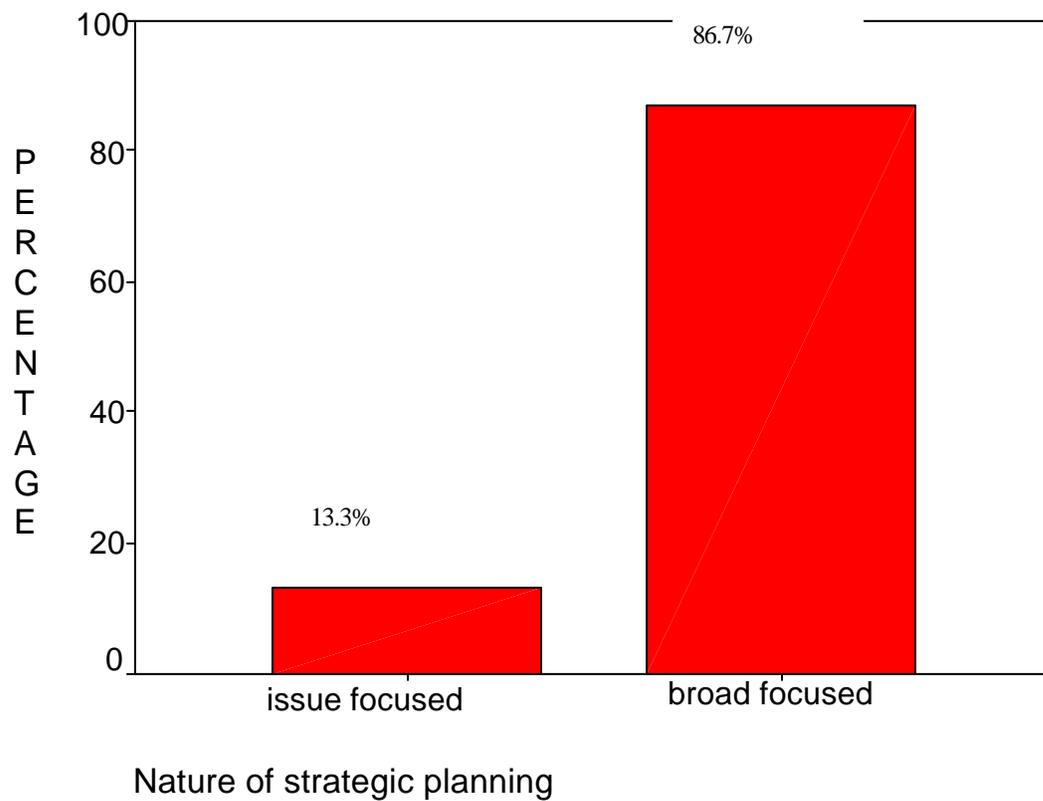
Interpretation:

From the above table, it shows that five different stakeholders and collaborators were involved in the participatory strategic planning process at different stages and with varied intensity. Board members and the staff gave lead in ensuring the success of the exercise.

6.2.6 The nature of Participatory strategic planning

Table 25: Nature of SP

Nature	Frequency	Percentage
Issue focused	2	13.3
Broad focused	13	86.7



Interpretation:

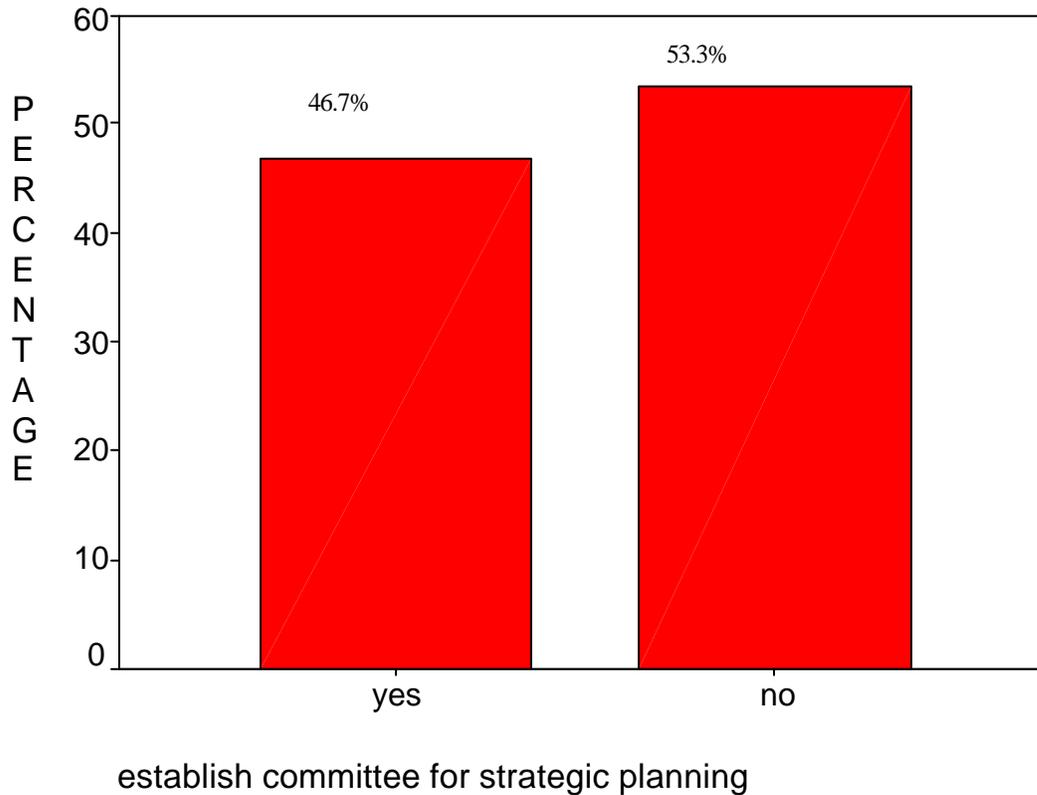
The Participatory strategic planning process was broad focused according to more than 87% of the respondents. Participatory strategic planning was considered broad focused because it touched on the organisational sustenance and especially the review of its mandate (vision and mission). The fact that the exercise was broad focused made it necessary to bring on board representatives of various stakeholders including staff, board, donors and community constituency (though representation of the last two was relatively low) among other stakeholders.

According to two of the respondents (13.3%), their experience with Participatory strategic planning was issue focused. In one of these cases, the driving force for the organisation was to establish as to how to invent ways of making profits otherwise the organisation destined to collapse.

6.2.7 An effort to establish steering committee for Participatory Strategic Planning

Table 26: Effort to establish SP steering committee

Effort	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	46.7
No	8	53.3



Interpretation:

According to the study, 46.7% of the respondents were for the idea to establish a steering committee for the Participatory strategic planning process. The committee was said to be important for providing direction and guidance to the process. Strategic Planning steering committees took responsibility in focusing on the task more effectively as well as detailing the implementation plans. The steering committee was effective in monitoring, following up and evaluating the implementation of the plans. However, 53.3% were not for the idea of setting up a steering committee. Some argued that the management staff was enough to jump in and fill that gap. The planning steering committee was also said to be unnecessary in situations where a participatory evaluation process preceded the planning activity whereby all the important issues would have been raised to form the planning agenda. Where the board and managers provided the necessary coordination, it was found that there was no need of having a steering committee.

6.2.8 Most significant stages of Participatory strategic planning

Table 27: Most significant stages of SP by what was achieved

Stage by order of significance	Frequency count on responses out of 28 responses*	Percentage	Justification
Clarifying organisational Mandate (Vision, Mission, Values)	6	21.4	*Gave guidelines on the areas of concern in the project. *Were able to identify themes and issues for consideration as priorities for planning *Rejuvenated enthusiasm *Affirmed the relevance of organisational mandate and the strategies of the organisation *Helped giving strategic direction for the organisation

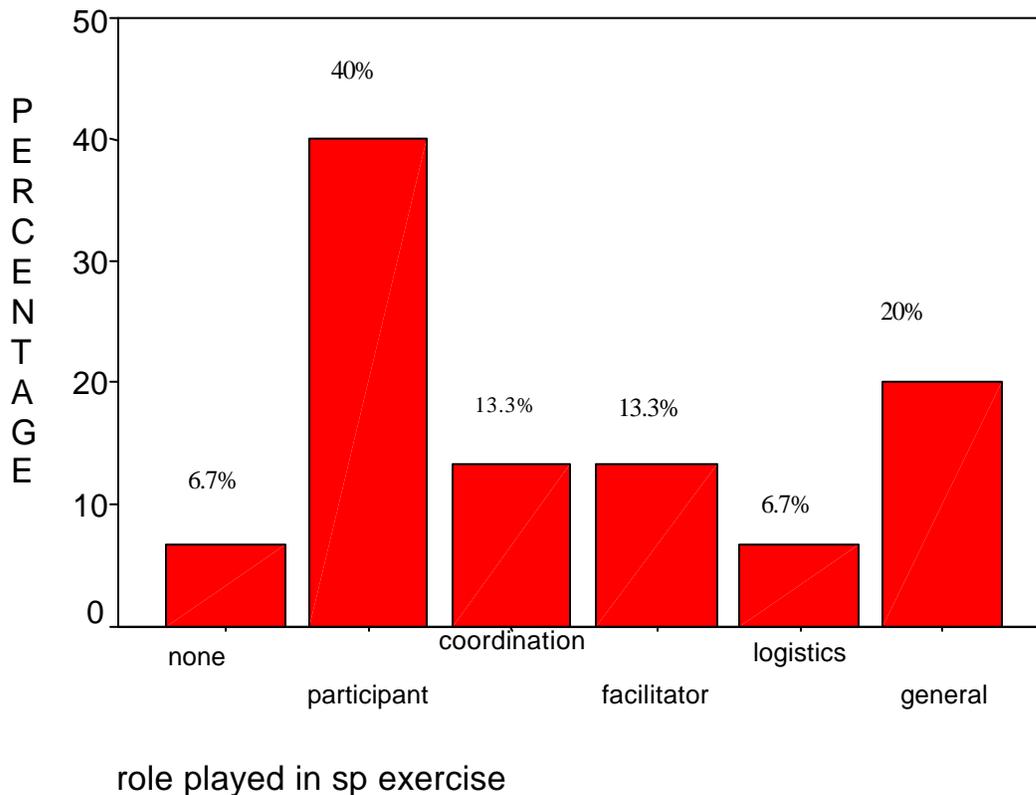
Strategic planning workshop where goals, objectives and strategies were developed to remove contradicts and blocks	6	21.4	*Helped identify specific objectives to be achieved within the given period of time *Were able to put in place a plan to overcome the blocks and contradictions
Programme Evaluation	5	17.9	*Established areas of strategic concern for planning *Reflected on the past of the organisation and drew lessons to feed into the planning process.
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis	4	14.3	*Affirmed our corporate vision and developed activity plans to actualise the same *Identification of areas that need improvement within the organisation
Stakeholder analysis	2	7.1	*Identified potential people for future collaboration
Fund raising	1	3.6	N/A
Practical decisions made	1	3.6	N/A
Implementation stage	1	3.6	*Standards of measurement were set for each strategic direction on which basis future assessment of progress will be possible
Staff appraisal	1	3.6	N/A
Organisation assessment	1	3.6	*Were able to appreciate strong attributes in the organisation and areas of poor performance
Total	28	100.1	

** Some respondents gave more than one response*

Interpretation:

Seemingly, respondents had varied high points in their experience with participatory strategic planning process. However, review of organisational vision, mission and goals dominated the exercise. The significance of this was mainly to establish areas of concern for participatory strategic planning. Participatory strategic planning workshop was also given similar prominence as a high point of the participatory strategic planning process. It is in this workshop where goals, objectives and strategies were developed to remove contradictions and blocks on the way of attaining the organisational vision. The workshop usually provided a forum for the culmination of information collected from various sources, giving stakeholders the opportunity to use that information for collective decision making.

6.2.9 The role respondent played in the Participatory strategic planning



Interpretation:

Nearly all the respondents had been involved in the participatory strategic planning exercise in one way or another. However, many of them operated exclusively at the level of participants (40%). Most of the others were involved in more managerial activities such as coordination (13.3%), facilitation (13.3%) and logistics (6.7%).

6.2.10 What was most satisfactory and disappointing in the participatory strategic planning exercise

What was most satisfactory

- There was high quality participation in the group discussions and negotiations among stakeholders with priority given to the views of the participants
- The impressive openness among stakeholders.
- Stakeholders understood their organisation better than before
- Participants contributed solutions for their own problems. Solutions of existing problems were found
- Enhanced spirit of teamwork
- The fact that every body's view was taken on board and given due consideration with full respect.
- Participatory process arrived at issues of concern
- Participatory methodology of the Participatory strategic planning process led to learning new planning

methods

- Organisation's critical issues were unearthed and addressed
- Effective plans were developed
- Development of objectives, strategies and monitoring indicators was possible for every sectoral group

What was most disappointing

- The fear of termination of the project due to poor performance from the evaluation outcome
- The meeting of the board members prior to the Participatory strategic planning process angered the participants.
- Poor quality of participatory strategic planning document and its delay from the consultants. In some cases, the outcome of the Participatory strategic planning report took so long that people tended to forget what they had discussed
- Preconceived ideas by the board members, resulted to demoralisation of the staff after their ideas were ignored
- Local priorities tended to shift with donor priority for funding
- No effective follow-up of the Participatory strategic planning outcome

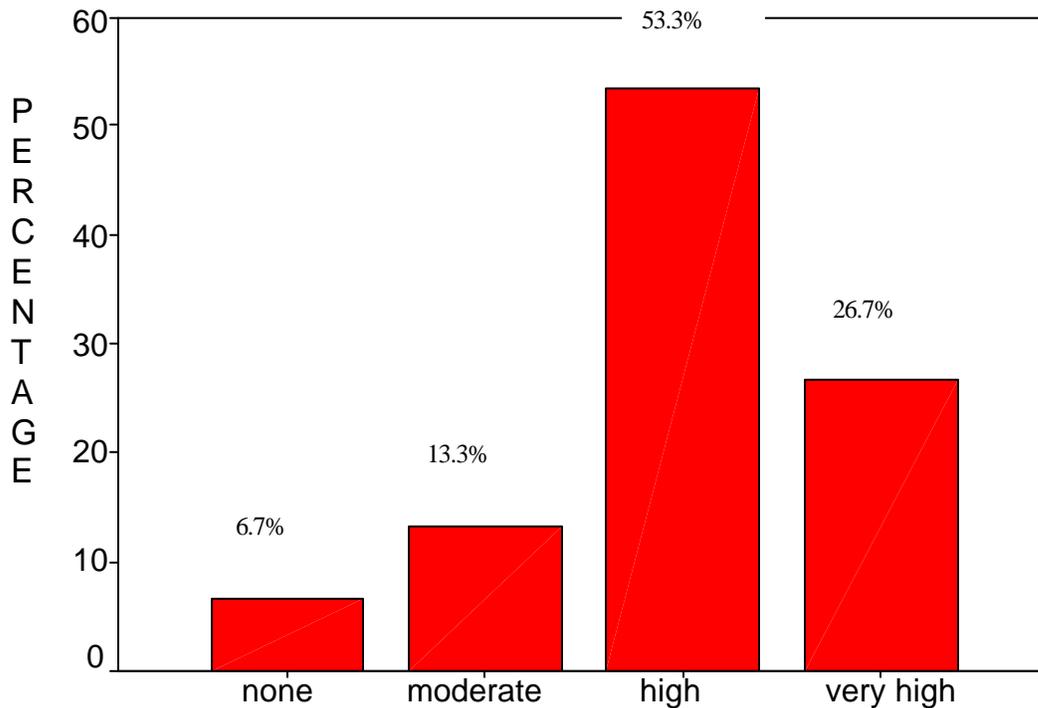
Comments:

The Participatory strategic planning exercise was a learning experience for the participants on how to develop strategies, objectives and how to identify monitoring indicators. However, lack of common focus prior to the Participatory strategic planning exercise caused a lot of dissatisfaction to the participants. In at least one case, this was exacerbated by suspicion arising out of the fact that board members held a meeting among themselves prior to the participatory strategic planning exercise.

6.2.11 To what extent did the SP exercise get support of the organisation's management?

Table 28: Level of management support

To what extent SP got support of the organisation management	Frequency	Percentage
None	1	6.7
Moderate	2	13.3
High	8	53.3
Very high	4	26.7
TOTAL	15	100



organisation management support to the sp exercise

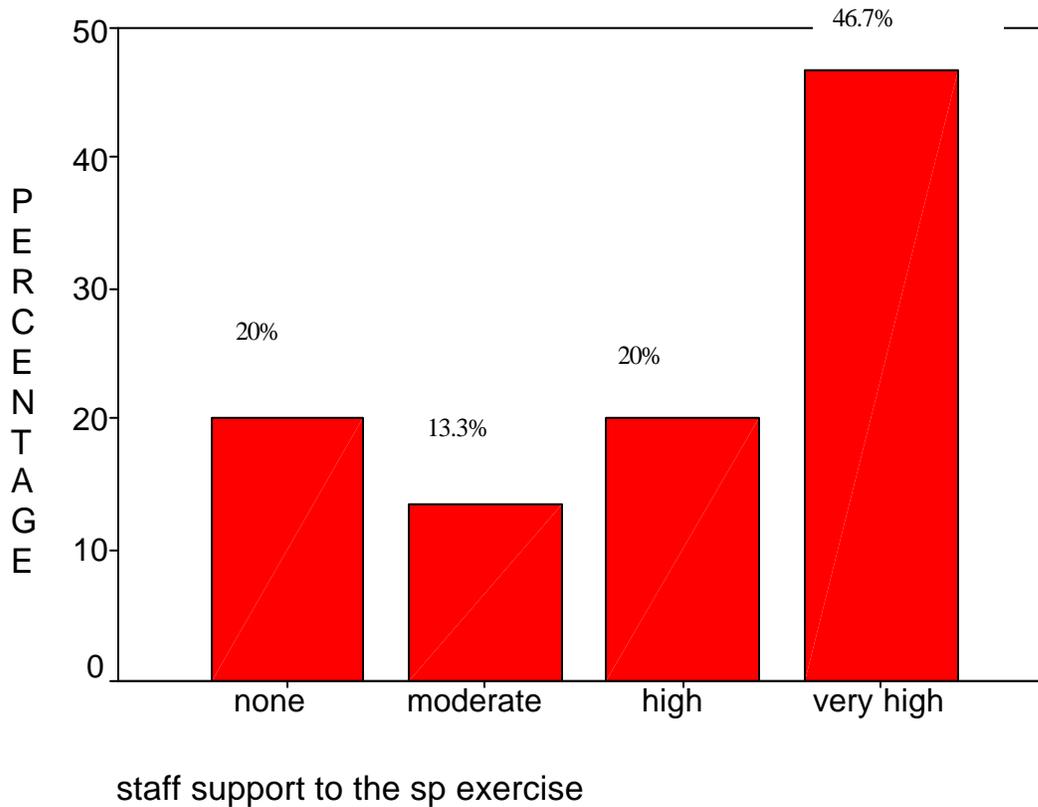
Interpretation:

The management support to the participatory strategic planning process was rated at ‘high to very high’ by 80% of the respondents. It was reported that the management warmly welcomed all the grievances raised during the planning process. The organisation management was also in the forefront not only in initiating the process, but also in efforts to ensure its success. Hence, the management support for the process was appreciated.

6.2.12 The extent of organisation’s staff support to the SP exercise

Table 29: Level of staff support

The extent of support of the SP by the staff	Frequency	Percentage
None	3	20
Moderate	2	13.3
High	3	20
Very high	7	46.7
TOTAL	15	100



Interpretation:

Staff support was 67% high to very high. However, the very high support claims the lion's share at 46.7% as compared to management's 26.7%. Overall, the management support seems more significant as prime movers of the planning exercise. The staff were reported to value their jobs so much that any move that would enhance productivity was fully supported.

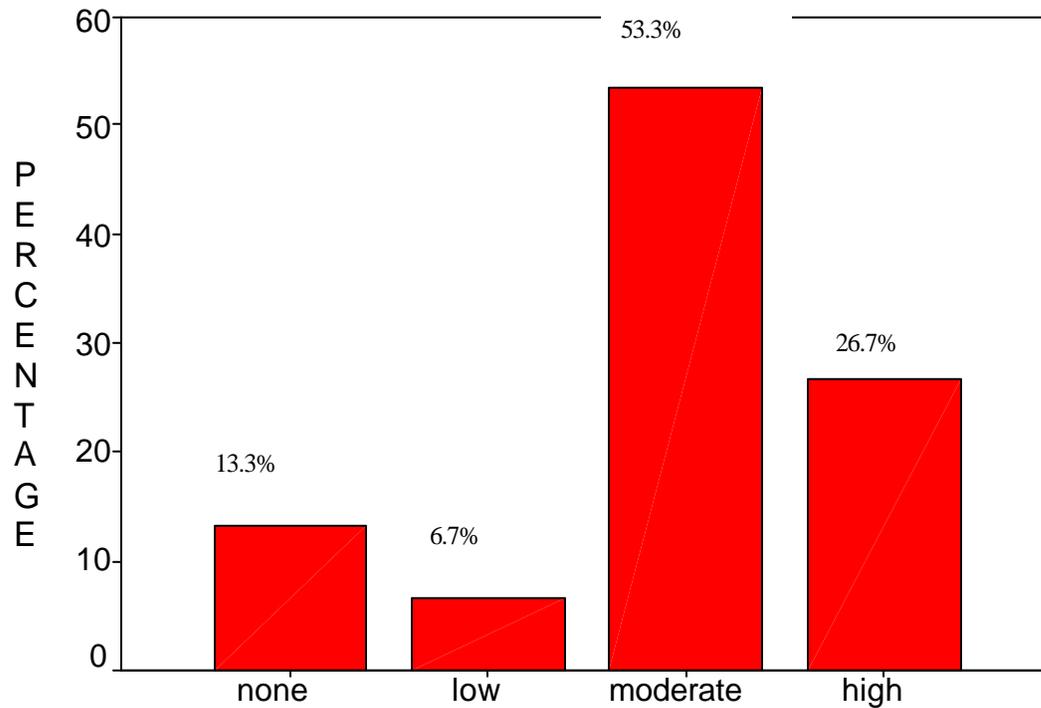
Staff are said to have been pleased to be accorded the opportunity to participate in the planning process and especially in giving their views and recommendations.

6.2.13 The extent of support by community constituency to the SP exercise.

Table 30: Level of community support

The extent in which targeted community accorded support to the SP exercise	Frequency	Percentage
None	2	13.3
Low	1	6.7
Moderate	8	53.3
High	4	26.7

TOTAL	15	100
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community constituency's support to the sp exercise

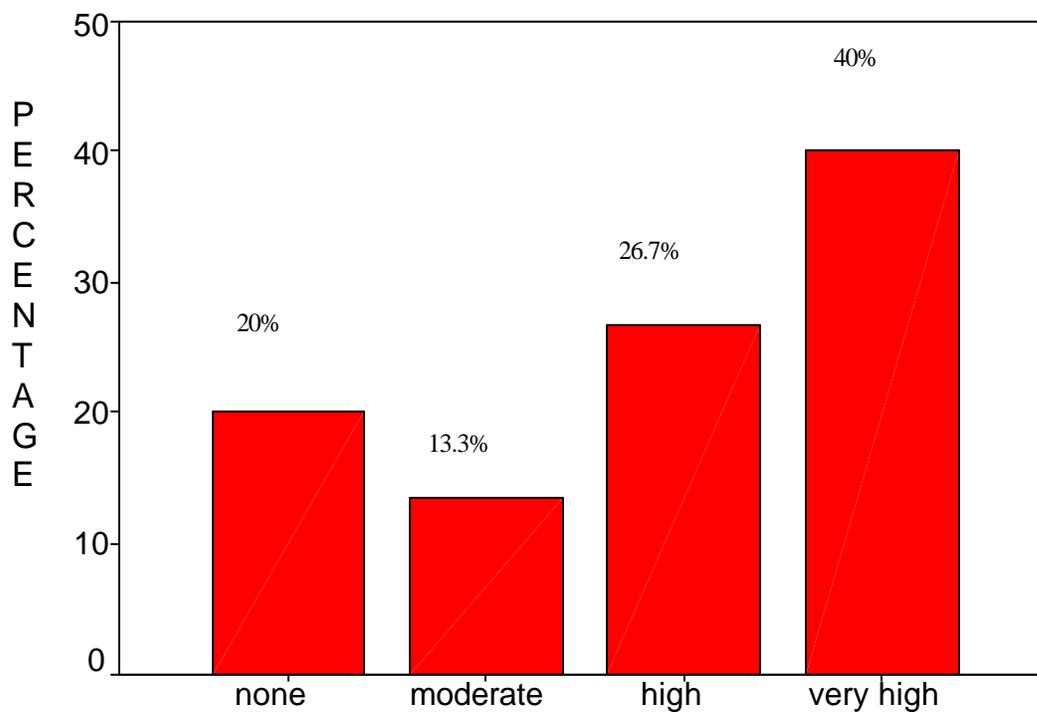
Interpretation:

According to the table and the bar chart above, there was only 26.7% indication of 'high to very high' support of the participatory strategic planning process by the community. In fact, there wasn't any response under 'very high' category. However, there was significantly low or non-support of the process of by 20% of the respondents. The reasons for lack of support by the community included the fact that the community was not involved in the exercise and that those who participated only came in during the programme evaluation, largely as respondents. The largest response (53.3%) indicated moderate support by the community. This could be explained by low representation of this constituency during the Participatory strategic planning. The SP raised high expectations on the part of the community that were never attained and this is said to have demoralised the community.

6.2.14 The extent of organisation's donor partners support to the SP exercise.

Table 31: Level of donor support

The extent of donor partners support to the SP exercise	Frequency	Percentage
None	3	20
Moderate	2	13.3
High	4	26.7
Very high	6	40
TOTAL	15	100



donor partner's support to the strategic planning

Interpretation:

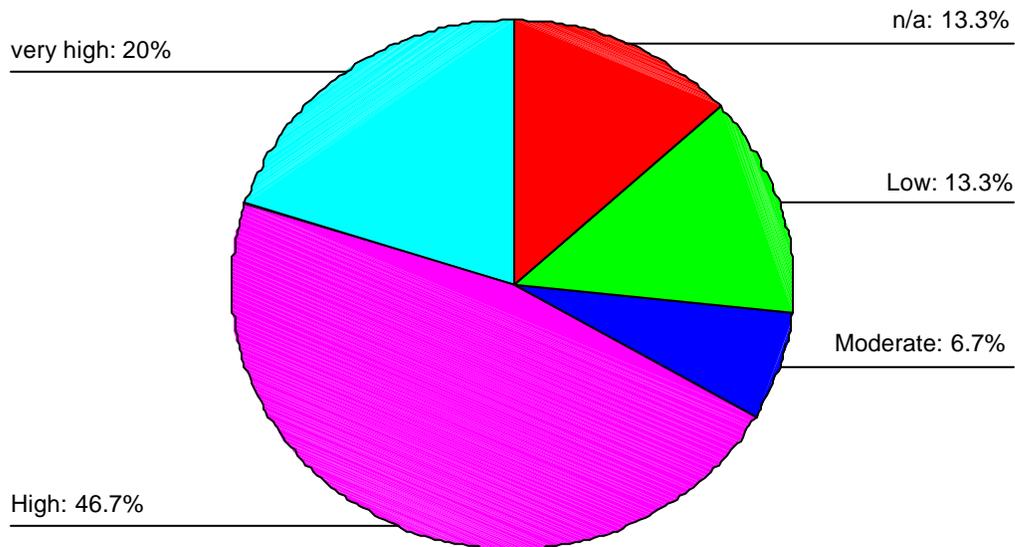
The exercise attracted a good support from the donor partners as indicated by 67% of the respondents. Not only did the donors support the participatory strategic planning activities financially, but are said to have given consent to support the implementation of the outcome. Some donors were involved in the process, either physically, or through regular updates of the proceedings of the exercise.

6.2.15 To what extent the Participatory strategic planning helped build the capacity of the organisation's ability to manage its own affairs.

Table 32: Extent to which Participatory Strategic Planning helped build organisation's management capacity

The extent in which the SP helped in capacity building of the organisation	Frequency	Percentage
Not	2	13.3
Low	2	13.3
Moderate	1	6.7
High	7	46.7
Very high	3	20
TOTAL	15	100

Scope of organisation capacity building as a result of sp



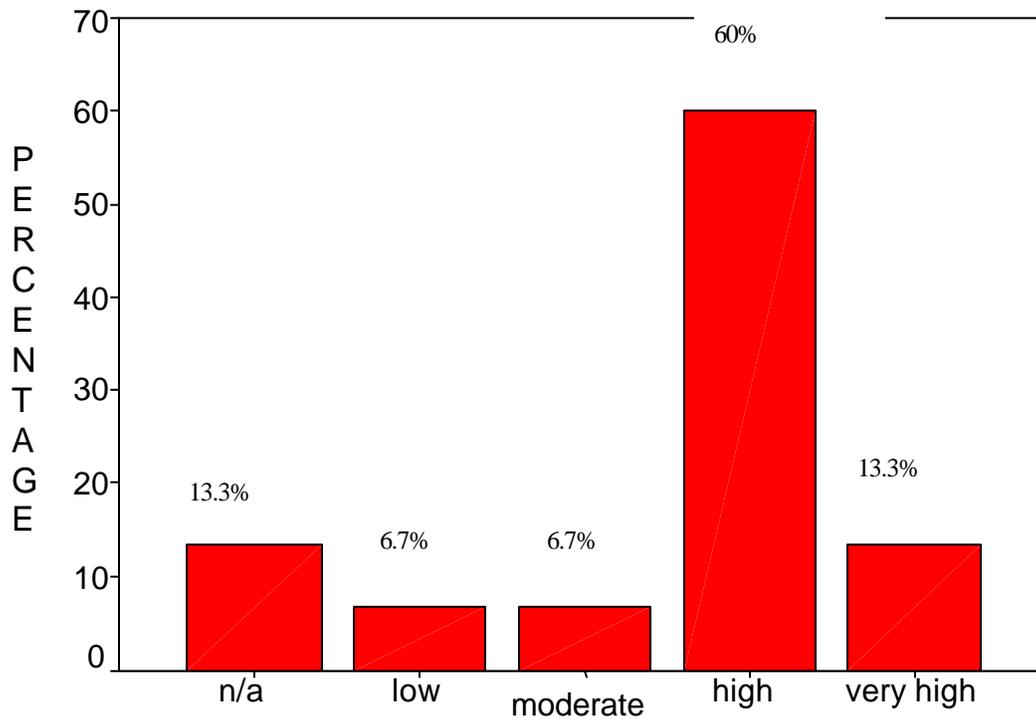
Interpretation:

From the pie chart and the table above it can be interpreted that 66.7% of the respondents perceived SP as having helped to build the capacity of the organisations involved (by 46.7% high and 20% very high). This is to show that generally SP activity was for support of the capacity building.

6.2.16 To what extent SP helped to build the capacity of the staff in the management of programmes.

Table 33: Extent to which SP helped build the management capacity of programme staff

The extent SP helped in capacity building of the staff in the management of programmes	Frequency	Percentage
N/A	2	13.3
Low	1	6.7
Moderate	1	6.7
High	9	60
Very high	2	13.3
TOTAL	15	100



The effect of sp in capacity building for the staff

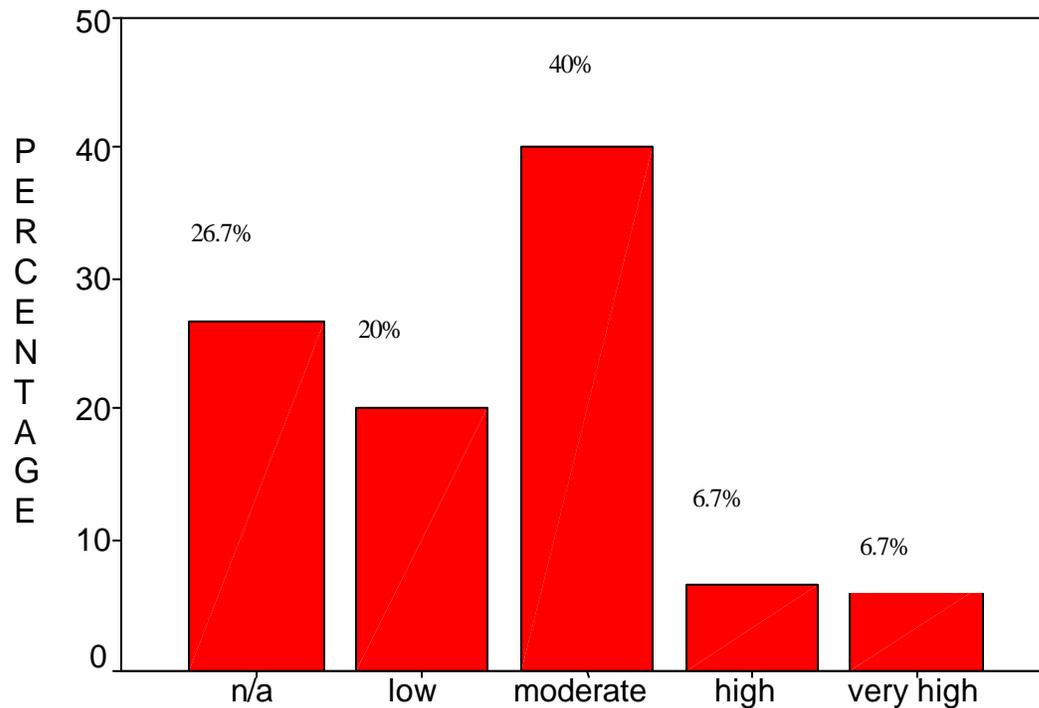
Interpretation:

A whole 73.3% of the respondents indicated that SP generated ‘high’ to ‘very high’ support in the capacity building among the staff to manage their programmes.

6.2.17 To what extent SP helped in building the capacity of the targeted community in its ability to management own development

Table 34: Extent to which SP helped build the management capacity of target communities

The extent in which the SP helped the community in capacity building to manage their own developments	Frequency	Percentage
Not applicable	4	26.7
Low	3	20
Moderate	6	40
High	1	6.7
Very high	1	6.7
TOTAL	15	100



Strategic planning contribution to the capacity building of the community

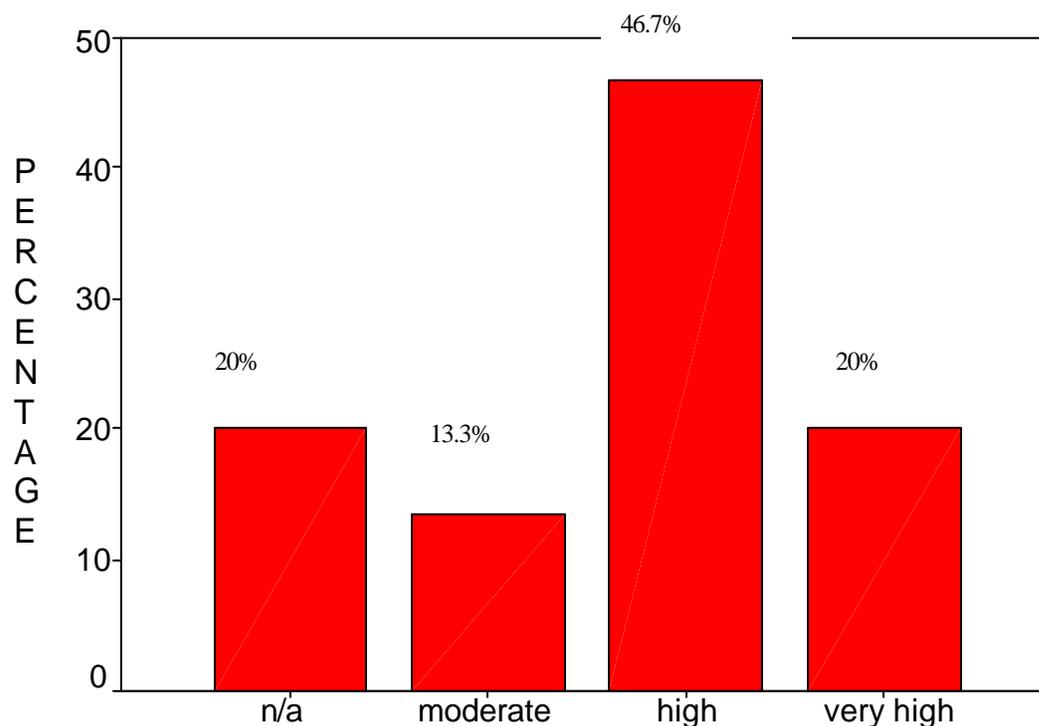
Interpretation:

Participatory strategic planning was perceived to have helped build the capacity of communities at ‘high’ to ‘very high’ by only 13.4% of the respondents.

6.2.18 What was considered to have been most satisfactory about the SP in the organisations

Table 35: Satisfaction in SP application owing to prior preparations

Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Not applicable	3	20
Moderate	2	12.3
High	7	46.7
Very high	3	20
TOTAL	15	100



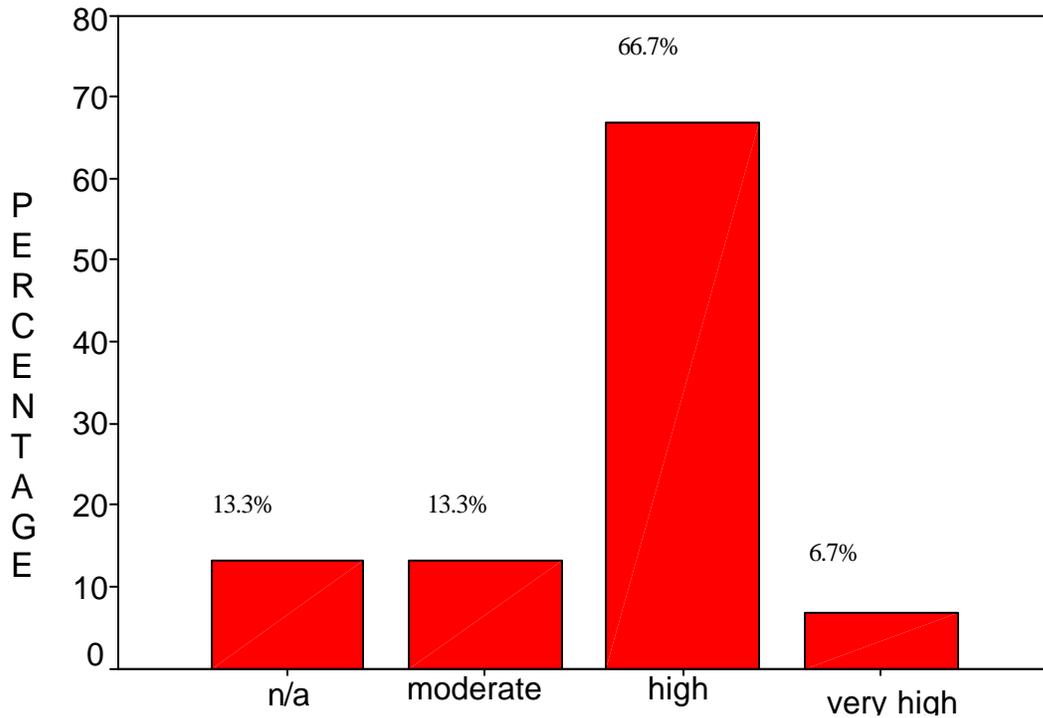
Strategic planning efficacy with respect to preparation

Interpretation:

The efficacy of SP was rated 'high' to 'very high' by 66.7% of the respondents owing to good preparations prior to the exercise. Nothing was left to chance in preparations for the SP as adequate prior planning is said to have taken place prior to the exercise.

Table 36: Satisfaction with the application of SP with respect to the quality of facilitation

Level of satisfaction of SP with respect to the quality of facilitation	Frequency	Percentage
Not applicable	2	13.3
Moderate	2	13.3
High	10	66.7
Very high	1	6.7
TOTAL	15	100



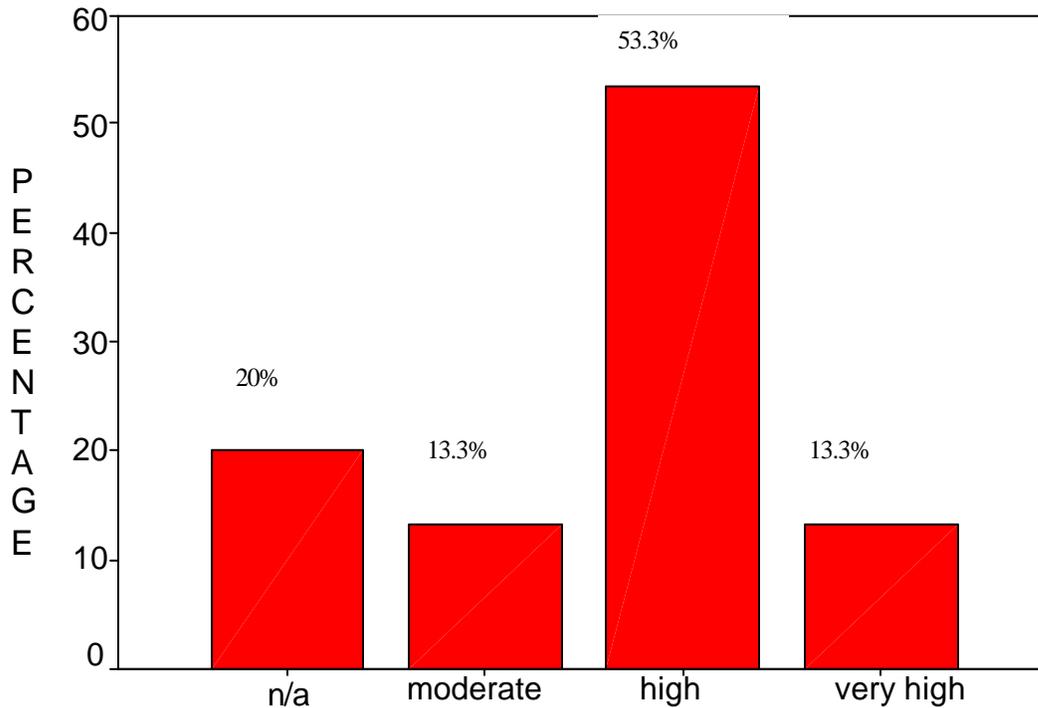
Strategic planning application with respect to quality of facilitation

Interpretation:

The quality of facilitation of the SP was rated 'high' to 'very high' by 73.4% of respondents. Very skilled, and experienced facilitators were said to have been involved in the SP processes, extensively using participatory methodologies of planning and review.

Table 37: Satisfaction with the application of SP as a result of support by the management

Support by the management level of satisfaction after the SP	Frequency	Percentage
None	3	20
Moderate	2	13.3
High	8	53.3
Very high	2	13.3
TOTAL	15	100



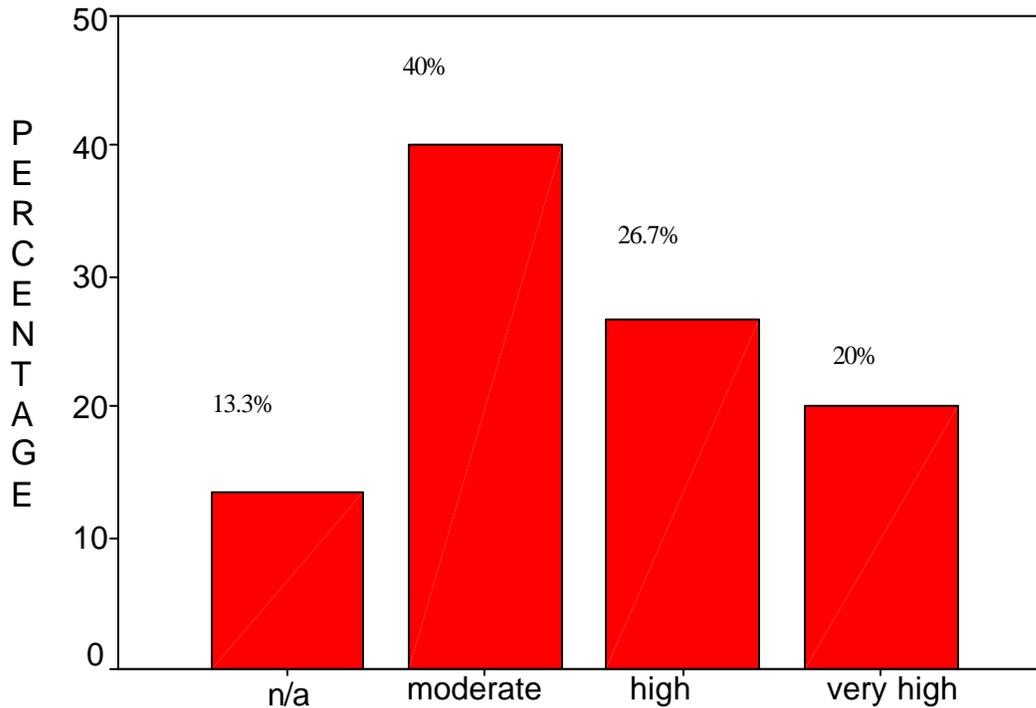
Strategic planning application with respect to management support

Interpretation:

The satisfaction with the application of SP was attained at 66.6% 'high' to 'very high' due to management support, through their full involvement and providing adequate financial support, plus their time and ensuring staff availability to the exercise.

Table 38: The extent of satisfaction with application of SP owing to conducive venue

Level of satisfaction of the SP application due to conducive venue	Frequency	Percentage
Not applicable	2	13.3
Moderate	6	40
High	4	26.7
Very high	3	20
TOTAL	15	100



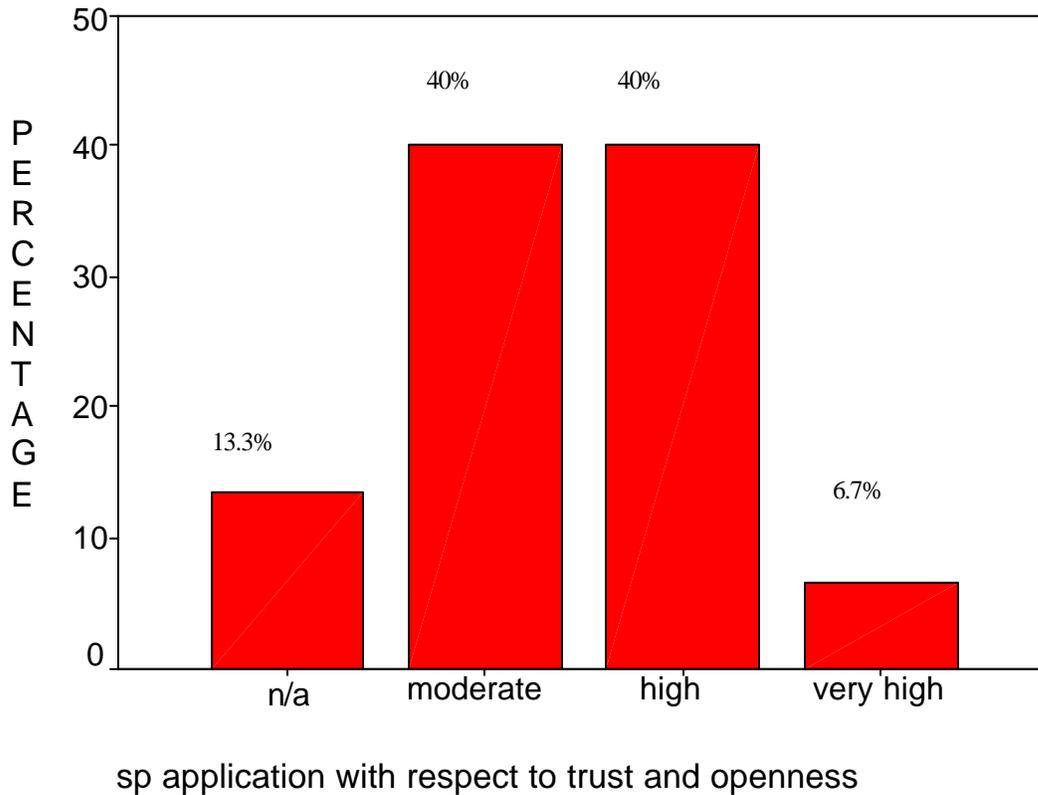
Strategic planning application with respect to training venue

Interpretation:

From the table and the bar chart above, venue for the SP activity is said to have been considered satisfactorily conducive at 'high' to 'very high' by 46.7% of the respondents. Venue was said to be generally unconducive as the planning workshops were some times held at or within easy reach of the work station. This caused unnecessary distractors, as participants were often tempted to attend to routine work demands. In such cases, the SP suffered low or inadequate attention. It was recommended that SP would do better when held away from the station of work.

Table 39: The extent of satisfaction with the application of SP in the organisation with respect to climate of trust and openness

Level of satisfactory in SP application with respect to climate of trust and openness	Frequency	Percentage
Not applicable	2	13.3
Moderate	6	40
High	6	40
Very high	1	6.7
TOTAL	15	100



Interpretations:

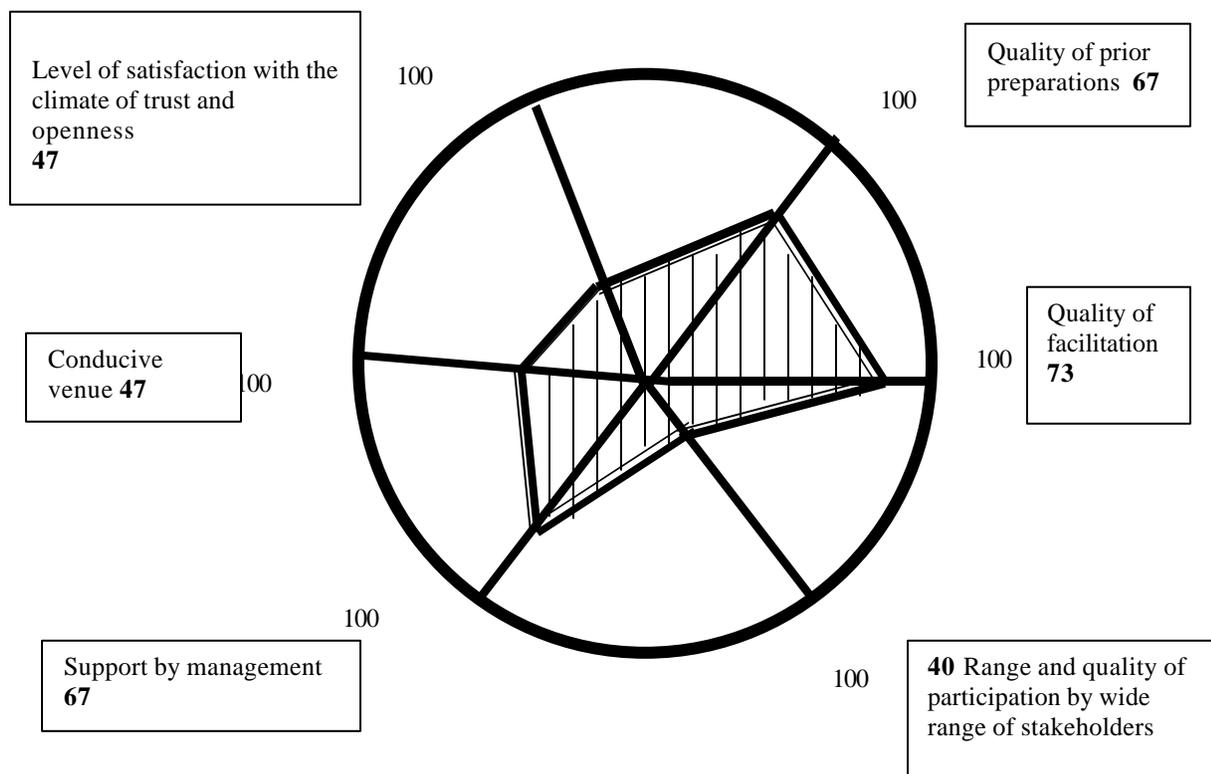
The satisfaction with the application of SP was 46.7% 'high' to 'very high' where trust and openness prevailed. In the absence of a climate of trust and openness, members were not able to discuss issues openly. With a climate of openness, tendencies of domination typical in a process of planning were said to have been addressed effectively.

6.2.19 Star-Matrix summarising the most satisfactory aspects in the application of participatory strategic planning

(The 'star matrix' tool of data analysis has been discussed in Chapter One, Section 1.5, Sub-section 1.5.3 of this thesis)

Figure 18: Most satisfactory aspects in the application of participatory strategic planning





Interpretation:

Quality of facilitations is said to be the single most satisfactory aspect of the Participatory Strategic Planning process. Quality of prior preparations and the support accorded by the management to the process rated second on the list of the most satisfactory aspects of the process. Poor representation of stakeholders as well as unconducive choice of venue and climate of mistrust were the major areas of dissatisfaction with the participatory strategic planning experience.

6.3 Conclusion

The foregoing Chapter was exclusively focused on field data presentation and analysis. There was an endeavour to draw inferences from the quantitative data to inform the broad interest of the research hypothesis. We have achieved just that. The Chapter Seven that follows will build on the findings so far in an attempt to establish the qualitative value to the data. This is the Chapter that will attempt to pull together the outcome of the field research relative to the theme of focus of the research at hand. In other words, Chapter Seven will attempt to provide the qualitative highlights of the research in terms of the implications of the information gathered in relation to the concerns of this study. The concluding Chapter Eight will provide summary of observations, conclusions and recommendations, again deduced from the interaction made with the data.

Chapter Seven

7.0 Discussion of findings in the light of the research objectives

7.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, attempt is made to capture the highlights of the outcome of the field research in the light of the concerns of this study. Subsequently, this has led to the drawing-up out of recommendations (Chapter Eight) towards informing and perfecting the practice of participatory strategic planning. Where possible, observations and conclusions have been supported with literature from previous research experiences on the same topic. It will however be noted that the analysis that follows is largely qualitative and consequently the presentation is more narrative.

7.1.1 Background to the study and the research problem

As noted in Chapter One, various methodologies and approaches have been experimented in the last one-decade or so in an effort to cause an effective institutional and human resource capacity building at both organisational and target community levels. Management operations in various development organisations as well as rural and urban community development initiatives have diligently sought to perfect efficiency and effectiveness through participatory assessments and participatory planning processes. The main purpose for the research at hand is to establish in which ways these methodological experiments have borne fruits in attaining capacity building.

True development process is complex and calls for a number of factors, which have all along either been taken for granted or overlooked altogether. It is for this reason some scholars have suggested that, a holistic development process should of necessity concern itself with human needs that transcend physical factors (MaxNeef, et al. 1989:1). There is no dispute on the fact that, until recently, community development has nearly exclusively been understood as an effort to meet people's basic needs.

7.2 Revisiting the problem statement

7.2.1 Specific problem addressed by this thesis

In participatory planning, it is believed that people's levels of commitment to a cause of community or societal concern, is directly symmetrical to the level at which the people were involved in the initial decision-making and planning stages of that intervention. The more involved or consulted they were, it is assumed, the greater will their commitment be in the implementation and maintenance of the service or project. In other words, people will sacrifice more for what they have played part to create, than for blue print plans handed down to them for implementation from higher authorities or 'experts'. The research at hand sought to establish whether or not participatory strategic planning can pass as the alternative planning strategy that will ensure authentic local ownership and people's responsibility and commitment to their cause.

However, for people to assume such responsibility and sense of ownership, capacity building becomes imperative right from the early stages. Here capacity building is conceptualised as the process of instituting a continuous adjustment of stakeholders' attitudes, values and practices from a state of conformity to that of transformation. It involves building up appropriate knowledge and skills aimed at strengthening each partner's ability to make effective decisions on what to do in their own circumstances and assume full responsibility over the consequences of those decisions. The process challenges partners to meet their needs on their own, as they identify, create and optimise on opportunities in life. Meanwhile the stakeholders seek to influence policies that govern their communities and the society at large to ensure that their individual and collective needs and rights are accommodated (Mulwa, 1999, unpublished).

The research had a mission to establish as to what extent participatory planning practices within Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Non-governmental organisations have managed to meet the capacity building expectations as understood above. It is also in the perception of the researcher that knowledge is still limited on the extent to which participatory methodologies are efficacious in specific contexts such as the polarised realities of complex organisations and the less sophisticated community based organisations within Kenya. How can one effectively promote participatory methodologies in development contexts where the supremacy of modern technology, corporate and interpersonal competition and individual ambitions outweigh the sentiments of local creativity, cooperation for common good and collective ambition?

7.3 Highlights from respondent's profile

Among the questions raised as part of the concerns for this study was the extent to which the exponents of participatory methodologies commit themselves as genuine practitioners, as opposed to rhetoric of survival (see section 1.4). The respondents' profile analysis was part of the attempt to understand the person of the practitioner who is in the fore-front as protagonist in the application of participatory strategic methodologies. Who are they, and what inspires them?

7.3.1 Gender factor

Of the fifteen respondents who participated in the study, 53% were male, while 47% were female. By and large, one may conclude that the gender representation among the respondents was fair. This composition took care of gender representation in the various perspectives advanced by the respondents as pertains in the concerns of this study. This rules out the possibility of gratuitous and superfluous influence of views by dominant presence of one gender over the other among the respondents. Hence, only minimal gender biased premises would be expected to have influenced the research outcome, given the strong neutralisation factor of physical representation. The level of participation of both male and female respondents was perceived to be fairly equitable too.

7.3.2 Educational background, professional orientation and age factor of the respondents

While 40% of the respondents were University graduates, 33% were diploma holders mainly in management careers. Forty six percent (46%) of the respondents were social development workers, including those in health and teaching disciplines. Slightly more than a quarter of the respondents (27%) were drawn from management disciplines such as business administration and accountancy. More than 53% of the respondents had career training spanning for a period of four years or more. Eighty percent (80%) of those interviewed were members of staff, either operating at the management level or at the field level. Only 13% represented the management boards.

While the evidently outstanding commitment of respondents to the spirit and practice of participatory methodologies may not necessarily have much to do with their levels of education, it will however have a lot to do with their type of career training. Nearly half of them (46%) were social development workers involved with social work, community development, health, and teaching. These are the kind of careers where professionals are socialised to appreciate people's views derived from their life experiences. The fact that 80% of these respondents are organisational staff, is also another factor that contributes positively to their commitment to the organisational vision and mission and its methodological orientation. In simple terms, the staff is employed and paid to uphold and implement the same.

Majority of the respondents who participated in the study (53.3%) were aged between 25-35 years. It should be noted that this is the most productive age of professionals. The more experienced bracket

ranging from 36 years of age and above was represented by 40%. Sixty seven percent (67%) of the respondents had six or more years of working experience. All of these factors account for a solid group of professionals that can be relied upon for an effective programme and organisational management. This fact is not incompatible with the wider concerns of this study at hand and therefore positively informs this research.

7.3.3 Prior nature of training of respondents in participatory skills

This is certainly a major determining factor for the level of support to be expected from the respondents towards the participatory strategic planning process. It is hereby presumed that, to the extent a person understands the logic behind a particular proposition or undertaking, to that extent will he or she commit oneself to the realisation of the proposed ultimate goals. In this milieu of rationalisation, one would expect that it is those respondents who were more exposed to the philosophy and principles behind participation, who would be more sympathetic, appreciative and committed to the participatory strategic planning process.

Taking the foregoing premise as our point of departure, we can now look at the levels of exposure of our respondents to participatory methodologies as a basis for assessing the correlation (if any) between that prior exposure and the quality of the participatory strategic planning process undertaken. It will be remembered here that the support accorded to the participatory strategic planning process by the staff (who form the large majority of the respondents of this research) was by all standards significantly high as noted in the previous Chapter. Sixty seven percent (67%) of the respondents rated the staff support and their participation in the participatory strategic planning process as ranging from high to very high. Now, is there correlation between this reality and the respondents' previous level of exposure to participatory methodologies?

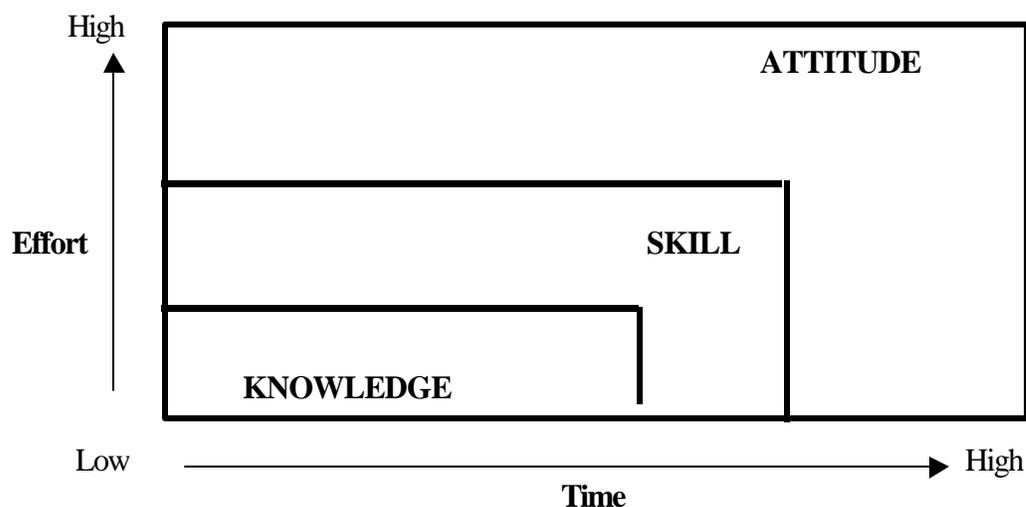
Table 40: Nature of participatory skills training of respondents prior to the participatory strategic planning activity

Type of training in participatory skills	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
None	5	33.3

Participatory Strategic Planning - only	2	13.3
Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) - only	3	20.0
Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) - only	1	6.7
Development Education & Leadership Teams in Action (DELTA) - only	1	6.7
Combination of more than one of the above	3	20.0
TOTAL	15	100

From the table presented above, it is notable that 67% of the respondents had some background training in one or more of the participatory methodology packages. Of these, 2 respondents out of the 15 (13%) had prior training in participatory strategic planning process. However, a whopping one third of the respondents had no prior training whatsoever in participatory methodologies. It is valid to generalise and claim here that the great number of respondents with prior training in participatory methodologies contributed significantly to the success of the participatory strategic planning processes undertaken by their various organisations sampled for this research. Their prior training and familiarity with participatory methodologies certainly added value to their levels of commitment, enthusiasm, and support to the whole process, as well as the quality of the outcome.

Figure 19: Levels at which training is necessary



Source: Training for the Trainer; St. F.X. University (Unpublished; undated Diploma in Adult Education Manual)

The figure above indicates that it takes more effort and time to transform people's attitudes through training than to impart knowledge or a skill. And yet, without transformed attitudes, practice and is unlikely to change as a result of mere acquisition of knowledge and skills.

But one may ask, why invest in training after all? The same way a captain is considered only as strong as his or her lieutenants, an executive officer or a manager of an organisation committed to participatory strategic planning will only be as strong as the quality and the level of commitment of his or her staff. In fact, the strength of an organisation is judged by the performance of the weakest member of its staff, the same way the strength of a chain depends on its weakest link. This justifies the need to invest in building the capacities of staff, whether through training or any other kind of formation.

Besides, an organisation would expect its staff to reflect its identity in society in terms of its values and culture; vision and mission (purpose and goals); policies; methods and strategies. This is yet another reason why an organisation should invest in training its staff to ensure the staff is abreast with the organisation's mandate. Staff training should not, however, be a once-off, ad hoc, after-thought. It should be incorporated as part of a wider and on-going staff development component within the strategic plans to be drawn-up.

7.4 When respondents were last involved in a significant process of Participatory Strategic Planning

Table 41: When last involved in participatory strategic planning

When last involved in Strategic Planning	Frequency	Percent
Year 2000	3	20
Year 2001	2	13.3
Year 2002	10	66.7

Total	15	100
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From the table above, it is notable that 67% of the participatory strategic planning activities reviewed among the six organisations interviewed had taken place with in 2002. Ordinarily, it may appear like there was too short a duration between the time the majority of the organisations undertook their participatory strategic planning and the timing of the research at hand. It may be assumed that this would pose a potential limitation as far as the expected impact of the participatory planning exercise on the organisation is concerned.

The reality however suggests a different perspective. Judging by the evidence of data collected from the respondents, it is clear that with participatory methodologies, it is not the duration following the activity, but rather the quality of the process of the activity that ultimately makes the difference. In other words, the discourse advanced here is the argument that, it is the evidence of transformed attitudes (which ultimately determine new management practices) that accounts for the success, and justifies the impact of a participatory learning process. Hence, it was possible to establish from this research (as will be evidenced below) the efficacy of participatory strategic planning in building the capacity of the organisations involved, including the capacity of the human resources employed in these organisations.

7.5 Who initiated the participatory strategic planning

Table 42: Who initiated the participatory strategic planning

Who initiated strategic planning	Frequency	Percent
N/A	2	13.3
Board management	6	40
Donor partners	1	6.7
Staff	5	33.3
Staff, board, and donor partners	1	6.7
TOTAL	15	100

From the table above, it is evident that management board and staff were the main prime movers of participatory strategic planning exercise (73%). Notably, donor partners played a minimal role (6.7%) in this regard unlike the common assumption that they were the primary movers of participatory strategic

planning in organisational entities. Unfortunately, we could not gather enough data to affirm this assumption or deny it.

7.6 Duration of the participatory strategic planning process

Table 43: Duration of SP process

How long was the strategic planning exercise (days)	Frequency	Percentage
1-3	8	53.3
4-6	3	20
7 and above	4	26.7
TOTAL	15	100

Majority of the respondents (53%) indicated that their participatory strategic planning exercises lasted for a period not exceeding 3 days. Most of these are those whose participatory strategic planning was largely limited to the planning workshop. Quality participatory strategic planning process will seek to involve all levels of programme and organisational management cadres. These are usually busy people and therefore asking for more than three days would be tantamount to losing their participation. Hence, this explains the significance of the phenomenon of the three days of planning. Altogether, a clear majority (73%) indicated that the exercise lasted for a period not exceeding six days. This can be explained by the fact that some planning activities were said to have begun with organisation assessment or and programme evaluation in an effort to establish the key issues of focus during the participatory strategic planning exercise.

7.7 Impact of stakeholder support on participatory strategic planning process

7.7.1 Support from the organisations' management

The management entities of various organisations gave relatively the biggest support to the participatory strategic planning exercise as compared to other key stakeholders. The management support was rated

high to very high by 80% of the respondents. In most cases the executive management teams (which includes the organisation's director or manager and the executive board members) reportedly took the mantle of the steering planning committees that guided the process. The management is also commented by respondents for exercising a good measure of tolerance and restraint during the participatory strategic planning workshops. This gave way to effective contribution by other key stakeholders (and particularly staff) without fear of retribution for their critical feedback on matters that touch on inadequacies in the management practice.

The respondents appreciated that in most cases, the management teams participated in all the important participatory strategic planning stages. It was mainly the management that conducted fund raising for the participatory strategic planning process. This was perceived as yet another indicator that the management supported exercise. Management support was said to be an assurance of the latter's commitment to the implementation of the planning outcome.

7.7.2 Support and participation of staff

Sixty seven percent (67%) of the respondents rated the staff support and participation in the participatory strategic planning process as high to very high. Factors accounting for this high support include the staff expectations that the process would lead to enhanced productivity in their various programmes (especially in the income generating projects). This would lead to greater job-security on the part of the staff as generation of adequate revenue to run the programmes would avert dependency on dwindling donor funding.

Participatory strategic planning was appreciated by the organisational staff as an opportunity to converge their views and recommendations towards influencing organisational policy. The exercise was therefore considered by staff a precious window of opportunity for organisational change. This was also an opportunity for the staff to clarify intricate aspects of their programmes as well as reaffirm programme priorities.

7.7.3 Support and participation of community constituency

The respondents indicated that target groups (comprising of beneficiary communities) gave the least support to the process (only 27% of the respondents rating community support at high). None of the respondents indicated the existence of 'very high' support from this category of stakeholders. Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents thought the community support to the process was oscillating between low to moderate. Specifically, the community either did not participate in the process at all, or their scope of participation was very weak. Reasons adduced to this include budgetary constraints which made it impossible to cater for the relatively enormous costs of involving the target communities. Thirteen percent (13%) were none committal as they declined to give a decisive response to this question.

Of the 27% that indicated high support, most of them cited what amounted to passive participation on the part of the community. In this case, community participation was perceived in form of community's cooperation by availing themselves for interviews during needs assessment and also during programme evaluation missions carried out as a precursor to the planning exercise. Such efforts were meant to help establish community priorities and programme gaps for the planning purpose.

This empirical field experience has indicated that generally community members (beneficiaries) did not participate in all the key stages of the planning process. The consequences of such an omission were obvious as community perspectives were not effectively taken on board. In some cases such as WAC where community members had been completely sidelined by the planning exercise, it was argued that, by extension, the board members would represent the community since they were drawn from the latter. But such an argument is self-defeating as the board members were largely hand-picked by the WAC management and that the criteria used to identify them did not necessarily ensure effective representation of various segments of the beneficiary community.

The management often advanced two arguments in an effort to justify the relatively low participation of the members of beneficiary communities in the planning process. It was often assumed that the planning exercise was too technical for the communities to comprehend enough to the level they could make a reasonable contribution. Obviously, this assumption is not only wrong, but negates the essence of

capacity building and empowerment for the target communities, which essentially forms the core concerns of the research at hand. It is the same argument that has been advanced over the years to deny the poor and the powerless access to the benefits of national economic development.

This peripheral position of the marginalised populations has been systematically reinforced and justified by the second argument advanced by the management during the field research. It was frequently argued that communities could not be brought on board effectively especially during the participatory strategic planning workshops owing to budgetary constraints. It was pointed out that the planning exercise had not been budgeted for and therefore it was the remnants of programme implementation funds that were used to actualise the planning activity. In other cases, where the planning activity had been budgeted for, community participation had not been given prominence or any vote-head allocation at all. This was tantamount to the reinforcement of the marginalisation process against a key but weaker stakeholder.

This points out to a critical need for change of attitude at the management level to begin to appreciate the potential in community constituency to determine their own goals and effectively shape their own destiny. It is this reality of perpetual marginalisation of the ordinary populations that has tended to compromise and undermine the potential for sustainability of community projects. This is owing to the consequential low sense of ownership and therefore poor identification of the local communities with those projects for whom they are meant to exist.

The reality established by the outcome of this research points out that a deliberate effort to fund-raise towards the costs involved in the implementation of a participatory strategic planning process is not only imperative but should take place prior to the exercise itself. Following the change of attitudes discussed above, it will no longer come as an after thought to the management that community participation in organisational strategic planning should be budgeted for. In such budgetary efforts, the participation of all key stakeholders will have to be put into consideration. It should be noted that a planning exercise that ignores a key stakeholder as the beneficiary community, will not only suffer low community support with low sense of local ownership, but remains lopsided in coverage of stakeholder interests. Hence, fair representation of the key stakeholders in the planning exercise should be maintained and particularly

the beneficiary constituency, the organisation staff, the organisation management and the donor constituency.

7.7.4 Support and participation of the donor constituency

Support accorded by donor partners to the planning process was rated at 'high' to 'very high' by 67% of the respondents. It is by mere coincidence that this rating ties with the support accorded by the staff. In most cases, it was reported that the donor demanded for organisational strategic planning as a precondition for renewal or continuation of a funding cycle. However, donors' physical involvement in the process was minimal.

The low involvement of donor partners in the strategic planning activities may have been occasioned by a number of factors. Donors were likely to be confident that the process (and the results) was authentic as they were often consulted in the identification of the process facilitators. Given that continued funding depended on the production of convincing strategic plans, donors would have had no valid reason to doubt that the results of the process would eventually reach their desk. In some cases, the donor partners based overseas had no subsidiary offices within the country. This made it necessary to consider and justify the costs that would be involved in their representation in the planning activities. Equally important is that the recent technological sophistication in the communication sector (with the introduction of electronic mail) has made it relatively easier, cheaper and quicker to exchange information on an ongoing basis. Hence local partners were able to update donors regularly as the planning exercise unfolded, making the physical participation of donor partners less necessary.

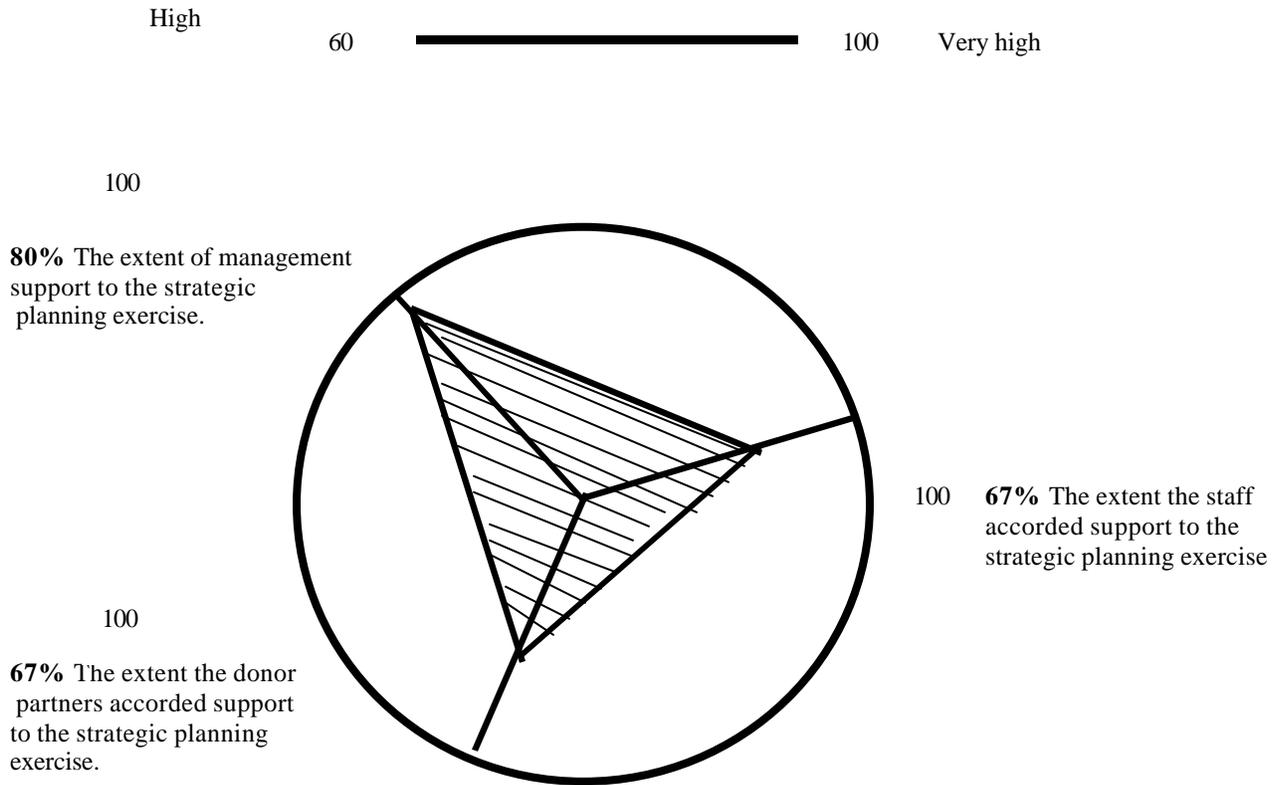
The 'star matrix' below (*Figure 20*) indicates that the largest support to the participatory strategic planning process among the key stakeholders was given by the organisation management followed by the staff and donors respectively. The support given by the beneficiary community constituency was so low that it could not feature under the scale of 'high' to 'very high'.

Figure 20: Summary on the extent of support given by various stakeholders to participatory strategic planning exercise on the scale of 'high' to 'very high'

(The 'star matrix' tool of data analysis has been discussed in Chapter One, Section 1.5,

Sub-
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section 1.5.3 of this thesis)

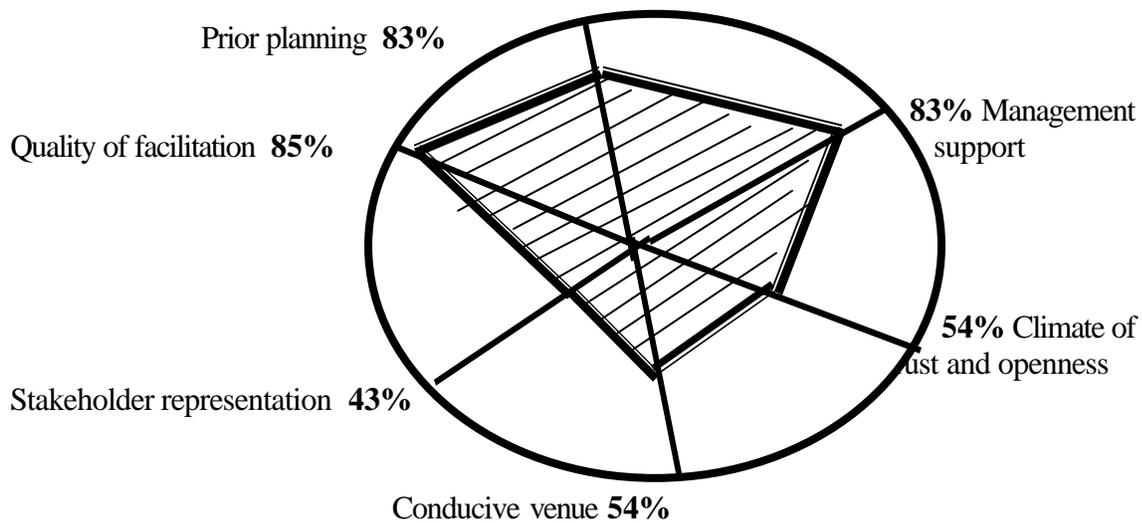


7.8 Aspects that made the participatory strategic planning activity satisfactory

Below is the comparative presentation of the variables of satisfaction extracted from respondents' scoring on the scale of 'high' to 'very high'. This is presented below in form of 'star matrix': (The 'star

matrix' tool of data analysis has been discussed in Chapter One, Section 1.5, Sub-section 1.5.3 of this thesis)

Figure 21: Most satisfactory aspects of SP



Interpretation:

From the above analysis derived from the respondents interviewed, quality of facilitation of the participatory strategic planning exercise was rated relatively the most satisfactory aspect of the process, at 85% of the respondents (assuming all other variables of the process not reflected above are of lesser importance and that the variables compared are adequate for the purpose of this research). The rationale advanced to justify this point of view was that the facilitators were highly skilled and widely experienced, with good command of the participatory planning methodology. Prior planning and management support followed at 83%. Thorough prior planning with nothing left for chance is said to account for the success of the planning sessions. The management is said to have accorded full support to the planning activities and especially in fund raising efforts. Stakeholder representation was the weakest aspect, particularly owing to the low or no representation of the beneficiary communities and the donor constituency in the planning workshops.

7.9 The place of SWOT analysis in ensuring quality participatory strategic planning

Eighty seven percent (87%) of the respondents cited broad-focused participatory strategic planning as the type of activity that they were involved with in their planning exercise. This means that the exercise enabled them review a broad spectrum of the important aspects of the organisational well-being and its development, including the relevance of its mandate in the changing reality. The respondents also pointed out that the broad focused participatory strategic planning exercise touched on the sustenance of the organisation as a whole and its programme activities in particular. Only 13% of the respondents cited their participatory strategic planning experience as having been issue-focused, that is narrowed down to a sectoral or single issue concern.

It was in broad-focused planning that SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the organisations involved was given prominence (SWOT has been discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 of this thesis). Recommendations based on the lessons drawn by the respondents point out that the SWOT analysis of an organisation is critical towards a rich outcome of a participatory strategic planning. The respondents' experiences with participatory strategic planning activities have led to the strong conviction that there is a strong co-relationship between the depth of SWOT analysis and the quality of issues (in their diversity, importance, urgency and relevance to the needs of the organisation) that emerge as a basis for participatory strategic planning. It therefore stands out as a key recommendation that SWOT analysis should precede broad-focused participatory strategic planning for best results as stakeholders will be able to identify more clearly not only the organisational gaps and weaknesses, but more importantly, the inherent potential to address these inadequacies towards more effective organisation building.

While SWOT analysis is closely associated with an organisational entity, participatory rural or urban appraisal (PRA/PUA) is its equivalent at the community level. This tool is suitable for use at the grassroots community level for similar purpose as SWOT (PRA has been discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis). The PRA will help the communities involved to identify and prioritise their

developmental and group needs that will need to be addressed in a participatory strategic planning activity.

7.10 Power imbalance in stakeholder participation

Unlike the composition of the respondents in this research which was fairly gender balanced (53% male and 47% female), it is lamentable that women participation in the strategic planning activities among the organisations interviewed was less than desirable. Women participation was noted to be relatively low with men presence dominating as compared to the attendance of women in strategic planning workshops. Of equal concern is the unequal participation between staff and the management owing to power imbalance in their relationship. In one case, the management of the organisation is said to have held a management meeting at the planning venue prior to the planning workshop. Apparently this did not go down well with the staff, which surmised that the management had a hidden agenda in that meeting. The staff feared that the management had plotted to hijack the deliberations of the planning exercise by choosing to exert their control over the planning process. As would be expected, this resulted in mistrust thus compromising the quality of the process and the validity of its outcome.

7.11 The most satisfactory outcome of the participatory strategic planning as a strategy for organisation building in the perception of the respondents

These choices were determined on the basis of rating of 'high' to 'very high' being variables from a continuum scale of 'low-moderate-high-very high'. From the analysis presented below, the most satisfactory outcome of the participatory strategic planning was clarity in the future direction of organisations' mandate in terms of vision and mission. Better understanding of organisational direction, was attained after establishing a common focus (vision, mission) and collectively identifying organisational priorities. This provided the basis for monitoring and assessing organisation's development.

It was also possible to come up with professionally sound plans with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound) objectives. In other words, it was possible for the organisations involved in the planning exercise to come up with clear targets to be attained in a specified period of time. In at least one case (Dandora) it was reported that business volume increased as a result of better credit management practice. The involvement of communities (mainly as respondents in data collection surveys prior to the participatory strategic planning exercise) is said to have positively had impact on community cooperation in loan repayment and better business management. Staff are now involved in budgetary exercises for their programmes as opposed to depending on their seniors to do budgets for them as was the case in the past when there was no collectively understood organisational focus. This has led to better budget controls during programme implementation.

Renewed motivation and enthusiasm among stakeholders was yet another high point as people who run and manage the programme at various levels got actively involved in the planning exercise. This made it a bottom-up planning activity, thus enhancing the sense of local ownership of both the process and the outcome. Now that it was possible for the stakeholders to make their invaluable contribution in terms of experience, knowledge, skills and talents, into the planning process, it was also possible to fully identify with the outcome.

The planning activity was a joint effort among partners in development that resulted in wide consensus among key stakeholders in bringing about programme and organisational change. Respondents commented the act of bringing together all stakeholders as equals to resolve organisational problems without having to leave it to 'expert planners' to do it for organisation. Equally significant outcome of the exercise was the increased sense of team-work in ensuring collective problem solving. The depth of interaction among stakeholders and the emotional involvement in solving organisational problems led to heightened sense of partnership and collective responsibility. There are more consultations now among stakeholders in the day to day management of programmes than there was before the participatory strategic planning. In fact, some respondents observed that the whole exercise had generated unprecedented enthusiasm among stakeholders.

Table 44: Analysis of the most satisfactory outcome of the participatory strategic planning

Responses	Frequency of response	Percentage
Better understanding of organisational direction, establishing a common focus (vision, mission) and collectively identified priorities. Renewed motivation and enthusiasm as people whose needs are addressed participate in the planning exercise. This makes it a bottom-up planning activity	9	47%
Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound (SMART) plans. Helps set clear targets in a specified period of time	4	21%
Sense of co-ownership of the organisational and programme plans (ability to identify with)	2	11%
Joint effort resulting in wide consensus among key stakeholders in bringing about organisational change. The coming together of all stakeholders as equals to resolve organisational problems without resorting to 'experts' to do it for them	2	11%
Increase in business volume as a result of better management practice	1	5%
Increased sense of team work with collective ownership and sharing of programme problems	1	5%
Total	19 Responses	100%

N.B. It should be noted that some respondents gave more than one response.

7.12 The efficacy of participatory strategic planning in organisation building

The extent to which the participatory strategic planning process helped build the capacity of the organisation management

Sixty seven percent (67%) of the respondents considered the exercise to have had 'high' to 'very high' impact on the organisation's management capacity. This reality is described by the 'Before and After' table (45) below as extracted from the respondents. From this analysis, it was concluded that before the strategic planning exercise, the 'support staff' tended to out-strip what was termed as 'productive staff' in some organisations, thus risking efficiency. It was reported that following strategic planning, more efficient management was put into focus leading to the reduction of the number of support staff.

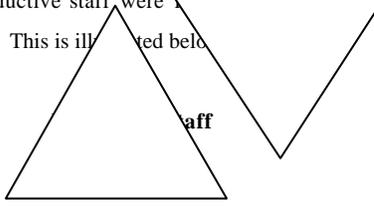
Organisational management in various organisations interviewed was said to be better responsive to problem solving than before the planning exercise. Perhaps this could be attributed to the feedback from stakeholders to that effect.

More time bound implementation of planned activities was possible following the strategic planning. This made it possible to monitor implementation schedules against specific timeframes, with clear role division and mandates to various stakeholders. In fact, this made it possible to develop user-friendly monitoring and evaluation systems based on programme objectives that were specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound.

It was also identified that all along community constituency had been alienated from participation in management decisions that affect the services they enjoyed from the partner organisations. This also explains why communities participation in the strategic planning exercise was less than desirable.

Table 45: The extent to which the participatory strategic planning process helped build the capacity of the organisation management

Situation before Strategic Planning	Situation after Strategic Planning
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<p>Productive staff were re-deployed to support staff. This is illustrated below</p>  <p>Support staff</p> <p>The organisation didn't know how to solve their problems.</p> <p>Implementation of activities were not time bound and no budget allocations were made for projects.</p> <p>No monitoring and evaluation systems in place.</p> <p>No mandate or unclear mandate existed to guide the stakeholders</p> <p>Community was not empowered enough to demand their rights</p> <p>Weak or no team-work among the staff across sectoral divide</p> <p>Low profitability of programmes in the absence of proper controls</p> <p>Organisation focused on service delivery in project implementation</p>	<p>Staff re-deployed was made leading to increased number of productive staff to the level that outnumbered the support staff. This resulted to increased output. This is illustrated below</p> <p>Productive staff</p> <p>Support staff</p> <p>Solutions were sought and found for persistent organisational problems</p> <p>Time frame for programme activities was set and budgets were prepared</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation systems designed and implemented</p> <p>Stakeholders drew or refined mandate to give them focus (mainly vision, and mission statements)</p> <p>Community was made to know, understand and claim their rights whenever this became necessary</p> <p>There is observable evidence of increased collective sense of ownership of problems and team spirit</p> <p>Increased programme profitability as a result of effective financial planning, monitoring and reporting</p> <p>Organisation focus shifted to contemporary concerns with matters of rights, just governance, policy advocacy and active citizenry.</p>
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7.13 The extent to which the participatory strategic planning process helped build the capacity of the staff

This was rated 'high' to 'very high' by 73% of the respondents, supported by the following qualitative analysis:

Table 46: The extent to which the participatory strategic planning process helped build the capacity of the staff

Situation before Strategic Planning	Situation after Strategic Planning
<p>Staff had not enough opportunity to air their views and influence policy</p> <p>Staff did not own and therefore did not fully identify with the plans they implemented. They did not get fully involved in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of such plans. Hence reason for low motivation and commitment.</p>	<p>Staffs were instrumental in giving views of solving problems and contradictions facing the organisations</p> <p>Staff got involved in all stages of project planning leading to clear sense of direction to achieve collectively identified targets which staff could identify with</p>

7.14 The extent to which the participatory strategic planning process helped build the capacity of the target communities to manage their own affairs effectively

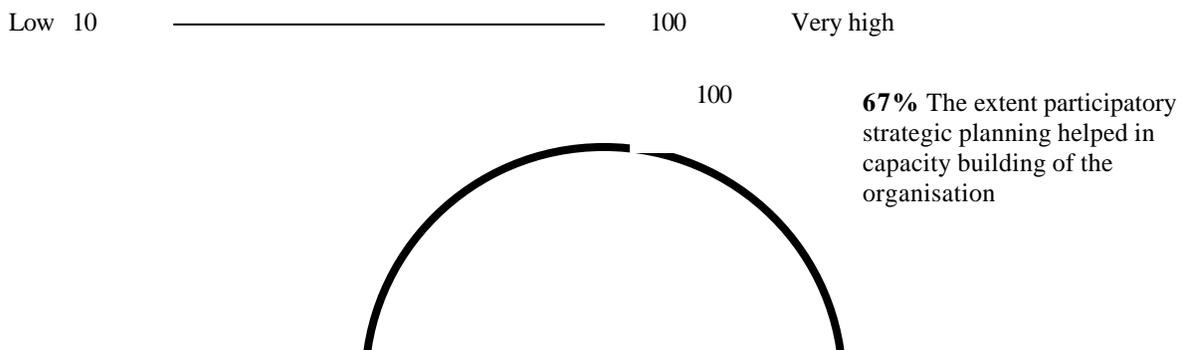
This was the lowest rated response, with only 13% of the respondents rating it high to very high. While 60% of the respondents thought the participatory strategic planning process had low or moderate impact on the capacity of the beneficiary constituency, 27% chose not to give their views on the question. As a whole participatory strategic planning had but dismal impact on the beneficiary communities, perhaps as a result of their low representation and participation in the process.

7.15 Summary on the extent to which participatory strategic planning helped in capacity building among key stakeholders

According to the ‘star matrix’ below (*Figure 22*), the staff had the biggest share of capacity building followed by the management. The factors accounting for this conclusion have been discussed above.

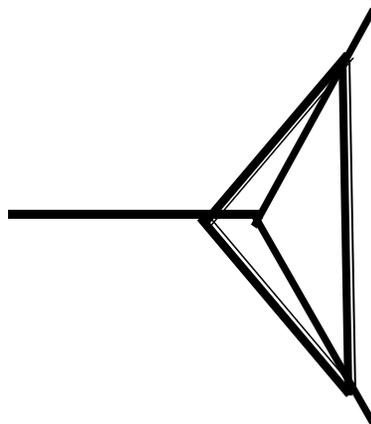
Figure 22: Summary on the extent to which participatory strategic planning helped to build capacity among key stakeholders

(The ‘star matrix’ tool of data analysis has been discussed in Chapter One, Section 1.5, Sub-section 1.5.3 of this thesis)



13% The extent to which the strategic planning helped build the capacity of the target community .

100



100

73% The extent participatory strategic planning helped in capacity building of the staff

7.16 Conclusion

This Chapter has surveyed and discussed the salient features on qualitative evidence extrapolated from the research findings. The Chapter has already proven that the respondent organisations in this research were left more strengthened as a result of the participatory strategic planning exercise they undertook. The positive impact of participatory strategic planning as a tool for organisation capacity building was felt, first and foremost at the organisation management level, but also at the staff level as reported by the respondents. This was also experienced at the beneficiary community level but comparatively to a lesser extent. Chapter eight that follows will attempt to summarise the outcome of the entire research exercise in the light of the concerns of the study.

Chapter Eight

8.0 Observations, conclusions and recommendations in the light of the research objectives

8.1 Introduction

This Chapter will make an effort to wrap up the salient annotations, observations and conclusions on the outcome of this research, keeping in focus the broad objectives of the study. Running through the conclusions drawn here is the perception that participatory strategic planning is not simply an activity geared towards creating a strategic plan. No. It is

nobler than that. The outcome of an authentic participatory strategic planning will transcend that simplistic expectation. It will help the stakeholders concerned to work out how to manage both an organisational entity, as well as a programme with a better sense of strategic priorities. That summarises the purpose of this Chapter. The Chapter will seek to establish the wider and enduring benefits that could be expected of authentic participatory strategic planning as part of an organisational management practice, and how these could be sustained and appropriated for organisation building.

8.2 Problems and prospects in the participatory strategic planning process

8.2.1 Possibility of blundering of participatory strategic planning process

There always exists the real danger of manipulation of participatory strategic planning processes by experts either to serve their own interests or the interests of the donor or both. In fact, such manipulation may not be deliberate. In such a case, manipulation of participatory strategic planning as an essentially participatory and empowering methodology, may be adulterated by people who pose as process experts, who may even know the theory and practice, but are not true converts of participatory methodologies. Best practice can only be expected of faithful process facilitators, people who are genuinely committed to the virtues of participation. Abusers of the practice do so through blundering methods whereby they pose as experts of participatory strategic planning process but end up using conventional planning methods.

In fact, it should be expected that there will be the possibility of resistance against the process of participatory strategic planning by the stakeholders of the old school of thought. Not all practitioners are converted into participatory methodologies, even though they may preach it. Many a time participatory strategic planning culture seeks to germinate and grow in organisations that are sometimes not participatory in their management style. Some organisations will ask for participatory strategic planning experience just because it has become a popular practice that will guarantee donor funding. It will therefore not be uncommon to find organisational management that will give lip-service to the methodology, while the organisational practice is totally far removed from the values embedded in

participatory strategic planning practice (such as respect for other people's views regardless of their level of operation within the organisation).

8.2.2 Danger of being bogged down by too ambitious focus

Respondents believe that the meticulous nature of planning that is characteristic of participatory strategic planning tends to lead to the identification of too many issues that confront the organisation or the stakeholders. These are often far beyond the available resource capacity and capability to address them. With this backdrop of meagre resources, the biggest challenge is now moving beyond the planning exercise, into 'putting the plan into action'. On the other hand, too ambitious planning is soon confronted by the reality that stakeholders tend to become too busy with other day to day life preoccupations to implement the plans. This reality has been decried by Thompson (et al. 1987:33) who lament that participatory strategic planning efforts have often suffered "grandiose strategic leaps" rather than step-by-step improvements within the organisational capabilities. Needless to say, this has often led to the negative sense of defeatism after getting bogged down with the process.

Now that participatory strategic planning can be a costly undertaking as compared to the conventional practice, care should be taken to avoid unnecessary costs. The process consumes time and resources in an effort to satisfy all stakeholders by harmonising their diverse expectations and interests. In spite of the costs involved, there is no guarantee that bad decisions will not be made, as a result of which smoldering problems surface. It is also possible for people to be bogged down in trivia. Consider carefully whether the costs involved are worthy the output.

8.2.3 Blue-print vis-à-vis flexible plans

High level of flexibility is called for at all times in the application of participatory methodologies such as participatory strategic planning. It should be borne in mind that there is no one best way in dealing with human conditions. Respondents in this study have cautioned that stakeholders should guard against being blinded by the outcome of participatory strategic planning to the extent that they cannot see new opportunities that come their way. The danger of inflexibility is more real following completion of a successful participatory strategic planning process. On this Barry (1997:6), argues that, "You cannot develop a perfect strategic plan; the world changes too quickly". For this reason, it is recommended

that the implementers of a strategic plan should only use it as a guide, as they remain open to unforeseen opportunities.

Equally important is that planners should remain open to useful, though unexpected, information and insights. It should be possible to establish regular progress reviews that provide the opportunity to update the existing plans regularly. According to Barry and Bryson, it becomes particularly more important to watch out for the need to be flexible when there is a great deal of risk in the implementation of a strategic plan. (Barry, 1997:6 and 11; Bryson, 1995:10).

Review or change of strategic plans would become necessary following dramatic changes in the socio-political political environment of a country. For instance, many human rights activist organisations in Kenya had to adjust or change their strategic plans in the year 2003 with the change of guards in the government following the successful democratic elections held at the close of 2002. The priority of focus in lobbying and advocacy in the country had began to change from isolated policy issues to complete overhaul of the constitution of the land. This called for change in strategic plans of many organisations.

8.2.4 The participatory strategic planning approach need not be standardised

Participatory strategic planning processes should be expected to vary from one context and situation to another. This is because participatory strategic planning is an organic process that is spontaneous and adaptive and therefore should be adaptable as circumstances change or differ. Each organisation has its own unique experiences and circumstances. For this reason, participatory strategic planning process should be adapted to people's specific local context, otherwise the process loses its uniqueness and quality. On the same, Barry (1997:13) strongly suggests that one should use participatory strategic planning process that fits one's organisation and context. This fact acknowledges the fact that organisations often operate in very different fields, sectors or situations. Other factors to justify variability of process include the nature of issues involved, size of organisation, time available, leadership style in the organisation (directive vis-à-vis non-directive), and the number of people and groups to be involved (Barry, 1997:13). Similarly, an organisation should use the outcome of a participatory strategic

planning activity with common sense and a sensitivity to the particulars of their own situation (Bryson, 1995:7).

8.2.5 Mistaken notion that participatory strategic planning is a preserve of experts

The six organisations visited for this research used external consultants for the participatory strategic planning exercise but only as process facilitators. The bulk of the work as pertains to the organisation, pre-planning, logistics and sometimes even the documentation of the planning exercise was handled by the management staff. In most cases, decision making for the planning exercise was made by steering committees constituted by staff and the management for the purpose of the planning activity.

In conventional planning, such activities have exclusively relegated to ‘experts’, apparently to fulfill the ritualistic tradition of planning, some of which take place annually as demanded to meet the donor requirement or conditionality. In such cases, contribution from key stakeholders often goes missing, or at best, is pretty scanty. Hence, as would be expected, such plans suffer from non-implementation owing to poor commitment from the stakeholders expected to implement them, but who were ignored in the planning phase. Thus:

most companies do not really engage in planning but simply play out an annual ritual; planning is carried out largely by outside consultants and corporate staff personnel, and therefore is becoming increasingly divorced from the realities of the business; and plans, once developed, tend to be too inflexible and constraining in rapidly evolving competitive environments (Thompson, et. al., 1987:33).

This ritualistic approach to planning should be avoided in preference of more spontaneous, organic and people driven planning.

8.2.6 Participatory strategic planning is not a substitute for the need for effective leadership

Participatory strategic planning should not be a substitute to effective leadership. It is unacceptable for leaders to abdicate their leadership responsibilities in the name of participatory planning process. In this case, the effects of participatory strategic planning will not be fully realised unless the organisational

leadership, and in particular the key policy and decision makers are committed to the process (Espy, 1986, 8). In other words, participatory strategic planning should only take place where there is full support of the key decision makers, opinion leaders and planners, for without their support the plans will not come to fruition. Though the leadership may delegate the process facilitation, they must provide explicit and direct support as they bear the ultimate responsibility over the quality and implementation of the planning activity.

8.3 Observations, conclusions and recommendations

From the foregoing research, respondents have raised the following observations and conclusions towards optimising the potential of participatory strategic planning as a tool for organisation building. These are essentially wrought from the respondents' praxis from the application of participatory strategic planning.

8.3.1 Motivation of stakeholders

There is a consensus among respondents that before they undertook participatory strategic planning, planning activities had been a preserve of the so-called 'planning experts'.

These are often identified from the developed world and commissioned by the donors on short-term consultancy basis. In other cases, 'planning experts' are technical staff within the organisation who carry out the organisational needs assessment and draw-up the organisational plans. These are usually handed down to the staff for implementation, as blue-print documents.

From the foregoing research, the staff concede that they could hardly identify with such plans and therefore experienced low motivation in their effort to implement such plans, which sometimes were too technical for community development workers to interpret. The staff efforts to adapt the same had been met with resistance, as it was only the planners or the management who had the authority to change such blue prints. However, as a result of the participatory strategic plans, respondents claimed that they were able to come up with concrete programme and organisational development plans arrived at collectively. These were documented for reference during the implementation phase, serving as a guide to the day to day shaping and reshaping of organisational policies and monitoring of organisational operations.

This conclusion is supported by practitioners of participatory strategic planning such as Espy (1986) and Barry (1997). They both hold the position that respect for and consideration given to the contribution made by various stakeholders will go a long way to enhance stakeholders' commitment to the implementation of the resultant strategic plans. Hence, participatory strategic planning not only increases cohesion among stakeholders but also strengthens sense of commitment to the organisational cause by all those involved, and especially the staff. (Espy, 1986:42; Barry, 1997: 6). A respondent from the research at hand affirmed this assertion with the following words: "Since all stakeholders were fully involved, the level of ownership and commitment to the implementation of the plans is bound to be high".

The respondents recommended that, for even better results, future participatory strategic planning efforts should of necessity be preceded by an induction of the potential participants into the principles and practice of participatory strategic planning. It was also recommended that potential participants should be made to articulate their expectations on the outcome of the anticipated participatory strategic planning exercise before the planning process begins. Such efforts would enhance commitment of various stakeholders in the implementation of the outcome. People like to support and defend what they understand, and more so what they have helped to create.

8.3.2 Informed planning

Experience from this research has shown that a successful participatory strategic planning exercise is built on a strong and reliable information-base. There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the enormous information generated during the pre-planning appraisals carried out by the organisations involved in this study immensely enriched the participatory strategic planning activities. Such information served to give direction to the planning exercises. From both semi-formal research (programme evaluation) as well as informal sources (participatory rural appraisals and needs assessment) that took place prior to the planning activities, it was possible to acquire critical information both from the key stakeholders as well as from the 'world-out-there'. These are people from within communities as well as from the wider society who may not necessarily be part of the daily operations of the organisation but who possess critical information for charting the way forward for the organisations involved.

Equally important source of information critical for the planning process are the SWOT analyses (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). SWOT analyses led to systematic information gathering about the organisation's external and internal environment. Respondents interviewed observed that as a result of the invaluable information gathered prior and during the participatory strategic planning exercise, policy makers and key decision makers (the management boards and the executive management of the organisations involved) were accorded an opportunity to fulfil their obligations by reviewing their policies and decisions accordingly.

8.3.3 Planning with the future in mind

The planning exercise that took place in the various organisations interviewed was the kind of planning that was made with the future in mind. According to Kreitner (1995:173), there are three levels of planning. *Operational planning* involves organisational sub-units determining specific targets that can be accomplished on time, within a span of one week to one year, and within the scope of available resources. *Intermediate planning* involves organisational sub-units determining specific targets that can be accomplished on time, within a span of one year to two years, and within the scope of available resources. Then comes *participatory strategic planning* which focuses on long-term targets that may last for two years to ten years before they can be accomplished. Hence, an organisation that appears to be attaining its desired transformation in a community or within the wider society within twelve months, then what that organisation has is not a strategic plan. The organisation is not thinking and planning

strategically. Though what it is doing may be worth doing, nevertheless, it may not necessarily constitute a strategic change. A strategic change should take longer than one year to realise. Usually, intermediate and detailed operational plans are drawn from the strategic plans.

Participatory strategic planning calls for the repositioning of an organisation in some significant way to enable it effectively respond to the challenges of strategic visioning. Participatory strategic planning involves the kind of planning that starts from the future backwards, making today's decisions in the light of their future consequences. In this context, planning teams would usually begin by responding to a typical question in participatory strategic planning: *What would you like to see in the well-being of this community in the next 5 years?* Good participatory strategic planning is built on 'future thinking'. The nature of the methodological process will in itself build stakeholders' commitment into the agreed-upon goals that emerge from the planning activity. Hence, strategic planning will refocus and reenergise a wandering organisation (Barry, 1997:9).

8.3.4 Hybrid of ideas added value

It has been observed that, in an ideal situation, the process of participatory strategic planning is bound to be comparatively more innovative as compared to the conventional planning practice usually dominated by conventional planners. There is a larger portfolio of ideas into the boiling pot as a result of the participation of a wide range of stakeholders including community representatives, field staff, programme staff, management staff, management boards and the donor partners among others. Putting emphasise on the value of participation of various levels of organisational workforce and hierarchy in the organisational strategic planning, Barry argues in a metaphor thus: while the top management knows the direction; those below know the terrain (Barry, 1997:6).. Not only is lower level participation essential to working out practical steps, but it is also highly desirable. Through such participation, managers generate the kind of understanding, ownership, commitment, and motivation necessary for successful implementation (Barry, 1997:6). In Barry's own experience, the alternative, which is to try to push strategic planning out into the organization and down through the ranks by exhortation and other forms of 'one-way communication', has only minimal effect.

8.3.5 A learning experience for all

It is evident that participatory strategic planning encourages initiative and responsibility within organisations as stakeholders think, make choices, plan and implement on their own, and for their own good. The process provides a common framework of learning, communication and decision making among stakeholders in an organisation. Participatory strategic planning has therefore been experienced not only as a planning tool, but also as a learning opportunity that helps stakeholders figure out what issues are really important in an organisation and what should be done about them. This point of view is also supported by some practitioners who have argued that the ultimate goal of participatory strategic planning should not necessarily be to produce plans, but to enable an organisation develop the culture of strategic thinking and strategic action (Barry, 1997:10; Bryson, 1995:10).

For this learning value to be sustained, collective annual reviews of strategic plans should be in built within a strategic plan. The purpose of the annual reviews is to stimulate organisational learning, and to check if the current strategic projects are adequate for creating the desired organisational future. It should be part of the wider monitoring systems in place to ensure the implementation of strategic plans remains on course and on schedule.

8.3.6 Maintaining trust

To avoid the unfortunate, usually destructive possibility of mistrust, it has been recommended that Management Boards and staff should start the workshop on the same day. An experience where Management Board held a meeting at the planning venue the night before other stakeholders arrived for the exercise nearly ruined the whole activity. The staff imagined that the meeting was held in a bad taste, to skew and hijack the whole exercise by ambushing other stakeholders. The staff surmised that the board had taken some predetermined position with the issues that were to be tackled in the planning sessions.

It is therefore recommended that, board meetings should not coincide with participatory strategic planning activity. Certainly, a board meeting should not take place just prior to a participatory strategic planning exercise. This will help to avoid the possibility of unnecessary

sensitivity among stakeholders and especially in cases where sensitive issues happen to be on the planning agenda. As one respondent observed: “You cannot get desired results in such an exercise in the absence of trust, openness and teamwork as the quality of the exercise is ultimately determined by the quality of the contributions of the participating stakeholders”.

8.3.7 Success of SP depended on the level of involvement of the senior management

For best results, it is recommended that participatory strategic planning should be the responsibility of senior line managers, with the chief executive officer as the main advocate of the practice. This way, you will have committed the entire organisation into the practice as decision and policy makers give it their full support and practical backup.

For their commitment to be rooted, it is recommended that all the programme and organisation management staff be trained in participatory strategic planning in order to develop in them the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes. However, it should be noted here that, it does not matter how much participatory strategic planning knowledge and skills is imparted among the staff if the attitudes remain unchanged. Such training should therefore labour in an effort to transform the attitudes of the staff; from narrow, simplistic thinking, to broad strategic thinking; from conventional, ‘expert’ controlled top-down planning perception, to self-motivating and self-believing approach to collective planning.

8.3.8 Budget for participatory strategic planning

Respondents argued that one of the major factors that led to low participation of some key stakeholders was the absence of budgetary allocation for the cost of their participation in the various stages of the process. It was recommended that in future, adequate budget allocations should be made prior to the participatory strategic planning exercise. This will ensure all the key stakeholders are brought on board as necessary without excuse or exception. On another level of concern, it is advisable to ensure that there is close link between plans and budget system. It should be possible to ensure that budgets are to and dictated by the strategic plans. Hence, all activities drawn to implement a strategic plan should be reflected in the budget. This will ensure no resources can be diverted or misallocated.

8.4 Summary of the key observations, conclusions and recommendations as per the objectives of the study

We have been able to address the research objectives that we set ourselves to achieve in this study. Our initial Chapters (One to Four) dwelt on literature review. This involved consultation of a wide range of secondary sources on social development paradigms. There was an attempt to highlight the historical factors in the modernisation development practice that led to the emergence of participatory development perspectives and practice towards people's empowerment. The net (negative) impact experienced from the modernisation paradigm justified the need for more experimental approach to development planning that respected the views of the people towards equitable development.

On the other hand, the positive experience with participatory development practice over the last few decades became the precursor to the participatory strategic planning experiments. This does not suggest that participatory strategic planning is a new management practice. It has been around for sometime but in the conventional management circles. What is new is the target group (NGOs and CBOs as opposed to the private corporate sector) and also the participatory nature of the process governed by values and principles of participatory development paradigm. Strategic planning tends to tilt the pendulum more towards institutional strengthening through people's participation in matters pertaining to institutional development. Stakeholders are also empowerment in decision making and in taking responsibility to shape their own destiny.

The latter Chapters (Five, Six, Seven and Eight), involved empirical field research, analysis and drawing up of conclusions to establish the efficacy in terms of the potential, limitations and

prospects inherent in participatory strategic planning as a tool for organisation building. The field experience led to the recommendations at hand towards perfecting the methodology and its practice, within the wider context of the ultimate goal of organisation building.

8.4.1 Revisiting the objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were threefold. At this juncture, it will be logical, as part of our conclusion, to review each one of them in the light of the material covered in this thesis.

8.4.1.1 Objective One:

To investigate on the wider developmental and methodological context of participatory strategic planning and the way it has been applied in various operational contexts (the processes).

This objective was well responded to in Chapters One, Two and Three of this thesis. Chapter One, which is essentially our research design Chapter, gave an overview of historical trends in social development, leading to the identification of the structural deficiencies that account for the root causes of rampant poverty today. This analysis gave way to an in depth study on the three development paradigms (Modernisation, Social Welfare and Participatory Development) in Chapter Two. Chapter Three was specifically devoted to further investigation on the relevance of Participatory Development as pertains to the concerns of this thesis. In particular, we looked at a wide range of participatory development theories and practice, and the role of community based organisations as instruments for community participation and empowerment. This was all in an effort to establish under what circumstances participatory development thrust can become a tool for organisation building, within which context participatory strategic planning fits.

The literature review covered in the foregoing Chapters established that modernisation paradigm is currently governing the contemporary world of conventional development. Globalisation theories and practise has now become the most predominant tool currently in use to modernise the world. This is being drummed up by the North, largely targeting to the resources of the Southern hemisphere, through the ‘modern’ package known as Structural Adjustment Programmes. We have also seen the polemics

and different facets of debate for and against globalisation. Some pointers on the possible way forward have also been highlighted.

In participatory development paradigm, it was concluded that the world had the means to improve the situation of the poor people through fair redistribution of wealth, technology, knowledge, and ideas accruing from modernisation, if only the political will could be generated to do so. If there was the political will to address the issue of inequality, power imbalance and social injustice as a primary goal, rather than just the expansion of world markets, then the governance of the global system could be changed by regulating markets, through global democracy and through respect of international rule of law to deliver that equality. Achieving economic growth and ensuring equality for all should, of necessity, be compatible.

Thus, the central challenge we face today is to ensure that modernisation becomes a positive force for all the world's people, instead of leaving billions of them behind in filth. If we are to get the best out of globalisation and avoid the worst, we must learn how to govern better at the local and national levels, and to govern better together at international level. We must think afresh about how we manage our joint activities and our shared interests, for many challenges that we confront today are beyond the reach of any state acting on its own.

We saw that, while there is much that poor countries can do to help themselves, rich countries have an indispensable role to play too. For them to preach the virtues of open markets to developing countries is mere hypocrisy if they do not open their own markets to the countries' products, or if they will continue flooding the world market with subsidised food exports, making it impossible for farmers in poor countries to compete. Nor can they expect developing countries to listen to their pleas to respect global environment unless they are ready to alter their own irresponsible patterns of production and consumption.

The discussion on the effects of modernisation paved that way for discussions on the social welfare development paradigm, an approach that has been devised to provide safety-net for the social casualties of modernisation process. These are the poor, the landless, the unemployed, the traumatised

as a result of civil wars and other forms of social tragedy, frustrated school dropouts whose career dreams have been prematurely terminated due to poverty, those afflicted by natural calamities such as floods and drought as they live at the peripheries of the centres of modernisation and those chronically sick, who cannot afford the cost-shared medical services as imposed by the donor conditionalities. These would have to be incorporated in the mainstream of development. However, the short cut has been to give them handouts for relief. It is only sensitised development planners who will seek to involve these categories of population in finding lasting solutions for their predicaments, towards becoming masters of their own destiny, as they organise to demand their rights from their society and governance.

The expectations of free handouts among people are not inborn but acquired from people's past experiences depending on the type of development orientation promoted by community leadership in the past. It is usually left at the discretion of those charged with the responsibility of administering social welfare interventions to determine when it is appropriate to administer and when it is not necessary.

It can be appreciated that 'handouts' will not only be necessary but critical in situations of emergency occasioned by catastrophies such as floods, fire, earthquakes, wars and prolonged drought among others. However, even where handouts are imperative as a short term measure to alleviate suffering, there is need to build on local coping strategies. This will strengthen the local capacities should similar circumstances keep reoccurring in future. This will help to avoid creating a situation whereby people become perpetual dependants on external assistance and handouts. People's ability to manage their own social welfare services will also help to avoid the situations whereby local beneficiaries of free services and handouts tend to be treated with disrespect by their benefactors simply because their situation of need is perceived to have rendered them helpless and hopeless. They are seen as people without rights, not even right to be treated with fairness.

In participatory development paradigm, it was established that an integrated approach to development is to be preferred for holistic human development. This is the kind of development approach that puts into consideration the need to meet the fundamental human needs in their entirety: physical, social, psychological and spiritual. This makes it imperative for multidisciplinary field development actors

(specialising in various sectors) to forge linkages of collaboration in integrating their services.

It was established that participatory human development approach is accommodative, open and creative, drawing heavily on life experiences of those involved and constantly responding to the emerging and changing aspirations of the community. This model of development puts people at the centre of development process and not on the periphery. Economic growth is not for the exclusive benefit of a few in society at the expense of the majority. Concern for fair distribution of national wealth and resources is of critical importance in this paradigm. It is a paradigm that seeks to empower people to assume full responsibility for their own development including the consequences of their decisions and actions. Participatory development cultivates sense of responsibility and ownership within the people, thus building people's sense of dignity, self respect and selfworth. For these reasons and more, it was concluded that participatory development paradigm should be preferred.

From the foregoing observations based on the comparative literature review of various development paradigms, it is hereby authoritatively concluded that 'participatory strategic planning' efforts should not only be sustained, but multiplied as a tool with the potential to guarantee organisation building. This is on the assumption that the process remains authentically participatory in nature and quality, in the hands of competent facilitators who are themselves bonafide converts in participatory methodologies and principles, including the values that go with it. They should also be experienced practitioners of participatory training for them to ensure and maintain the necessary sensitivity, spontaneity and balance. This is precisely because facilitating participatory strategic planning processes can be a delicate undertaking that will generate diversity and conflicts to be managed and harmonised effectively.

8.4.1.2 Objective Two:

To establish the limitations (problems) associated with the participatory strategic planning methodology against its efficacy as a tool for capacity building, both at the organisational as well as at the target group levels.

Faulty assumptions about the future are often responsible for plans that later turn out to be unimplementable. Where baseline surveys and situational analyses have been compromised, it is not possible to anticipate with reasonable accuracy, the kind of future scenario to be aspired as compared to the present circumstances. This is a bad start already for participatory strategic planning. Many organisations end up with plans that are irrelevant owing to poor or hurried preparations towards participatory strategic planning activity. Fortunately, most organisations interviewed during the research at hand had either carried out conventional baseline surveys, participatory rural appraisals or programme evaluation prior to the planning exercise.

To avoid such an anomaly, it is recommended that participatory organisational assessments and participatory evaluations be conducted at the organisational level prior to the planning exercise. This helps to identify both the organisational strengths and weaknesses (see sections 4.2.3; 3.2; and Annex 1). It is these gaps identified from organisation assessment that provide direction for the desired future for the organisation. Participatory rural appraisal methodologies have proved more efficacious at the grassroots community level as a tool for identifying aspirations and priorities for participatory strategic planning (see section 3.2).

In other cases, faulty plans may result from an overstatement on the organisation's capabilities leading to too ambitious plans that cannot possibly be implemented with the available organisational resource base, in both human and material resource capacity. To avoid such a waste, organisation's existing and potential capacity to implement certain priorities in organisation building should be established during the organisational capacity assessment exercise prior to the planning exercise. Care should also be taken to avoid information overload from such assessments, that could also have similar consequences where organisation's capacity to process such information is limited. These potential loop-holes had adequately been taken care of in most organisations subjected to this research.

The same way poor situational analysis that does not correctly identify issues of critical priority in the perspective of the key stakeholders would affect the relevance of the plans, commitment of stakeholders to the implementation of the outcome of a planning exercise will be compromised by poor planning process that does not acknowledge the critical contribution of each category of stakeholders.

Inadequate involvement of each stakeholder in the process may come as a result of poor facilitation or poor conflict management within the planning group leading to deliberate and premature withdrawal of some group members. Poor human relations among stakeholders will often lead to poor group dynamics and conflict during the planning exercise (see sections 3.2.11; 4.3 and 4.4). This is more likely to happen where climate setting was inadequate at the beginning of the planning exercise. For smooth sail and therefore best results, time should be devoted to creating sense of unity among stakeholders, given the diversity of interests represented. In this case, the process facilitators should be fairly well experienced in group dynamics, adult education methods and conflict management and resolution.

Absence of these considerations could lead to disillusionment, cynicism, and feeling of powerlessness among stakeholders despite having completed a planning activity. Leaders would rather not ask stakeholders to invest their energies into developing plans that are soon to be ignored. Planning teams are therefore warned to be extra sensitive on these factors by ensuring thorough preparation prior to the planning exercise, and also competent facilitation towards well focused product of the planning exercise. However, it is advisable not to go ahead with a planning exercise, if there is no guarantee that the plans will be vibrant enough to win commitment for their implementation.

It is in the opinion of some of the respondents in this research that participatory strategic planning will thrive best where the local stakeholders have a good measure of financial independence. Where the realisation of a planning process is entirely depended on funding from some external donor partner, the local stakeholders (and particularly the intermediary organisation) will often find themselves at a loss with uncalled for compromises to make, as donor priorities take precedence. Local fund raising efforts are necessary to maintain autonomy and self-determination.

With the current shift in global development paradigms from service delivery to rights approach embedded in participatory development paradigm, capacity building for stakeholders is imperative to change attitudes and perceptions towards quality participatory strategic planning experience. In this context, this new understanding of the meaning of quality development becomes necessary among key stakeholders prior to the planning exercise, if to expect far-reaching outcome compatible with participatory development values.

It has been observed that participatory strategic planning may not always be the desirable engagement in any one given point in time in the process of organisational growth. It should be noted that participatory strategic planning may not always be the panacea to solving all the organisational problems. Other strategic options should also be assessed. For instance, small, consistent improvements or changes built on a sound vision and leadership may be all that is required. Such small changes seldom involve major capital, so there is little need for staff input neither for advice of outside experts. Rather than putting huge resources into developing elaborate plans and projects, it may be possible to expect most improvements to bubble up, in entrepreneurial fashion, from the lower ranks. This requires a deliberate investment in recruitment of qualified staff but also in effectively orientating such staff into the organisational vision, mission and values vis-à-vis the competition. In this case, the role of top management is not to spot and solve problems as much as to create an organisation that can spot and solve its own problems (Barry, 1997:11).

Objective Three:

To identify the potential of participatory strategic planning methodology and its efficacy in organisation building.

It has been established from the research at hand that management board and staff were the main prime movers of participatory strategic planning activities in an organisation (see Chapter Seven). Notably, donor partners generally played a minimal (though not the least) role in this regard unlike the common assumption that they were the primary movers of strategic planning in organisational entities.

The management of various organisations involved as respondents to this research are said to have been relatively more supportive to the participatory strategic planning process than any other single stakeholder. In most cases the executive management teams (which includes the organisation's senior staff, managers and some board members) reportedly took the mantle of the planning steering committees that guided the process. The management is also commented by respondents for exercising a good measure of tolerance and restraint during the participatory strategic planning workshops where organisational weaknesses were discussed openly. This gave way to effective contribution by other key stakeholders (and particularly staff) without fear of retribution for their critical feedback on matters that touch on inadequacies in the management practice.

In all cases, respondents appreciated that key management teams participated in the important stages of the participatory strategic planning of their organisations. For instance, it was the management that conducted fund raising for the participatory strategic planning process. This was perceived as an indication that the management supported the exercise. The management initiated needs assessment processes prior to the participatory strategic planning exercise. This was clear acknowledgement on the part of the management that they were keen to develop strategic plans that responded directly to the diverse priorities of their stakeholders. The representation of the senior management in participatory strategic planning workshops that culminated in the generation and documentation of strategic plans was seen to be yet another assurance that the organisational leadership was committed to the implementation of the outcome of the planning exercise.

The staff support and participation in the participatory strategic planning process was also noted as high. Factors accounting for this high support include the staff expectations that the process would lead to enhanced productivity in their various programmes. On the other hand, stable and productive programmes would lead to greater job-security on the part of the staff in the light of dwindling donor resources. Participatory strategic planning was appreciated by the organisations' staff as an opportunity to converge their views and recommendations towards influencing organisational policy. The exercise was therefore considered by staff a precious window of opportunity for organisational change. This was

also an opportunity for the staff to clarify intricate aspects of their programmes as well as reaffirm programme priorities.

Generally community members (beneficiaries) did not participate in all the key stages of the planning process. The consequences of such an omission were obvious as community perspectives were not effectively taken on board. In some cases such as WAC where community members had been completely sidelined by the planning exercise, it was argued that, by extension, the board members were representing the community since they were drawn from the latter. But such an argument is self-defeating as the board members were largely hand-picked by the WAC management and that the criteria used to identify them did not necessarily ensure effective representation of various segments of the beneficiary community.

The need for the participation of all stakeholders in participatory strategic planning is too important to be left at the mercy of the donors. The need for community participation in particular should not come as an after thought to the management, but instead, should be budgeted for from the start. It should be noted that a planning exercise that ignores a key stakeholder such as the community constituency, will not only suffer low community support with low sense of local ownership, but remains lopsided in coverage of stakeholder interests.

From the analysis of responses from those interviewed, the most satisfactory outcome of participatory strategic planning towards organisation building was the clarity in the future direction of organisations' mandate in terms of vision and mission. Better understanding of organisational direction, was attained as well after establishing a common focus (vision, mission) and collectively identifying organisational priorities. This provided the basis for monitoring and assessing organisation's development.

It was also possible to come up with professionally sound plans with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound) objectives. In other words, it was possible for the organisations involved in the planning exercise to come up with clear targets to be attained in a specified period of time. In at least one case (WAC), it was reported that business volume increased as a result of better

credit management practice following participatory strategic planning. Staff are now involved in budgetary exercises for their programmes as opposed to depending on their seniors to do budgets for them as was the case in the past when there was no collectively understood organisational focus. This has led to better budget controls during programme implementation.

Renewed motivation and enthusiasm among stakeholders was yet another high point as people who run and manage the programme at various levels got actively involved in the planning exercise. This made it a bottom-up planning activity, thus enhancing the sense of local ownership of both the process and the outcome. Now that it was possible for the stakeholders to make their invaluable contribution in terms of experience, knowledge, skills and talents, into the planning process, it was also possible to fully identify with the outcome.

The planning activity was a joint effort among partners in development that resulted in wide consensus among key stakeholders in bringing about programme and organisational change. Respondents commented the act of bringing together all stakeholders as equals to resolve organisational problems without having to leave it to 'expert planners' to do it for organisation. Equally significant outcome of the exercise was the increased sense of team-work in ensuring

collective problem solving. The depth of interaction among stakeholders and the emotional involvement in solving organisational problems led to heightened sense of partnership and collective responsibility. There are more consultations now among stakeholders in the day to day management of programmes than there was before the participatory strategic planning. In fact, some respondents observed that the whole exercise had generated unprecedented enthusiasm among stakeholders.

8.5 Concluding statement

To this extent, and as evidenced by the analytical information presented in this thesis as deduced from both the literature review and the (quantitative and qualitative) field data, it can authoritatively be declared that participatory strategic planning is significantly efficacious as a tool for organisation building, but under the following conditions:

-That for the process to attain this value in efficacy for organisation building, it must be facilitated by able and experienced facilitators, with the right attitudinal orientation. Inappropriate facilitators will tend to manipulate the process, water down its value, and render it impotent as far as capacity building is concerned.

-That all the key stakeholders who form the substance of the organisational partnership and therefore its entity and identity, must be involved in the entire process without exception. This adds value not only to the quality of the plans themselves, but also to the enhanced sense of collective ownership of both the process and its outcome. This will have positive impact on the commitment of stakeholders to the implementation of the outcome towards organisation building.

-That preparatory ground work in form of information building and needs identification as pertains to the various stakeholders' circumstances and expectations is as an essential part of the process, as the actual strategic planning activity itself. Such preparatory ground work will include, but not limited to organisation assessment, participatory community appraisals and baseline surveys to raise the kind of information that will appropriately inform the planning activity.

-That for best results, participatory strategic planning should only be an intervention to complement an existing tradition of participatory organisation management culture. In other words, a conventionally managed organisation will get the least benefits from a participatory planning experience as compared to an organisation that already had an inbuilt tradition of participatory management prior to the participatory strategic planning exercise.

-That the involvement of the Senior Management more or less guarantees the implementation of the outcome of the participatory strategic planning activity. Indifference on the part of the management towards an organisational strategic planning exercise is not only a bad start but a sure way to frustrate the entire exercise. Hence, management support to the process should not be assumed but explicit by their direct participation or any other obvious indication of their active interest in the activity.

8.6 Suggested areas for further research

It is suggested that research of a similar kind in future should seek to specifically establish more fundamental factors that lead to the low participation of community stakeholders in participatory

strategic planning. It is has appeared like the negative belief on the part of development change agents in the potential of the community to make a significant contribution in this (rather technical) activity has led to a negative attitude across the board.

Equally important for further research is the influence donor funding has had on the participatory strategic planning initiatives. In particular, there is need to establish as to what extent such influence served to meet the interests of the donor as opposed to those of the economically weaker stakeholders. Depending on the outcome of such research, it could even lead to the necessity to completely de-link participatory strategic planning from donor funding in order to attain best practice.

Research would be necessary to assess the extent to which stakeholders 'faithfully' implemented their strategic plans after the planning activity was completed. Without negating the need for flexibility during the implementation period, it will still be important to establish the level of faithfulness on the part of the implementers to the original plans. Such an assessment will establish in a more concrete way the levels of commitment among stakeholders to the implementation of the strategic plans as the ultimate test of their sense of ownership. It will also be possible to establish more concretely the impact the planning activity has had on the capacity of the stakeholders to manage their own affairs.

