

**SOME ISSUES AFFECTING PARTICIPATION OF THE POOR IN DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECTS IN INKOSIKAZI COMMUNAL LANDS IN ZIMBABWE**

*by*

**BHEKIMPILO KHANYE**

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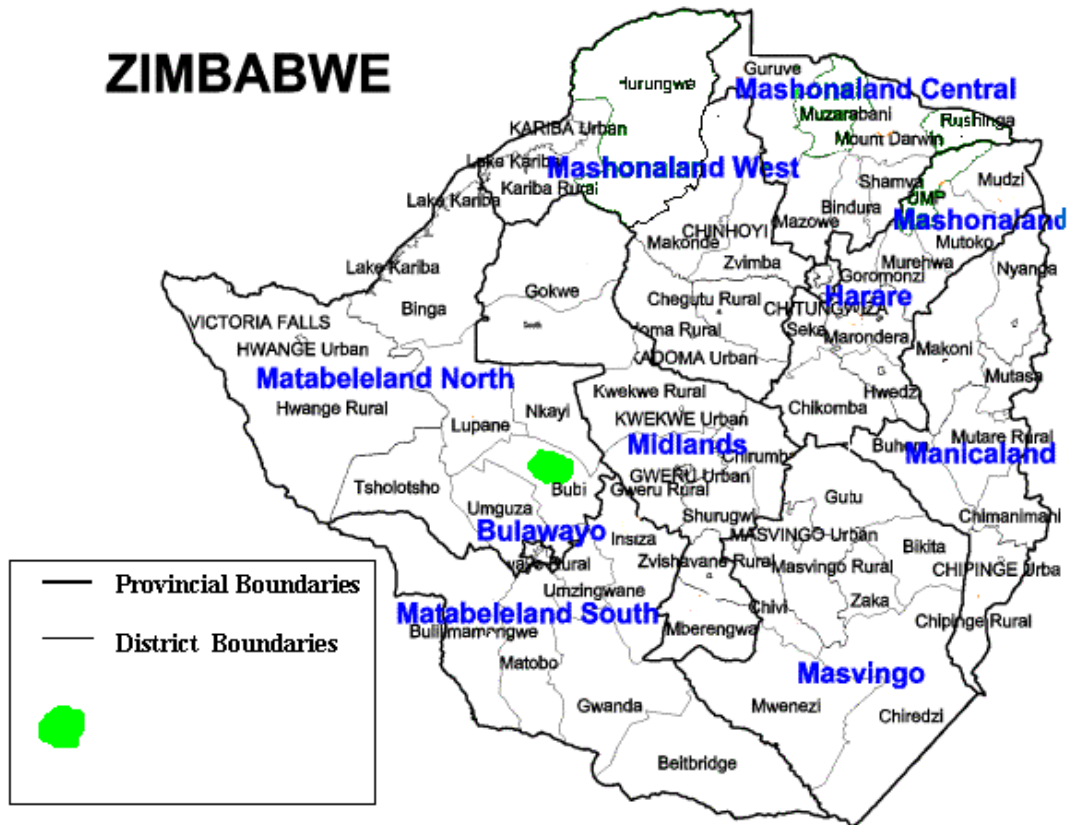
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**SUPERVISOR: DR S.P. TREURNICHT**

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# ZIMBABWE



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## **SUMMARY**

This study investigates some of the issues affecting participation of the poor in two development projects in Inkosikazi communal lands in Zimbabwe. Recent trends in participatory development are reviewed and discussed in the study. Some definitions of the concept of participation are explored, including its historical background, importance and challenges.

Fieldwork was undertaken in Inkosikazi communal lands in July 2004. Two projects were randomly sampled, and in one of them involving goat-rearing, some of the participants were classified as being very poor, while in the other, a heifer loan-scheme project, none of the participants could be classified as very poor. The possible reasons for these variations are explored in the study.

The conclusion of the thesis is that the study succeeds in examining certain key issues affecting participation of the poor in Inkosikazi communal lands in Zimbabwe and recommendations thereof are made.

**Key terms:** Participation; People-Centred Development Projects; Participatory Rural Appraisal; Participatory Development Approach; Poverty; The Poor; Indigenous Knowledge; Development Facilitators; Types of Participation; Gender Issues.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<b>ADP</b>	<i>Area Development Programme</i>
<b>NGOs</b>	<i>Non-Governmental Organizations</i>
<b>PRA</b>	<i>Participatory Rural Appraisal</i>
<b>USAID</b>	<i>United States Agency for International Development</i>
<b>FAO</b>	<i>Food and Agricultural Organization</i>
<b>UNCDF</b>	<i>United Nations Capital Development Fund</i>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<i>United Nations Children’s Fund</i>
<b>UNISA</b>	<i>University of South Africa</i>
<b>UNDP</b>	<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>
<b>NGO</b>	<i>Non –Government Organization</i>
<b>UK</b>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
<b>IIED</b>	<i>International Institute for Sustainable Environment and Development</i>
<b>ORAP</b>	<i>Organization of Rural Associations for Progress</i>
<b>RRA</b>	<i>Rapid Rural Appraisal</i>
<b>FDQ</b>	<i>Frequently Asked Questions</i>
<b>IISD</b>	<i>International Institute for Sustainable Development</i>
<b>VISA</b>	<i>Village-Initiated Support Activities</i>
<b>PLA</b>	<i>Participatory Learning And Action</i>
<b>RAAKS</b>	<i>Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems</i>

## CHAPTER 1

*“More people than ever before are wealthy beyond any reasonable need for a good life, and more are poor and vulnerable below any conceivable definition of decency.”*

*(Chambers 1997:1)*

### INTRODUCTION

With the aim of providing the reader with the historical and socio-economic context of the area, so as better to understand some of the issues affecting the participation of the poor in development projects, this chapter offers background information on the Inkosikazi communal lands where the field research was undertaken. A motivation for the study is outlined, and the research problem and its scope are also delineated, along with the research methodology.

Rural Zimbabwe has two types of settlements: the resettled communities living on former commercial farms, and the communal areas, which, historically, have provided the habitation for most of the black communities. The communal lands are divided administratively into different districts and villages under traditional leadership. The Inkosikazi area is one such communal land and is located in the southern part of Zimbabwe; namely, Matebeleland North Province. The area is of historical importance for the community and the country at large, because it was the home of one of the wives of King Lobengula, the last king of the Ndebele empire before British settlers destroyed it in 1893. Inkosikazi is encircled by commercial farming areas which distinguish it as a communal island with a total population of about 60 000 people.

According to the Department of Agriculture and Extension Services and World Vision PRA Report (1997), the area falls within Agro-Ecological Region 4, which is characterized by dry spells and erratic rainfall. The fact that the area is prone to drought. means that it is unsuitable for crop farming. However, the sweet veldt in Inkosikazi makes the region very suitable for ranching. The community therefore relies mainly on livestock rearing, although there is also some cropping, particularly of the dry land variety. Their livelihood is also derived from providing labour to the neighbouring commercial farms. These practices have, however, been affected by the current land redistribution programme. Some of the farms which used to employ locals have been designated for resettlement, resulting in farm workers losing their jobs and being forced to leave the area. This loss of indigenous skills has affected the area detrimentally. Inkosikazi is therefore a community which is now looking at other options for earning a living and transforming the lives of the people within it. Whilst development projects create an expectation of such a transformation, the question remains as to whether or not the poor can actually participate in, and benefit from, these projects. In this thesis, the poor are defined as those without livestock and a means of producing food for themselves. Their plight forms the basis for this study, and the next section deals with the problem in detail.



## **1.1. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

The motivation for this study is predicated upon the fact that understanding the issues affecting the poor, and then facilitating an environment that is conducive for them to participate in addressing these issues, could contribute to a transformation of their lives as they become directly involved in development processes. The importance of this study to Zimbabwe as a country and to the Inkosikazi communal lands in particular is also outlined.

The participation of the poor is critical if development projects are to transform their lives in a meaningful way. Myers(1999:45-60) argues that development should result in positive change or transformation in people's lives. Chambers (1997:9) states that the primary objective of development should be the "well-being of all", and this includes the very poor. The local people themselves have to decide what they want to do so that they can take control of their lives. Within this broad effort, people-centred development should aim at the poorest of the poor within each community. The people must be the ones who define what kind of transformation they require and what projects they think can provide the required outcome. Without local control of development, there is a danger that outsiders may steer the process in a direction that is not in line with the aspirations of the people. Indeed, as Chambers (1997:236) puts it, development practitioners should get to a point where "the question 'Whose reality counts?' can be answered more and more with 'Theirs'". The issue is whether we, as development professionals, have the vision, guts and will to change our behaviour, to embrace and act out reversals".

This is further argued by Krishna (2003:131) who says that local control can be enhanced by first seeking to understand what the local people are doing on their own to overcome poverty as opposed to outsiders simply relying on the latest development theory or the latest trends. Failure to ensure that the poor participate in any development efforts at community level results in the maintenance of the status quo, with the poorest of the poor remaining untouched, while the rich increase their wealth. People-centred development should therefore seek to effect changes in the status quo within each community, and this can be done through ensuring that the poor participate in development and control the outcome of such development. In fact, Korten and Klauss (1984:300) stress that people-centred development focuses on the people themselves as the main actors, to whom key issues are: “who defines the goals, controls resources, and directs the processes affecting his or her life.”

There is a need to focus on a specific class of people and not just on the community in general to ensure that the poorest of the poor are not bypassed. A focus on the community in general in development projects is criticized by Warburton (1998:14), who argues that the postmodern emphasis on fragmentation championed by Hall, et al (2002:587) challenges the community development concept because it is based on the assumption that a network of personal relationships and behavioural patterns exist, shaped by physical neighbourliness and common socio-economic factors. This conventional interpretation of community development wrongly assumes that communities are homogeneous, with similar challenges and uniform needs which can be equally addressed by the same projects.

These assumptions are contentious and are part of a historical scientific paradigm. Hall, et al (2002:587) assert that people are no longer bound by the above community relationships because they have long-standing personalized connections as individuals, connections which are maintained over time. Globalisation has resulted in advancements in technology, a factor that can lead to the creation of impersonal relationships. However, whilst this may be valid in some instances it is not of particular relevance to the traditional rural African community where this study is based. The argument by Hall, et al (2002:587) is also supported by Emmett (2000:503), who, in his analysis of the South African situation, argues that the concept of participatory development wrongly assumes that communities are homogeneous. This is not so, though, because people within a community could have differences based on class, race and power relations. Such differences may be important variables with regard to who participates in development projects, and hence the focus of this study is on issues affecting participation of the poor in particular as a special category in the Inkosikazi communal lands and not just on the participation of the community in general. A specific criterion was used to determine who exactly are poor, and this will be discussed later in the thesis. In Zimbabwe, the participation of the poor should be a priority for all development organizations, because the worsening economic situation implies that the poor are getting poorer. Promoting their participation and empowerment is therefore an important way to guarantee their survival in an increasingly hostile economic environment. This is because when they participate they can decide on what their priorities are, and how they want to set up partnerships with outsiders. The country has a total population of about 13.7 million people and,

according to the World Bank (2002:7) and USAID (1999:11), 60% of the people live below the poverty line. In Zimbabwe, only 20% of the population earn 60% of the country's income. The poor spend 33% to 50% of their income on food and basic health. The average life expectancy is only 40 years. The situation has been exacerbated by HIV/AIDS, which is estimated to be infecting one in every three sexually active adults (1:3).

A Zimbabwean weekly, the *Financial Gazette*, of the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2004, reports that the country's inflation rate is at 394% as of June 2004. Although this has declined over the past months from 623% in January 2004, it still remains very high, and most basic commodities are out of reach of the ordinary person. This worsening national situation is even more severe in the Inkosikazi area, where unemployment and insecurity surrounding dwindling food supplies have eroded the source of livelihood for the people.

The importance of carrying out this study can therefore be summarized as follows:

- i) Poverty continues to be the major challenge to human transformation in Zimbabwe and the rest of the developing world. It is therefore important that issues affecting the participation of the poor be understood so that they inform people-centred development strategies.
- ii) The researcher's place of employment, World Vision International, Zimbabwe (an aid organization that is extensively involved in people-centred development) should benefit immensely from this study, as it will

be able to revise many of its development approaches for the benefit of the poor.

- iii) Development theories and approaches have been changing over time, and this study is a realization of the importance of contributing to the theoretical understanding of people-participation through focusing on some of the factors which affect this.
- iv) The government of Zimbabwe, whose primary role is to facilitate the transformation of people's lives through people-centred development projects, must be assisted in understanding some of the factors that affect the participation of the poor so that the government can integrate these in their plans and be in a better position to advise non-governmental organizations.
- v) The Inkosikazi Area Development Programme, which is funded by World Vision International, Zimbabwe, needs to be informed by a better understanding of how best to facilitate programmes which can provide greater benefit to the poor, as World Vision will be withdrawing from the area in 6 years time. This can only be effectively done if programme managers are able to make informed choices by understanding some of the factors that affect the participation of the communities.

The gloomy picture of the country's economic situation as discussed on page 8, as well as changes in the Inkosikazi people's livelihood, means that the poor will be further exposed to increased poverty. Hence, it is imperative that all development efforts should focus on strengthening the indigenous coping mechanisms through participation of the poor, who should be empowered so that they are able to afford basic foodstuffs. They should also be uplifted to the extent that they are able to meet their basic needs such as health and education. Much of this can only be successfully achieved if the participation of the poor in people-centred development is encouraged. This research will therefore seek to contribute to such development through analyzing issues affecting participation of the poor in development projects in the Inkosikazi communal lands. These issues need to be addressed so that development practitioners can modify their intervention in order to promote local, self-reliant development.

The poor should participate in any efforts aimed at improving their lives in a way that gives meaning to their own vision for development. Monaheng (1998:31) argues that, ethically, the people whose lives are affected by development should participate in such development and be in a position to control the development process. Unfortunately, this theoretical goal is seldom realized. Monaheng(1998:31) further notes that there has been an erroneous assumption that western society symbolizes the ideal or most desirable form of social organization and lifestyle. The West, according to Monaheng (1998:32-35), has its own share of problems associated with the way in which Western nations are socially organized.

Such problems include high suicide rates, alcohol abuse, and general criminal activity. It should be added that the mass consumption of scarce natural resources is part of the self-destructive process. Participation in development should be organized according to indigenous values.

From their experience, development agencies such as the FAO (1996:8) have noted that the cost of development may be less if the poor participate, because such projects have greater potential for success. This may be debatable, though, since there are others factors such as the macro-economic environment and globalisation which could affect the cost of development. Notwithstanding this, the UNCDF (2002:3) reported that only through their participation can the poor access public goods, services and micro-finance. Another United Nations Agency, UNICEF(2002:1) argues that participation of the poor is important because it results in the use of locally available resources as opposed to external ones, and this also contributes to cost reduction. When poor people control the outcome of a project, its activities become relevant to their needs, whereas if they are not in control there is a strong possibility of coming up with interventions which are totally unrelated to the needs and aspirations of the people whom development organizations seek to serve (UNICEF, 2002:1). Again this is linked to sustainability, which is undermined if projects fail to survive beyond the presence of the external support organization. Participation of the poor therefore enhances their ownership of the development processes, and makes them independent of outsiders. For this to happen, the participation of the poor should not only be viewed in physical activities such as their mere presence at meetings.

There must be a deliberate capacity-building effort so that the poor can acquire the requisite competence necessary to design and manage their own development.

Wetmore and Theron (1998:30) observe that people participation is now generally acknowledged as both an end and a means in the process of empowerment which contributes to people's self-confidence, pride, initiative, creativity and capacity building.

### **1.1.1. Participation For Promoting Gender Equity**

Gender is also a very important factor in relation to poverty. In most communities, women do not have sufficient access to resources and services and are amongst the poorest citizens. Narayan, Chambers, et al (2000:142-143) assert that the prejudice against women is so serious that they are not free to voice their opinions in meetings and promote their own point of view in their daily activities. Biases such as these against women are more glaring in Indonesia, where a poor women battle against their social status in a community which understands decision-making as being the sole preserve of men. Women are supposed only to provide domestic services, and this is carried over from the home to the projects themselves. The situation is no different in Africa. Furthermore, Myers (1999:36) observes in this regard that women perform two thirds (2/3) of the world's work, but earn only one tenth (1/10) of the world's income. They own less than one hundredth (1/100) of the world's property.

Although women are therefore marginalized, their participation in development is a potential asset for the transformation of the entire community.



Participation of the poor in development initiatives may address this gender imbalance, and may result in them having better access to resources that matter. The experiences of other organizations such as Oxfam (2001) in relation to participatory development at grassroots level will also be explored during the study.

Although the participation of the poor is important, it is amazing to note that their participation levels remain low, and they continue to be marginalized by both the rural elites and development organizations. Studies by FAO (1996:8) show that the poor are not only marginalized, but are forced to rely on the rural elites who dictate development terms and direction. In this regard, the FAO (1996:8) report observes that in Nigeria, agricultural projects provided assistance through existing structures, but it was only the rich farmers who benefited, while the poor could not access the services.

There is surely a need to study the issue of participation of the poor more closely so that new insights may be gained into why they remain marginalized when their participation is so critical. Forceful arguments are made by Cooke and Kothari (2001:6-7) that the poor remain marginalized because the very concept of participation itself is faulty and tyrannical, since it only indulges in mild introspection which does not challenge development strategies outright, but results only in minor adjustments on how such strategies are implemented. The findings of this research can be used in enriching the level of knowledge in development studies. Other students and development organizations can build on it in their studies and research.

### **1.1.2. Participation as a human right**

Over and above all the scientific and scholarly reasons why the poor have to participate in people-centred development is the fact that they are human beings whose lives must be regarded as valuable. They are entitled to resources and services and protected by each country's constitution in the same manner that everybody else is. They therefore deserve to participate in their own advancement as a matter of fundamental democratic right. Myers (1999) argues that the poor are not ignorant, lazy, fatalistic people, but are normal human beings simply deprived of critical services and resources. He further asserts that the poor are people, not just ideas or concepts. They are persons existing within families, communities and social systems. Myers (1999) also says that the poor live with the non-poor, not just on their own in absolutely poverty-stricken communities.

In every community there are varying levels of indigence, and even between households there are sometimes dominant men who are not as poor as other members of the households. It is therefore important to study their level of participation in development and to contribute towards their transformation. Chambers (1997:172-175) argues that poor people live in a "cluster of disadvantages". In other words, there is some kind of poverty trap. He goes on to spell out different dimensions of poverty, which include material poverty, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness.

## **1.2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

This study investigates some of the key issues affecting participation of the poor in two development projects in the Inkosikazi communal lands in the Bubi district in Zimbabwe. These issues include the attitudes of both the poor and the facilitators, the approach of the aid organizations, and social conflicts within the communities themselves. The issues may vary from one community to the other because poverty differs according to context.

It is common knowledge that most projects have good intentions, which centre on poverty reduction, but which do not go further during implementation to ensure that it is the poor that benefit. Many development organizations have adopted participatory methodologies, which see the community participate in project design, implementation and evaluation. This is laudable, but it is then important to appreciate some of the issues that affect the participation of the poor, which is the main thrust of this study.

It is important that projects meant for the poor should not just target the community, but should rather focus specifically on the poor within that community. It will further be argued that the phrase “community development” is in itself flawed, because it gives an impression of homogeneity and an assumption of similarity in required interventions.

The phrase is faceless and impersonal, whereas the target of development is people with specific identities: it is the development of the people and not just of the community that matters. Development projects can sometimes proceed in an area without reaching out to the very poor.

### **1.3. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH**

The research will focus on two out of a total of ten community development projects in the Inkosikazi communal area. These ten projects include irrigation schemes, goat rearing projects, cattle rearing projects and small nutrition gardens. These are all aimed at enhancing the livelihood of the poor and most vulnerable households. The projects were funded by different organizations and they are at varying stages of implementation. This research focused on the participation of the poor in any of the two sampled projects in this community.

**Geographic Area:** The research will be done in the Inkosikazi communal lands in Zimbabwe.

**Groups:** The research will focus mainly on the Ndebele community in the Southern part of Zimbabwe, namely the Inkosikazi Area. These people are therefore of the same tribe, so ethnicity is not an issue in the participation process. The people of Inkosikazi fall under one traditional leadership, which means that the social, economic and convenient location and easy access to leadership, and the communal projects were randomly selected from each of the Inkosikazi communal areas.

**Age group:** The research focused on adult men and women (18 years and above), because in terms of local custom they are the ones allowed to interact independently with outsiders and to participate in development projects in the area. Other elderly people and community leaders within the community were also consulted.

This was the scope of the study for which the following methodology was then used:

## **1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this section, the basis for selecting the Inkosikazi communal lands for the study is explained. The sources of information used, both primary and secondary, are outlined, and so is the sampling method, triangulation and validity of data. The choice of the Inkosikazi area for study as opposed to other areas was based on an observation of unique participation trends in this area. This is in line with the arguments of Silverman (2000:90) that a non-participatory observation method is an important preliminary approach to any research so that the target population is relevant to the subject being studied. The very poor members of the Inkosikazi community were observed not to be actively participating in development projects meant to benefit them. This observation has to be substantiated through research. In addition to this, access to the area may be achieved at reasonable costs.

The research study was done with the blessing of the local leadership who supported it being carried out independently. The local language, Ndebele, was used to ensure easy communication with the target group.

### **1.4.1. Secondary sources**

Access to the UNISA and University of Zimbabwe libraries made documentary research possible. The PRA report conducted by World Vision in the target area was used as a secondary source of information. This contains the community definition of poverty.

Poverty assessment reports were also sourced from the government. These detail poverty levels in each district. These were utilized in addition to an extensive review of literature on development.

#### **1.4.2. Primary sources**

The above secondary data sources needed to be substantiated by field research, gathering first-hand information from the project's participants themselves. The next section explains how this was done.

#### **Operationalization**

In order to do valid research on participation of the poor in development, it was important to design a research instrument, which was used to explain how people give meaning to participation in their own particular way in the area in question. Field research was conducted through the use of focused group discussions, and a questionnaire was also developed for this purpose. These discussions captured general information on the project, such as when it started, its objectives and major activities. Beneficiaries were also analyzed in terms of gender composition, since the assumption was made that gender was one of the variables that determines participation in this particular social system.

### **1.4.3. Random Sampling**

There are various sampling methods that could be used in this study, and these may be divided into probability and non-probability sampling. According to Ary, et al (1996: 177-181), in probability sampling, each number has a non-zero probability of being chosen, whereas in non-probability sampling it is the opposite, with each member selected from the population in a random manner. This study uses simple random sampling because it gives all projects an equal chance of being selected. It counteracts researcher bias and is easy to use. Systematic sampling, which is as good as the random method, was not used because it is best suited to situations where the sample size is large, whereas in this particular study a total of only ten (10) projects make up the total population. Stratified sampling was not used, because there is not significant diversification in the objectives and focus of all the projects in the area: they all have similar objectives, namely, the transformation of human lives, particularly those of the poor.

Kish (1965) and York (1998:239) warn of sample selection bias which results from selected individuals not participating, a factor which could compromise the validity of the results. This view is confirmed by Berker (1993:386) and Miller & Wright (1995). In this research the possibility of research target participants not turning up was minimized through making appointments with the selected project members in good time, and both the community leadership and all the project members were given a full explanation as to the purpose of the study.

Simple random sampling was therefore used to select the projects in question. Research was done in the Inkosikazi communal lands in the southern part of Zimbabwe. Each project was selected randomly, taking into account Mouton's warning (1996:138-139) regarding sampling procedure being "effectively random" and "random enough". This study sampled two out of the ten (10) development projects in the Inkosikazi communal area because resources, both in terms of time and money, did not allow all ten projects to be studied. The two projects are within the same community, and therefore subject to similar participation dynamics such as leadership, social cohesion and power relations relating to the marginalization of the poor. In addition to sampling, open-ended discussions were held with the other people in the Inkosikazi communal area.

#### **1.4.4. Description of the population**

Although the whole Inkosikazi communal area has a total population of about 60 000 people, there are ten development projects in this area initiated by diverse organizations, including World Vision International in Zimbabwe. The two sampled projects have a total membership of 156. The other development projects in the area benefit approximately 1400 people in total.



## **1.5. Data Collection And Analysis**

Data was collected in the field through focused group discussions with members of the two sampled projects. This was done using a questionnaire which is attached at the end of this thesis.

During the data collection process, the caution raised by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:199) was taken into account, namely that a researcher should avoid only focusing on those areas which agree with his or her views, but should also be on the lookout for deviant opinions and new information. An example of contentious viewpoints were those expressed by some members of the community leadership who were of the opinion that all the people in the area had equal access to services and facilities and could therefore participate in development processes regardless of their poverty status. As part of this study, there was also continuous analysis of data in the field, with notes being taken so that new findings could be documented. These were combined with the final analysis of data that was conducted after the fieldwork. The post fieldwork analysis included coding or categorization of the findings. This resulted in the two projects' beneficiaries being classified by the participants themselves into wealth rankings; namely; the poor, very poor, middle-income and the rich, as well as classification by gender. Triangulation of data was used to promote reliability.

### **Reliability of data collected**

According to Best and Kahn (1993:217) and Mouton (1996:144-145), reliability of data collection is mainly concerned with consistency and stability in measurement over different sample items. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:100) believe that reliability may be gauged by the extent to which the findings can be reproduced or replicated by another researcher, although one has to realize that different researchers will have the potential to view things differently.

In order to promote reliability of the information collected, a relaxed atmosphere was created for the focused group discussions so that participants could freely express their views. The purpose of the study was fully explained to them.

The questionnaire (attachment 1:) was consistently and uniformly used so that both groups were subject to the same guidelines.

### **Triangulation and the validity of the data**

Denzin (1970:85) says that triangulation involves the use of more than one approach to investigate a research question. This enhances validity, widens and deepens one's understanding of the problem, and improves the quality of the data. Out of the four forms of triangulation he outlines, namely data triangulation, theoretical, methodological, and investigator triangulation, this research used the last, investigator triangulation, because of the small geographic area within which the research takes place and the fact that there are only a total of ten projects within the whole area.

Investigator triangulation basically involves the use of more than one researcher in order to avoid bias. Two fieldworkers were used to gather data and then the findings were interpreted and consolidated. The caution by Silverman (2000:99) that triangulation may tempt a novice researcher to push aside the dataset they cannot explain and pick the one that they can explain was noted, and all data from the field was explained, even if it did not agree with the initial assumptions of the study.

Before going on to discuss the field research findings in detail, the analysis of these findings will be sharpened by first discussing trends in participatory development . This, then, is the focus of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

*“The shift from top-down to participatory development models has given “local people” a voice, but in practice real participation is often elusive” (Eversole, 2003:781)*

### **A DISCUSSION OF SOME OF THE RECENT TRENDS IN PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to discuss some of the recent trends in participatory development in order to have a better understanding of the Inkosikazi communal area field findings. The chapter opens with a brief overview of the historical background to the concept of participation, and then goes on to discuss some of the definitions of participation, which, together with the analysis in this chapter of different types of participation, serve to show that participation is contextual: it is viewed differently by diverse interest groups and people. The importance of the participation of the poor and the challenges associated with such participation, as well as an analysis and critique of PRA, also form part of this chapter.

## **2.2. A brief historical background to the concept of participation**

For a comprehensive understanding of the concept of participation, it is important first to review how it came about and the conditions which led to its development. In this regard, Monaheng (1998:31) observes that after World War Two both the theory and practice of development assumed new dimensions. Initially, the West assumed that the decolonized countries had to copy or imitate Western economic development in order for them also to be viewed as being developed. Coetzee (1986:31) says that this thinking, which was based on modernization, believed that strategies needed to be found towards bringing Third World Countries to the level of those considered to be the most advanced and modern. It implied the replacement of traditional societies with modern ones, the former being considered “primitive” and retrogressive, while the latter were viewed by the advocates of modernization as progressive and ideal (Coetzee, 1986:30). This approach to development is, of course, misplaced, as it takes no account of the value of local knowledge and initiatives. Monaheng (1998:32) further notes, however, that the importance of the participation of beneficiaries became clearer over time. He argues, too, that developing countries had a very high economic growth rate which actually exceeded that of the developed countries in the nineteenth century. However, despite this impressive economic growth, inequality and poverty continued to worsen. This was accompanied by an over-emphasis on foreign aid, industrialization and technological sophistication and transfer. Monaheng (1998:33-34) also notes, with reference to Kotze (1997:9) and Coetzee(1989), that the administration of the development approach was initially characterized by centralization but, with time, there was a gradual shift to participation, due to increasing criticism of this centralized

approach. Monaheng (1998:31-34) argues that this was also the time when the concept of a Third World was advanced, mainly by proponents of the community development approach. The 1970s saw more strategies which were inclined towards addressing the issue of poverty.

There was a paradigm shift from growth-centred to people-centred development, which, according to Korten (1990:68), places importance on the people themselves within the limitations and capacities of their environment. This observation is supported by Shaw (1994:12) who mentions the change in thinking from the then traditional development theories focusing on economic growth, to the more radical school of thought which began to define development in terms of values, the quality of life and the importance of satisfying basic needs.

Still on the development of the concept of participation, according to the FAO report of March 1996, the subject of participation of the poor in community development is indeed not new. It was actually mooted in the mid 1970s after it was noted that rural development efforts had a limited impact on poverty. The FAO (1996) report also says that, following this awakening by development organizations, a World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development was held in Rome in 1979. During this convention, the international community singled out the non-participation of the poor in development efforts as the major cause of the failure of community development interventions. In this regard, the FAO started its People's Participation Programme in 1980.

UNDP (2002:9) traces the issue of participation by the poor in development back to the 1940s, when attempts to provide development assistance and undertake interventions were first made.

At this point, according to the UNDP (2002:9), there was limited involvement of the local people until the 1950s, when there was a focus on the building of local capacities and community-based organizations. Therefore, according to the UNDP (2002:10), the 1950s and 1960s saw the intensification of community development in Africa and also in Asia. However, in all these efforts, the poor were generally left out, with government officials being viewed as the link between the external forces of modernization and the rural communities. The processes were usually determined by the outside world which was seen as civilized, while the community's role was that of supporting the national agenda and not determining what development activities were to be done.

In its historical account of the subject of participation of the poor, UNDP (2002:10) further notes that the 1970s and 1980s saw a change of approach to development as the realization began to emerge that the poor are marginalized. Development organizations changed their attitudes and methodology, with the focus shifting from a top-down to a bottom-up approach. There was a realization that the poor, whom community development interventions meant to serve, were marginalized in the key aspects of participation in decision making, as well as the implementation of, and participation in, the sharing of benefits. This can be summed up as a lack of control of development projects by the people.

In the UNDP (2002:10) the World Bank was singled out as one institution which allegedly confined participation of the poor solely to needs-identification, taking total control itself of the process thereafter. This was indeed a very narrow view of participation by the World Bank.

While development organizations the world over were going through a process of reflection on the need to change their approach with regard to the participation of the poor in their own development, poverty levels continued to worsen everywhere, and the poor became even poorer. In this regard, Bello (1989:10) says that the 1980s were marked by a steep rise in poverty and inequality throughout the Third World. Lean, et al (1990:15) observed that in the 1980s a nil growth was experienced by one third of the Third World population. Mayo (1993:7) then argues:

*“The third World has had 40 years of development and things are not getting better ... time after time development seems simply to modernize poverty at huge environmental cost.” (Mayo, 1993:7)*

In short, the development facilitators started off with no participation by the poor in their own development, then realized their mistake and revised their approach to ensure their participation, but, notwithstanding this, Eversole (2003:781-782) rightly observes that participatory development is yet to be achieved in practice, partly because participation means different things to different people. Examples in this regard include multinational banks which may view participation of the stakeholders as a means of



promoting unpopular policies which otherwise could have a political cost. For the local people, however, participation could mean a “radical agenda of empowerment for the former objects of development” (Eversole, 2003:782)

It is therefore fitting at this point to look at some of the definitions of participation by selected writers and organizations.

### **2.3. A discussion of some of the definitions of participation**

Having reviewed the historical background to the concept of participation, an overview of some of the definitions of participation becomes important, because they bring out a difference in emphasis. This will also help to focus the discussion by giving pointers to critical aspects of participation.

Although Oakely, et al (1991:6) note that participation generally defies any single attempt to define it, there have been some efforts to do so .The World Bank defines participation as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them” (World Bank, 2002). The bank recognizes the poor as key stakeholders. One must hasten to add that the Brettenwood institutions have yet to gain a reputation for leaving the poor to control development projects without interference.

Another definition similar to the one given by the World Bank is provided by Midgley (1986:26) and Burkey (1993:59) who focus on organized efforts to control the

resources governing social institutions by those initially excluded from such control. According to Coetzee and Graaff (1996:318), the issue of control should be so pronounced that there is sufficient counter-empowerment of the people, enabling them to overcome already existing power players such as the state and business sector.

UNICEF (2002:1-10) adds to the definition of community participation an element of decentralization and building of local capacities over and above the community simply identifying its problems and deciding how to solve them.

The definition of participation by UNDP (2002) focuses on the involvement of the people in decision-making, the implementation of decisions, the sharing of benefits and an evaluation of development programmes. Other key aspects relate to influence or control by the beneficiaries, empowerment of the poor, and partnerships or joint efforts and dialogue. These seem to be crucial phrases running through all the definitions. Further to the above, UNDP (2002) highlights four types of community participation. The first is passive participation, where beneficiaries, though welcoming and supporting a project proposal, remain cautious and even suspicious of it. The second type is increasing involvement, where trust emerges and the beneficiaries increase their level of contact with project staff. Beneficiaries may start taking up some responsibilities as they become more active partners in the implementation process. The last form of participation is ownership and empowerment, when the beneficiaries have the capacity and will to sustain and improve on initiatives started by the project. This thesis discusses the different types of participation in more detail in section 2.6.2 below.

### ***2.3.1. A Discussion Of Participation As A Contextual Phenomenon***

While some definitions may attempt to generalize the understanding of what participation is, the practical reality is that it is contextual: it varies from area to area in terms of culture, and amongst institutions based on the institutions' particular interests. In this regard, Rahnema (1992:117-120) argues that governments may view participation as a tool they can use to accomplish their desired political goals, as long as they can contain what they may perceive as the "abuses" of participation by the people. This is manipulative of the people, and such an understanding by governments of what participation is needs to be challenged in the strongest possible terms. Rahnema (1992:117-120) further observes that participation may be seen by some NGOs as merely a part of fund-raising jargon. Such views on participation by some NGOs deserve to be contemptuously rejected. Eversole (2003:782) gives examples of contextual variations on the part of institutions such as multinational development banks.

Such organizations may only see the participation of stakeholders as a means of promoting their own potentially unpopular policies in a manner that eliminates the political costs that could accompany resistance to such policies. He further argues that this is in radical contrast to the grassroots activists who may view participation as a "radical agenda of empowerment of the former objects of development" (Eversole, 2003:782). Verhelst (1987:17-23) laments the disregard of cultural diversity by development facilitators. He argues that culture is not just music and dance, but

includes those aspects of people's way of life which enable them to cope with the challenges in their areas and to survive. The development facilitators, Verhelst (1987:17-23) further argues, sometimes bring their westernized or foreign solutions to local people, instead of each community coming up with a culturally relevant solution to the challenges which they face.

He likens such development facilitators to restaurant waiters who may serve the same dish the world over, but only wear different cultural attire. Regardless of the variations in the understanding of what participation is and how it is implemented, the convergence of opinion on its importance is clear. This is therefore analyzed in the next section of the discussion.

#### **2.4. Importance of participation of the poor in people-centred development**

Cooke and Kothari (2001:37) maintain that participation approaches can generally be viewed as having two broad objectives: first, the efficiency arguments that participation will yield better project outcomes; and second, the equity or empowerment arguments that participation is a process of promoting the capacity of people to improve their own lives. The following breakdown of the issues relating to the importance of participation can therefore be viewed from these two broad objectives.

##### **2.4.1. It is their Right to Participate**

Even as Vira and Jeffrey (2001:302) rightfully observed after their study of projects in Kashmir and Chad, it is very important for the poor in any country or community to be

in full control of any efforts aimed at improving their lives. Slochum, et al (1995:4) argue that it is a fundamental democratic right for all human beings to be involved in decisions relating to their own situation. Hall, et al (2002:587) and Kollvalli & Kerr (2002:213) also note that partnership with the poor should be central to any methodology targeting the development of the poor. This, according to McGee, et al (2002:88) can even be stretched to include the participation of general civil society, whose involvement, they argue, benefits the poor through the production of favorable policies.

#### ***2.4.2. Participation may contribute to better utilization of resources***

The further importance of participation of the poor is noted by the FAO (1996:12) report.

Basically, this argues that where people participation exists, there may be better development returns. The report asserts that, in terms of economies of scale, it is better to provide services to participatory groups which form a grassroots level “receiving system” than to give services to scattered small-scale producers, as this is expensive. Participation in this regard is seen as reducing costs and increasing efficiency. Similarly, Hoddinott, et al (2001:98), basing their reasoning on their case study in South Africa, assert that participation of the beneficiaries is important because use of locally available information, unknown to outsiders, reduces the costs of intervention.

### **2.4.3. Participation may improve self-sustainability of projects and access to services by the poor**

Formation of democratic organizations through small informal groups is best for the poor, whose literacy levels are low and who can, in this way, share ideas. The participation of the poor in projects meant to improve their standard of living may improve chances for the self-sustainability of such projects. The UNCDF (2002:13) report says that participation of the poor can result in their access to public goods, services and micro-finance. Ghai and Vivian (1992:50) argue that even in sustainable development, participation is a key to the successful implementation of projects, because it may result in the sustainable management of local resources by the people.

UNICEF(2002:1-10) summarizes some of the possible advantages of having the poor participate in efforts aimed at developing them. These are:

- **Increase in efficiency** as locally available resources are used against external and expensive ones.
- **Increased effectiveness** of interventions as they become more relevant to the local poor people.
- **Local capacities are built.** In this regard, Oenga and Ikumi (1999:82), in their study of the PAR outcomes in Nyakerato, Kenya noted that it results in improved community leadership skills, with those in leadership roles such as chairpersons or treasurers understanding their roles better and, in general terms, everyone realizing a “common good.” This also has the

*potential to reduce conflict within the communities. Narayan (2003:2) concurs with this point, saying that participation is important because it empowers the people, building their assets and capabilities to a level where they can negotiate with the development facilitators and have meaningful influence over, and control of them by being able to hold them accountable. Empowerment also means that the people give legitimacy to a development program and all its related processes, especially support to the leadership which, according to Cook (1975:102) is important for sustainability. Cornwell and De Beer (1997:88) observe that the success of such empowerment should be based on the view of the participants themselves, if they see the outcome of their actions as beneficial.*

- **Results in improved targeting** of benefits to the poorest within a community.
- **Increases ownership** which can promote sustainability. Rahman (1993:150) agrees, saying that participation may address the mindset of dependency in such a way that the people become more confident and positive in their approach. Blackburn, et al (2000:210) also say that policy consultations can, among other things, enhance ownership through the mainstreaming of participation in programs.
- **Status of women** can be improved as they also access resources and services. In this regard, Khadka and Paudyal (1999:78), drawing lessons from Participatory Action Research in Nepal, observe that both men and

*women end up having an equal opportunity to do those things which relate to their transformation.*

Cahn and Camper (1968:211-224) stress that participation enhances the dignity of the participants, while at the same time utilizing local resources and knowledge. The importance of combining the locals' knowledge and that of the researcher is also noted by Haggard, et al (2001) in their study of farmers in South-east Mexico. Related to enhancing the dignity of participants is the freedom of expression men and women, boys and girls derive from working in peer groups, as noted by Gordon and Phiri (2000:72) in their study of sexual and reproductive health in Zambia.

The issue of dignity and self-confidence is critical if the people are fully to own the development process and sustain it.

The World Bank (2002:2) and Chambers (1997:206) also note that any attempt to ensure the participation of the poor must involve learning from them first hand what kind of problems they face, how they have tackled them and how they think they can gain control and influence over their environment. It is therefore the poor who should be allowed to teach the outsiders about their problems and what solutions they think would suit them best.

A fitting conclusion to this section is provided in the assertion by Hiuzer (1973:14) that the belief that the poor will not participate because they are apathetic and generally resist change is utterly unfounded. The emphasis, he argues, should not be on



whether the people will participate or not, but rather on how and in what form they should participate. This was clear in the Inkosikazi communal area where the poor actively participated in their own initiative in the form of the Hlumazonke Goat Project.

One of the challenges with which people-centred development facilitators are still grappling, and on which this thesis will not pretend to focus, is the participation of children, as raised by Bartlett (2001:62). He argues that children are left out of participatory processes, and asserts that they obviously have different views from those of adults. This is an area which could well provide the focus for future research, but, until then, children continue to be left out.

Although this discussion has shown that participation of the poor is important, the challenges facing the implementation of such a process remains to be discussed. Some of these challenges are dealt with in the next section.

## **2.5. Some Practical challenges Relating to Participation**

Participation of the poor faces certain challenges which are yet to be overcome by the different development stakeholders. The first challenge to participation relates to the sustainability of the participation process at community level. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (2000) notes that participatory approaches usually fail to sustain community participation after the implementing organization has withdrawn. This means that empowerment of the poor to the point where they can continue on their own is a big challenge. This view, of course, is based on the assumption that

development is externally induced, and overlooks the importance of local initiatives. Such thinking has to be changed so that the importance of grassroots control of the development process is appreciated.

UNICEF (2002) also observes that one of the major challenges facing any attempt to ensure that participatory approaches are sustainable is the fact that they are very expensive, especially because one cannot be sure that the desired outcomes will be achieved. Such costs could include organizing community meetings and spending time talking to the people. This can also be considered irrelevant and a luxury in situations of extreme poverty, where feeding people and saving lives is more important.

Getting the marginalized or poorest of the poor in a community to participate in their development can also upset the status quo, through threatening the leadership and destabilizing power relations. This could unsettle the community and affect the continuity of the very development process itself, because a perpetually unstable socio-political environment makes it difficult for people to get together and focus on the development issues which affect them.

UNICEF (2002) also makes the critical point that talk about the participation of the poor may be more of an “ideological favour”, where the interest lies in simply promoting a development perspective or approach and not really caring about the plight of the poor. One of the worst possible scenarios is that at times the focus on participation of the poor results in the shifting of the burden onto the poor themselves, who are then left

struggling on their own in the name of participation. Slocum, et al (1995:4) assert that traditional approaches to participation neglect very crucial aspects such as power relations, and gender roles and relationships. Communities are not homogeneous, but are classified on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion and caste. This implies varying needs, and one therefore cannot just lump people together as “a community”.

One very radical challenge relating to the concept of participation is discussed by Cooke and Khothari (2001:6-7). For them, the issue is not just about focusing on weaknesses relating to the implementation of participatory approaches, but rather that the concept of participation itself is faulty. They argue that it is tyrannical and that it basically involves three forms of tyranny.

The first concerns the tyranny of decision-making and control, where participatory development facilitators override legitimate local decision-making processes. The second form of tyranny, in their view, is what they call tyranny of the group, in which local group dynamics may simply result in participatory decisions which entrench the interests of those already advantaged by power relations within a community. The last one involves tyranny of method, where Cooke and Khotari argue that participation may have closed out other methods which have certain advantages that participation alone does not offer (Cooke and Khothari, 2001:6-7).

Whilst Cooke and Khothari's opinions (2001:6-7) do indeed add a valuable dimension to development thinking, trying to challenge the concept of participation itself is being a little over-ambitious, and amounts to winding the clock back to the time when the

development approach was a top-down one. Their view certainly has a place in the development archives, but comes nowhere near embracing the future of development studies

Notwithstanding the above challenges, participation of the poor remains critical. How this subject is to be practically approached requires discussion, and this becomes the focus of the next section of this study.

## **2.6. An Overview Of Some Key Issues Within Participatory Approaches**

This section of the thesis discusses the development trends which formed the background to participatory approaches and then explores different types of participation. Commonly used participatory practices such as the Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal are outlined and critiqued.

### **2.6.1 Historical Background to Participatory Approaches**

Community Development has evolved over the years to embrace People-Centred Development approaches. The era of community development was characterized by a top-down approach to development, where the outsiders meant to facilitate such development would be the ones dictating to the communities what had to be done. The outsiders were considered experts who knew what the people needed in order to develop, and they (the people) simply had to adopt whatever was recommended. De Beer (1996:69) says that, during this period, participation was merely confined to the involvement of people. Communities were told what would be of benefit to them if they

joined development projects initiated by outsiders. They were effectively co-opted to work on projects which were not part of their own lived experience. De Beer (1996:69) further observes that, in this context, although there would still be community education meetings and interaction with community leaders, these would be done differently, in a manipulative way, as opposed to a situation where there is proper community participation. In contrast, popular participation focuses on the very central question: "Who controls development?" (De Beer, 1996:69-70). Those affected by development and meant to benefit from it are the ones who should be the key decision-makers.

The emphasis is on empowerment and control by the people. Outsiders are only supposed to be neutral facilitators who are also there to learn from, and together with, the communities.

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED, 2000:1) traces the concept of people participation to the times of the Greek philosopher, Aristotle. He analyzed the Greek city states to unearth those factors which add to human happiness and "the good life." In his time, people participation occurred through voting, paying taxes, holding office, attending meetings and defending the state.

By the late 1940s and 1950s, the industrialized countries conceptualized a lack of development as involving a dearth of technology and, consequently, development efforts focused on channeling aid to poor countries, with the belief that once the technology gap was bridged, then the poor countries would be developed. This misconception did a great deal of damage to development efforts. The IIED (2000:1-2) further argued that

this technology transfer belief was succeeded by the “resource gap” concept. This was almost similar to the former, but focused on government income and expenditure, imports and exports, savings and investments. In both approaches, people were expected to improve their lives, either by adopting new technology, or by contributing to the national good through taxes, production of items for export, and through savings and investments. These theories influenced international aid right up to the 1960s.

The poor people in developing countries were made to play a very passive role, where technological innovations were either just thrust on them, or where they were forced to contribute to national resource flows.

This scenario persisted until about the 1950s and 1960s, when community development was introduced as a new approach to rural development. Its roots lay in Theodore Roosevelt’s Country Life Commission, the objectives of which were to improve the livelihoods of rural Americans by building the capacity of deprived communities so that they could develop their own resources and be self-reliant. Mayo (1975:130) notes that the notion of community development originated after the Second World War, and stemmed from concerns on the part of the colonial administrators about basic education and social welfare issues in the former UK colonies. In this regard, Midgley (1986:17) point out that the focus was on the promotion of agriculture, health and social services. The UK Colonial Office, in one of its publications, (1958:2), made it clear that, while it hoped that participation by the locals would be voluntary, it would go further to stimulate such participation if it was not

forthcoming. This sounds like a euphemism for forced labour or participation. The Colonial Office was also responding to the growth of nationalism. With the advent and spread of decolonization, community development was then taken up by the United Nations in less developed countries.

There were five key areas of community development: there was integrated development involving community plans and working with all technical sectors; secondly, there was an emphasis on planning based on felt community needs rather than on the conceptions of the technocrats. Thirdly, self-help efforts were encouraged. The last two aspects involved training of local leadership and focused on technical assistance from industrialized countries, promoting the involvement of local people in decision-making, and doing away with the then conventional approach to charity. Serious flaws were apparent, though, because communities were viewed as being homogeneous entities with identical problems and needs. In this regard, Cohen and Uphoff (1980) observed that the community development approach had a narrow outlook on participation of the poor, as it concentrated on the experts defining participation under the pretext that they had all the knowledge concerning how to solve the problems of the poor. Some would argue, on the contrary, that outsiders might indeed acquire knowledge from the locals and, in this way, become experts.

The failure of these approaches to transform rural communities led to the advancement of new ideas supporting more active involvement on the part of the poor. By 1966, organizations such as USAID started to use phrases such as “population participation”

and “people participation”. This language became more prominent in the 1970s in major donor agencies such as the World Bank , the Overseas Development Administration, and the United Nations. Literature emphasizing the importance of participation also began to emerge. The first publications to deal with this subject were various articles in the journal *Rural Development Participation Review* produced by Cornell University, as well as a work by Korten (1981), and a book entitled *Putting People First* (Cernea, 1985). It was perhaps Cohen and Uphoff (1980) who provided the clearest definition of participation where they explained that the process required people’s involvement in decision-making, programme implementation, sharing the benefits of development programmes and, finally, in the evaluation of programmes. Others such as Oakely (1991:6) further argued that participation involved empowerment of the poor to the extent that they could sustain and manage their resources, as well as interacting profitably with the government and donors. The process of empowerment was therefore to be taken as an end in itself, rather than a means to achieve successful programme implementation. Oakely’s argument (1991:6) has the weakness of not realizing that participation does not only mean empowerment.

In what forms, then, does participation manifest itself? The next section looks at some of the types of participation by people in development.

### **2.6.2 Some Types of Participation of the Poor in People-Centred Development**

The International Institute for Environment and Development, IIED, (2002:4) analyses seven different types of participation which range from the least effective to the most



desirable and effective. These are very important types of participation, which, in my view, development organizations should use in order to gauge their activities and approach to participation.

They also help to break the subject of participation into user-friendly and consumable entities: any community development effort can easily be fitted into one of the seven stages. These participation types are as follows:

#### Manipulative Participation

Community participation is only a pretence, and is characterized by unelected and powerless representatives of people on official boards or committees. They are simply there to be manipulated. An interesting observation on manipulation is advanced by Rahnema (1992:116) who says that, while participation is usually associated with good or moral intentions, it can actually be used negatively through manipulation. He further notes that manipulation does not necessarily involve being forced to participate: people may find themselves partaking in an activity the origin, inspiration and control of which is with outsiders. This type of participation should be rejected outright.

#### Passive Participation

In this category, the communities participate by being briefed or told about what would already have been decided or carried out. The project management makes decisions on their own, and external professionals monopolize

information. The people may therefore be called to development meetings, but not have an opportunity to make their views known so that these may be taken into account and shape the direction of the project.

Thus, local knowledge is not valued at all. This is an undesirable type of participation which should be thoroughly discouraged.

#### Participation by consultation

Decision-making is not shared with communities, whose participation occurs only through being consulted or by answering questions. It is the outsiders who determine problems and information-gathering methods and who fully control the analysis. The communities therefore only provide answers when questions are asked. The fact that the outsiders would have decided on their own what information to gather and how to get it means that they would already have determined what the development focus should be, then simply using the people to provide baseline information for purposes of substantiation. The people might be well informed, through consultation, on what development projects should be undertaken, but they would not have a role in identifying such projects and deciding how they should be implemented. The people therefore have no control of the development process. This is also an undesirable type of participation which should be rejected.

### Participation for material incentives

The communities only participate in activities because there are certain direct and immediate rewards such as food and cash. Communities usually take part by providing labour in exchange for these incentives, but have no other stake which outlives the incentives or “pay”.

This type of participation is neither developmental nor sustainable, as it is more a case of conventional employment than people participation. One can, however, look critically at this analysis by the IIED (2002:4) and say that it does not, of course, mean that people will simply participate without considering what benefits will accrue to them. In one of the Inkosikazi communal area projects studied in this research, the Hlumazonke goat project, the participants made it clear that they started the project on their own because they wanted to raise money to improve their livelihoods. They were therefore motivated by a perceived benefit, yet they formed this project on their own without facilitation from any outsider. An NGO, ORAP, only came in later to assist during the implementation process. It is helpful to differentiate between employment in a project the origin and ownership of which does not concern the people, and one in which people see themselves as owners of the project and are in control, making decisions and determining their own destiny.

### e) Functional Participation

External agents realize that, in order to achieve project goals, it is important for people to participate. Such participation is, therefore, a means or a tool to

achieve a desired end, and not an end in itself. The people might be involved in some kind of decision-making, but this would involve minor aspects, as outsiders would already have made the key decisions. This is certainly not a desirable type of people participation, as it reduces participation to an empty gesture.

In terms of a critical appraisal of this IIED (2002:4) level of people participation, one would have to conclude that one cannot just wish the development organizations away: they have the resources, financial ones in particular, which are necessary for the successful realization of the people's desires. The central issue is how the development organizations view the role of the people. They should allow the people themselves to decide their own development.

f) Interactive Participation (Co-learning)

At this stage the people participate in joint analysis, development of action plans, and in the formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is not merely viewed as a means of achieving project goals, but as a right. Interdisciplinary methodologies are used to come up with different perspectives, using a systemic and structured learning process. The communities find a reason or acquire a stake in sustaining structures and practices because they have absolute control of local decisions and determining how resources are used. This is a desirable type of participation which should be the goal of development organizations as they seek to improve people participation.

Even in terms of this type of people participation envisaged by the IIED (2002:4), however, there still needs to be a realization that communities are not homogenous: they have different interest groups, sometimes with diverse needs determined by wealth and power relations.

The question of whom within the community would be participating in the joint analysis is, therefore, critical. This is the type of participation which characterizes the Inkosikazi Heifer Project. The supporting organization, World Vision, engaged the people of Inkosikazi through PRAs to identify the issues they wanted to tackle and, from these processes, a partnership between the people and the organization began. The weakness of this partnership, though, is that, during the PRAs, the people were treated as one community and there was no desegregation according to different social categories. The result was that even when the Heifer project started, the targeting was not specific and, as shown in the research results, the very poor were left out of the process.

#### Self-mobilization (Collective Action)

According to the IIED (2002:4), this is the most desirable form of people participation at this point in time. The people make decisions independently of external institutions, and actually have contact with the outsider institutions in order to mobilize required resources. They may even challenge the existing allocation of wealth and power. The people also learn collaboratively and appreciate the value of learning from each other.

It may not always be possible to start with the most ideal type of people participation, but because development is a process, different projects could be conducted at varying levels of participation.

The most important factor is to have a deliberate and clear process of moving towards the most desirable type of people participation through a process that embraces error. Even within this ideal form of participation, the challenge of who exactly within the community is involved still remains. For example, with regard to the poorest of the poor within that community: would they be as empowered as those who are more privileged?

Paul (1987:44) and Agarwal (2001:1623) raise an important observation that different types of community participation may co-exist within one particular project. Participation may therefore not always be as structured practically as in the seven steps outlined above. This, in my view, is an important observation, because people are complex beings with different cultures, and their thinking and behaviour may not simply fit neatly into different theoretical moulds.

Having examined the concept of participation, it is also important to look at some of the participatory approaches, beginning with Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal, because these are generally extensively used by development facilitators in general, and by World Vision International in the Inkosikazi communal lands in particular.

### **2.6.3 A discussion of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) And Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

According to Chambers (1994) and the IIED (2002:3), the approach to people participation initially used by development facilitators was Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). This was essentially a data collection process which was firmly controlled by outsiders, and the community participated simply by providing the required answers to questions. Data analysis was undertaken and decisions made by professionals from outside the community.

In 1985, a conference was held at Khon Kaen University, where delegates came up with seven (7) different types of RRA. One of these was called “participatory RRA” (KKU, 1987), and it signalled the start of interest by development organizations in participation of the people. Outsiders began to play more of a facilitating role, encouraging local analysis and consequent ownership of information and generation of community action plans. People from external organizations became aware of the complexity of intervening in development where they had to subject their values to those of the local people. Chambers (1994), the IIED (2000:2) and McCracken (1988) observe that Indian and Kenyan development experiences in 1988 were classified as “participatory rapid rural appraisal” and participatory rural appraisal. This marked a critical departure from RRA and marked the birth of PRA. Training in this method was later conducted in India and other countries.

#### **2.6.4 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) – An Analysis and Critique**

Changes over time and the challenges faced by the various development approaches has led to the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal to facilitate the participation of locals in their own development.

The major shift in development thinking brought by PRA is that community development, as indicated by Mayo (1975), was originally developed as a colonial tool, the anchor of which was an outsider who came into the community to spearhead development. At first this was biased towards informal education, but eventually encompassed other forms of social work and projects. The approach was based on the outsider playing a major role. This is in sharp contrast to the PRA, which is defined by the World Bank (2002) as a planning mechanism which focuses on shared learning between local people and outsiders to assist development facilitators, government and the local people themselves to plan appropriate interventions together. This World Bank (2002) view also has to recognize that PRA is more than just a planning tool: it is first and foremost a philosophy which recognizes the locals as far as control of development and research processes are concerned.

Chambers (1997:206) says that PRA has been a surprise revelation to outsiders that the local people “can do it”. PRA basically uses what the FAQ Forum (2002:2) calls a set of “basket techniques,” from which the most appropriate in each context are



selected. It involves semi structured interviewing which uses a checklist as opposed to a questionnaire. This guides the facilitator in community discussions.

The first and one of the most important of these techniques or tools is stakeholder analysis. This is used to acquire an appreciation of power relationships, influence and interests of stakeholders involved in a development programme. Information such as who could influence a project either positively or negatively comes out. Other tools which are used in PRA, as outlined by Chambers (1994 and 2002), are maps, models and transect walks.

On mapping, Alcorn (2000:76) says that it can also be used to identify areas where rights and responsibilities are unclear. There is also seasonal analysis, time distribution by gender and dreaming or visioning of communities and, using these techniques, one can come up with a plan of action.

The FAO Forum (1996:1-12) noted that PRA's key principles are participation, flexibility, team work, and optimal ignorance. The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (2002:8-9) highlights 5 key principles of PRA. These are outlined below and then critically analyzed:

a) Empowerment

This is based on the concept that knowledge is power. The participation of locals in the process and in the results breaks the professional monopoly of information and empowers locals with knowledge and initiatives.

This concept of empowerment needs to take into account the fact that participation is not a once-off event, but has to be sustained throughout the lifespan of a development project: only then can there be real empowerment.

b) Respect

Researchers realize the importance of learning and listening with respect for local intellectual and analytical capabilities. It must be stressed that if this process is to be successful, there must be highly trained and experienced facilitators who will not attempt to manipulate the locals through leading questions. Besides, some of the communities are now also over-researched, and know how to behave in order to gain assistance from outsiders and manipulate aid organizations in order to secure funding.

c) Localization

There is extensive use of local material and representations as opposed to external symbols. This is important because the people are able to use their own means of expressing their situation, challenges and vision for the future. The documentation of these issues for development projects is therefore easily utilized by the people themselves who not only identify with such projects, but can easily understand and explain them because they have put them together using symbols and expressions that are relevant to their own cultural context.

d) Enjoyment

A well-conducted PRA is fun, as the emphasis shifts from “rapid” to “process.” The facilitators really enjoy themselves as they sit back and watch the people themselves map out their area, outline their challenges, express their dreams or vision for the future, and prioritize their plans to realize their desired goals. Having the privilege to watch such a process unfold can only bring joy, excitement and satisfaction to any genuine development facilitator.

e) Inclusiveness

PRA includes all groups such as women, children and the aged and destitute. This is important, because such diverse groups within a community may face divergent challenges and cherish different aspirations, despite the fact that they live within one locality. PRA processes are, therefore, able to capture these differences, and this provides very helpful information to the people as they plan projects to target these different groups.

In addition, according to Aune (2000:687), PRA is only useful for problem identification and decision-making at a very local level, as opposed to being used as a planning or structuring tool, although its uses can be scaled up. The above assertion on inclusiveness can at times provide a challenge because the communities are not homogeneous: they have within them different interest groups based on wealth, poverty or power relations, and do not simply consist of different age groups.

For PRA to be inclusive, the facilitators should therefore take this complex composition into account, otherwise they risk dealing only with the village elites, with the result that the very poor are left out.

### **2.6.5 Critique of PRA and some other Participatory Methodologies**

In spite of its wide usage and the applause from community development practitioners, PRA has remained fraught with glaring loopholes. According to Cornwall, et al (2001:112), there is a need to focus on enhancing the quality of participatory practices. In this regard, Sillitoe, et al (2002:15) note that it is important to focus on how local knowledge can be defined and who should do this. In the same manner, the IISD (2002) argues that PRA is, at times, merely used as a label when it is not really participatory. It can be hijacked by outsiders, directed by them and only used to legitimate projects and NGOs. Formalism is another weakness cited, where the “PRA hit team” gain access to a local community to “do a PRA”. This is an exploitative and abrupt approach, driven by deadlines and planned training. In this regard, Treurnicht and Botha (1999:65) argue that Participatory Learning Action, which is similar to PRA, should not be conducted in a hurry, but should be more informal. This is rarely the case in practice, as facilitators, who include both NGOs and Government, tend to rush such processes. Gibbon (1999:74), who studied the institutionalization of PRA in Nepal, observes that donors are insisting on the use of PRA, but at the same time they do not give ample opportunity for this process to take place.

Instead, they want quick results. He further argues that many NGOs and consultants have suddenly emerged in the last few years, and they use PRA in such a way that the initiatives and actions by the locals are completely undermined.

The often “expensive” and “insensitive” consultants use PRA tools in an extractive manner. This, in Gibbon’s view, can be corrected through NGOs first focusing on their own structures so that they eliminate incompetent trainers.

Another weakness is that PRA can raise local expectations and result in frustration when nothing fruitful results from the process. PRA has also been criticized for being narrowed down to an emphasis on data collection (IIED, 2000:10). In this regard, PRA becomes a mere tool-kit rather than a learning process. Community leaders can also direct PRA towards their own aims and sabotage those activities which do not benefit them. Pottier (1997) in IIED (2000:11) actually puts it this way: “Whatever PRA pundits say about relaxed settings, participatory workshops are structured encounters marked by hidden agendas and strategic manoeuvres.”

The other weakness of PRA is that it is based to some extent on community homogeneity, whereas communities are different and diverse within themselves. This is substantiated by Mompati and Prinsen (2000:625) who observe that PRA in Botswana failed to take into account the ethnicity factor, when communities there are structured along ethnic lines. PRA has become a label without substance, as it fails to be integrated into project planning and implementation.

Its objectives are often unclear, with an underlying assumption that merely by using PRA there will be positive project results. Kleemeier (2000:929) concurs with this. After studying Lake Victoria fisheries, he concludes, in his analysis of PRAs and sustainability, that the method is only suitable for small-scale community projects.

Treurnicht and Botha (1999:64-67) also note that while the intention is to empower the local communities to participate, the outsiders have challenges in “handing over the stick,” as the locals may not be familiar with the tool being used. In fact, Gibbon (1999:75) asserts that this failure to relinquish control results in the lack of sustainability of participatory initiatives, leaving local institutions undeveloped. Treurnicht and Botha also argue that participation in itself can be exclusive of others and therefore it is important to have a situation which is flexible in order to allow movement of people in and out of the process. They note that the use of Participatory Learning Actions may usher in conflict within communities. There is, of course, also the argument by Espinosa (2000:76) that in fact participatory approaches cannot be applied to all research situations and stages. He says there are times when non-participatory approaches may be more appropriate than participatory ones. This argument can be supported by the experiences of World Vision, Zimbabwe, which has been using PRAs since 1997. Later, in 2002, when those programs had to be evaluated, it was realized that the information collected from PRAs inherently lacked the required quantitative detail which creates benchmarks for evaluations. As a result, the organization had to resolve to do both PRA and the baseline surveys.

The baseline survey is less participatory on the part of the beneficiaries, but is led by professional enumerators who will then be highlighting the areas identified through PRA and giving them more quantitative detail.

Khadka and Paudyal (1999: 77) point to one of the common challenges of participatory methodologies as they focus on Participatory Action Research in Nepal, concluding that it was a time-consuming exercise requiring too many meetings. This could mean that one receives only scant attention from the community members as they may end up being busy with other livelihood chores.

In his study of barriers to the institutionalization of PRAs by NGOs in Nepal, Gibbon (1999:73) further notes that the new skills acquired after training on PRAs might only be used by individuals in their personal capacities, but not by their organizations. This is because PRA trainers may just conduct a once-off training exercise and then not follow up to assist during the implementation process. As Gibbon argues, this is also probably due to the fact that the training needs are not participant-focused and so are not able to deal with potential threats encountered during implementation. Whiteside (1997:71) makes a very practical observation that a wholesale shift from RRA to PRA, as if the former has absolute irrelevance and weaknesses, while the latter is a panacea for participation, is not sensible. He notes, in fact, that PRA has glaring weaknesses such as merely using the term for processes that are neither empowering nor participatory. Some organizations use PRA when, within themselves, there is no evidence of a spirit of participation, and no willingness to empower communities to make their own decisions.

Such bodies simply use PRA to achieve quick or extractive results. Whiteside (1997:71) therefore argues that there are some situations which will require the use of RRAs and not PRAs. These are “transient situations” where there has been a disaster such as war, or where there is a need for relief and rehabilitation. These situations require information sooner than the PRA process can provide for, and so RRA becomes very appropriate as it can provide data that is accurate and which effectively informs the emergency responses that are required. The other noted weakness of PRA where RRA can fill the deficiency lies in the fact that PRAs result in organizations focusing on a small area for a very long time, thus leaving other neighbouring communities suffering as they await their turn.

#### **2.6.6 Some Analysis of World Vision Zimbabwe PRA Experiences**

World Vision Zimbabwe has been doing PRAs in 18 districts since 1996. As a matter of policy, every development programme in these areas has been preceded by PRAs. It has been envisaged that this will result in greater people participation, increased sustainability of programmes, and the subsequent transformation of living standards of beneficiaries. However, certain weaknesses have been noted over the years. First, PRA results have tended to be identical as one moves from one area to another. This is surprising, because different communities are involved, living in totally different socio-economic contexts.

It was then noted that World Vision had trained a PRA team which would move around facilitating this process.



The team eventually ended up subconsciously having a set of “typical” PRA findings in the backs of their minds. Experience, usually an asset in many situations, was a liability in this case. This validates arguments by Cooke and Khothari (2001:19-23) that the pretext of reliance on local knowledge is a fallacy because facilitators bring their outsiders’ agenda to the local people and then interpret findings as reflecting local knowledge. Cooke and Khothari further note that there is often a manipulation of local people’s knowledge, and plans to align this so that it accords with organizational goals and focus. At World Vision there has also not been any integration between the PRA process and the eventual programme implementation and monitoring. Experts extract PRA findings into technical implementation plans with highly scientific tools such as log frames which are way above the level of people’s comprehension. PRA can indeed, therefore, be easily reduced into an ordinary “tool-kit” meant to certify that an organization has “done it”.

World Vision has also encountered challenges where participatory methodologies are at times hijacked by influential individuals within communities who then ensure that only their own interests are projected, at the expense of those of the poorest people within the community. This happens right at the initiation of PRA community workshops where the poorest of the poor do not come out to gather at meetings with the rest of the community, leaving the PRA facilitators to interact only with the village elite and those whose social standing in the community gives them the confidence to attend community meetings. Facilitators then represent the very poor without any knowledge of their unique circumstances.

Such challenges are not peculiar to World Vision. Truelove (1998:14-15) studied the implementation of Village Initiated Support Activities (VISA) in Gambia, which involved a village identifying and prioritizing potential development projects with the help of external technical assistance. These three or four prioritized projects were then taken to ward level where a ward level prioritization would be done. The major weaknesses, however, were that the projects were usually chosen by “benefit captors” without the participation of the community. These “benefit captors” are a few individuals who deal directly with the donors by virtue of their better education and communication skills which enable them to write project proposals. The majority of the community members therefore remain marginalized. This affected the selection of projects, even down to ward level, as a few individuals made decisions for whole communities. Community participation was therefore significantly reduced. The VISA approach was consequently reviewed in 1995, and the use of PRA tools was introduced. This ushered in a more people-centred approach which effectively identified genuine village needs (Truelove, 1998:16). The challenge still remains as to how to translate village level PRA results into consolidated regional and national plans. This is a very serious challenge, not just in relation to this case in Gambia, but wherever PRAs and other participatory methodologies are used. There is a real risk of village plans being “lost” in the process of consolidation, and more so when outsiders are in charge. World Vision Zimbabwe is currently shifting attention from PRAs to Appreciative Inquiry with the hope that the outcomes will be different. Another weakness of PRA noted at World Vision is the fact that PRAs are too qualitative and not sufficiently quantitative.

This makes it difficult to evaluate programmes where PRA was used to establish baseline information. With the advent of PRA, baseline surveys were sidelined, as they were considered top down data-gathering tools which were not participatory.

World Vision is currently going back to all the community development programmes where PRA was utilized, in order to carry out baseline surveys so that there can be quantitative baseline information which can be used as a yardstick during programme evaluations. In future, the idea is to carry out either PRA or AI, and baseline surveys.

The hope is that, through further studies, the gap between policy and participatory approaches as noted by Holmes (2001:134) will be reduced. Participation of the people in their development is inevitable, but its quality and actual effect on policy has to improve. The observations of Muthuran and Shah (2001:236) that there are signs of improvement in the quality of participation are indeed encouraging.

### **2.6.7 A Brief Overview of other Participatory Methodologies**

In the mid 1990s, a total of about thirty-two (32) participatory methodologies and techniques were developed and outlined by Pretty, et al (1995:132). Common principles from these were brought together to form Participatory Learning Action (PLA) which focuses on cumulative learning by both professional trainees and locals. Its main objective is to seek and appreciate diversity as opposed to trying to simplify the complex.

It believes that all views are important, though different. PLA uses group learning and is flexible in approach, encouraging invention and the use of different methods as dictated by the context. Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems (RAAKS) is another methodology which was started as a practical method of participatory diagnosis for small farmers in Colombia. Engel and Salomon (1997:101) state that RAAKS emphasizes systems thinking, multiple perspectives and joint learning. Its added value, they argue, is its systemic approach to monitoring, evaluating and improving the performance of an organization in relation to other actors. This methodology, just like other participatory methodologies, does not offer prescriptions for human transformation, but a description of an action-oriented process. It has three distinct phases; namely, problem identification, constraints and opportunities, and action planning. These are not necessarily followed in chronological order, but should be viewed as a cycle of steps which can be repeated. While the instruments offered by RAAKS for data collection and analysis may appear to exhibit some resemblance to PRA, the major aim of RAAKS goes further, enhancing the problem-solving capacity of the stakeholders through improved communication and joint learning. In the first phase of RAAKS, the problem is explored, stakeholders are identified, and their environment understood. This is the knowledge system. The different aspects of the knowledge system are focused on during the second phase through eight analytical perspectives also known as “windows”.

Another offshoot of PLA is Participatory Action Research which upholds the general PLA principles.

Its proper application, as shown by Oenga and Ikumi (1999:82) in their study of PAR outcomes in the Nyakerato community of Kenya, are: attitude change by the community, improved community leadership skills, improved communication and reduction of dependency.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is another approach that evolved mainly in response to the failures of PRA. It was developed in the early 1990s by David Cooperrider of Case Western Reserve University.

AI looks for community strengths, passions, and those forces that foster the community's life and sustain it. The starting point for AI is, therefore, not what the community problems are, but rather what gives the community life. Basically, it consists of four stages; namely, discovery, dream, design and destiny. In the discovery stage, the people focus on the positive aspects of their community, the resources and assets they possess and the wealth of their culture. Based on these positive aspects, they then come up with their vision, or dreams and plans of action, to take them to their desired future. This approach is still new, and its impact on the participation of the poor in community development is yet to be seen. One major challenge that has already become clear, though, is that communities generally find it very difficult to identify their potential. The approach has also been criticized for being an attempt to shift the blame

and burden of community development so that it falls solely on the shoulders of the community. Gender analysis is another participatory methodology.

The World Bank (2002:5) states that gender analysis looks at appreciating and documenting the differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in a given context. The role of women in different capacities such as production, reproduction and management within a community are analyzed so as to determine the effects of changes in these roles.

The process covers practical gender needs such as the need for clean water, and strategic gender needs such as laws to facilitate property ownership. There is also the Twenty Points of Progress Programme (20PPP) which, according to Woller and Mayfield (1999:9), is a “participatory methodology for systematically measuring and assessing the impact of village development programs.” Communities are allowed to make their own self-assessment of the level of development and quality of life. Action plans are then developed by the communities which are also encouraged to share information with others and form development networks. Dealing with techniques, approaches and methodologies is only one aspect of practical participation. The other one is focusing on the people themselves, discussing what issues affect their participation. The next section analyses these issues.

## **2.7. Some Issues Affecting Participation In General**

The aim of this section of the thesis is to discuss some of the issues that affect participation of the poor in general, as outlined by some development literature. Such a global understanding of issues affecting participation of the poor is important, because it also informs the analysis of the situation in the Inkosikazi communal lands.

### **2.7.1. Effects of Poverty on Participation**

The FAO report of March 1996 says that a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which focused on worldwide projects targeting poverty, shows that the poorest are marginalized or excluded from both the projects' activities and their benefits.

The report says that although conventional approaches to rural development have been criticized, there have been no major changes in the last three decades. Development efforts target medium to large-scale successful producers who are then supported with technology and have access to credit and extension advice. The hope is that by some kind of trickle-down effect, the developments will gradually reach the poor within the rural community. Consequently, more resources, such as land and capital, were made available to the rural elites, while the poor became poorer. The rural poor are rarely consulted during the planning of development, and do not play any role in the respective activities thereafter.

According to the FAO (1996) reports, the poor have no form of structure or organization to represent their interests and, because they are isolated and poorly educated, they are forced to depend on the rural elites who define the development course for the community. Nigeria is a good example of this marginalization of the poor, where large-scale agricultural development projects assisted successful farmers and worked through the existing socio-economic structures, with the hope that this would result in local cooperation. On the contrary, the result was that a small group or class of “overnight farmers” was created by means of having easy access to credit to buy equipment. It was the richer landowners who were able to buy the most equipment. In its study of 40 poverty-focused rural development projects, the ILO discovered that, in Mali, a project used the village development associations as vehicles for distribution of materials, and the result was that it was only the better off villagers who received these, while the poorer ones did not, as they had no associates to stand up on their behalf. A similar assertion was made by Zimmerman (2000:1439) following a study of South Africa’s land redistribution. He argues that the poor are unlikely to benefit from such redistribution, because of the prohibitively long distances and very high up-front costs. Poverty is therefore a major factor in participation, and there is a need to focus on specific social categories within communities. Observations made way back in 1983 by Chambers (1983:18) that there is a “person bias” in development, where “rural development tourists” only consult rural elites, who then make decisions on behalf of the poorest people, are still surprisingly valid in some cases, despite the perceived shift towards participation.



### **2.7.2. Effects of Gender on Participation.**

A large component of the poorest of the poor are women. Howard (2002:164) and also Akerka (2001:110) rightly observe that gender mainstreaming should, of necessity, be part of any stakeholder participation effort. Even as Cornwall (2000:378) observes, when one focuses on participation of the poor, one should also look at the roles of, and relationships between, men and women. An Oxfam (2001) report argues that women are usually forgotten in development and treated as passive recipients.

The report says that it is important for community development interventions to ask the question whether such development leaves women worse or better off. According to Mercer (2002:101), women's participation can, in fact, boost their social status and improve their financial position. However, women in developing countries are the major food producers and work more hours than men, but earn only about one tenth of the income. In Bangladesh, malnutrition rates are three times higher among girls than boys. The Oxfam (2001) report, in its assessment of gender and poverty, observes that, in Pune, Western India, 12 000 women and children live by scavenging recyclable items such as rags, plastic, metal and bottles which they sell to scrap merchants. Despite their long hours of work, exposed to dirt, injuries, diseases, wild dogs and sexual harassment, they hardly earn enough money to afford even one meal a day. Chambers (2002) concur with the above descriptions of the plight of women, saying that women are discriminated against and are not free to voice their opinions at community meetings. The situation is worse in Indonesia, where poor women face two major struggles.

First, they suffer because of their gender, and second, they have to battle with their social status in a community that regards decision-making as a domain reserved exclusively for men. Women's role in community activities derives from the traditional domestic female role which confines them to cooking, cleaning, decorating and fetching water.

In Indonesia, therefore, when one talks of community participation, the concept is understood basically to refer to men. In this regard, Gurung (1995:Discussion Paper No. 3) argues that a serious gender-sensitive programme should involve women activists, and should also ensure that the time and structure of meetings suit women. According to Narayan, Chambers, et al (2000:143), women only take over the leadership role in cases where there is a good deal of male migration, something that is prevalent in Thailand. Still referring to Thailand, Sopchokchai (1996:4) points out that women there are generally marginalized and discriminated against in people-centred development efforts. Despite the fact that women form more than 50% of the population, they are socially, culturally and politically prohibited from participating in development issues. This has resulted in most Thai women limiting their focus to household chores and not contributing ideas to community processes. It is noted, however, that when women are actively involved in development processes, they show that they have very different ideas compared to men, relating to what is needed for the development of their area. Men tend to focus on infrastructural matters, while women are more concerned with the day-to-day issues relating to actual quality of life. These include childcare, nutrition programmes and other health-related projects.

Effective participation of women requires that they have access to information. Katz (1998:Paper55) and the 1997-98 A C Neilsen-McNair Reports indicate that most development agents now disseminate their information through the Internet, yet women in rural areas have no access to information technology.

Therefore, while poverty is an important factor in participation, gender is also a major aspect of poverty. Any attempt towards fostering the participation of the poor and the marginalized should also focus exclusively on women. It is encouraging, however, to note that the African Charter (Chapter 3) commits itself to people's organizations which, amongst other things, strive to promote the development of autonomous grassroots organizations which are gender-sensitive. Nevertheless, it is the execution of this which is more important than simply a political statement of intent.

### **2.7.3. The Effects of Education And Attitudes of the Poor to their Participation**

Bartley (2002) argues that poverty encompasses more than just an inability to access services and facilities, such as those relating to education, health care, and other basic needs. He says that poverty also involves an attitude problem which nurtures a poverty mentality or spirit. This is therefore the first and critical factor which affects the participation of the poor in community development. Thus, there is a need to address the attitude of the poor if they are to participate meaningfully in development. Perhaps the attitude problem is caused by low literacy levels.

This is taken up by Kotze (1997:38), who observes that communication is a critical factor in ensuring people participation. People must be well informed and have a clear source to which they can channel their concerns. In fact, WulDhorst and Macl (1990) go further to say that if people act on limited information, they could oppose the project. This creates friction and squabbles which obviously reverse development.

In addition, Hegde (1998:1-3) notes that there is serious lack of confidence amongst the poor. Basing his argument on the lack of utilization of India's natural resources by that country's poor, he says that these people seem not to believe in the technology they have and lack motivation and training. However, Fox (1991:111) and the World Bank (2002) observe that the issue of what the poor perceive as the direct benefits that would accrue to them for participating is critical. This calls for a focus on participation beyond simply motivating the poor to carry out activities or share the costs of such activities.

The poor must understand clearly how they will benefit. An example is given of the India Forestry Department that concluded an agreement with the local people whereby the locals would receive a share of intermediate forestry products, plus 25 per cent of the revenues from the sale of final harvest poles. This became an incentive to the community, and they participated actively because the benefits were very obvious. There is other research on the importance of perceived benefits or project impact as a determining factor in people participation such as one done by Chirwa, et al (2002:159) in Malawi. Here, the provision of specific incentives was found to be a critical factor in increasing the participation of women.

This argument on perceived benefits is also supported by Blau (1964:88), Homans (1974), and Coser and Rosenberg (1970), who assert that the people must view an activity or process of change as factors that will benefit them either morally or economically.

#### **2.7.4. The Effect of Lack Of Capital on Participation**

The poor do not seem to possess any meaningful initial development capital, or force, push or drive. Lacey (1976:6) attributes this to a lack of resources which, he says, are distributed in favour of those who can afford them, namely the rich. The poor are then trapped in poverty, without any foothold in the form of resources upon which they can stand and speak for themselves. No wonder that Sachs (1992:29) concludes that the pursuit of development itself can actually intensify poverty. The rich become richer, while the poor sink further into poverty.

#### **2.7.5. Effects of Organization Approaches And Project Focus on Participation**

The other reason for the non-participation of the poor in development is what Blackburn and Holland (1998:129) call “targets and accountability”. Community Development projects focus solely on financial and physical targets, which have to be achieved within a given time frame. The poor are therefore not considered an attractive investment destination, since they do not guarantee quick returns. In this regard, William (1991:1) argues that there is a tendency by organizations involved in food distribution programmes and the provision of clothing or medicines to employ a more

top-down approach. This approach is usually justified by citing the fact that an emergency situation pertains.

The United Nations report of 1959 (p.17) discusses the example of India, where the approach to participation was based on the belief that the information on new technology and farming techniques would trickle down from the village leaders to the rest of the farmers in the community. This approach did not work, but instead widened the gap between the poor and those with resources. The approach completely ignored the existing imbalances in resource ownership. Gibbon (1999:76) feels that an organizational culture that allows learning is important, as a failure to do so could result in uniform training and project traditions being applied indiscriminately, rather than in line with the unique needs of the communities. Whiteside (1997:73) agrees, saying that when, at times, local priorities are not in line with those of the facilitating outside organization, such priorities are then ignored. This means that an organization would merely be using the locals to peddle its own beliefs and agenda.

### **2.7.6 Social Hindrances to participation**

Narayan, Chambers, et al (2000:134) assert that in some cases, such as in India, Somali and Nigeria, the poor are excluded from decision-making opportunities and acquiring resources, purely on the basis of the social hierarchy, namely the caste system. These writers maintain that the poor are able to point out within a community others who are more marginalized than them.

In Egypt, these marginalized figures are called the “madfoin”, the buried alive, in Ghana, the “ohiabrubro” or miserably poor, while in Bangladesh they are referred to as the “ghinno gorib”, meaning the despised or hated poor. Malawians call them “osaukitsitsa”, which may be translated as “those who eat food for pigs.” Such abject people exist in every community across the Third World, all of them denied participation in development. These people perpetually carry the stigma of poverty, which makes them avoid social gatherings, as they cannot hold their heads up in the community due to an absence of any self-esteem.

#### **2.7.7. The Effect of the Attitudes Of Facilitators on Participation**

Another critical factor which prohibits the participation of the poor in development is the attitude of the development facilitators themselves. Chambers (1997:83) argues that some facilitators blame the poor for their poverty, and always perceive them as requiring change, never pausing to think that they, as development facilitators, also need to change. Chambers further notes that when these development facilitators are hosting outsiders, they stage manage the process by ensuring that the visitors visit only carefully selected projects which involve the most successful farmers.

The poor are swept under the carpet and hidden from visitors who go on to write impressive comments in visitors’ books. This behaviour entrenches the marginalization of the poor.

Chambers (1997:170) goes on to point out that the elite or educated people, who probably see themselves as enlightened, always want to speak on behalf of the poor

and the marginalized. Instead, the poor should be allowed to express themselves. It is these enlightened people or professionals who see the poor as homogeneous. On the contrary, as Chambers stresses (1997:172-175), those who experience poverty are different and complicated, with diverse livelihoods and support systems, based on differing sources of income, food, fuel and animal fodder.

Related to the issue of the facilitators is the argument by Hobbs and Simasiku (2000:63) that, whilst participatory learning and action require good facilitators, these are “not always available”. These researchers then forward an interesting argument that in fact what is needed is not a highly qualified person, but simply a literate one who has the confidence to stand in front of a group and facilitate. While acknowledging that the quality of learning is better with a trained facilitator, they insist that even without training, such learning would still be “good enough”.

The poorest of the poor cannot speak for themselves because the village elite act as their spokespersons or middlemen in interactions with outsiders when, in fact, the poor themselves represent different categories based on age, gender, and ethnicity.

The people from outside always assume they have met the community, whereas they have often only met men from the influential groups – the middle aged and youths. There is more to a community than these readily visible groups. Even amongst women there are differentials, and it is only the wives of better off men who are forthcoming, while the poorest lag behind. The impact of all this is that development planning excludes the poorest of the poor and they do not even begin to access the benefits.



The Global and Development Network (1999) reported that even national government programmes such as land reforms aimed at reducing poverty have failed to benefit the poorest of the poor. While land ownership enables access to credit and investment incentives, these have failed to benefit the poor. There are only a few success stories such as that involving the Philippines where, in 1972, land reform impacted positively on the lives of the poor. Otherwise it is usually always the rich who grab land intended for the poor.

### **2.7.8. Structural And Administrative Hindrances of People Participation**

Oakley, et al (1991:14) divide hindrances to the participation of the poor into three broad categories. First, there are the structural obstacles such as an unfavourable political environment or oppressive legal system which could, for example, deny access to information on the part of the poor in rural areas. This is why Lu Xing (2000:8), in his study of participatory approaches in Yunnan, China, observes that “participatory development requires an enabling environment, which differs from country to country due to differences in culture and political system”. The second hindrance to participation of the poor could derive from administrative obstacles which result mainly from over-centralization, with the rural poor unable to participate in project planning. In this regard, it can further be argued that even where planning is undertaken at community level, such planning should be further decentralized so that it embraces the poorest of the poor within that community. The last barrier to participation is the social one, where these marginalized groups within the community end up with a dependency mentality as they lean on the village elite to do things for

them. This fourth point is elaborated by Mukherjee, (1977:156) who says that, at times, the poor simply want to limit access to material factors such as wages and food.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

As Holland and Blackburn (1998:128) observe, the poor should be given an opportunity to speak for themselves. Their voices need to be heard directly, and not through others who purport to be the voice of the voiceless. The recommendations of the Asian Development Bank Review (2002), which recommends that participation can better be fostered through small (not large) community-based organizations, are worth pursuing.

So far, this thesis has discussed in detail the historical background to participation of people in development, the methodologies used and the challenges to these methodologies. The different types of participation, and the general issues affecting participation of the poor, have also been explored in detail.

These preceding discussions form a sufficiently comprehensive theoretical framework and analysis of participation for field research on issues affecting the participation of the poor in development projects in the Inkosikazi communal lands in Zimbabwe. The following chapter therefore focuses on the results of the field research, as well as analyzing and discussing them.

## CHAPTER 3

*“the poor are systematically excluded as actors. Too often the voice of the poor is regarded as “damaged goods”. The powerful do not expect the poor to have anything to offer, since they have been labeled (usually by the non-poor) as lazy, ignorant or unworthy.”( Myers 1999:76)*

### FIELDWORK OUTLINE AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the results of the field research. However, in order to gain greater clarity upon, and understanding of, the results, the chapter begins by providing some background information relating to the sampling of the two projects, explaining why random sampling was chosen over and above other sampling methods. The discussion then proceeds to elaborate on details of the two projects, their objectives and composition. Fieldwork processes are outlined, before concluding the chapter with an investigation of those issues that were found to be affecting the participation of the poor in the Inkosikazi communal lands.

#### **3.1. Sampling: The Preference for Random Sampling over other Sampling Methods.**

As already explained in Chapter 1 of this thesis, it was not possible to study issues affecting participation of the poor in all ten projects in the Inkosikazi communal lands. This was because of resource limitations, particularly those of time and money. The participation issues and trends have been observed to be the same in this communal area: hence, the findings in these two projects can be used to make general

inferences. This is in line with the argument by Arga (1991:181) that you do not need a lot of data in research, but rather “a little bit of data and a lot of the right brain.” Random sampling was preferred over other sampling methods as outlined by Babbie (1990:8) and Ary, et al (1996:177-181), because these were found to be unsuitable for this study. It is the perfect form of probability sampling. Each member of the population has an equal opportunity of being selected. In this study it is the most appropriate to use, because it gives the participants in all development projects in Inkosikazi an equal chance of being selected. The researcher’s possible bias is controlled, while the chosen sample will be representative of all the projects in the area. It is also relatively easy to use and therefore the most appropriate for this study.

It is for these reasons that simple random sampling was used to select two projects where members participate in a focused group discussion to study issues affecting the participation of the poor. Mouton’s concerns (1996:138-139) that any sampling procedure should be ‘effectively random’ and ‘random enough’ were both adequately taken care of. The procedure was effectively random because there was no correlation between it and the membership composition of the chosen projects. The selection of Inkosikazi communal area projects for this study was also based on the fact that the findings would be used by the community leadership, project participants and World Vision to reflect on the way in which they are undertaking development projects with a view to improving the targeting of the poor.

The two projects sampled were the Heifer Loan Scheme project and the Hlumazonke Goat Project. The next section details the background information on these projects and their objectives.

### **3.2. Background Information On The Two Sampled Projects**

The two projects are within a distance of about 15 kilometres from each other within the Inkosikazi communal lands. Their background and focus are as follows:

#### **3.2.1. The Heifer Loan Scheme Project**

The Heifer Loan Scheme Project was started in 1998 and sponsored by an NGO, World Vision. The project's objectives are to assist the poorest of the poor to procure assets in the form of cattle which they can use to draw equipment, and also for milk, meat and for sale. This would then enhance the people's food security. Livestock, particularly cattle, are considered the most important asset a household can have. In a region where the rainfall pattern is poor and erratic, but the veld is good for ranching, livestock ownership becomes a critical livelihood asset for the people. One hundred and forty (140) community members in this area are members of the Heifer Loan Scheme. Of these, one hundred and thirty four (134) are men, while only six (6) are women. World Vision purchased 140 heifers and gave them as loans to groups of ten (10) community members. Each person in the group had one heifer. They are to pay back the loan price of the heifers over two years, at purchase value, with not interest.

### **3.2.2. Hlumazonke Goat Project**

The second project sampled was a goat-rearing project called Hlumazonke, located in the Inkosikazi communal lands in the Bubi District of Matebeleland North Province. The project is sponsored by a local Zimbabwean NGO called Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP). The project started in 1998, and its main objective is to increase household income through the rearing and selling of goats. People buy goats from the community, feed them and sell them at a profit. They also have breeding stock from which they harvest goats for sale. The Hlumazonke Project has a total membership of sixteen (16) people, of which three (3) are men and thirteen (13) are women.

It is therefore in these two projects that field research on issues affecting participation of the poor in people-centred development projects in Inkosikazi communal lands were studied, as detailed below.

### **3.3. Fieldwork In Inkosikazi Communal Lands On Some Issues Affecting Participation Of The Poor.**

Research work in the field was conducted in July 2004. Appointments were made for a meeting with community leaders through World Vision staff who work in the area. On the appointed day, two field researchers travelled to the Inkosikazi communal lands from Bulawayo, the nearest town, which is about 100 kilometres away.

The meeting with the community leadership was attended by the village chairman and two members of the village committee. The objectives of the research were explained to them, as well as the fact that the findings would be shared with both the community leadership and the participants of the projects in question.

The community leadership was very receptive and expressed their support for the study. The situation was smoothly facilitated by the fact that the two field researchers were known to the community, having worked for World Vision in the area for about five years. After the community leadership meeting, another meeting was held on the same day with the chairpersons of the two projects in order to notify them of the intended discussions with members of their respective projects. They also expressed their support for the study and appointments were made for the group discussions a week later. The second trip to Inkosikazi was made a week later for consultations with the project participants. Two group discussions were held, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

The following section details the data collection tool used during these discussions and the steps that were taken to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected.

### **3.3.1. Data Collection On Participation of the Poor in the Inkosizaki Heifer**

#### **Project and Hlumazonke Goat Project**

This section of the thesis focuses on the data collection tool used during the group discussions with the participants of both the heifer and goat projects. The issues of reliability and validity of the data are also dealt with.

No pilot study was undertaken, because the researcher was very familiar with the area and the projects under study, and was aware of what would work well.

### **Data Collection Tool Used During Field Research**

A questionnaire, which is the interview guide for a focused group discussion, was used. See Attachment 1. The questionnaire starts by soliciting information on the name of the project, its location, inception date, objectives and support organization. The significance of the information on support organization is that it is important to know whether the findings are based on a particular organization's approach to development, or whether they are representative of general issues affecting the poor, regardless of the support organization.

The information on objectives is useful in determining whether a project is indeed a development one meant to benefit the people, as opposed to any other project within a community which may be aimed simply at extracting resources from that community to profit entrepreneurs elsewhere. The questionnaire goes on to ask for the nature of the activities which form the basis of the project. This is helpful in providing an in-depth understanding of the project, and will be useful in analyzing its composition, particularly in relation to the role of the poor. As indicated in the review of some development literature, gender is an important variable in poverty, and the questionnaire is also designed to capture information pertaining to gender discrimination. The most important section of the questionnaire is when the participants are asked to specify their membership according to wealth.



The group is asked to define, through wealth indicators, what in their own situation constitutes the very poor, the poor, the middle-income group, and the rich in their community. This is therefore a contextualised definition of the poor. Their sources and range of income are indicated per category.

The group then classified their project members into relevant wealth groups, and it became clear which social class dominated the group. Two important aspects were focused on during the data collection; namely, reliability and observation effects.

### **Reliability of the Research Process on Issues Affecting the Participation of the Poor in Two Inkosikazi Projects**

In order to ensure reliability of the research process, efforts were made to ensure that the focused group discussions were guided by a similar set of questions. One interview guide was used in the two group discussions. The subject discussed, the group composition in terms of their poverty levels, was depersonalized, and this made the participants able to discuss freely, knowing that they would just give figures or percentages without mentioning any names.

The research context was managed so as to ensure that the discussions took place in a free and friendly atmosphere. This involved explaining to the group the purpose of the research and making it clear to them that the results would not prejudice them.

### **Observation Effect on the Study of Heifer and Goat Projects In Inkosikazi**

To manage the observation effects, particularly the researcher effects, sampling was undertaken, not only on projects sponsored by World Vision, but also on those funded by other NGOs. This is because the researcher is an employee of World Vision, and a focus solely on projects sponsored by World Vision could have affected the findings, as participants could possibly have been influenced by this relationship in their responses. The sampled projects are therefore sponsored by different NGOs.

The data collected from the two projects gave an indication of the people participation trends in this area. These are outlined in the next section.

### **3.4. Discussion Of The Participation Trends In The Heifer And Goat Projects In The Inkosikazi Communal Lands.**

In this section, the details regarding which category of people within the Inkosikazi community participated in the two projects in question are outlined. This composition is then key to the analysis of issues affecting the participation of the poor. The participants themselves categorized people, and this will also be explained in this section.

In both the Heifer and Goat Projects, the project members' definition of the poor is based on ownership of livestock. This is because the community's livelihood is

generally agro based, with ranching as the favoured activity in this agro-ecological region. The very poor are defined as those with no livestock, particularly cattle, sheep and goats. They also do not have any other form of assets. The other indicator of this group is that they are not able to pay school fees for their children. The poor are defined as those with between one (1) and five (5) cattle. They have an average monthly income of Z\$500.00 per month per household. The next wealth group comprises those in the middle bracket. They are defined as owning between five (5) and twenty (20) cattle, with an average income of about Z\$10 000.00 per month. Their sources of income are livestock sales and urban employment. The last wealth group is the rich. These people were defined as those with twenty-one (21) cattle and above. Their major sources of income are wages from urban employment and livestock sales. They have an average monthly income of Z\$15-20 000.00.

The results in the table above show that, in the Inkosikazi Heifer Loan Project, only seven (7) people are classified as poor, and none of the project members are in the very poor category. The majority of the members are in the middle, where there are 133 people out of a total of 140. Those considered rich in the community are also not represented in the project. The members thought the rich were too proud to associate with them.

In the Hlumazonke Goat project, those classified as poor dominate, accounting for 8 out of a total of 16 people. The very poor are benefiting from this project: there are

three (3) of them. These two different scenarios present a good setting for an analysis of issues that affect the participation of the poor.

On the basis of the different categories of people participating in the two projects delineated above, a discussion with the projects' participants during the study revealed some of the issues affecting the participation of the poor in the Inkosikazi communal lands. These are outlined in the next section.

### **3.5. The Effects Of Poverty On Participation Of The Poor In the Inkosikazi Development Projects**

When an analysis of the composition of participants in the Inkosikazi Area Development Programme Loan Scheme is made, the effect of poverty on participation of the poor in development projects comes out clearly as one of the issues affecting their participation.

An analysis of the composition of the project members shows that there is a concentration of membership at the centre, with those in the middle accounting for 95% of the membership, and the poor making up the remaining 5%. There is a glaring absence of the very poor on one hand and the rich on the other. The very poor were found to be completely absent because they could not afford to pay back the money for the heifers and so they were left out.

The project is therefore not benefiting the very poor or poorest of the poor and they remain entrenched in poverty. According to the Inkosikazi Area Development

Programme design documents, this project is intended to benefit the poorest of the poor. It is supposed to be a people-centred development project that targets those without livestock so that they can acquire these in order to establish an asset base for themselves. The very poor are considered to be high risk, and it is felt that there is no business sense in investing in them. The fact that they do not have money to pay for the heifers means that they are perpetually condemned to poverty.

The concept put forward by Chambers (1983:18) relating to “person bias”, where development facilitators interact and work only with the elite while the poorest of the poor remain unseen, seems still to apply in Inkosikazi. In this case, though, it is not really the elite or wealthy in the community who are monopolizing project benefits, but those in the middle category. In any event, the poor still remain marginalized.

It is also interesting to note the similarity of the findings in this research to those of Zimmerman (2000:1439) who, in his study of land redistribution in South Africa, notes that the very poor there would not benefit because of the long distances involved and the high up-front costs. The very wealthy in the Inkosikazi community are not members of this project because they despised it and did not want to be seen to be receiving what amounted to a donation. They felt that this would compromise their status in the community and so they are left out.

## **The Gender Issue as it Affects Participation of the Poor in the Inkosikazi**

### **Development Projects**

The livestock development project indicated that there was only limited participation of women. It is also interesting to note that out of the 140 members only 6 are women. One reason could be that the project is targeted at households, and men are registered as heads of households. However, the findings still have a bearing on the development of women, because their inability to access such a crucial asset in the community's livelihood means that they will not be able to improve their standard of living and overcome poverty.

Cattle are regarded as a symbol of wealth, and indeed their ownership makes a difference in the lives of the people because they use them for as draught animals, meat, manure and milk. They also sell them and use the income for their basic needs. Women do not own cattle, and at a household level they do not make decisions relating to their use, particularly with regard to selling them and the use of the money realized from such sales. This lack of participation by women makes them perpetually dependent economically. They almost become economic refugees in their own households.

These findings are consistent with the arguments of Narayan, Chambers, et al (2000:143) that women are generally marginalized in development, and only assume leadership roles when men have migrated. The severity of this marginalization in

Inkosikazi is, of course, not as great as it is in Thailand, as described by both Narayan, Chambers, et al (2000:143) and Sopchokchai (1996:4)

### **3.7. Effects Of Project Focus And Approach On Participation of the Poor in the Inkosikazi Development Projects**

The Hlumazonke Project presents an interesting deviation from the established trend in other projects studied in this research. While in other projects the very poor and the rich do not participate, the Hlumazonke Project had three members who were categorized as very poor. Asked to account for this unique feature, the project members said that their project was not formed through facilitation by an outside organization, but was started by the community members on their own. They came together as neighbours with a good relationship and started this community-based organization. It was only later that they partnered with the NGO. This is a very important aspect to note, because it shows that if NGOs identify already existing networks and relationships within a community, they will be able to reach the poorest of the poor. These very poor people would have teamed up with people they are used to and understand, without any competition with others who would be better placed for assistance from an NGO.

On the other hand, if an NGO comes into a community and facilitates the formation of projects and a Community-Based Organization (CBO), the very poor are left out in the stampede for NGO funds, where those with resources are able to forge ahead of everybody else.

It is therefore not enough just to have community-based organizations but, more critically, projects must be community initiated as well. These findings substantiate the argument by Verhelst (1987:17-23) on the importance of the local people's culture or their own way of surviving as something that should form the basis of development projects.

The findings regarding some of the issues affecting participation of the poor in the Inkosikazi communal lands, as explained in this chapter, are sufficient to generate some of the recommendations to development facilitators, project members and community leaders. These recommendations are outlined in detail in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 4

*“Because poverty has very important local origins, more contextualised and more fine-grained knowledge will be required for better understanding the nature of poverty in any particular region.” (Krishna, 2003:132)*

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY ON SOME OF THE ISSUES AFFECTING PARTICIPATION OF THE POOR**

In view of the research findings and discussions thereof in the preceding chapter, this chapter puts forward some recommendations for the possible improvement of people participation. This is important, because it might assist future studies on the participation of the poor through providing some critical pointers to areas that affect participation. Recommendations are also important because they may enhance the capacity of development organizations such as World Vision to improve on the ways in which they engage the poorest of the poor in development programming. The community leadership in the Inkosikazi communal lands can also use the recommendations, which will be shared with them, to review their perception that the very poor are active participants in development projects. The study on some of the issues affecting the participation of the poor in the Inkosikazi communal lands in Zimbabwe therefore makes the following recommendations to development facilitators, researchers, community leaders and other interested readers:

## **4.1 Recommendations on Identifying Development Projects**

- 4.1.1. When NGOs facilitate development projects, they should base them on already existing, community-initiated networks and relationships. This might improve the participation of the poor, particularly the very poor or poorest of the poor.
- 4.1.2. Outsiders should not be in a hurry to facilitate development projects in an area, but should spend time, probably up to two years, relating with people so that they have a profound understanding of the issues that affect the participation of the poor in development projects in that community. Such an understanding would then inform the planning of development initiatives.
- 4.1.3. It is also recommended that there should be a devolution of power on the part of development organizations. Decision-making and control by the poor themselves at the project identification stage may enhance their participation and means of benefiting from the project. As Chambers (1997:101) observes, there are, at times, those who are powerful at the top and who think they know what the poor need. This should not be so. Let the poor decide for themselves.

## **4.2. Recommendations on Improved Targeting of Development**

### **Projects' Beneficiaries**

4.2.1. When implementing development projects, facilitators, in partnership with the people, should improve on their modes of targeting.

The people should not be treated as one homogeneous entity with similar challenges which can be solved in the same way through uniform interventions. Each development project should delineate clearly exactly what category of people it is targeting within a community. For such specific targeting to be possible, there should be definitions of the very poor in each area by the people themselves, as well as indicators thereof, so that they can systematically check whether their projects are actually targeting them. This will assist them in refocusing their efforts.

4.2.2. In some cases it might be important for development facilitators to consider encouraging a partnership between the very poor and the rich, where possible, in development projects so that they can share ideas.

The rich might assist the poor in gaining self-confidence.

## **4.3. Recommendations on Appropriate use of PRA to Enhance Participation of the Poor in Development Projects**

4.3.1. PRAs should not be used merely as an information-gathering tool, but should be viewed first and foremost as a philosophy which recognizes

that development initiatives and control should lie with the people themselves. Information that comes out of the PRA process should be referred to in a participatory manner at all stages of a development project, not just at the project identification stage.

- 4.3.2. PRA facilitators should be careful not to expect set findings from a PRA process, but should allow these to vary according to the different contexts within which people live.

#### **4.4. Recommendations on Improved Communication with the Poor**

- 4.4.1 Communication with the poorest people within a community is critical if they are to participate in development projects. This requires not only regular contact between the development facilitators and the rural people, but also calls for a realization that, at times, regular community communication channels, conducted through community leadership structures, are not an effective means of relaying information to the very poor. Extra effort should therefore be taken with regard to the poor people themselves, even if this means going directly to their households to talk to them.
- 4.4.2 Distances to development project sites and community meetings should be such that the poor can also easily reach them.
- 4.4.3 The language used in either written or verbal communication should be kept simple and within the understanding of the poorest of the poor.

## **4.5 Recommendations on networking between NGOs and Governments**

4.5.1 NGOs should appreciate that the primary responsibility for development facilitation lies with the government of any country.

It is only the limitation of resources which necessitates the conscription of NGOs to complement government efforts.

4.5.2 The recommendation is that NGOs should therefore work with local governments, taking into consideration that government structures will still remain within the community even after an NGO is gone. NGOs should therefore consider building the capacity of government staff and systems to service the people. This recommendation is mindful of the fact that there are others who may be of the view that NGOs should not work together with government, to ensure that any projects with which NGOs are involved retain their independence and integrity. However, this thesis is deliberately at variance with such a view, because recognizing a local government and coordinating with it does not necessarily imply that the efforts of NGOs will be sullied.

4.5.3 NGOs should also network amongst themselves so that they avoid duplication of efforts and can also share the most promising development practices.

## **4.6 Recommendations on the use of Indigenous Knowledge**

- 4.6.1 NGOs should value local knowledge and use it as they facilitate development. It may be necessary for NGOs to employ some locals who can then assist in linking the development facilitators directly with the local people.
  
- 4.6.2 There should indeed be respect for what Myers (1999:137-138) calls the “community’s story”. Communities have their own views on how they have survived over years and how they can continue to enhance their livelihoods.
  
- 4.6.3 Building the capacity of the local people is important, but this should not be seen by outsiders as an opportunity for indoctrination of the locals, to the extent that local knowledge is substituted with the outsiders’ way of thinking and the imposition of their value systems. Such an approach may collide with local customs and norms and therefore be resisted by some locals to the detriment of development.

## **4.7 Recommendations on Recognition by Development Facilitators of Different Cultural Contexts**

- 4.7.1 It is important for development organizations to realize that each community exists within its own cultural setting which could be different from other communities. This means that development needs, possible solutions and the challenges of these may vary from one cultural context

to the other. Therefore, there should not be a development approach or intervention which is the same across communities in different cultures. The people themselves understand their culture better than an outsider, and they should be the ones who decide what is relevant for their culture.

This recommendation is in accordance with Verhelst (1987:17-23), who argues that consideration of cultural contexts should not just be limited to token gestures such as music and dancing, but should allow the people themselves to make culturally relevant decisions.

4.7.2 Faith based organizations such as the Christian-based World Vision International, face a greater challenge in recognizing and respecting local cultures, because religion is generally a subjective phenomenon which may not incorporate the beliefs of other cultures. The recommendation to such organizations is that they need to be very sensitive to the local cultural context. If need be, they should occasionally engage other impartial organizations or consultants to assess their interactions with communities, in order to determine whether or not they are looking at issues from the sole perspective of their own faith, at the expense of local people's cultural understanding and aspirations.

4.7.3 The Heifer Project in the Inkosikazi communal lands has only six (6) women who benefited directly as cattle owners. This figure may be set against the one hundred and thirty four men (134) who benefited from the scheme. According to discussions with some of the people in the

community, one of the reasons for this uneven distribution is probably the culture of this patriarchal community, where women are not expected to own such important assets as cattle. The recommendation, therefore, is that even when the communities themselves are the ones who have to decide the project in which they want to be involved, it remains very important for development facilitators to consider the interests of culturally disadvantaged groups such as women.

#### **4.8 Recommendation on Institutional Flexibility**

- 4.8.1 This study recommends that development facilitators and other stakeholder institutions should be flexible as they work with the people in development. While institutions have their own needs which could be related to how they source development resources, preferred development approaches and internal control systems, these should not be so rigid that the will of the people is seriously compromised. There should be a reasonable degree of flexibility.
- 4.8.2 Development facilitators should review the role of local institutions in enhancing the participation of the poor, particularly those institutions the outsiders would have created in the communities. Some of them might actually be hindering the participation of the poor, instead of creating an environment that facilitates such participation. The Heifer project in Inkosikazi, which does not benefit the very poor, is managed by a local



management structure which was created by World Vision International. It is this management committee which selected beneficiaries. By contrast, in the same area, the Goat Project, which was created out of the local people's own social relationships and networks, without being coordinated by a management committee, does involve the participation of the very poor. The recommendation is, therefore, that development organizations should not create their own institutions within communities, but should rather, in the words of Van der Waal (2001:69), "nurture" existing ones.

#### **4.9 Recommendation on Local Resource Mobilisation**

- 4.9.1 Local people should mobilize locally available resources for development projects and also, where possible, make financial contributions. Outsiders should only come in later to set up partnerships with the locals. Those partnerships should focus on specific aspects of the project for a defined period of time and then the locals should be left to continue with their project.
- 4.9.2 The communities should also view such locally available resources for a building project as river sand, pit sand, and stones as their assets and attach a monetary value to these whenever they are used in a local development project. In urban areas these are valued building materials, whereas in rural areas they are usually not valued, and this may make

the poor believe that they have absolutely nothing to contribute to development when, in fact, they actually possess important resources.

#### **4.10. Recommendations on Size of Projects**

4.10.1 Development organizations should allow for a process of growth by the local people in the management of development projects.

These organizations should start with small projects and grow these over time so that the locals are able to learn, make mistakes, reflect on them and improve their project management skills. This could enhance the confidence of the local people as they align project growth to their growing capacities.

#### **4.11. Recommendation on Training of Development Facilitators**

4.11.1 Development facilitators should be properly trained for people centered development facilitation. It is important for them to be courteous to the local people with whom they work. Patience, also emphasized by Chambers (1997:233), is an important attribute for a development facilitator. Communities should be allowed to learn at their own pace and not be hurried. An impolite facilitator may fail to access the views of the people and then assume that they are in agreement when, in fact, they might have been put off by the facilitator's demeanour.

4.11.2 Humility is another important attribute which should be inculcated in the training of development facilitators. This is not a technical skill that can be acquired, but is a subjective personality trait which should start with an

inward self-reflection, based upon an acceptance on the part of facilitators that there is much that he or she does not know but needs to learn from the local people. Humility should also allow a development facilitator to be apologetic to communities when necessary, instead of conveying an appearance of infallibility.

In this regard, Chambers (1997:101) rightfully argues that one should guard against the power of education. Respect for the poor people is critical if a development facilitator is to be accepted by the poor themselves.

4.11.3 Development facilitators also need to be trained to focus on the people and not on the projects or programmes. Emphasis should fall, not only on good project planning and reporting, but even more on the poor people themselves.

#### **4.12. Recommendation on Documentation of Learning.**

4.12.1 Development organizations should encourage within themselves a culture of documenting and sharing their learning. This is important for improvements in the quality of facilitation. In the Heifer Loan Scheme Project in the Inkosikazi communal lands, it was saddening to note that the facilitating organization, World Vision International, did not have any documentation on their particular learning experiences, and so they were unable to use these experiences in similar projects elsewhere. Other organizations could also learn from the case of World Vision International

that there needs to be a focus on institutional memory through a process of careful documentation.

This thesis recognizes that, in spite of the above recommendations, there are still many participatory development issues for further study. Some of these are outlined in the next section below.

#### **4.13 Areas for Further Research on Participation.**

The following areas could not be covered by this study and are therefore recommended for further research:

- ✓ Child participation in development projects. Children, like adults, have their own dreams and ways in which they would like to see things done. There is a need to explore how much work has been done with children and, if any, how this work may be improved upon and extended.
- ✓ There needs to be more research on how the local people on their own organize themselves for development.
- ✓ Do we really need NGOs? Is there an alternative?
- ✓ There is certainly room for a more detailed study on the relationship between gender issues and participation in development projects. This thesis only covered gender as one of the issues affecting participation of the poor, but the subject could be developed into a thesis on its own.
- ✓ More research is still required relating to the dynamics of community leadership structures.

## CHAPTER 5

*“Without first knowing what poor people are doing by themselves to overcome poverty or cope with it, programs of assistance can hardly be well designed.”*

*(Krishna 2003:131)*

## CONCLUSION

This has been a very interesting study which enriched my knowledge of the dynamics of people participation and made me realize that the subject is very complex and, at times, oversimplified by development facilitators. The quality of my contributions to development philosophy and the institutional practices of World Vision International Zimbabwe has been significantly enhanced by my experience.

It needs to be noted in conclusion that the very poor generally do not participate in development projects. Of the two projects studied, one of them, the Hlumazonke Goat Project, has only three of its members classified as very poor. The reason for the participation of the very poor in this project came about because the project was initiated by the communities on their own, before they went into partnership with the NGO. They therefore formed their own scheme, based on good neighbourliness and personal relationships. The NGO only came in to assist, but was not instrumental in the formation of the group.

The Heifer project was initiated as a result of a partnership between an NGO and the community. This probably entailed the respective NGO and community agreeing on some kind of selection criteria for the beneficiaries, criteria by which the poor were excluded.

In 1997, PRA community workshops were conducted in the Inkosikazi communal area by World Vision. There seems to have been no participative relationship between the PRAs and the poor, suggesting that PRAs do not necessarily reach the poorest within communities or empower them to participate in community development.

The following conclusions can therefore be drawn:-

- 5.1. The very poor or the poorest of the poor do not participate in community development projects initiated by NGOs and communities.
- 5.2. Development projects benefit those in between, in the middle social class. The very poor and the rich are normally non-participants. The rich generally do not participate in community development projects as they consider it demeaning to become partners with the poor.
- 5.3. Projects that are initiated by communities on their own, without the facilitation of outsiders such as NGOs, have a better chance of involving the very poor. This is because these community projects are based on relationships such as neighbourliness and kinship ties. This was particularly evident in the Hlumazonke Goat Project.

This study has therefore been successful in examining some of the issues that affect participation of the poor in development projects in the Inkosikazi communal lands in Zimbabwe.

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**ATTACHMENT 1: DATA COLLECTION TOOL**

1. PROJECT NAME:.....
  
2. LOCATION.....
  
3. SUPPORT ORGANIZATION.....
  
4. PROJECT OBJECTIVES:.....
  
5. PROJECT ACTIVITIES.....
  
6. GROUP MEMBERSHIP: MEN..... WOMEN.....NUMBER OF  
HOUSEHOLD.....
  
7. WHEN DID THE PROJECT START?.....

8. DEFINITION OF THE POOR HOUSEHOLDS IN THIS COMMUNITY THROUGH WEALTH RANKING

Wealth Group Category	Indicator of Wealth Group	Sources of Income	Income Range	Number of Households in this project for each category
Very poor				
Poor				
Middle				
Rich				

9. WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE ABOVE HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION IN THIS PROJECT?.....

ATTACHMENT 2: TABULAR SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Project Objectives</b>	<b>No of Project Men</b>	<b>No of project Women</b>	<b>Number Of Rich</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>Middle</b>
1. Inkosikazi ADP Heifer Loan scheme	To create assets for members To rebuild livestock herd To enhance food security	134	6	0	7	0	133
2. Hlumazonke Goat project	To increase household income through rearing and selling of goats	3	13	0	8	3	5