

Crop Wild Relatives – A manual of *in situ* conservation ©

Participatory approaches for CWR *in situ* conservation

Community participation is key to achieving sustained CWR *in situ* conservation

THE CHALLENGE

Scientists often have limited knowledge of how to apply participatory approaches, leading to the exclusion of local and indigenous communities from the conservation planning and development process.

THE SOLUTION – Let the locals lead

Local and indigenous communities maintain intimate knowledge of their natural environments and the wild plant species, including CWR, surrounding them. This module introduces the concept of community participation and participatory approaches available for the planning and implementation of CWR *in situ* conservation projects. It aims to encourage an understanding of how to develop and utilize participatory approaches, what participation involves and the role it can play in various conservation settings.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Community - refers to local and indigenous communities.

Participation - refers to working with communities to achieve conservation and socio-economic goals and involves an element of community empowerment.

Partnership - refers to agreements entered into with other key stakeholder groups largely for the purpose of CWR *in situ* conservation planning.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Using participatory approaches began in the 1970s with the Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) concept, a process where the role of local communities was limited to providing information and the decision-making power lay in the hands of outsiders. This transformed into the Participatory Rural Approach (PRA) in the 1980s, when the underlying philosophy changed, as PRAs were designed to follow people's concerns and interests, building a process of community empowerment to influence change. Such interactive approaches are now commonly referred to as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA).

The idea of participation is an **overall guiding philosophy** of how to proceed. It entails an approach which includes strong involvement and consultation on the part of the subjects and the research. **It is not always necessary to strive for a level of participation equal to community autonomy or mobilization, but the work should enhance community empowerment.**

Community-based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM)

Given that local and indigenous communities maintain intimate knowledge of biodiversity, there is a growing recognition of the need to enhance the role of these communities in the management and conservation of their environments and resources. CBNRM models represent a shift from centralized to more devolved approaches to management which works to strengthen locally accountable institutions, enabling communities to make better decisions about the use of land and resources.

Source - Roe, D., Nelson, F. and Sandbrook, C. (2009) *Community Management of Natural Resources in Africa: Impacts, Experiences and Future directions*. IIED. <http://www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=17503IIED>

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Petty's Typology of Participation - describes different types of participation

Passive Participation:

People are told what is going to happen or has already happened. Decisions are made without listening to people's responses.

Participation in information giving:

Information shared belongs only to external professionals. People answer questions posed by researchers using questionnaires or surveys but do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings.

Participation by consultation:

People are consulted and external agents define both problems and solutions. They may modify these in the light of people's responses, but are under no obligation to listen to people's views.

Participation for material benefits:

People provide resources in return for food, cash or other material incentives.

Functional participation:

People form groups to meet project objectives. Involvement when major decisions have already been made.

Interactive participation:

People participate in joint analysis. Groups take control/ownership over local decisions and people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

Self-mobilization:

People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems.

Source - Bass, S. Dalal-Clayton, B. and Pretty, J. (1995) 'Participation in Strategies for Sustainable Development.', Environmental Planning Issues Number 7, IIED.

Participatory Tools

Brainstorming
 Direct observation
 Seasonal calendars
 Daily activity profiles
 Time-lines
 Venn diagrams
 Portraits and profiles
 Questionnaires
 Matrices
 Review of secondary data
 Mapping and modeling
 Transects, group treks, guided walks
 Semi-structured interviewing
 Focus groups and interviews
 Wealth and well-being rankings
 Case studies and stories
 Field report writing
 Local resource collections

Source: Grenier, L. (1998) *Working with Indigenous Knowledge; A Guide for Researchers*. IDRC.

USING A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH - USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Why is a participatory approach necessary?
- What experience and skills in participatory approaches exist in my organization?
- What experience and skills exist in partner organizations?
- Who might make up the team for a participatory approach?
- Is there a need for additional training in participatory approaches for team members?
- Does my organization or others have existing relations with the proposed community?
- Has the participatory process and planning involved the community from an early stage?

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CHECKLIST FOR AN EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION PROCESS

1. Begin consultation at the earliest stage possible

- Consider how communities will be involved before commencing project design.
- Share the motives and purpose of the proposed research and explain the benefits.
- Visit different community groups (women's groups, farmer association) to raise awareness about the project.
- Ensure information is accessible by the community.
- After obtaining local permission to undertake research, engage communities in the process. Collect information about the location and community members' interests and concerns to fully understand the local context and address local needs.
- Explain the community's role and responsibilities, including activities to be conducted and the potential impact on community routines and practices.
- Respect local traditions, culture and traditional knowledge.
- Explore avenues to overcome language barriers and cultural differences.

2. Build community confidence

- Community involvement should be at the centre of the project - make certain that no one is excluded.
- Identify and involve traditional decision-making authorities.
- Encourage the participation of marginalized groups such as women and children.
- Provide adequate information for communities to make informed decisions.

3. Identify stakeholders and their rights

- Indigenous groups and local communities directly or indirectly affected by the research.
- Land owners and holders of resource rights where research will be conducted.
- Authorities with jurisdiction over locations and activities.
- Key persons with knowledge of the cultural, social and economic context.
- Individuals and authorities with the power to influence the project.
- Community groups to be involved. Ensure women are encouraged to participate as they bring unique perspectives but may not hold formal positions in the community.

4. Agree frameworks for consultation

- Formulate a framework for communication and information exchange and access, and identify capacity building needs of the communities.
- Raise awareness to ensure community members know their legal rights and authority to influence the research process.
- Develop and finalize the project work plan and time frame for implementation and ask communities to identify the most appropriate form for consultations.
- Establish a review mechanism to determine the effectiveness of community consultations.
- Identify accessible means to resolve conflicts which may arise during the project.

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COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS (CCAs)

CCAs can be defined as: *natural and modified ecosystems with significant biodiversity, ecological and related cultural values, voluntarily conserved by indigenous and local communities through customary laws and other effective means*¹.

1. Communities closely tied to ecosystems and species through cultural, livelihood and economic links;
2. Community-based management decisions lead the conservation of habitats, species and ecosystem services; and
3. Communities are the prime actors in decision-making and implementation of actions.

1 - Kothari, A. (2006b) 'Community conserved areas: towards ecological and livelihood security', *Parks*, vol 16, no 1, pp 3–13.

The Challenges

Participatory processes are demanding and often involve a range of different perspectives, opinions and interpretations of goals and purposes which must be discussed and negotiated. This is important to consider as substantial resources may be required for capacity development and to fund community consultation and engagement; a long-term commitment is essential.

To ensure an effective participatory process, it is good practice to identify social (and natural) scientists in your organization and among others with skills and experience in using participatory methods and approaches with local and indigenous communities.

Key Opportunities

Working closely with communities can facilitate data gathering and provide insights into indigenous knowledge including, understanding and distribution of CWR, patterns of use and potential threats. Participatory approaches also give local groups the opportunity to be involved in planning and partnerships and allow scientists to work with these communities to improve the management of habitats and CWR species. With additional capacity building support, these groups can become involved in the development and implementation of national action plans.

FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- *The Community Toolbox: the Ideas, Methods and Tools for Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation in Community Forestry*. FAO (1990) <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5307E/x5307e00.HTM>
- Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC) - <http://www.recoftc.org/site/index.php?id=392>
- Community Planning - <http://www.communityplanning.net/index.php>
- IUCN Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas - <http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp/topics/governance/icca/index.cfm>
- Parque de la Papa (The Potato Park) - http://www.parquedelapapa.org/eng/03parke_01.html
- IIED Participatory Learning and Action - www.planotes.org/
- Participatory Approaches: A Facilitator's Guide - <http://community.eldis.org/.59c6ec19/>
- Louise Grenier (1998) Working with Indigenous Knowledge; A Guide for Researchers. IDRC http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9310-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html
- IGNARM, *Network on Indigenous peoples, Gender and Natural Resource Management*- <http://www.ignarm.dk/>
- Guide to Effective Participation - <http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/index.htm>
- Community Empowerment - <http://www.scn.org/cmp/>