

I. Key Points from the Training Sessions

SESSION 1

Course Overview and Ice Breaker

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, you will...

U...appreciate the variety of work done by your fellow participants

U...have a better understanding of the way you currently develop programmes

U...understand the course objectives and agenda

U...reconcile your personal expectations with the course objectives



CONTEXT: *This first session is designed to introduce you to the other participants and to the course. In addition to receiving the workshop agenda and objectives, you will be given the opportunity to express your own expectations. The introductory case study serves two purposes: 1) It provides the trainers with a baseline for assessing the success of the training; and 2) It orients you to the types of things that you will be learning in the course.*

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to...

U Understand the history and foundations of participatory learning and action (PLA) approaches

U Identify and implement the different steps of the participatory programme development (PPD) process

U Practice the behaviours and attitudes which are necessary for the successful implementation of PLA

U Facilitate the use of various PLA techniques

SESSION 2

Introduction to Participatory Programme Development (PPD)

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, you will...

U...Reach a consensus on the meaning of "participation"

U...Be able to define Participatory Programme Development (PPD) and the word "community"

U...Understand the basic concepts of PPD

U...Understand the history and foundations of participatory learning and action



CONTEXT: *The main goal of this session is for participants to come to a consensus on two of the main concepts that are the basis of the training: participation and community. In addition, you will learn about the history and theory of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) and watch a video to illustrate these basic concepts. This session builds the foundation necessary for learning about the specific steps of the Participatory Programme Development Process and specific PLA techniques.*

Participation can take many forms within development programmes, and some types of participation are more "participatory" than others. A participatory continuum is on the following page¹, laying out different forms of participation, from the least participatory to the most participatory. Which type of participation best matches your drawing of participation?

The goal of PPD is to enable communities to engage in *collective action*, which is the most participatory form of participation.

¹Adapted from Pretty (1995) in Cornwall, A. 1996. Towards Participatory Practice: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and the Participatory Process. In *Participatory Research in Health: Issues and Experiences*. de Koning, K. and M. Martin, eds. p. 96. London: Zed Books.

THE PARTICIPATORY CONTINUUM

<u>Mode of Participation</u>	<u>Involvement of Local People</u>	<u>Relationship of Research and Action to Local People</u>
Co-optation	Token representatives are chosen, but have no real input or power.	ON
Compliance	Tasks are assigned with incentives; outsiders decide agenda and direct the process.	FOR
Consultation	Local opinions are asked; outsiders analyse and decide on a course of action.	FOR/ WITH
<u>Mode of Participation</u>	<u>Involvement of Local People</u>	<u>Relationship of Research and Action to Local People</u>
Cooperation	Local people work together with outsiders to determine priorities; responsibility remains with outsiders for directing the process.	WITH
Co-learning	Local people and outsiders share their knowledge to create new understanding and work together plans, to form action with outsider facilitation.	WITH/ BY
Collective action	Local people set their own agenda and mobilize to, carry it out in the absence of outside initiators and facilitators.	BY

Definition of Participatory Programme Development

Participatory Programme Development (PPD) is the process of working in partnership with communities to develop feasible, desirable and sustainable programmes.

PPD uses an approach known as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). PLA is a process that enables community members to 1) analyse their needs; 2) identify possible solutions to meet those needs; and 3) develop, implement, and evaluate a plan of action. The background and foundations of PLA are discussed in greater detail below.

Focussed or Unfocussed PPD?

PPD can be either focussed on a specific sector or issue, or it can be "open", meaning that the community is free to implement projects addressing any issue that it chooses. Many sponsoring agencies (SAs) are not able to do open PPD, however, because they receive money from donors to do work on specific issues. Although this situation may not be ideal, because it limits the community's freedom to decide which issues to address, it is important to recognize this reality and work within it.

If the sponsoring agencies faces these types of constraints, they have one of two options:

1) They can be direct with the community before the PPD process begins, and tell them that it will focus on a specific sector or issue (e.g., health or education); or

2) They can conduct the PPD in an "open" fashion, and hope that the community identifies their issue as one of their priorities. If this does not happen, the SA should be willing to link the communities with other SAs who could help them address their priority issues.

Definition of "Community"

Before learning the principles and techniques of PPD, it is helpful to define the word "community", since the community participation is the heart of PPD. *Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary* gives two definitions for the word "community":

A group of people residing in the same region and under the same government

and

A class or group with common interests

In rural areas, the first definition generally applies. In urban areas, the first definition could also apply (e.g., in a neighbourhood), but there are also many other types of communities that are not dependent on geography to define them as a community. For example, urban residents may have little in common with their neighbours, but they may be linked to other urban dwellers through work, studies or common interests. Examples of urban communities include factory workers, commercial sex workers, members of social clubs and university students.

Facilitating PLA with these "non-traditional" types of communities can pose special challenges, because the people may come together in one place only for a few hours each day (or even less frequently). Therefore, the scheduling of PLA activities may be more complex in urban areas than in rural areas.

The PLA Team

An ideal PLA team is composed of six to ten people, although this number is not fixed, and the team may be larger or smaller. It is also multidisciplinary, which means that the team normally has a mix of different genders, disciplines and career statuses. In addition, there are often representatives of different groups or organisations, including the following:

- g The agency sponsoring the PLA workshop
- g Other NGOs or development agencies that are working in sectors related to the PLA workshop (e.g., health, agriculture, education, environment)
- g Local government representatives (e.g., extension officers, members of district development committees)
- g Community members (community link persons)

Note that this team composition is not fixed; it is possible that not all of these groups will be represented, or that other groups not mentioned will be a part of the team. Every team will be different, depending on the community.

Each team member has a well-defined role². One person takes on the role of team leader, and the others act as both facilitators and note takers. The PLA team often divides up into pairs or groups of three in order to work with different community groups simultaneously.

- g The **leader** is in charge of making the initial contact with the community; serving as the primary link with village leaders; coordinating logistics of the field work; introducing the team to the community; supervising the work of other team members; ensuring that activities stay on schedule; moderating conflicts between team members; facilitating daily team meetings; overseeing the report writing and editing; distributing the final report; and making arrangements for follow-up after the workshop (by assuring that there are appropriate liaisons from the sponsoring agency). The leader may be either a staff member of the sponsoring agency or an external PLA consultant. He or she should have extensive PLA experience and should be charismatic, dynamic, organized and a good communicator.

The trainers will take on many of the responsibilities of the team leader during this course, since the initial contacts and logistics will have to be taken care of before the course begins. Within each of the three participant PLA teams, however, one person should be the leader.

²Schubert et al. 1994b. p. 19-24.

- g The **note takers/recorders** are responsible for observing and recording the PLA activities. This includes both written notes and hand-drawn copies of maps and diagrams that community members create on the ground. In addition to writing down key remarks that are made during activities, the note taker also records who is talking and describes the group dynamics. The note taker should be observant, a good listener and familiar with the local language. The note taker should also be able to summarize information and present it in a clear, concise format.
- g The **facilitators** conduct the PLA activities with the community members. They ensure that all members of the community are given the chance to participate, and they keep the different groups on task. They must have excellent interpersonal skills and a good sense of humour, and be flexible and patient.

NOTE: The note takers/recorders and facilitators often switch roles during the course of a PLA workshop. Participants should be encouraged to do this during the field work.

- g Approximately two **community link persons** are identified by the PLA team to assist with the PLA workshop. These link persons serve as liaisons between the community and the team. In addition to helping with logistical arrangements, they help to facilitate the PLA activities. They should be people who are respected, dynamic and willing to learn from their fellow community members. They should also have schedules permitting them to attend the entire PLA workshop.

History and Foundations of Participatory Learning and Action

Participatory learning and action (PLA) is based on the assumption that community members are the best "experts" about their own health and social situations. The role of PLA facilitators is to help community members tap their own knowledge and resources and

use them effectively. According to Robert Chambers of the Institute of Development Studies, PLA has its roots in a variety of participatory methodology approaches³:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| g Activist participatory research | g Field research on farming systems |
| g Agrosystems analysis | g Rapid rural appraisal (RRA) |
| g Applied anthropology | g Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) |

³Chambers, R. 1992. *Rural Appraisal: Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory*. Discussion Paper no. 311. p. 2. Brighton, England: Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex.

The principal pioneers of these techniques include...

- The Brazilian activist Paulo Freire;
- The University of Khon Kaen in Thailand;
- The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London; and
- The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in Sussex, England.

The PLA process and techniques taught in this course are most heavily based on **rapid rural appraisal (RRA)** and **participatory rural appraisal (PRA)**. RRA emerged in the late 1970s in the agriculture and environment sectors as a reaction against "rural development tourism"--whereby urban-based development officials were taken on specially arranged tours of rural areas and given a very biased view of "successful" development projects. RRA was used to gather information more quickly and with a higher level of community involvement than was the case in large, quantitative surveys. RRA was a largely *extractive* process, however. After the information was collected, it was taken out of the community and brought back to the development agencies to be analysed by "experts."

PRA evolved out of RRA in the 1980s, mainly through experimentation by small non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It focussed more on the appreciation of local people's *capabilities* to plan and implement their own projects (as opposed to RRA, which stopped at an appreciation of local people's *knowledge*). PRA took many of the methods invented by RRA and added the concept of local ownership of the information generated through participatory techniques. PRA emphasized local analysis of data, or "handing over the stick" to communities.

In summary, RRA is a process designed to promote learning by outsiders, where data are collected and then taken out of the local community to be analysed. PRA, on the other hand, enables local people to conduct their own analyses and to develop their own plans of action.

The term participatory rural appraisal was coined in Kenya when the National Environment Secretariat and Clark University (Massachusetts, USA) worked with a community in Machakos District to develop a village resource management plan. At the same time, several NGOs in India were beginning to conduct PRA. Since the early 1980s, the use of PRA has extended to countries in all regions of the world, mainly through the work of NGOs⁴. Although it was originally used in rural villages, PRA has begun to be conducted in urban areas as well.

⁴Chambers, R. 1992. *Rural Appraisal: Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory*. Discussion Paper no. 311. p. 11. Brighton, England: Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex.

The term **participatory learning and action** (or PLA), which has been used in recent years to designate the whole family of participatory approaches mentioned above, emphasises the **ACTION** phase of the process; that is, the phase when the community implements its solutions. PLA can be conducted in all types of communities (e.g., rural, peri-urban and urban).

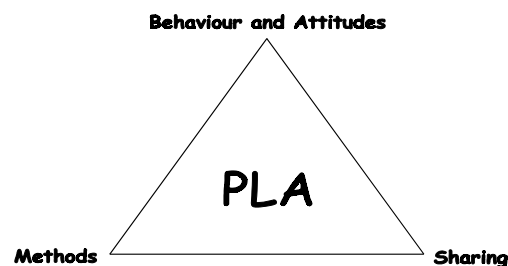
Although originally conceived for use in agriculture, environment and natural resources sectors, the use of PLA has expanded into other sectors, including health, gender, education, and violence prevention.

Within the health sector, PLA has been used in projects dealing with women's reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention, nutrition, child survival, health care financing, and water & sanitation.

The Foundations of Participatory Learning & Action

PLA has three foundations, which can be visualized as a triangle:

1. ***Behaviour and Attitudes*** are at the top of the triangle, because many PLA practitioners believe that these elements are the key to



successfully facilitating community participation. The kinds of behaviours and attitudes which are necessary for the successful facilitation of PLA include the following:

- Respect for local knowledge and capabilities (Reversal of Learning)

- Rapid and progressive learning
- “Handing over the stick”
- Flexibility and informality
- Offsetting biases
- Seeking diversity
- Self-critical awareness

2. **Methods** are used to gather and analyse information during the PLA process. Following are some examples of methods:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| ●Mapping and diagramming | ●Time lines, schedules and seasonal calendars |
| ●Semi-structured interviews | ●Matrices |
| ●Sorting and ranking | |
| ●Transect walks and observation | |

Because many of these methods are visual, they can be used by those who are illiterate or low-literate, which encourages the participation of ALL members of the community.

Two key strategies for the use of PLA methods include having a multidisciplinary team and practising triangulation.

A multidisciplinary team is composed of representatives of both sexes, different sectors (e.g., health, agriculture, education, etc.) and different disciplines (e.g., research, programme management, field work). This kind of team ensures that all viewpoints are represented.

Triangulation refers to using diverse sources of information and different techniques of data gathering to achieve a high level of accuracy. (e.g., using semi-structured interviews to cross-check the information gathered during a mapping exercise).

3. **Sharing** of information and experiences is a key element of PLA and takes place on several levels:

- Local people sharing information amongst themselves
- Local people and outsiders sharing information with each other
- PLA facilitators sharing information amongst themselves
- Organisations conducting PLA sharing experiences with each other

At the community level, free sharing of information ensures that communities truly own the knowledge that is generated and that the outside facilitators gain a complete picture of the communities. On a global level, NGOs and other organisations working with PLA learn from each other's successes and challenges by sharing their experiences⁵.

⁵Chambers, R. 1994. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Challenges, Potential and Paradigm. *World Development*, 22(10):1-17. p. 3.

SESSION 3

The Participatory Programme Development (PPD) Process

Session Objectives

By the end of this session, you will...

U...Be able to describe the order and content of the different PPD stages

U...Apply your knowledge of the PPD stages to a case study

U...Understand the PPD process in the context of an actual project



CONTEXT: *This session is designed to give you an overview of the whole Participatory Programme Development Process, and how the steps relate to one another. After this session, you will explore each of the steps in more depth.*

Ordering the PPD Process

PPD is a process that consists of several stages. There is no set length for the process--it will be different in every community, and may vary from months to years. PPD is more than just a collection of participatory techniques, and it does not end once the PLA team leaves the village after the PLA workshop. PPD begins with the identification of a project site and ends with an evaluation of activities undertaken by the community as a result of the community action plan.

The PPD process usually consists of the following stages:

1. Selection of the community and formation of the PLA Team
2. Training of the PLA team and logistical preparations
3. Preliminary site visit
4. The PLA workshop: data collection
5. The PLA workshop: data synthesis and analysis
6. The PLA Workshop: ranking of problems and solutions
7. The PLA Workshop: presentation of results
8. The PLA Workshop: creation of an action plan committee and development of a community action plan (CAP)
9. Workshop follow-up and implementation of the CAP
10. Participatory monitoring and evaluation

Description of the PPD Stages

Following is a detailed description of the different PPD stages⁶:

1. Community selection and logistical preparations

Ideally, the communities themselves request a PLA workshop from the sponsoring agency (SA). Sometimes, however, SAs are required to develop projects in specific regions, districts, or villages. Therefore, the SA project manager (who may also be the PLA team leader) may decide to approach a specific community to ascertain its interest in participating in a PLA workshop.

What kind of community would benefit the most from a PLA workshop? PLA is likely to be successful in communities with the following characteristics⁷:

- Communities with a strong sense of "community" (either geographical or based on mutual interest)
- Communities that have already participated in self-improvement projects
- Communities that are aware of the health issue that your organisation is prepared to address
- Communities that have strong leadership
- Communities that have decision-making power over resources that are given to them
- Communities that have the time to devote to PLA.....both the time for the PLA workshop and the time to implement projects (Keeping in mind that PLA is not a fast process.)

After a potential community has been identified, the first step is to contact community leaders to see if they would be interested in participating in the PLA process. Communities have many different kinds of leaders, both formal and informal. It is essential to contact the formal leaders (e.g., local political or religious officials) in order to gain initial access to the community. Once the approval and commitment of the formal leaders has been obtained, the PLA team can seek out informal leaders who would also play a key role in the PLA process (e.g., the president of the women's group or the head of the local labour union).

⁶Adapted from: 1) Schubert et al. 1994a. *Facilitating the Introduction of a Participatory and Integrated Development Approach (PIDA) in Kilifi District, Kenya. Volume I: Recommendations for Institutionalizing PIDA Based on Four Pilot Projects.* Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. p. 22, and 2) Kabutha et al. 1993. *Participatory Rural Appraisal: A Case Study from Kenya.* In *Rapid Appraisal Methods*, K. Kumar. (ed.) Washington, DC: The World Bank. p. 179-84.

⁷Howard-Grabman, Lisa. Save the Children. Personal conversation.

The team leader meets with community leaders as early as possible in order to determine dates when it would be most convenient for the community to participate in a PLA workshop. The team leader clearly explains the purpose of the PLA workshop and the different steps of the process, emphasizing that the goal is to help the community help itself.

The team leader is responsible for coordinating logistical arrangements for the PLA workshop (e.g., transportation, food and lodging). These are discussed in more detail in Session 7.

2. Formation and Training of the PLA Team

Once a village or community has been identified, a multidisciplinary PLA team of approximately six to ten people is formed. The team includes both men and women, and at least one person speaks the local language. The members should have different skills and backgrounds. These will be discussed in more detail in Session 6 (Team Building). All members of the team should have training and/or experience in PLA.

NOTE: The team leader or person responsible for organizing the PLA workshop will need to organize a **short training** for members of the team, especially the community link persons. The training will need to cover the basic principles of PLA and how to facilitate the different techniques. This training can be conducted in the community a few days before the PLA workshop (unless the community link persons are able to travel to another training site).

3. Preliminary site visit

After the PLA team has been trained, they make an initial visit to the community in order to introduce themselves prior to the PLA workshop. They meet with community members and familiarize themselves with the village or neighbourhood. The team meets with different groups of community leaders during this initial meeting (village elders, administrators, women's groups, the health committee, etc.).

By making this initial visit, the team gains an initial impression of the community and ideas about some priority health problems or other issues of importance. The team also uses this first visit to collect secondary data which will be reviewed before the village workshop (reports, statistics, maps, etc.).

4. The PLA workshop: data collection

During the first part of the workshop, the team spends approximately four to six days in the village collecting information about community problems (in health and other relevant sectors) by using a variety of techniques, including mapping,

diagramming, transect walks, semi-structured interviews, listing, sorting, ranking and sequencing. When problems are identified, community members are asked to suggest possible solutions.

During this data collection phase, the community members may be divided in order to allow the full participation of everyone (e.g., young women, elderly women, young men, village leaders, etc.). The team generally spends half the day working with the community and the other half working together to organize the information collected and plan for the next day.

5. The PLA workshop: data synthesis and analysis

After the data have been collected, the team takes a day to compile and organize the information into a format that can be easily understood by the community members (e.g., large charts and tables, maps, time lines, etc.). The information is organized according to problems identified and possible solutions.

6. The PLA workshop: ranking of problems and solutions

The PLA presents the different community groups with a summary of the main problems and the solutions that were identified. The PLA team then facilitates sorting and ranking exercises with community members to help them prioritize the problems. Once the most important problems have been identified, the sorting and ranking process is repeated for the possible solutions. The PLA team helps the community members reach a consensus about which solutions to implement and which indicators to use to measure the progress of each solution.

7. The PLA workshop: presentation of results

The community groups come together and present the results of their problem and solution rankings to each other. The PLA team helps the community to reach a consensus on which solutions to implement.

8. The PLA workshop: creation of an action plan committee and community action plan

After consensus has been reached on which solutions to implement, the PLA team leader asks the community to select an action plan committee (APC), which will be responsible for writing the community action plan (CAP). The members of the committee should represent all segments of the community, and there should be at least one person who is literate and can write. Once a committee is chosen, members of the PLA team may choose to leave the community for several days (preferably no more than a week), so that the APC can develop the CAP.

Although the PLA team explains the format of the CAP and provides guidance if requested, they do not participate directly in the writing of it. It is up to the community members to create this plan themselves, so that they will have complete ownership of it.

Once the CAP is finished, the APC presents it to the PLA team and the rest of the community. The PLA team and the community provide feedback on the feasibility of the CAP and identify activities that would need support from the SA. Based on the feedback from the community and the PLA team, the development committee revises the CAP as needed. The PLA team then works with the committee to discuss the next steps for working with the SA. One or more members of the PLA team should be designated to follow-up on the implementation of the CAP.

9. Workshop follow-up and implementation of the CAP

At the end of the workshop, the PLA team writes a report of the workshop, which is translated into the local language and presented to the community.

Once the community has finalized the CAP, the SA works closely with the APC and other community groups to implement the project. The SA continues to let the community take the lead and be responsible for completing various activities, although the SA may provide guidance.

10. Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E)

The APC and the SA decide how often they want to conduct monitoring activities and when would be an appropriate time to conduct a mid-term and a final evaluation. Participatory monitoring and evaluation is a continuous process which is overseen by the APC. The indicators to be measured are determined during the creation of the CAP.