

Fact sheet¹ Commitment 4

Participation and Representation

FAO is committed to enable fair and representative participation of all sections of affected populations, including the most vulnerable and marginalised

Participation provides the basis for dialogue with people affected by a crisis on what is needed and how it might best be provided. It can help to improve the appropriateness of the humanitarian response by, for example, identifying priority needs, and by ensuring that local capacities are taken into account². In addition, participation can be seen as a transformational intervention in the provision of aid, with a longer term aim to develop the capacity of both communities and aid providers to close protection gaps and build resilience against future emergencies³.

Agencies often rely predominantly upon existing representation systems such as village chief groups or elders, government instituted systems or party political structures. While these systems should be respected, they often support and augment social power structures and do not address the diversity of need and experience within any given community. A failure on the part of humanitarian agencies to understand the participatory structures they rely upon can itself constitute a breach of accountability. For example, committees intended to represent the interests of people being assisted may themselves be left to freely perpetrate or perpetuate abuse and corrupt practices⁴. It is no longer accepted practice to allow the more powerful men, or even the most powerful men and women in a community, to monopolize the voice of the community. Participatory and representation structures need to be well analysed and understood and alternatives found when necessary.

FAO is committed to:

- Enabling affected populations to play an active role in processes that affect them through the establishment of meaningful and representative participatory processes. Women, men, boys and girls receiving support from FAO and its partners participate in or are given an opportunity to otherwise influence initial assessment, project design, criteria for targeting and selection, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Systems of community representation are fair and representative, enabling the most marginalised, vulnerable and affected to have a voice.
- Considering and addressing local contextual factors that may enhance or inhibit free and open speech on the part of separate interest groups (power, social or gender differentials, for example) whenever participatory systems for FAO projects are being established and reviewed.
- Identifying programme participants in a participatory process and conjunction with an analysis and understanding of gender, age, diversity and special needs within any targeted community.

Additional Notes

Implementing a commitment to participation means that individuals or community representatives take part in decision-making processes throughout the project cycle, either spontaneously or facilitated by agencies, and those they seek to support agree to programme activities.

The importance of this aspect of accountability practice, that of including community perspectives in the design and delivery of projects, has seen the development of many approaches and methodologies, and the creation of a large number of participatory tools tailored to the sector or type of intervention, for example, participatory rural appraisal (PRA), problem trees, or workshops. However, adhering rigidly to templates for participative approaches holds the risk of standardizing instead of adapting the same good practices to local contexts and capacities. Learning from good practices but also finding context specific ways of involving the people FAO

¹ This document supports the FAO in Emergencies Guidance Note on Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) and the IASC CAAP(Commitments on AAP) Tools. It includes: Each FAO commitment as presented in the Guidance Note, Further detail and explanation from other sources, Case studies and examples on each commitment in practice, and Links to external resources.

² From the Participation Handbook, Groupe URD and ALNAP: <http://www.urd.org/Participation-Handbook>

³ From the Danish Refugee Council: <http://www.drc.dk/relief-work/how-we-work/operational-principles/participation/>

⁴ For example, camp committees in Haiti in 2010: <http://www.hapinternational.org/news/story.aspx?id=175>

seeks to assist allows them to influence or make decisions about the project and can ensure that all stakeholders are represented in the process.

Case studies

Learning from local knowledge in the Gambia⁵

The use of participatory survey techniques, as part of an assessment of traditional breeding systems in the Gambia, was found to be very useful in gaining insight into the prevailing production systems and related breeding strategies. It was vital to promote the involvement of the livestock-owning communities in Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR) management activities.

A comprehensive investigation sought to understand traditional breeding strategies and highlight existing local knowledge. As an approach building on cooperation with livestock owners and other stakeholders, communication between professionals in research and development and the livestock-owning communities was facilitated.

A unique characteristic of resistance to a specific parasite transmitted through livestock diseases endemic in the humid and sub-humid zones of West Africa was found to be recognized and exploited by livestock farmers. To assess such traditional cattle breeding systems, a sequence of surveys was employed among herd owners and herders of 27 villages in three districts: group discussions were created to facilitate informal exchange of breeding knowledge and experience between livestock owners and scientists; livestock owners were informed about intermediate results obtained from consecutive survey rounds, and feedback that scientists received during discussions with livestock owners was utilized in planning and refining the intervention. As the aim of the programme was to support and strengthen local breeding endeavors, participatory techniques were successfully combined with the collection of quantitative data necessary for more formal breeding approaches.

IRC in Pakistan response: planning through a participatory approach⁶

IRC Pakistan decided to pay particular attention to the SPHERE indicator on participation when planning their response to the Pakistan earthquake in 2005. In order to fully understand the cultural requirements of IDPs (in particular women) in Jalozi Camp, IRC hygiene promoters conducted focus group discussions with groups of women in four different locations. Women were invited to share their needs in relation to the type, location and layout of bathing, laundering, and toilet infrastructure. During the discussions, the women clearly expressed where they wanted the public sanitation blocks to be located, and the number of families they should have covered. They expressed their preference around separate laundering, bathing and excreta disposal area. Women also explained that latrine and bathing blocks should not be against the outer walls because of the risk of men creating 'peep holes'. Finally, the IRC Hygiene Promoters discussed the possibility of IRC's support to use waste water from the tap-stands and grey water from laundering and bathing to water a series of kitchen gardens and whether this was culturally acceptable and feasible. Following the focus group discussions, IRC adapted their plans for the sanitary block designs in Jalozi Camp and started constructing infrastructure based on the new designs.

Family Malnutrition – Authorities Participation for broader impact in Kenya

As malnutrition and food or water borne diseases were found to be dependent also on knowledge or the lack thereof, rather than solely on actual food and water limitations, a special teaching programme for small school children was initiated in Kenya. It aimed at improving nutritional behavior of the rural population with highest impact on the current and future generations through schools. To change a family's food related behavior and to improve a child's nutrition, an FAO project brought together the Ministry of Education and other public institutions, local agricultural and health experts, teachers and parents. FAO was aiming at identifying the available resources and habits, and the most urgent needs of families to obtain better nutrition for their children. After consultations, partners designed adapted curricula for elementary school teachers. It included sessions on hygiene, eating habits and local food choices that had been identified as weaker areas of knowledge. Training for teachers in participatory methods for the delivery of the messages was also included. In a few weeks of the pilot, a very large portion of children arrived after having a breakfast and with homemade snacks from locally available and traditional food; as a result, it was reported that they were more alert and participated better in the classes and learning.

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/Participation/gambiabreeding-lessons.html>

⁶ <http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/wash-accountability-handbook.pdf>

The initial participation and support at ministerial levels created national level ownership and responsibility at Government Level. Such partnership is now assuring further dissemination of this new method at a wider Country level.

Promoting gender-equality approaches through local groups⁷

Working with groups can be one of the mechanisms through which development programs can increase women's control of deliverables, assets, land, and enhance their status and well-being, where this is lacking. Women draw upon a range of social networks for personal and family livelihood. A range of participatory rural appraisal tools, as well as stratifying groups according to different social criteria, can help ensure women's inclusion in groups. Where strong gender segregation exists, working with existing women's groups may help facilitate entry into communities and allow women to retain control of project benefits.

Gender related norms that disadvantage women should not be challenged outright but strategies for doing so could be weighed against other project objectives, such as increased food security or better management of natural resources, which may influence gender norms. Encouraging women to define their needs and preferences prior to the design of projects is a first step toward ensuring balance between challenging and respecting local norms. Gender norms are also context specific, varying across cultures and even within the same country, implying that there are no one-size-fits-all strategies for addressing the needs of poor rural women.

It must be clear that women also need incentives, especially when the opportunity costs of their time are high, such as in labor-intensive collective action schemes. In the Philippines, for example, attempts to have women monitoring lake water to determine whether soil conservation techniques were reducing silting were unsuccessful until the project realized that women were more interested in health issues than in soil loss. When the project began to raise awareness about how water quality affected the health of families and the program expanded to include monitoring for E. coli, women's participation significantly increased.

Participation and Representation Useful Links and resources

FAO participation website

<http://www.fao.org/Participation/>

The Participation website (inactive since) brings together a broad cross-section of stakeholders interested in participatory approaches and methods in support of sustainable rural livelihoods and food security, including a broad selection of cases studies and other resources.

HAP Participation resources webpage

<http://www.hapinternational.org/case-studies-and-tools/participation.aspx>

Tools, case studies and links about participation from HAP members the joint initiative

ALNAP and Groupe URD's Participation Handbook for Humanitarian Field Workers, and Evaluating Humanitarian Action

<http://www.alnap.org/resources/guides/participation.aspx>

ALNAP facilitated the Global Study on Consultation and Participation of Disaster-affected Populations, carried out by Groupe URD from 2002 to 2004. The Participation Handbook for humanitarian field workers contains detailed practical advice on the participation of affected people in humanitarian action. It contains three sections: Developing a participatory approach (main issues, key factors, building mutual respect, communication methods and advice on reviewing your approach); Implementing your participatory approach at every stage of the project cycle (initial assessment, project design, implementation, monitoring and final evaluation); Tools and additional resources (books, internet sites, etc.).

The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management -

<http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/2010-hap-standard-in-accountability.pdf>

The HAP standard sets some guidance for organisations intending to comply with the HAP Principles of Accountability. The resource is also a means to assess organisations against recognised benchmarks of accountability and quality management and to improve its practice.

⁷ <http://www.fao.org/Participation/Lessons-QuisumbingPandolfelli.html>

The Interim Guide to the 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management -

<http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/interim-guide-to-the-2010-hap-standard.pdf>

According to international standards, guidelines and principles of continual improvement, the HAP 2007 Standard underwent an extensive revision process. The review reflects learning of applying the Standard and accountability practice since 2007. A more comprehensive guide to the HAP 2010 Standard is forthcoming.

The Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response -

<http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook/>

The SPHERE Project's core standards describe conditions that must be achieved in any humanitarian response in order for disaster-affected populations to survive and recover in stable conditions and with dignity. The inclusion of affected populations in the consultative process lies at the heart of Sphere's philosophy.

People In Aid's Code of Good Practice - <http://www.peopleinaid.org/code/>

The Code of Good Practice is a management tool that helps humanitarian aid and development agencies enhance the quality and accountability of their human resources management.

The Joint Standards Initiative: Humanitarian Standards for Aid Workers

<http://www.jointstandards.org/>

The Initiative aims at supporting the humanitarian system in providing accountable programming that meets accepted standards of quality, both in the immediate humanitarian response, and in the development and implementation of organisational and operational strategies for short and long-term recovery and the prevention of future crises.

Sphere Quality and Accountability Best Practices Guidelines

<http://www.sphereproject.org/resources/>

A set of materials to be used in training workshops or as an introduction to the range of quality and accountability initiatives for humanitarian response. The materials enable participants to understand the approach to quality and accountability of 8 main Accountability initiatives (such as HAP, ALNAP or the Sphere project).

ALNAP's Evaluating Humanitarian Action

www.alnap.org/resources/guides/evaluation/ehadac.aspx

This guide was developed after discussions within the evaluation community about how to strengthen evaluation of humanitarian practice, and how to foster more effective use of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria. The objective of this guide is to provide practical support on how to use the DAC criteria in Evaluation of Humanitarian Action (EHA). It draws on good-practice material on evaluation and on EHA, including other guides, handbooks and manuals.

The ECB Project's Good Enough Guide

<http://www.ecbproject.org/the-good-enough-guide/the-good-enough-guide>

In this guide, accountability means making sure that the women, men, and children affected by an emergency are involved in planning, implementing, and judging the response to their emergency. This helps ensure that a project will have the impact they want to see. The *Good Enough Guide* was developed by the Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB). The ECB is a collaborative effort by CARE International, Catholic Relief Services, the IRC, Mercy Corps, Oxfam GB, Save the Children, and World Vision International.