

Participatory Policy Reform from a Sustainable Livelihoods Perspective

Review of concepts and practical experiences



by Marilee Karl
with contributions from
Jorieke Potters, Diego Colateí,
and Stephan Dohrn

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Livelihood Support Programme (LSP)

An inter-departmental programme for improving support for enhancing livelihoods of the rural poor.

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The Livelihood Support Programme

The Livelihood Support Programme (LSP) evolved from the belief that FAO could have a greater impact on reducing poverty and food insecurity, if its wealth of talent and experience were integrated into a more flexible and demand-responsive team approach.

The LSP works through teams of FAO staff members, who are attracted to specific themes being worked on in a sustainable livelihoods context. These cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary teams act to integrate sustainable livelihoods principles in FAO's work, at headquarters and in the field. These approaches build on experiences within FAO and other development agencies.

The programme is functioning as a testing ground for both team approaches and sustainable livelihoods principles.

More information on the LSP is to be found on the last page of this document.

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Participation, Policy & Local Governance sub-programme

The main goal of the participatory policy reform sub-programme is to identify ways to enhance the participation of the poor in policy making processes. It is trying to improve methods to develop trust among multiple stakeholders and broaden the participation of local government, private sector and civil society organizations representing the interests of the rural poor in policy making.

Local people, especially poor and marginalised groups, often have very weak or only indirect influence on the policies that affect their livelihoods. Policies that are developed at central level are often not responsive to local needs and do not provide the rural poor with the access to assets and services that they need to improve their livelihoods.

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Executive Summary

Policies have considerable impact on people's livelihoods. They influence the access people have to livelihoods assets and the strategic possibilities for employing these assets to reach favourable livelihoods outcomes. However, policies developed at central level are often not responsive to the policy needs at local level and, therefore, not conducive to local livelihood strategies. Local populations, especially poor and marginalized groups, have often a very weak or only indirect influence on the policy framework affecting their livelihoods. The development and application of tested strategies and institutional mechanisms to support the participation of the rural poor in policy making would facilitate the generation of policy frameworks to reduce poor people's vulnerability and enable their access to the assets and services they require to pursue sustainable livelihoods.

There are few documented experiences of participatory policy making (PPM) involving the rural poor, and still less analysis of those that have been documented. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw some initial lessons from these that would aid in the development of strategies and mechanisms to support the participation of poor people in policy making.

In so doing, it is important to take some key factors into consideration:

- ∄ *Policy* refers to a course of action designed to achieve particular goals or targets and may be made by governments, private organizations and communities. *Policy process* refers to the way of making policy and encompasses formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policy.
- ∄ Policy and policy making processes are complex and dynamic and they are usually not linear.
- ∄ Policy affects different groups in different ways. The implications for PPM are that any activities directed at influencing policy must analyse how policy change will affect different groups and ensure that all groups affected are involved, particularly marginalized groups such as women and minorities.
- ∄ The institutional and organizational environment is not uniform. The implications for PPM are that no one strategy or framework will fit every situation. The context is of critical importance. Moreover, the environment may change either gradually over time or even quite suddenly, due to political and economic changes and other shocks.
- ∄ Policy and policy making are macro, meso and micro processes. Policies that impact on livelihoods may come from international, regional, national, sub-national or local levels. Analysing and distinguishing the levels of policy and policy making are critical for identifying entry points for potential policy reform.

The first step in developing strategies and mechanisms of PPM is to identify areas for policy reform. A sustainable livelihoods approach can provide an understanding of the livelihoods of the poor, the policy sectors that are relevant to them and whether or not appropriate policies exist in these areas.

Another important step is to identify favourable external enabling environments for PPM. This involved scanning the environment and analysing: the political context; the governance mechanisms, process and institutions; whether there are any windows of opportunities for change; and civil society to see whether there are active civil society groups that could support and facilitate the participatory policy making of the rural poor. This environmental scanning could help identify possible institutional arrangements and participatory mechanisms for supporting PPM.

At the same time, it is critical to identify the constraints that could hinder PPM (e.g. lack of political commitment to reform, lack of effective decentralization, poorly functioning governance, weak civil society, lack of capacity among NGOs and the rural poor). Once constraints are identified, judgements need to be made as to where policy change in any given area is feasible, whether there are alternative avenues to influence policy or whether there are ways to overcome constraints.

A SL approach can help identify the key groups and organizations of the rural poor who should participate in policy making and provide an understanding of their capital assets that enable them to participate. Creating an internal enabling environment is vital to the success of PPM efforts. Information, knowledge, awareness, capacity to articulate demands, and skills in communications and negotiation are all needed for successful PPM.

Finally, efforts to support PPM should include mechanisms for evaluating the participation and the process.

1. Introduction, Background and Methodology

An underlying assumption of the LSP Sub-Programme 3.2 on participation, policy and local governance is that a more active involvement of the rural poor in policy making, either directly or through community-based and civil society organizations, would enhance their access to assets and services and benefit their livelihood and food security goals.

Policies have considerable impact on people's livelihoods. They influence the access people have to livelihoods assets and the strategic possibilities for employing these assets to reach favourable livelihood outcomes.

However, policies developed at central level are often not responsive to the policy needs at local level and, therefore, not conducive to local livelihood strategies. Local populations, especially poor and marginalized groups, have often a very weak or only indirect influence on the policy framework affecting their livelihoods.

This existing gap between micro-level actions and macro-level policy making oftentimes results in policies and institutions that do not enable appropriate access of the rural poor to assets and services they require to improve their livelihoods and food security situation.

The LSP Sub-Programme 3.2 aims to contribute to bridging this gap through the development and application of tested strategies and institutional mechanisms to support the participation of the rural poor in policy making. This would facilitate the generation of policy frameworks to reduce poor people's vulnerability and enable their access to the assets and services they require to pursue more sustainable livelihoods.

This overview of the current thinking on and experiences in supporting participatory policy reform is intended to assist the Sub-programme 3.2 to pursue these objectives.

The preparation of this paper involved an extensive literature review of more than one hundred documents relating, directly or indirectly, to participatory policy making. The bibliography lists these documents. The paper also benefited from the input of members of the Sub-programme 3.2 and others. Requests for inputs were extended to fifty-three FAO technical officers, two IFAD technical officers and one consultant. Thirty-six responses were received and interviews were held with 22 of those who responded. Meetings of the sub-programme 3.2 members provided feedback on the outline and draft of the paper.

2. Sustainable Livelihoods and Participatory Policy Making: Issues and Answers

This section takes a brief look at definitions and basic concepts of sustainable livelihoods (SL) approaches, policy and policy processes, and participation and participatory policy making (PPM). It also refers readers to sources of more in-depth discussion. It reviews current thinking on PPM and looks at some of the major concepts and issues that are relevant to PPM: the interface between policy and SL approaches, policy and power relations, governance, decentralization, rights-based approaches and legal frameworks, and holding policy makers accountable. Although these concepts and issues are looked at separately, it must be kept in mind that they are inter-related.

2.1 Sustainable livelihoods approaches

This paper assumes a knowledge of sustainable livelihoods (SL) approaches.¹ To refresh memories, a brief summary of the main characteristics and concepts of SL approaches follows.

Sustainable livelihoods approaches were developed in the 1980s by different development agencies and organizations and, especially since the 1990s, have been adopted by many as a framework for looking at development issues and addressing poverty. SL approaches emerged from the growing realization of the need to put the poor and all aspects of their lives and means of living at the centre of development, while at the same time maintaining the sustainability of natural resources for present and future generations.

Livelihood, as understood in SL approaches, can be defined as follows:

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Adapted from Chambers and Conway 1992, cited in DFID 2000: 1).

While the SL approaches used by different development agencies and NGOs vary, they are generally characterized by the following elements:

- § People-centred, with a focus on the poor;
- § Responsive and participatory;
- § Multi-level;
- § Conducted in partnership;
- § Sustainable; and

¹ Readers unfamiliar with SL approaches, or who want a more in-depth review, are referred to: Ashley, Caroline and Diane Carney. 1999. *Sustainable livelihoods; lessons from early experiences*. London: Department for International Development; Chambers, R. and G. Conway. 1992. *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century*. IDS Discussion Paper 296. Brighton: IDS; and DFID. 2000. *Sustainable livelihoods guidance sheets*. London: Department for International Development. See the bibliography for other documents on the subject.

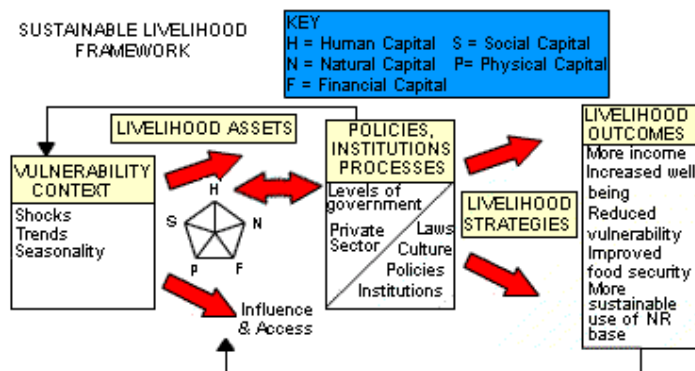
Š Dynamic.

The particular sustainable livelihoods framework developed by the Department for International Development (DFID) contains the following elements:

- Š An analysis of the causes of vulnerability, including trends, shocks and seasonality;
- Š An analysis of livelihood assets at the individual, household and community level, comprising human, social, financial, physical and natural resource capital;
- Š The context within which livelihoods evolve, including micro and macro level policies; civic, economic and cultural institutions; laws and governance;
- Š Livelihoods strategies; and
- Š Livelihood outcomes, assessed in terms of reduced vulnerability, more food security, more income, increased well-being, and sustainable use of natural resource base (DFID 2000).

This framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Sustainable livelihoods framework



2.2 Policy and policy processes

Policy can be defined as ‘course of action designed to achieve particular goals or targets’. Public policy is made by government to achieve particular national outcomes. Private organizations or communities may also form their own policy to achieve defined goals (DFID 2000).

While this definition of the term ‘policy’ is succinct, literature on SL approaches agrees that policy is complex, dynamic and difficult to define. Moreover, policy cannot be understood in isolation, but must be examined in context and as part of a process. A government, organization or other entity may issue a policy statement, but policy formulation and implementation is mediated through a wide range of institutions and organizations.²

² For a more in-depth examination of concepts and theories of policy and policy processes, see Conway, Tim, Caroline Moser, Andy Norton and John Farrington. 2002. Rights and Livelihoods Approaches: Exploring Policy Dimensions, *Natural resource perspectives*, no. 78, May 2002. London:

The term ‘policy process’ commonly refers to “processes of making policy, of decision-making, and ways of putting issues on the agenda as matters of public concern, along with often rather intangible processes of the way issues are thought of and talked about” (Keeley 2001:5).

Policy processes encompass:

- § Formulation, involving information gathering, analysis and decision-making.
- § Implementation, generally involving a set of rules, regulations and institutions to achieve the goals of the policy.
- § Monitoring and evaluation of the formulation and implementation of policy.

There are a wide variety of theories of policy and policy making. A widely-held view is the linear model (also called the mainstream, common-sense or rational model). This assumes that policy making is a rational, logical process that moves through sequential stages (Sutton 1999: 9) i.e.:

- § Recognizing and defining the nature of the issues at hand.
- § Identifying possible courses of action to deal with these issues.
- § Weighing the advantages and disadvantage of these alternatives.
- § Choosing the option that offers the best solution.
- § Implementing the policy.
- § Possible evaluation of the outcome.

In real life situations, however, policy processes tend to be more complex: “policy processes are often distinctly non-linear, inherently political and contested, and more incremental and haphazard” than the linear model suggests (Keeley 2001: 9). Moreover, implementation of policy “requires consensus building, participation of key stakeholders, conflict resolution, compromise, contingency planning, resource mobilisation and adaptation” (Sutton 1999: 23).

Some ‘models’ of policy processes or ways that policy is made are:

- § small changes to existing policy in incremental stages;
- § debate and negotiation between the state and civil society actors;
- § a process of trial and error, with hypotheses tested against reality;
- § the bureaucratic process and the institutions from which it emerges;
- § political struggle between interest groups within society.

Looking at the wide variety of policy making models leads to the conclusion that there is no one model of policy making that is universally valid and applicable. How policy is made depends on the context. The experiences of influencing policy, described in later sections of this paper, confirm this view.

In summary:

Overseas Development Institute; DFID. 2000. *Sustainable livelihoods guidance sheets*. London: Department for International Development; Johnson, Craig and Daniel Start. 2001. *Rights, claims and capture: Understanding the politics of pro-poor policy*. Working Paper 145. London: Overseas Development Institute.; Keeley, James. 2001. *Influencing policy processes for sustainable livelihoods: Strategies for Change*. Lessons for Change in Policy and Organisations, no. 2. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies; Mayers, James and Stephen Bass. 1999. *Policy that works for forests and people*. IIED; OECD. nd. *Citizens as partners: Information, consultation and public participation in policy making*; Pasteur, Kath. 2001. *Tools for sustainable livelihoods: policy analysis*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies; and Sutton, Rebecca. 1999. *The policy process: An overview*. Working Paper 118. London: Overseas Development Institute.

- § Policy and policy making are complex and dynamic: Policy processes include several components: formulation, which involves information gathering, analysis and decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.
- § Policy processes are usually not linear
- § Policy processes are affected by political, social and economic circumstances; therefore, no one model of policy making is universally applicable.
- § Policy and policy processes occur at the micro, meso and macro levels, and these levels are interlinked.

2.3 Participation and participatory policy making (PPM)

Definitions and concepts of participation in development have evolved over time.³ In the 1950s and 1960s, NGOs and grassroots activists began promoting community and popular participation. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, FAO was among the first multilateral agencies to promote popular participation in development projects and programmes.

In the context of development projects and programmes, popular participation was interpreted along three broad lines (Oakley 1988):

- § Participation as contribution, i.e. voluntary or other forms of input by rural people to predetermined programmes and projects.
- § Participation as organization, either externally conceived or emerging as a result of the process of participation.
- § Participation as empowerment, enabling people to develop skills and abilities to become more self-reliant, and to make decisions and take actions essential to their development.

Concepts of participation have widened to include not only the rural poor but also other stakeholders and sectors of civil society. This is reflected in the definition of participation as "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them" (World Bank 1996, p. xi).

Different development agencies distinguish a continuum of participation, ranging from minimal to intense participation. The continuum of participation used by the World Bank for the poverty reduction strategy (PRS) process is commonly referred to as the 'ladder of participation' and can be summarized as:

- § Information sharing: one-way flows of information to the public.
- § Consultation: two-way flows of information between the coordinators of the consultation and the public.
- § Joint decision making.
- § Empowerment: transfer of control over decision making and resources to stakeholders.

³ For a summary of concepts of participation in the development field, see Karl, Marilee. 2000. *Monitoring and evaluating stakeholder participation in agriculture and rural development projects: A literature review*. Rome: FAO, SD Dimensions. See also Cornwall, Andrea. 2002. Locating citizen participation, in Gaventa et al, *IDS bulletin*, vol. 33, no. 2, April 2002; and McGee, Rosemary with Andy Norton. 2002. *Participation in poverty reduction strategies: A synthesis of experience with participatory approaches to policy design, implementation and monitoring*. IDS Working Paper 109. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

The continuum of participation can include other steps in the ladder:

- § Contribution: voluntary or other forms of input to predetermined programmes and projects.
- § Information sharing: stakeholders are informed about their rights, responsibilities and options.
- § Consultation: stakeholders are given the opportunity to interact and provide feedback, and may express suggestions and concerns. However, analysis and decisions are usually made by outsiders and stakeholders have no assurance that their input will be used.
- § Cooperation and consensus-building: stakeholders negotiate positions and help determine priorities, but the process is directed by outsiders.
- § Decision-making: stakeholders have a role making decisions on policy, project design and implementation.
- § Partnership: stakeholders work together as equals towards mutual goals.
- § Empowerment: transfer of control over decision-making and resources to stakeholders.

These concepts of participation are related to development projects and programmes and assume an external initiator. However, empowerment can also involve capacity building that enables people to set their own agenda and carry it out in the absence of external initiators.

Many critiques of participation in development projects and programmes report that the term 'participation' is often used to refer to information sharing or consultation and that it seldom reaches the levels of joint decision making or initiation and control by stakeholders (McGee with Norton 2000: 63).

Recent thinking about citizen participation looks at the concept of participation from a perspective that acknowledges the possibility of citizens taking autonomous action and creating their own opportunities for participation. Development efforts to promote participation, in this perspective, focus on creating spaces for participation, whereby "citizens gain meaningful opportunities to exercise voice and hold to account those who invite them to participate" (Cornwall 2002:56).

Participatory policy making carries participation beyond the framework of projects and programmes to the arena of policy processes. It implies the empowerment of stakeholders to take part in the whole cycle of the policy process: formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy. In practice, however, participation in policy making can also be along a continuum.

A crucial question is **who** participates. A stakeholder analysis for a particular policy can help identify those who should be involved in the participatory policy making process.

Some benchmarks for quality participation are:

- § Provision of full information to key partners on past policy in the area concerned, its impact, need and rationale for new policy;
- § Support to enhance capacity of key partners where necessary, to permit them to understand and utilize the information;
- § Facilitated consultation and negotiation across different stakeholder groups to bring out diverse perspectives and priorities and attain agreement on the resolution of differences;

- Š A defined and publicized procedure for providing feedback to all key partners and supporting them in the fulfilment of their roles in subsequent implementation of the policy;
- Š Built-in monitoring procedure to provide feedback to key partners periodically throughout the whole process (McGee with Norton 2000: 69, based on Tandon 1999).

Some measures of quality in participation in policy work are:

- § Quality of the resulting policy: in terms of how equitable, far-sighted and sustainable its effects are;
- § Inclusiveness: the hearing and inclusion in negotiations of all the different perspectives and priorities on a particular issue;
- § Broad-based ownership: attainment of widespread ownership of and support for the policy in the country and throughout the population;
- § Capacity-building: enhanced capacities of various stakeholder groups and public agencies to enable participation in future policy work (McGee with Norton 2000: 69).

2.4 SL approaches, policy and the poor

“Adopting the sustainable livelihoods approach provides a way to improve the identification, appraisal, implementation and evaluation of development programmes so that they better address the priorities of poor people, both directly and at a policy level” (DFID 2000:5).

What contribution can a sustainable livelihoods approach make to addressing the priorities of poor people at policy level?⁴

Some argue that SL approaches are easier to apply at the micro-level than at the meso and macro levels and that issues of political processes and power relations are not strongly brought out (Norton and Foster 2001: 10). Others, however, affirm that SL approaches have much to contribute at the level of policy: “The sustainable livelihoods approach recognises the importance of policies and institutions in governing poor people’s access to livelihood assets, and in influencing their livelihood strategies and their vulnerability to shocks and stresses. Hence, the approach advocates a more ‘upstream’ approach to reducing poverty. In addition to micro-level work that directly aims to improve poor people’s livelihoods, it recognises that for change to be sustainable macro-level issues need also to be addressed, including policy” (Pasteur 2001: 3).

One of the key contributions an SL approach can make to policy analysis is its focus on the livelihoods of the poor: “An analysis of policy for sustainable livelihoods (SL) requires an understanding of the livelihood priorities of the poor, the policy sectors that are relevant to them, and whether or not appropriate policies exist in those sectors. The policy priorities of poor people will be realized more effectively if they have the capacity to articulate their demands and influence the policy process” (Pasteur 2001:1).

An SL approach is based on principles that can be applied to policy making efforts: i.e. interventions in support of the poor should be people centred and participatory, holistic, dynamic, and sustainable; build on strengths; and link macro to micro.

⁴ A review of the literature has turned up only a few sources that deal with the relationship between SL approaches and policy making, either from a theoretical perspective or practical experiences. However, four documents have been identified as particularly useful and relevant: *Influencing policy processes for sustainable livelihoods: Strategies for change* (Keeley 2001); *The potential of using sustainable livelihoods approaches in poverty reduction strategies* (Norton and Foster 2001); *Tools for sustainable livelihoods: policy analysis* (Pasteur 2001); and *Sustainable livelihoods approaches at the policy level* (Thomson 2000).

SL approaches also take a cross-sectoral perspective. Whereas policy is often made in relation to a single sector, such as agriculture, an SL approach looks at how policy affects all aspects of people's livelihoods. Agricultural policy from this perspective is not just a matter of improving agricultural production. It must be examined from the perspective of its linkages with other areas, such as education, health, and finance. At a practical level, this may mean the need to make trade-offs between different aims. (Keeley 2001: 7).

An SL approach to policy raises key questions (Pasteur 2001: 2):

- § What are poor people's livelihood priorities and what policies affect them?
- § Are the methods used to make and implement policy supportive of SL principles?
- § What institutions and organizations mediate the interface between policy and people?
- § In which ways do particular policies impact on people's livelihood strategies?

2.5 Politics and power relations

Policy making is not neutral. It is impossible to ignore the existence of power relations between various stakeholders. In examining how the poor can influence policy, the argument that 'political capital' must be included in the SL framework (Baumann 2000) becomes especially pressing. As Baumann says, "The notion of political capital is critical in linking structures and processes to the local level and understanding the real impact these have on sustainable livelihoods. Political capital explains where local people are situated – in terms of balance of power in relation to other groups" (Baumann 2000:5).

Political capital is a critical element in influencing policy making. It is not static and is impacted by both internal and external factors in the environment; e.g. capacity building in negotiation, group formation, changes in government, and legislation. Policy modifications are likely to alter the balance of power relations; therefore, attempts to influence policy are likely to be met by resistance and challenges from those who stand to lose in the power equation. On the other hand, proposed policy changes may also offer benefits to the non-poor as well as the poor. When powerful groups also stand to gain, PPM has a greater chance to succeed.

The political context is also a key element in determining the potential for influencing policy making. The type of political regime may either enhance or impede the possibilities for engaging in PPM. The political context may change along with changes in government and the political parties in power.

Although examining the political capital of different groups may help to identify those with more or less power to influence policy, it is also essential to examine the power relations within groups, communities and households. This may reveal marginalized and less powerful segments of the population within these entities. Efforts to empower and build the capacity of people to participate in policy making processes must take into consideration the existing power relations and opportunities within local groups, communities and households. Thomson (2000: 4) points out that while empowerment and participation of both men and women is a major aim and element of the SL framework, analysis is often carried out at the household level, and this may make it difficult to ensure gender sensitivity.

2.6 Governance

Governance is the exercise of authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It has been used to mean "how the institutions, rules and systems of the state – the executive, legislature, judiciary and military – operate at central and local level, and how the state relates to individual citizens, civil society and the private sector" (DFID 2000). It has also been defined as "the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences" (UNDP cited in Thomson 2000: 4).

Governance mechanisms, processes and institutions affect the possibilities and ways of engaging in PPM. Top-down types of governance may make it more difficult to facilitate participation in policy making. Bureaucracies, in particular, often impede participatory policy processes. Participatory policy making requires both the active engagement of the poor and responsiveness from the state. Efforts may be needed to increase responsiveness from the top at the same time as strengthening voices from the bottom. Changes in political context and political capital are likely to affect the bureaucratic context and possibilities for influencing policy.

Analysis of the political and bureaucratic contexts is crucial for successful PPM efforts and affects the choice of strategies to influence policy. Where political commitment and bureaucratic capacity exist for policy reform, it may be possible to participate in national policy reform processes. In other instances, it may be possible to create spaces for the voices of the poor to be heard in governance. In still other circumstances, it may be necessary to force policy debates to happen: "This may happen by helping marginalised groups to articulate their concerns, by supporting processes of empowerment, improving awareness of rights, building advocacy and communication skills, increasing knowledge of institutional and legal processes and demanding inclusion in policy debates, or indeed the creation of a policy process" (Keeley 2001: 11).

2.7 Decentralization

There has been a growing trend towards decentralization of governance in many countries. A recent study (Manor 2000) synthesizes lessons from 60 experiences of decentralization in countries of Asia and Africa. This study distinguishes three types of decentralization:

- § Deconcentration or administrative decentralization: the dispersal of agents of higher levels of government into lower-level arenas.
- § Fiscal decentralization: the downward transfer of decision-making powers over funds to lower levels.
- § Devolution or democratic decentralization: the downward transfer of resources and power (and, often, tasks) to lower-level authorities which are in some way democratic.

A meeting of experts on farmer organizations development, held in Nairobi in March 2002, concluded that: "The recent and continuing adoption of different models of decentralization clearly offers new opportunities for rural people to participate in local economic and social development planning" (Nairobi Seminar 2002:7). In a similar vein, Norton and Foster state that "It seems natural to assume that moving the location of decision-making closer to the community level will lead to more responsive, poverty-focused public services" (p 14). Both documents, however, note that this is

not necessarily the case. Decentralized government “may simply provide another opportunity to reinforce the power of local elites and foster clientelism” (Nairobi Seminar 2002: 7).

In order for decentralization to offer opportunities for PPM, it must be combined with good governance and possibilities for all stakeholders, especially the poor and marginalized, to participate. A particular issue is that decentralization of decision making is usually not accompanied by a similar decentralization of financial resources. This has negative effects on the possibilities of implementing policies that are made at a decentralized level. If the communities involved were able to provide some of the funds for decentralized government, this might increase the willingness of local government to listen to the demands of the community.

Decentralization can contribute to the improvement of governance in the areas of transparency, responsiveness to citizens, openness, accountability and flow of information (Manor 2002). This would help create favourable conditions for PPM.

2.8 Rights-based approaches and legal frameworks

Governance and decentralization are closely linked to another recent trend: rights approaches to development anchored in the international human rights system formed by the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent commitments made by government over the years.

A recent study (Conway et al 2002) concludes that a rights approach has important implications for policy processes: “A rights approach draws attention to who does and does not have power, and how this affects the formulation and implementation of policy” (p. 1). This study identifies areas of complementarity of sustainable livelihoods approaches and rights approaches:

- § “Rights analysis can provide insights into the distribution of power. By identifying groups lacking effective rights – and groups who may be denying rights to others – it can highlight the root causes of the generation and perpetuation of poverty and vulnerability. As such a rights approach provides one possible way of examining the operation of institutions and political processes...that influence the livelihoods of the poor....
- § Sustainable livelihoods analysis offers one way to prioritise efforts to obtain rights for poor groups. By identifying constraints on people’s livelihoods, it can suggest which kind of rights are most important for a particular group at a particular time...” (p. 3).

The signing of international rights conventions or setting rights down on paper is, in itself, no guarantee a country will base its policies on these rights. However, rights on paper can be an entry point to work towards pro-poor policies and can open up spaces for PPM. Experience has shown that civil society organizations have often played a major role in “identifying key livelihood rights, pressing for them to be established in law, and subsequently ensuring that they are effectively enforced” (Conway et al 2002: 4).

Functioning legal frameworks and institutions along with good laws are important both for implementing policy and creating an enabling environment for participation in the policy process (FAO 2000c). It is often observed that there are significant gaps between laws and their enforcement. However, “there is a danger in making too much of a distinction between legislation, on the one hand, and its implementation on the

other. While no one can reasonably deny that implementation of law requires attention to external economic, social and institutional factors, it is also true that law enforcement can be significantly influenced by the way legislation is drafted in the first place” (Lindsay et al 2002: 2).

Nevertheless, a functioning legal framework – institutional and judicial mechanisms – is crucial for ensuring the implementation of policies, rights and laws. On the one hand, a good legal framework will facilitate PPM and, on the other, efforts at policy reform may need to give attention to how legislation and legal frameworks will affect the implementation of policy.

2.9 Holding policy makers accountable

“Accountability refers to the ability to call public officials, private employers or service providers to account, requiring that they be answerable for their policies, action and use of funds” (Narayan 2002: 16).

Although literature on issues of accountability, monitoring and evaluation in policy processes is sparse, there is agreement that accountability, monitoring and evaluation are important elements in ensuring that policies are implemented effectively.

Narayan (2002: 17) distinguishes three main types of accountability mechanisms: political, administrative and public. “Political accountability of political parties and representatives is increasingly through elections. Administrative accountability of government agencies is through internal accountability mechanisms, both horizontal and vertical within and between agencies. Public or social accountability mechanisms hold government agencies accountable to citizens. Citizen action or social accountability can reinforce political and administrative accountability mechanisms”.

Access to information is a major prerequisite for people to hold accountable those responsible for implementing policy and to monitor and evaluate policy implementation and effectiveness. However, the few documented experiences of citizen monitoring have been mainly in the realms of public service delivery and public expenditure.

Recent thinking about participation, citizenship and accountability is opening up new dimensions of accountability that are relevant to PPM. As Gaventa says: “Changing meanings of rights and citizenship, as well as opening of new roles and spaces for citizen participation, raise critical questions about the ways in which civil society, state and market actors hold each other to account. Rather than focusing simply on the role of the state in ensuring the rights of citizenship, new models of accountability are emerging which focus on the role of citizens themselves in monitoring the enforcement of rights, and in demanding public scrutiny and transparency” (Gaventa 2002: 9).

Citizenship, participation and accountability are linked together in a synergy that has been called the ‘governance wheel’: “Participation is about the involvement of all stakeholders, the state and non-state, through a process of communication and negotiation to influence the decisions that affect their lives. Participation leads to the creation and sustenance of accountability. A sense of the right to accountability provides the basis on which citizens can act. It leads to openness and transparency in policy making. Such accountability builds up social reciprocities characterized by equity, intergroup tolerance and inclusive citizenship. Responsive and active citizenship, in turn, results in meaningful participation” (Tandon 2002: 63-64).

3. Review of FAO and Non-FAO Experiences

This section presents a number of FAO and non-FAO experiences in supporting participation of the rural poor in policy making processes.

A review of the literature and interviews with FAO and IFAD technical officers reveal few experiences of PPM. Those that do exist are not well-documented. The information is fragmented and incomplete, and had to be extracted from documents that were written for other purposes; e.g. workshop reports, travel reports, and descriptive materials focusing on aspects of the project or programme other than policy. Much of the material deals with plans rather than results or processes. There has been little analysis or evaluation of results or processes. Ten cases of FAO and non-FAO experiences were selected from this documentation.

The information presented includes: the initiator, source of funding and dates of the experience; the objectives; who participated; the processes and institutional mechanisms used; the results; the enabling environment; the problems and constraints encountered; the sustainability of the process; and the lessons learned. The cases are:

1. Mali: National Cotton Production and Marketing Policy
2. Kenya: Scaling up Participatory Extension
3. Hindu Kush – Himalayas: Participatory Policy Framework: Empowering Local Community in Livestock Resource Planning and Decision Making
4. Turkey: National Forestry Programme
5. Mozambique: Land Policy
6. Costa Rica: Gender and Participation in Agricultural Development Planning
7. Honduras: Participatory Consolidation of Government Institutions and Territorial Planning
8. Mexico: Programme of Integrated Rural Development in the Tropical Wetlands (PRODERITH) - Rural Communication System
9. Brazil: Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre
10. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs): examples of participation in the PRSP processes in Bolivia, Malawi, and Rwanda

3.1 Mali: National Cotton Production and Marketing Policy

(Bingen 1998)

The case study on influencing the national cotton production and marketing policy in Mali is an example of an autonomous initiative of farmers demanding policy reform.

3.1.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates:

National Union of Cotton and Food Crop Producers (SYCOV). Took place in 1991.

3.1.2 Goals and Objectives:

Changes in national cotton production and marketing policy.

3.1.3 Who Participated:

The National Union of Cotton and Food Crop Producers (SYCOV) and the nationalized Malian Company for Textile Development (CMDT).

3.1.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

The process consisted of two phases: a confrontational approach taken by SYCOV and a negotiated settlement between SYCOV and the CMDT.

3.1.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs):

Two important factors were critical to the success of the effort:

- § Capacity building and empowerment: SYCOV emerged as a producers' union with the power and strength to confront and negotiate with the CMDT from a long process of capacity building and empowerment. Mali has had a history of strong village associations (VAs) dating from the 1970s. Over the years, several different development projects and programmes have engaged in capacity building with these VAs. The formation of a federation of VAs strengthened their power to negotiate successfully with government agencies.
- § Opportunity: a change of government in 1991 provided SYCOV with an opening to press its demands at a time when the new government was eager to prove its commitment to democracy.

3.1.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

The main problems cited by the case study were in the areas of accountability, power relations, and the danger of co-option. As the capacity and strength of the VAs and the union increased, there were signs of the emergence of power elites and a need for greater accountability of SYCOV leaders. Attempts by the government to co-opt the union also threatened its ability to continue to serve as a progressive political force.

3.1.7 Results:

Cotton producers obtained the desired changes in national cotton production and marketing policy in 1991.

3.1.8 Sustainability:

Sustainability depends on the ability of SYCOV to continue as a progressive political force in the face of possible co-option" by government forces.

3.1.9 Lessons Learned:

Capacity building is key to the emergence of strong farmers' organizations that can take action and obtain policy changes from government.

3.2 Kenya: Scaling up Participatory Extension

(Anyonge et al 2001)

The case study on scaling up participatory extension in Kenya is an example of a government initiated process assisted by donor agencies and implemented by government agencies.

3.2.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates:

The process was initiated by the Government of Kenya with assistance from the Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA). It was implemented by the Forestry Extension Services Division. Farmers shared costs of implementing pilot project activities. The initial funding phases were 1990-1998.

3.2.2 Goals and Objectives:

To assess the impact of conventional service delivery.

To develop participatory extension methods, such as local level planning (LLP).

To incorporate experiences of pilot participatory extension projects into national extension policy (scaling up).

3.2.3 Who Participated:

There was widespread participation ranging from farmers and community groups to extension staff to national extension policy makers, research institutions and donors.

3.2.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

The process was carried out in methodological steps over a number of years, beginning with the assessment of conventional extension delivery, moving to pilot projects to develop participatory extension methods, and scaling up to incorporating the experiences of these projects into national extension policy.

A wide variety of participatory mechanisms were used, including: surveys of farming households and farmers' focus groups; socio-economic and marketing studies; PRA; training of extension staff in participatory methodologies; open village meetings (barazas); focus group discussions to develop multi-agency extension plans; meetings with women's groups leaders and village elders; national agroforestry extension workshop; field visits by policy makers to project sites; and farmers' views collected by agricultural extension policy team. Donors shared their experiences of LLP and were represented at policy meetings.

3.2.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs):

A number of critical factors led to the success of the project. There was a favourable external environment for the government to initiate the project in that farmers expressed the need for improved extension delivery and methodologies. An opportune moment was provided by the abolition of a costly and time consuming tree felling permit. The project also created a favourable internal environment by providing capacity building for all stakeholders and undertaking extensive consultation, which created broad ownership of the process. The project was also capable of adapting to the changing national policy environment of deregulation and economic liberalization.

3.2.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

A number of factors lessened the sense of ownership of the project, however. These included lack of transparency and accountability between those implementing the extension plans and farmers and community groups and the fact that funds were channelled through just one government agency.

Not all the participatory methods were equally successful. Open public meetings were too large and attracted less active members of the community. As a result, attendance was inconsistent and it was not possible to allocate and follow up responsibilities.

3.2.7 Results:

Assessment showed that school and farmers' LLP groups were the most effective conventional service delivery methods.

LLP was carried out as a pilot project in two districts. It succeeded in facilitating community planning and implementing a range of NRM activities.

Communities in the two locations continue their own development activities, mobilizing resources and engaging the services they require.

The pilot projects have had an influence on national policy.

3.2.8 Sustainability:

A critical factor that could threaten the sustainability of the changes in the extension policy and methods is the attitude of extension staff accustomed to implementing training and visit (T and V) extension methods. For this reason, intensive staff training was planned for the first two years of implementing the new policy and methods.

3.2.9 Lessons Learned:

The project learned a number of lessons from its experience in using participatory methods, i.e.: community feedback is best channelled through village elders and leaders of organized groups as long as consideration is given to gender in community representation; community experience in planning and budgeting enables them to take up these responsibilities when extension service funding declines; developing technology and conducting trials on representative farms, makes it possible to reach larger numbers of farmers; and timely capacity building of extension staff in their weak areas is crucial.

3.3 Hindu Kush – Himalayas: Participatory Policy Framework: Empowering Local Community in Livestock Resource Planning and Decision Making

(Tulachan and Maki-Hokkonen 2002)

The case study on developing a participatory policy framework for community empowerment in the Hindu Kush – Himalayas is an example of a carefully planned, step by step, participatory process initiated by FAO in partnership with an INGO.

3.3.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates:

The process was initiated and funded by FAO (Animal Production and Health Division) in partnership with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) Mountain Farming Division. The time frame was 1997 – 2001.

3.3.2 Goals and Objectives:

To develop a participatory policy framework for community empowerment in livestock resource planning and decision making in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas (HKH) region.

3.3.3 Who Participated:

The process of developing the policy framework involved a range of participants including, research institutes, FAO, and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

3.3.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

A number of steps were taken in preparation for the multi-stakeholder consultations in which the proposal for the policy framework was drafted. These preparations included state of the art review studies and the development of a livestock data base; an international symposium of experts on livestock production systems in mountain areas; country papers prepared by resource persons; and case studies, carried out using participatory techniques, to identify key indicators. On the basis of these materials, a multi-stakeholder workshop was held with the participation of farmers, ICIMOD, research institutes, government agencies and FAO to draft the proposal. A similar multi-stakeholder workshop is planned on operationalizing the framework.

3.3.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs):

A favourable enabling environment facilitated the process: the failure of past top-down livestock development approaches meant there was readiness in the area for developing a new participatory policy framework.

Critical factors favouring the success of the initiative included: the existence of INGOs in the area with considerable development experience and expertise; the existence of efforts of projects and NGOs working at the grassroots using participatory approaches; the existence of some successful small-scale livestock enterprises (with mainly women as the active players).

3.3.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

The fact that the mountain regions of the area are diverse, fragile, marginal, vulnerable and resource poor was a risk factor.

3.3.7 Results:

A concrete proposal for a policy framework for community empowerment in livestock resource planning and decision making in the region was prepared in 2001 and is ready for field testing and validation in 2002.

3.3.8 Sustainability:

External funding was necessary for the process of developing the proposed framework and additional funding will be required for its testing and validation. Once the framework is successfully implemented, it is expected to empower farmers' communities to plan and manage local livestock resources in order to improve mountain livelihoods in a sustainable manner.

3.3.9 Lessons Learned:

- § The development of a framework for community participation and empowerment for livestock resource planning and management must take place in the context of NRM.
- § Location-specific planning strategies need to be developed.
- § Planning processes should be output oriented rather than service oriented.
- § The policy framework should be flexible and modifiable.

3.4. Turkey: National Forestry Programme

(enyaz 2001; Reeb 2001)

The case study on the National Forestry Programme (NFP) in Turkey is an example of an FAO-assisted process to prepare a national forestry policy that takes into consideration the forest-related needs of a range of stakeholders, including rural and urban populations and wood-based industries.

3.4.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates:

This is an FAO TCP/TUR/0066 with a time frame of 2000 – 2003.

3.4.2 Goals and Objectives:

To provide technical assistance for preparation of a National Forestry Programme (NFP) that will take into consideration the needs of rural and urban populations as well as wood-based industries.

3.4.3 Who Participated:

Project staff, staff of the Ministry of Forestry and other ministries, village cooperative representatives, NGOs; private sector, and academics.

3.4.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

Efforts were made to include the input of forest villagers and other stakeholders in the policy formulation through a field survey to gather recommendations. A training workshop was held to equip persons to conduct the field survey. The results were presented at a national-level workshop.

3.4.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs):

Information was not provided.

3.4.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

A number of constraints were identified that hindered the participation of villagers in the survey. These included the lack of adequate information and poor timing. Villagers were busy in the fields during the survey and this limited their participation. Another major problem was the absence of feedback mechanisms to inform stakeholders about the outcome of the national workshop or whether their recommendations had been taken into account.

3.4.7 Results:

Input from stakeholders is under consideration.

3.4.8 Sustainability:

The formulation of the NFP is still on-going and there has not yet been a full assessment of the process or its sustainability.

3.4.9 Lessons Learned:

An enabling environment needs to be created to ensure the participation of stakeholders. This environment should include:

- § Capacity building of (i) the facilitators, not only in participatory approaches, but on the NFP process and its implications as well; and (ii) stakeholders on how to negotiate their interests.
- § Awareness campaigns using a variety of media.
- § Providing information about the process to the stakeholders.
- § Use of existing communication channels, such as NGOs working at village level, to provide information.
- § Sufficient time and resources to obtain active and representative participation.
- § Inclusion of marginalized groups among the stakeholders.
- § Setting times and places for meetings that are convenient, taking into consideration the work schedules and other responsibilities of the village populations.
- § Allowing sufficient time for the entire process to be carried out effectively.
- § Establishing feedback mechanisms to inform stakeholders about the results of their inputs.

3.5 Mozambique: Land Policy

(Tanner 2002; McGee with Norton 2000: 50)

The Mozambique Land Policy case study provides an example of a government initiated participatory process, with technical assistance from FAO.

3.5.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates

The process was initiated by the Government of Mozambique, with the assistance of FAO. The time frame was 1994-1997.

3.5.2 Goals and Objectives:

The objective was to develop a new land policy that would form the basis of a new land law.

3.5.3 Who Participated:

The process included participation from government, academia, civil society organizations and representatives of farmers' cooperatives. Government participation was cross-sectoral through an Inter-Ministerial Land Commission. An FAO advisory team provided assistance and advice.

3.5.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

The mechanisms used included consultations with stakeholders at local and regional levels, a series of seminars, and opportunities for stakeholders to submit reports and comments. A National Land Conference with multi-stakeholder participation was also held.

3.5.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs):

The impetus for developing the new land policy was the transition of the country to a market economy. Unlike other countries in Southern Africa, land had never been concentrated in the hands of a minority. In order to prevent this from happening and protect the traditional land rights of farmers, a new land policy and law were needed. Without such a policy, the transition to a market economy brought with it the risk of privatization of land in the hands of a few and the loss of access to land by the local farmers.

A favourable enabling environment was created by the Government's commitment to a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder process.

A strong civil society movement, the *Campanha Terra* (Land Campaign), that included a coalition of 150 civil rights organizations, farmers' associations, women's movements, church groups, trade unions, and academics, stimulated civil society participation through:

- § Direct action, including a march on parliament led by farmers;
- § Information dissemination, using a wide variety of information dissemination media, including seminars, farmers' workshops, posters, pamphlets, comic books, theatre, radio, audio cassettes and video; and
- § NGO-led debate in rural communities and channelling of feedback to the Inter-Ministerial Land Commission.

3.5.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

Constraints included: pressure from powerful socio-economic groups and attempts to monopolize land; and ingrained views and reliance on past policy approaches among many people in important circles.

3.5.7 Results:

The policy was formulated in 1995 and, in 1997, a new land law went into effect.

3.5.8 Sustainability:

While the process resulted in a new land policy and law, a number of concrete steps were deemed necessary to ensure their implementation, including:

- § widespread information dissemination about the new land policy and law;
- § capacity building for those charged with overseeing implementation; and
- § a strengthened judicial system.

3.5.9 Lessons Learned:

Although an objective of developing a new policy was to protect traditional land rights, it was found that some traditions and customs discriminated against women and their rights to land. These were in conflict with constitutional protections of equal rights. In such circumstances, it was decided that constitutional rights should prevail in the new land policy and law.

3.6 Costa Rica: Gender and Participation in Agricultural Development Planning

(Bifani 1997)

The Costa Rica case study on gender and participation in agricultural development planning is an example of a government initiated process with technical assistance from FAO.

3.6.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates:

The process was initiated by the Government of Costa Rica, with the assistance of FAO TCP/COS/4552(T). The time frame was 1996-1997.

3.6.2 Goals and Objectives:

The goal was to contribute to the introduction and development of an alternative methodological approach, the Gender Approach, in the guidelines, programmes and activities of the mixed farming and environmental sectors.

3.6.3 Who Participated:

The process included broad participation from women farmers, farmers' and producers' organizations, local agricultural centres, district-level agencies and a national-level multi-sectoral Gender Planning Committee.

3.6.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

A three-step process included:

- § Capacity building for technical and administrative personnel and farmers on gender issues.

- § Institutional strengthening and formation of women's organizations at the grassroots and regional level, and capacity building in the use of communication media to promote participation and equality. About 80 women farmers were trained in management and negotiation. Two regional organizations of women farmers were formed.
- § Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder consultations.

3.6.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs):

A favourable enabling environment was provided by:

- § The Government of Costa Rica's adoption of a Productive Reconversion Programme of the mixed farming sector, adhering to the principles of Agenda 21 and sustainable development.
- § A process of decentralization and recognition of the importance of farmers' participation in sustainable development.
- § Government of Costa Rica's concern to improve situation of rural women and the existence of highly motivated Women's Ministry Office and Women's Sector Office.

3.6.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

The process was constrained by its short duration. Projects that attempt to make structural changes require a long period to mature and change long-ingrained attitudes. In this case, deeply rooted gender stereotypes provoked discomfort and defensiveness in some people when dealing with formulations regarding discrimination against women.

3.6.7 Results:

The process resulted in a proposal for strategic guidelines to incorporate the gender approach into the sectors' guidelines. As of 1997, an official document was being prepared with deadlines stipulated for compliance. However, the case study provided no information or assessment regarding the implementation of the guidelines.

3.6.8 Sustainability:

Elements that are expected to promote sustainability are: the creation of strong groups of women farmers, gender sensitive experts, officials and technicians, and committed officials in the sector's institutions.

3.6.9 Lessons Learned:

A number of elements in the process can be cited as particularly useful in achieving the objectives of the process:

- § Simultaneous entry points at various levels (local, regional and national) were particularly effective as was participation of all social actors: farmers, officials, executives.
- § Capacity building in institutions and farmer bases was essential.
- § Institutional mechanisms promoted transmission of knowledge and experiences both vertically and horizontally.

However, it was found that:

- § Additional efforts are needed to reinforce women farmers' communication channels and mechanisms to negotiate with agencies responsible for financial and technical support.
- § More precision is needed in the formulation of indicators to measure progress.

3.7 Honduras: Participatory Consolidation of Government Institutions and Territorial Planning

(FAO 2002, 2002b)

The case study from Honduras on participatory consolidation of government institutions and territorial planning is an example of a process initiated by a municipal level government.

3.7.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates:

Municipality of La Campa, Honduras. Dates not given.

3.7.2 Goals and Objectives:

To prepare a territorial plan at the municipal level, using participatory methods, that will guarantee a profitable and sustainable use of natural resources, strengthen the cultural and ethnic patrimony of the population, and promote food security and sustainable livelihoods.

3.7.3 Who Participated:

Participants included the local population, farmers' organizations, representative community organizations and the municipal government.

3.7.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

Local populations were consulted through their village councils and sectoral commissions were formed. Representatives of the sectoral commissions participated in the Municipal Development Councils.

3.7.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs)

Critical factors contributing to the success of the process were the social capital of the communities in the form of family and ethnic ties and the existence of traditional consultation practices in the village councils. Another critical factor was the legitimacy of the mayor in the eyes of the local population. In addition, the mayor's efforts received support from an FAO-assisted project in the area.

3.7.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

Risk factors included the lack of basic infrastructure and services and the weak fiscal transfers from the central government.

3.7.7 Results:

The municipality was able to achieve its goal of preparing a territorial plan and was able to raise and spend money through taxation, based on land use, which was acceptable to local populations.

A programme was drafted for organizing the territory (*ordenamiento territorial*) according to assignment and actual use of land with the participation of all municipal dwellers through their respective village councils.

Sectoral commissions were formed within the Consejos de Desarrollo Comunal (CODECO) and CODECO representatives participated in the Municipal Development Councils.

3.7.8 Sustainability:

The sustainability of the local institutional set-up is assured as long as it remains relevant and reflects ethnic ties.

The municipality has been reinforced through the willingness of the local population to pay the taxes necessary for the provision of services. This willingness is expected to continue as long as the services remain relevant and charges are fair.

3.7.9 Lessons Learned:

An important lesson is that local populations are willing to pay taxes as long as: (i) the quality of services received in return is satisfactory and relevant to farmers' needs; and (ii) the level of taxation reflects income. This is critical to the sustainability of the effort. Other experience shows that participatory community planning sometimes cannot be implemented because finances are controlled by the central government.

The relevance of territorial planning is a function of the extent to which the local population has been involved in the design.

Ethnic ties and ancestral tradition may be a source of social capital when applied to natural resource management and agricultural production.

The sustainability of municipal structures is a function of their ability to raise taxes locally.

3.8 Mexico: Programme of Integrated Rural Development in the Tropical Wetlands (PRODERITH) - Rural Communication System

(FAO 1996)

This case study provides an example of a rural communications component designed to promote people's participation and influence in the decision and policy making of a large-scale integrated development programme.

3.8.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates:

The Programme of Integrated Rural Development in the Tropical Wetlands (PRODERITH), Mexico, was a government-initiated programme, financed by a World Bank Loan. FAO provided technical assistance for the communications component. The time frame was: Phase I 1978 – 1984 and Phase II 1986 – 1995.

3.8.2 Goals and Objectives:

The objectives of the component were to create a rural communications system in support of PRODERITH and transfer the system to farmers' associations in order to promote participatory planning and appraisal by farmers; build capacity of farmers and programme staff in the production and use of communications media (e.g. video and radio); and provide programme coordination and management with feedback from the beneficiaries.

3.8.3 Who Participated:

Participants included project staff, development institutions, community groups, farmer leaders, and farmers' associations.

3.8.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

The process included:

- § Training of communication staff and community members in production and use of videos.
- § Production and use of videos to stimulate discussion and debate among the rural communities about their past and present situations and options for improvement; for educational purposes in rural communities; as participatory policy making tools to consult communities about development options, to show project decision makers the progress and problems in the local project areas, and to present the views of the rural communities, in order to contribute to understanding problems and finding solutions.
- § Use of other communication means, such as radio and low-cost media, to complement local information systems.

3.8.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs):

Two critical factors created a favourable environment for developing a rural communications system designed to bring the views of farmers to policymakers and planners:

- § Lessons learned from the failure of a previous large-scale agro-industrial project in the region. The cause of the failure was attributed to top-down planning and implementation which did not take into consideration the needs and views of the local population. Consequently, it was resisted by the local communities. It was, therefore, decided that PRODERITH must involve rural communities in the design and planning stages of the programme and seek local feedback during programme implementation.
- § The process of decentralization taking place in Mexico favoured the development of locally-based communication systems and initiatives.

3.8.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

The economic crisis and structural adjustment in Mexico during the 1980s threatened the success of the programme as a whole, including the rural communications component. The scaling down of personnel and funds resulted in the downsizing of the activities of the rural communications system.

3.8.7 Results:

The rural communication system succeeded in bringing the voices and views of farmers and their communities to the programme's technical staff, institutions, planners and policymakers. Participatory communication became part of the policy development and extension methodologies used within PRODERITH.

A communication system was established consisting of a central unit and a network of several local units capable of implementing communication campaigns.

Training in communication for development reached about 800 000 farmers.

Communication activities were undertaken to support farmers' organizations and their capacity to implement local development plans.

More than 700 videos were produced on a wide range of agricultural and rural development issues and were used for:

- § promoting discussion and debate among rural communities;
- § capacity building of farmers and staff;

- § informing planners, policy makers and institutions about the ongoing situation of the project.

3.8.8 Sustainability:

Sustainability depends on whether the democratic and participatory focus successfully applied during PRODERITH is sufficiently institutionalized and becomes a stable element of rural development.

3.8.9 Lessons Learned:

This rural communication initiative illustrated the key role communication can play in promoting people's participation in planning and policy making. Communication channels and media were able to:

- § bring information to rural communities, enabling them to make informed decisions;
- § stimulate discussion and debate among rural populations on development issues affecting their livelihoods;
- § serve as a means of consultation between planners and local communities;
- § help decision makers understand the problems in the project areas and find solutions; and
- § bring the views of farmers to planners and policymakers.

3.9 Brazil: Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre

(Chavez nd; de Sousa Santos 1998; Goldsmith and Vainer 2001)

The participatory budgeting scheme in Porto Alegre Brazil is an example of participatory policy making at the municipal level initiated by the municipal government.

3.9.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates

The Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) in power in the government of Porto Alegre initiated the process in the 1990s.

3.9.2 Goals and Objectives:

The objectives were to: achieve citizens' direct participation in decision making regarding urban management and local development; and to encourage greater political awareness and power of urban residents and their social organizations.

3.9.3 Who Participated:

Participants came from the ranks of the governing party, professionals, technocrats, the middle class, the working poor, and a few from the very poor. They included:

- § Administrative units of the municipal government.
- § Representatives of neighbourhood-based associations gathered in Regional Assemblies (the city is divided into 16 regions).
- § Participatory Budget Council, composed of delegates from the regions, thematic plenary sessions, municipal workers' union, neighbourhood associations, and representatives of the local government.

3.9.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

After the party's decision to establish a process with broad participation, a methodical structure was established consisting of:

- § Formal accounting by the municipal government for the previous year and its investment and expenditure plan for the current year.
- § Two annual rounds of assemblies (regional and thematic) at which the population can express demands and set priorities for municipal investments and policies. Thematic assemblies centre on issues of public transport and traffic; education; culture and leisure; healthcare and social security; economic development and taxation; and city management and urban development.
- § Preparatory meetings, convened and chaired by the popular councils or community leaderships, where citizens can express and discuss demands and select regional delegates.

3.9.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs):

The main factor making this effort possible was the election of the leftist political party (the PT) with wide support from different sectors of the population. Once in power the decision of the PT to govern not just for the poor, but all urban residents, gained the support of the middle class. This was a critical factor in the success of the participatory budgeting initiative. The existence of an active grassroots movement dating from the early 1980s, including the formation in 1983 of the Federation of Neighbourhood Associations of Porto Alegre (UAMPA) meant that basic consultative structures were already in place at the local level.

Critical success factors internal to the process included:

- § Clear and transparent structures, processes and operational rules.
- § Clear and objective criteria for the allocation of the investment resources available for each region.
- § The ability to overcome the political culture of confrontation and clientalism and to create spaces for negotiation of different claims and demands.
- § The creation of mediating structures, institutions and processes to channel the competing demands and claims of different interest groups and stakeholders.
- § Sufficient time for new processes to get off the ground, be tested and adapted, based on lessons learned.
- § Defined accountability.

3.9.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

The PT had the ability to overcome a number of obstacles that threatened the effort, including: the bankruptcy of the municipal government when it came into office; conflicting trends within the PT, with one faction favouring the inclusion of only community organizations in the budgeting process; and hostility from a conservative city council and right-wing newspapers and television programmes.

3.9.7 Results:

It is generally agreed that the objectives of participatory budgeting have been achieved with increasingly greater participation and involvement of citizens in decision making.

3.9.8 Sustainability:

The sustainability of the process depends on a number of factors. A possible threat to its continuance is the dependence of the municipal budget on transfers from the federal government. Macroeconomic or political considerations may threaten the ability of the municipalities to carry out autonomous policies if the federal government cuts the social budget in the face of economic crisis. The possibility also exists that this radical process may become routine and participation may consequently decline.

Other participatory budgeting and decentralization efforts have been undertaken in some 80 cities of Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina where progressive parties have been elected to office (Chavez nd: 1).

3.9.9 Lessons Learned:

The political culture of confrontation and clientalism both need to be overcome to allow for the creation of spaces for negotiation of different claims and demands.

Mediating structures, institutions and processes are required in order to channel the competing demands and claims of different interest groups and stakeholders.

Gaining the support of powerful groups can contribute to the success of the effort.

Structures, processes and operational rules must be clear and transparent.

Criteria for allocation of investment resources must be clear and objective.

Time is needed for new processes to get off the ground, be tested and adapted.

3.10 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs): Examples of Participation in the PRSP Processes in Bolivia, Malawi, and Rwanda

(Catholic Relief Services 2001; McGee with Norton 2000; Painter 2002; Richmond and Ladd 2001)

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers is an initiative developed by the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1999. Governments are obliged to prepare and implement a PRSP in order to benefit from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and obtain WB and IMF loans.

This case study is based on critiques of the PRSP process in Bolivia, Malawi and Rwanda.

3.10.1 Initiator / Source of Funding / Dates:

The PRSP process is intended to be government owned and controlled. It was initiated in 1999.

3.10.2 Goals and Objectives:

The PRSP is intended to provide the basis for the tripartite agreement between the WB, the IMF and Governments. It aims to be:

- § **Country-driven**, led by governments with broad-based participation;
- § **Results-oriented**, with clearly identified and agreed upon outcomes and indicators;

- § **Comprehensive**, with a multi-dimensional view of poverty;
- § **Long-term**, with commitment needed from both donors and governments; and
- § **Based on partnership** between governments, CSOs, the private sector and donors.

3.10.3 Who Participated:

Bolivia: Civil society participation was weak, especially at the local level and among indigenous people. Women were also not well represented in the process despite a 30 % quota set for women's participation at the municipal level. A number of constraints hindered participation (see 3.10.7).

As a result many sectors of civil society in Bolivia felt they could not effectively participate in the government-led PRSP process. Instead they organized an alternative process that attracted the participation of many CSOs, workers and indigenous people. While this alternative process created many spaces for civil society discussion and debate, it did not directly influence the outcome of the PRSP.

Malawi: Local level participation was weak and civil society was almost entirely excluded. In response to the exclusion, the Malawi Economic Justice Network was formed to push for greater civil society participation.

Rwanda: Local level participation was relatively high. However, while attention was given to the class, age and gender of participants, few rural people participated. At the civil society level, INGOs, national NGOs, trade unions and some churches participated, but religious organizations, rural-based NGOs, farmers' organizations and the informal sector were not fully involved.

3.10.4 Process / Institutional Mechanisms:

The PRSP process consists of:

- § Preparatory analysis on poverty, institutions and budget;
- § Formulation;
- § Approval;
- § Implementation; and
- § Impact assessment.

Bolivia: The Bolivian Government instituted a National Dialogue for civil society participation. The primary mechanism was round table discussions at municipal level on concrete issues of poverty reduction and resource allocation. Decisions were made by consensus and representatives took the conclusions forward to departmental and national levels.

Malawi: the main institutional mechanisms of the PRSP process were: i) a technical committee to oversee the process; and ii) district-level workshops.

Rwanda: in spite of a weak democracy, the government managed to establish structures for broad input at the local level at the analysis stage of the PRSP process. The mechanisms were: i) a National Poverty Assessment involving approximately 1000 sectors (the second-lowest organizational level in the country) with outreach to communities and households; and ii) a Policy Relevance Test carried out in 38 of 100 districts that involved about 10 000 people in focus group discussions.

3.10.5 Enabling Environment / Critical Success Factors (CSFs):

Bolivia has a highly developed and active civil society including NGOs run by an educated middle class, social movements consisting of broad-based membership groups run by the indigenous population, and an active Catholic Church. As a rule, an active civil society constitutes an enabling environment for participation and is usually a critical factor in its success. An active civil society is likely to demand and expect quality participation.

No information was provided about enabling environments or factors in Malawi and Rwanda.

3.10.6 Constraints / Problems / Critical Failure Factors (CFFs):

One factor that negatively affected participation in the PRSPs in all countries was its tie with eligibility for benefits from the HIPC initiative which led countries to rush the process. Broad and effective participation, however, needs time.

Bolivia: The process was negatively affected by a national political crisis. Moreover, previous efforts in Bolivia to promote participation through the 1995 Law of Popular Participation and 1997 National Dialogue were fraught with problems. Consequently farmers and trade unions were distrustful of the PRSP process. Additionally, there tended to be a weak connection between the municipal governments and the local population, particularly indigenous people, which hindered local-level participation.

Civil society was highly critical of the PRSP process in Bolivia for a number of reasons, notably: the insufficient time allotted for effective participation, the lack of information from the government in appropriate languages and formats, the absence of information in indigenous languages, and the short notice given about meetings which prevented participants from preparing adequately. The discussions on political, social and economic issues were held separately and CSOs were excluded from the economic discussions.

Malawi: There was a high level of distrust between citizens and the state, and civil society organizations tended to be weak and lack experience in advocacy. The technical committee included a few CSOs, but only those screened by the government. District chiefs were responsible for inviting people to the district-level workshops, but no guidance was provided by the central government to ensure participation of ordinary people. As a result, workshops were dominated by elected and traditional authorities and influential people. In addition, agendas and documents were not distributed before meetings, preventing proper preparation. In response to the exclusion, the Malawi Economic Justice Network was formed to promote greater civil society participation.

Rwanda: Participation was constrained by the failure to translate documents into community languages. Moreover, participants were not able to prepare adequately because the agendas and documents were not distributed before meetings. Participants were also disappointed to find that the consultation meeting at the national level, which was supposed to be a forum to discuss the interim PRSP, consisted primarily of a long government presentation.

3.10.7 Results:

As of 2001, 35 PRSPs had been undertaken, and 14 full PRSPs are publicly available. The case studies gave only a critique of the process and did not give information on the results.

3.10.8 Sustainability:

Because the WB and IMF require and finance governments to undertake the PRSP process, questions have been raised as to the sustainability of the participatory processes and the mechanisms set up. It is too early to ascertain whether any of these will take on a life of their own.

Changes in government and economic situations in countries may threaten the sustainability of the process.

3.10.9 Lessons Learned:

Many lessons regarding participation can be gleaned from the PRSP experience in these countries. Some of these lessons would appear to be simply common sense: if people are to participate they must receive basic information and documents in appropriate languages and formats, and agendas and documents must be distributed ahead of time in order for participants to prepare adequately to take part in meetings.

Meetings must be conveniently timed for participants and consideration must be given to working hours and women's household and child care responsibilities. Meeting places should be accessible, neutral and non-threatening. Likewise, the level of formality and protocol should not be intimidating.

People who are expected to participate in policy making need to be made aware of their rights and an effective communication strategy must be implemented. Capacity building is necessary, particularly in the areas of economic analysis, policy formulation, negotiation and advocacy.

The PRSP process demonstrated that quality participation cannot be rushed, and that participatory processes are only as strong as the weakest institution on which they are based. Weak local-level democracies produced weak participatory processes. The initiator of the process and the one setting the rules, in this case the government, strongly determines the quality of the process. An experienced civil society is helpful but not determinative if the institutional mechanisms for participation fail to provide adequate spaces for civil society.

Participation in the PRSP process proved easier to organize at the analysis stage. More attention is required to promote participation in the decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. Mechanisms must be in place to give feedback on whether and why recommendations are or are not included.

4. Lessons Learned and Suggestions for Entry Points, Participatory Mechanisms and Institutional Arrangements

On the basis of the preceding review of key issues and concrete experiences of participatory policy making, this section looks at steps that can be taken in the field to help identify possible entry points, participatory mechanisms and institutional arrangements for undertaking PPM initiatives.

Some overall key factors to be taken into consideration are:

- § Policy affects different groups in different ways. The implications for PPM are that any activities directed at influencing policy must analyse how policy change will affect different groups and ensure that all groups affected are involved, particularly marginalized groups, such as women and minorities.
- § The institutional and organizational environment is not uniform. The implications for PPM are that no one strategy or framework will fit every situation. The context is of critical importance. Moreover, the environment may change either gradually over time or even quite suddenly due to political and economic changes and other shocks.
- § Policy and policy making are macro, meso and micro processes. Policies that impact on livelihoods may come from a number of levels: international and regional (e.g. environmental legislation or trade agreements); national (e.g. land rights legislation or national forestry programmes); sub-national or local (e.g. decentralized natural resource management or municipal services). Analysing and distinguishing the levels of policy and policy making are critical for identifying entry points for potential policy reform.

4.1 Identifying areas for policy reform

A sustainable livelihoods approach can provide an understanding of the livelihood priorities of the poor, the policy sectors that are relevant to them, and whether or not appropriate policies exist in those sectors. Key questions that can help identify policy areas that require change in order to respond to the needs of the poor include:

- § What are poor people's livelihood priorities?
- § What policies affect the poor and their livelihoods?
- § What kinds of policies would be supportive of people's livelihoods?
- § How is policy made and implemented?
- § Are the methods supportive of SL principles?
- § What institutions and organizations mediate the interface between policy and people?
- § Is it possible to distinguish the levels at which policies are operative: international, regional, national, sub-national, and/or local?
- § At which levels is policy change needed and feasible?
- § Is it possible to identify where in the policy process the need for change is most pressing: in formulation of policy (planning, information gathering, analysis and decision-making), implementation, or monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation?

Insights from the case studies

Hindu Kush – Himalayas: Many of the poor in these fragile mountainous areas depend on livestock for their livelihoods. Past livestock programmes, however, had failed to improve their livelihoods. Participatory case studies helped identify needed reform and the possibilities for change at local level.

Mozambique: The transition to a market economy brought with it the risk of privatization of land in the hands of a few and the loss of access to land by local farmers. Policy reform at national level was identified as a way to protect poor farmers' access to land.

4.2 Identifying favourable external enabling environments

Scanning the external environment is a key step in determining possible entry points, participatory mechanisms and institutional arrangements for PPM. Areas that need to be analysed include:

4.2.1 The political context

“Depending on the context different strategies will be appropriate for engaging with policy processes. Different types of regimes can impose different constraints on what is achievable” (Keeley 2001: 10). Key questions are:

- § Is there a democratic government? What types of democratic structures and institutions exist?
- § Are there effective laws, legal frameworks and functioning legal institutions?
- § Does political commitment to rights and the possibility to exercise these rights exist?
- § Is there effective decentralization that brings decision making closer to the local level?
- § Is there political commitment to policy reform?
- § What mechanisms exist to influence policy through political structures?
- § Are there existing or potential development programmes and projects that could work with government to facilitate policy reform?

Insights from the case studies

Political commitment by the national governments played an important role in the experiences in Costa Rica, Kenya and Turkey. In all three cases the entry points for policy changes were development programmes and projects assisted by multi-lateral and bi-lateral development agencies. In Mozambique, the government took the initiative to institute policy reform and created mechanisms to influence policy through its structures and by requesting assistance from the FAO Legal Department.

In Brazil and Honduras, municipal level governments were committed to policy reform and created the political structures to influence policy.

The PRSP experiences ring a cautionary note: government commitment was conditioned by the obligation to develop a PRSP in order to avail of international loans. Tying the PRSP to the HIPC initiative resulted in hurried processes.

4.2.2 Governance

Good governance, i.e. functioning mechanisms, processes and institutions that make it possible for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences, are critical to an enabling environment for PPM. Bureaucracies are an element of governance that affect policy processes. When looking for spaces to influence policy, key questions to ask include:

- § Are bureaucracies dominated by people from a particular disciplinary background, geographic area, academic institution, etc.?
- § Are there particular patterns linking the bureaucracy to political parties or the private sector?
- § Are bureaucracies organized in such a way that cross-sectoral approaches are possible?
- § Do bureaucracies operate transparently?
- § Does bureaucratic capacity exist for policy reform?

Insights from the case studies

Cross-sectoral approaches appear to be particularly feasible in cross cutting areas such as environment and natural resource management (NRM), land rights, and gender. The existence of gender focal points in different ministries and government agencies facilitates taking a cross-sectoral approach in efforts to influence gender-related policy. Environmental, NRM and land policy are often the province of several ministries and government agencies.

Different agencies dealing with the same issue could create bottlenecks for reform if they do not cooperate. However, an openness to cooperate across sectors can be a positive factor in enabling change. This is borne out by the cases in Costa Rica, Kenya and Mozambique, all of which established multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral mechanisms for policy reform.

4.2.3 Windows of opportunity for change

Political, economic and social environments are dynamic. A change in government, a transition to a market economy, changing patterns in social relationships, the introduction of new technologies, the failure of past policy or programmes, a conflict or a peace agreement, whether gradual or sudden, can all offer possibilities to engage in PPM. It is important to be alert to these opportunities.

Insights from the case studies

Several of the experiences in the case studies were made possible by changes in the political, economic and social environments. In Mali, a change of government provided an opportunity which the National Union of Cotton and Food Crop Producers seized to demand changes in production and marketing policy. In Porto Alegre, Brazil, it was the coming into power of the Workers' Party that enabled the municipal government to initiate participatory budgeting. The transition to a market economy in Mozambique was the impetus for land policy reform. And in Mexico, the failure of a large-scale agro-industrial project caused the government to take a more participatory approach.

4.2.4 Civil society

An active civil society contributes to a favourable enabling environment. "Civil society in almost every country harbours some experience of participatory processes

for policy change which will be a resource...to draw on....Where these experiences are little known or have taken place at local rather than macro level, international and national NGOs may be able to assist...in identifying the relevant people and processes...The step must go wider than documentation, since most of such experience is not documented” (McGee with Norton 2000:52).

An initial step is to identify which civil society groups and organizations could support and facilitate the participatory policy making of the rural poor (e.g. INGOs, NGOs, unions, religious organizations, research institutions). Key questions include:

- § How do these groups network and interact with each other, with grassroots organizations of the rural poor, and with policy making bodies?
- § What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- § Do relationships of trust and cooperation exist between them and organizations of the rural poor?
- § How can they support the participation of the poor in policy making processes?
- § What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with particular CSOs?

Insights from the case studies

The development of a participatory policy framework for empowering the local community in livestock resource planning and decision making was greatly facilitated by the existence of INGOs in the area with considerable development experience and expertise; and projects and NGOs working at the grassroots level in the area, using participatory approaches. These actors played critical roles in supporting the participation of the poor in the process.

In many countries NGOs that work with the rural poor possess extensive knowledge of local conditions, promote participation by the poor in the development process and engage the poor in capacity building activities. However, given the wide range of NGOs in many countries, it is necessary to set criteria for choosing those that could help promote the participation of the poor in policy making. The following criteria set by IFAD for cooperative relations with NGOs could be utilized (IFAD 2001):

- § Knowledge of local situation.
- § Commitment to building local organizational capacity within a framework of participatory approaches.
- § Readiness to place own operation in the context of community plans.
- § Demonstrated readiness to cooperate and share knowledge with others.
- § Commitment to both the mobilization of local resources and responsiveness to the changing needs of local communities.
- § Well-defined and transparent organizational structure.
- § Technical capacity, experience, adequate management and facilities for the tasks at hand.

In addition, the following should be considered:

- § A relationship of trust between the NGO and the local community.
- § Ability and commitment to channel information to and from local community and policy makers.
- § Ability and commitment to facilitate direct access and communication between local community and policy makers.

4.3 Identifying participatory mechanisms and institutional arrangements

Scanning the environment for enabling factors sets the basis for identifying participatory mechanisms and the institutional arrangements that could be utilized in PPM. It is also useful to examine those employed in existing experiences in PPM and the lessons learned.

There are no universally applicable participatory mechanisms or institutional arrangements. Steps for identifying useful mechanisms and arrangements include: examining the existing political context, governance institutions, and civil society organizations; reviewing participatory mechanisms and institutional arrangements that have been used in past; and analysing their strengths, weaknesses, effectiveness, and appropriateness.

The case studies presented in this paper utilized a wide variety of mechanisms and institutional arrangements. These provide useful insights for other efforts.

The experiences that used development projects as entry points (Kenya, Hindu-Kush – Himalayas, Turkey, Costa Rica and Mexico) each planned out step-by-step processes and worked through relevant organizations and institutional arrangements.

The Kenyan experience of scaling up participatory extension was carried out in methodological steps over a number of years, beginning with the assessment of conventional extension delivery, moving to pilot projects to develop participatory extension methods, and scaling up to incorporating the experiences of these projects into national extension policy.

The experience of introducing a gender approach in the mixed farming and environmental sectors in Costa Rica also followed a three step process, including capacity building for technical and administrative personnel and farmers on gender issues; institutional strengthening and formation of women's organizations; and multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder consultations.

Both of these efforts involved multi-agency discussions and planning and a wide variety of participatory mechanisms. Capacity building for both the local populations and the government and project staff was considered critical for the success of efforts.

In Kenya, not all the participatory methods were equally successful. Open public meetings were too large and attracted less active members of the community. As a result, attendance was inconsistent and it was not possible to allocate and follow up responsibilities. Community feedback was better when channelled through village elders and leaders of organized groups. However, it is necessary to ensure that consideration is given to gender issues in community representation.

The experience of developing a national forestry programme in Turkey also involved several government ministries and participatory mechanisms, in particular a survey to gather the inputs of farmers. This mechanism could have been more effective if training had been given to facilitators not only in participatory approaches, but on the NFP process and its implications as well, and to stakeholders on how to negotiate their interests.

The Hindu-Kush – Himalayas initiative to develop a participatory policy framework involved a different set of processes and arrangements. Key partners included INGOs and research institutes with expertise and experience in NRM and livestock in the

region, along with the livestock farmers and government agencies. The participatory development of the framework was prepared through review studies, country papers and case studies and carried out through multi-stakeholder workshops.

Multi-stakeholder consultations were also an important mechanism in developing a new land policy in Mozambique. Because of the nature of the policy reform, arrangements involved legal institutions, cross-sectoral participation of government ministries through an Inter-Ministerial Land Commission and consultations with stakeholders at local, regional and national levels.

The experience of developing a rural communications system to promote people's participation in the decision and policy making of a large-scale integrated development programme in Mexico used video and other media for both horizontal and vertical communications. Rural people were provided with the information necessary to discuss the issues and express their views. These were presented to decision makers not only in the planning stages of the programme but throughout the implementation, so that adjustments could be made and solutions sought for problems as they arose.

The institutional arrangements and mechanisms were of a different order in Honduras and Brazil, due to the nature of the government-led process of policy making at the municipal level. In both cases, governance institutions were involved and mechanisms were based on traditional systems of consultation. At the same time, both in Brazil and Honduras, highly structured processes were instituted with clear rules and regulations.

Clearly, the institutional arrangements for any PPM initiative will require an analysis of the existing institutions to see which ones would be most appropriate in any given situation. The same is true for the choice of participatory mechanisms. Choices will also depend on the existence of constraints and the possibilities for creating internal enabling environments, issues that are discussed in the following sections.

4.4 Identifying constraints

Identifying constraints to policy reform is also important in order find ways to avoid or overcome possible obstacles. Negative answers to some of the questions listed in section 4.2 on identifying favourable external environments may reveal constraints, e.g. lack of political commitment to reform, lack of effective decentralization, poorly functioning governance mechanisms, unresponsive bureaucracies, weak civil society, lack of trust, lack of capacity in NGOs.

Another set of questions deals with power relations. Since policy modifications may alter the balance of power relations; those who stand to lose are likely to resist attempts to influence policy. Policy change may also challenge traditional or ingrained attitudes and ways of doing things. In this regard key questions are:

- § What power relations exist within groups, communities and households?
- § How will power relationships be affected by policy reform?
- § Who stands to benefit?
- § Who stands to lose?
- § What traditions may stand in the way of change?
- § Will policy change challenge widely-held attitudes? How strongly held are these?

§ How will policy reform affect ingrained ways of doing things?

Insights from the case studies

In Brazil, a critical factor in the success of the participatory budgeting initiative was the ability of the municipal governing party to gain the support of the middle class. To do this the party had to deal with internal conflicting trends, with one faction favouring the inclusion of only community organizations in the budgeting process. Once in power, however, the party decided to govern not just for the poor, but for all urban residents.

Ingrained attitudes and practices among extension staff in Kenya were deemed a threat to the sustainability of changes in extension policy and methods. To overcome this risk, intensive staff training was planned for the first two years of implementing the new policy and methods.

Projects that attempt to make structural changes require a long period to mature and change long-ingrained attitudes. In Costa Rica, deeply rooted gender stereotypes provoked discomfort and defensiveness in some people when dealing with formulations regarding discrimination against women. Awareness building and gender training might help overcome this.

Constraints can also take the form of the lack of capacity to implement policy, weak legal frameworks and institutions and lack of financial resources. Questions need to be raised about each of these.

Policy made at a sub-national or local level may encounter roadblocks in the implementation stage if fiscal control remains at the national level and if other sources of funds are not available. This has occurred where decentralization of decision making is not accompanied by a similar decentralization of financial resources. If the communities involved were able to provide some of the funds for implementing local policy, this would increase the possibilities of sustainable implementation.

Insights from the case studies

In Mozambique a number of constraints were identified that could hinder the implementation of the new land policy and law. Consequently, a number of concrete steps were planned to overcome these obstacles, including:

- € widespread information dissemination about the new land policy and law;
- € capacity building for those charged with overseeing implementation; and
- € a strengthened judicial system.

The successful implementation of the territorial planning initiative in Honduras was due in part to the ability of the municipality to raise and spend money through taxation. The willingness of the local population to pay the taxes necessary for the provision of services is expected to continue as long as the quality of services received in return is satisfactory and relevant to farmers' needs.

In Kenya, community experience in planning and budgeting helped the local population to take up these responsibilities when extension service funding declined.

Once constraints are identified, judgements need to be made as to whether policy change in a given area is feasible, whether there are alternative avenues to influence policy, or whether there are ways to overcome constraints. If proposed policy changes

offer benefits to the non-poor as well as the poor and when powerful groups also stand to gain, PPM has a greater chance to succeed. Plans can also be made to overcome constraints through capacity building, training, awareness campaigns, and ensuring finances for implementation.

Important steps to overcoming constraints on policy reform are, thus:

- Š Identifying the constraints.
- Š Building support for reform through awareness campaigns and explaining how people will benefit.
- Š Capacity building, training and strengthening of institutions to ensure implementation of policy.
- Š Resource mobilization including technical, managerial and financial resources to implement policy reform.

Complementary steps to overcoming constraints include capacity building of poor people to articulate their demands and influence the policy process. This is discussed in section 4.5 on creating an internal enabling environment.

4.5 Identifying the key participants in PPM and their assets

A sustainable livelihoods approach can help identify the key groups and organizations of the rural poor that should participate in PPM and provide an understanding of their capital assets that enable them to participate. In this regard, key questions include:

- Š What groups and organizations exist at the local level (e.g. farmers' organizations, women's organizations, village associations, cooperatives)?
- Š Who do these groups and organizations represent?
- Š Are there under-represented or excluded segments of the local population (e.g. women, the very poor, indigenous people)?
- Š What can be done to enable the under-represented or marginalized groups to participate?
- Š What are the power relations and dynamics among and within groups and organizations?
- Š What is their political capital in relation to local, district and national government and governance institutions?
- Š What experience do they have in PPM?
- Š What human, social and financial capital can they draw on to enhance their participation in policy making?
- Š What skills do they possess that would enable or enhance their participation?

Insights from the case studies

In the Hindu-Kush – Himalayas experience, a key step in the process was identifying the stakeholders and the assets and skills they could contribute to developing the participatory policy framework. As a result, participants included livestock farmers, livestock input and output agents, and NGOs involved in planning and implementation of livestock projects in the region. The initiative was able to draw on the skills developed by NGOs working at the grassroots level in the area, using participatory approaches and by a number of successful small-scale livestock enterprises, in which women played a key role.

In certain cases, the stakeholders who should participate may appear obvious; e.g. if policy reform is needed to improve the livelihoods of small farmers, then organizations of small farmers must be involved. However, it is still important to examine the dynamics and representivity of these organizations. Are women and marginalized groups adequately represented at decision making levels, for instance? A too cursory or hurried stakeholder analysis may lead to the exclusion of people who should participate.

Insights from the case studies

In spite of intentions and efforts to build participation into the PRSP process, there was inadequate participation of the poor in many instances. In Bolivia, participation of indigenous people and women was particularly weak. And while attention was given to class, age and gender of participants in Rwanda, few rural people were included in the process.

4.6 Creating an internal enabling environment

Creating an internal enabling environment is crucial to the success of PPM. Elements of an environment that enable effective participation of the rural poor in policy making include:

- § Awareness of rights.
- § Knowledge of institutional and legal processes.
- § The capacity to access the necessary information for decision making.
- § The ability to articulate demands.
- § Means of communication to make the voices of the rural poor heard, and to network with other stakeholders and communicate both horizontally and vertically.
- § Skills in negotiation, lobbying, and communication.

An important step in identifying the possibility for PPM is to gauge the extent of the capacity that exists in the above areas and to analyse what skills and capacity building are needed. Where an enabling environment does not exist or is weak, it can be created or strengthened through capacity building and efforts to empower the rural poor. An assessment should be made of the strengths and weaknesses of local populations in these areas, which need to be strengthened, what methods could be employed to strengthen these (e.g. workshops, training sessions) and who could facilitate capacity building (e.g. NGOs, experts, other local groups).

There is no step-by-step methodology for creating an enabling environment that can be applied. However, insights can be gained from the experiences in the case studies,

nearly all of which included elements of creating an enabling environment. In some many cases, this was crucial for the success of the process.

Insights from case studies

Building strong peoples' organizations:

A critical factor in the successful efforts of farmers in Mali to influence policy was the long process of capacity building and empowerment of village associations in the country. Over the years, several different development projects and programmes engaged in capacity building with these associations. The producers' union that emerged had the power to negotiate successfully with government agencies.

Strengthening women farmers and their organizations was built into the process of introducing a gender approach in the mixed farming and environmental sectors in Costa Rica. One of the three components of the project was institutional strengthening and formation of women's organizations at the grassroots and regional level, and capacity building in the use of communication media to promote participation and equality.

Building and using communication skills:

The rural communication system in Mexico succeeded in bringing the voices and views of farmers and their communities to the programme's technical staff, institutions, planners and policymakers. Participatory communication became part of the policy development and extension methodologies. A communication system was established consisting of a central unit and a network of several local units capable of implementing communication campaigns. About 800 000 farmers were trained and communication activities were undertaken to support farmers' organizations and their capacity to implement local development plans. In addition, more than 700 videos were produced on a wide range of agricultural and rural development issues and were used for:

- € promoting discussion and debate among rural communities;
- € capacity building of farmers and staff; and
- € informing planners, policy makers and institutions about the ongoing situation of the project.

Provision of information needed for informed participation:

In Mozambique, the land policy reform benefited from a strong civil society movement, the *Campanha Terra* (Land Campaign), that included a coalition of 150 civil rights organizations, farmers' associations, women's movements, church groups, trade unions, and academics. The coalition stimulated civil society participation through: information dissemination, using a wide variety of media, including seminars, farmers' workshops, posters, pamphlets, comic books, theatre, radio, audio cassettes and video; and NGO-led debate in rural communities and channelling of feedback to the Inter-Ministerial Land Commission.

4.7 Monitoring and evaluating participation in policy making

Monitoring and evaluating the quality of participation in policy making will enable PPM efforts to learn lessons and make adjustments to improve the participation of the poor in the process and enhance future efforts.

Some benchmarks for measuring quality participation are:

- § Provision of full information to key partners on past policy in the area concerned, its impact, need and rationale for new policy;
- § Support to enhance capacity of key partners where necessary, to permit them to understand and utilize the information;
- § Facilitated consultation and negotiation across different stakeholder groups to bring out diverse perspectives and priorities and attain agreement on the resolution of differences;
- § A defined and publicized procedure for providing feedback to all key partners and supporting them in the fulfilment of their roles in subsequent implementation of the policy;
- § Built-in monitoring procedure to provide feedback to key partners periodically throughout the whole process (McGee with Norton 2000: 69, based on Tandon 1999).

Some measures of quality in participation in policy work are:

- § Quality of the resulting policy: in terms of how equitable, far-sighted and sustainable its effects are;
- § Inclusiveness: the hearing and inclusion in negotiations of all the different perspectives and priorities on a particular issue;
- § Broad-based ownership: attainment of widespread ownership of and support for the policy in the country and throughout the population;
- § Capacity-building: enhanced capacities of various stakeholder groups and public agencies to enable participation in future policy work (McGee with Norton 2000: 69).

4.8. Feedback needed from the field on possible ways to operationalize PPM in FAO Member Countries

To assist in the identification of possibilities for operationalizing PPM processes in FAO member countries, it would be helpful to receive feedback on:

- § Policy areas that require change in order to respond to the needs of the poor.
- § The external environment, including political context, governance, and opportunities for change.
- § Possible institutional arrangements and participatory mechanisms, particularly those that have been used in previous PPM initiatives.
- § Potential constraints that could create problems.
- § The key groups and organizations of the rural poor that should be participants in PPM.
- § The civil society groups and other organizations exist that could support and facilitate the participatory policy making of the rural poor.
- § The internal enabling environment, i.e. the capacity and skills of the rural poor and the needs for improving the internal environment.

Reference should be made to the specific questions listed in section four of this paper, keeping in mind that the relevance of the questions may vary according to particular circumstances.

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Further information about the LSP

The Livelihood Support Programme (LSP) works through the following sub-programmes:

Improving people's access to natural resources

Access of the poor to natural assets is essential for sustainable poverty reduction. The livelihoods of rural people with limited or no access to natural resources are vulnerable because they have difficulty in obtaining food, accumulating assets, and recuperating after shocks or misfortunes.

Participation, Policy and Local Governance

Local people, especially the poor, often have weak or indirect influence on policies that affect their livelihoods. Policies developed at the central level are often not responsive to local needs and may not enable access of the rural poor to needed assets and services.

Livelihoods diversification and enterprise development

Diversification can assist households to insulate themselves from environmental and economic shocks, trends and seasonality – in effect, to be less vulnerable. Livelihoods diversification is complex, and strategies can include enterprise development.

Natural resource conflict management

Resource conflicts are often about access to and control over natural assets that are fundamental to the livelihoods of many poor people. Therefore, the shocks caused by these conflicts can increase the vulnerability of the poor.

Institutional learning

The institutional learning sub-programme has been set up to ensure that lessons learned from cross-departmental, cross-sectoral team work, and the application of sustainable livelihoods approaches, are identified, analysed and evaluated for feedback into the programme.

Capacity building

The capacity building sub-programme functions as a service-provider to the overall programme, by building a training programme that responds to the emerging needs and priorities identified through the work of the other sub-programmes.

People-centred approaches in different cultural contexts

A critical review and comparison of different recent development approaches used in different development contexts is being conducted, drawing on experience at the strategic and field levels in different sectors and regions.

Mainstreaming sustainable livelihoods approaches in the field

FAO designs resource management projects worth more than US\$1.5 billion per year. Since smallholder agriculture continues to be the main livelihood source for most of the world's poor, if some of these projects could be improved, the potential impact could be substantial.

Sustainable Livelihoods Referral and Response Facility

A Referral and Response Facility has been established to respond to the increasing number of requests from within FAO for assistance on integrating sustainable livelihood and people-centred approaches into both new and existing programmes and activities.

For further information on the Livelihood Support Programme,
contact the programme coordinator:
Email: LSP@fao.org

LSP WORKING PAPERS to June 2004

- Baumann P., (July 2002) **Improving Access to Natural Resources for the Rural Poor: A critical analysis of central concepts and emerging trends from a sustainable livelihoods perspective.** FAO, LSP WP 1, Access to Natural Resources Sub-Programme.
- Cotula L., (August 2002) **Improving Access to Natural Resources for the Rural Poor: The experience of FAO and of other key organisations from a sustainable livelihoods perspective.** FAO, LSP WP 2, Access to Natural Resources Sub-Programme.
- Karl M., (August 2002) **Participatory Policy Reform from a Sustainable Livelihoods Perspective: Review of concepts and practical experiences.** FAO, LSP WP 3, Participation, Policy and Local Governance Sub-Programme. Also available in Spanish and French.
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