

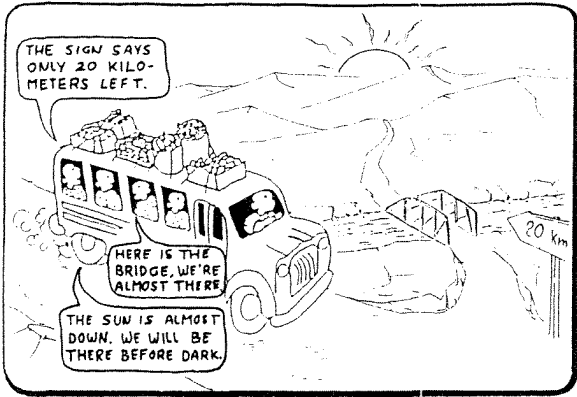
Participatory Monitoring

What is Participatory Monitoring?

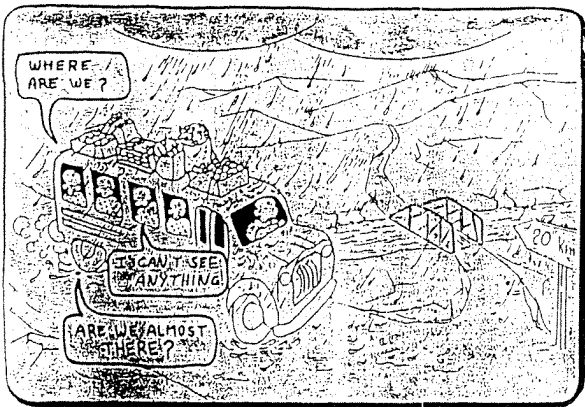
Participatory Monitoring is the systematic recording and periodic analysis of information that has been chosen and recorded by insiders with the help of outsiders.

Participatory Monitoring measures progress

The main purpose of Participatory Monitoring is that it provides information during the life of the project, so that adjustments and/or modifications can be made if necessary.



Take the example of a bus trip from one community to the other. When passengers can see out the windows, they can monitor progress by observing the passing landscape, reading the road signs, and watching the movement of the sun across the sky. Monitoring these kinds of information on a bus trip lets them know whether they are heading in the right direction.



But, suppose a rainstorm made it impossible for passengers to see out the windows. The bus would be moving, but the passengers would be unable to know if they were on the right road, or headed in the right direction. That is what it would be like without monitoring. If only the driver of the bus knows where the bus is going, and measures progress without discussion with the passengers, that is like monitoring without participation.

Participatory Monitoring

Provides information for decision makers

Participatory Monitoring enables partners to keep track of activities by recording information on a daily, weekly, monthly or seasonal basis. Taking the time to stop and analyse the information can provide important and immediate feedback, and can be used in the future for Participatory Evaluations.

For example, a community processed fish marketing co-operative monitoring monthly sales over a year might show that sales were low over the three month rainy period when transportation is a problem. Using this information, the community might decide to transport and store processed fish close to the market before the rainy season starts.

Information is periodically analysed

Participatory Monitoring is not only keeping records. It is also stopping at set times to analyse information. The time to stop and analyse will vary according to the nature and/or seasonality of activities.

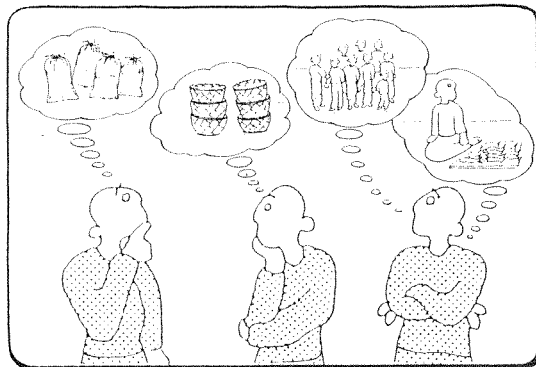
For example, projects with fresh fish based enterprise activities may have daily recording of cash, and monthly balancing of the records; while fish processing activities may only require record keeping during processing and selling periods, with an analysis at the end of each season.

Agreement on the objectives and activities is necessary

Before Participatory Monitoring begins, the community must understand why they are monitoring. Information should keep everyone informed of progress (or lack of progress) toward planned objectives and activities.

Insiders choose the terms of measurement

When the terms of measurement, (kilos, grams, baskets, sacks, cans, pounds, head pans, etc.) are chosen by insiders, the information is better understood. The chances of the monitoring continuing in the future are more likely.



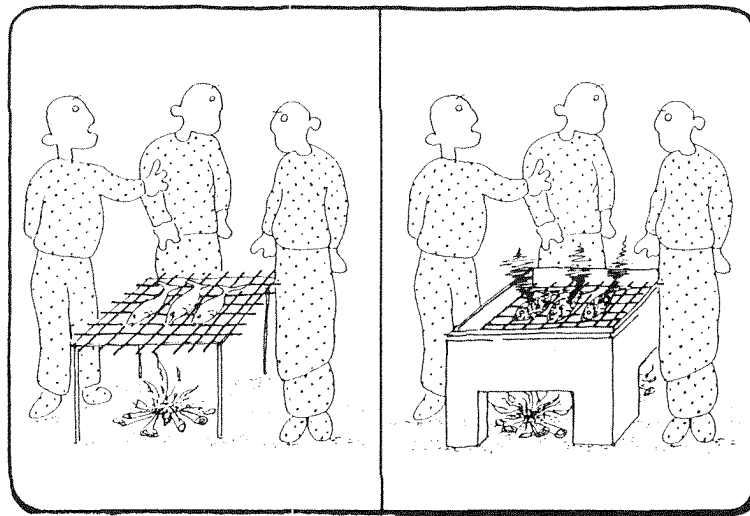
If this kind of information is required by outsiders, they can translate the insiders' terms of measurement into terms that they use. For example bags, and head pans can be translated into kilograms or pounds.

Chapter Four

Broadly examines progress towards objectives and activities

Insiders, given the opportunity, have the ability to combine qualitative (descriptive) information with quantitative (numeric) information, providing a more complete analysis.

For example, an objective may be to increase the quality of a community's smoked fish product by introducing and building 100 of a new type of fish smoker successfully used in a neighbouring country. Information from monitoring in the first year might show that, as planned, 100 of the new type of fish smokers had been built. This is important and useful information. It shows that activities are going according to plan.



But it may not be complete information if the objective of increasing the quality of smoked fish is not considered. Fish processors may be experiencing increased spoilage because the types of fires the community used to build, when used in the new smokers, caused the fish to burn. This information can bring up the question of whether the fish smokers, as currently designed and produced, are a worthwhile activity or should be modified in some way. It may call for an early evaluation which may avert a potential disaster and turn it into a success!

The Benefits of Participatory Monitoring

Provides an ongoing picture

Participatory Monitoring provides an ongoing picture that allows the community to determine whether activities are progressing as planned. It may also show when activities are not leading to objectives, so that early adjustments can be made.

Problems are identified and solutions sought early

Participatory Monitoring provides an early warning which identifies problems at an early stage. Solutions can then be sought before the problems get out of hand. This is especially important with new technologies that may have negative effects after introduction.

Participatory Monitoring

<i>Good standards are maintained</i>	Continuous feedback throughout the period of the activities ensures that the quality of the activities is sufficient to provide good results. For example, fish fingerling survival surveys when stocking a pond can indicate the quality of the juveniles and the effects of transportation and handling.
<i>Resources are used effectively</i>	Participatory Monitoring can show the resources that are required to produce a certain effect, or how necessary resources can be distributed differently to get a better effect.
<i>Complete picture of project is produced</i>	When insiders are in control of monitoring, the results are examined relative to their past experience. This broader picture enhances all other benefits of monitoring.
<i>Information base for future evaluations</i>	Both insiders and outsiders can benefit from data based on realistic information showing trends which may be used for future evaluations.

Monitoring people's participation

Both insiders and outsiders can monitor participation, but it may be for very different reasons. Insiders may be interested in fair distribution of costs and benefits; outsiders may be interested in equal community representation in decision making.

<i>Insiders monitor participation</i>	<p>Insiders may wish to know who participates in communal activities, so that benefits can be fairly distributed. In many instances, community fishery activities will be done using the volunteer labour of community members.</p> <p>Those who contribute their labour may wish to be acknowledged in some way or may also want sanctions taken against those who do not volunteer labour. For example, those who contribute to the building of improved landing facilities may receive free access whilst others might have to pay.</p>
<i>Outsiders monitor participation</i>	Participation is often an outsider objective because outsiders are concerned with equal representation of all groups in the community. Outsiders may want to ensure, through monitoring participation, that all involved and affected community members are represented when decisions regarding activities are made.

Because "participation" is a process that emerges and develops as the activities progress, information needs regarding participation may undergo significant change over time. For example, increases and decreases in turnout at community meetings are not always an effective indicator of participation. There may be an enthusiastic turnout at meetings when the activities are first introduced to the community. However, as groups and committees take over decision making, the community only has to be kept informed. Therefore the turnout at meetings may drop off, especially if things are going well.

*Insiders and
outsiders monitor
participation
together*

Regardless of whether monitoring participation is more important to the insiders or the outsiders, it makes sense to have insiders identify indicators and, if it is important to them, help measure them. If the information is not important to them, they should just define the indicators. For example, outsiders tend to measure participation in hours, whereas insiders may have more applicable indicators such as evaluating participation based on the skill and quality of work, rather than the time spent: one person may supply skilled labour for a shorter period of time and still be considered by others to have equally participated.

While Participatory Monitoring can be introduced at any stage of activities, it is best introduced at the beginning stage, before activities are implemented. At this stage, preparations are made as to how and who will do the data collection, and when any periodic analyses will take place. After implementation, when the activities have begun, the recording begins. At set periods, which can be either daily, weekly, monthly or seasonally, the information that is being recorded is analysed.

If the activities are already on going, there are still many benefits to be had from introducing Participatory Monitoring. If the current monitoring method is not working well, or if the information that is generated is not useful to insiders, or if other PAME approaches are being tried, introducing Participatory Monitoring may still be appropriate. It may be useful to compare the kinds of information and the value of the information before and after participatory monitoring!

Participatory Monitoring

Steps to Participatory Monitoring

Take the time to prepare and plan monitoring. It helps if everyone knows why they are monitoring, and how the monitoring will be done. The first meeting to plan the monitoring programme can include all those directly involved in the activities as well as other interested groups (see: Group Meetings); it will however be necessary to concentrate on those individuals directly involved and those selected by the groups who will be responsible for monitoring. Planning for monitoring can use a framework much like those used for Participatory Baselines and Participatory Evaluation. This framework is explained in the following steps.

Step
1

Discuss reasons for monitoring

Review the benefits and purpose of monitoring, so that insiders can decide for themselves whether monitoring will help them.

Step
2

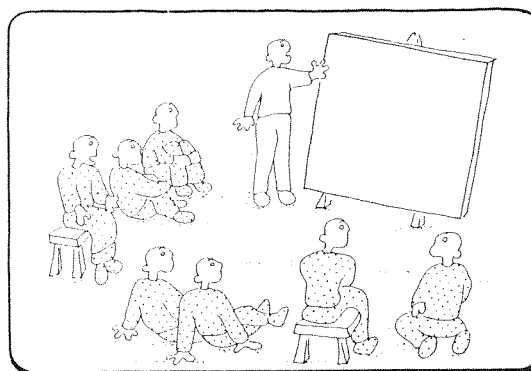
Review objectives and activities.

If the PAME process has been used up to this point, the insider objectives and activities will have been established during the Participatory Assessment. If insiders have not previously been involved, the objectives and activities as established by outsiders can be reviewed and discussed by insiders. A Participatory Assessment may be necessary if insider and outsider objectives are very different.

Step
3

Develop monitoring questions

After objectives and activities are reviewed, discuss the information needed to help know if activities are going well. Focus on the questions "What do we want to know?" and "What do we monitor that will tell us this?". The facilitator can write (or draw), the monitoring questions generated around each objective and activity on large sheets of paper or a



blackboard. There should be agreement by the group on each monitoring question. If many questions are generated they can be ranked in order of importance.

Step
4

Establish direct and indirect indicators

For each monitoring question, determine direct and/or indirect indicators that will answer the monitoring questions. (Indicators are described in Chapter 3.)

Step
5

Decide which information gathering tools are needed

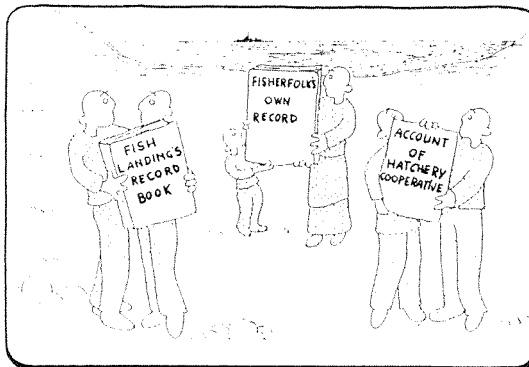
The most appropriate information gathering tool must be chosen for each indicator or monitoring question. Remember one tool can gather information that answers many monitoring questions. Some useful tools are:

- Community Environmental Assessment
- Survival Surveys
- Fisherman's Own Records
- Fish Landings Record Books
- Community Financial Accounts

Step
6

Decide who will do the monitoring

Monitoring may require people with specific skills such as bookkeeping or mathematics. It will also require a certain amount of labour and time from people. Those with the skills and the time can be identified. Some form of compensation may be required for those community members who are assigned monitoring duties because of the amount of time that will be spent away from their primary duties.

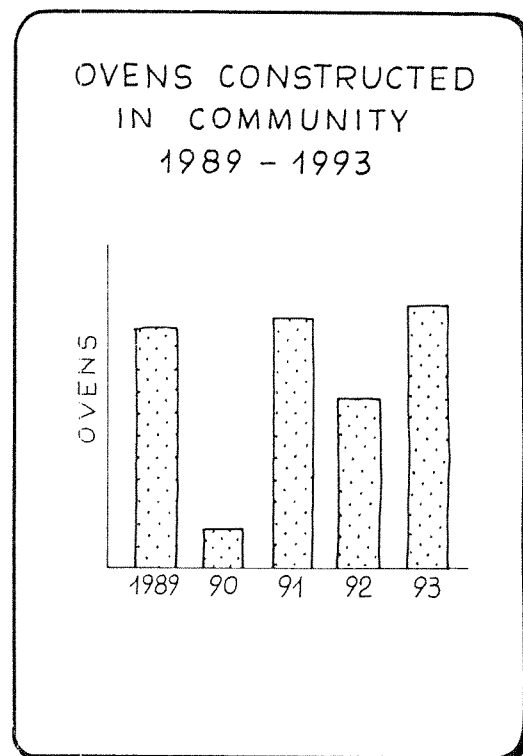
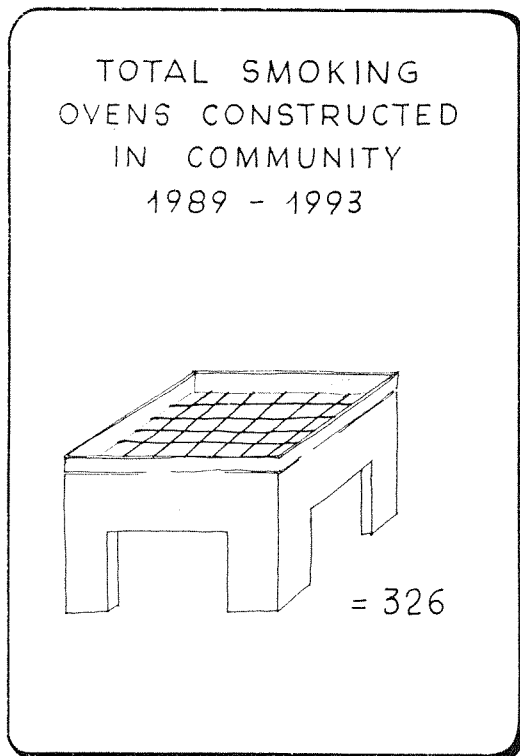


Participatory Monitoring

Step
#7

Analyse and present results

It is important that the information monitored is analysed at specific times throughout the activities. The analysis can be discussed at community meetings, posted on bulletin boards or put in community newsletters. The community will then know whether or not activities are progressing as planned or if changes or modifications are required. (Chapters Six and Seven deal with information analysis and presentation.)



Sometimes things will get worse before they get better. Try not to be too hasty about giving-up on something that doesn't appear to be working right away. Remember to think of both short-term and long-term effects