

Participatory Evaluation

What is Participatory Evaluation?

A Participatory Evaluation is an opportunity for both outsiders and insiders to stop and reflect on the past in order to make decisions about the future. Insiders take responsibility and control of:

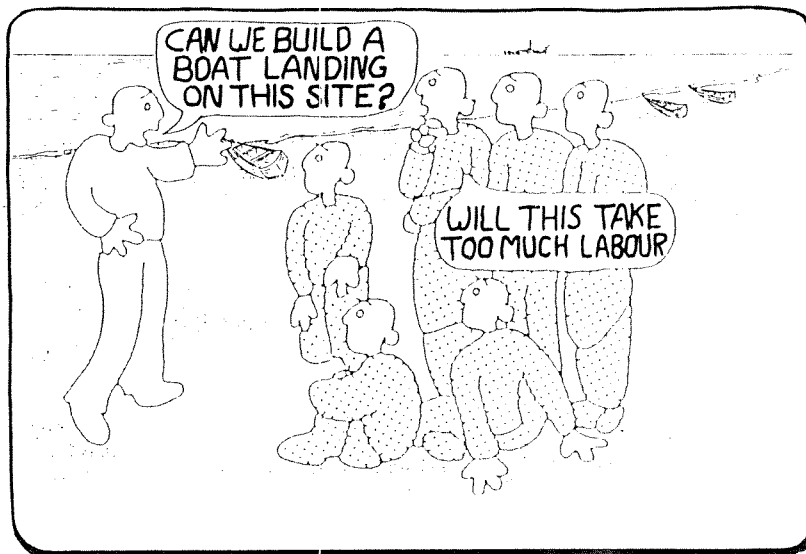
- planning what is to be evaluated
- how the evaluation will be done
- carrying out the evaluation
- analysing information and presenting evaluation results.

Insiders take the lead in participatory evaluation

Insiders will probably already be able to intuitively and informally evaluate situations in light of their own individual and/or group objectives. This is because:

- community fishery activities often require involvement and inputs from insiders
- it is ultimately insiders who reap the benefits and bear many of the costs of the project
- insiders choose whether to continue or discontinue activities when the outsiders leave

Thus, it makes sense for outsiders to help insiders conduct an effective evaluation. With the results of evaluation, insiders may choose to continue activities, modify all or some, change the strategy, change the objectives, or even discontinue activities.



Participatory Evaluation

*Outsiders
facilitate
Participatory
Evaluations*

Outsiders assist insiders in planning and conducting the evaluation. They guide but do not direct. They can provide the focus, the idea, and some help, intervening when assistance is required.

Participatory Evaluations are not conducted solely for the purpose of answering the questions that outsiders need answered. However, in many instances, insider and outsider evaluation questions may be the same and both may be answered through Participatory Evaluation.

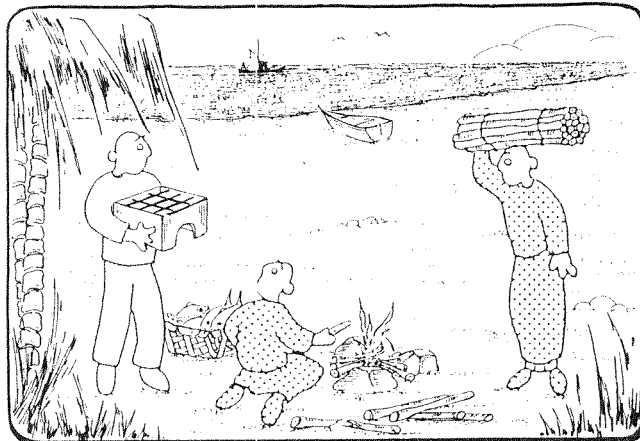
Governments and donors may want very specific information. Both will need to know if the activities are relevant to the problems perceived by insiders and if the activities are likely to continue when the outsiders withdraw support.

*Information to
guide
management
decisions*

A Participatory Evaluation should not be thought of as a final judgement on whether activities are successful or unsuccessful. The information gathered should encourage adjustments to the activities either during the period of the activities, when planning future phases of the activities, or possibly be the basis for new activities.

In a Participatory Evaluation, people learn about the things that have worked well, and why they worked. They also learn about the things that haven't worked well, and why they didn't. When the people involved go through the process of examining, it is more likely that corrective measures will be taken because the causes of the problem are discovered and understood by the community.

For example, a participatory evaluation mid-way through the activities might reveal that expensive, but fuel efficient fish smokers were only helpful to those who must pay for fuel wood as it cut down their running costs. It was not so helpful to those who collected their wood for free. This information could be used in the next phase of activities in an attempt to find a solution to this new problem.

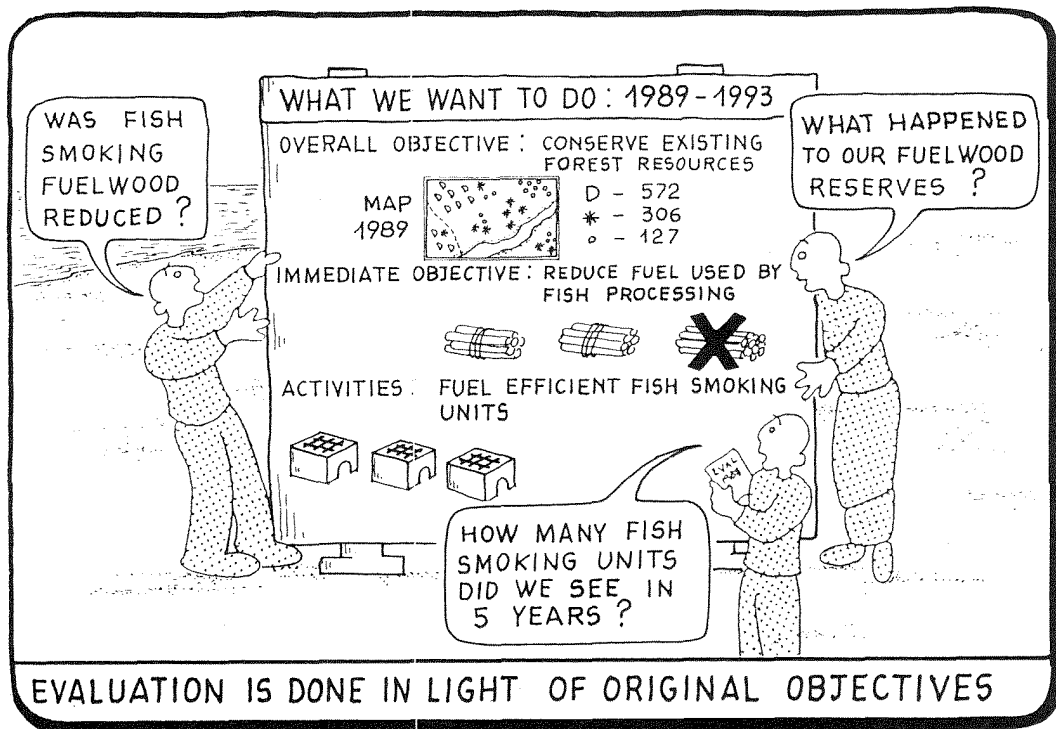


Chapter Five

Both objectives and activities are considered

In a Participatory Evaluation, the overall and immediate objectives, their continued relevance, and the effectiveness of the activities are all taken into account.

For example, the overall objective might be to conserve existing forest resources, and the immediate objective to reduce fuel wood consumption for fish smoking. The activities have tried to meet these objectives by introducing fuel efficient fish smokers. An evaluation can provide information such as the number of fish smokers currently being used, and the fuel wood saved.



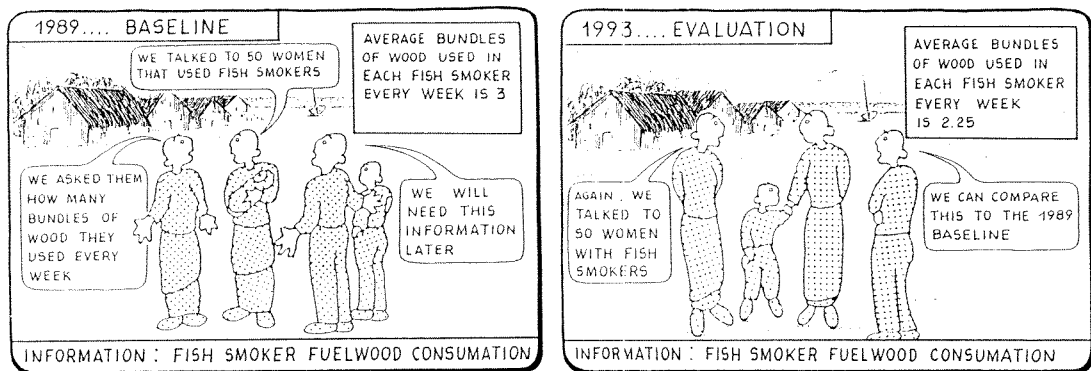
This information will let people know if their objective, that is to reduce fuel wood consumption, has been achieved.

Participatory Evaluation

Baseline assessment and monitoring contribute to participatory evaluation

Much of the information previously collected can be used in Participatory Evaluation

For example, information from Participatory Assessments can be used to identify the original overall and immediate objectives, re-acquainting the community with their original analysis of the problems. Information from Participatory Baselines can provide information (such as average household fuel wood consumption before fuel efficient fish smoking units were introduced) that is useful for comparison.



Information from participatory monitoring will give total amounts and progressive trends.

